TUESDAY, 28 MARCH 1995

—

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

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

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

Crimes (Confiscation of Profits) Amendment Act 1995—

Proclamation—the provisions of the Act that are not in force commence 1 April 1995, No. 65

Health Act 1937—

Poisons Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 1995, No. 64

Local Government Act 1993—

Local Government (Joint Local Government Areas) Regulation 1995, No. 63

Local Government (Local Government Areas) Regulation 1995, No. 61

Local Government (Transitional) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1995, No. 62

Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act 1982—

Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements (Brisbane Cricket Ground Trust) Regulation 1995, No. 57

Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements (Island Industries Board) Regulation 1995, No. 58

Superannuation (State Public Sector) Act 1990—

Superannuation (State Public Sector) Amendment of Deed Regulation (No. 2) 1995, No. 59

Transport Infrastructure (Railways) Act 1991—

Transport Infrastructure (Railways) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1995, No. 66

Weapons Amendment Act 1994—

Proclamation—the provisions of the Act that are not in force (other than the provisions mentioned in the Schedule) commence 24 March 1995, No. 60.

PAPERS

The following papers were laid on the table—

Minister for Housing, Local Government and Planning (Mr Mackenroth)—

Under section 71 of the Local Government Act 1993—

Letter, dated 6 March 1995, to the Local Government Commissioner withdrawing the reference dated 219 March 1993 under section 4H of the Local Government Act 1936 in respect of the areas of the Shires of Murweh and Tambo

A copy of the new reference to the Local Government Commissioner dated 6 March 1995 to examine, report and make recommendations on various reviewable local government matters in respect of the areas of the Shires of Murweh, Tambo and Bauhinia

A copy of the reference to the Local Government Commissioner dated 9 March 1995 to examine, report and make recommendations on the reviewable local government matter of the reduction of the Flinders Shire Council's complement of members for the 1997 local government triennial elections.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Overseas Visit

Hon. W. K. GOSS (Logan—Premier and Minister for Economic and Trade Development) (10.02 a.m.), by leave: I wish to report to the House on a visit that I undertook earlier this month to Germany and the United Kingdom. The primary purpose of the visit was to maintain and enhance Queensland's business profile in Europe, in particular in new export industries, and to meet with key business and Government representatives. I seek leave to table my report and have the remainder incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

Thursday, 2nd March, 1995 to Thursday, 16th March, 1995

My visit included a number of activities relating to CEBIT, in Hannover, the largest information technology and telecommunications exhibition in the world.

This year Australia was named as official "partner country" at the exhibition, giving Australian companies a higher profile and greater opportunities for accessing new export markets.

I personally met with each of the 22 Queensland firms participating at CEBIT and attended the official opening of the exhibition and the opening of the Australian stand with the Prime Minister of Australia.

Queensland firms participating in CEBIT were assisted by the Information Industry Board and the Trade and Investment Development Division of my department which provided advice on marketing skills and helped arrange meetings with potential new overseas distributors.

Queensland's I.T. and T. industry grew by more than 20 per cent last year and the Queensland companies at CEBIT displayed an innovative range of products which suggests that with continuing Government support and a favourable location in the Asia Pacific region I.T. and T. will soon overtake traditional products such as lead and wool as an export earner.

During my stay in Hannover, I visited Wolfsburg, the headquarters of Volkswagen and the site of the largest car manufacturing plant in the world. My discussions with senior executives of the company focussed on opportunities for light metals in future car production and the export potential of the Gladstone magnesium pilot program.

My visit to Germany also included an inspection of the International Tourismus Borse (I.T.B.) in Berlin, the largest tourist and travel fair in the world.

Tourism is Queensland's third largest industry, generating approximately $6.7 billion a year and employing 125,000 people.

As well as meeting with many of the 23 Queensland firms exhibiting at the I.T.B., I held discussions with representatives of the Europe office of the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation and senior executives of the Australian Tourism Commission.

Europe is a vital market for Queensland tourism because while greater numbers of overseas visitors come from Asia, the average length of stay of European visitors, and hence their average expenditure, is greater.

In the United Kingdom, I held discussions with Government and industry representatives and met with the Australian British Chamber of Commerce and the Australian Business in Europe Group.

I will now detail the main appointments and discussions.

Meeting with Deutsche Bank

In Frankfurt I met with Dr Rolf Breuer, a member of the board of managing directors of the Deutsche Bank and some of the bank's senior executives. I received a briefing on the German economy and discussed features of Queensland's current economic position, including its favourable investment climate, high levels of economic growth, population growth, lowest State taxes and charges and the State's strategic proximity to important Asian Pacific markets.

Briefing from Australian Consul General, Berlin

Upon arrival in Berlin, I received a briefing on the political and economic situation in Germany from the Consul-General, Berlin, Ms Adamson, and a representative of Austrade.

The Consul-General expressed a view that my presence at both the CEBIT exhibition and the I.T.B. Tourism Fair would be seen by German industry as a positive statement of support for Queensland.

I subsequently received a further briefing on current developments in Germany and eastern Europe, particularly Russia.

Inspection of I.T.B., Berlin

I met with representatives of Queensland firms participating in the I.T.B. and was given a demonstration of a new CD-ROM package designed by the European office of the Queensland Tourism and Travel Corporation which allows tourism operators to produce their own brochures using images of Queensland tourist destinations. The package, which could be purchased from the Q.T.T.C., would assist greatly in the marketing of Queensland's tourism product.

While at the I.T.B., I discussed Queensland's involvement in national tourism programs with representatives of the Australian Tourism Commission and appeared on a radio program for the German media services, Deutsche Welle, which has a listening audience of approximately 46 million people.

The interview was an ideal opportunity to specifically promote Queensland tourism in the European market.

Visit to A.E.G. facility Hennigsdorf

A.E.G. is a joint-venture partner with the Queensland firm, Evans Deakin, for the supply of light rail vehicles for Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia.

The vehicles, which are being manufactured by Walkers Limited of Maryborough, are expected to be ready for export to Malaysia within the next two months.

After a briefing from senior executives of the company on light rail vehicles, locomotives, and the tilt train I inspected the company's manufacturing plant and was given a practical demonstration of the light rail system currently operating in Berlin.

Meeting with Volkswagen, AG

Mr Wolfgang Beese, Executive Director, Strategy Development, and other senior executives of Volkswagen provided a briefing on the company's world-wide operations and discussed the use of light metals in automobile production.

These discussions had particular relevance for the Queensland Government's interest in the future development of light metals production, including the magnesium pilot project in Gladstone.

Meeting with Doctor Peter Fischer, Minister for Economy, Transport and Technology, Lower Saxony

Prior to the CEBIT '95 exhibition in Hannover I met with Dr Peter Fischer, a Minister in the Government of the State of Lower Saxony.

Lower Saxony is the host of the CEBIT exhibition, which was formally part of the annual Hannover trade fair, that has become a major independent event in its own right.

Our discussions focussed on the Queensland and Australian information technology and telecommunications industry, which was observed to be the second largest in the Asia Pacific region after Japan, and the development and continued expansion of the CEBIT exhibition.

Official opening ceremony, CEBIT, Hannover, Germany

CEBIT is the world's largest information technology and telecommunications exhibition, attracting more than 700,000 visitors from around the world. This year, for the first time, Australia was chosen as official "partner country" for CEBIT.

The Prime Minister, Mr Keating, participated in the official opening ceremony which highlighted Australia's position as a major I.T. and T. exporter and a strategically important launch pad for international companies in the Asia Pacific region.

Official opening of Australian "partner country" stand, CEBIT, Hannover, Germany

I attended the official opening of the "intelligent Australia" stand with the Prime Minister, Mr Keating, and subsequently undertook an inspection of the Queensland and Australian exhibitors.

I personally met with each of the 22 Queensland companies at CEBIT and received a first hand briefing on their products, the assistance they had received from the Queensland and Federal Governments and the appointments with overseas distributors that they had organised as a result of the exhibitions.

All companies had attracted significant interest from potential distributors and I was subsequently advised that as a result of meetings arranged at CEBIT most companies had established substantial leads which were expected to be followed up by genuine new business.

It should be stressed that without the assistance of the Queensland Government's Information Industry Board and the Trade and Investment Development Division of the Department of Premier, Economic and Trade Development, many of these companies would not have had the opportunity to attend CEBIT.

Last year the Government arranged for several Queensland companies to attend CEBIT as observers rather than direct participators. This gave companies an opportunity to see first hand how CEBIT worked and how they could use it to their advantage.

For this year's exhibition, assistance was provided to those companies by way of training on marketing skills and the identification of new international distributors. Assistance was also provided in setting up meetings with those distributors.

As a result CEBIT was a major success for Queensland's I.T. and T. industry which is growing at the rate of 30 per cent per year and which will within two years overtake products such as lead and wool as an export earner for Queensland.

Siemens Nixdorf press conference and dinner, Hannover, Germany

Siemens Nixdorf, a major international I.T. and T. company with regional offices in Australia, invited me to attend and address a gathering of approximately 350 journalists from around the world during the CEBIT exhibition.

The dinner had an Australia theme in keeping with Australia's status as "partner country" and I had an ideal opportunity to discuss Queensland's I.T. and T. industry with not only international media representatives but also senior representatives of the Siemens Nixdorf company.

Meeting with representatives of Metro Link, Manchester, England

Metro Link is a new private sector operated mass transit system in the City of Manchester in northern England.

The system which uses some existing infrastructure from British Rail was established through funding by British Government and the Metro Link company which is made up of private sector concerns and local Government. The system provides an efficient, clean, high speed light rail service for the Manchester area.

Given the recent release of the draft regional transport plan for south-east Queensland, this meeting provided a useful insight into public transport options and some of the transport issues which will need to be considered as part of the R.T.P. process.

Meeting with E.D. and F. Mann, London

E.D. and F. Mann is an international company, trading in agricultural products. The company is a joint-venture partner in the Mackay Sugar Refinery.

My discussions with senior executives of the company focussed on current issues in the Queensland sugar industry including specific questions of deregulation and the future of export markets.

The Queensland industry was seen by the company to be in a healthy position with a

record crop and a good set of selling arrangements in place with the Queensland Sugar Corporation. The forthcoming review of the sugar industry was discussed and the company indicated they would provide a submission based on their views.

Meeting with Tate and Lyle, London

Tate and Lyle is an international company whose principal interest is the production of sugar, cereal sweeteners and starch. It has a major interest in Queensland through its subsidiaries including the Bundaberg Sugar Company.

Our discussions focussed on similar issues to those raised with E.D. and F. Mann earlier in the day and indeed Tate and Lyle echoed sentiments expressed about the strong position of the Queensland sugar industry and indicated they would also be lodging a submission to the Sugar Industry Review.

Meeting with Minister of State for Transport and officers of the Department of Transport, London

In London I meet with John Watts, Minister of State for Transport and officers of his department to discuss public transport issues and how these may relate to the Queensland experience.

The Minister's views about the need to combine public transport solutions with new approaches to the use of the car in urban areas were noted. His officers gave me a briefing on current public transport initiatives in Britain including a new tramlink service in the Croydon area south of London. Substantial written material was provided which will be a useful resource in the Government's consideration of the draft regional transport plan for south east Queensland.

Function for Australian Business in Europe (A.B.I.E.) and the Australian British chamber of Commerce (A.B.C.C.), Queensland House, London

I hosted and addressed a special function for A.B.I.E. and A.B.C.C. in London where I spoke about Queensland's strong economic position and its advantages as a base for British and European countries wishing to expand in the Asia Pacific region.

I stressed that while Asia was an important export destination, Queensland would not neglect the United Kingdom and indeed indicated that Britain was our fifth largest export market. The Queensland Government would therefore continue its partner relationship with British industry and would welcome further expansion which would take advantage of our relative economic strengths.

Meeting with Mitec/Thorne E.M.I., London

During the CEBIT exhibition I inspected a display of telecommunication products by the Queensland company, Mitec Limited.

Mitec has entered into an arrangement with the British company, Thorne E.M.I., who are sub-contractors to Transfield Shipbuilding Victoria for the supply of naval electronics support measure equipment for Australian and New Zealand frigates.

Representatives of Mitec and Thorne E.M.I. provided a demonstration of this equipment and briefed me on the current state of the project.

Meeting with the Right Honourable Alistair Goodlad, M.P., Minister for State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, London

I have met with the Minister on three previous occasions. He has responsibility for Commonwealth matters within the British Government and has a particular interest in Asian affairs. Therefore, while in london I took the opportunity to once again discuss matters of relevance including Queensland's current economic and political situation, British Government policy and economic developments in Asia.

Wreath laying for Queensland servicemen, London

1995 is the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II. Prior to my visit, officers in my department made contact with the Queensland Branch of the Returned Services League about an appropriate recognition of the role of Queensland servicemen in the European campaigns of the war.

On the last day of my visit, I laid a memorial wreath at the London Cenotaph, a major war memorial in central London.

Attendance at the House of Commons

I attended question time at the House of Commons.

PARLIAMENTARY CRIMINAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE

Operation Wallah

Mr DAVIES (Mundingburra) (10.03 a.m.): The *Courier-Mail* of Saturday, 25 March 1995 carried an article on page 1 and continued on page 2 titled "Richo report ruckus". It is of concern to the committee that members of the public reading that article may gain the impression that there was something sinister attaching to that letter. In addition, the article has the potential to create the impression that the committee, or some members of the committee, are not discharging their responsibilities as members of the committee. That is not the case.

Firstly, the committee has discharged its statutory responsibilities. Secondly, the committee is convinced that the CJC has pursued this matter with vigour. The committee has been assured by the Director

of the Official Misconduct Division, Mr Mark Le Grand, that the CJC "have not taken one step backwards in this matter". It has also been assured by the CJC Chairman, Mr Rob O'Regan, QC, that there has been no indication of interference by Governments at any level in Australia. Previously, and again at the joint meeting yesterday, the committee was assured that the matter was being pursued "thoroughly and vigorously" by the CJC. I seek leave to table a statement in response to this matter to which is attached copies of the relevant correspondence.

Leave granted.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Dr D. Grundmann

Mr BORBIDGE (10.07 a.m.)**:** I direct a question to the Premier. I refer to the failure of the police to lay charges against Dr David Grundmann, who has admitted to terminating pregnancies of up to six months for reasons such as exam stress, and I ask: will the Premier incorporate changes in his proposed amendments to the Criminal Code to outlaw such activities?

Mr W. K. GOSS: The final draft of the Criminal Code, which has been the subject of exhaustive consultation, will be tabled in the Parliament later this week by the Attorney-General. There are no changes in that draft, as there have been no changes in previous drafts, to the provisions relating to termination. The law in Queensland is the same now as it was under the former National Party Government, as established during the time of former Premier Joh Bjelke-Petersen by the court interpretation of the Criminal Code. That interpretation is consistent with the law in all of the other States of Australia and in other parts of the Western World, such as the United Kingdom. In general terms, a termination is available when it is necessary for the preservation of the mother's life, and that is a phrase which has been interpreted broadly by the courts, and properly so.

In relation to this matter, I have said before that my view is that this is a matter for a woman and her doctor. As I understand the position in this Parliament, this is an issue which is the subject of an entitlement to a decision based on the conscience of each individual member of each of the three parties. As far as I am aware, that situation continues to be the case.

As to the doctor to whom the Leader of the Opposition refers—I do not think that we should be getting too carried away by paying too much attention to the offensive and grandstanding remarks that he made. I understand that those remarks have been investigated by the police. However, I am not aware of the outcome of that investigation.

Early Release of Repeat Offenders

Mr BORBIDGE: I direct a further question to the Premier. I refer him to his Government's appalling policy in regard to the early release of repeat offenders convicted of serious crimes, including the early release of LKoi Davidson, who has seven previous convictions, included armed robbery, after serving 16 months of an eight-year sentence; the early release of Roger Shoesmith, who has 15 previous convictions, including armed robbery, after serving less than nine months of a four-and-a-half-year sentence; and the early release of Jody Allan Flanagan, who has five previous convictions, including armed robbery with violence, after just 11 months of a four-year sentence. I ask: when will this disgraceful situation be addressed by his Government? Is it not a fact that the proposed new Criminal Code will have no impact whatsoever on this revolving-door policy?

Mr W. K. GOSS: The policies of this Government have already had a substantial impact in terms of deterring crime and apprehending criminals. That is shown by the fact that our prisons are under pressure and require more cells. Under this Government, not only are more police catching more criminals but also, under our laws and policies, criminals are being sentenced to, and imprisoned for, longer periods than they were under the Liberal/National coalition or the National Party Government.

In relation to the particular cases to which the Leader of the Opposition referred—which I understand he got from the *Sunday Mail* newspaper—I make the point that decisions about whether or not to grant parole to prisoners rest with the Community Corrections Board.

Mr Borbidge: Who makes the law?

Mr W. K. GOSS: That was the law under the Government of which Mr Borbidge was a part and from which he now likes to distance himself.

Mr Cooper interjected.

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

Mr W. K. GOSS: The Leader of the Opposition and the member for Crows Nest

are very rough and tough and hairy chested in their rhetoric, but let us look at their record in relation to the most serious and offensive criminals in our society. It is salient to note that, under the former coalition and National Party Governments, if one considers their history across——

Mr Connor interjected.

Mr W. K. GOSS: I have until 11 o'clock.

Mr Borbidge interjected.

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

Mr W. K. GOSS: If one considers their record over 30 years from 1959 to 1989, one finds that almost one-third——

Mr Hobbs interjected.

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

Mr W. K. GOSS: Let us look at the record of the Government of which the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Crows Nest were a part. They were members of the Government and the Cabinet. What was their record in Government? What is the truth about those two members? What is their record, and why are they so determined to interject and stop the House from hearing their record? Their record is this: in relation to the worst criminal offences, almost one-third of all prisoners sentenced to life imprisonment under Mr Borbidge's and Mr Cooper's Government were released on parole after serving fewer than 13 years. In fact, one lifer served only seven years and one month. Under this Government, the Act was amended in 1990 to provide a minimum non-parole period of 13 years for prisoners sentenced to mandatory life imprisonment. Almost one-third of those serving life sentences under Mr Cooper and Mr Borbidge were released in under 13 years and, as I said before, one person was released in just over seven years.

Queensland's prisons hold approximately 180 people serving life sentences. The average term—and we should compare this with the record of members opposite—served by those prisoners prior to release on parole is 17 years and six months. In terms of the length of sentence that they serve—that figure is not only higher than the performance of Mr Cooper and Mr Borbidge in Government, it is also higher than that of any other State in Australia. The Queensland Government is tougher than all of the other conservative Governments.

The Community Corrections Board is made up of representatives from the community—average Queenslanders. No party in this country or this State has a mortgage on wisdom when it comes to dealing with the problems of serious crime, but our policy is superior to that of members opposite. Our policy is delivering practical results. All members opposite can do is come up with shameful and pathetic policies that would lead to the shooting of the Avon lady. In practice, the record of Mr Cooper and Mr Borbidge in Government is a pathetic one and a soft one. Mr Borbidge's record in Government is a pathetic one. In rhetoric, Mr Borbidge is rough and hairy chested; on his record, he is soft and smooth as a baby's bottom.

Electricity Tariffs

Mr LIVINGSTONE: I direct a question to the Minister for Minerals and Energy. In last year's Budget, the Treasurer announced that in March this year there would be electricity tariff cuts for commercial and industrial consumers. I ask the Minister: is the Government on target with these tariff cuts?

Opposition members interjected.

Mr McGRADY: I am here today, and I will be here in 10 years' time, which is more than can be said for members opposite. As well as tariff reductions for business and industrial users, the Treasurer also promised a price freeze until 1996 for all domestic consumers of electricity. I am pleased to say that, as promised by the Treasurer last year, Queenslanders are now enjoying the benefits of a well-managed, corporatised electricity industry. The tariff cuts and the tariff freeze came into effect at midnight on Sunday, so Queenslanders are already saving.

Restructuring of the tariffs means that there is a range of decreases. Some consumers may receive a greater reduction than others, but the important point is that in real terms all customers of the commercial and industrial sector will receive a decrease in their electricity tariffs. The average decrease is about 8 per cent. For example, based on typical levels of electricity use, users of irrigation pumps for small crops will enjoy an 8 per cent reduction; a corner store will receive a 6.1 per cent reduction; a dental surgery will receive a 11.3 per cent reduction; a hardware store will receive a 13.2 per cent reduction; and a dairy farm with no irrigation will receive a 9.2 per cent reduction. In dollar terms, for a steakhouse-type restaurant, this could equate to a possible saving of about $1,600 a year. A

medium-sized grocery store could save about $700 a year. For businesses around the State, this will mean a saving of $100m a year.

We believe that there will be a substantial boost to job creation in this State, and this demonstrates that the Goss Government is the leading economic manager in Australia. We have constantly held tariff increases to below half the CPI figure, and I am informed that no other Government in the history of this State has been able to make that claim. In real terms, tariffs for all customers are 12 per cent lower than they were when we took office in 1989. The latest decreases for commercial and industrial customers mean that their electricity charges will be down by 20 per cent in real terms since 1989. Corporatisation of the electricity industry took place on 1 January this year, and the benefits are going immediately into the pockets of all Queenslanders.

Tarong Power Station

Mrs SHELDON: I ask the Minister for Minerals and Energy: is it true that the Tarong Power Station, which produces 40 per cent of the State's power, has coal reserves for only two days of operations? Is it also true that this has occurred through poor management of our energy resources and extremely poor stock control methodology at the powerhouse?

Mr McGRADY: Members of the Opposition use every opportunity to run down the electricity industry of Queensland. They are knockers and whingers, and they are doing nothing for the development of this State. From time to time, for various reasons, stocks of coal do come down.

Mrs Sheldon interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Deputy Leader of the Opposition has asked her question.

Mr McGRADY: However, I am informed that the current levels pose no threat to the energy supply from Tarong.

Mrs Sheldon: You don't know.

Mr McGRADY: It would serve those characters opposite better if they promoted this State instead of running it down at every opportunity. It is no wonder that they have been sitting in the Opposition seats for five and a half years. I have news for them: they will be there for many years to come. They are a disgrace.

Proposed Provisions of New Criminal Code

Mr BUDD: I ask the Attorney-General: could he explain the history of the proposed provisions of the new Criminal Code in relation to the use of reasonable force in a home invasion?

Mr WELLS: It was in August last year that the Government authorised me to advise the House of the Government's new position with respect to questions relating to breaking and entering. It was the policy that I announced then that is the policy now. We are not going to get into any sort of law and order auction with the members on the other side of the House. The issues are far too important for that. We enunciated our position in August and our position remains the same as it was in August.

For the benefit of honourable members opposite, so that they will understand or at least hear what the law is and what the law will be, I would like to explain that to the House. Currently, the law is that in order to undertake an act of self-defence or defence of one's own property, it is necessary to use such force only as is reasonable and necessary. That is a double test. The Government has decided to make it a single test; a simpler test, a less restrictive test. The test will be whether the action of self-defence or defence of property was reasonable.

Under the present Criminal Code there are additional burdens which are placed upon a home owner with respect to moveable property. If somebody has stolen property from a house and that person moves outside of the house, then the owner may, according to the Criminal Code, use such force as is reasonably necessary in all the circumstances so long as the owner does not cause bodily harm. That is a very low test. That is a test which can involve as slight an injury as bruising the person. The Government believes that that is too soft. The Government believes that the Opposition's law, which operated for 32 years when it was in Government, is far too soft.

The new test will be that one may use such force as is reasonable in the circumstances. Again, it is a single test—not the double test of reasonably necessary—the single test of "reasonable", so long as one does not cause grievous bodily harm. In other words, the Government is proposing to allow considerably more leeway.

What is the simple distinction between the position which the Opposition has taken and the position which the Government has

taken on this issue? The position which the Opposition has taken is that it has explicitly said, in the words of the member for Crows Nest, that it will reject the reasonableness test. Members opposite do not think that people's actions should be confined by what is reasonable. That is the difference between the Opposition and the Government. The Opposition is committed to removing the reasonable person test, the Government is committed to retaining it. The Government is in favour of reasonableness, the Opposition is opposed to it. It is as simple as that for the people of Queensland. If the people of Queensland want a Government which is committed to reasonableness, then they will support this Criminal Code and this Government.

Life Sentences, Criminal Code

Mr LINGARD: I refer the Premier to his answer to the Leader of the Opposition, in which he said that the average gaol sentence will now be 17 and a half years. I refer to his Government's Criminal Code, which promises life sentences of 26 years, and contradictory statements by the Minister for Corrective Services, Mr Braddy, that "the basic policy is that as far as parole is concerned, you get out at half time." I ask: is not this phoney, get-tough Criminal Code a smokescreen for the revolving-door prison system?

Mr W. K. GOSS: In reply to the honourable member, the answer is: no, it is not. Secondly, I suggest that he read *Hansard* so that he quotes and understands me correctly.

Q-Build Apprentice Intake

Mr PURCELL: I refer the Minister for Administrative Services to the 1995 apprentice intake by the Department of Administrative Services building unit Q-Build. I ask: could the Minister explain the reasons for such a large intake of apprentices considering that there does not appear to be a commercial need for such a large group of apprentices?

Mr MILLINER: I thank the honourable member for the question and acknowledge his very keen interest in the way in which this Government sets about training people, particularly in the construction industry. He has a very proud record in that field. It is true that this year Q-Build did in fact take on some 90 apprentices. Last week, I was very pleased to attend a function to welcome those 90 young people into the work force of Q-Build and to give them a start in life.

Q-Build is the largest employer of apprentices within the building industry. Those apprentices have been employed for a couple of reasons. The first is obviously to give young people a start in life and to give them some training. The second is that we have an obligation to ensure that we start to train sufficient people to sustain the construction industry. It is interesting to note that the Construction Industry Training Council has already predicted that there will be a shortfall in the number of apprentices required in the industry until at least the year 2000, so there is a shortfall generally in the provision of training for apprentices within the construction industry. Therefore, the Government sees that it does have a role—a community service obligation—in training young people for the construction industry.

Mr Foley: Hear, hear!

Mr MILLINER: The Minister is right. With the program in place, I know that he has been very keen to employ those apprentices.

It is true to say that we are operating in a commercial environment and, as such, if we were operating strictly in that commercial environment, we certainly would not be taking on 90 apprentices. However, this Government recognises that it does have a community service obligation to take on those apprentices for the reasons I outlined earlier.

The Government has a very proud record in the construction industry because, during the recent downturn in the economy, this Government accelerated the capital works program to ensure that there was a steady stream of work coming through into the construction industry to maintain a skilled work force which would ensure that when the industry did pick up, that work force would be available to participate in that recovery. I am pleased to say that that recovery is here. One need refer only to the number of construction projects going on throughout the city to which this Government has made a significant contribution by ensuring that there was a skilled work force capable of completing those projects. This Government does have a very proud record in training apprentices within the building industry. I am very proud of the young people who have taken the opportunity to work for Q-Build and have a go.

Tarong Power Station

Mr SANTORO: I refer the Minister for Minerals and Energy to the Tarong Power Station, which produces 40 per cent of Queensland's power needs. I remind the

Minister that there is normally a six-month stockpile of coal ready to service the production capacity of that power station. I again ask the Minister: why, as a result of mismanagement, as at the end of last week, there was insufficient coal at Tarong to last for more than two days? What is the Minister doing to redress the situation that existed at that power station as a result of union action the week before and as a result of mismanagement at the power station?

Mr McGRADY: As I mentioned before, I have been informed that there is an adequate supply of coal at the Tarong Power Station to meet the needs of that power station.

Maryborough College of TAFE

Mr DOLLIN: I direct my question to the Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations. The Maryborough College of TAFE has been a leader in vocational educational and training reform in Queensland since 1990—a beacon or a light on the hill, so to say. I ask: can the Minister advise the House of the latest advances in the college's role in advancing competency-based training?

Mr FOLEY: The Maryborough College of TAFE has indeed played a leading role in the development of competency-based training. I acknowledge the keen interest that the member for Maryborough has in the provision of training through TAFE and, in particular, the leading role that the Maryborough college plays in competency-based training. Competency-based training is the method by which apprentices and trainees are trained on the basis of competencies rather than on the basis of the time that has expired during their training programs.

Since 1990, at Maryborough, apprentices in carpentry, fitting and machining, fabricating and the electrical and motor trades have been studying under a competency-based training pilot. In the current Budget—that is, 1994-95—almost $300,000 is committed to the operations of the centre and the implementation of competency-based training across Queensland. The commitment to the Maryborough College of TAFE is a plain recognition by the Government that centres of public expertise can and should be developed throughout regional Queensland.

Aboriginal and Island Councils

Mr LITTLEPROUD: I refer the Premier to the continued poor performance of some Aboriginal and island councils outlined in the 1993 Auditor-General's report, which qualified the accounts of 21 community councils. The Auditor-General also criticised the Minister for not creating and implementing an appropriate financial management system for those councils. On 4 October 1994, the Honourable Anne Warner stated publicly that she would impose fines of up to $12,000 on those councils that failed to perform. Bearing in mind that the 1994 Auditor-General's report, which was tabled in the House last Friday, qualified the accounts of many of the same 21 councils, I ask: what evidence does the Premier have that Mrs Warner monitored those councils to prevent maladministration? Will any of those councils be fined for their lack of accountability?

Mr W. K. GOSS: As I understand it, the audit relates to the 1993-94 year and shows some improvement. It has been made plain——

Mr Littleproud: She said in October last year she would be fining councils that didn't perform.

Mr W. K. GOSS: Yes, but the audit relates to the 1993-94 financial year. As members who know something about that matter understand, the Minister has made it plain that the very long history of those councils is such that it will be a long time before they perform to the standard that Governments would like and that Governments should require.

As the House was advised last year on a number of occasions, the Minister has implemented measures to improve the performance of those councils, but it must be understood that their performance will not improve overnight. The audit reports still indicate problems. The Government and the Minister concede that. However, they show some improvement.

Mr Littleproud interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Western Downs has asked his question. He will cease interjecting.

Mr W. K. GOSS: I understand that there has been a marked improvement in the performance of seven councils. Unfortunately, there has been a deterioration in the performance of one. From memory, that is Woorabinda. I assure the member and the House that the Government is committed to continued improvement in the performance of the councils, but it will take some time. Neither the Minister nor anybody else has the capacity to change that situation overnight.

Citytrain Network

Mr BEATTIE: I direct a question to the Minister for Transport and Minister Assisting the Premier on Economic and Trade Development. I refer to the hive of activity in continuing to improve the safety of and accessibility to Queensland Rail stations in my electorate, such as Windsor, Wilston and Newmarket, and I ask: would the Minister inform the House about the nature of the upgrading program now under way throughout the Citytrain network and the Government's intentions for the future?

Mr HAYWARD: As the honourable member for Brisbane Central is certainly aware and as other members would be aware, since 1991 when the program commenced, Operation Facelift has resulted in a profound transformation of much of the Citytrain network, with the expenditure of $17.2m. It demonstrates the Government's real commitment to making suburban rail stations safe, comfortable and attractive places for passengers.

Those initiatives to upgrade security and facilities for the Citytrain network are integral to the Government's strategy to encourage an increased use of public transport and to complement the multimillion-dollar investment that is occurring in the south-east Queensland passenger rail network. As the member for Brisbane Central indicated, there has been a hive of activity at the Wilston, Newmarket and Windsor stations, which reflects the intensive program that has been undertaken throughout the network.

The safety of passengers at Newmarket Railway Station will be improved when the pedestrian mazes and gates are installed on both sides of the level crossing. That will be completed in about June this year at a cost of $45,000. That system has proved to be an effective way of deterring passengers from taking dangerous risks when the lights are flashing and the boom gates are closed to vehicular traffic. The system is similar to that installed at the Windsor Railway Station, where $125,000 has been expended on improving the lighting, platform resurfacing and facility refurbishment and, very importantly, the installation of a reduced-grade ramp to improve access for the disabled.

At the Wilston Railway Station, $115,000 is to be spent on renovating that station building, improving the lighting, platform resurfacing, and, importantly, the installation of a public phone and a security help phone. Through works at individual stations such as that, the Government is committed to improving the comfort and the safety of rail commuters and encouraging people to leave their cars at home and take the public transport alternative.

Small Business Licence Fees

Mr CONNOR: In directing a question to the Minister for Business, Industry and Regional Development, I table a letter from the Meat and Allied Trades Federation, which states in part that, under the environmental protection regulations presented to the Parliament last week, the annual licence fee for production of 10 tonnes or more of tallow a year is $6,020 and that the average price for tallow is only $400 per tonne, which would mean that a small producer would have to produce 15 tonnes to cover the licence fee alone, without covering the other costs of production. I ask: how does the Minister expect small businesses to survive in Queensland when his Government charges more in licence fees than the producer receives when he sells the product?

Mr PITT: The member for Nerang is like the proverbial wet blanket. He spends most of his time putting a damper on business confidence in this State. His recent activities are borne out further by his question. I will quote from a statement that he made earlier this year, in which he cited figures similar to the flaky figures that he presents today.

Mr Littleproud interjected.

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

Mr PITT: The honourable member said that $650 is too much for panel beating and spray-painting businesses to pay each year for one audit. He then said that that might represent more profit than the business makes in a whole year. Those figures are similar to the figures he cited in his question. All the time, he comes up with those magical figures.

Queenslanders are quite comfortable with the new Environmental Protection Act. They demanded it. The business community accepts the need for regulation in that respect. In general, the business community has fallen into line. I sometimes wonder whether the member has paid attention over the past three years during the consultation and discussion on that Act.

Mr Stephan interjected.

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

Mr PITT: I wonder also whether the member represents the interests of the business community or whether he is doing what I suspect he is doing, that is, looking after those who have most to fear from wise environmental protection—the polluters themselves.

Export of Education Services

Mr HOLLIS: I ask the Minister for Education: could he outline to the House the development of education services as an export industry for Queensland and the direct and indirect benefits that will bring to the State's economy in the future?

Mr HAMILL: Export of education services is one of the growth industries in Australia today. Last year, education services earned this nation $1.5 billion in export income. It is expected that, by the turn of the century, education products will earn this nation $2 billion in export income. To put that in perspective—that is a bigger revenue earner for Australia than the wheat crop, and it is growing rapidly. Some 8,800 students from 47 different countries are studying at Queensland educational institutions. What does that mean in terms of the State's economy? Income in the order of $171m flows into the State each year. That is a very substantial sum. The policies of this Government are designed to further enhance the provision of education services as an export earner for our community.

Last week, I had the pleasure of participating in the signing of another 12-month educational agreement with the provincial Government of Central Java. Vice Governor Soesmono of Central Java was here for the signing of that agreement, as were a number of leading businesspeople. One of the people at that ceremony was Lorraine Martin, a provider of educational services who is well known in this State and overseas. Ms Martin made the point that her company writes around $5m of export income in education services. The multiplier effect of that represents around $25m worth of income for this State through her endeavours alone.

Our Government has pursued very strongly the area of educational exports within our region and facilitated a number of companies to build a bridgehead into that sector. We are continuing to work not only with Indonesia but also with Papua New Guinea, which is a major source of income through our schools. I am pleased to report to the House that to further our position as a provider of quality educational export services we have initiated a scholarship program with Central Java, which has resulted in two short-term visits by an officer in the livestock industry of Central Java, who is studying in Queensland, and another officer who will study in conjunction with educational services.

By demonstrating our capacity to provide high-quality education products not only for our domestic market but also internationally, we can ensure Queensland's position in a burgeoning export industry in which we have a very strong comparative advantage in our region.

Criminal Code

Mr COOPER: I refer the Attorney-General to his belated recognition that people need the right to defend themselves against home invasions, even though his outline of reasonable force indicates that nothing has changed under his revised Criminal Code. I ask: will criminals who commit crimes of home invasion continue to have the right to take civil action against people who use whatever force is reasonable to defend their homes or businesses against those criminals?

Mr WELLS: Certainly not to the same extent as members opposite allowed them to when they were in Government. The "belated recognition" to which the honourable member refers is, in fact, precisely what I said last August. If the honourable member did not understand it in August, and if he did not understand it when I said it a few minutes ago, I will say it again for him now. The difference between the honourable member and this Government is that the honourable member is in favour of people being able to do whatever is unreasonable in the circumstances, whereas this Government is in favour of people being able to do what is reasonable in the circumstances. I said it in August, and I will say it now: the old law proclaimed that a person could use such force as was reasonably necessarily so long as it did not do bodily harm.

The honourable member and the Government of which he was a member would not allow householders to defend their own property to stop people from getting away with that property, even to the extent of laying a fist on them and giving them a bruise, because that is what "bodily harm" meant. This Government has significantly but sagaciously increased the amount of force that is capable of being used. We are not going to allow a free-for-all. We are not going to allow people to behave unreasonably. The standard of the

reasonable, ordinary Queenslander is the standard that is going to be used in these circumstances. I spell out to honourable members that the term "reasonable" is not a lawyer's term of art; it is not some obscure legal concept. When the term "reasonable" is used in the law, it means the ordinary, commonsense of humankind— what would be judged as reasonable by the ordinary Queenslander in the street.

I repeat: we are not getting into an auction with honourable members opposite. If they want to put forward a policy that says that people can blow away anyone who walks into their front yards, they can do that. If they want to say that people can behave unreasonably, they can do that. However, our position is the position that I articulated in August last year, that is, the position of the reasonable man and the reasonable woman.

Pollution and Waste Problems

Mr SZCZERBANIK: I draw the attention of the Minister for Environment and Heritage to an article on the front page of Saturday's *Courier-Mail* in which the reporter, Brian Williams, quotes officers of her department as saying that Queensland's pollution and waste problems are out of control. I ask: can the Minister inform the House whether that report accurately represents the current situation in Queensland?

Ms ROBSON: It is very important to clarify for members of this House the accuracy of those statements that were made about pollution and waste in Queensland and what this Government is doing about it. The report in Saturday's *Courier-Mail* was neither an accurate representation of the current situation in Queensland nor what was said by my officers at that seminar. Those officers were invited to speak to that seminar, which was organised by the Local Government Association of Queensland and dealt with issues of liquid waste management in Queensland. I also spoke at that seminar.

The report on the front page of the *Courier-Mail* is a mixture of what was actually said at the seminar and other background information that was provided to the media over quite a long period. Those two sources of information were combined, and the results in the report are totally out of context in terms of what was said at the seminar. The article claims that Queensland's natural environment is being degraded at an accelerating rate, despite attempts to halt the damage. Nothing could be further from the truth.

With regard to Queensland's sewage plants—honourable members would be aware that a Statewide audit has been conducted on those plants that were failing to meet the required standards, and they are now remedying the situation under close supervision from my department. With regard to the illegal disposal of waste—the draft waste management strategy is now very near to finalisation and will, with its five-docket system and manifest, bring to an end this very offensive practice. With regard to the comments about pathetically weak environmental legislation—we inherited pathetically weak environmental legislation.

Mr Veivers interjected.

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

Mr Slack interjected.

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

Ms ROBSON: We inherited pathetically weak environmental legislation. In March this year, we introduced and declared a new integrated Act, which became law. That Act contains penalties of up to $1.25m for companies that deliberately and wilfully pollute.

With regard to the mining industry—some very inaccurate statements were made about the mining industry in that particular front-page article. An environmental protection policy, which will be introduced to cover the environmental impacts of mining, will complement the environmental management overview system that is already in place under the control of DME. I highlight the fact that both the Gladstone Power Station and Mount Isa smelters are licensed under the Environmental Protection Act. Contrary to the erroneous article in which the assertion was made that each industry is not operating in compliance, I point out that they are operating in compliance with their licences. Neither of the DEH officers at that seminar ever contended anything different. It is obvious that the Government has addressed issues of environmental pollution. We are moving forward rapidly and solidly.

Concessional Rail Fares

Mr HEALY: I refer the Minister for Transport to a report in the *Sunday Mail* dated 19 February 1995 which states that, according to documents obtained under freedom of information, the Government is considering a

range of transport options in the lead-up to the 2000 Olympics, and I ask: will the Minister give an undertaking to the thousands of Queensland pensioners that concession fares on the Spirit of the Tropics, the Sunlander and the Spirit of the Outback will not be scrapped to make room for full-paying passengers as suggested in the article?

Mr HAYWARD: Let me make a point about these issues as clearly as I can. Last week, I had the pleasure of launching the refurbished version of the Sunlander. At that launch, I clearly guaranteed that the Government would maintain its commitment and ensure that Queensland seniors who were eligible for discounted fares would continue to receive those advantages. The position of the Queensland Government is very clear in that regard.

Opposition Law and Order Policy

Mr FENLON: I ask the Minister for Police and Minister for Corrective Services: could he advise what knowledge he has of the status of the law and order policy development by the Opposition?

Mr BRADDY: This is really one of the strange fiction stories of Queensland. Not only does the Opposition not have a set of considered policies, but also it cannot even decide whether or not it has one. For example, on 14 March this year, the *Peninsula Pine Bugle* reported that Denver Beanland attended a meeting in that area in support of the Redcliffe coalition candidate, Judy Beresford, at which he spoke about the coalition's law and order task force. At that meeting, Mr Beanland solemnly assured the people that the meeting was not a political meeting; rather it was a way "to listen to local views which would be considered when policies were drawn up." That was duly reported in the *Peninsula Pine Bugle* and the locals were encouraged to come forward with ideas that had a real chance of being reflected in the Opposition's policies.

Strangely enough, at around the same time, Kevin Lingard, the coalition member and candidate for Beaudesert, was reported in the media saying that the coalition "had finished all its policies and these would be released at appropriate times." So we have one member saying one thing in the *Peninsula Pine Bugle* and another member saying another in the *Beaudesert Times*.

The coalition has embarked upon a course of trying to con and fool the people of Queensland. Opposition members are not sure whether or not the coalition has policies. In Redcliffe, people are encouraged to come forward with ideas that will be incorporated in policies that are not yet formulated. However, at Beaudesert people are told that the Opposition's policies are locked in place already and are ready to be released.

Of course, what we have is a hotchpotch of nonsense from the Opposition. Members would recall that, last year, the Opposition was going to cut little bits off people and flog people. It found that that did not go down very well. Mr Cooper was an avid supporter of the member for Keppel, who was out there advocating the Saudi Arabian solution, which was to cut off fingers and flog people. Apparently, that has not worked and probably even in Beaudesert and Redcliffe that policy has been canned. The Opposition is no longer interested in that one. Now we have suggestions from Mr Cooper that if an unauthorised person enters anyone's house in this State, that person can be shot and no-one will ever possibly be charged with an offence, no matter how unreasonable that shooting. That is the latest piece of nonsense from the Opposition.

This Government's policies are clear. People can defend themselves provided the force is reasonable, and they can use whatever force is reasonable. However, they cannot shoot the pizza boy or the Avon lady.

Woorabinda Aboriginal Council

Mr LESTER: I ask the Minister for Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs: what action does the Minister have in hand to ensure that small-business creditors who are owed in excess of some $580,000 plus by the Woorabinda Aboriginal Council will be paid? What date can I tell creditors of the council in the Keppel electorate that they will indeed be paid?

Ms WARNER: I am trying to decipher the question, which was fairly garbled. The issue, which is very clear and which has been confirmed by the courts, is that the Woorabinda council is the responsibly elected body at Woorabinda. It is the body that is financially responsible for the debts of that council. This Government offered to appoint an administrator to clear up the financial difficulties at Woorabinda. The council appealed that decision, and the courts determined that the council had been elected properly and that it should be given more time to deal with its own financial situation.

To date, the council has been given more time, as the court recommended. We are monitoring the situation to make sure that Woorabinda is doing the right thing in trying to get its financial house in order.

Opposition members interjected.

Ms WARNER: Mr Speaker, I do not think that the members opposite want to hear the answer to this question. Bearing in mind that Woorabinda is an independently elected council, as has been determined not only under the legislation but also in the courts, we are doing everything in our power to monitor the situation.

As the courts directed, the Woorabinda council as been given more time to deal with the situation. That situation cannot go on forever and I am seeking legal advice as to the appropriate length of time that that council should be given to resolve its financial difficulties. One of the things that I want to make abundantly clear to everybody is that this Government is not going to simply pick up the bill for Woorabinda. It is not going to come in with a pot of gold and clear all its debts because, as has been determined by the legislation and by the courts, that council is responsible for its own financial affairs and that council has to deal with this matter in the appropriate manner.

Opposition members interjected.

Ms WARNER: Mr Speaker, it has been incredibly difficult to get the message across to members opposite because they simply refuse to hear the answer. That council has been given time to deal with its problems, and we will be monitoring the situation. I will be seeking further legal advice if the situation does not improve.

Feez Ruthning Review of Unfair Dismissal Laws

Mr WELFORD: I ask the Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations: is he aware of a review by the law firm Feez Ruthning of Queensland's unfair dismissal laws? Could he advise the House of the conclusions of the review?

Mr FOLEY: The law firm Feez Ruthning conducted a review of the published decisions of the State Industrial Relations Commission hearing applications for compensation or reinstatement. I table that review for the interest of honourable members.

I will refer to it briefly. The results of the review of the cases found that in well over half the cases the application was refused or dismissed. In no case has the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission made a monetary order for compensation of more than $30,000. I refer to an interview with the reviewer, David Miller, a partner in Feez Ruthning, which appeared in *Business Queensland*. It states—

> "We can see no reason at all for the alarmist and sensational hype that appeared in the press this time last year."

This alarmist hype is continued in a press release of the Queensland Chamber of Commerce and Industry, which I table.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The time for questions has now elapsed.

MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Allegation of Misleading of Parliament by Attorney-General

Mr BEANLAND (Indooroopilly) (11 a.m.): I rise on an important issue concerning the administration of justice in Queensland, which includes the Attorney-General misleading this House. It involves conflicts of fact between the Attorney-General and the Criminal Justice Commission. The Opposition is making serious allegations of impropriety against the Attorney-General. The Attorney-General has misled this House and is now attempting to stifle a proper investigation by the Senate.

In Parliament on 21 February 1995, the Attorney-General, in a ministerial statement referring to the Senate inquiry on unresolved whistleblower cases and the allegations by Messrs Lindeberg and Harris, said that "they have been already exhaustively examined by the CJC". This conflicts with the submissions made by Mr Mark Le Grand, the Director of the Official Misconduct Division of the CJC. He was the CJC commissioner who purported to conduct the public investigative hearings into the Huey allegations raised on Channel 7 in 1991. Yet on 24 February 1995, before the Senate committee he stated that he had never met Huey and that he knows nothing about him. This was because the alleged exhaustive examination was a farce. Essential witnesses, including Huey and Farrah, were never spoken to about these allegations. Huey had been retired from the Police Service to avoid a proper investigation.

The Attorney-General personally knows that these matters have not been exhaustively examined by the CJC, because no real investigation ever took place. The lack of exhaustive examination is further proved by the Attorney-General's own correspondence.

On 27 August 1990, the Director of Prosecutions forwarded a memorandum of advice to the Attorney-General that no action would be taken against Detective Superintendent Huey. I remind the House that under section 372(2)(b) of the Criminal Justice Act the Director of Prosecutions has a statutory duty "to refer to the complaint section of the CJC all matters that he suspects involve, or may involve, official misconduct". The Director of Prosecutions failed to report to the CJC, even though his report clearly established official misconduct on the part of Detective Superintendent Huey. However, the Director of Prosecutions did report to the Attorney-General, who was not a party to the action.

On 29 August 1990, two days later, the Attorney-General informed Parliament of the advice of the Director of Prosecutions, stating that the matter is now legally closed, even though later correspondence to the Attorney-General dated 5 September 1990 shows that it was not. The Attorney-General further stated in this House—

> "All relevant parties have been advised that the Crown does not intend to bring any further prosecutions in respect of these matters."

This is misleading, because it ignores offences of official misconduct and the statutory duty to report them under the Criminal Justice Act. When the Attorney-General made this statement, the CJC had not been provided with a copy of the advice of the Director of Prosecutions concerning Huey. On 5 September 1990, Sir Max Bingham, QC, wrote to the Attorney-General informing him that complaints were lodged with the CJC concerning allegations against Huey. He said that these matters were "not investigated pending completion of Mr Miller's inquiry". Mr Miller is the Director of Prosecutions. Sir Max then asked whether the Attorney-General "would be prepared to make available to the Commission Mr Miller's findings to assist in its completion of the complaints process". This same memorandum of advice was read by the then Police Minister, Mr Terry Mackenroth. It caused him such concern that he contacted the acting Police Commissioner and had him read it. As a result of this, Detective Superintendent Huey was forced to resign from the Police Service on 18 September 1990.

On 11 October 1990, the Attorney-General, Dean Wells, wrote to Sir Max Bingham thanking him for his letter of 5 September, and provided the CJC with a copy of Mr Miller's findings. This was far too late, as Detective Superintendent Huey had already been retired from the Police Service with full superannuation benefits. Even the CJC in a press release on 12 March 1991 recognised that "aspects of Mr Huey's conduct in the early 1980s could represent official misconduct". However, it continued to state that "they would not be able to impose any effective punishment or sanction against Mr Huey, who was no longer a member of the Police Service".

The Attorney-General has repeatedly misled this House and the people of Queensland over these issues. Worse still, he has knowingly lied. Sir Max Bingham has said that the CJC has not investigated this matter pending the advice of the Director of Prosecutions. That advice was received so late that the CJC could not take any action against Huey, as evidenced by its press release of 12 March 1991. Huey has received hundreds of thousands of dollars of taxpayers' money because the CJC failed to carry out its statutory duty. The Attorney-General knows this. The CJC's failure was directly assisted by the inaction of the Attorney-General, now its Minister. Yet the Attorney-General continues to tell this House that these matters have been exhaustively examined by the CJC. This is clearly untrue. It is a blatant untruth. In fact, it is a blatant lie. The documents prove it.

The Attorney-General has further stated to the House that the PCJC has also exhaustively examined this material. That statement is demonstrably false. I refer again to the Attorney-General's own correspondence. The first PCJC investigation is known as the Clamp/Cox investigation. This investigation has been subject to much criticism. Professor Moody, an expert used by the CJC itself, had this to say of that report—

> "The conclusions of the Parliamentary CJC report by Clamp and Cox are incorrectly based on unfounded assumptions and uninvestigated or overlooked inconsistencies in the facts and evidence."

In relation to the second PCJC report, the majority found that at the time of Huey's retirement "there were no complaints then outstanding against him". This is incorrect. Sir Max Bingham's and the Attorney-General's own correspondence disprove that finding, yet the Minister had the hide to stand in this House and tell the Parliament that the Government and public servants will not assist the Senate inquiry into whistleblowers because these matters have been "exhaustively

examined by the CJC". Such conduct is intolerable from any Minister, but it is an absolute disgrace from the first law officer of the State, the Attorney-General. How can the people of the Queensland have any confidence in the administration of the law under this Attorney-General?

This Attorney-General has already lectured this House upon ministerial responsibility. I quote from *Hansard* of 6 July 1989, when he said—

> "I would like to address the question of the Westminster convention of responsible Government. Under this convention, a Minister must take responsibility for what occurs in his portfolio. Under this convention he must resign when any serious allegation of impropriety is made against him, and that is so whether or not the impropriety that is alleged against him is true or not. He must stand aside and have the matter properly investigated and examined. Once a proper investigation has occurred, the Minister may then resume his position if he is cleared by that investigation. There is ample precedent for this to occur . . ."

The Attorney-General need look no further than the principled stand of Mr Ian McLachlan, who stood down because he said he misled the people of Australia. As distinct from Mr McLachlan's stance, which was caused by being misled by staff, the Attorney-General is personally aware of his misrepresentations to the Parliament, as his signature appears on the correspondence. It is clear that the Government should accept the Solicitor-General's advice that the Senate inquiry has constitutional authority and the power to summons State officials. The Government must cooperate with this proper investigation.

The Government's present stance, as demonstrated by the leaked Cabinet documents tabled by the Opposition on 21 February 1995, clearly shows that the Government, and in particular the Cabinet, led by the Attorney-General, is hell-bent on maintaining a whitewash of the Huey affair in order to keep the truth from the public and to frustrate any inquiry searching for such truth. The Attorney-General will say that this matter has been examined by the Director of Prosecutions, the CJC and the PCJC. I put it to the Attorney that no such examination can be exhaustive when the matters have never properly been investigated, as is evidenced by Mr Le Grand's statement and his correspondence with Sir Max Bingham, QC. I table relevant documents and correspondence in relation to this matter.

It has also been suggested that these allegations are too old. However, they were not too old for Huey, who raised these matters himself before the judges inquiry while making false allegations against His Honour Judge Pratt in 1989. It is paramount that the Attorney-General resign from the Ministry, as he has deliberately misled the Parliament on matters of serious and public importance.

Three-cornered Electoral Contests

Mr SZCZERBANIK (Albert) (11.10 a.m.): Today I would like to focus on one of the biggest political con jobs in Queensland history. I refer to the widely publicised decision by the coalition parties to abolish three-cornered electoral contests—except, of course, where they do not abolish them. One might say that this was a Clayton's abolition by a Clayton's coalition. One of the Liberal achievements worthy of mention from the list in the Liberal Party President's February letter is—

> "Finalisation of agreement with the National Party regarding the contesting of seats in the next State election."

This follows the historic announcement on 28 March last year, when Rob Borbidge and Joan Sheldon signed a joint statement detailing six steps to ensure a strong coalition. The sixth step was—

> "No three-cornered contests for the next State election in marginal ALP seats, except by agreement."

After all those agreements, it was something of a shock to read this headline in the *Gold Coast Bulletin* on 2 March: "Coalition treaty undone in Albert". The following article stated that there would be a three-cornered contest in Albert following the admission by the Liberal Party President, Mr Bob Tucker, that the Liberals would nominate against the National Party's local candidate. In that article, the National Party accused the Liberal Party of breaching the spirit of the coalition agreement. That begs the question: what agreement?

I remind members of the media reports in October last year that a Morgan poll commissioned by the Liberal Party had indicated that the conservatives would do best in electorates where the National Party did not field candidates. The Liberals made reference to that research as part of their defence in the 2 March *Gold Coast Bulletin* story, which also offered readers this blunt appraisal of the Liberal Party's research—

> "The record of the Liberal Party research is abysmal and does not take into account optional preferential voting."

Members may wonder who made that comment. It was none other than one of the senior officials of the Liberal Party's partner, the National Party State Director, Mr Ken Crooke. He went on to describe the Liberal Party's research as "entirely inaccurate and unreliable". One can only hope that the coalition partners reach some agreement on whose research to use when they start to run the coordinated campaign promised in the letter.

So that members do not think that the backbiting is restricted to the National Party's administrator, I remind them of what the current Opposition Leader, Mr Borbidge, said in Parliament about the Liberals on 4 September 1986—

> "The Liberals in this place would be the biggest hypocrites in any Parliament in Australia. Everywhere they go, they carry with them the stench of hypocrisy."

More recently, on 21 July last year in the *Biggenden Weekly*, the member for Callide felt compelled to talk about the electoral problems facing the National Party. She stated—

> "We of course have the Liberals and can only hope that they don't create a situation which will keep us out of Government in this State for a further term."

I predict that that further term will extend to three or four terms!

Not to be outdone—on 8 March in the *Caloundra Observer* the National Party's Caloundra Electorate Council Chairman, Mr Graeme Haycroft, said that the Nationals were still not completely sold on the idea of helping Mrs Sheldon. Mr Haycroft stated—

> ". . . whether she gets wholehearted support here will depend entirely upon whether we have no more three-cornered contests in Queensland."

Of course, that has gone down the tubes with the announcement of a three-cornered contest in the electorate of Barron River. In the very same article, the National Party Women's Section Chairman, Helen Birkell, painted an even more disturbing picture of the type of help that the Nationals will be offering Mrs Sheldon in her Caloundra electorate. She said—

> "In the end it doesn't matter what we say to our members . . . They will make their own judgments. If it's a genuine coalition they'll be there for Joan. If it's not then they won't."

I believe that the member for Caloundra will be waiting a damned long time for any good help to come from her coalition bedfellows. As many as 10 electorates will have three-cornered contests, if one includes—as one must—the so-called Independents or the Clayton's Liberals.

It would be very easy to conclude from all of this that the Liberals deserve condemnation from their coalition partners for treating the electoral arrangement with contempt. But just four months ago, the National Party of Queensland announced that it would run a candidate against the Liberal Party's sitting MHR in the Federal electorate of Fairfax. Mr Crooke defended that decision by saying that the Liberals had only themselves to blame for lacking strength of principle on moral issues. The Liberal Party member for Fisher, Mr Peter Slipper, who was also threatened with a National Party opponent, replied by accusing the National Party of Queensland of extreme hypocrisy. I must remind the House that this is the very same person who was once a member of the National Party in this State and defected to the Liberal Party when he thought that he was going to lose his seat. That very same bloke talks about hypocrisy when he cannot even stay in one party and give undivided loyalty to that party!

Whom should one believe? Certainly not the National Party President, Don McDonald, who, in 1991, when the Nationals and Liberals signed an agreement pledging to work together in coalition, said—

> "From today onwards, we have only one opponent—the Labor Party."

How untrue that is! It would be reasonable to assume that the recycled coalition leader, John Howard, is in a position to have some insight—maybe not a great deal, but he should by now have some knowledge of the working relationship of the National Party and Liberal Party in this State. In 1993, when talk of coalition in Queensland turned to talk of amalgamation, Mr Howard stated that the union of the two parties would produce only one possible result: a pineapple party. To that, I must add that Queensland is already witnessing the rough end of the coalition, and it can only get rougher now that the honeymoon is well and truly over and the lights in the bedroom have come on in the morning.

The so-called coalition agreement has certainly made the National Party and the Liberal Party the strangest of bedfellows. Their

relationship reminds me of two of my children's favourite television characters. When they are not in their pyjamas, B1 and B2—or Mr Borbidge and Mrs Sheldon—dress up for their day in Parliament and pretend that all is well at home. Behind their facade of unity lies a disturbing truth: the coalition is a treaty falling apart, and they have only themselves to blame. "B1" and "B2" should give up their coalition agreement, stick to chasing teddy bears and leave the running of this State to the Labor Party.

Operation Wallah

Mr GRICE (Broadwater) (11.17 a.m.): I rise to pose very serious questions to which the Australian people need truthful answers. Those answers must come from the Australian Labor Party, which is using its supervisory powers over law enforcement agencies to prevent exposure of the truth. Evidence exists that senior Federal Labor Ministers misused their positions of trust to betray the Australian people. They made it possible for Labor mates to circumvent United States, Japanese and United Nations embargos on trade in defence-related electronic components. Along the way, the mates and others made fortunes.

The stock-in-trade for the scam included semiconductors from Japan. It included processes and machinery for printed wire board and surface mast technology from the United States—used in guidance systems for missiles, in warfare systems in the FA-18 fighter and in warships planned for our Navy. The scam that these Labor Ministers made possible involved the payment of a large bribe to a senior official of American defence contractor McDonnell Douglas Corporation. It involved the bribery on a massive scale of a senior official of Japanese electronics giant and defence contractor Mitsubishi. It involved the manipulation of Australia's Defence Offsets Program to provide financial benefits to Labor mates and, some say, senior Labor figures. In short, Labor Ministers have betrayed the people they were elected to govern.

Former Labor senator and senior Federal Minister Graham Richardson is at the centre of corrupt transactions involving many millions of dollars, and he is far from being alone. The Defence Minister, Senator Ray, was a participant in a vital meeting held in a Sydney restaurant in May 1993. Those at the meeting included Richardson, Ray, the crooked businessman Robert James Burgess, his partner Peter Lynn Rovazzini, and at least one senior official of McDonnell Douglas. Without the cooperation of the Government, the scam could never have got off the ground, let alone net players like Burgess millions of dollars. Other senior Labor Ministers have ensured that the truth never sees the light of day by preventing proper investigation and exposure.

I have spoken in the House previously about the relationship between Richardson and Nick Karlos. At that time, I said that I was never interested in the form of the actual bribe but in why the bribe took place. It was that relationship between Richardson and Karlos which led law enforcement agencies to evidence indicating corruption on a massive scale. Investigation of the corrupt inducement or bribe provided to Richardson by Karlos led to the latter's business partner, Robert James Burgess, and the setting up of Operation Wallah. That is detailed in Operation Wallah documents prepared as long ago as 4 February last year. From the start, the operation involved elements of the Queensland Police Service, the Criminal Justice Commission and, importantly, the Australian Federal Police and the National Crime Authority. At times, I have been a vocal critic of the CJC and, when I think it appropriate, will be again. But this time the CJC got it completely right. Both Karlos and Burgess were questioned at secret investigative hearings at the CJC. Labor Party involvement soon became clear when Karlos telephoned Federal MP and former State Labor official, Wayne Swan, after giving his evidence. Telephone logs prepared by the investigating task force contain the details.

The involvement of Labor and senior Labor figures was also indicated by the fact—again evidenced by telephone logs—that Burgess called Richardson both before and after his evidence was given. In an interview reported by the *Courier-Mail* recently, Richardson himself confirms the calls. The Labor power broker and former senator denies that the calls were related to Burgess' evidence to the CJC, but he does confirm that he and Burgess were mates.

Those hearings, and a mass of other evidence put together by the CJC and others, should have sparked decisive action from those best placed to take it—the Federal agencies. The Australian Federal Police and the National Crime Authority had, and still have, a clear obligation to act. Honourable members should remember that they were foundation members of Operation Wallah, with full access to the information gathered. The CJC long ago supplied them with evidence suggesting that Labor Federal Ministers had been corruptly involved with facilitating

dealings by two Burgess companies—the Blacklip Seafood Company, later renamed J Micro Trading, and Integrated Memory Systems. Material which I obtained from the Australian Securities Commission lists the suspected arms trader, Raju Shewa, as a recent director of IMS.

The CJC provided evidence that Burgess and an associate, Juliette Saliba, bribed a senior official of Mitsubishi to obtain $30m worth of semiconductors—essential components in weapons guidance systems. It provided evidence that those components were then re-exported and may have ended up with totally inappropriate regimes in breach of international embargos. The CJC provided evidence that the Labor Federal Government allowed the Defence Offsets Program to be manipulated to the benefit of Burgess and McDonnell Douglas. The latter was able to sell to Burgess, for the price of $1, a process and machinery used to manufacture printed wire boards used in guidance systems. McDonnell Douglas was allowed to claim something like $4.5m in defence offset credits for that $1 sale, and Integrated Memory Systems is said to have made a similar amount.

I do not want to detail everything the CJC has gathered and passed on to other agencies for action. My concern is that key Federal agencies have failed to act appropriately on the information that they have been given. Those agencies have been subject to improper influence by the Labor Federal Government, aimed at preventing proper action. The problem is that the CJC has run out of jurisdiction, and the AFP and the NCA have been called off.

The matters involved are crimes against Federal law and against United States law. The evidence has had to be handed over to bodies which have not been permitted to act. The AFP has always been included in the Operation Wallah information stream, and there have been numerous briefings by the CJC, including a very detailed one for Commander Tyree on 1 December and 2 December last year. There have also been plenty of requests for action, so the AFP has no excuse for inactivity. Indeed, Federal Police have a letter in which the CJC complains of what it calls the AFP's reluctance to act.

On 22 December, the CJC met Federal agencies and that meeting resolved to ask the Inspector-General of the Defense Department to research and analyse defence contracts. The CJC attempted to get Federal authorities active again early last month when the Federal Police received another letter, this time from the CJC chairman. Mr O'Regan mentioned suspicions of an illicit trade in semiconductors from Mitsubishi in breach of United States laws. He spoke of suspected payments of corrupt secret commissions to someone from McDonnell Douglas. He spoke of the transhipment of defence technology in 1991—the printed wire board technology so handy in missile guidance systems. He also spoke of the illicit trade of printed wire board and surface mast technology from the McDonnell Douglas plant in St Louis, Missouri, in 1993. This is the technology Burgess' company tried to sell to the Peoples Republic of China, Middle Eastern regimes and the former Eastern Bloc.

Federal authorities have blocked FBI requests for help. The FBI has a legitimate interest as McDonnell Douglas is a giant in the American defence industry, and there is clear evidence that at least some officials of the company have been party to the misuse of American weapons technology. There is also the matter of the $10,000 bribe paid to a McDonnell Douglas official.

The United States is frustrated by the lack of action by the Labor Federal Government. As the *Courier-Mail* reported, the Assistant Legal Attache at the US Embassy protested that delays could allow the destruction of evidence. I can tell the House that J. Steven Ramey was, in his words, "strongly concerned" about possible violations of US laws. He was concerned enough to want CJC investigators to take part in briefings in the United States with FBI and US Customs Service people. Diplomatic niceties mean that that could not happen without Canberra's approval—which has been withheld. To the relief of the Federal Government, Ramey has left Australia. We have to wonder if he was recalled at the insistence of Canberra as a result of the heat that he generated after being briefed last September.

The CJC found one agency prepared to do its duty when it briefed the NSW Police Fraud Enforcement Agency late last year on evidence that Burgess and Saliba had bribed the national sales manager of Mitsubishi Electric Australia. Saliba was arrested and charged and has made court appearances. It is interesting to note that the CJC obtained some of the evidence against Burgess and Saliba after the FEA obtained search warrants on its behalf. Similar warrants originally obtained by the NCA were withdrawn personally by the NCA boss, Tom Sherman, at 6.15 the night before the raids they covered were to be carried out. The FEA did its job,

unlike the NCA and the AFP, but it was unable to get its hands on the principal target.

Burgess bolted to the United States after giving his evidence to the CJC, and there he stays until the Federal Attorney-General gets around to authorising an extradition application. He is beyond reach of United States authorities until the Australian Federal Police get around to authorising an exchange of information. The Australian people deserve to be told why. Federal Ministers have told Parliament consistently that no Federal offences have been disclosed, but the Commissioner of the AFP, Mick Palmer, wrote in January that material provided by the CJC "raises the suspicion of a significant fraud on the Commonwealth". Why has that information not been made public?

The case involves corruption of Ministers of State, misuse of Australia's defence funding and illegal trade in defence technology. Why are Federal agencies, answerable to a Labor Government, refusing to act on the evidence available? Why has this Government not insisted on Federal action since Burgess' companies are based here, and the components were brought to the Gold Coast? Why does the Federal Justice Minister write to Mr Wells demanding action to silence the CJC? Why does the NCA boss try to kill the story in a letter to the *Courier-Mail*? They are the questions that need answers, and so does the question as to why the Premier's private secretary, David Barbagallo, met Bob Burgess and Peter Rovazzini at Integrated Memory Systems in 1991. Does the conspiracy involve the entire Australian Labor Party?

Time expired.

Law and Order

Mr NUTTALL (Sandgate) (11.27 a.m.): The issue of law and order was raised by the Opposition in the Matter of Special Public Importance debate last week. In question time today, a number of questions were again raised regarding the issue of law and order. In light of the imminent introduction of the new Criminal Code in the Parliament, it is appropriate that we talk about the issue of policing in Queensland. In the past, I have been a strong supporter of community policing and today I wish to outline a number of community policing initiatives both within the State of Queensland and within my electorate.

Under this Labor Government, there has been an enhanced partnership between the Police Service and the community in fighting crime in general. The first initiative I wish to mention is Neighbourhood Watch. While this Government does not lay claim to commencing the Neighbourhood Watch program, it has certainly gone a long way in enhancing Neighbourhood Watch.

The program is essentially organised by the community in order to reduce residential crime. Householders are encouraged to join together in small, informal groups for the purpose of improving the safety of their families and other neighbourhood residents. It is not a police scheme. Police lend their expertise only to enable residents to organise themselves for the purpose of minimising crime in their community.

Neighbourhood Watch will work only if the community supports the scheme. Commercial Union Insurance is the major sponsor of Neighbourhood Watch and provides funding for the program. The 10 Network is now a joint sponsor and provides support in terms of television air time and production of community service announcements.

The number of Neighbourhood Watch groups within my electorate has increased by two in the past 12 months. I am pleased to say that that has been as a result of residents getting together trying to combat particularly the issue of break and enters in certain areas. Since the commencement of those Neighbourhood Watch groups in certain parts of my electorate, the crime rate has certainly decreased.

I have said before that the police have produced a number of brochures about Neighbourhood Watch which state the steps to take to protect one's own property. I refer in particular to property identification, that is, the engraving, photographing and marking of property. That is only the first step. Once people engrave their property, that information must be registered with the police and recorded on computers so that if that property is stolen and subsequently recovered, the police have one way of tracking down its original owners. Marking and engraving are an obvious deterrent to those would-be offenders who try to hock stolen property. In my electorate—and I can speak only for my electorate—the police regularly attend Neighbourhood Watch meetings. That program has strong support from the inspector of the Sandgate Police Station, Inspector Veronica Kane, who is an avid supporter of community policing.

Another important initiative that was launched by the previous Minister for Education, Mr Comben, is the School Watch Program. In conjunction with the Queensland

Police Service, the Education Department has implemented that program throughout the State of Queensland. Approximately 500 schools, both in Government and non-Government sectors, are now being inducted into the program. The basic theme of the School Watch Program is to look, listen and report, and it involves those people who live in areas surrounding schools.

Recently, at the Sandgate Town Hall, I held a public meeting of people from all schools within my electorate, that is, 16 public and private schools. I wrote to their P & C associations, school principals and student councils, inviting them to the meeting, at which we had a substantial roll-up. A number of those schools have taken on the initiative of the School Watch Program. I am pleased that, since the introduction of the School Watch Program, although vandalism within the schools in my electorate has not been eliminated entirely, it has been reduced drastically. However, that program needs the continued support of both the local community and the school community, including the students in those schools.

Another program is the well-known Adopt-a-Cop Program, which has been operational since 1985. That program aims to create a rapport and understanding between the adoptee police officer and the children of a school. As a result of the personal and interested approach of those adoptee police officers, children with an inherent fear of police have genuinely overcome that fear. In excess of 500 police officers are now involved in the program in primary schools, with many more police officers participating on a volunteer or as-needed basis within their communities as liaison officers at establishments such as hospitals and aged-care homes. I have eight aged-care homes in my electorate, and the police do a remarkable job of liaising with the residents of those homes.

Another initiative is the crime prevention function, that is, the Policing Advancement Division. Funding of $500,000 is provided for that function and other relative functions within the Policing Policy and Strategy Branch for home security advisory displays and the development of crime prevention materials and strategies. To that end, crime prevention as a function coordinates three home security mobile displays and one small-business security display throughout the State. The program, which develops and produces materials on property security and personal safety issues, provides crime prevention advice and information to members of the Queensland Police Service and members of the community. That program is the sole responsibility of the Queensland Police Service.

We also have the now well-known Driver Reviver Program. With Easter looming upon us, it is timely to remind the people of Queensland of that great program, which is a joint initiative of Queensland Transport and the Queensland Police Service. It is a community-based volunteer program aimed at curbing road accidents caused by driver fatigue. Driver Reviver sites are determined by Queensland Transport in conjunction with the Queensland Police Service based on statistical evidence of fatigue-related road accidents. In Queensland, there are now 29 Driver Reviver sites, coordinated by local police and staffed by volunteers from the local community. That program is sponsored by Nestle in Australia.

Another initiative of the Government is the Home Secure Program, which is up and running within my electorate. That program endeavours to improve the security and quality of life of older people and persons with disabilities by providing them with a range of home safety and security support services, information and advice. That program is run jointly by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Planning and the Queensland Police Service. Funding is provided by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Planning, and the Police Service is committed to the provision of three constables to the program.

The Neighbourhood Safety Audit Program aims to minimise opportunities for crime, particularly violent crime, in public areas of the community through improvements to the design and physical layout of the environment. Police and other members of the community work together to determine what actions can be taken to make their community safer. During 1995, it is intended that targeted areas include higher education centres, hospital car parks and new residential subdivisions. The Department of Administrative Services and the Queensland Police Service are jointly responsible for the running of that program. All funding is handled by the Department of Administrative Services, and the Queensland Police Service is committed to the provision of one police officer as the State coordinator.

We also have the Police Beat shopfronts, which I spoke about last week in the Matters of Special Public Importance debate. The Police Ethnic Advisory Groups are also a great help. The Government has also introduced the Safety House Program for children travelling to

and from school. Over the past few years, that program certainly has been enhanced. One of the most important projects is the Women's Safety Project. In 1990, the Queensland Police Service established the Women's Safety Project to undertake extensive consultation with the community, Government departments, media and the police.

Time expired.

Queensland Rail Workers

Mr JOHNSON (Gregory) (11.37 a.m.): Today I will speak about the demise of Queensland Rail workers. The great American civil rights leader, the late Dr Martin Luther King, told his people, "When you reach the top of the mountain, don't forget the valley below." It is a pity that the Goss Labor Government and former Transport Minister, David Hamill, who, until recently, was the Minister responsible for Queensland Rail did not adhere to that statement.

On the weekend, I spent three days at Bowen, Sarina and Coppabella. The former Minister for Transport should have visited those places and learned at first-hand what is happening to the people who make Queensland Rail work. Morale in Queensland Rail is at an all-time low. Union leaders have deceived their members across the whole State. Yes, they have consulted with the grassroots employees of Queensland Rail all right, but they have gone back to Brisbane and been told by the Government-controlled bureaucracy that they will do it the Government's way. Queensland Rail workers pay their union dues—their $200-odd a year—but they never see anything in return for that money. The Labor Party Government is totally responsible for what has happened to those people. The union heavies come back to Brisbane and consult with Queensland Rail and the former Minister's committee.

Mr Beattie interjected.

Mr JOHNSON: The honourable member might be a member of that committee; I do not know. He is making plenty of noise—he always does. The member for Brisbane Central should be ashamed of what has happened. I thought that he supported railway workers. In the past five years, no Government member has visited the railway yards. Railway workers never saw the former Transport Minister, David Hamill. I hope that the new Minister, Ken Hayward, might get there. The Government has sold out those workers.

All this Government is concerned about is bureaucracy building at the expense of the real people in Queensland Rail. Many of these people have been sent to the bank via the voluntary early retirement scheme, but the only bank that this Government knows about is the blood bank. It has sucked every ounce of blood from their veins and left those people demoralised and dejected. This Government is a vampire of the first order. Anticipation of death is worse than death itself, but the members opposite do not care. All they care about is how good it is to be at the top, but they forget about the people who put them at the top. Talk about Judas and the 30 pieces of silver—the members opposite are the greatest mob of Judases that this State has ever seen. They have betrayed the real people who make Queensland Rail work. The members opposite are responsible and they know it.

As I have just said, morale is at an all-time low. I am qualified to make that statement because I have just visited Sarina, Coppabella and Bowen and many points in between. I have witnessed first-hand the sacrilege that has been committed by this Government against the people who have traditionally been their supporters. The Labor Party is no longer the workers' party, and I am pleased to say that the National and Liberal Parties will fill that role—and fill it with responsibility and understanding of these people we will.

This Government is heavy on social justice. If honourable members opposite call what they have done to the railway running men, station masters, assistant station masters, control tower personnel and maintenance crews social justice, then I suggest they go back and examine their policy because what they have done to these employees is totally the wrong meaning of what social justice is all about.

Mr Horan: They don't care about the workers.

Mr JOHNSON: They do not care about the workers, as my colleague the member for Toowoomba South just said. They do not give a damn about anybody who is doing it hard.

A whole host of issues that I will address in this Parliament have been treated with contempt by this Government and by Queensland Rail.

Mr Beattie: That's not right.

Mr JOHNSON: The member for Brisbane Central should listen. In relation to the issue of electric locomotives, because of

power fluctuations in the controls drivers have made numerous complaints about loadings on the coal lines. Time and time again electricians have tried to rectify that problem but to no avail. It seems that that is a problem right across the Queensland Rail coal network. Because of fluctuations, problems exist in relation to loading times. Nobody wants to know about those problems. The Minister has never visited these places and probably none of his committee has, either. The Gladstone locomotives do not have the problem. It is extremely difficult for trainee drivers to handle the 3100 class locomotives.

Another anomaly with the locomotives is the seating. The problem is becoming progressively worse, with drivers complaining of tiredness and bad backs due to inappropriate, uncomfortable seats. They have been promised the new Blemshy seats, but they have not yet been sighted; they probably never will. We hear about promises. The promise of a UHF radio system to replace the current VHF system is still on the backburner. That will cause problems as the current radio system is becoming overloaded with cross conversations from other systems.

Driver assistants have been told that they have to become drivers or else become redundant from the work force of QR. These people do not have a problem with this, but I have been told from Sarina, Coppabella and Bowen that the stress from constant, apparently irrelevant examinations is taking its toll. Those drivers are professionals who provide this service to Queensland Rail and the Queensland public with great honour and dignity. They are professionals of the highest order in their respective fields and it seems an insult to their ability and professionalism to be constantly subjected to these unwarranted examinations. Nobody knows the tracks on which they operate better than they do and, for the training of new drivers, practical experience is always going to prove the best.

To further rub salt into their wounds, when the blue collar workers attend the driver school in Rockhampton, they are not treated as well as their white collar colleagues who attend similar schools in other areas. The blue collar workers receive $400 a fortnight for expenses, whereas the white collar workers receive $800 a fortnight. How does the Government justify that anomaly. Once again, it is treating them as second-rate citizens. Shame on the members opposite, who are supposed to represent the worker.

The problems associated with driver conditions are further compounded by the ongoing saga of 12-hour shifts. Sometimes workers can be away from their home base for up to 18 hours because they are waiting between hours for train loading to be completed, which makes it impossible to sleep and be fresh for the last part of their shift. The shadow of the proposed standby concept is still hanging over their heads. That concept, if implemented, will further complicate the problem because it takes away time from their days off. If those workers are notified that they are on standby, they could be waiting around their homes for up to eight hours and then given a minute's notice that they are required to work a 12-hour shift. Those people could be away from their homes for 20 hours. They do not get paid for the time they are on standby and they do not get paid for the waiting time. Where is the union representation for these people now?

Unfortunately, the member for Whitsunday is not in the Chamber. My colleague the member for Mirani and I visited two of the railway centres in his electorate and one in Whitsunday.

Mr Beattie: She is usually sitting there all the time.

Mr JOHNSON: She is not in the Chamber at the moment because she knows the heat is going to be on. That lady has never been inside the railway yard at Bowen. The workers at that yard do not even know who their member is.

Mr Beattie interjected.

Mr Barton interjected.

Mr JOHNSON: I will give the member for Brisbane Central and the member for Waterford the mail. When Debbie Perske becomes the member for Whitsunday, she will give those people the representation that they deserve. She will be on the job all the time, just as the member for Mirani now talks with those people and understands their problems.

The really contentious issue relates to probably the hardest workers on the Queensland Rail network—the rail maintenance crews. These crews are currently working shorthanded with antiquated machinery or, sometimes, no machinery at all. Those people are the lowest paid workers in the Queensland railways network but they provide the most important service. This is a display of the incompetence and irresponsibility of this Government in recognising the role of these people.

Mr Beattie: You attack her when she is not here. Isn't that typical.

Mr JOHNSON: No, it is not typical. I am just telling the facts. The honourable member can stick up for her if he likes, but he should relay my words back to the member for Whitsunday.

Speed restrictions exist right across this State. The member for Archerfield is a great man of the railways. I inform him that, because of speed restrictions and lack of maintenance, it now takes eight hours for the Spirit of the Outback to travel from Emerald to Longreach. That is the case right across this State. Forty speed restrictions have been placed on the rail line between Rockhampton and Sarina.

Time expired.

Campus of North Point Institute of TAFE

Mr HOLLIS (Redcliffe) (11.47 a.m.): I rise to speak on the commitment by this Government to develop a permanent campus of the North Point Institute of TAFE on the Redcliffe Peninsula. This facility will enable TAFE to provide a much enlarged range of services to the people of Redcliffe. The campus, which will be constructed adjacent to Redcliffe State High School, will complement the effort of that school in presenting what I and many senior TAFE personnel believe to be the most successful integrated TAFE/high school facility in Queensland.

Redcliffe State High, apart from being an extremely good school in respect of academic results, also gives all students the opportunity to participate in a range of TAFE courses, which enable students from that facility to leave school with an academic certificate in one hand and a TAFE certificate in the other. The need for enhancement of TAFE facilities in Redcliffe is evidenced by the number of TAFE courses presently conducted at the two State high schools and the independent colleges. As at November 1993, in excess of 24 TAFE courses were offered with a total of 804 students participating. This figure has grown since, accentuating the need for a TAFE campus in this area.

In an area of high unemployment, TAFE and other organisations such as Skillshare and Job Clubs offer training to the unemployed and, what is more important, the skills that are necessary in this day and age to obtain employment. With its urbanisation, Redcliffe has little hope of major manufacturing being established within its boundaries. The 1991 census identifies the wholesale and retail trade as the predominant employers in the Redcliffe area. The large retailers such as Coles, Woolworths and Franklins generally conduct their own retail training programs.

The majority of the subjects offered by TAFE are those that deal with business studies, commerce studies, child care and hospitality. Of course, we should not forget the other very important subjects that are offered in Redcliffe, including social subjects—literacy, numeracy and personal development for women. Those subjects are also extremely important in the range of courses that TAFE offers.

I should also make mention of the overall success of TAFE in Queensland. One of the challenges confronting the Queensland Government in the early 1990s was to facilitate the widespread reform of Queensland workplaces to make them more competitive and efficient and, as a consequence, to encourage further growth in the economy and create additional jobs for Queensland. The strong growth evident in the Queensland economy and the ongoing expansion of employment opportunities bears witness to this Government's success in meeting the challenge of reforming Queensland workplaces.

I refer now to the significant role that TAFE has played and will continue to play in the ongoing process of developing and growing our State's economy. In less than one generation, Australia has been transformed by unprecedented social, economic and technological changes. During that time, Australia has been opened up to the world. Australians have become acutely aware that they are part of a competitive world environment and that their continued high standard of living depends upon how well they compete in that environment. Each year, more Australian businesses are impacted upon by international competition. Some are affected by overseas imports competing in the domestic marketplace; others are affected by competition from other exporters competing against us in our export markets.

The economic reform agenda of the Australian and Queensland Governments has many elements, including improved transport systems, more sophisticated telecommunications and reform of the workplace. However, central to all of those elements are the skills and abilities of our people. Australia and other leading nations recognise the essential requirement for a highly skilled workplace. The dynamic Asian economies are also undertaking major education and training initiatives to support

their development. Enhancing the skills of our people improves our international competitiveness. It also improves our overall productivity and the quality of our goods and services, and it improves our capacity to be adaptive to meet the new and rapidly changing situations.

In many of our high performing and internationally competitive organisations, employees no longer simply perform repetitive tasks. In those organisations employees frequently work in teams, take a greater and personal responsibility for quality, solve work problems and work with new technologies. To meet those requirements, employees must be multiskilled and adaptable. These new expectations have transformed Australians' attitudes to work and learning. A decade ago, just three in ten young Australians completed 12 years of schooling. Now, seven in ten young Australians complete Year 12. That increased focus on workplace skills has stimulated an enormous demand for vocational education and training and has increased expectations dramatically about what is provided and how it is provided.

TAFE is the largest provider of post-secondary school education in Queensland. With a student population significantly in excess of that of the combined States' universities, Queensland's TAFE system has become a crucial linchpin in the economic prosperity of our State. TAFE Queensland's programs of study play two vital roles: they provide people with immediately usable skills that will get them into jobs, and meet the many and varied training needs of thousands of workers throughout Queensland's businesses and industries.

TAFE Queensland has contributed to the development of this State because it has wide recognition and support throughout industry and the community; it provides accessible training through a Statewide network of more than 60 campuses and centres; it provides a range of products and services—in excess of 2,000 different programs of study; it has experienced teaching and support staff, many of whom are leaders in their field, with significant industry experience; it offers a strong and viable commitment to students with special staff, programs and facilities to cater for a diverse range of student needs, including such groups as non-English speaking, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, those with low literacy and numeracy skills, people with disabilities and the long-term unemployed; and it has a wide range of negotiated agreements with other educational providers such as universities and industries to ensure that TAFE students have a wide range of future study and career options.

Earlier in my speech, I referred to increases in the number of students accessing TAFE courses in Redcliffe. In many ways, the North Point Institute of TAFE reflects the growing demand for vocational education and training services throughout the Queensland community. Since 1989, the number of students has grown from 14,000 to 24,000 in 1994—an increase of 60 per cent. In addition to this strong growth, it is also pleasing to note a high degree of community satisfaction with the courses and the quality of teaching provided by this institute.

A survey of TAFE clients about the service that has been provided to them has demonstrated that the quality of training has not diminished while this growth in student numbers has been achieved. That TAFE Queensland client satisfaction survey revealed that 46.6 per cent of TAFE graduates gained jobs within 30 days of graduating and 67.4 per cent had a new or different job within a year. Three-quarters of the graduates said that they use their TAFE skills on the job. That is reflected in the North Point institute because 82 per cent of the graduates of that TAFE believe that the skills that they obtained from their TAFE courses assisted them in their current work positions. Of those graduates, 83 per cent said that they intended to undertake further study, and 96 per cent indicated that this study would be within TAFE. In excess of 95 per cent of last year's semester 1 graduates indicated that they would recommend their TAFE course of study to others. I am confident that the institute will continue to build on this high degree of client satisfaction to ensure that the relevance and the quality of its program meet the needs of its present and future graduates.

In conclusion, I thank the Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations, the Honourable Matt Foley, who, I notice, is present in the House, and also the Minister for Education, the Honourable David Hamill, for their commitment to technical and further education in Redcliffe with the construction of the Redcliffe TAFE campus.

International Facilities Corporation

Mr LINGARD (Beaudesert—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (11.57 a.m.): Last week in this House I asked a question of the Minister for Administrative Services about the involvement of International Facilities Corporation with the Queensland Government and listed IFC's involvement with the Brisbane

Convention Centre and also the Cairns Convention Centre. The Minister answered my question by saying, "My department is aware of no other involvement of IFC with the Queensland Government other than the Cairns Convention Centre and the Brisbane Convention Centre."

The Minister deliberately and blatantly misled the House because, as the records of the Brisbane Cricket Ground Trust show, the Department of Administrative Services paid to IFC $75,000, as is disclosed in the annual report of the Brisbane Cricket Ground Trust.

The fiasco of the Brisbane Cricket Ground relates directly and blatantly back to the Department of Administrative Services and also to the Government. It relates also to the fiasco last week when, on the Thursday of Queensland's cricket match against Tasmania, the Deen brothers surrounded the grandstand with a fence and then, at Friday lunchtime, 24 hours before the decision was made that Queensland would be in the Sheffield Shield final and 48 hours before it was decided that the final would be played at the Brisbane Cricket Ground, they started blatantly knocking down the grandstand. That action shows plainly that this Queensland Government, this Premier, this Treasurer and this Minister for Administrative Services did not have the ability or the desire to stop that demolition.

Let me outline IFC's involvement with the Queensland Government—a direct involvement with the Queensland Government. Let us go back to March 1993 when the tenders for the master planning of the Brisbane Cricket Ground were outlined. On 7 June 1993, this Government brought in a Bill, which was called the Brisbane Cricket Ground Bill. On that day, the Brisbane Cricket Ground Trust decided to appoint Graf Consultants to administer the work that was to be done at the Brisbane Cricket Ground.

However, on 10 June, three days after the trust's appointment, Treasury—this Government—stepped in blatantly and decided that it would appoint none other than IFC, the company which this Minister for Administrative Services says has no other involvement with the Queensland Government. So we saw IFC appointed, and its managing director was appointed to the board. Leo Hielscher had left the trust and was replaced by Mr Nissen from the Commonwealth Bank. So we had a new board, which was appointed on 17 June.

Cabinet appointed, over the trust, the board of the IFC. In January/February 1994, $12m in the trust was supposed to be committed from the Bears and the Bulls, but $20m was to be committed from this Government—$10m from Treasury and $10m from Mr Gibbs' department. This Government blatantly appointed Darryl Jackson.

Time expired.

FACTORIES AND SHOPS REPEAL BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 23 February (see p. 11063).

Mr SANTORO (Clayfield—Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party) (12 noon): I rise to support the Factories and Shops Repeal Bill, though not without some misgivings. The Minister gave a most interesting speech on the genesis of the factories and shops legislation. I am sure that members who either listened to him delivering his speech or read it later would now have a much better understanding of how and why this legislation was first introduced and its importance in the economic and social development of Queensland. What these same members would most probably not be as informed about is why the restrictions on the sale of motor fuel were introduced in 1975, why they have not worked and why we are being presented with a scorched-earth legislative solution by the Government.

The provisions that this Bill will repeal were introduced in late 1975 by the then Minister for Industrial Development, Labour Relations and Consumer Affairs, Fred Campbell. He pointed out that the insertion of Part 9A of the Act was intended to restrict the retail sale of motor fuel by wholesalers from industrial pumps and bulk fuel depots. Mr Campbell told the House that the existing system of retail petrol distribution was inequitable. Petrol station proprietors were being disadvantaged, and in order to ensure that the average service station occupier was able to offer a quality and safe service to consumers, retail sales from industrial pumps and bulk depots were prohibited.

The then Minister used the term "orderly marketing" to describe the legislation. However, if honourable members look at the provisions that he introduced and read the *Hansard* record of the debate in this House when the legislation was being passed, they will see that Part 9A was intended to achieve a wider social and economic purpose. It was intended to create a level playing field amongst the retail sellers of petrol and to prevent oil companies and wholesale

distributors from engaging in unfair and monopolistic marketing behaviour. It was intended to protect the public from the safety risks associated with selling petrol from outlets where proper workplace safety provisions were not in place. It was intended to prevent consumers from being ripped off by wholesalers who were either watering down or adulterating petrol or engaging in other unfair selling practices. In short, the Bill was not introduced to limit or curtail private enterprise but to create a level playing field and to prevent unfair and inappropriate market pressure from being placed on small retail outlets by the oil companies.

The Minister now tells us that these provisions have failed to achieve these objectives and should be repealed. Two reasons were advanced for this. Firstly, on appeal to industrial magistrates on what constitutes public interest, occupiers of bulk depots have been granted permits to sell motor fuel by retail; and, secondly, occupiers of bulk depots have set up separate retail establishments in the same locality as their bulk depots and often on adjoining premises. As the Minister said, there are suspicions that such retail outlets are simply a means of channelling motor fuel to the public at bulk depot prices.

Before commenting on the Minister's reasons, let me make my position crystal clear. I belong to a party and a coalition that strongly support both private enterprise and competition. Any policy that advances private enterprises, encourages competition and rewards hard and honest work deserves support, and the Opposition will always extend that support. However, I do not support legislation designed to protect industries from competition or from community and economic scrutiny.

When I first thought about this repeal Bill, my initial reaction was that it deserved full and unqualified support. I now have misgivings, and these stem from both the reasons that the Minister advanced for the repeal and what will happen in the future to retail motor fuel sellers in this State. It seems a little trite to say that we should repeal a Bill because a legislative loophole has been exploited. If industrial magistrates have been presented with arguments based on public interest grounds, why was the legislation not amended to clarify the term or to provide legislative guidelines that the judiciary could take into account? If bulk depot operators are selling fuel at wholesale prices from retail depots, why have industrial inspectors not enforced the law? If the Minister says that it is because it is hard to prove offences, I suggest that more inspectors should have been allocated to the task and that the legislation be reviewed again to facilitate prosecutions.

I am very disappointed that this Bill is being repealed, not because it is untenable on economic grounds but basically because people have exploited loopholes. The Government has responded by putting up its hands and saying, "Okay, you are avoiding the law. We had better get rid of the law." Is this yet another case of this Government responding to a problem by throwing it over to a committee and saying, "It's all too hard" and then walking away? My concerns are compounded by the Minister's statement that the repeal will be delayed by 12 months to allow local governments to address any problems flowing from it. I ask the Minister: to what problems is he referring? In addition, I ask him: why do local governments need 12 months? Surely his department has been consulting with the Local Government Association for some time so that, if action is needed, it can be achieved quickly and comprehensively.

I turn now to the essence of my concerns. I wish to reflect the attitude of the Motor Trades Association of Queensland to this measure. It supports the Bill and this measure on the proviso that all retail sellers of petrol are subject to the very same legislative and planning standards. My question is: how can the Minister guarantee a level playing field? He admitted in his second-reading speech that retail outlets owned by bulk depots are selling petrol at bulk depot prices. He tells us that we should support a Bill that will effectively strip industrial inspectors of any power to prevent this conduct. By implication, he tells us that, by repealing this ineffective Bill, the problems that it was enacted to prevent will go away. The Minister might well be right.

Perhaps the problems of unfair trading, collusion, price fixing and the like are not that bad in the petrol industry. Perhaps these problems can be dealt with by the Trade Practices Commission or the Industry Commission. However, we are not too sure about that. I have to say that a "perhaps" answer leaves me with a feeling that this Bill may compound the problem that retail petrol outlets are facing and not address them. Repealing legislation normally means that the problem that it was enacted to solve has disappeared or that other legislation is in place here or elsewhere to deal with it. We normally do not repeal legislation because it has been avoided, and public servants who have carried out a review say that the prescriptions it

contains are ineffectual. I ask those public servants: if the prescriptions are ineffectual, how do we make them workable? That is the relevant question. If I were a Minister, I would not be running around repealing legislation based on narrow legal grounds. Instead, I would consider deeply the implications that it would have on the real people who are working their hearts out in retail outlets, and the customers whom they serve. That is why I and the Opposition have misgivings about this Bill.

I point out to the Minister that I will not oppose this Bill, but I am very worried about the bureaucratic process that led to this decision and the reasons the Minister has advanced for the repeal of this Bill. I sincerely hope that a robotic, economic rationalist, theoretical, cost-benefit approach is not used too regularly and that care is taken in the future to factor in the human dimension and the realities of the real world before any further legislation of this type is introduced into this House.

Mr BARTON (Waterford) (12.08 p.m.): I rise to support the Factories and Shops Repeal Bill. This is a very straightforward and small Bill that simply repeals the existing Factories and Shops Act, most of the provisions of which have already been made redundant. The main impact of the Bill, which has already been referred to not only by the Minister in his second-reading speech but also by the member for Clayfield this morning, is the abolition of licences for fuel outlets. We should have a look at that aspect. Although the member for Clayfield has indicated that the Opposition will be supporting the Bill, he has raised some concerns about the abolition of licences for retail fuel outlets.

In recent years, there has been a move away from red tape. I was rather surprised to hear the comments of the member for Clayfield, because I thought that it was predominantly the Opposition parties that had been promoting that concept. Generally, since this Government came to power in late 1989, it has addressed the issue of licensing by removing as much business regulation as possible, in particular business regulation that was considered redundant or unnecessary. Certainly, a section within the Department of Business, Industry and Regional Development has been following that process through. The issue was looked at in great detail by the Council for the Economic Development of Queensland, which is chaired by the Premier. At one stage several years ago, I was part of a subcommittee of CEDOQ that looked at a number of the business regulations that were introduced in the old era of red tape and business regulation. By and large, those days have gone. It is acknowledged that in many cases self-regulation is a better way to go and that much red tape can be stripped away without any negative effects.

My experience as a union official was that, despite the regulations that were introduced in 1975, many industrial establishments did sell small amounts of fuel. My observation was that they typically sold only very small quantities of fuel to their own employees. It was not uncommon for a sugar mill or a large industrial establishment that had its own bowsers and fuel supplies to sell to their employees fuel at a reduced rate. I am aware also of some wholesalers that sold fuel. When I lived in north Queensland, it was not uncommon for people to have a 44-gallon drum of fuel in their shed from which they refuelled their own cars. They would ring up the wholesaler and have a new 44-gallon drum of fuel dropped off whenever their own supply was getting low. That practice was largely ignored, and in my view it certainly was not doing any harm to the major retailers. I hardly think that the fuel depots will suddenly set up retail outlets and try to compete against the service stations across the length and breadth of Queensland. For that reason, I believe that the repeal of those provisions can be supported.

I want to make a comment about the importance of this Act in our history. In one sense, I am a little sad to be supporting in the Parliament the repeal of the Factories and Shops Act. As a much younger man roaming around north Queensland——

Mr Beattie: You're still young.

Mr BARTON: I take that interjection. That is the best interjection that I have ever had. I certainly am still young, but when I was a very much younger man, the Factories and Shops Act was the bible that I carried around north Queensland. It supported me in my job as a union official to ensure that the correct conditions applied to various workers.

In that era, the Factories and Shops Act contained the relevant occupational health and safety standards. At that time, we thought that those standards were inadequate. After I moved from north Queensland, I was involved in the preparation of quite a number of submissions to the then Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Affairs, Vince Lester, regarding the amendments that we as a trade union movement sought to the Factories and Shops Act to put in place better occupational health and safety standards in

Queensland. There were positive improvements under the Occupational Health and Safety Act 1989, which replaced much of the Factories and Shops Act. The situation was improved even further after the Goss Government came to power and enacted many of the measures that we were unable to convince Vince Lester and the Government of which he was a Minister to put in place. Things will improve even further at the end of this week, when the Workplace Health and Safety Bill is debated and passed by this Parliament.

As I said earlier, I am quite nostalgic about this Act. I want to relate one story about the Act. In the Joh Bjelke-Petersen era, when union officials visited industrial establishments they were frequently told, "You're all law-breakers. You're all thugs. You are here breaking the law." As a union official, I used to look after a major sector of the engineering industry. Small-business operators very seldom had industrial action taken against them, but they took the view that all union officials were law-breakers and thugs. The minute I stepped up to the door and showed them my right-of-entry certificate, they would typically say, "Look, you can't come in here." I would say, "Why not? I have a paper from the Industrial Commission that says I have a right of entry." They would say, "Because you're a law-breaker and a thug."

In order to prove that I was not a law-breaker and a thug, I would pull out my Factories and Shops Act and say to that small-business owner, "I am no more a law-breaker than you are. Let us have a look for your lockers. Let us have a look for how many pedestals you have in the toilets compared with how many employees you have in this establishment. Let us go and have a look for your showers." I demonstrated to most smaller employers that they were technically breaking the law. In this era of self-regulation, such action is unnecessary. I still feel a little sad that we are repealing the Factories and Shops Act. However, for the reasons that have been given, I certainly support that move.

Hon M. J. FOLEY (Yeronga—Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations) (12.16 p.m.), in reply: I thank honourable members for their support for the Bill. I turn briefly to the matters raised by the honourable member for Clayfield, Mr Santoro. He asked about the problems with respect to local government that prompted the 12-month phase-in period. The issues there are access problems for the public, storage of fuel—for example, in underground tanks—and safety with respect to any potential fire hazards. One year is considered prudent to enable local governments to monitor what may be needed by way of local laws to enable a level playing field to be achieved. In fact, the Brisbane City Council suggested that a nine-month period be allowed, but that has been extended to 12 months. As to the monitoring—it is the intention to bring together the Department of Local Government, the Business Regulation Review Unit, the Motor Trades Association of Queensland and the Local Government Association to examine issues that will affect local government regulation. I commend the Bill to the House.

Motion agreed to.

Committee

Clauses 1 to 5 and Schedule, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

Third Reading

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

WORKERS' COMPENSATION AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 21 March (see p. 11186).

Mr SANTORO (Clayfield—Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party) (12.19 p.m.): The Opposition is pleased to inform the Minister and the Government that it will be supporting this Bill. However, obviously, we have some reservations. From the outset, let the Opposition again go on the record as being totally against any plans and any moves by the Federal Labor Government to introduce a national workers compensation scheme.

Honourable members will appreciate that the Federal Assistant Minister for Industrial Relations, Mr Gary Johns, is very insistent in his attempts and statements on this issue. I find myself in the very pleasant and, I must admit, unusual position where I am in agreement with not only employer organisations in opposing a Federal Labor proposition but also in agreement with the Government of this State and the union movement.

Mr Beattie: You're getting better. That's what it means.

Mr SANTORO: I will take the interjection from the member for Brisbane Central not because I want to take up the full 60 minutes available to me as a result of this Bill——

Mr Beattie: I'm sorry if I offended you. I apologise.

Mr SANTORO: The member has not offended me. I was going on to say that from time to time there are glimpses of sanity and unanimity in this place that are pleasing. This instance is one of them.

I would like to go on the record as saying that the Opposition does agree with the General Manager of the Queensland Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Clive Bubb, who is on the record as saying that a workers compensation scheme "could be forced into an 'insurer of last resort' role which would see premiums rise significantly" if a national workers compensation system was introduced. He went on to say that premiums could rise by anything up to 300 per cent if the model that is envisaged by the Industry Commission was forced upon the States by the Federal Minister.

Honourable members might be interested to know what the Industry Commission has in fact recommended. There are a great number of planks to its plan, including: removing access to common law in favour of statutory payments under an agreed table of injuries; holding employers liable to pay the cost of compensating employees for much longer periods, initially at 95 per cent of pre-injury earnings for the first 26 weeks, indexed; and, in the case of partial incapacity, periodic compensation after 26 weeks would step down to 75 per cent for the next 18 months and then to 16 per cent for a further three years. If, after five years, the employee still does not have a job, the employer will continue to be liable to meet the cost of associated Social Security payments until deemed retirement age or return to work, whichever occurs first.

In the case of total incapacity, periodic compensation after 26 weeks would continue at 95 per cent for a further 24 months and would then step down to 85 per cent until deemed retirement age or return to work, whichever occurs first. In non-adversarial dispute resolution procedures, judicial review would be a last resort, with the initial decision subject to non-judicial review by an independent, internal arbiter before appeal to external arbitration or resort to the courts. A Government agency would be subject to the same occupational health and safety regulations as other organisations.

There would be no dollar or time limits on medical expenses in respect of workers compensation claims. Lump sum payments for future medical expenses will be discontinued. There would be compulsory private insurance for contractors. Subcontractors will be covered by compulsory workers compensation insurance, with the premium being paid by the firm letting the contract. Injured workers groups would be funded through premiums, and I am sure that, as members try to come to grips with that last concept, they will appreciate that that was an essential component of the Victorian system, WorkCare, which went broke.

I could go on because the list of components of a national workers compensation scheme as advocated by the Industry Commission and taken up to a considerable extent by the Special Minister of State, Gary Johns, would in fact put us in a Victorian WorkCare position not just in this State but across Australia if he was to have his own way. Therefore, it is really of no surprise to hear somebody such as Dawson Petie, the Secretary of the ACTU of Queensland, say—

> ". . . while we recognize the Queensland system isn't perfect, we believe you need to take a holistic approach to this issue."

That is another issue on which I can agree with Mr Petie, that is, that a holistic approach does need to be taken. Looking at the workers compensation scheme of Queensland from a holistic point of view, we see that it is working well.

As I have said before in this place, the effects of a national, hybrid workers compensation model would lead to massive increases in premiums, bureaucratic nightmares and, of course, Queensland cross-subsidising other more expensive and inefficient interstate schemes which are still reeling from the effects of the experiments and abuse by successive State Labor Governments. Even though the Opposition is on the record as saying that this Labor Government is beginning to make changes to the workers compensation system of this State that resemble some of the experiments of Labor Parties interstate, the Queensland scheme is not yet so bad that we need to throw our lot into a national pool that is as inefficient as some of those failed experiments.

In my capacity as a shadow Minister, I have rarely received as many representations from local governments, chambers of commerce and major employers across the State who have forcefully stated their opposition to a national workers compensation scheme. I am pleased to go on the record as saying that the Opposition understands those concerns and together with those groups it will

oppose any attempts by Federal Labor to introduce such a scheme.

The broad thrust of the intention of this Bill is to bring Government workers within the workers compensation system that currently embraces private sector workers and employers. However, in the view of the Opposition, it does stop short of achieving that object. In a general way, the Bill provides for Government departments and instrumentalities to hold workers compensation policies in the same manner as private sector employers. As a result of the amendments before us today and as holders of workers compensation policies, Government entities would appear to be subject to all of the requirements of section 4 of the current Act, including the legal liability to pay compensation and to insure with the board, undertaking the role of a principal, audit of wages and contracts, discounting of premiums, and default assessments. Indeed, Government entities would be subject to most of the provisions of the existing Act which apply to private enterprise. The Opposition believes that that is commendable.

In fact, it is fairly clear from the brief comments of the Minister on the detailed review by Queensland Treasury and the Workers Compensation Board of the current system for public sector claims that there is plenty of scope for improvement in the handling of these claims. The review showed us that Government workers took an average of 3.2 days more on compensation than private sector workers, and that each claim for a Government worker cost, on average, nearly $1,000 more than a private sector claim. It is obvious that the present system provides virtually no incentive for Government departments to manage workers compensation claims properly or efficiently because the Government has acted like a self-insurer, without the incentives which do apply to private sector insurers.

Honourable members would be aware that the Workers' Compensation Act expressly forbids self-insurers. Section 4.7 of the Workers' Compensation Act 1990 provides—

> "(1) Accident insurance is to be undertaken only by the Board.
>
> (2) Policies are to be issued by or on behalf of the Board and no other person or association or group of persons.
>
> (3) A policy issued in breach of the section is unenforceable at law."

This section has its genesis in 1916 when then Premier T. J. Ryan initiated legislation in Queensland which was then, and still is, unique to Australia. He created a Government-administered monopoly for workers compensation and excluded private companies from engaging in what was to them, at that time, a lucrative business. It is perhaps surprising in this rapidly changing world that this basic principle has remained untouched by successive Governments and is the pillar on which workers compensation rests in 1995 in the State of Queensland. Well, almost.

Throughout this long period, Government workers have remained outside the system, although their claims, with the exception of common law actions, have been handled and processed by the Workers Compensation Board for a small administrative charge. In effect, the Government has been a self-insurer for its own workers while its legislation has expressly forbidden it for private sector employers.

The legislation before the House takes the Government one step away from being a self-insurer, but can it be said that it is not a self-insurer under the proposed arrangements? I shall turn to this question in a moment. Presently, let me continue with the question of self-insurance. The Industry Commission, in its report on the inquiry into workers compensation in Australia, has recommended that workers compensation schemes in Australia offer self-insurance to suitably qualified employers under appropriate regulations. At page 200 of its report, the Industry Commission said—

> "The arguments in favour of self-insurance are, however, persuasive. Self-insurers face strong incentives to provide safe places of work, since a greater proportion of costs are borne internally. Self-insurance also means 'ownership' of the process of rehabilitation and return to work, and facilitates the development of an internal culture geared to minimising costs of work related injury and illness."

As I stated in my initial comments, the Commonwealth Government's response to the Industry Commission's recommendation favours self-insurers in principle. However, it also raises a number of problems. If the Government continues to be a self-insurer of its own employees, its case to maintain the efficacy of its legislation and oppose the Commonwealth Government's push to

introduce self-insurers will be seriously compromised.

Let us consider that aspect of the law more closely. Section 4.1(3) of the Act states—

> "All premiums and other moneys received by the Board under this Act are to be paid into the Workers' Compensation Fund.
>
> Amounts standing to the credit of the Fund are to be applied in making—
>
> (a) payments in respect of policies, whether of accident insurance or other insurance business; and
>
> (b) payments in relation to the administration of accident insurance business or other insurance business undertaken by or on behalf of the Board; and
>
> (c) payments for purposes that the Board considers will assist in—
>
> (i) the treatment or alleviation of injury suffered by workers; or
>
> (ii) the recognition or prevention of injury to workers; and
>
> (d) payments required under the Act to be made from the Fund."

The outgoings of the board cover a huge list of expenses, including salaries, consultancy charges and rent. I refer honourable members who want to see the comprehensive list to page 50 of the 1944 annual report, which shows that the outgoings amount to approximately $37m. There are many other outgoings from the fund to which private employers' premiums contribute. It is instructive to refer to some of them: public hospitals contribution, $5m; sessional counsellors' fees, $3,539,512; Medical Assessment Tribunals, $1,262,593; special grants and services, $955,850; workplace rehabilitation courses, $374,297; mines rescue stations, $609,545; University of Queensland—Chair in Orthopaedics, $300,000; the Royal Flying Doctor Service, $46,305; and the one that causes the Opposition a considerable amount of concern and about which I have spoken the most both in this place and outside this place, the workplace health and safety grant, which last year amounted to $6,496,000.

Can the Minister tell me, when the amendment to the Act takes effect, how much will the Government contribute towards the cost of those services, which are paid for now largely by private employers? The reason for the question is obvious. Private employers already think that they contribute significantly to the funding—out of the workers compensation premiums that they pay—of many non-workers compensation projects, some of which I have detailed. Even when outgoings from the fund relate to issues that are of great concern to the board, there is doubt about the efficacy of that expenditure. I refer in particular to the outgoings directed to the funding of the Workplace Health and Safety Program.

When one looks at the performance of the Government programs in workplace health and safety, those concerns are justified. I refer in particular to a trend that has commenced in the past 12 months. A study of the evidence shows that, in 1993-94, Queensland recorded a massive increase of 11.7 per cent in workplace injuries. I stress to honourable members on both sides of the House that those are not the Opposition's figures but the Government's figures. Government statistics show that, in 1993-94, there were 48,535 workplace injuries in Queensland—a jump of 5,087, or almost 12 per cent, from 43,448 in the 1992-93 year. When we consider another amendment Bill at a later time, I will elaborate on that aspect of workplace health and safety. That increase in the number of workplace injuries occurred despite the injection of $34m of funds into the Division of Workplace Health and Safety from the Workers Compensation Fund since the Labor Party came to power. The amount was $618,000 in 1989-90, $5.9m in 1990-91, $8.1m in 1991-92, $13m in 1992-93 and $6.5m in 1993-94.

Queenslanders, including the good people who administer the workers compensation system of this State, must wonder whether they get good value for all of that money. At a time when new and safer technology means that our accident rate should be falling, the figures suggest that the very opposite is occurring. Thus, the reasons for the concerns that are held about the funding of workplace health and safety programs by private sector premium payers.

Clause 5 of the Bill isolates the premiums paid by Government departments and costs of claims made by Government workers from the Workers Compensation Fund. It states—

> "Despite subsection (3)"—

to which I have already referred—

> "the board may—
>
> (a) transfer premiums for policies for contracts of accident insurance or other insurance business paid for government workers into an account

(other than the fund) kept at the Treasury; and

(b) use amounts held in the account for purposes mentioned in subsection (3) in relation to the government workers."

In his speech, the Minister explained what will happen in practice, when he said—

"A separate fund as well as separate premium rates and pools have been designed which will ensure that the risks and liabilities associated with Government claims continue to be isolated from the private sector.

In order to allow the introduction of the premium based system for Government agencies, amendments to the Workers' Compensation Act are required to provide authority to:

incorporate Government agencies into a premium based workers compensation scheme; and

enable the transfer of funds between the Workers Compensation Trust Fund and the separate provision account within the Consolidated Fund for the purpose of transferring Government premium collections and paying Government claims."

As the Minister seeks to set up that separate fund, several questions arise. We are told that there will be a separate fund within the Consolidated Fund, as well as separate premium rates and pools in order to isolate the workings of the public sector scheme from the private sector schemes. There is not necessarily a problem with that. Indeed, there is obvious advantage in the Government being able to determine from the overall workers compensation statistics what is happening in relation to public sector workers, particularly given the indications in the Minister's second-reading speech on the Bill that public workers' claims involve both more time off and overall more costly claims.

That begs the question as to what DEVETIR has been doing with its massive increases in funding under the Government. However, I can pursue that story at another time. There is an obvious advantage in the Government being able to monitor the situation by having information available discretely, through a discrete system. The Opposition does not have a problem with that per se. However, we will want to know from the Minister in his reply: what form the separate fund will take, who will administer it, who will be responsible for it, and how the Government will manage the significant moneys that will flow from the fund.

For example, will the funds simply pass through a separate accounting procedure on their way to the Workers Compensation Trust Fund, where presumably they would be treated in exactly the same fashion as insurance premiums from the private sector, or will the Treasurer hang onto them for a period and perhaps invest them separately—and I stress, separately—within the Queensland Investment Corporation in order to use those moneys as yet another public sector milch cow, in other words, as a source of revenue? If that is the case, we may have a problem, because the fate of all other premiums is to go within the general pool, where all employers benefit from the terrific record that the QIC has in managing Government funds. It would seem to be discrimination that the Government is to have a particular advantage in relation to defraying its costs.

Before Opposition members support that part of the legislation, we would like to know from the Minister whether the public sector will be open, for example, to distributions from the bonus pool and, if so, how that will be calculated. Currently, that distribution of money is made on the basis of a considerable number of factors, ultimately related to the insured entity's performance in relation to injuries. If the Government is to partake of the bonus pool, will it be by way of distribution from the pool, which includes the private sector contributions as well as the public sector contributions, or will it be based simply on the public sector's own contributions?

These are significant matters, particularly when we consider the size of this ostensibly discrete new public system. As the Minister stated in his second-reading speech, we are dealing with an employer of some 165,000 workers, which is a great number of workers. We are dealing with a very significant addition to the workers compensation premiums and we are dealing with very substantial outgoings in relation to the likelihood for significant claims. It is important for the Minister to provide significantly more detail in relation to the disposition of the funds and the management of the separate fund. We look forward very much to hearing from the Minister in relation to these questions.

It is obvious that the Government has decided to adopt a halfway position in producing this legislation. On the one hand, it is taking a step back from being a self-insurer and giving the outward appearance of bringing the Government's 165,000 employees within

the Workers Compensation Fund. On the other hand, it says, "We will pay premiums just like the private employers, but we will keep the money isolated from the private sector." In other words, the Government seems to be saying, "We only want to get a little bit pregnant."

I suppose the Government's defence for its actions is that it wants to wait and see how all of this turns out. It may be saying, "Let us experience claims handling and payment of premiums and see whether we should contribute to the fund." I submit to the Minister that the Workers Compensation Board has been handling the claims of Government employees for many years now. The claims experience by those professionals must be very substantial. The board must be in a very sound position to know what the introduction of Government workers to the fund will cost and what the benefits will be.

Workers compensation premiums are generally industry based. If the rating system devised for Government workers is soundly based, there seems to be no good reason why it cannot be integrated into the general fund now rather than later. Again, in his reply the Minister may wish to address that matter. The only possible reason for the Government's action to isolate Government claims and premiums from the private sector seems to lie in the claims experience of Government workers.

The Minister has commented upon the poor average claims cost history for Government claims compared with the private sector. He has referred to various steps which have been taken to control statutory and common law claims numbers and costs in the private sector, including the promotion of the benefits of early return to work, the implementation of workplace rehabilitation programs, the implementation of new financial penalties and revised incentives, and the continuing review of the management of common law damages claims with a view to reducing legal and other costs.

In fact, the Minister emphasised Government action taken, by saying—

> "The review of Government claims costs pointed to the potential for significant improvements if the public sector could be exposed to a similar system of incentives and penalties as the private sector."

However, and I am sure all reasonable members in this place will agree, the Government and Government agencies have had many years to improve their performance in handling absences on workers compensation. On the Government's own admissions, they seem to have failed lamentably. We must ask why something has not been done before this? We must also ask the question—because the Government will not be full participants——

Mr Beattie: Give us a break. He is doing something about it. He's actually doing it.

Mr SANTORO: We have acknowledged that, but I think we are entitled to ask questions about the legislation. We are not going to give carte blanche assurances.

Mr Beattie: Why not trust us?

Mr SANTORO: I take the interjection from the honourable member for Brisbane Central.

Mr Beattie: Say, "I trust the Minister." Why can't you?

Mr SANTORO: I think that the Opposition is displaying a reasonable degree of trust. The honourable member is trying to get me to fill the 60 minutes I have been allocated to speak.

Mr Beattie: No, I don't want you to fill anything up.

Mr SANTORO: I can tell the honourable member that I have sufficient files and sufficient issues to do that, undoubtedly with the help of his interjections. We are supporting the legislation, but we are entitled to ask questions of the Minister just as the Minister is entitled to—and hopefully will—provide us with the answers.

We must ask: as the Government will not be full a participant in the workers compensation scheme, will it be left to Government departments—and not the Workers Compensation Board—to implement measures for improvement? Perhaps the honourable member for Brisbane Central may wish to provide an explanation. Why will they do it better the next time around?

Those points represent the Opposition's reservations about this Bill. The Opposition and many other private sector participants in Queensland's workers compensation scheme look forward to the Minister's explanations and assurances.

Before concluding, I wish to touch on a couple of other related points. Recently, honourable members, particularly those who are interested in workers compensation matters, may have been witnesses to the debate that I referred to previously, which was being promoted by the Federal Minister in

relation to the alleged huge transference cost from State workers compensation schemes to the Federal social security system and Medicare. Undoubtedly, all honourable members would recall that the rationale advanced by the Federal Minister is that the cost of work-related injuries or illnesses which result in permanent disablement should be borne by employers and not by the social security system and Medicare. I say simply that I wish to support strongly the response that was made by the QCCI that, if the Federal Minister is going to advance that particular argument, both sides of the equation need to be looked at. As Clive Bubb, on behalf of the QCCI stated—

> "It may be true that there is some transfer of costs to Social Security where a worker who has been 'paid out' by the compensation scheme then claims Social Security or sickness benefits. But this occurs on a relatively small scale and the Government should not overlook the reverse side of the same coin.
>
> . . .
>
> The point the Government made on cross transference of cost may be valid but in my view there is even larger cross transference of costs to the workers compensation schemes caused by the legislative requirement that workers compensation schemes cover lifestyle-based conditions under certain circumstances."

On behalf of the QCCI, Mr Bubb was saying that the current Queensland workers compensation scheme provides many benefits that relieve much financial pressure from the Federal social security system and Medicare.

Mr Connor: A good example of that is the fact that they're covered on the way to and from work.

Mr SANTORO: I take that interjection from the honourable member for Nerang that the Queensland workers compensation scheme is particularly generous through the consideration that it gives employees in terms of injury which may be the result of travelling to or from work. I think that is a very worthwhile point for members to remember.

The other related issue that I would like the Minister to address during his reply or at another stage in this debate and to which honourable members on the other side of the Chamber who are yet to speak may wish to refer is the suggestion, which the Opposition has been making in this place and outside it for a while, that workers in Queensland may be short-changed as a result of the operations of our system because employers are being asked to pay more premiums than they should.

This particular cause has been taken up in a very vigorous way by my parliamentary colleague the honourable member for Hinchinbrook, Mr Marc Rowell. When Mr Rowell raised this particular issue with the Minister, as the Minister will recall, the Minister was not only dismissive but also abusive. I am not being deliberately unkind. I was in this Chamber on the day the honourable member raised that matter during a debate and I think the Minister sidestepped the issues. He did not answer the question.

Many employers pay their workers in excess of the award wages because they believe they are worth extra pay because of the valuable service that they provide in the workplace. I believe the Minister and nobody on the other side of this Chamber would want——

Mr Foley: Really, you should know better than that.

Mr SANTORO: The Minister can answer the question. I will raise the point and the Minister can reply to it.

Mr Foley: The premiums are paid on the basis of the payroll. Claims are paid on the basis of the relevant award.

Mr SANTORO: I take that interjection. The payroll also consists of a component that is made up of the over-award payment.

As I have just said, that is one of the related points that Clive Bubb makes in terms of the implicit benefits within a workers compensation scheme such as the Queensland scheme. So if the Queensland scheme takes the benefit of the extra premium that is payable to the fund as a result of the over-award component, why cannot the worker, when the worker is injured or contracts an illness, benefit from a larger payout as a result of that extra insurance being taken out through the higher premium?

Mr Foley: Because it's a question of the most efficient means of administering premiums and the most equitable way of treating claims, and it has always been thus.

Mr SANTORO: Let me say this to the Minister: it is almost like the law and order debate when we are talking about——

Mr Foley: Please!

Mr SANTORO: No, I will not digress too much because the important point that the Minister has raised is one that is raised

constantly by the Government, not just in relation to the workers compensation system. It seeks support for its actions by claiming administrative efficiency. The Government seeks that support when it talks about the police clustering system and it says, "Look, it is far more efficient to have a clustering system of policing, but it does not matter that it delivers an inferior policing service." I will stop there because I know that the Minister does not want me to digress any further from the Bill by talking about law and order. The Minister seeks the same support for this concept of efficiency in terms of this issue. The Minister used the word "equitable", but if he asked the workers who were short-changed and do not get the equivalent of the over-award payments, and which are covered by the extra premium, they will tell the Minister that——

Mr Foley: Would you like us to pay the claims on the basis of the over-award wages that they receive?

Mr SANTORO: If the Minister continues to extract premiums which incorporate the over-award payment within the payroll, the Opposition would be happy to support that. We have said that to the Minister before. Otherwise, the Minister should be reducing premiums so as not to reflect——

Mr Foley: But the relationship between the quantum of the premiums and the quantum of claims is a different issue from the method of collection as opposed to the method of payment.

Mr SANTORO: No, the workers compensation scheme in Queensland is an insurance scheme, and a premium should reflect what is being insured. If we extract a premium that reflects the overall payroll, we should be insuring that overall payroll or that component that is taken up by an injured worker. It is a very simple point. I will not repeat it because I think that I have made my point, and I certainly——

A Government member interjected.

Mr SANTORO: Which honourable member said that I have not? I urge that anonymous honourable member to go on record in this place as denying Queensland workers what they are entitled to have. I bet my bottom dollar that that member will not do that. Anyway, I have made my point. I appreciate the Minister's contribution to this debate by his answers to queries raised. However, the Opposition is not convinced. Perhaps, if the Minister wishes, we will debate this matter during the Committee stage.

Another point that I wish to make relates to the Government's recent workers compensation advertisements. I say to the Minister that it is very difficult for the Opposition to endorse that series of advertisements. Many people in the community regard them as a cynical electioneering exercise.

Mrs Edmond interjected.

Mr SANTORO: Businesses and the Opposition do recognise the importance of ensuring that employers pay the appropriate workers compensation premiums. However, the problems that the Government is attempting to address through this advertising campaign have existed for years. The problem with the Government's current advertising campaign—and, again, I am sure this point will be accepted by all honourable members—is that those advertisements are being shown mainly during dinnertime and breakfast-time when the people who are the target audience are not watching them. If honourable Government members are fair, as are all honourable Opposition members and indeed the QCCI, which has raised this issue, they would have to agree that, again, those advertisements are another cynical attempt by this Government to curry favour with the electorate. Various employers have made contact with members of the Opposition and me and have asked, "Where is the funding coming from for these advertisements, particularly when the people who they are supposed to be reaching are certainly in the main not seeing them?"

Mr Vaughan: They're directed at the wives of the small-business people. Their wives do the books. They're directed at their wives at lunch-time and breakfast-time.

Mr SANTORO: I take that interjection from the honourable member for Nudgee. He goes on the record as saying that the wives of businessmen play a very strong role within their husbands' small businesses. However, I dare say—and I am sure that anybody who reads this debate would also say—that that statement by the honourable member is one of his more injudicious ones because it is not just the wives of small businessmen who keep the books and undertake other clerical duties. In fact, I say to the honourable member that irrespective of whether it is men or women who keep the books or who run the business, that advertising campaign is being run mainly at a time when the target audience is not watching. If the honourable member disputes what I have said, he should make contact with the various employer organisations that have

brought this matter to my attention. I can certainly give him as examples five or six written representations that have been made to me by employers who resent part of their premiums being diverted to fund an advertising campaign that they believe falls far short of the mark. In saying that, I reject any comments made by the honourable member for Mount Coot-tha that employers deliberately seek to avoid legitimate workers compensation claims. I can see the honourable member for Brisbane Central is asking me to wind up. However, I am afraid that when outrageous claims are made by Government members, they have to be countered.

In my capacity as a shadow Minister, I have had many representations made to me about faults in the workers compensation system. I should say that whenever I make specific representations to the Workers Compensation Board for comment, I appreciate very much the assistance and the promptness with which my queries are answered. Perhaps I will pause there for the lunchbreak and make reference to a couple of issues afterwards.

Sitting suspended from 1 to 2.30 p.m.

Mr SANTORO: Prior to the luncheon adjournment, I indicated that I would raise several specific matters which, in turn, have been raised with me from various quarters in relation to the current operations of the workers compensation system. I now do so in the context of referring the Minister to some cases that he may be able to take on board.

The first case concerns a woman who, as a teacher, suffered a permanent 10 per cent speech disability as a result of carrying out her basic classroom duty of addressing students. The Education Department terminated her employment, and the amount that she has received in compensation is insufficient even to provide for retraining for another role. It seems to me that this person has been hard done by. I appreciate that the workers compensation system must have its limits, but I also believe that, in circumstances where it is conceded that a work-related injury effectively robs a person of his or her livelihood, in particular a livelihood requiring significant skills, there should be some better means of preventing the sort of suffering that has occurred in this instance and, I imagine, similar ones.

In this case, we have a person who trained as a teacher but who can no longer expect employment in her profession. I think that the system must somehow accommodate this sort of situation, perhaps through some form of retraining assistance. The laudable emphasis on rehabilitation and on getting people back to work as promptly as possible which marks modern workers compensation schemes really demands some form of equitable answer to this sort of problem. I would be happy to provide the Minister with some more detail, if he is prepared to look at this case.

Mr Foley: Write me a letter.

Mr SANTORO: I certainly will write the Minister a letter, and I look forward to his response.

Another specific matter concerns a claim for extended compensation, something of which the Minister is officially aware from the correspondence between us. The case concerns an injury to a man caused by a side of beef falling upon him. There was a successful claim for support through workers compensation, which the claimant has sought to extend unsuccessfully on a number of occasions since 1989. While it seems to me that the claimant has exhausted all avenues available to him, one issue that the Minister may like to take on board is whether there needs to be any extension of section 9.20 of the Workers' Compensation Act, which limits the relevance of fresh medical evidence concerning a claim to medical evidence available within one year of the consideration of the claim by the tribunal.

Another specific issue that I wish to raise concerns the loss of consortium. Loss of consortium is not within the cover of a policy under workers compensation, according to a judgment handed down two years ago in the District Court. Clearly, to vary this would imply an increase in premiums, the extent of which is unclear given the lack of knowledge which exists in relation to the number of claims that there might be. I raise the matter here because it is clearly an issue which, however irregular, will arise from time to time. If the Minister has not already considered the issue, maybe he could give the matter some consideration. I would presume there remains the option for victims of this unfortunate problem to seek to establish some rights before the common law.

Finally, in relation to specific issues—and, again, I would be happy to take this matter up with the Minister—an issue has been brought to my attention concerning the vulnerability of people to claims by contractors or subcontractors. In the instance that has been brought to my attention, a person employed by a contractor, who had, in turn, been contracted to supply and apply vinyl cladding

to two homes in Mackay, sought to make a claim under the Workers' Compensation Act in relation to an injury suffered on the job. The complication for the home owner arose because the contractor who employed the injured worker could not be found, which has diverted the injured worker's attention to the home owner, as the ultimate employer of his labour. Clearly, this action, were it to be successful, would make anybody who engages a painter or a chippie to do work on his home liable for a claim. I would hope that the Minister will give some urgent consideration to this case. As I said, I would be more than happy to share with the Minister the correspondence that has been generated in my office about this case.

Before concluding in relation to specific cases, I reiterate the appreciation that I have expressed to the officers of the Workers Compensation Board for the very professional way in which they treat my queries. I do appreciate that I receive answers from the Minister, but obviously the Minister receives the detailed briefings which come back in the form of official correspondence from his officers. I do appreciate the courtesy that is extended to me and, through me, to all of the people who make many representations to me in my capacity as a shadow Minister.

The basic tenet of this legislation, as I said before, is the user pays principle. Government departments, which have not in the past been required to pay workers compensation premiums, will be required to do so. Ultimately, nobody can argue with that, and the Opposition is prepared to support this legislation pending satisfactory explanations from the Minister regarding a number of matters raised before the luncheon recess. In any event, in closing, I think it is also worth observing that, through the extension of the user pays principle in the way envisaged in the Bill, we are seeing another effective reduction in departmental allocations from this Government. The user pays principle has been applied by this Government not only to external consumers of its goods and services but also quite comprehensively within Government, to the extent that we now have many millions of dollars running around within the growing empires of Ministers and directors-general.

We would also like to know whether this latest example of user pays will see more public servants being diverted from front line work to go into administering this workers compensation regime—something that the Minister will hopefully address in the context of my earlier query about how these funds will be managed. With those few reservations, I am pleased to afford the support of the Opposition for this Bill.

Mr BEATTIE (Brisbane Central) (2.36 p.m.): I rise to support the Workers' Compensation Amendment Bill of 1995. There are three great winds in the world. There is the sirocco, which is an oppressively hot and "blighting" wind blowing through the Sahara from North Africa, across the Mediterranean and into Italy. It is a very hot wind.

Mr Ardill: Blighting?

Mr BEATTIE: It is a very "blighting" wind; I take that interjection. The second great wind of the world is the mistral, which is a cold wind that blows through France. It is a dry, cold wind. It blows from northern France through the Rhone Valley to the Mediterranean. However, it is a cold wind. The third wind is the honourable member for Clayfield, who has to go down in history as one of the great winds of this Parliament. In years to come, when we think of the sirocco and the mistral, we will also think of "little sirocco", the honourable member for Clayfield. I should warn the House that when the sirocco blows through Italy, it causes depression, suicides, domestic violence and all sorts of difficulties. I warn "little sirocco" that, if he continues in this way, it will have the same ramifications in this State. I believe that the people of Queensland need to be warned about the performance in this House of "little sirocco", who took a total of 45 minutes to say very little.

Mr Stephan interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: The honourable member does not even qualify as a wind; he is a pipsqueak, and he should wait his turn.

Having made that introduction, I now wish to address the legislation. Since 1989, the incidence of workplace disease and injury in Queensland has fallen by 14 per cent, which is an impressive record. However, the economic cost of workplace disease and injury still runs at an unacceptably high $1.2 billion a year. That is too high. Since 1989, under this Minister and this Government there have been a number reforms in the workers compensation area. I congratulate the Minister on that. The legislation before the House today is a continuation of the reforms that the Minister began.

This legislation joins State Government departments with the private sector in the Statewide Workers Compensation Scheme, a scheme aimed at exposing Government departments to the same incentives and

penalties as the private sector. As we know, there are 165,000 Government employees. The keys to reducing the problems associated with workers compensation are education, improved work practices and making certain that people realise the risks of accidents in the workplace. I will come back to that issue.

The changes in this Bill follow a detailed review by Queensland Treasury and the Workers Compensation Board of the present system of public sector compensation claims. That review highlighted the relatively long time taken by Government departments to deal with average claims as compared with the time taken by the private sector. As the Minister pointed out in his second-reading speech, Government workers who claimed compensation in 1993-94 took an average of 21.9 days on compensation at a cost of $2,953, compared with the private sector average of 18.7 days at a cost of $2,120. That review of Government department claims costs highlighted the clear potential for significant improvement in the public sector if it was exposed to a similar system of incentives and penalties as the private sector. Again, as the Minister pointed out in his second-reading speech, in line with the general policy of the Government, this legislation is expecting a level of performance from Government agencies equivalent to that in the private sector. That is the thrust of the Bill.

As the Minister pointed out, the result is this Bill, which will allow for Government agencies to be incorporated into a premium-based workers compensation scheme from 1 July 1995. A premium rating system has been developed which will maximise the incentives for Government agencies to reduce the incidence of illness and injuries amongst employees through appropriate risk management strategies and to otherwise better manage their claims costs through, for instance, the implementation of workplace rehabilitation. In common with the Minister, I have referred to workplace rehabilitation on a number of occasions. It is an important aspect of workers compensation. This legislation represents a move by Government departments to a premium-based system that will provide additional incentives to them to actively manage their risks and costs. That is the key to this legislation, and that is why it is so important.

As I said at the outset, it is important to have a broad understanding of the costs of workplace injuries to the community generally. Australia's workplace fatalities and disease statistics paint a very concerning scenario. Australia-wide, the number of workplace-related fatalities is estimated to be 2,700 annually. Workplace injuries requiring one week or more off work are a conservative 160,000. However, the cost in terms of anguish and compensation is disturbingly high. It is believed that around 2,200 of those 2,700 deaths are a result of workplace exposure to cancer-causing chemicals. Workers in this category could have been suffering from cancer for some time.

The remaining annual work force fatalities which, according to workers compensation figures, were 455 in 1992, comprised both traumatic injuries and diseases. Twenty-nine of those fatalities were women. Of the total, 54 per cent died from injuries and the rest from disease. Victoria—with 195—had the most fatalities, followed by New South Wales with 147. The overall figure of 2,700 to which I have referred emerged from a sleuthing study undertaken by the University of Sydney's School of Public Health plus data gleaned from workers compensation sources. It can be seen that we have a particular problem, and that is why there must be ongoing reform of workers compensation. This Government is at the forefront of that reform. That we lead Australia in this sector is something of which this State can be very proud.

It is worth considering the issue of community awareness of injuries. It has been estimated that injuries in homes and workplaces, on roads and sports fields cost the economy up to $10 billion a year. An article in the *Australian* of 28 February this year stated that, in addition to that cost, 7,000 lives are lost each year. The article covered broader topics than workers compensation, but it referred generally to the effects of accidents on the community. In February this year, at the first national conference on injury prevention and control held in Sydney, experts claimed that most of those accidents could be avoided. According to Worksafe Australia, in the workplace alone 2,700 people die in industrial accidents annually. Combined with about 200,000 cases of occupational injury or disease, that takes the cost of workers compensation to about $5 billion Australia-wide—an enormous cost.

Although the number of annual road fatalities has reduced dramatically in recent years, road deaths still account for 28 per cent of the 7,000 injury deaths. When addressing that conference, Dr Carmen Lawrence, the Federal Minister for Health, stated—

> "The challenge for us is to bring about a change in community attitudes, to develop a culture of safety and a

> general understanding that injury is preventable."

That is the theme of my contribution to this debate. That is the centrepiece of workers compensation, and it ought to be the centrepiece of our educative efforts. I agree totally with that comment by Dr Lawrence. She stated further that injuries directly cost the health system about $1.2 billion a year and account for 10 million visits to doctors, one million visits to emergency departments and 350,000 hospital admissions. Dr Lawrence continued—

> "Injury is the major cause of death in both sexes under 40 years of age and accounts for 6 per cent of all deaths."

Those are enormous figures.

A visiting United States injury prevention expert, Dr Mark Rosenberg, warned people at that conference that, unless adequate resources were injected into accident-prevention programs, the cost to the Australian economy would rise even further. He cited an example, stating that injuries, including those associated with crime—which is broader than what I have been talking about; nevertheless this is the comparison that he made—cost up to $240 billion a year in the United States. Dr Rosenberg stated—

> "People tend to think of injuries as just another part of life. We need to get rid of the word 'accident' from our vocabulary. (Accidents) are all preventable, just as we have prevented many infectious disease epidemics."

Dr Rosenberg is the Director of the National Centre for Injury Prevention and Control in Atlanta, Georgia.

My comments have been reflected by the Minister's comments in this House. I applaud the legislation that he has introduced. I congratulate him on his initiatives and reform in workers compensation and wish him well for his future initiatives in that regard.

Mr ELLIOTT (Cunningham) (2.46 p.m.): I rise to participate in the debate on the Workers' Compensation Amendment Bill. I shall refer particularly to the categorisation of employees. If an employer has 10 employees undertaking different tasks on an agricultural farm, the Workers Compensation Board—in its wisdom or otherwise—categorises each of those employees in the very same manner. Even though only one of those 10 employees may be actually involved in cattle raising, each employee is tarred with the same brush and given the same risk rating. A high risk attaches to the handling of cattle. I appreciate that a workers compensation premium is assessed on the level of risk involved in a particular occupation. Everyone accepts that as part and parcel of the scheme. However, let us suppose that nine out of 10 employees on an agricultural farm operate tractors, pickers or harvesters but one person is involved in running cattle—getting on a horse, bringing them into a yard——

Mr Barton: This Bill is about the public service, you dill!

Mr ELLIOTT: I know exactly what the Bill is about.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Palaszczuk): Order! The Chair considers the term used by the honourable member for Waterford unparliamentary and asks that he withdraw it.

Mr BARTON: I allowed my frustration at the fact that the member was not talking to the Bill to get in the way. I withdraw.

Mr ELLIOTT: I understand what the Bill is about. Obviously, the gentleman is a little frustrated. Perhaps he would prefer to be watching the cricket. I assure him that I do not wish to waste a lot of the time of the House.

In the old days, the debate on the first reading of a Bill allowed members carte blanche to talk about a wide variety of topics. Mr Deputy Speaker, as you were here then, you would recall the agreement that was struck to allow members to raise, during the debate on the second reading of a Bill, matters related to legislation before the House. Workers compensation is of concern to us all. I support the thrust of this Bill. I merely take this opportunity to briefly bring to the attention of the Minister a matter related to workers compensation. The Minister knew full well that I was going to do this, because I told him about this before I got to my feet.

When people are categorised under the workers compensation scheme, it is important that the risk attached to their occupation correlates with the actual work that they undertake. As I was saying, people in the circumstances that I outlined earlier are not at risk in terms of their day-to-day activity, yet the Workers Compensation Board has chosen to spread the net wide and, because cattle raising is one of the activities undertaken on a property, all the workers are lumped into the highest risk category. That is totally unreasonable. It has been explained to the Minister, and I think he realises that it is unreasonable. He said that he was going to do something about it. I wish only to remind the Minister that, to date, nothing has

happened and that the people I represent are just as concerned about this matter as they ever were. As their representative, I urge the Minister and his departmental officers to do something about it. A fair bit of time has elapsed. I have been very patient; I have not been unreasonable. I ask the Minister to do something about it.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I thank you for your indulgence. I do not wish to waste the time of the House. With those words, I will resume my seat.

Mr PURCELL (Bulimba) (2.51 p.m.): This amendment to the Workers' Compensation Act is aimed at the public sector of the work force. It is a part of this Government's drive for efficiency and good work practice for that sector. It will give directors and managers of departments more of a hands-on approach to the management of the safety and health of those workers who are under their control. The people in charge of workers in the public sector do not have a good record in carrying out their duty of care. As it stands now, they will not pay a lump sum payment at the end of a year; that sum will be paid up-front. Their record of managing jobs and looking after workers under their control is something to which they will need to pay attention so that workers do not need to claim workers compensation.

This amendment will draw to the attention of managers in the public sector various areas where they may have problems and how they should go about addressing them. It is usually very simple things in the workplace that cause accidents to happen. I agree with the member for Brisbane Central when he says that injuries are unnecessary and that they can be avoided. Employers should overcome problems in the workplace that are causing injuries. Even if it is just one item that is causing injuries, such as trips or falls due to loose carpet or a loose tile on a work floor, or a desk that is jutting out into a passageway which could cause people to injure themselves, something should be done to alleviate that problem. It may be stairwells that are incorrectly lit or people working in places without scaffolds. A hands-on approach is needed; unsafe work practices must be avoided.

Each employee is an individual and should be treated as such if workers compensation is to be managed in a responsible manner. The cost of compensation premiums will not be a line item in a budget, but rather a cost against a person—someone who has been injured. Managers should find out who has been injured, where they have been injured, how they have been injured and why they have been injured and do something about seeing that those circumstances do not arise again. I support this Bill. I think that the Minister has got it right with this amendment, and I will be watching the outcome with interest.

Hon. M. J. FOLEY (Yeronga—Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations) (2.55 p.m.), in reply: I thank honourable members for their support for the Bill. I will address some of the matters that the honourable member for Clayfield raised with respect to the form that the separate fund would take. Premiums will be collected and immediately transferred to the Government premium funds, which will be Treasury managed. The Government fund will be administered by the Workers Compensation Board and the Treasury Department.

The private sector and Government funds will be completely segregated at this stage, and that is contemplated as part of a transitional arrangement. The segregation of private and Government funds is planned to monitor the claims experience of the two funds. The State Actuary will review the financing and provisions of the Government fund.

In answer to the honourable member's inquiry about merit bonus distribution, there are nine large departments: DEVETIR, Police, Corrective Services, Family Services, Education, Transport, Administrative Services, Queensland Rail and the Department of Primary Industries. Those departments are fully experience rated. The premium will increase or decrease annually based solely on each department's performance, that is, there is no bonus or demerit as such.

The smaller departments or agencies will participate in a merit bonus or demerit scheme fully funded from Government premiums paid by these 14 departments or agencies. The small departments will receive merit bonus or penalty as an incentive to achieve better claims performance. The large departments with a premium of about $2m, as I indicated, will be experience rated, that is, claims experience will be compared against premium on an annual basis and the premium rate will be adjusted according to performance. As their incentive is to keep claim costs low, the larger departments will try to keep their premium rate as low as possible. As to the various grants that are made—the honourable member inquired about their connection with Government premiums. Those respective

grants will be recouped from Government premiums in proportion to Government claims costs.

I turn now to the issue of whether more public servants would be needed to administer the Government fund. There will be minimal additional work in administering the Government fund. There will be no additional positions needed to perform this function. The amount of work required to be done to administer the previous Government scheme will be much the same as for the proposed scheme.

I turn now to the advertising program currently under way. I am informed by departmental officers that the TV advertising is timed to reach the widest audience during peak viewing periods. I acknowledge the interest of the honourable member in ensuring, as the campaign urges, that employers pay their appropriate levels of premium.

I also acknowledge the thanks given by the honourable member to officers of the Workers Compensation Board for their professionalism in responding to inquiries from him. Officers of the board do strive to attain a high level of professional service with respect to injured workers and with respect to inquiries, and those remarks will be appreciated by those officers.

I thank the member for Brisbane Central and the member for Bulimba for their contributions to the debate. I thank also the member for Cunningham, who again raised an issue that he has raised with me in respect of which some time ago I received a deputation.

This reform will help ensure that Government departments are put in a position similar to that of private sector agencies. In that way, there will be greater incentives for Government departments to manage their workers compensation costs and, hopefully, to include in their management strategies prevention systems that will prevent the loss of life or limb and prevent injury and disease in the workplace and thereby ensure better working conditions for employers and a containment of costs in that area. I commend the Bill to the House.

Motion agreed to.

Committee

Hon. M. J. Foley (Yeronga—Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations) in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1, as read, agreed to.

Clause 2—

Mr CONNOR (3.02 p.m.)**:** Clause 2 refers to the fact that the Bill amends the Workers' Compensation Act. I remind the Minister of comments that he made in his second-reading speech—

> "The changes proposed as part of this Bill follow a detailed review by Queensland Treasury and the Workers Compensation Board of the current system for public sector compensation claims."

How was that review undertaken? What was the time frame of the review, and when did it occur?

Mr FOLEY: It occurred over the past year and involved consultation with officers of Treasury, officers of the board and, naturally enough, officers of the relevant Government departments affected.

Mr CONNOR: I reiterate the fact that, in his second-reading speech, the Minister said that changes proposed as part of the legislation are as a result of that review. I bring to the Minister's attention an article in *Business Queensland* of 5 July 1993, in which he reportedly stated that "this decision", that is, the decision to force the public service to pay workers compensation, was determined in 1992. In *Business Queensland* of July 1993, the Minister reportedly stated that he made that decision in 1992. Yet, in his second-reading speech, the Minister stated that the decision was made as a result of the review, which was done only in the past 12 months. Which is correct?

Mr FOLEY: I suggest that the honourable member does not pursue a career in advocacy. Both propositions are correct. For some time, the Government has sought to introduce that reform. For quite some time now, in response to questions from the honourable member, I have indicated that to the Chamber. The Government introduced the reform in the usual way in which that is done, as a result of undertaking detailed consultations with officers of the board and officers of Treasury and thereby arriving at the detailed machinery which appears in the Bill before the Committee.

Clause 2, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 3 to 6, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

Third Reading

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

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 21 March (see p. 11187).

Mr SANTORO (Clayfield—Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party) (3.06 p.m.): The limited amendments proposed demonstrate that Minister Foley is fiddling while Rome is burning under the Goss Labor Government's discredited industrial relations legislation. At a time when this State's industrial relations legislation is in tatters and in need of comprehensive reform, the Minister is essentially attending to what is basically an administrative matter, namely, allowing public sector agencies to represent themselves in proceedings in industrial jurisdictions in respect of local industrial matters.

I am pleased to inform the Minister that the Opposition has no objection to the proposal, which replaces the existing, highly centralised Warburton arrangements and supports individual public sector agencies having greater flexibility to negotiate their own industrial arrangements. However, the Opposition's complaint is that the Bill does not go nearly far enough. In short, it represents a lost opportunity to introduce needed industrial reforms to Minister Foley's past mistakes.

It has now been demonstrated clearly to the citizens of Queensland that the Goss Government experiment with industrial relations has failed. Under the now-discredited strategy, the Minister sought to replicate into the State industrial relations system whatever legislation his mentor, Laurie Brereton, proposed at the Federal level. As fast as Minister Brereton stitched up a deal with Mr Kelty and the ACTU for more union power, Minister Foley copied it; the result being a cocktail of brutal and unchecked union power and record industrial unrest and disputation.

The frequency with which policy and legislation has been varied has created uncertainty. That process has occurred without adequate consultation and usually with undue haste. The end result has been a highly prescriptive and biased Queensland industrial system, which has substantially mirrored the Federal system. The Goss Labor Government and the Minister lack the imagination and energy necessary to consider an independent State industrial relations system and to take on the task of persuading his Federal counterpart to adopt what should be a leading-edge Queensland model. Rather, the Government has attempted to rationalise the Minister's "all the way with Laurie Brereton" approach as "the preservation of a vibrant State system" and "harmonising the Federal and State systems based on the principles of cooperative federalism".

The Minister maintains that his model provides for national unity while accommodating regional diversity. So much for Mr Foley's rhetoric. The fact is that that has been a recipe for disaster, with little evidence of industrial harmony. No other State has adopted such an approach. Therefore, when one examines Australia's industrial relations performance, while each State has the common ingredient of the flawed Brereton legislation for persons covered by Federal awards and agreements, differences in industrial outcomes among the States significantly reflect the other variable, namely, the industrial relations policies and legislation of the State Government.

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, Queensland has become the strike capital of Australia, with a horrid industrial relations record. For every month since March 1994, Queensland is leading all other States in strikes by the proverbial mile. Let me elaborate in some detail so that it can be absolutely plain to all members of the House and the citizens of Queensland how the State is losing out as a consequence of Minister Foley's ill-directed administration of the system.

In March 1994, the number of working days lost per 1,000 employees for the previous 12-month period was 144 in Queensland, which compared with 93 days in New South Wales, 109 in Victoria, 35 in South Australia, 54 in Western Australia and 31 in Tasmania. In April 1994, the number of working days lost per 1,000 employees for the previous 12-month period was 151 in Queensland, which compared with 99 days in New South Wales, 110 in Victoria, 37 in South Australia, 53 in Western Australia and 36 in Tasmania. I could go on repeating similar figures for the months of 1994 of May, June, July, August, September, October and November but, in the interest of brevity and because I have aired those figures within the wider community and through the media, I will refrain from providing all of the figures.

However, when one reads the figures for December 1994—the last month for which figures are available—the number of working days lost per 1,000 employees——

Mr Foley: Per 1,000 employees?

Mr SANTORO:—per 1,000 employees for the previous 12-month period was 135 in Queensland. Why did the Minister query that?

Mr Foley: I was wondering whether your figures were out by a factor of 1,000, as Mrs Sheldon's were the other day.

Mr SANTORO: I thought that the Minister might have been up to mischief. I believe that the Minister would be gracious enough to acknowledge that the Australian Bureau of Statistics has written to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and apologised for providing wrong information.

Mr Foley: When is she going to apologise for misleading the House?

Mr SANTORO: I do not believe that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition needs to apologise for misleading the House. After all, as a result of wrong advice, the Minister has had it wrong many times in this place, and I have not once heard him apologise.

Returning to the figures for December 1994—as I said, the number of working days lost per 1,000 employees for the previous 12-month period was 135 in Queensland, compared with 113 days in New South Wales, 58 in Victoria, 38 in South Australia, 51 in Western Australia and 32 in Tasmania.

We all know the caution that must be applied when interpreting statistics. However, the ABS statistics that I have quoted have some clear implications. Firstly, they are matters of fact, not opinion. All the rhetoric that Minister Foley can muster—as he attempted to do in this House last week—will not explain them away. It is clear that, when examining those figures for days lost per 1,000 employees, we are comparing like with like. Queensland's disastrous showing cannot be put down to its relative size or any other factor apart from its unique State industrial relations system, which has been imposed upon us by the Goss Labor Government. Finally, and most importantly, there are no variations from the clear and indisputable trend that Queensland is consistently the leader in industrial disputation. Leaving aside interstate comparisons, Queensland's industrial record has deteriorated under the Foley administration. In 1992, Queensland lost 66,300 days in industrial disputes. In 1993, this figure leapt to a massive 128,400. In 1994, this higher level has become the norm, with a slightly increased total of 130,100 working days lost.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I ask you and, through you, I ask this House: how can ordinary citizens of Queensland have continuing confidence in a Government with such a disastrous record? How can Premier Goss and Minister Foley continue to accept such a record of non-achievement? Honourable members should think of the productivity that is being lost to this State as a consequence of these poor outcomes. It must inevitably be having a negative impact on the Queensland economy—an impact that the Government constantly refuses to acknowledge. How can Queensland hope to attract the investment that is needed when the State is fast developing such a reputation of industrial instability? It is clear to all that Minister Foley has sold Queensland down the drain because he is not prepared to institute any real change to the industrial relations system of Queensland other than to go along with the Commonwealth model, irrespective of the consequences.

There has been an abysmally slow uptake of enterprise flexibility agreements, despite Minister Foley's assurances approximately 12 months ago when the relevant Bill was being debated. Honourable members would recall that this is the vehicle available for non-union agreements—provided they can run the gauntlet of union interference, as they must traverse the hoops and hurdles necessary for registration before the commission. In a State where less than 30 per cent of the work force in the private sector consists of members of unions, how many EFAs have been registered? Not surprisingly, the answer is that only seven such agreements have been approved by the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission.

It cannot be disputed that, under the Goss Labor Government, enterprise bargaining in Queensland has been a gross failure. Figures released earlier this year by the State Government show that, as at 20 December 1994, 455 enterprise agreements had been registered with the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission, covering a total of 170,000 employees. Of those, 142,100—I stress, "142,100"— were State Government employees and only 27,900 were private sector employees. That dismal performance flies in the face of the stream of hollow rhetoric that the Goss Government dishes out about the alleged success of its enterprise bargaining process. If honourable members subtract from the figures those 142,100 public sector employees who constitute the Government's own work force, they will realise that that is a very poor performance level indeed. In fact, only 27,900 private sector workers are covered by registered enterprise agreements. The reason that so few small businesses in Queensland are prepared to enter into the official enterprise bargaining process is the automatic legislative right of unions to interfere in the

negotiation between employees and employers, whether or not they are wanted. Even if the union is not involved in the workplace negotiations, it can still come over the top in the Industrial Relations Commission when an agreement is being registered. That right is guaranteed by Queensland industrial relations law.

Of course, that brings me to the recent Ashai case. Nothing—and I mean absolutely nothing—more than the Ashai case shows just how much Queensland's industrial relations system is wedded to the disreputable Federal model. When the infamous Brereton-Ashai decision was brought down, the non-Labor States immediately initiated what was to be a successful appeal to the Full Bench of the Australian Industrial Relations Commission. Minister Foley and the Goss Labor Government refused to join in the challenge, despite calls to do so by the Opposition, major employer organisations and thousands of Queensland businesses.

At that time, a suggestion appeared in the *Australian Financial Review* that the Minister and his department had initially agreed to participate in the challenge but that willingness to participate had been shortly withdrawn. That the Minister did not participate in that challenge is a symbol of his eternal shame in relation to industrial relations matters. He did not join the challenge because a challenge would have placed him in confrontation with his union friends who fought to uphold the discredited Hodder decision, which represented a massive power grab for unions with dwindling memberships.

The Minister and his Government were willing to sell out the interests of Queenslanders who are subject to the Federal industrial relations system for the sake of playing party politics. He ignored the interests of this State, rather than line up with the other States, which just happened to be of other political persuasions. I say to the Minister: what a petty attitude! The issue should have been above party politics. It was an issue of common interest to the States and all workers.

Indeed, the Minister's participation in a challenge would have focused attention on inadequacies in the Federal legislation, which appears to allow for union interference in bargaining in non-union workplaces. That would have highlighted similar inadequacies in the Queensland carbon copy industrial legislation. There is clearly a need to fix any similar Queensland inadequacies by more legislation. That seems to have been conceded by the then acting Minister, who has announced that amendments will be made; but they are obviously not in this legislation. I ask the Minister: are the amendments that were foreshadowed by acting Minister Elder in the pipeline, or were they a figment of Mr Elder's Christmas imagination? The Minister and the Government continue to support the Queensland legislation, which is heavily weighted in favour of unions, notwithstanding that the vast majority of Queensland workers choose not to be members of a union. In this case, that is approximately 70 per cent of workers in the private sector.

Amongst other things, the Queensland industrial relations legislation provides preference in favour of unionists for engagement, promotion, transfer, annual leave, overtime and practically every other conceivable criterion; sanction-free periods for unions during bargaining periods, when industrial action can take place with legal immunity; and the right of unions to interfere with enterprise flexibility agreements that have been negotiated between employers and their employees when employees certainly do not want any interference.

Blatant attempts to force unions on workers will lead the public to believe that unions do not have the capacity to attract members voluntarily. My advice to unions is that they be very conscious of that particular detriment to their reputation and status within the community, because this could bring them into disrepute when they should be concentrating on providing services to their members. Although unions have always had the right to represent future or potential members in award proceedings, that may be appropriate, perhaps—and I used the word "perhaps"—for the award safety net. I believe that the role of an independent umpire, such as the Industrial Relations Commission, can perform that role very admirably. However, it is not appropriate for unions to impose their will on non-unionists in an over-award setting—as is the case with the Labor version of enterprise bargaining. I again go on the record as stating that the Queensland coalition policy will support extending enterprise bargaining to non-union workplaces without any notion of a right by unions to frustrate or overturn agreements that meet statutory obligation.

Where agreements are to be negotiated in non-union workplaces, unions will not have the relevant background to negotiations or share the common commitment to agreed arrangements. In that case, they would come in cold. Queensland needs diversity and competition among enterprises. Given the low rate of unionisation, the only way that this can

be achieved is to recognise bargaining units that are not union based and allow them to develop agreements without union involvement where the employees—the workers—within such workplaces desire it. Where they do desire union involvement, the Opposition and I say, "Let them go ahead. Let them be involved." Of course, we will support totally the right of that involvement.

I say to the Honourable Minister that, at the next ballot box, Queenslanders will have woken up to the fact that the Goss Government, under Minister Foley's administration, is just as union dominated as the Labor Governments of the 1940s. Queenslanders are among the lowest paid in Australia, with Queensland pay packets being the smallest in Australia. Again, I raise this matter in the context that the industrial relations legislation, from which we are supposed to be benefiting, leads to those outcomes.

I ask members to consider the most recent ABS data on average weekly earnings. As at November 1994, Queensland had a full time adult average weekly ordinary time earnings rate, which excludes overtime, of $587.70, compared with rates of $652.80 in New South Wales, $625.90 in Victoria, $600.60 in South Australia, $631.20 in Western Australia and $599.90 in Tasmania. That is, Queensland employees had the lowest rate of all the other States. A comparable picture also exists in respect of adult average weekly earnings, where Queensland had a rate of $627.90 compared with $696.90 in New South Wales, $670.30 in Victoria, $636.80 in South Australia, $675.40 in Western Australia and $631.60 in Tasmania. Obviously, the figures speak for themselves. Under the Goss Labor Government and Minister Foley, who is responsible for unemployment——

Mr Bennett: What's the point?

Mr SANTORO: The point is that I have heard the excuses of the Treasurer, who has tried to say that the major reason why wage rates, as I have just quoted, are lower in Queensland than they are interstate is that we have a relatively unskilled work force. When I say that the Government has failed to foster value-added industries and lead to a more skilled work force which earns commensurately higher wages, the Government then starts ducking for cover and says that the figures are wrong. Those figures are not wrong. They not only demonstrate an absolute neglect for the worker, whom Mr McElligott purports to represent, but also the figures demonstrate clearly a failure by this Government to bring about industry outcomes that see the diversification of the Queensland economy, which would enable more highly skilled people to be employed and which would enable the average weekly earnings that I have just quoted to be boosted. It is very simple, but then I do not expect the member to acknowledge that, let alone understand it.

Mr McElligott: Government charges.

Mr SANTORO: What do Government charges have to do with what we are talking about?

Mr McElligott: Cost of living; lower wages.

Mr SANTORO: The Opposition does not accept that Government charges in Queensland are as low as the Government claims them to be. I challenge Government members to go out and talk to businesses and ask them whether their workers compensation premiums have declined under the Goss Labor Government and what the rate of increase is compared with what it was under non-Labor Governments. I suggest to Government members that, if they really want to figure out what impact Government charges are having on small businesses, they go out and talk to small businesses. The story that they will hear will indeed not be a very pleasant one.

As I was saying, under the Goss Labor Government and Minister Foley, who is responsible for unemployment, our youth are also missing out on work opportunities. I ask Government members, who try to make flippant remarks about these hard, cold statistics, to consider the latest ABS data on youth unemployment. As to the ratio of unemployed teenagers looking for full-time work to the total teenage population as at February 1995, the Queensland percentage is 9.6 per cent, which is higher than the average of 8.9 per cent. That figure compares with 8.5 per cent in New South Wales, 8.4 per cent in Victoria, 9.3 per cent in South Australia and 8.6 per cent in Western Australia. I suppose Government members would take the lead of the Prime Minister. When confronted with unemployed students he said to them, "Go and get a job." Of course, under those figures——

Mr Davidson: He was only joking.

Mr SANTORO: I am afraid that the Prime Minister——

Dr Watson: He was only joking because he knows that there are no jobs.

Mr SANTORO: That is right. The Prime Minister may say that he was only joking, but close to one million people who are looking for jobs realise that it is not a joke.

Mr Bennett: How many?

Mr SANTORO: The figure is just under one million, but that is the officially recorded statistic only. If one looks at what is defined as the rate of hidden employment, official sources show that the figure could be as high as 1.7 million. I think that figure will stand to the eternal shame of the Labor Party as it seeks to justify its absolutely abysmal performance when it comes to jobs. These are not the Opposition's statistics; they are figures produced by the ABS and by the Department of Social Security. Obviously, those figures embarrass Government members. If they do, so be it. I always say, "If the cap fits, wear it." I turn now to the proposed amendments.

Mr Davidson: They are not using those figures to support their own cause.

Mr SANTORO: I think that the honourable member for Noosa makes a very valid point. Government members cling to statistics only when it suits them, but when we tell them the hard truths about the impact their dastardly policies are having on the workplace, they then shrink from the truth and are very flippant about it.

I turn now to the proposed amendments to the Public Sector Management and Employment Act. The coalition recognises the importance of a professional, impartial and efficient public service as a fundamental necessity of a democratic and prosperous society. I go on record as saying that a coalition Government will respect and value its public service and will provide a stable environment in which it can operate. That is a far cry from the situation under Labor where the public service has been subjected to an academic political reform agenda that has resulted in staff despondency, uncertainty and public administration difficulties. Labor has placed little value on existing knowledge, skills and experience and, from the outset, set out to politicise the public service. Government members may say, "How do you know this?" I can tell them the Opposition knows this because, over the past year, it has been consulting with the State public service unions. I want to say to honourable members in this place that the Opposition's policy will reflect the aspirations of the public service as reflected through the fine representation that that public service union has made on behalf of its members.

In fact, before other commitments overtook us as a result of the sittings of Parliament, this evening we were to meet with the State public service union to again finalise its input into the Opposition's policies which, I can assure all members, will be an exceptionally good set of policies and which see public servants infinitely better off.

Mr Foley: When are we going to see these policies?

Mr SANTORO: I take that interjection from the Honourable Minister.

Mr Foley: Are they secret?

Mr SANTORO: No, they are not secret. The Minister should listen carefully, and I will give him the answer. I will tell the House what has been happening over the past couple of weeks every time the Opposition released policies, irrespective of whether they are in relation to law and order or education. I remember that the honourable member for Merrimac and shadow Minister for Education released an exceptionally good policy on school discipline. What happened a few weeks later? The Government pinched it. I say to the House that I think that is fine. The best form of flattery is imitation, and the Government has done that. The Opposition accepts that it was a good policy. The law and order policy that the coalition has been talking about——

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Palaszczuk): Order! The best form of flattery for the Chair is that the honourable member return to the contents of the Bill.

Mr SANTORO: I was attempting to answer the question asked by the Minister, "When are you going to release the policies?" and I say that the Opposition will release the industrial relations policy when it suits the Opposition and when it is able to communicate it effectively to the Queensland public, that is, just prior to the next State election. So the Minister should be patient. As I have said, under the coalition's industrial relations policy, not one Queensland worker will be worse off. In fact, I go on the record as saying that it will be proved demonstrably that the workers will be much, much better off.

I will return to the State public service. However, before I do so, I go on record in this place as extending my appreciation to the half a dozen to one dozen unions with which I have been consulting. In fact, I have been extremely encouraged by the number of unions that have received me within their boardrooms and at their committee meetings. Next week, I will be meeting with even more union executives. They say, "Your presence

here will really annoy your political opponents." Obviously, that prediction was true.

I will also go on the record as saying that we are not going to agree—and, in fact, we do not agree—with all of the points of view that the union movement, through the respective unions with which I have consulted, put to me. However, I have been pleasantly surprised by the fact that we have reached agreement on many points, including several contentious ones, which will surprise even the Minister and all other Government members. Ours is a different ball game to that played by members opposite. Protected by the full weight of the law, as a result of the legislative compulsion that backs them up, they march into employer workplaces and try to force their points of view. However, we simply write to their constituents and say, "We would like to represent you, and particularly those members who don't subscribe to the Labor Party philosophy." I have been pleasantly surprised by the sense of fairness that exists within the ranks of the executives of many unions, and I am pleased to go on the record as saying precisely that.

Before honourable members opposite say, "There are also many unions that don't want to see you", I point out that I acknowledge that not every union has been receptive of our invitation to consult. That is their problem. We obviously have to look at other ways of reaching the members within their ranks who are not represented by the philosophy that those unions espouse. Within the limitations that face an Opposition, we will certainly seek to do that. However, let me go on the record as saying that we are very comfortable and pleased with the degree of consultation and reciprocity of goodwill between the coalition and the union movement in Queensland, and in particular within the State public service unions.

In the main, most members of the State public service unions openly acknowledge that they are members of the Labor Party and that they man the Labor Party booths. However, they are looking for better representation than Government members are giving them, and our public service policy will reflect the aspirations of the membership. And at this time, that policy is representing them with distinction.

Mr Bennett: I don't know how you can keep a straight face.

Mr SANTORO: The reason I can keep a straight face is that it is the truth. The truth always hurts people such as the honourable member opposite and enables people such as me to keep a straight face.

The coalition believes that much hard work is necessary to restore and upgrade services to all Queenslanders, regardless of where they live. To achieve this, it will take the efforts of the coalition and the work force working together. A coalition Government will be committed to recognising the unions as the appropriate bargaining units for salaries and conditions. Did honourable members opposite hear that? What is their interjection to that? I did not think that they would like that. Government members should listen to this. Public service unions will have direct access to the Premier and the head of the Premier's Department on a regular basis, unlike the current antagonistic arrangements between Labor's Public Sector Management Commission and the public sector unions.

As to enterprise bargaining in the public sector—under Minister Foley's leadership, it has been a case of too little too late, with both its customers, the citizens of Queensland, missing out on the benefits of increased productivity and performance and the State Government's employees losing out through delayed and unattractive pay increases. Let us compare Queensland's record, for example, with the Australian public sector, given that it is the Federal Government that Minister Foley so highly reveres. In the APS, the framework agreement applied a 2 per cent increase from December 1992 and minimum increases of 1.4 per cent in March 1993 and 1.5 per cent in March 1994. I hope that honourable members opposite are listening to this and will try to explain why these lapses in pay increases about which I am speaking have occurred.

Further increases of 2 per cent were provided as from January 1995, with further increases of between 1.5 per cent and 2 per cent to be provided by no later than July 1995. Agency agreements cover 73 per cent of the total Australian public service staff and 99 per cent of employees in Government business enterprises. I encourage honourable members opposite to compare this record with the position in Queensland, where reform is being delayed as a result of Government procrastination over an extended period. This was described by a joint president of the SPSFQ as "a seemingly unending series of delays" and "a blatant attempt to rip off locality allowance from public servants employed outside south-east Queensland".

To demonstrate how the Goss Government holds ordinary public servants in contempt, I point out that all that public servants have received is a flat $15 per week increase from September 1994, regardless of the level of their responsibilities and with no

certainty of from when the next 1.4 per cent will actually be paid—that is, when agency agreements are accepted by the Goss Labor Government. Public servants will then not receive another pay increase until mid 1996 at the earliest. No wonder public servants are wanting to talk to the coalition parties about our industrial relations policies. No wonder they want to know what our industrial relations policy in relation to public sector enterprise agreements is all about.

Mr Bennett: Open chequebook.

Mr SANTORO: No, it is not an open chequebook. It is based on merit, productivity, dignity, consultation and giving employees a sense that they actually belong to a public service that is valued and which has its skills recognised and appreciated by Governments. So far there are no agency agreements within the core public service. The various regional port authorities are yet to negotiate an enterprise bargaining agreement, as is the case with the larger public sector organisations, such as the Corrective Services Commission, the Ambulance and Fire Services, and 11,500 employees in the TAFE system. Therein lies a tragic story. The TAFE enterprise agreement has not materialised despite every earnest and sensible attempt by the union concerned to make a fist of it. It has been obstructed at every turn by the intransigence of the Government.

As I said at the beginning, the Opposition is pleased to support the amendment to the Public Sector Management and Employment Act as a consequence of the Crown Solicitor's advice about the lack of flexibility with the current provision. Individual agencies should be enabled to negotiate conditions of employment which depart from the minimum standards prescribed by the public sector regulations. However, this support does not extend to arrangements which prohibit mobility among various public sector agencies. For example, the Opposition is in favour of ensuring the portability of leave arrangements where employees move between Queensland public sector organisations.

No objection is raised by us to the consequential amendments, which are essentially of a housekeeping nature. The Opposition supports the proposed legislation because it does contain fairly routine amendments. However, in doing this the Opposition wishes to emphasise its dissatisfaction with the real workplace reform in Queensland, which has resulted in the indisputably poor industrial relations indicators to which I have referred. Also, the Opposition wishes to make it clear that in Government it will provide ordinary, hard-working public servants with a better deal through our recognition and valuing of their work based on principles of trust, fairness, respect of individual rights and cultural diversity.

Before concluding, on behalf of the Opposition I again wish to state our absolutely unequivocal commitment to recognising the roles of fair and equitable unions within the Queensland workplace. I know that the honourable member who is to follow me in this debate will undoubtedly try to again portray me as being anti-unionist and anti the role of unions. Nothing is further from the truth, the proof of which is the way in which the union movement is now embracing the coalition's offers of consultation and the very real and significant input that they are having to the coalition's industrial relations policy. We make a commitment to the union movement of this State that, apart from insisting on the fundamental principle that unionism is voluntary, the door will be open to all legitimate unions that seek to represent in good faith the best interests of their members. That is a commitment which is made without any qualification or reservation and which, of course, will be demonstrated amply when we regain the Treasury benches.

Mr BARTON (Waterford) (3.40 p.m.): I am pleased that the previous speaker stopped talking when he did, because I do not know that my tummy muscles could have taken much more. I had a big laugh about some of the comments that he made. My principal reason for speaking in this debate is to outline the issues addressed by this Bill and indicate my support for it.

Much has been said today in this Chamber, but very little of it has related to the Bills before the Parliament. This legislation aims principally to continue the process of reform of industrial relations in this State, particularly with regard to the public sector. It enables the outcomes of industrial relations agreements in the public sector to be in the hands of those who have to live with them day by day. The managers of the various public sector units and the employees of those units, with their unions, will have far greater input than they have to date into reaching agreements and putting them into place and, where they cannot agree, those who are directly part of the process will appear before the Industrial Relations Commission.

It is extremely important that we reach that point. I have been well known in the past—but I have mellowed a little in recent

years—for objecting to lawyers being given greater opportunity to participate in the industrial tribunals than had historically been the case. My objection to that was principally that the people arguing the case were too removed from the workplace. However, I have now mellowed and acknowledge that there has been an increase in the range of cases in which lawyers can appear before the industrial relations tribunals of this State. This Bill enables the public sector units to assume greater responsibility for managing their industrial relations affairs and allows them to be self-represented in appearances before an industrial tribunal.

We have all seen cases before the tribunals in which representatives have come from the central agency. In the past, the law required that representation had to be provided through the Advocacy Branch of DEVETIR. Frequently, that meant that the people given the running of the case had not been involved directly in the bargaining process. It is fairly difficult for such a representative to arrive on the scene and run somebody else's case when that person has not been involved in it directly or in many cases has not had the time to undertake complete preparation. That certainly was the case before I was elected to this Parliament, particularly during the time of the previous Government.

This Bill changes that scenario. It recognises that, when an issue arises that involves only one unit, the industrial relations people from an individual public sector unit can represent themselves. They do not have to go through the central agency. That is an important change. It means that the people directly involved have much more say in the outcomes, and they will therefore have more commitment to the outcomes and more ownership of them, which equates to a much higher chance of successful application of those outcomes.

Mr Santoro: Smaller is beautiful.

Mr BARTON: The member for Clayfield said, "Smaller is bigger", but——

Mr Santoro: No, smaller is beautiful.

Mr BARTON: Obviously, we are not talking about the member for Clayfield when we talk about beauty! I do not know that we are talking about "smaller" either, but the member for Clayfield was dubbed "little Sirocco" earlier. I did not know that a little Sirocco could make so much noise!

I return to the involvement of DEVETIR. I do not want the comments that I am making to be construed as a criticism of DEVETIR, because they are not. In cases that have a multiagency impact, DEVETIR will still be there and will be directly represented, because that is its role as the principal industrial relations agency for the State Government. If it is a very important and significant case that impacts on only one public sector unit, then DEVETIR still has the right—as it has always had—to be represented and to run the case. The legislation provides a range of options. In small businesses and in most larger private sector organisations, the people who have to own the outcomes are typically the ones who run the case, are involved in the bargains and represent the employer and the union in a case before the industrial tribunal.

Another important feature is that the Bill will allow a greater degree of flexibility in providing standards and outcomes in the public sector. Until now, that issue has been overlooked or not thought through fully. This provision has probably come about as a result of the latest round of enterprise bargaining. Although the Act as amended several years ago allowed for award conditions to be varied as part of an enterprise bargain, until now public sector determinations and regulations have not been able to be varied through an enterprise bargain. This Bill will allow that to occur. Until now, public sector determinations have been a bit like the old awards. They were sacrosanct and they could not be changed, notwithstanding the significance of a proposed improvement. The minimum standards had to prevail; in no way could a condition be reduced, regardless of how good the deal was. Although this Bill will change that scenario, I stress that there must be fairness in any such proposal and that people should not be disadvantaged by any proposed outcome—similar to the protections that apply under various awards.

It is important to note that extensive consultation has been undertaken with all parties, they being in this case the public sector unions and their peak council, with the employers being the public service departments. I want to respond to some of the comments made by the member for Clayfield. In order to believe what he said during his contribution to this debate, we would have to believe that all of the public sector unions are extremely unhappy with this Bill, but that is certainly not the case. Extensive consultation has been undertaken with the unions in regard to this legislation, just as they have been consulted in regard to the enterprise bargaining process. Although it is a very short piece of legislation, this Bill has been worked

through with the unions and, as a result of those consultations, it has their support. We have to take with a grain of salt many of the comments by the member for Clayfield in regard to how welcome he is in union boardrooms and how upset the unions are with this Government.

The member for Clayfield said a number of other things to which I should respond. He claimed that Queensland is the strike capital of Australia. As I do not have the proof of the member's speech in front of me, I am not able to refer directly to the figures that he so eloquently outlined with that little bit of breeze that passed through the Chamber five or ten minutes ago. We should look at the comparisons between this Government's period of office and that of the previous Government. That is where the very striking comparisons lie—no pun intended! During the Liberal/National Party period of Government, the strike figures were much higher than they have been over the past five years, and much higher than they are currently.

The comparison of strike figures in this State between when the National Party held Government in its own right, between the period 1983 to 1989—when the Liberal Party was even more irrelevant because it was sitting on the cross benches—and now are absolutely staggering. At that time the National Party Government was openly and blatantly attempting to smash the trade union movement into submission. If the only way that the Government could bash the trade union movement into submission was to smash it out of existence, that is what it attempted to do.

It is 10 years since the SEQEB dispute. Nobody on this side of the Chamber forgets how, 10 years ago, 1,000 people were brutally dismissed by a National Party Government that was absolutely intent on getting its way at any price. Also, many of the business people who were affected by that dispute have said that that Government had made it very clear to them that it was prepared to win at any price, even if the price included the loss of those businesses because they were unable to operate because the Government of the day was not prepared to negotiate reasonable settlements with the trade union movement.

I think it is extremely important for the people who look at *Hansard* in the future, or who examine these issues, to look at the current strike figure comparisons. They should certainly compare them between now and when the National Party and Liberal Party were last in Government in coalition and when the National Party was in Government in its own right. The strike figures are now, in relative terms, at historically low levels.

When the member for Clayfield says that the Queensland figures are currently higher than in other States, he forgets that we have to acknowledge that recently there have been several notable disputes in this State over enterprise bargaining and over disputes where a small number of employers have been attempting to de-unionise their workplaces. Whenever unions and their members face confrontation, that will result in unions taking some action to defend themselves. We have to look at where those disputes have taken place because just a bland, global view——

Mr Purcell: They're all out.

Mr BARTON: I have just been given a most important message. The South Australians are all out. Madam Deputy Speaker, if you might indulge me, I would like to move that we all go home.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Power): Order! The honourable member's motion is out of order.

Mr BARTON: I take your advice, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Mr Bredhauer: You were speaking when Queensland won the shield.

Mr BARTON: I think that is very important and, at the same time, I was speaking about the irrelevancy of the member for Clayfield's comments. I think that is important.

I return now to the important issues before us. We should not look only at the global strike statistics. If we want to really understand why those figures are currently slightly up in this State, we have to dig a little deeper and look precisely at what those disputes were about.

The member for Clayfield commented on the take-up rate of enterprise agreements, and of course this Bill deals with enterprise agreements in the public sector. He said that only 170,000 employees are currently covered by enterprise agreements. That is still a very significant number of employees who have been successfully involved in that bargaining process. There are many out there right now who are still in the middle of the bargaining process who no doubt in the near future will also be successful in achieving enterprise agreements.

I refer now to the number of private sector employees—27,900, even if I can believe the member for Clayfield's figures—who have

been successful in negotiating enterprise agreements. It is typically the larger private sector employers that have finalised enterprise bargaining agreements. The experience that we see in the private sector in Queensland is that most employers are small. The history in Queensland of enterprise bargaining, even before enterprise bargaining became acceptable and the norm—the policy and the process—was that bargains are reached at a local level. Typically small employers with a handful of employees reach their own understandings with employees and they will put those understandings into place by an exchange of letters and sometimes even by negotiation among themselves.

Mr Santoro: Once upon a time you favoured amalgamations of unions. You wanted bigger unions.

Mr BARTON: I am quite proud of the fact that the union movement has been rationalising so that it can have the efficiencies and economies of scale to recruit the number of people that have the skills and the resources to bargain in the workplace. That does not mean that I do not accept that at the small locations people will reach agreements and they will frequently not go to industrial tribunals. Anybody who has been out there and has had any involvement in industrial relations in this State, either from an employer organisation assisting the employer to reach agreement with the employees and their union, or as a union official negotiating with the small employer, knows that frequently historically the only record of that agreement is the notes that are taken. Anybody who has been involved in IR knows that that is the case.

Just before sitting down, which I am about to do—the member for Clayfield said that he was not a union basher and that I would so accuse him. I do not want to disappoint the member for Clayfield because I think that, by his own words today, he demonstrates that he has not only no affinity with the trade union movement of this State but also that he is totally opposed to that movement and its objectives. He makes the point that he is welcomed into boardrooms of unions. We should not forget that there are both unions of employees and unions of employers. I have no doubt that he is welcomed into the boardrooms of some of the unions of employers. I know some of them—I will not name them. I do know some of the unions of employers where he is certainly not welcome. He is not only not welcome in the boardrooms of unions of employees; he is certainly not welcome into all boardrooms of unions of employers.

I could make comment about many issues that he has raised, but I will make only one more comment. He spoke about the Opposition's future industrial relations policy. In common with the Minister, I am pretty anxious to see it, but I am also fairly certain that when we do see it the policy will simply be: forward to the past. I support the Bill.

Mr STEPHAN (Gympie) (3.59 p.m.): I would like to refer to a couple of the comments that the member for Waterford has made. He said that when the Opposition was in Government it was putting businesses out of business and people out of work. If ever a Government knew anything about putting businesses out of work, it is this Government.

Mr Santoro: One million unemployed.

Mr STEPHAN: There are one million unemployed people in Australia and the Prime Minister says, "Isn't that a wonderful set of figures?" It makes me wonder what sort of mentality he has. That worries me. Maybe Government members are slow learners, but I can remember them being bitterly opposed to any proposal for enterprise agreements.

Mr Santoro: Don't they have a very convenient memory?

Mr STEPHAN: Sometimes it is just as well that they have a very convenient memory. At least they know a good thing when they see it. The problem is that it takes them a while to grab hold of it and put it in place.

Mr Foley: Are you saying that the certified agreements are similar to the voluntary employment agreements?

Mr STEPHAN: There is some similarity, but the only problem is that the Minister has not caught hold of the thread of them to any great extent and has not taken full advantage of the benefits of voluntary employment agreements and included them in enterprise agreements.

In his second-reading speech, the Minister said that the amendments to the Act seek to facilitate workplace reform. The member for Waterford also made that comment. The Minister said also that the Bill before the House is a step along the path of enterprise-based decision making and improved productivity. When Government members talk about improved productivity, I become concerned. That is because, although the Government tries to achieve greater productivity, at the same time it introduces an enormous number of new taxes—called new charges or whatever else—that make it difficult

for businesses to be productive and profitable. The Government must realise that conflict in what it is doing. The effect of the Government's actions is to run businesses out of the State. It is certainly not doing a great deal to encourage them. In recent environmental legislation, the Government imposed more charges.

Mr Gibbs: Don't go on for too long. You put people to sleep.

Mr STEPHAN: I thank the Minister very much for that vote of confidence. I noticed that the Minister recently came into the Chamber. I do not know whether he was watching the cricket, but it is good to see the Minister's face in the House.

Mr Santoro: The Minister will sleep under any conditions. You shouldn't let it worry you.

Mr STEPHAN: No, I should not let it worry me.

I want to refer to some of the charges that the Government imposes on businesses. Charges on aquaculture operations range from $500 to $3,300. In the metal-finishing industry, I took note of another charge. For commercial spray painting businesses, the Government has imposed an annual charge of $650; for metal forming, a charge of $400; and for metal recovery, a charge of $500. Although those charges are small, in many instances those types of operations are carried out by the one firm, so the Government is imposing a total charge of $1,500 on such firms.

In many circumstances, those charges make it difficult for industry and businesses to compete or even exist. I have been talking about charges in only one field. The Government must realise that those charges add to the other costs, such as interest rates and overheads, and to the very difficult problems that those businesses face in competing with subsidised products from overseas. That matter is of concern to many of my constituents. In many instances, businesses are staring down the barrel at that sort of competition.

We have just finished debating a Bill about workers compensation. An enormous amount of concern was expressed about increases in charges in that field. I want the Minister to realise that, under conditions of increasing charges, business itself cannot be competitive or, in some cases, even continue to exist. A couple of years ago, along with my colleague the Opposition spokesman on Industrial Affairs, I went to New Zealand. It opened my eyes to see the process that the New Zealand Government was going through and the success it had achieved. It was soon recognised that, for example, the VEAs—employment contracts—were directed towards improving company profits. They helped a great deal to make companies more competitive and to give them a leading edge not only in their own country but also in other countries around the world. Australia is also feeling the effect of what New Zealand has been able to achieve by its ability to compete on a very different basis than that on which it competed a few years ago.

Mr Bennett: Do you think the New Zealand industrial relations scheme has a strong social justice component to it?

Mr STEPHAN: The New Zealand industrial relations scheme was a big improvement on the scheme that the Queensland Government was trying to peddle.

Mr Santoro: Ask the honourable member who is interjecting if he would like to compare the unemployment rate and increases and decreases in the unemployment rate in New Zealand.

Mr STEPHAN: That would be an interesting comparison, to consider what the employment rate is in New Zealand.

Mr Santoro: Would you suggest that the honourable member should go to New Zealand and learn something?

Mr STEPHAN: It would be a good idea if he were to go to New Zealand and speak to some of the people. They are our friends. I feel sure that they would welcome the honourable member. Provided that he was prepared to listen, he would come away greatly enlightened.

I will cite some of the figures that show that New Zealand has been successful. In 1990-91, the number of working days lost due to industrial stoppages was 337,000. In 1991-92, just 12 months later, that number was 52,000. Under the conditions that applied in 1990-91, the amount of wages lost through disputes was $48.8m. In 1991-92, the figure was $6.3m. In 1990-91, the number of stoppages was 129. In the following year the figure was 54.

Mr Santoro: I dare say you are depressing them.

Mr STEPHAN: I think that I must have depressed them. It is a pity that Government members have not taken much notice of those figures. However, they are good and encouraging figures. That is what we in Queensland must do. We must consider what

our productivity is and how we can improve it to make our businesses competitive.

I was also interested to note that the horticulture and viticulture industries in New Zealand were starting to boom. In that field, businesses in New Zealand are our competitors. If the New Zealand industries are booming and businesses can produce at a price that is cheaper than the price at which we can produce in Australia, we will suffer. Those types of matters are of concern to me. People in New Zealand will benefit from the competitiveness of their industries.

Mrs Woodgate: You're not suffering, Len. You enjoy yourself.

Mr STEPHAN: Mrs Woodgate also would enjoy a trip to New Zealand. I feel sure that the people would make her welcome.

I will pass on to Government members two more good-news stories from New Zealand. One is in the field of industrial relations. In 1991, the Port of Auckland handled more tonnage than it did in the mid 1980s, when almost three times as many staff were employed. Canterbury Leather operates a thriving business and enjoys the flexibility that it now has to negotiate directly with staff about productivity, production and marketing problems. By taking into account the local work force, each of those businesses has benefited, and the companies have been able to stay in business. The Queensland Government has taken a step in that direction. It is a small step, and I encourage the Government to move a little bit faster.

Hon. M. J. FOLEY (Yeronga—Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations) (4.10 p.m.), in reply: I thank all honourable members for their contributions to the debate and for their support for this Bill. The principles of the Bill were not subject to challenge during the debate, but there are a number of matters to which I shall respond.

At the outset, I think it is important to clarify the condensed humbug that we heard from members of the Opposition in their purporting to warm to the interests of the trade union movement. I remind honourable members of the coalition policy that was in fact leaked to the *Courier-Mail* and published on 20 October 1994 under the heading "Secret plan to fight union power". That article states—

> "A State coalition government would mount a full-scale attack on union power, secret documents showed yesterday."

The article goes on to say—

> "A victory to the conservative parties at next year's State election would almost certainly herald a return to the union-government clashes of the Bjelke-Petersen era."

For the interest of honourable members opposite, I table that article because it gives the lie to their purporting to be supportive of the trade union movement.

What stifling hypocrisy this Chamber has seen this afternoon! The honourable member for Clayfield was trying to pass himself off as a friend of the trade union movement having leaked—either himself or through other agents—the coalition's policy. Firstly, members of the coalition leak a policy to attack unions and then, when they receive an adverse reaction, when they are described as union bashers, they consult—first the policy, then the consultation. What stifling hypocrisy! Surely the honourable member for Clayfield must see the patent inconsistency of his position and the ludicrous attempt on his part to gloss over the policy that had been leaked with this spurious attempt at consultation.

The complaint is made that our industrial relations system has cooperation between Federal and State systems. I remind the House what that means in practical terms. If the honourable member for Clayfield would get out of the ideological forums in which he likes to secrete himself and get out into real workplaces, into real business and industry in Queensland, he would find that business and industry are asking again and again and again that the Government cut the red tape—to ensure that if a set of rules exists in the Federal arena, then the same set of rules exists in the State arena. That is exactly what we have in Queensland. Any enterprise can enter into an enterprise bargaining arrangement— whether it is a State or Federal award—in accordance with exactly the same principles and procedures.

Similarly, if a person has an industrial relations problem or dispute in Queensland, that person can go to one Industrial Relations Commission office. The Federal and State commissions are now co-located. If a person is in Townsville, that person can go to the one office to see industrial inspectors. That is the sort of practical, commonsense reform that the Government has delivered. The Government has been determined not to be caught up in the nineteenth century ideological debates so familiar to the honourable member for Clayfield but, rather, to respond to the big issues of the day, which are all about generating employment.

The honourable member complained that somehow the industrial relations system in this

State was prejudicial to employment. I remind the honourable member that since the Goss Government came to power, we have seen an extra 178,100 jobs generated in Queensland. That is more than the rest of Australia put together over the same period. Only 150,300 jobs were generated in the rest of Australia. If the honourable member wants to judge the system by performance in generating employment, let him come clean and acknowledge that the runs are well and truly on the board.

As to the attempt by the honourable member to use statistics to his own ends, which followed the shameful performance of the Opposition in getting its statistics wrong by a factor of 1,000—about which it has still not apologised for misleading this House—the members opposite gloss blithely over the fact that the 1994 ABS statistics indicate that the strike level in Australia is at a 35-year low. That sort of good news is inimical to the honourable member. He does not want to hear it. He does not want to hear good news. He does not want to hear that under the Goss Government the average yearly strike rate to December 1994 was 110.47 working days lost—lower than the national average yearly rate of 174.76 during the same period. He particularly does not want to hear the statistic about the performance under the previous Government, because under the previous Government the State experienced a yearly average strike rate of 246.23 over a six-year period ending December 1989, that is, more than twice as bad as the average yearly strike rate under the Goss Government.

This attempt by the honourable member to use this modest reform Bill to mount an attack on the industrial relations system has done nothing other than expose the fundamental weaknesses of the Opposition's pseudo policies. I say "pseudo policies" because they are happy to leak what they thought would be electorally popular—the good old-fashioned attack on union power—which backfired on them. They are now moving to go through this cosmetic fiasco of consultation with the union movement to produce a policy—the details of which they are still running scared about putting before the Queensland people.

Mr Santoro: You'll be right. They'll be out shortly. You can relax.

Mr FOLEY: The honourable member is encouraging us along the lines of "Don't you worry about that." That has a familiar ring to it in this debate.

I thank the honourable member for Waterford, Mr Barton, for his eloquent contribution to the debate. He brought a shaft of commonsense that was much needed in the debate at that stage. He made the very important point that delegation of responsibility in this area from central Government to the respective agencies can entail a greater ownership in the industrial process. If there is one lesson that modern managers in real workplaces have learned, it is that one has to mainstream industrial relations as part of the core business of management. It is not sufficient to push to one side industrial relations issues, out of the core business of management over to a specialist department, because good managers know that if one wants to achieve real outcomes, one has to work with people. Human relationships is what industrial relations is all about, and that entails having public sector management accept responsibility for industrial relations as part of the core business of public sector management. That is what this Bill before the House facilitates.

I was puzzled by the contribution of the member for Gympie.

Mr Gibbs: You join the company of many.

Mr FOLEY: I thank the honourable acting Minister for Primary Industries. I suppose the most charitable thing I can say is that it is Lent and we should all suffer a little in the interests of greater things. The member for Gympie certainly made a contribution in that regard. I commend the Bill to the House.

Motion agreed to.

Committee

Hon. M. J. Foley (Yeronga—Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations) in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 and 2, as read, agreed to.

Clause 3—

Mr SANTORO (4.21 p.m.): In the Explanatory Notes and his second-reading speech, the Minister argues that no additional cost to Government will come about as a result of this amendment. I find it difficult to accept that that will be the case because one needs only to look at the duplication of effort throughout the public service where many departments—Health being a prime example—have created huge industrial relations divisions. I ask the Minister: how can he assure the Chamber that, in fact, the industrial relations section of DEVETIR will not

be wound down to compensate or to reflect the increases in the industrial relations advocacy capacity of line departments? Over past years, we have seen the growth of industrial relations sections in various departments. Many additional costs have been incurred, such as libraries, telephone costs, research and travel expenses. It is hard to accept the Minister's argument that there will be no additional costs. What efficiencies will this Bill bring into the system and what assurances can he give the Chamber that his claim that no additional costs will be incurred will, indeed, be the case?

Mr FOLEY: This is tied up with the central point that I was making towards the end of my reply to the second-reading debate, namely, this process is not about delegating industrial relations responsibility from DEVETIR to a series of industrial relations units in other departments. It is about ensuring that the public service management in each of those departments accepts industrial relations issues as part of the core business of being a good manager. As such, it is intended to avoid the duplication of effort that can arise when a matter that can and should be dealt with at the local level in a agency has to be referred to the central agency, with all the attendant duplication of cost and abrogation of responsibility at the local level. This is about ensuring that so far as possible industrial issues that can be dealt with responsibly by the relevant department are dealt with by it, thereby avoiding the costs that are attendant upon duplication and inappropriate referral.

Mr SANTORO: I ask the Minister: does he then envisage that there will be no additional industrial relations executives or officers employed to fulfil the industrial relations functions that he seems to believe managers within those line departments will be doing themselves? Is he able to assure us, or does he envisage, that there will be no additional staff employed down the line?

Mr FOLEY: I do not envisage that there will be additional staff employed as a result of these amendments.

Clause 3, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 4 and 5, as read, agreed to.

Schedule, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

Third Reading

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

WATER RESOURCES AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 23 March (see p. 11353).

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Palaszczuk): I call the member for Callide.

Hon. R. J. GIBBS (Bundamba—Minister for Tourism, Sport and Racing) (4.25 p.m.): Before the member commences, I wish to point out that the original Explanatory Notes contained some typing errors so I found it necessary to substitute fresh Explanatory Notes.

Mrs McCAULEY (Callide) (4.26 p.m.): This Bill epitomises Labor Party thinking, and it is one that will gain the Government no support in the bush for its stance. I will talk about my objections shortly.

The aim of the amendment Bill is to provide more flexibility in establishing and amalgamating water areas and boards and improve the administrative process of boards. Certainly, there is room for improvement in those areas if the experience of a water board in my electorate, the Coreen Water Board, is anything to go by. I take this opportunity to tell the House the sorry saga of this water board and how the Minister and his department—although I am not blaming the bureaucrats in this instance because they are simply acting under instructions—have handled this matter.

The Coreen Water Board supplies water to approximately 35 rural properties. In July 1993, the secretary of the board wrote to the Minister saying that, owing to the drought, the board's bores were failing and that it had become essential to establish a new water supply. The secretary sought the Minister's approval for actions which the board wanted to take and stressed to the Minister the importance and urgency of the matter. Later in July 1993, a reply from the Executive Director of Water Resources stated—

> "It will take some time to follow these procedures through; but you have my assurance that all steps will be taken to push the process through all stages as quickly as possible."

On 9 August 1993, the Minister, Mr Casey, also replied. He stated—

> "I understand the seriousness of the situation and the urgency which must be attached to the re-establishment of a new supply for the Board. The staff of my Department are moving quickly with the

technical and administrative work which is necessary."

I might add that the Coreen Water Board is not one of those boards in which everything works smoothly and with which all those supplied with water are happy. In fact, a number of property owners wish to get off the line, and that has probably been the cause of the inaction by the Minister. However, he should have sorted out the matter long ago and tried to solve the problem taking into account both sides of the story. He stands indicted because he has not done this.

Because there are always two sides to every story, I have stayed out of this bunfight except to urge the Minister to resolve the situation. However, I received a very terse fax from one of the people who wants to get out of the scheme. I simply say to her that if she wants to get aggressive with her local member, and particularly if that local member is me, then that is not the way to go about presenting her case. I must say also that I have no sympathy for anyone who has bought into that area recently, because they bought their properties knowing about the scheme and how much it would or would not cost them. They should shut up and support the scheme or they should have bought a property somewhere else.

Schemes such as Coreen work only when everyone in the scheme works together. If some people want to pull the pin, then the likelihood of the scheme collapsing is quite high because those left on the scheme will be faced with higher charges as a result—charges that may well be beyond their capacity to pay. I speak from the experience of having two properties that are served by two different water schemes.

I come to October 1993, when a general meeting of ratepayers of the board resolved that a secret ballot be held to determine their wishes with regard to the future of the board. The necessary papers and notes were delivered to the local Water Resources office on 10 November 1993, but by mid December of that year still no action had been taken by the department. So much for the urgency! Imagine how long it would have taken had the matter not been urgent. This delay went on for almost another 12 months, and in September 1994 the long-suffering secretary of the board wrote to the Deputy Premier and advised him of the situation. He said—

> "The current bore has been limping along for some months and has only held out this long by the imposition of water restrictions and by alternating the supply of water to different sections of the scheme. The pump is pumping a lot of air and this has caused pipe breakages and pump breakdowns. The situation cannot continue like this for much longer."

The secretary made it quite clear that the board did not suggest that the Water Resources Act should not be fully complied with, and suggested that the impending disaster could be averted without denying any person his or her rights under the Act.

In October 1994, in reply to a query from me as to what was happening, the Minister said—

> "Once the statutory advertising period has closed on 16 November 1994, and the requirements of section 9.3 of the Act have been met, the Department will be able to assist the Board in taking the necessary steps to secure a new supply."

That brings us to today, and still we have no action. The secretary of the board—and he would be tearing out his hair, if he had plenty of it—again wrote to the Minister and said that the advice of February 1995 that there would be a 10-week delay was unacceptable because the bore was now totally unable to meet the current water supply demands. The board's storage tanks have not had water in them for six weeks, and the pumps are pumping a lot of air, which is causing excessive maintenance problems and wildly inaccurate meter readings.

Last week, I checked with the department and was told "about four weeks", but now that the Minister has exited the scene, who knows what the delay will be. I believe the Government stands indicted for not resolving this situation one way or the other. Obviously, any decision on this matter will not please everyone involved, but it is Government inaction and its total inability to actually do something which frustrates people who attempt to deal with it. It is a sad indictment on the Goss Labor Government that such a sad tale has to be told.

Another matter of great concern to me in relation to water resources in the Callide electorate—and there are a large number of them—is the way in which this greedy, grasping Government is trying to charge drought-stricken farmers in the central and upper Burnett area for water extraction from river sand. It is not just charging them; it is charging them excess rates. These citrus growers have suffered prolonged drought conditions and, as a result, the Upper Burnett Irrigation Scheme has ceased to supply

surface water to some irrigators. These irrigators have sustained their productive enterprises with expensive sand troughing of the riverbed sands. I know of one chap who has spent in excess of $100,000. And yet the miserable, mean lot of people known as the Goss Government are charging these irrigators for any water extracted from the riverbed. This has never happened before. The former National Party Government realised that such action is taken only in dire circumstances. It did not charge the poor old beleaguered irrigators, but this Government is only too happy to kick the bush when it is down.

The Upper Burnett River Water Advisory Committee is simply asking for the following things. I might add that the Minister has not even replied to my letter of 24 January on this matter. The committee said—

> "As was the previous practice, when water releases cease, so should charges."

Further, it said—

> "Alternatively, that water extracted from the bed sands in excess of announced allocation be treated as water harvesting and charged for at water harvesting rates. This would give the Department some return towards operating costs, give producers some much needed relief and be seen as an equitable compromise."

There is also a move afoot to push for the expansion of the Mundubbera Weir and to conduct feasibility studies into the 34.4-kilometre weir on the Boyne River. I fully support the push for these facilities, but I have no faith in this Government to act quickly in any matter that involves water, because it simply cannot do it. If a coalition Government comes to power after the next election, the people of the Burnett can rest assured that their water problems will be at the top of the list with me, and they can be assured of the understanding and eagerness of all members of the shadow Cabinet to assist.

I believe what is needed in this State—and what has been neglected by this Government—is a long, hard look at the capital works program pertaining to water resources. At present, it is fashionable to say that we do not need large water storages in this State. What rubbish! We need as many as we can sensibly plan for and afford. That brings me to the thinking of this Government on capital works for water resources. It thinks the user-pays principle is the track to go down. It is dead wrong. Users cannot pay, for example, for a $60m water storage facility. It is nonsense to say that they should. The spin-offs from such a project are as beneficial as, or more beneficial than, the Indy or the convention centre in Brisbane, which are heavily subsidised, or paid for outright, by this Government. What is the difference?

This Government lacks any initiative or inclination to manage the water resources of this State in an efficient and effective manner that would benefit all of the people of Queensland. It should plead guilty to the charge and be taken out and shot.

Mr Gibbs: I'm shocked that you would attack me in this way.

Mrs McCAULEY: There is more.

Finally, I would like to talk about the Ban Ban Springs area, which is another area in which water problems exist. It is under the control of Water Resources. Ban Ban Springs has run dry this year. Some locals tell me that this is the first time in history; others say that they are not sure whether it is the first time. Certainly, it is a very rare occurrence. A few months ago when I checked on it, it was certainly very dry. However, it has since started running again. The last time I saw it, it was running. However, the flow is directly related to when the people on the property opposite are irrigating. When they are irrigating, there are no springs; when they are not, the water comes back.

Last year, we held a large meeting attended by a lot of Aboriginal people. They said that Ban Ban Springs is a sacred site to them. They have had no joy at all from the Department of Environment and Heritage. Water Resources does not seem to be able to come up with a solution to the problem. There was a meeting in December of last year. At that meeting, the predominant view was that the area should have ground-water restrictions put in place. I was not able to attend that meeting. Apparently, a lot of landowners did not attend, and I think that the Water Resources officers were a bit concerned that the landowners were not represented properly at that meeting.

At that meeting, it was suggested that a pipeline could be run across the road from the property opposite and the water could be artificially kept up to Ban Ban Springs. Both the Gayndah Shire Council and the Wakka Wakka tribe—the Aboriginal people from Gayndah—are opposed to this idea. They believe that is really a false way of keeping water to the springs, that it is just window-dressing. They are also concerned that, if the people who own the property opposite from where the water is coming decide to close it

down, they would have no redress. I know that Water Resources officers have a problem with this issue. I know that they have spent several thousands of dollars on legal advice about what rights the Aborigines have regarding their claim that the site is a sacred one. I believe this Government stands indicted for its lack of support for the Aborigines on this issue.

In the early days of Australia, long before white settlement, this area was a meeting place for the tribes who came from the coast on their way to the Bunya Mountains. They met at the Ban Ban Springs because there was plentiful water. All of the tribes came together before they made their annual pilgrimage up to the Bunya Mountains. The Aboriginal people's claim that this is a sacred site and that they do not want the springs to be spoiled is a legitimate one. But, by the same token, the people who are irrigating were given the go ahead. In fact, they were helped by officers from Water Resources. They were told what was an appropriate place to put their bore and so on. They are not in the wrong, either. They are victims of circumstance.

I understand that some people in the Gayndah area are not happy with the irrigators. For example, when someone's son was approached by some people from Gayndah and told, "If you are going to pump this huge amount of water to irrigate your property, you will run the springs dry", he said, "So what?" I do not know whether that is true or not. But if he said that, he can expect people in Gayndah to be unhappy with that sort of attitude. That is his problem, not mine. My concern is that neither party is in the wrong, but we are no closer to having the issue resolved.

The Minister said originally that he felt the drought had a lot to do with the springs drying up. However, that is not so. There is a direct relationship between the irrigation on one side of the road and the springs drying up on the other because, whenever the irrigation is stopped, the springs start up again.

Since that December meeting, I know that Tim Smith, from the office in Bundaberg, has spoken to the Minister. They have agreed to look at ground-water restrictions. This is a very lengthy process. It means doing a survey of all of the landowners, costings and so on. It will take several months to do this. I am disappointed. I wrote to the Minister a long time ago and proposed some solutions, one of which included pumping from a waterhole on the Burnett. I suppose that all of those solutions involved the department spending money that it did not wish to spend. However, as departmental officers helped those people set up the irrigation which has caused the problem with the springs, I believe that the department has some responsibility to assist them. The department should accept that responsibility, bite the bullet, pay the money and solve the problem.

I am aware that the Opposition will not divide on this legislation. However, I reiterate my earlier comment that I do not have any confidence in this Government in its handling of water resources in this State.

Mr ROBERTSON (Sunnybank) (4.41 p.m.): I rise to support the Water Resources Amendment Bill 1995. It is appropriate that the debate on this legislation commenced last week, given that 22 March was the International Day for Water. The basis of the Bill currently before the House is a clear demonstration of this Government's commitment to meeting the water needs of industry and the community in this State. Significantly, part of this commitment is also to ensure that our existing water resources are used wisely and not wasted.

As the Minister stated in his second-reading speech, the changes contained in this amendment Bill are consistent with the policies of water reform agreed to by the Council of Australian Governments in Hobart in February 1994. The COAG water policy agreement also contains important commitments to water education, particularly in schools and the broader community. Last Tuesday, as part of the International Day for Water, a school education program was launched by the Brisbane City Council. The Water Wise School Water Auditing Kit is a joint initiative of the DPI and the Brisbane City Council. The aim of that kit is to help schools analyse where they are currently using water and then pinpoint strategies by which they can reduce their water consumption and cut back the amount that they are paying in water rates.

I believe that that is an important and worthwhile initiative. By educating our young people before they establish bad water-use habits, we will be creating a long-term and lasting effect in our campaign to more efficiently regulate water usage in our community. The Water Wise School Water Auditing Kit is currently being trialled in 50 primary schools around Brisbane. Once that trial is complete, the package will be released to schools throughout Queensland. The overall goal of Water Wise is to reduce water consumption Statewide by 20 per cent. By achieving that goal, the DPI calculates that the

State Government will save $40m in deferred infrastructure development costs. Collectively, the local governments of Queensland will also save $40m annually in water treatment and pumping costs.

The ever-increasing drain on our water resources is exemplified by the following statistics. It has been estimated that in 1931 each Brisbane person used 200 litres of water every day. With increased industry and improved water supply services, by 1964 that figure had grown to 350 litres per person per day. Currently, water usage per person in Brisbane has nearly doubled in the last 20 years to 635 litres per person per day. With 1,000 people moving to Queensland every week, unless we make a concerted effort to manage our water usage, then the demand to build more dams will become inevitable.

The Water Wise School Water Auditing Kit contains some valuable insights into how we waste water and provides constructive suggestions as to how we can reduce this wastage. For example, at present urinals in boys' toilets at schools flush continually 24 hours per day, seven days a week. It has been estimated that 700,000 litres of water are used to flush each urinal each year. By installing control mechanisms so that urinals are flushed only during school hours, well over half of that amount of water can be saved. I am informed that the cost of equipment to achieve this is as little as $500.

One issue that is not addressed in the School Water Auditing Kit is the use of ground water to irrigate sports fields and gardens in schools. It is this matter that I wish to spend some time discussing today. In discussing this topic, I wish to recognise and highlight an extremely worthwhile project recently undertaken by the Sunnybank State Primary School. The use of ground water is, of course, not uncommon in rural schools. However, in urban schools—particularly in the Brisbane area—it is rare, mostly because of ease of access to the readily available mains water supply. As we search for ways to minimise the demand for treated water from the mains supply, perhaps it is time that we rethought where we can draw water from for specific purposes.

As many members of the House will know, Sunnybank used to be one of the prime agricultural areas of south-east Queensland. It was part of the region's salad bowl. Fruit and vegetable farms flourished in the area due to a combination of rich volcanic soil and a constant water supply drawn from the water table, which was sufficiently close to the surface to provide spring water at a number of locations in the area. Prior to the area opening up to the farming community in the late 1800s and early twentieth century, it also provided a good timber supply, so thick were the forests in the area. Therefore, the water table that was once the source of water for forests and bushland became the all-important supply for fruit and vegetable growers. The farms have since made way for residential development, and this valuable natural resource is no longer used to any great extent, except by a few remaining farms and one or two sporting organisations.

It is from this background that a recent initiative by the Sunnybank State Primary School deserves consideration as a pilot project for other schools in the area. Last year, the Sunnybank State School P & C Association was successful in its application for a subsidy to sink a bore and purchase pumping equipment to provide an alternative water supply to irrigate the school's sports fields. As a result of that initiative by the P & C association, the use of treated water from the mains supply to irrigate the school's sports fields will no longer be necessary, therefore saving hundreds of thousands of litres of treated water each year.

With schools increasingly becoming responsible for service charges with the assistance of funding from the Department of Education, it makes sense that alternative means of providing basic services such as water and electricity which are cheaper and which will therefore save funds be investigated and supported. I therefore take the opportunity during this debate on the Water Resources Amendment Bill to put forward this suggestion that departments may investigate for wider application. I believe that the DPI, and in particular Water Wise, have a valuable role to play, in coordination with the Department of Education, to assist schools, particularly in urban areas, to investigate the viability of utilising alternative water supplies where appropriate.

It is often the case that a major casualty of progress, in particular residential development, is that we forget some of the tried and true methods of the past or are all too ready to cast others aside as being old fashioned. Perhaps we should be less willing to discard the ways of past generations and give greater consideration to how they may be utilised in today's setting. It may well be that, by using some of these ideas, not only will we save scarce public resources but we will also help our precious environment. In supporting the Bill before the House, I request that

consideration be given by both the DPI and the Department of Education to investigating the greater use by schools of ground-water supplies in urban areas and to giving support and encouragement to schools that wish to utilise what could be a cheap and readily available natural resource.

Finally, I want to respond to comments made earlier in this debate by the member for Warrego, Mr Hobbs, and the member for Callide, Mrs McCauley. Mr Hobbs raised concerns that land-holders are required to contribute in part to the cost of establishing water infrastructure such as dams. In fact, the honourable member went so far as to say that the National Party had some philosophical problems with that policy and that it was its belief that the State Government should contribute the capital cost and land-holders should be required to pay only for water reticulation.

The problem with that approach to funding the construction of dams and other water-storage facilities is that it completely ignores the impact that such infrastructure has on the value of farms. For example, in the Water Pricing Policy Options Paper released in 1993, the Department of Primary Industries notes that prior to 1990 the only capital payments made to the State for the provision of a water allocation were in the sale price of land in certain State-developed irrigation areas. As a result of this, existing land-holders obtained windfall gains in the form of enhancements in property values resulting from their connection to secure water supplies. This occurred particularly in schemes in which the Government resumed, subdivided and sold land for agriculture.

The report noted that current valuations in the Burdekin River irrigation area indicate that, on average, over 70 per cent of sale values can be attributed to enhancement from improved water services. The question then arises—and this is a matter that the member for Warrego, Mr Hobbs, and the member for Callide, Mrs McCauley, conveniently ignored—if land-holders are to benefit from significant increases in land values as a result of the building of new dams funded solely by the State Government, should there not be a requirement for land-holders to contribute to the basic infrastructure costs?

Interestingly, in spite of the National Party's alleged philosophical objection to this approach, the report also notes the policy formulated by Water Resources in 1988 aimed at earning from land-holders a surplus of revenue over direct local operating costs principally to fund new and ongoing infrastructure costs. Changes in this direction were initiated under the former National Party Government but were overtaken by the new Labor Government's commitment to limit price increases to the CPI. So much for the National Party's philosophical commitment—a philosophical commitment that has only recently been rediscovered by the member for Warrego during his party's time in Opposition. I support the Bill before the House.

Mr STEPHAN (Gympie) (4.51 p.m.): It gives me a great deal of pleasure to join in the debate on the Water Resources Amendment Bill. People who live in the country areas of Queensland in particular realise how important it is to be able to store water and utilise it as required. Under the heading "Objectives of the Legislation", the Explanatory Notes state—

> ". . . the Government may release water allocations for sale by auction, tender or ballot.
>
> . . .
>
> The amendments to Part 7 will increase the flexibility of the licensing process . . ."

They continue—

> "Provision is being made to enable charges to offset the cost of Government in ensuring that referable dams are built and operated in a safe manner to protect the community."

Those provisions are very important, but there is what amounts to a demand that producers pay for water up-front. The fact that other people are receiving the benefit of that water in the production of crops or the running of cattle seems to be of secondary concern. My concern is that the Government is imposing those up-front charges on the irrigators and those who use the water in the cities and forgetting the flow-on effect that it will have to other parts of the community.

I would like to emphasise that the whole community needs to benefit over a period. I am not talking about 30 years or 40 years. When a dam is constructed, it has to last for many generations. It must be borne in mind that future generations will get the benefit of the water from such a dam.

On my own farm, I engaged in a process of water conservation. I built more dams to try to ensure that I had sufficient water for the driest season that might come along. The pity of it was that I had just got the dams large enough so that I could cope in the driest of seasons and I sold the farm! Anyway, somebody else is getting the benefit of it.

Somebody else is harnessing the water and utilising it. Those dams will be there for a long time. That is the important point.

The member for Bundaberg said that we need more efficient use of water. I am not sure where the efficiencies are to be made. The member was talking about water being transported over a long distance. In the instance that he gave, it was brought from the Bjelke-Petersen Dam to the Bundaberg area for the purpose of irrigation. I am concerned about the loss of water that occurs when it is being released from these dams. By the time it reaches its destination, a tremendous amount has been lost.

In the Gympie area in the 1991 drought, water was being released from the Borumba Dam at about 240 megalitres a day, and only 160 or 170 megalitres was actually reaching its destination. Approximately 80 megalitres was disappearing. We cannot afford to lose that amount of water, particularly during times of drought.

Mr Beattie: Evaporation.

Mr STEPHAN: Evaporation would account for the loss of some of that water, but not as much as 80 megalitres. More evaporation will occur when the water is in the dam than when it is being transported. If water is going to be transported over long distances, a more efficient method needs to be used than running it down riverbeds. The water soaks into the ground. Some people may even take some of the water during that process. There is a tremendous demand for ground water, and the demand cannot be met. Some of the existing underground systems that held water 10 years ago just do not have any water at the moment. A lot of rain over many seasons will be needed to replenish our water supplies.

I have with me an article from my local paper which carries the title "Urgent Need to Get More Water". It refers to the Mary River catchment, which runs for a considerable distance. It passes through the back of Caloundra and Maryborough before it reaches the ocean. The areas of Hervey Bay, Maryborough, Noosa, Maroochydore, Caloundra and Gympie are experiencing tremendous population growth. All of these areas will require water from the Mary River and its tributaries. The local residents are concerned that there will be a shortage of water. Unless programs are put in place to obtain more water and to reuse water—for example, grey water can be used for watering gardens—we will not have sufficient water in the foreseeable future.

That brings me to the plan to increase the capacity of the Borumba Dam. It is proposed to build a new dam wall. But that is not going to occur until the year 2006. During the last season, a month was the difference between running out of water and having just enough to get by. Another month of dry weather would have meant that that dam would have been empty or very close to empty. The irrigators certainly would not have been able to use any water from it. Under those circumstances, the water would have had to be kept for the people who live in the cities and towns.

At this stage, there has been no real commitment from the Minister as to when work will start on raising the water level of the Borumba Dam. There is a proposal to use a sock, for want of a better word, over the spillway to lift the level of the water another three metres to four metres. That will make a big difference to the volume of water that will be able to be stored by that structure. We want that work to be carried out now. We do not want to have to wait another three or four years for the water level of that dam to be lifted.

The Government needs to realise that, as a result of the tremendous population growth in this area, there is a shortage of water. We have to face the consequences. Local residents have told me of their concern that we might run out of water. This matter cannot be taken lightly. A decision has been made that a dam will be built on Amamoor Creek.

Mr Beattie: Amamoor?

Mr STEPHAN: Yes. Does the honourable member know where Gympie is? I will take Mr Beattie for a walk around the ridges and let him know where those areas are.

Mr Beattie interjected.

Mr STEPHAN: The honourable member is getting close to it. I am pleased that the fellows from Brisbane know where those rural places are. From time to time, the honourable member obviously enjoys going there.

A decision has been made for the construction of a dam on Amamoor Creek, and the locals are at a loss as to what they can expect. The Government should bear in mind that, although the construction of that dam may be 20 years in the future, those people must be able to get on with their lives. They realise that the area will be covered by a dam and that, if they want to sell their property, they will not be able to sell it for its real value. If people want to make

improvements to their property, they will not be able to obtain a real return and be paid in full for those improvements. Because of the unknown, those people are not able to sell their property or make any improvements to it. If the Minister or the acting Minister intends to go ahead with that construction, I ask that plans be put in place fairly quickly to enable those people who have to move out of the area to be able to do so. I also ask that those who want to stay in the area be allowed to stay for another 20 years, or whatever it might be. Uncertainty is the major concern of those people and, for that matter, people who live anywhere else. As soon as the Government talks about building a dam in an area, it incurs the wrath of the locals, who always want the dam to be built somewhere else and not near them.

Another problem is that some time in the not-too-distant future we must cater for the storage of water by methods other than the building of dams. Some members have spoken about the possibility of using water from underground systems, but this also draws the wrath of some sections of the community. Another alternative is desalination, although that is an expensive alternative that may not be feasible. However, we should investigate and pursue those options to ensure that we do not run out of water during dry periods. During the wet season, there is plenty of water. However, on the driest continent on earth we must ensure that we have sufficient water for the foreseeable future and for future generations.

Moves have been made to put weirs in some rivers, for example, the Mary River, and to use those weirs for water distribution. Honourable members referred also to the Teemburra dam in Mackay. It was suggested that a weir in the area south of Gympie could hold about 9,000 megalitres. That is not an enormous amount of water, but a sock or deflatable apparatus could be used to get water out of the way during floods and it could be put back again when the floods have gone. If that system could be utilised throughout our river system, it would enable water to be stored in river banks and nearby areas and would ensure that the level of flooding, which sometimes causes a problem, would not increase. Those are some of my concerns. As I said, I am concerned about the possibility of the Government imposing on operators extra charges that they may not be able to bear.

Mr Beattie: Do you support user pays for water?

Mr STEPHAN: If the honourable member had been listening earlier, he would have heard that I made the point——

Mr Beattie: You avoided it earlier. I heard what you said.

Mr STEPHAN: No, I was not avoiding it. The honourable member says that the first user shall pay for the whole lot.

Mr Beattie: Yes, but they get the capital benefits from that, don't they?

Mr STEPHAN: That is what the Government is doing. It is increasing the cost of allocations. Twelve or 18 months ago, the statement was made that an allocation would cost about $300 or $400 a megalitre. Bearing in mind the amount of water that is used by some irrigators, that charge would be a substantial amount of money that people would not be able to afford. The dam, weir or whatever it might be will be there for many generations. I do not see why the present generation should pay the total cost of that construction. If the Government is to be sensible and realistic about that program, it should put the money up-front so that future generations can benefit.

Mrs BIRD (Whitsunday) (5.07 p.m.): At the outset, I send my best wishes to the Minister for Primary Industries and Water Resources, Edmund Casey. Most people recognise that he is a special man with special strengths, but the fortitude of that man must be seen to be believed. I know that he regrets not being here today for the debate on this legislation. We look forward to having him back very, very soon.

I support the Bill, because water is by far the most significant issue in my electorate. Whether one is in Collinsville, Airlie Beach, the islands or the cane fields of Calen, it is the very same issue. I support any legislation that will make easier access to improved water and infrastructure management through water supply and drainage boards. The reason is the necessity for water in my electorate. The location and pattern of development within the Whitsunday electorate have been largely governed by the rural sector, particularly the sugar and horticultural industries. Recent growth in popularity of offshore and coastal tourism has had an impact. The tourism and hospitality industry has emerged as a major regional industry. The role of some centres has also changed. Nevertheless, the dominant primary industry is the growing of sugarcane, with sugar mills in Proserpine and Farleigh.

The major storage of water in my electorate is in the southern part of Dumbleton

and the Peter Faust Dam, with the largest storage being the Peter Faust Dam, which has a capacity of 500,000 megalitres. That dam supplies additional water for irrigation and urban development while protecting the town of Proserpine and its highly developed agricultural areas from flooding. The Kinchant Dam, with a storage capacity of almost 63,000 megalitres, operates as a system from three weirs on the Pioneer River. The construction of water storage in the Pioneer and Proserpine Rivers has resulted in significant social and economic benefits for the associated community. However, it is fair to say that, in all areas of my electorate, there are still many dry spots. An appraisal study of storage sites in tributaries of the Pioneer River has located a preferred option for future urban water supply development, and the Goss Government has allocated $34m towards the cost of the Teemburra project. The sugar industry has responded positively, with a further $45m towards the construction of works funded by its sugar package.

The Eungella Dam was built in 1969 to provide water for the Collinsville Power Station and water for the Clare Weir on the Burdekin River for agriculture in the lower Burdekin delta. There is no longer a requirement for water from the Eungella Dam at the Clare Weir since the completion of the Burdekin Dam. As a result, considerable spare water capacity exists at Eungella for reallocation to the Bowen River irrigation area.

Preliminary estimates through Water Resources in Ayr indicate that an additional 15,000 megalitres per annum is currently available in the vicinity of Collinsville and that this could irrigate between 2,000 and 3,000 hectares, depending on the types of crops and the irrigation method used. As a basis for comparison, the Don River horticultural area at Bowen comprises 3,000 hectares with a water allocation of approximately 15,000 megalitres per annum.

Bowen small-crop growers directly employ 1,200 people during the season, and the value of horticultural production in 1994 was estimated at $80m. The industry is looking to expand into exports, but is being severely limited by lack of a suitable water conservation scheme on the Don River. Although the comparison between the Don River and Bowen River areas partly identifies the agricultural potential on the Bowen River, the DPI has experienced considerable difficulty in encouraging existing land-holders—mainly pastoral lessees—to take up water allocations for agricultural use. However, in recent times there have been instances when some Bowen growers have successfully negotiated directly with land-holders to lease land and to commence horticultural production on the Bowen River. This could be the start of a new industry in the Collinsville region.

In 1967, a report was produced on the Bowen/Broken River irrigation scheme. That report identified 30,000 hectares of land on the Bowen River as being suitable for irrigation, but the report focused mainly on the production of fodder and improved pastures for the beef industry. The scheme would have supported 2,000 people within the Collinsville region and provided additional benefits and employment opportunities in the Bowen and Mackay regions for meat processing.

The scheme was based on the construction of the Urannah dam of 1.5 million megalitres capacity, which would have provided enough water to irrigate 30,000 hectares in the Collinsville area and 90,000 hectares in the lower Burdekin. Eventually the decision was taken to build the Burdekin Dam of 1.86 million megalitre capacity, and this meant the abandonment of plans to irrigate the Bowen River. I am assured that that was not a political decision.

Since the completion of the Burdekin Dam, a change in development plans for irrigation on the right bank of the Burdekin River from Home Hill to Guthalungra along the coastal belt north of Bowen has occurred. This has been due to high development costs and the unsuitability of soil types containing excessive salt levels. That area of approximately 30,000 hectares has been taken out of the original Burdekin scheme and its future development is under review.

As a result of the excellent work done by the Collinsville District Development Bureau through the Collinsville Future Search Workshop, Mr Casey feels that a good opportunity exists to look again at the 30,000 hectares of high quality agricultural land on the Bowen River and redefine its agriculture potential in view of the changes in the requirements of local and export markets that have taken place since that initial report in 1967.

Recently, I have received inquiries about Bowen River land for the growing of cotton, citrus trees, grain, peanuts, vine crops and horticultural production. With its inland location, cold winters, good soil and abundant water, the Bowen River could provide a diversity of agricultural opportunities which are not available in the wetter coastal areas of north Queensland, particularly in relation to satisfying export markets. The objectives of

the steering committee into agribusiness, which was set up through the Future Search Workshop, are to promote the implementation of the Bowen River irrigation scheme in a number of stages.

Stage 1 would involve the taking up of surplus water available from Eungella and would be implemented at a minimal cost to Government. The town of Collinsville has the infrastructure capacity already available to absorb between 1,500 and 2,000 people. Any future developments of the irrigation scheme would be dependent on the success and viability of producers involved in Stage 1 and this would give the Government the opportunity to assess the economics of the project before any additional investment in the region is required. In promoting the implementation of Stage 1 of the Bowen River irrigation scheme, the committee selected several objectives, and among which was a review of that original report. The Minister has agreed to that review, and it is now proceeding.

Once again, I offer my best wishes to Edmund Casey. I support the Bill.

Mr ROWELL (Hinchinbrook) (5.15 p.m.): I acknowledge the difficult situation in which the Minister for Primary Industries finds himself.

Queensland has a variety of rainfall conditions, some of which vary quite markedly over a very short distance. Many areas along the tropical coastal belt have a severe problem because of the difficulties involved in growing crops under wet conditions.

The sugar industry, in particular, faces an immediate challenge in relation to water management. In some cases, a need exists for irrigation in many of the drier areas of the State. However, on the wet tropical coast it is essential that the farming community is able to carry out the many and diverse functions with which rural industries are required to cope and the specific circumstances that apply. The sugar industry is providing a sound future for our balance of payments. Australia has now become the biggest single exporter of sugar in the world. This year, the Queensland sugar industry will contribute $1.6 billion in export credits for Australia. The sugar industry produced 5 million tonnes of sugar, which included the New South Wales industry's contribution. Twenty percent of the total production is used in home consumption. It is essential that practical legislation is put in place for the future development of an industry that is expanding at a rapid rate in this State.

It is crucial that access to drainage be made available to those areas that are developing their land resource. In the past, individual drainage has been carried out on an ad hoc basis but, in the future, greater recognition will be given to planned systems that should eliminate the frustration and doubts that have occurred in the past. It is also important that areas that have been growing crops over a period are integrated into comprehensive systems that benefit catchment areas as a whole. After all, water is the lifeblood of primary industries and, indeed, of life itself.

It is often necessary to contain water with dams or to pipe water considerable distances to ensure supply. There is generally a lack of planning by Labor Governments—particularly this one and its Federal counterpart—to contain or divert water from areas in the continent where there is an abundance to areas that have enormous potential for the growing of crops.

Mr Nuttall: What did your Government do?

Mr ROWELL: We did plenty as far as creating water storage areas is concerned.

Recently, many of those areas experienced one of the worst droughts ever experienced, but no planning to prevent that happening in the future has become apparent. We have learnt to provide systems through irrigation to iron out the deficiencies of rainfall. At times, there is a need to grow crops totally under irrigation or to supplement rainfall.

Crops vary in their water requirements. Often there is a distinct advantage in growing a crop in an arid environment, as long as water can be provided for irrigation. At times there is an underground supply, a stream or a river that can be sourced for a wide range of specific systems of irrigation. Constantly, better systems are being developed and more precise methods are being used to measure a plant's requirements. This is bringing about the finetuning of a crop's water requirements and making better use of a resource that is generally in short supply. Most of these systems not only apply water to crops but it is also quite common for fertiliser to be introduced into the system to maintain a crop's nutritional requirements. The latest irrigation statistics are for 1992-93. It is highly likely that the current figures are much higher.

The area under irrigation in the State was 386,739 hectares. The crop with the greatest area being watered was sugar cane, with 154,000 hectares. Crops under irrigation included cereals, 46,500 hectares; fruit,

22,600 hectares; and vegetables, 28,000 hectares. Other crops and pastures covered 135,000 hectares. There were 8,448 establishments using irrigation.

Coal-fired power stations and hydrosystems for the power generation industry in the State depend on water for their existence, and they have built storages to ensure a constant water supply. Although agricultural drainage is important in every area where crops are being produced, there is a greater demand for it on the wet tropical coast of the State. Because of the spasmodic nature of the Queensland weather, even the drier areas of the State need to make provision for drainage in the event of unseasonal rain occurring.

Both the Federal and State Governments have become aware of the valuable contribution the sugar industry makes to the economy. As a result, prior to the last Federal election the Sugar Industry Infrastructure Package was devised to bolster the Federal Government's prospects. The total package amounted to $117m. An amount of $19m was provided separately by the Federal and Queensland State Governments, with the industry making up the difference.

The break-up of the package is as follows: drainage in the Russell, Mulgrave, Tully and Ingham districts received about $7.25m from Government sources and the industry will contribute about $4.245m. Irrigation projects in the Burdekin and Maryborough were recognised as an initiative that would be beneficial to those regions, which receive less rainfall than the coastal section north of Townsville. The Government's contribution was $23.45m, and the industry's obligation is $57.67m. Other sources are involved. Two tramline extensions in the Murray Valley and Plane Creek regions received $7.3m from the Government and $17.625m has to come from the industry in those areas. As the Minister has said, the agreement with the Commonwealth is to spend the money by 30 June 1997. Owing to the buoyancy of the industry, there has been a great demand for land. The industry is in a state of constant expansion, and land held by the Government in the Burdekin River area is being sold for record prices. The Government is making quite a handsome packet out of it.

It is essential that every endeavour is made to keep the industry efficient and also that the very necessary insurance of making provision for irrigation and drainage is made while the industry can afford it. A great deal of land being used by the sugar industry is marginal. In the past, owing to its impoverished or low-lying nature, that land has been passed by. In a number of instances, the sugar package will provide the necessary infrastructure resources to allow individuals to access better drainage and irrigation.

Currently, according to statistical information, 17 drainage boards are operating in the State administering a total of 19,910 hectares of land. The majority of those boards are located from Smithfield in the north to Ingham, with individual benefited areas, in one instance, of up to 6,000 hectares.

In the past, four drainage boards in the Ingham district have been administered independently. The concept of drainage boards in Ingham started back in 1976. At the time, there was an element of apprehension among growers, but commonsense prevailed, and with the administrative skills of Eric Wilson, the long-time manager of the Hinchinbrook and Cardwell Development Bureau, the growers in the area were able to reap the benefits. The amalgamation of the four drainage boards will allow for independent management by each farmers' group while gaining major administration savings. Reductions should occur with borrowings, if necessary, and banking and auditing will also be more efficient.

Another advantage will occur with the maintenance and construction of drains. The economies of scale brought about by the hire of equipment and the general application of preserving the carrying capacity of the systems is essential. Although the construction of drainage systems is important, the ongoing maintenance is of paramount concern. No mention has been made in the legislation of works committees. Currently, residents and growers in the lower Seymour River area in the Ingham district are greatly concerned about the diversion work that has been proposed through the Ripple Creek area. The *Herbert River Express* has given coverage to the proposed scheme and the comments that have been made by the various parties.

One of the major problems that is occurring on the flood plains is the silting of rivers and streams. It has been estimated that, in a flood, only 10 per cent of the water is carried in the actual stream. Because of the heavy rainfall in the tropics, it is essential that watercourses are kept as clear as possible. Although they carry only a small amount of flood water, they provide the necessary function of reducing excesses in water tables when the flood subsides.

Over the past 10 years, canegrowers, particularly in north Queensland, have been trash blanketing their ratoons. That practice has reduced the unnecessary work of ratooning a crop and it has played a major role in almost eliminating the silt being deposited in rivers and streams. In the past, agriculture received the blame for silt problems, but for thousands of years before any form of agriculture existed, silting occurred in estuaries and rivers and watercourses shifted because of natural phenomena.

It is evident that there is now a keen awareness of the need to use low-lying and swamp areas to reduce turbidity levels of drainage systems and absorb nutrients in the water. Agricultural industries are mindful of their responsibility to eliminate nutrients finding their way into streams, and they have given a great deal of support to the monitoring that has taken place in the Johnstone and Herbert catchments to follow the progress of fertiliser through the soil profile, as it is in the best interests of rural producers to utilise fully the nutrients that are applied. To date, the recordings have shown levels lower than the accepted benchmark.

Throughout flood plains and low-lying country, natural formations take excess water into rivers and creeks. They have evolved over centuries when a sufficient volume of water has made channels to rivers and creeks, and then to the sea. If those formations are obstructed with man-made structures, the blockage will cause flooding and, of course, loss of crops. Once again, this legislation has done nothing to ensure that those important formations are kept open and clear. I am aware of a number of man-made blockages that have caused confrontations between growers, resulting in crop losses and erosion problems.

To some degree, the problem is being addressed at a district level when new areas are assigned and applications for cane assignments are made. However, the problem is not as easy to address in existing assigned areas, and it is virtually impossible to enforce a solution when dealing with growers who are not answerable to the sugar industry.

The Government is more content with creating a fuzzy feeling about environmental issues. The red tape and time involved in clearing silt that has built up in mangroves has held vital work to ransom. There is no question that these sensitive areas should not have a knock-it-down and dig-it-up policy. That should not occur. However, applications need to be expedited and work carried out within a reasonable time frame. The cost of these applications and the level of planning required is ludicrous.

Although the clearing of drains and mangroves, which requires a permit from the DPI, immediately looks destructive, a rapid rehabilitation of the species takes place once the work is completed. The drainage boards in the electorate have raised a number of issues in relation to the legislation. There is a need to clarify what is intended by the term "other relevant lands", which appears on numerous occasions in the amendment Bill. If a structure is built or construction work is to take place, why can these areas not come under the designated area? If they are an integral part of the drainage system, I believe they should be included in the designated area. It is unlikely that "other relevant land" will be other than a part of the drainage scheme. Can an explanation be provided for this definition?

In the previous legislation, it was designated that one owner or occupier of a property would be eligible to be a member of a drainage board. The amendment now allows for more than one member from each property to be eligible for election to a board. Generally, this is undesirable, as technically the whole board could come from one property. Hypothetically, if a designated area extended into a residential area, it is possible that a group of people living in a block of flats could be eligible to run a drainage board. I do not believe that that will happen but, unfortunately, that is what the legislation allows for.

It would mean that, if people had a barrow to push, they could control the progress of a board, which would be funded by the rates set by the board on land-holders in the area. Often, there are a number of hobby farmers within a designated area. Once again, because they may outnumber the farming community, who carry the burden of the majority of rates, it is possible that the people in rural areas would have no say in the running of the drainage board. It is possible that the whole direction of the board could be railroaded by a group that has the majority of members, although they make a minor contribution. They can investigate proposals for work; construct; administer; fix and levy rates; and undertake a wide range of activities vested in the board.

Another matter that was raised by the Warrubullen Drainage Board, near Innisfail, was the recovery of debt. The board has a serious problem with bad debts of $70,000. This has been further exacerbated by a

defunct aquaculture venture owing $35,000 and another person who owes the board $4,000. Part of the problem occurred when the Water Resources Act of 1989 was introduced. The board was not aware that the provision in the Water Act of 1926 that had tied the debt to the land had been changed by the Water Resources Act of 1989. It is highly possible that the reason that the provision was deleted in 1989 was that, if the lessee did not pay the levies for some time, the debt could accumulate to a substantial amount of money. If the lessee left the property, the debt would then rest with the owner of the property, possibly without the owner's knowledge.

There would be some industries, such as the sugar industry, in which the levy could be deducted from mill pays but, in the case of the horticultural or cattle industries, this would be impossible. Of course, the hobby farms and urban subdivisions could not be levied in a similar manner to the sugar producers through the mill payments system. Local governments may be the appropriate authorities to act as a collection agency if the matter gets out of hand.

Drainage does present a different situation for bad debts from that of water supply for irrigation, as the irrigation supply can, in some ways, be restricted or cut off. But in the case of debt recovery for drainage, for the most part it would be difficult to block access to drainage. More than likely, that type of action would have an impact on other property holders who depend on the drain to remove water from their property. An amendment by way of regulation may provide for the chief executive to delegate power in a catchment area to a local government authority.

Time expired.

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN (Caboolture) (5.35 p.m.): It gives me a great deal of pleasure to rise in support of the Water Resources Amendment Bill. In the past five years, with the Minister, I have visited a number of areas and spoken to users. I believe I have some understanding of the importance of water in a great many areas of this State.

I would like to acknowledge the rather extraordinary comment by the previous speaker, the member for Hinchinbrook, who intimated that Labor Governments are known for their lack of planning. That was an interesting comment, given that currently in my local papers I am being belted by the coalition candidate because this Government does nothing other than plan. Maybe they are both wrong, because the coalition candidate is claiming that one of its phantom projects in 1982, which we are bringing to fruition, is——

Mr FitzGerald: Every time he's on his feet he talks about the Opposition.

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN: Members opposite are a wealth of material.

Mr T. B. Sullivan: A wealth of contradiction.

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN: Indeed, they are a wealth of contradiction. They are the resident joke. Maybe we should talk about them more often.

This evening, I would like to preface my comments on the Bill by acknowledging the great work of the Minister for Primary Industries, my good friend and colleague, Ed Casey, a man with whom I have had the pleasure of working quite closely for the past five years. I would like to acknowledge his work in bringing this Bill to the House. It is another example of the excellent work that Ed has done in his five years as Minister to modernise the operation of the vital primary industries of this State. Having previously wished him well in an earlier debate, I now look forward with great anticipation to his return to work in his post as Minister for Primary Industries.

The Bill amends the Water Resources Act of 1989. It will achieve a number of objectives, including the provision of more flexible processes for establishing and amalgamating water and drainage boards. There is the power to sell new and increased water allocations by auction, tender and ballot over and above the existing methods. There is a simplification of the process for entering into agreements for the supply of water. And in establishing designated areas under Part 7 of the legislation, there are mechanisms to incorporate requirements resulting from community consultation. It is important that we acknowledge community consultation. Also, the Bill provides for the setting of fees and charges, other than for water, to cover the costs of administering the very important control of referable dams in respect of integrity and safety issues.

At this point, I will comment on the contribution of the Opposition spokesman, the member for Warrego. If my understanding of his contribution is correct, he does not want inspection fees for referable dams. He is suggesting that we put the onus on people to ensure that the dams are maintained. For the information of members who may not know, I inform the House that a referable dam is one

that exceeds set minimum dimensions, or one which could pose a risk to life or property should it collapse or fail in any way. It is quite clear that the Government, if it did not inspect these dams, would certainly be derelict in its duty of care to the people. Therefore, these provisions are fine.

There are some further effects of this Bill, including a number of minor amendments which essentially improve administrative efficiency. Amendments to the Bill will, among other things, enable the implementation of the State agreement with the Commonwealth on the Sugar Industry Infrastructure Package, which has been spoken about a great deal. I will refer to it again shortly. It provides a more businesslike approach to establishing water development policies and it provides for more flexible procedures for establishing flood plain management areas. It is worth mentioning that no additional cost implications are anticipated as a consequence of the proposed legislation. The changes will either be revenue neutral or lead to lower costs. I want to elaborate a little on some of those points.

The Goss Government is committed to creating an environment that encourages the development of new products, new marketing opportunities and new industry developments. The Government's goal is to ensure that infrastructure is in place to meet the State's economic growth potential in alignment with the principles of ecologically sustainable development. The Department of Primary Industries, under the strong leadership of Ed Casey, has implemented a new policy approach to the provision of water infrastructure development through consultation and negotiation of partnership arrangements with rural industries and individuals to provide for shared funding agreements to enhance the placement of more efficient and effective water resource infrastructure.

The Opposition spokesman, the member for Warrego, indicated that he had some philosophical problems with farmer beneficiaries having to contribute to the cost of works. I mirror the comments of my colleague the member for Bundaberg, who indicated that he felt that that particular part of the Opposition spokesman's speech and those parts that followed it smacked of gross hypocrisy. In her contribution, the member for Callide also spoke about that matter, saying that she was against user pays. I refer members to the Minister's second-reading speech, in which he indicated that this was a continuation of a previously decided policy—one that was decided by this Government in 1990. The Minister indicated quite clearly that that does not mean that the Government would not continue to be a major contributor to new water resource development in the future. In fact, it is not user pays; it is user contributes, which is slightly different. Of course, land-holder contributions will enable State Government funds to go further.

Finally, and more importantly, in his second-reading speech the Minister indicated that this policy is consistent with a policy for water reform agreed to by the Council of Australian Governments in Hobart in February 1994, which the Queensland Government supports. In February 1994, the Council of Australian Governments—if one includes the ACT—had amongst it representatives three ALP Governments and six coalition Governments. It is clearly quite incorrect for Mrs McCauley to draw the conclusion that this Government has no concern for the interests of people in western Queensland, unless she wishes to visit similar criticisms on her ideological colleagues in southern States. As the Minister said, by obtaining contributions from the industry the public dollar is stretched much further to enable more formalities to be pursued, as opposed to arrangements under the previous Government.

A prime result of this approach is the Sugar Industry Infrastructure Package, which comprises $19m of State funding being matched by the Commonwealth and supplemented by industry to the total of $45m. The Sugar Industry Infrastructure Package is designed to give the industry confidence, stability and growth for at least the coming decade, complementing the modernising measures already undertaken in the Queensland Sugar Industry Act 1991. The member for Hinchinbrook, Mr Rowell, expanded on the details of the 12 projects within the package, which include irrigation, drainage and transport works. I will not cover those details again. I admit that the member has an interest in matters relating to sugar—not the least of which is where his next feed is coming from.

Part of the arrangement agreed to within the package requires drainage boards to carry out works for which progress payments will be met. The amendment to the Water Resources Act 1989 will allow the amalgamation of water supply and drainage boards. This will enable industry to borrow in order to fund drainage and irrigation schemes. This is necessary in cases where the Department of Primary Industries is not the body actually responsible for the work, as opposed to major developments such as the Teemburra dam,

where the Department of Primary Industries is managing the project and, as we have heard several times during this debate, contributing some $34m.

Another important result of these amendments is that they will assist in the management of flood plains. Under the amended legislation, the community will be able to consider the acceptability of existing or planned works on flood plains within the process required prior to constitution of a designated area. The process of notification of a proposal includes details of acceptable works that have been found to be acceptable based on criteria developed in consultation with the community. Again, I highlight the community consultation that is a key factor of this amending Bill. The process also provides for objection by individuals or organisations and negotiation of amendments to the proposal so that the rights of all are protected. Honourable members should welcome those arrangements.

After the constitution of a designated area, acceptable works can be licensed in a predictable way without further appeal by community members. For the owners of the acceptable works, this will mean that less uncertainty is associated with the licensing process. They can have confidence that, if the works are identified as acceptable works in a proposal to constitute a designated area, then they will not be required to remove the works as a result of a licensing decision by the department or an appeal court. For those concerned about the construction of works on flood plains, the changes mean that the acceptability of works can be established by the community in the process of constituting a designated area. This avoids the need for expensive court action to challenge licensing decisions with which they disagree. In summary, the amendments provide greater planning certainty for land-holders with existing or proposed works on flood plains while still providing community processes through which any concerns can be considered and resolved.

As an example of just how important this legislation is—by paying close attention to the proper and effective control and management of water, which is our most important resource—the Goss Government has been able to ensure steady progress and growth in the sugar industry in Queensland for the past three years. I shall cite some examples of that. Sugarcane is Queensland's second most economically important crop. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics' preliminary estimates, it contributed $827.2m, or 16.6 per cent, to the State's gross value of agricultural commodities produced in 1993-94. That figure was 8.5 per cent above the previous year's crop and the second successive annual increase in value since the drought devastated the 1991-92 crop. It is estimated that the gross value of sugarcane cut for crushing in 1994-95 will reach a record $1,200m. That figure is 45.1 per cent above the previous year's preliminary ABS estimate and 22.9 per cent of the State's total gross value of production. That increase resulted from a record cut of 32.9 million tonnes of cane—which was up 10 per cent on the previous year—improved sugar content and increased prices. As a consequence of the record sugarcane cut, the 25 Queensland sugar mills produced 4.68 million tonnes of raw sugar—16.4 per cent more than the previous year's record of 4.02 million tonnes.

Provided that reasonable weather conditions prevail throughout the remainder of this financial year, at least 32 million tonnes of sugarcane could be crushed in 1995-96. Assuming average sugar content, it is estimated that sugar production could range between 4.4 million and 4.6 million tonnes. This could not have occurred, and the future would not look so promising, without water. The massive expansion in the Burdekin is a great example of this. I have no doubt that without the untiring efforts of the Minister, Ed Casey, these significant achievements would not have been possible. The Water Resources Amendment Bill will enable the hard work that Ed has done to continue this expansion.

We have had some reasonably good rains in recent times, but if Queenslanders could harness the tears being shed in South Australia right now and turn those onto our farmlands, we would not have to worry about water resources in this State for some time.

Mr FITZGERALD (Lockyer) (5.49 p.m.): It is with pleasure that I join the debate on the Water Resources Amendment Bill 1995. I will not confine my remarks specifically to the clauses of the Bill but will speak generally about water resource matters of which I have some knowledge and for which I have considerable passion. Previous speakers in this debate have outlined their attitudes to the storage of water and the record of this Government—either praising it or condemning it, depending on which side of the chair they sit. I believe that the Goss Labor Government will be remembered in history for the absolute blunder that it made in halting the Wolffdene dam project. History will record that as one of the greatest political blunders ever made by a Government in Queensland's history.

The need for water is absolute. Our civilianisation cannot survive without it. We talk about cutting down on water use, and I know that we have to do that, but at present we have not found any alternative to it. Water is necessary to sustain life. Every human being uses water in varying quantities—although I know that some members probably drink more of it than others. We need water for the production of our food and we need it for the carrying away of our waste. It is used as a medium for conveying our waste from our homes.

The Government's attempt at substituting the Wolffdene dam with a number of other dams means that other people are going to be disturbed; we will have to build water storages of a similar capacity somewhere else. The previous Government had gone through all the pain of obtaining the site for the Wolffdene dam. People living in the area had been disturbed. It was at considerable personal cost to a lot of people whose properties had to be resumed by the Brisbane and Area Water Board, which was the purchasing authority at the time. All that pain had been gone through, only to see this Government come into power and change the policy initiatives and declare that it was not going to proceed with the Wolffdene dam.

I would like to speak generally about some of the major water storages which have already been constructed and which were not paid for immediately. Let us look at the Snowy Mountains scheme. I know that that was an electricity generating scheme, but it primarily turned the snow-fed waters that flowed into the Pacific Ocean inland so that we had a substantial Murray/Murrumbidgee irrigation scheme in southern parts of Australia. I give praise to the Governments of the day that initiated that scheme and carried it out. Had that scheme not succeeded, Australia would have been in a much weaker position today as far as water supplies are concerned. We would not have had the population that exists today or the great farming enterprises in the Murrumbidgee irrigation area, which was set up during the fifties. As a young lad, I went down there and inspected those schemes. I looked at the construction of the mighty Snowy Mountains project. I saw Jindabyne and Adaminaby, which had to be shifted. That was a traumatic time for most of the inhabitants because their whole town had to be shifted. That was one of the costs that was borne by those people; although they were compensated so that the rest of Australia could benefit from the scheme.

I refer also to the Ord River project, which I believe has largely been a failure, probably because it was constructed for political reasons, and I see the Minister nodding his head. At the time, there was a feeling in Australia that we needed to store more water. The Prime Minister, Bob Menzies, was in strife in the electorate, so he decided that he would implement that major project to prove to the people that he was interested in the provision of water. That is my political analysis of his decision at the time.

The scheme went ahead. It is a magnificent scheme, but the water has not been able to be utilised properly. Some farming enterprises depend on that scheme but, by and large, the water goes to waste. The water is supplied at an extremely low price to farmers. What price does one sell water at when there is an abundance of it and there are not enough takers? The price is being set at that level in an endeavour to obtain a return on capital, which is not occurring at present.

I forecast that eventually that scheme and other schemes up in the Kimberleys will supply water to Adelaide and to other parts of south-eastern Australia. Although members might say, "Gee, you are a bit far-fetched, aren't you", I point out that there are no great ranges between the Kimberleys and the south east that a pipeline would have to cross.

One of our benefits as members of Parliament is that we can sometimes travel overseas and find out what happens in the rest of the world. In October, I was part of a parliamentary team that went with the then Minister for Business, Industry and Regional Development, Mr Elder, to Korea. While we were in Seoul, we were hosted by the staff of a company called Dong Ah, who explained to us that although they conducted a shipping business, they were mainly into construction around the world. They had just completed a project in Libya. They had actually won a contract to supply water from the Sahara Desert to two cities on the Mediterranean coast.

The project was enormous. A number of spears were used to pump accumulated fresh water from under the Sahara Desert—I forget the depth they pumped it from—and then conveyed through two separate pipelines to the coast. Each of the pipelines was 4 metres in diameter. The total length of the pipeline was 4,000 kilometres. I know that members are astounded to hear about that. We were taken through the whole project on a map. It is enormous. Of course, Libya was extremely short of water. It had this enormous amount of

fresh water under the Sahara Desert, which the company put in large holding reservoirs. One of the pipelines actually ran downhill all the way, because there were no mountain ranges and the Sahara Desert is above sea level. It was just a straight downhill gradient all the way. The other pipeline needed a pumping station because the water had to be pumped over a low range. There was quite a considerable cost involved. The pipes that were laid weighed 72 tonnes each. I presume that they had no problem finding bedding sand in the Sahara Desert for the project.

That gives members an idea, in a country that is reasonably wealthy because of its oil reserves, of the value of water for those people and how with a bit of vision a large project can succeed. I would find it very difficult to believe that a project such as that could be started under this legislation, which is basically user pays. The point I am making is that sometimes infrastructure has to be provided by the State over a long period. I am not saying that every stupid scheme that can be dreamt up is going to be feasible so therefore we should incur massive national debts to pay for some scheme that obviously is not financially sound. I do not subscribe to that theory at all, but I believe that, because we are an extremely dry continent, some day we will see water from the Ord River used by the population in south-eastern Australia.

Likewise, I think other massive schemes will need to be developed to give a little bit of hope and direction to this nation. Can honourable members think of the effect such a large project would have upon this nation were we to get it going now? We have to look back at the project to supply the goldfields in Western Australia with water from the Mendara Weir. At about the turn of the century, an Irish engineer by the name of O'Connor developed a scheme to convey water all the way from somewhere north of Perth—Mendara Weir—all the way to the goldfields. I forget the actual length of the pipeline, but it was an enormous distance. I believe that water is so vital to this nation that we will really have to consider the provision of such infrastructure by Government over a long period.

Sitting suspended from 5.59 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr FITZGERALD: Before the dinner recess, I was outlining the need for the Government to provide the necessary infrastructure for water facilities throughout the nation and particularly this State. I note in the legislation the requirement for the beneficiaries of that infrastructure to pay a capital contribution towards its cost, allegedly so that the State may provide more infrastructure. My question to the Minister—and I know that he will need to seek advice on it—is: how many structures have been constructed by the Labor Government in the five years that it has been in power that were not planned by the previous Government? How many new projects has the Government started that were not already planned and did not receive the sugar infrastructure funding that was provided by the Federal Government?

Mr Nunn: You talk a lot, but you did nothing.

Mr FITZGERALD: The member for Hervey Bay says that the former Government did nothing. If he were to go through the list of 26 dams that are controlled by the department, how many of those would he find were provided by the previous Government? The majority of them were provided by the former Government. How many of the dams that are now used for irrigation would have been provided had this legislation been in place? I suggest that the number would be somewhat less than the number of dams that were provided. The State should provide the necessary infrastructure and encourage farming development afterwards. It is impossible to get the farming development to come first and to create an economic base on which the infrastructure can be provided later. That does not work. Water infrastructure is just as important as roads, rail, airports and seaports. I ask honourable members: do roads make any money for the State? Is a profit shown on the infrastructure that the Government provides for roads? It is a social cost. The State provides that infrastructure.

Infrastructure involves the provision of a service so that commerce can carry on, farms can produce, and industry and the economy can prosper. I maintain that the provision of water resources is an infrastructure cost that should be borne by the whole community. Those who benefit will certainly pay the charges that are levied on them—in this case, for water. However, that cost must be borne by the whole community. Some industries may be able to bear higher costs than other industries. We know that prices fluctuate violently in the vegetable industry; so how on earth can anyone who wants to operate a vegetable-growing enterprise plan on what his or her income will be in the future so that he or she can sign a long-term contract with the department or the soon-to-be-corporatised water resources organisation?

We know that the Government has a great interest in preserving agricultural land. It is a policy of this Government, and it was a policy of the previous Government, that people not be permitted to subdivide agricultural land into rural residential blocks. Why? It is felt that there is a need to preserve and maintain rural agricultural land. On the other hand, although our social conscience says that we must preserve rural agricultural land for the future, the Government says that people must provide the water for that land themselves. I assure the acting Minister that if he does not provide water for the Lockyer Valleys of this State, they will remain lousy dryland farms, which really produce nothing. People would not farm that land as dryland farms; they would need a couple of thousand hectares to make a living out of it, because it is not the most suitable soil for dryland farming. The Government should provide water facilities for that area, which has extremely low water reserves.

Something must be done about this issue, and a lot of discussion must take place with farmers to get their views on what they want to do about it. When discussing this subject with a group of farmers, one must be very careful, because various farmers have very strong views which, quite often, are conflicting views. Some farmers believe that the farms they own have natural advantages over other farms; therefore, they are totally opposed to any restrictions being imposed on the use of water. They bought those farms and put tens of thousands of dollars—in unusual cases, hundreds of thousands of dollars—into developing water facilities on those farms. They believe that they should receive some benefit for that expenditure over a long period. It is very, very important that this issue be addressed and that the whole community gets the best out of those farms.

If we do not develop our water resources, this State will continue to go backwards. I ask: how many of the schemes that were built in the past would be built nowadays? The Tully/Millstream project has virtually been canned by the Government because part of it is in a World Heritage area. The Government said that, because of the sensitivity to the environment, the Tully/Millstream will never be developed as a hydro-electricity scheme. I ask honourable members: using those same criteria, how many schemes would have been built in the past? We as a society must make a decision on whether to progress and build such a scheme. Honourable members know that I am totally in favour of the Tully/Millstream project. I have considered the scheme. I understand that some environmental cost would be incurred by putting water storage in that World Heritage area. However, the World Heritage listing of an area need not necessarily mean that the area cannot be developed. My understanding is that, provided proper management conditions are imposed, it is possible to have a quarry in a World Heritage area. That an area is on the World Heritage List does not mean that a quarry cannot be located there. It is absolutely ridiculous that we cannot go ahead with the Tully/Millstream project.

One member raised the issue of the amount of water consumed per head of population and quoted a figure of about 600 litres per person per day. That is an enormous amount of water. The member quite rightly pointed out that a fair bit of that water is used for flushing urinals. It is true that an enormous amount of water is used for washing clothes, for toilet purposes and for cleaning up around our households. Compared with the amount of water that we use for cleaning our environment and our homes and for watering our gardens, the amount that we drink is minuscule.

Consideration must be given to using grey water on our gardens in order to preserve our environment. The amount of water wasted is enormous. In country areas, all water is recycled. For instance, all the water that is used in the townships of Gatton and Laidley is recycled. The effluent that goes back into Lockyer Creek or Laidley Creek is fully treated. It infiltrates the underground aquifer and is used as underground water, or it meanders down Lockyer Creek and the Brisbane River and ends up in the Mount Crosby Weir. The people in Brisbane eventually drink the treated effluent from the Gatton sewage system. Not unlike Europe, that recycling process exists here. I do not believe that people in Brisbane have suffered any problems from that method of water treatment. One of the best results is that the water infiltrates the underground aquifer and is used for irrigation purposes. Naturally, the quality of that water and effluent must be checked very regularly to make sure that it does not cause any major problems for those citizens who use it.

Another major demand for water is its use as a cooling agent in power stations. Some power stations are cooled by fresh water. The Gladstone Power Station is the only seawater-cooled power station in Queensland. The Tarong Power Station uses about 5 million tonnes of coal a year, and the Stanwell Power Station will use a similar amount. Power stations use seven tonnes of fresh water for

every tonne of coal that they burn. My calculations are that the Tarong Power Station would use 35,000 megalitres per year.

There is a tremendous demand for water in this State. This legislation will not provide us with any more water storage facilities, and the Government is negligent in not planning for those facilities. For instance, a water storage facility is needed at the Upper Teviot Brook.

Time expired.

Mr SPRINGBORG (Warwick) (7.40 p.m.): I will try to keep my comments relatively brief because I am aware that the Minister wants to wind up the debate. He is not feeling particularly well. I draw the Parliament's attention to an article that appeared in *Queensland Country Life* recently. That special report on February 22 was titled "Politicians to lobby for more dams". I will read some extracts from that article for the benefit of honourable members in the Chamber. The article states—

> "A plan to drought-proof almost 30 percent of Australia is being pushed by an unusual bi-partisan team of politicians."

The team includes Ernie Bridge, ALP, Western Australia. If my recollection is right, he was a former Aboriginal Affairs Minister in the previous Labor administration in Western Australia. The team also includes Barry Wakelin, Liberal, South Australia; Senator Winston Crane, Liberal, Western Australia; Ian Sinclair, National Party, New South Wales; Bob Katter, National Party, Queensland; Bob Brown, ALP, New South Wales; and Michael Cobb, National Party, New South Wales.

The development proposals they are discussing are the Bradfield scheme in Queensland, the Kimberley pipeline scheme in Western Australia, the Daley scheme in the Northern Territory and the Clarence scheme in New South Wales.

I will conclude my reference to this article with the words of Mr Ernie Bridges.

Mr Bredhauer: Bridge

Mr SPRINGBORG: Mr Bridge. The article states—

> "The National Water Distribution Scheme calls on the Federal Government to co-ordinate and harvest Australia's huge, monsoonal river systems."

The article states "Ernie Bridges", but I take the interjection from the honourable member for Cook.

> "Ernie Bridges said the Kimberley region and prominent river systems in other states could deliver the equivalent of 30 Sydney Harbours each year to areas that are resource rich but lack adequate water supplies.
>
> 'Incredibly, less than 10 pc of the combined, safe, annual yield from all these systems is currently being used,' Mr Bridges, now shadow minister for the North West, said.
>
> 'My vision is an Australia which cannot be dominated by drought. It is an Australia where the risk has been taken out of rainfall.' "

I would like to wholeheartedly endorse those particular comments, because since federation and before this nation has lacked the vision to develop our entire nation. We seem to concentrate our attention on the eastern seaboard, the western seaboard in Western Australia, and the southern seaboard in New South Wales and around the bottom edge of Victoria.

Unfortunately, when those types of schemes are mentioned, far too many people jump up and down and say those schemes cannot work, without even giving the proposals a proper analysis. I am concerned by an article that I read in the *Toowoomba Chronicle* dated Thursday, 16 March. That article reported a speech delivered on behalf of the Queensland Minister for Primary Industries, Mr Ed Casey, by Mr Tom Fenwick. On behalf of the Minister, he comprehensively ruled out any possibility of the Clarence River scheme ever going ahead. Effectively, he ruled out any idea of talking with the New South Wales Government about that proposal. If so many politicians from so many different parties right around Australia are willing, able and have the vision to consider those proposals, I believe that we as a Parliament and as people of Queensland generally have an obligation to consider those proposals and at least conduct a decent feasibility study. I do not believe that a proposal such as that can be eliminated simply by saying that it will not work because of the State boundaries.

If one considers the Murray/Darling catchment in Queensland, one will note that much of the water that New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia actually gain comes from Queensland because of the natural flow of the rivers. As to the Clarence River system—the majority of that water runs out to sea and I believe that much of that could be harnessed, through a 100,000 megalitre scheme or perhaps a scheme that is a little bigger, and diverted back over the range. Many producers in northern New South

Wales believe that the scheme should go ahead as a flood mitigation program and because no major catchments exist in that area. Those producers do not have a reliable water supply, either. So, I do not believe that we should be eliminating those proposals. At least we should be having a go at talking with the New South Wales Government saying that we will cooperate with the Murray——

Mr McElligott: What is the environmental impact of that?

Mr SPRINGBORG: Exactly! That is what I am getting at. The feasibility study would consider an environmental impact study. That is a very important aspect. We have to consider the cost of the scheme in capital terms and whether we would be able to hook up a hydro-electric scheme to that project, whether the farmers in that part of the world want it and, importantly, the environmental impact of it and whether it would affect the aquatic life along that river and at the mouth of the river. We need to be considering the feasibility of those schemes before being prepared to knock them on the head.

Mr Bredhauer: So you won't build a dam over the border and pipe the water back?

Mr SPRINGBORG: Yes, the water would be piped back. It would involve a 1.5 metre—five foot—tunnel to come back over the border into Queensland. That would then feed the Condamine system.

Mr Bredhauer: What's the difference between that one and Eastlink?

Mr SPRINGBORG: I was hoping that tonight somebody would bring up the Eastlink scheme. I would like to have a little more time than I have to talk about the differences between that scheme and this one. Firstly, the Eastlink scheme is a minor scheme. It does not have the capacity to deliver any meaningful amount of electricity to Queensland. If the honourable member for Cook is serious about doing it right, I would advise him to read today's Stanthorpe *Border Post* in which the Deputy Shire Chairman said that the project coordinator said that—and I have heard him say it myself—to do this seriously we need to have a 500 KVa line in conjunction with that project running into the Hunter Valley. The honourable member should not open his mouth and talk about matters of which he has absolutely no idea.

The scheme that I mentioned earlier would benefit much of northern New South Wales as well as much of inland southern Queensland. I believe that we need to consider the feasibility of that scheme.

From the State Government perspective, we need more Government-constructed water resources in this State. I have a big problem with the capital contributions that are being expected from producers. I know some people say that producers make a profit from water. However, those producers pay taxes, they employ people in the local community and the multiplier effect is of great benefit to the community, State and nation. We can consider roads, which were alluded to by the honourable member for Lockyer, and also education. We do not expect our students to pay for education. We reap the benefits further down the track.

If I can take any notice of what Mr Fenwick stated in that article—and I have no reason to doubt him at this stage—the Government wants to maintain an ongoing commitment to major water storages. If we can go this far, maybe the Government will take away its commitment in general to the contribution to water storages in Queensland. The State Government lacks vision. Other than those built under the Sugar Industry Infrastructure package, no dams have been built in this State since this Government came to power in 1989.

Primary producers already pay tax. Under a system in which they contribute to the cost of the dam they would pay a capital contribution, an ongoing contribution for water and also pay the tax. I do not think that the Government can have that three-way dipping and effectively go about providing for the proper needs of the people within the State.

A little earlier in the day I spoke to the Minister's advisers and, on a positive note, I turn to the notification of people in an area where a major referable dam is to be constructed. Recently in my electorate, a gentleman rang me to say that a major dam—I think it was about 70 megalitres—was proposed in the base of a creek right near his property. Obviously, that would impact very adversely on many of the surrounding property owners. He was not aware of it. It was advertised in the *Goondiwindi Argus*, which is not circulated to people who live in his area. The Minster's advisers tell me that, if such a situation occurs, there is provision for the project to be readvertised in another newspaper. I suggest a simpler method, which would pick up problems at the outset, and which is very similar to what was amended in the Local Government Act a couple of years ago. The surrounding property holders and maybe some of the local representatives could be notified by letter so that people affected would be caught in the net. Maybe that is a

matter for consideration so that this sort of scenario does not occur: a dam has been suggested, people have applied for a licence, it is now being advertised, the Government is waiting for that three or four month period to expire and the first people hear about it is, basically, when the licence is granted.

I think that there is a problem in that the message does not always get across to people. They are not necessarily the cause of the problem; it is just a lack of understanding by some people in other areas of the geographics of some areas of Queensland. That is no slight on the members of the department because, unless they have an intimate understanding of the way in which that particular community works, it is very, very difficult to be able to get the message across.

The last matter that I wish to touch on is the issue of water reliability. Over recent times, we have heard much in the media about an area near St George, which is situated in the electorate represented by the shadow Minister, the honourable member for Warrego, where there has been an overallocation from the dam in that area and subsequent problems with regard to reliability and the information that has been provided to those irrigators. I have had the same problem in my electorate. That problem arose about three and a half years ago when the department conducted beneficial use studies. It found that some irrigators were not necessarily using all of their water. At that time, it was said that there was more water in the dam that could be sold or allocated further downstream. After that study, the Water Resources Division came up with a figure of around about 9,000 megalitres a year out of the Coolmunda Dam. That was sold downstream as well as other water, the amount of which I cannot remember off the top of my head, from the Glenlyon Dam. That was done against the advice of the local committees. At the time they said, "We do not believe that we have that much water. We believe that that is going to cause a problem for us in the future", which it has done. For a long time, until recently when we were fortunate enough to get a storm, Coolmunda Dam was sitting on 3 per cent capacity. Glenlyon Dam is down to about 12 per cent capacity. The advice of the local people, who knew about this matter, was not taken into consideration. More water was sold. The end result was that the people downstream who actually bought those allocations suffered reliability problems, and the people upstream, who had some of their allocation taken away and had some extra capacity taken out of the dam and sold downstream, also suffered reliability problems.

The Government goes around the State lecturing business people and farmers—probably rightly so—about becoming more efficient, taking control of their businesses, understanding cash flows—that is, what goes in and what goes out—understanding planning, budgeting, and all of those sorts of things. I ask the Minister: how can he expect those farmers or business people in those towns to plan if the Government is not able to provide them with the reliability that they had before? On the one hand they were told that they could rely on 35 per cent or 40 per cent reliability. They went ahead and planted a crop. The next thing they were told that they were going to have only 25 per cent reliability for that year. It is a high risk if people plant some of those high input, high return crops. I believe a number of people have lost, and have lost heavily. I ask the Minister and his department to take on board a little bit more of what those local advisory groups have to say, because in the case to which I have referred, they were right. They said, "What if we do have a dry? Do we have the water?" In the end, they were proven to be right.

In view of the time, I will not continue, although I have some other things that I could possibly contribute in this debate. However, I would be pleased if the Minister would take on board that comment I made about the notification of referable dams, in particular to neighbouring areas.

Mr LINGARD (Beaudesert—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (7.54 p.m.): Firstly, I join my colleagues in wishing the Minister for Primary Industries a speedy recovery. One of the things that I can always remember Mr Casey saying to me was that it did not matter what was said in this Parliament or what was said across the Chamber, one did not carry that fight outside that door on my left. I admit that Mr Casey has never done that. He has always been a gentleman in that sense, and I have always respected him.

I want to ask the Minister a question. I am not going to be so rude as to ask him a detailed question, knowing that he has only just taken over this portfolio. However, I know that he has his advisers present and I would like an answer to a question about the Wivenhoe Dam. The records that I have received from the library show that the capacity of the Wivenhoe Dam is 1,150,000 megalitres when it is just used for water storage. However, I have received word that now that extra storage water is needed for the

Tarong powerhouse and has to be taken from the Wivenhoe Dam, there is a temporary flood storage available of 1,450,000 megalitres. In other words, on top of the storage capacity of 1,150,000 megalitres, when there are storms the Wivenhoe Dam can cope with an extra capacity of 1,450,000 megalitres. In summary, that would mean that there are 2.6 million megalitres available in that particular dam. I ask the Minister: is he going to increase the storage capacity of the Wivenhoe Dam to the extent that its ability to be able to control floods in Brisbane City will be limited or is the Minister just saying that at present, because the water level in the Wivenhoe Dam is low, he is going to be able to increase the holding capacity? If the Minister is going to increase that holding storage capacity to over 1,150,000 megalitres and therefore take up the capacity into the stormwater area, the Minister would have to agree that Brisbane City may be inconvenienced. I would like his advisers' answer to that question.

Similarly, I would also like the Minister's advisers to tell the break up of the cost of that $80m pipeline that is being taken across to the powerhouse. I cannot possibly see how a pipeline stretching over that distance would cost $80m. In fact, my advisers tell me it would cost $20m to $30m. If the answer is that the extra $50m is being used to provide storage water and pumping stations to other areas along the way, I accept that. However, I do not believe that a pipeline covering that distance would cost $80m.

In rising to contribute to this debate, I cannot help discussing the Government's appalling track record in providing water infrastructure in this State. We all know the extensive problems and hardships suffered by rural Queenslanders in battling the extreme harshness of the land. However, we are all aware that there is an increasing movement by people on the land towards preparing for drought. Surface water storage and irrigation schemes are the answer, particularly as many bores have dried up during the current drought. However, I do not believe that this Government has pulled its weight in this crucial area. It has not assisted the rural or primary producing sector to any great extent to provide essential water storage. I believe that is one of the very big differences between the previous National Party Government and this Government in our assessment of what we should provide as a basic commodity. Personally, I believe that one of the basic commodities with which we should provide all people is water and water storage. It is something that is of considerable concern to primary producers and residents of rural communities, but I believe that this Government has failed them.

At the end of February, the Queensland Farmers Federation released the results of its December quarter survey. Those survey results highlighted the need for more irrigation areas. The Executive Director of QFF, Graham Dalton stated—

> "Where irrigation schemes have held up, the rural sector has performed strongly, providing enormous wealth to the Queensland economy. Where reliable water supplies have not been developed, the rural sector has been decimated by four long years of drought."

I refer to an article in today's *Courier-Mail* by Gordon Collie, which refers to comments by the Mayor of Boonah, Mr Brent, about the Moogerah Dam. I know that it is hard for city people to accept that after all the rain that we have had in the past few weeks that the Moogerah Dam is still only at 4 per cent of its capacity. Anyone who has driven through the Mount Alfred or Boonah areas down to the Moogerah Dam has been amazed to see that it is still only at 4 per cent of its capacity. The Maroon Dam to the south of Beaudesert is still at just over 25 per cent of its capacity. So people in the communities in that area are saying that they need assistance in providing storage water both to their communities and to the farmers in those areas.

I do not believe that this Government has been fair in providing water storage to those communities. When we were developing the Teviot dam, we offered to pay all the headworks costs, except for $1m. However, the Minister is saying that those people will have to pay at least $6m for headworks. It is absolutely impossible for the limited population of the Teviot dam area to contribute $6m, and it will not be done. That means that the Teviot dam will not be constructed, because those farmers cannot pay $6m. Such a contribution would be okay in the city areas where a very high population can contribute through water rates. However, it is just not on for those people to pay $100 a megalitre. In addition, dams contribute to the underground water system. This Government, like any other Government, has a responsibility to provide the basic commodity of water to those communities.

As all members would be aware, the best performing sector in primary industries has been the sugar industry and other irrigated crops. The sugar industry has been profitable, with prices at a record high. That is great. Part

of this Bill is about facilitating the implementation of the Sugar Industry Infrastructure Package, which the Opposition unreservedly supports. The sugar industry is lucky, because buoyant prices mean that it is able to absorb the high capital costs that the Goss Government is demanding for water infrastructure. Many industries are nowhere near as fortunate.

Those areas where reliable water supplies have not been developed have been neglected and overlooked by the Goss Government. Since 1990, the Government's policy—to which the Minister referred in his second-reading speech—has been that land-holders should contribute to the cost of establishing water infrastructure. Government members opposite should hang their heads in shame at the Goss Government's disgraceful track record in this respect. The people who can least afford to pay the Government are suffering the most. I understand that the land-holders' contribution towards the capital costs of building a dam is pegged at one-third. This can, and does, amount to millions—as in the case of the Teviot dam. This policy has caused many vital water infrastructure projects to fall over before they even had a chance to get off the ground. This callous policy has increased suffering and hardship in rural areas. It has been financially impossible for primary producers to come up with that sort of capital to contribute to dam headworks.

Mr McElligott: Who should pay?

Mr LINGARD: One has only to look at three different valleys behind Boonah to realise what dams do for a community. When one considers the development in the Moogerah Dam, Fassifern Valley and Warril Valley areas, one realises what dams do for a community and production within it. Similarly, when one considers the Maroon Dam and the Logan River near Beaudesert, one sees the difference. The third valley is the Teviot dam area, which has nowhere near the same level of production as those other areas. Dams provide a benefit to the community and the country, and I believe that some of that benefit should be put back into those areas where production can be developed.

Water is a basic commodity that we all deserve the Government to provide. There are many things in this community that a Government provides. We do not ask who should provide them, because we accept that a Government provides those basic commodities. Basic commodities are water and water storage. People deserve a basic commodity to be provided by this Government. At the moment, not all industries are as profitable as the sugar industry. They simply cannot afford to pay. So what has the Government done? It has left them high and dry. Instead of working towards what should be of benefit to the whole of Queensland and its economy, the Government has said, "No money, no water." A pertinent example is the proposed Teviot dam, about which I have spoken. Those people cannot afford the $20,000 per year in water charges that the Government says they should pay. It is impossible for them to pay that. Clearly, the Teviot dam project is dead. I would like to hear the Minister say that it is not dead, but I believe that it is. There is no doubt about that. It is not fair for the Government to say, "If you pay the massive costs of the headworks, we will provide the dam", because water storage is a basic commodity. The Government has killed the project and future economic development in that area.

What about considering the future economic viability of smaller communities in the provision of water infrastructure? What about social infrastructure? If the Government matched funding for water storage with what has been offered for drought relief, it would find that the call for drought relief in the future would be greatly reduced. As my colleague Mr Hobbs has already stated, the coalition believes that it is reasonable for the Government to pay the capital costs of headworks and that primary producers contribute to reticulation and pumping infrastructure. That is a much fairer system, which would mean that areas such as Boonah would get the necessary essential water infrastructure to ensure a stable future not only for our primary industries and rural communities but for the entire State's economy. The Bill refers to water allocations and provides a framework for commercial water sales to be managed and the process by which the Government may release water allocations for sale.

I refer also to Mount Tamborine. At this stage, commercial water is being taken from Mount Tamborine with absolutely no control by Water Resources. Everyone accepts that, for some reason or another, Mount Tamborine has a readily available water supply. Commercial water suppliers can take off Mount Tamborine as much water as they possibly need and as much as they can sell. Clearly, the community of Mount Tamborine is saying that it does not mind when water is taken off commercially as long as plenty of water is available. However, during extreme droughts, this Government will turn around

and say, "There is absolutely no control over Mount Tamborine. The bores can go." If that happens, I believe that this Government will have to answer to that community. Surely, one can appeal to Water Resources, which can say, "That is an area where we will control the taking of water. In these times of severe drought, we will not allow water to move off the mountain for commercial use."

Given the high charges being levied on primary producers in the form of contributions to water infrastructure, my one concern is security of supply. The acute problems with supply on the St George irrigation scheme are clearly a case in point. Cotton producers in that area were given announced water supplies which, without warning, were drastically reduced by 40 per cent, and this endangered crops. Those cotton producers are required to work to professional standards. They worked out their cropping rates according to their announced allocations and planted accordingly. However, the Government did not demonstrate the very same professionalism in managing that resource. So when the industry is setting and meeting professional standards and the Government is levying commercial rates on farmers for their water supply, the Government should consider giving a cast-iron guarantee that it can deliver. I have no problem with most of the provisions in the Bill because they may ease the considerable red tape involved in the setting up and amalgamation of water boards. However, I am concerned about the administrative charges levied on referable dams. The Explanatory Notes to the Bill state—

> "Considerable costs are associated with the assessment of applications for licensing of large dams and subsequent monitoring to ensure their continuing safety. Amendments will enable a significant part of these costs to be contributed by the applicants or dam owners."

Everyone agrees that safety is important, but this is just another impost on the industry. I am concerned that it is merely a revenue-raising exercise. Most of the provisions in the Bill are obvious and commonsense. With the exceptions that I have outlined, I offer my support for it.

Mr ELLIOTT (Cunningham) (8.08 p.m.): In taking part in the debate on the Water Resources Amendment Bill, it gives me no pleasure to say that this Government's handling of its water policy has been a total failure in large areas of Queensland. In particular, I refer to the Government's handling of irrigation water. In the run-up to the 1989 election, the Government made stupid statements about the Wolffdene dam. It has since been hoist on its own petard, and it has realised what a disaster it would be not to go ahead with that dam. It will now be in all sorts of strife in trying to find water to meet the demands imposed by incredible increases in population in the south-east corner of this State. There will now be two dams in that area, but they will not be in my electorate, so I will not spend a lot of time discussing them. The Government has not only shown a total lack of foresight in relation to irrigation but also in relation to the urban water supply, and it will rue the day that it made that decision.

Recently, the Minister sent the head of the Water Resources Commission to a seminar at Toowoomba to reject out of hand support for the Northern Rivers scheme. That scheme would augment the Murray/Darling system and improve the flow of water through its rivers, which would overcome the massive environmental problems in existence in that region and the low productivity of those irrigation areas.

I have lived quite close to those areas for a long period, so I know them quite well. I have many friends in that region. It will be disastrous if the Northern Rivers experience three or four floods over consecutive years. If that occurs, business operators will have to remove their goods from their shops and store them at a higher level, mass evacuations will be necessary and flood boats will be all over the place. New South Wales takes a very different attitude to the possibility of constructing dams in the upper end of the Northern Rivers.

We are not talking here only of parochial schemes that might bring water back into the Condamine River. The thumbnail-sketch feasibility studies that were undertaken revealed that, in terms of a cost-benefit analysis, one of the most feasible proposals was that which returned water to the Condamine River. Other proposals for the upper ends of the Northern Rivers would return water to Tenterfield Creek, Mole Creek and into the Seven Mile Creek, amongst others.

In response to those proposals, this Government did not say, "Look, we do not have the money. We cannot do it at the moment." Instead, this Government ruled out the Northern Rivers scheme and other similar proposals completely. To me, that move was completely negative. Where would we be in Australia if that sort of attitude had been taken when the Snowy Mountains hydro-electric

scheme was mooted? Under the attitude adopted by this Government, a proposal such as that would never have got off the ground. We must thoroughly analyse all proposals to ensure that the interests of both States are served. The Border Rivers Act allows a sharing of water between both States. The Mole Creek dam, which could easily be constructed, would augment the capacity of border rivers such as the Dumaresq. Such a measure would be of massive benefit to the users of that river and to the river itself.

If this Government does not give serious consideration to some of these propositions, it will go down in history as the most negative Government to ever sit on the Treasury benches. It gives me no pleasure to make these comments, and I probably will not win one single vote by making them. I am raising these issues out of sheer frustration. I know the head of the Water Resources Commission well. He was the best commissioner to serve that body during the time of the National Party Government. He changed people's approach to the utilisation of water. That fellow understood the risks that irrigators must take. He said to them, "Okay, if you guys want to take more water and take more risks, then you have to accept the fact that at the other end you may run out of water when you need it. But if you feel that you can make more money by taking more water now, then go ahead and do it."

The head of the Water Resources Commission favoured the pump diversion from the north branch of the Condamine River over the original scheme that was proposed, which would have been hugely unpopular and would have caused many environmental problems. Some of his actions have indicated clearly to me that he has a lot of foresight and knowledge. To me, that fellow is the best commissioner that I have seen during my political life.

Mr McElligott: That's a long time.

Mr ELLIOTT: It is 20 years. I suppose that is a while.

I refuse to believe that the head of the Water Resources Commission would have gone to that seminar in Toowoomba of his own accord to reject the Northern Rivers scheme in such a negative fashion. That is atypical of his approach to water resources issues. I suspect that his visit to that seminar was at the behest of Ed Casey, the Minister for Primary Industries. Mr Casey sits around the table with other negative-minded people and puts the kybosh on any proposal that will take affirmative steps to solve the current problems.

At present, the border rivers are facing many problems. There has been an overallocation along the border rivers both on the New South Wales side and the Queensland side. It cannot be said that no problems exist and that plenty of water is available. If we are to alleviate the current underground aquifer problems of the Condamine Basin, water will have to be sourced from other places. In my view, the Elbow Valley scheme in itself does not offer any particular solutions. It will merely take water that is presently flood harvested from the Condamine, put it into a dam and then reallocate it to other areas. That is merely robbing Peter to pay Paul.

If the proposed 27-kilometre pipeline were to be constructed on the New South Wales side, water could be pumped back into the Condamine River, providing a massive supply. No-one has reworked the figures relating to that proposal. Along with the shadow Minister, I have had long discussions with an engineer who has had a lot to do with that proposal. He is of the opinion that no-one has tried to gauge the potential yield of the larger site—not the one at Maryland Creek, but further down the river. In the opinion of that engineer, it is possible to construct a larger dam than was originally proposed in the report commissioned all those years ago. The yield of an as yet unconstructed dam could well be significantly higher than that outlined in the proposal that the Government has rejected out of hand.

The Government might well claim that it does not have the money to do this or that, but if it does not commit some funds to conducting research and analysing the various proposals floating around, we will never know whether they are feasible or not. I urge the Government not to walk away and act as Pontius Pilate but to spend some money on investigating the capabilities of some of the proposed schemes. I believe that much more water is to be had than is indicated by the report that is floating around the department at present.

This is not a one-sided issue. I understand fully that New South Wales is not about to embark on any scheme that will assist Queensland and its border rivers and leave people on the other side of the range high and dry. In fact, ample potential exists to provide water to both sides of the range and implement a flood mitigation program. I urge the Government to have a decent look at such

possibilities and not to take a negative attitude by rejecting them out of hand.

Government members walk around the place posing as the party of consultation. They are always talking about Green Papers and White Papers, but when it comes to the crunch, they really do not consult properly at all. My understanding is that the Queensland Irrigation Council——

Mr J. H. Sullivan interjected.

Mr ELLIOTT: There is a plethora of different people on that council. This is typical of the mentality of Government members. Presumably these people who give their time to the community to work on that body have been picked by the Minister. The Government picks these people, not me.

Mr J. H. Sullivan interjected.

Mr ELLIOTT: They are not picked by me. The Government puts people on the Queensland Irrigation Council and says, "These people will be there to consult with", and it promises the community that they will get input into the Bill. Early on, they receive a draft of the Bill. By the time that the Bill is actually produced, the community has not been consulted. People are not particularly pleased with this Government because they do not feel that they had adequate input into this Bill. What is the point of having bodies such as the Queensland Irrigation Council if the Government is not prepared to sit down and discuss with them at length before legislation reaches the stage where it is not really going to get changed at all? Why bother about having these community bodies?

I want to put in a plug for that consultation phase. When I was a Minister, I always believed in consultation. I did not walk around hitting people over the head with a big stick. There are many instances where one gains a tremendous amount by actually listening to what people have to say. The people on that council have a lot of experience, particularly in irrigation. For goodness' sake, the Government should listen to them when it is putting a Bill together.

There is another area that I wish to raise, about which I will say more during the Committee stage. I might be totally wrong about this clause; it may not be as impractical as it looks. I refer to page 10, Clause 9(3), which provides for a new section 2AA. Let us look at the Condamine River basin irrigation area, which has some 140 licence holders. Whenever people in the designated area want to repair a bore or put another bore down—whatever they want to do—the provisions of the clause have the potential to adversely affect every other irrigator in that Condamine basin area. Every one of the other 139 people will be affected by whatever is done. So that proposed new section is of potential detriment to them.

The way that that proposed new section is drafted, if one of the land-holders wants to do any bore work, he will have to contact each and every one of those people and get a letter from them to say that it is okay to go ahead and do whatever it is that he wants to do. Before, applicants had to advertise in either the *Toowoomba Chronicle* or whatever other papers were considered reasonable, and people had to object. The objections were considered, and if the objections did not stand up, the work went ahead. If the objections did stand up, then something was done about it. I did not see that as being a very difficult procedure. I understand that the Government is probably coming from quite a reasonable and practical viewpoint in as much as it is trying to simplify the procedures before people drill bores or do whatever they are going to do.

The Condamine River is like a huge basin. It is whole lot of underground water in one big basin. It is not as though streams run off in every direction. It would appear that, as people pump that water, it is like a mine; it just goes down and down. I do not think that there is any doubt in anyone's mind that the Condamine River basin irrigation area is going to fail; it is only a case of when. It is a quantitative thing. If water is pumped at X rate, it will fail at a certain time; if it is pumped at X plus it will fail sooner; and if it is pumped at X minus it will fail later.

We have to determine that situation exactly. The Government's old system of asking people to advertise is probably more realistic for that location. I am not saying that that necessarily applies in other areas, however, I would ask the Minister to look at that proposed new section and determine whether or not what I am saying could be correct. With those words, I support the Bill.

Mr MALONE (Mirani) (8.25 p.m.): Mr Deputy Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to speak on the Water Resources Amendment Bill. As much as possible, I will restrict my remarks to the electorate of Mirani. Firstly, though, I would like to give my best wishes to Minister Casey. His electorate adjoins mine. Recently, since I joined Parliament, we have had discussion quite frequently regarding the train derailments in that area. I must say that it has been mostly light-hearted, but sometimes a little bit more serious than that. No matter

what side of the House he is on, I hope that he gets well as quickly as possible and returns to the House.

I wish to refer to the Teemburra scheme, which is in my electorate. As honourable members well know, it is now in progress and is on target to store water in late 1996. It has a capability of supplying 41,150 megalitres of water, 29,000 megalitres of which will be available for irrigation. That will supply water to around about 9,000 hectares of irrigated cane. That will not include any extra land or any new land in the future.

Before the dam was built, a survey was undertaken which showed that there was a demand at that stage for 63,000 megalitres of water. I will reiterate those figures. The dam is going to supply 29,000 megalitres of water and there is an inherent demand for 63,000 megalitres of water. So, basically, before the dam is even built, it will supply only half of the demand that is in that valley.

The reason that the dam was to be built is that there was a water supply crisis in the Mackay area. Every year, in the Mackay region, the urban industrial areas were running short of water. We have had five years of drought now and there has been an unusually high level of water consumption because of that. However, the fact remains that the Mackay district, and particularly the valley, was running short of water. It was an ideal opportunity for both that supply and the supply to the canefarmers to be topped up by a dam. The only question I have is whether the dam is big enough. I think many people have raised that question before me and certainly many will raise it after me.

The fact remains that, without water, it is difficult for the area to access future development opportunities. Indeed, there are two major opportunities right now that are sitting in limbo waiting for a supply of that water. Of course, the sugar industry is a major contributor to the cost of the dam. Particularly, $10m out of the Mackay Sugar Cooperative is going directly into the building of the dam. Another $5m is being supplied through allocation money from the farmers. So, straight up-front there is $15m from the farming organisations, who are really taking only about a third of the water. Of course, $10.53m came out of the infrastructure funding, half of which came from the Federal Government.

There is quite a story about the infrastructure funding, and if I had a bit more time I would enlighten the House on just where that came from, how it disadvantaged most of the existing farmers and how some of the new farmers were probably advantaged by it. Of course, on top of that funding, this Government has provided $32m. I must congratulate the Government on making the decision to build the dam. It has taken five years to do something about it. I, for one, am not going to knock the building of another dam.

The expansion of the sugar industry has been talked about a lot and, of course, the value-adding of the sugar industry has been affected because of the uncertainty of supplies of water and particularly the lack of guaranteed supplies of water, which is very important. It is okay to build an industry based on the availability of an amount of water, but it has to be guaranteed. Unfortunately, in the valley, and particularly around Mackay, it was very difficult to guarantee a certain supply of water because of the uncertain seasons that we are experiencing of late.

I congratulate Mr Casey on his push for value adding of the industry. It is important that we continue to do that. The examples now are the bagasse pulp mill and the yeast plant that will be built at Mirani. Two weeks ago, I was part of a parliamentary trade delegation that met with representatives of the Taiwan Sugar Corporation, which is the builder of the bagasse pulp mill. We met with the president, Mr Chang, and the manager of products development, Mr Tony Lin, who will be in our district, in Mirani, and in the Mackay district in the coming week. It was opportune for the party and me to meet with the representatives of the Taiwan Sugar Corporation to talk about that development.

Those projects and others in the pipeline are to be for the benefit of all of us now and into the future. Our children and our grandchildren will be the beneficiaries of the investment in that project. With that in mind, I have some grave concerns about endeavouring to finance a facility such as that, which has an ongoing benefit over a long period, with short-term fundraising on a user-pays principle.

Some members opposite talked about the fact that irrigation water increases the value of land. That is fairly obvious, but the point must be made that the cost of the water is only one component of the cost of getting water onto the land. In the Teemburra scheme, water will cost $40 to $70 dollars a megalitre. I suggest that it costs every bit of that, and more, to get that water from the hydrant onto the land. My estimates are that, once the water is in the hydrant, the capital

costs of irrigation are approximately $1,000 an acre, or $2,500 a hectare. In real terms, the fact that a landowner has water certainly increases the value of the land, but the extra capital contribution that the landowner must make to the land is part of the cost. Quite often, those figures become a little fuzzy.

The high cost of irrigation water is of no benefit to anyone. With high-cost irrigation, it is impossible for farmers to make a profit from growing cane or any other crop. Further, if farmers derive no benefit, the district misses out through lost opportunities for employment and investment, and the dollar return to the tax department goes out the window. Now the district is seeing a return of the drought years. This year, we have had very little rain. By the look of things, we will have another bad year. It is imperative that we put in place those irrigation schemes.

I stress again that the Government is building a dam that will supply only half the demand. I do not want to be negative. It is important to realise that any stored water is good stored water, and we should continue to do those types of things. There is an opportunity in the valley to continue along that line. The Burdekin scheme that was put in place by the National Party Government, with a fair amount of funding from the Federal Government, is now being used as a goldmine by the Queensland Labor Government. When the Government runs short of a few funds, it whizzes up there, puts on another auction and picks up a few million dollars. In real terms, dams do pay for themselves. If it were not for water, the land around the Burdekin would not grow a thing.

I turn to another part of the legislation. The Act refers to licences and ongoing charges for referable dams. In a number of regions throughout Queensland, farmers have no opportunities to access Government storage schemes, so they provide for themselves. Now farmers are being charged quite heavily for taking the initiative and doing something for themselves. I refer to Water Resources in Mackay. Max Brown, who is in charge of farm dam design, is doing a great job. Unfortunately, Max has about 80 farm dam plans on his books and is finding it impossible to keep up with the demand. In the Mackay district, simply because the resources in the Department of Primary Industries are not available, at least 80 dams are not being built.

Obtaining approval for a referable dam is a long and complicated process. Recently, I received information that a farmer has been waiting for more than six months to obtain approval for a referable dam. That is just not on. We are in the middle of a drought. That man is ready to build a dam. Because he cannot get approval to build it, his whole farm operation becomes unviable. That problem must be examined very closely.

In relation to bores in the Mackay district—we must consider the control of underground water resources without excessive cost to the participants. Low water tables due to drought are causing heartbreak for those who are trying to beat the drought. We are getting salt intrusion into the bores and we need some type of control to overcome that problem. I am not sure whether the legislation addresses that. I would be pleased to hear what the Minister has to say about that.

Hon. R. J. GIBBS (Bundamba—Minister for Tourism, Sport and Racing) (8.36 p.m.), in reply: I welcome the contributions made by all members and I thank the Opposition members for supporting the need for the amendments. I will also pass on to my colleague the member for Mackay, Mr Casey, all the wishes that are being expressed for his speedy recovery. I appreciate the comments that were made in that regard.

Opposition members supported the Bill, but in doing so they raised a few matters on which I will now comment. The Opposition spokesman, Mr Hobbs, cautioned the Government that there are limits to the level of funds that can be provided by rural land-holders to water resource projects. I have noted that, but I am constantly reminded of all those land-holders who are not able to benefit from Government-sponsored water resource projects or packages, such as the sugar package. Those land-holders—and there are many of them—must make their own decisions and invest their own money in water projects at much higher levels than those who are fortunate to receive the benefit of substantial Government, or taxpayer, contributions, which enhance their properties.

The member for Warrego also referred to the Lower Balonne flood plain and the problems created in the community by the different attitudes of irrigators and graziers to the development of the flood plain. The Government has been very active in working with all of the parties to resolve those differences. The proposed amendments, along with those to be introduced in the Committee stage, are all part of the process of giving a legislative basis to a management

plan that is being prepared in conjunction with the community-based Lower Balonne Advisory Committee, which represents both irrigator and grazing interests.

In common with a number of Opposition members, Mr Hobbs seems to have a philosophical problem with the idea that irrigators in Government-sponsored projects are now required to make a contribution to the capital cost of the works. He had no difficulty with the ongoing annual charges for operation, maintenance and refurbishment. As I said, those irrigators get a substantial benefit that other irrigators do not get—someone to build the scheme for them. Most would see that it was quite reasonable for the Government to seek some contribution from those beneficiaries, which can be turned back into further capital works to develop our water resources across as wide an area of the State as possible. I also point out that, with all new projects, a great deal of negotiation has been undertaken with potential water users to establish their capacity to pay in the first place.

In relation to the amendments that will apply to referable dams—I assure the member for Warrego that they are not retrospective and they do not extend the licensing system. They are simply about Government being able to recover some of the costs of ensuring dam safety from owners of very large dams—generally local governments, mining companies and the State itself. The overwhelming majority of farm dams constructed by the rural community are not of referable dimensions, and those new charges will not apply to them.

In relation to Mr Hobbs' concerns about increasing the red tape by licensing ground water bores—the amendments set out to achieve the opposite. If a land-holder reaches agreement with adjacent land-holders, there will be no need to go through the usual advertising procedure for gaining a licence.

I thank my colleague the member for Bundaberg for his expert comments on the multiplier effects of public funding of projects. Be they water projects or the Indy, the benefits they bring are the same and I believe that Opposition members have to learn that. We have witnessed such effects in recent times. I also welcome his thoughts on making better use of the water resource assets we already have. This is fundamental to our Government's Water Wise program and I am happy to see that, in a recent national survey, our efforts in Queensland were head and shoulders above those of other States.

Mrs McCauley, the member for Callide, referred to the Coreen Water Board and its problems. As she has also placed a question on notice on the same issue, I will make no further reference to that matter at this stage. However, no amendments in this Bill will impact on the Coreen Water Board. Mrs McCauley also made a few adverse comments about the Government's planning and development program for water resources. The Government does have a significant program for water resources development. The program is now more focused on meeting needs within a realistic, economic and environmental framework. We no longer have the ad hoc approach that we endured before this Government came to office. Some of the projects now under way include the ongoing Burdekin irrigation area at Ayr, the Kelsey Creek scheme at Proserpine, the Lockyer weir and Morton Vale scheme at Gatton, the Teemburra dam and irrigation project at Mackay, the Walla weir at Bundaberg and Stage 1 of the Logan weir at Beaudesert. The Government is working closely with primary industries—sugar, cotton and horticulture—to determine the priority areas and we have established partnership arrangements for future water resource projects. I suggest that that is a very successful way of doing business.

I have noted the member for Sunnybank's comments on ground water and I will make sure that this important aspect is covered in future issues of the department's education kit on Water Wise.

In common with earlier Opposition speakers, the member for Gympie spoke about the up-front costs that rural land-holders have to pay. The Government is quite accommodating with those costs and they are able to be paid off over 10 years or so. This gives land-holders the opportunity to produce rural commodities to meet what now come down to quite reasonable annual costs. The member for Gympie also mentioned the need for additional water storage in the Mary River system. He is aware that our Government has approved a 50-year strategy to meet the needs of both the Sunshine Coast and the area along the Mary River. That project will start with the raising of Borumba dam in the next few years. My departmental staff have been discussing the appropriate timing for that work with local governments in the area. The member can be assured that the Government is responsive to the needs of this developing area and will be implementing works as soon as they are required. I have also heard his comments about Amamoor Creek and a dam

site there. I will discuss a timetable with my staff to see what can be done to address land-holders' concerns.

I thank the member for Whitsunday for the background information she has produced on the resources of her area. I will discuss potential schemes for the Bowen area with my departmental staff.

Mr Rowell, the member for Hinchinbrook, spoke about the need for integrated and comprehensive water planning. I point out that it took our Government to produce the State's first water conservation strategy. This Government has taken a far more strategic approach to water issues than the ad hoc approach of the past. The State Water Conservation Strategy released in April 1993 has set the broad directions and now a number of our regionally based planning studies have been completed for future supplies to areas such as south-east Queensland, the Sunshine Coast and the Mary River Valley. Mr Rowell mentioned some hypothetical situations that could occur under some extreme circumstances when the proposed amendments become law. For the member's clarification, "other relevant land" as defined in the Bill is pertinent to water supply areas where, for example, pipelines may be needed to connect non-contiguous parts of a water supply area.

I thank the member for Caboolture for his contribution, which went a long way towards explaining to Opposition members some of the important reasons for the amendments.

The member for Lockyer reminded me how in the past water schemes have been built to serve political needs. The Goss Government—and I have heard Ed Casey say this on many occasions—will not be drawn into uneconomic and unsustainable water projects. Schemes are now subject to the most rigorous economic and environmental evaluations. I was pleased to hear the member say that we should not entertain schemes that would obviously never be financially viable. This Government could not agree more.

Mr Springborg mentioned a number of massive and grand water schemes and asked for them to be evaluated. Most, if not all, of those he has mentioned have been looked at and they always show costs that exceed benefits. At the prices we get for commodities, we simply cannot justify the cost. Mr Springborg also mentioned the advertisement of water work licences. I have noted his comments and I will ask the department to review and monitor its procedures to ensure that the process is fair to all. My understanding is that there are very few instances in which inappropriate advertisements have been placed and where that has occurred, the matter was soon rectified.

The member for Beaudesert referred to the Wivenhoe Dam and asked some detailed technical questions. As the member is aware, the dam is owned and operated by the South East Queensland Water Board. My departmental staff will inquire of the board and the electricity authority so that I can respond in writing to the member in the near future.

Mr Elliott made a point in relation to amendments. I would like to assure him that we are not changing the normal processes for gaining a licence, that is, to advertise, receive objections and so on. The amendment provision will only be used when going through that full process is not warranted. I agree that the provision is not appropriate for areas like the Condamine, so the ongoing licensing process will still be necessary. This is only an amendment to cut red tape when that is practical.

I thank all honourable members for their contributions. There are a number that I have not covered, but I am sure that most of the issues that were raised in this Chamber tonight by those members to whom I have not referred directly have probably been covered in that summation. I thank all honourable members.

Motion agreed to.

Committee

Hon. R. J. Gibbs (Bundamba—Minister for Tourism, Sport and Racing) in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 7, a read, agreed to.

Clause 8—

Mr GIBBS (8.48 p.m.): I move the following amendments—

"At page 9, lines 17 to 19—

omit, insert—

'(3) Section 4.13(3)—

omit, insert—

'(3) An application for a licence for the following works in a designated area must be made within 90 days after the constitution of the designated area, or any longer period decided by the chief executive in a particular case—

(a) controlled works, specified under a regulation under section 7.2 as acceptable proposed works, being

constructed when the designated area is constituted;

(b) controlled works constructed before the designated area is constituted.'.'.

At page 9, line 22, '(j)'—

omit, insert—

'(i) or (j)'.

At page 9, line 23, 'works'—

omit, insert—

'works mentioned in subsection (3)'.

At page 9, line 23, before 'keeping'—

insert—

'constructing,'.

At page 9, line 29, before 'keeping'—

insert—

'constructing,'."

Amendments agreed to.

Mr HOBBS: Unfortunately, I missed the first few words of the Minister's reply. I think he said that the amendments that he is proposing will allow for works that are in the process of construction to proceed and also allow for proposed works to proceed. It often happens that a difficulty arises within a region in relation to a proposal when an area is designated. If the Government decides that it wishes to designate an area and works are in progress, there is also the possibility that proposed works will follow. Those proposed works may not physically have been done, but tenders may have already been let, and also the planning processes could have been completed. From my understanding of what the Minister said, I believe that to be the situation. I would like the Minister to clarify whether that is in fact the case.

Mr GIBBS: My advice is that the amendment to section 4.13(3) will allow for the continued construction of acceptable proposed works that have been identified in a proposal notified to designate part of Queensland and in the regulation designating a particular area. Also, persons who have entered into a contract for a construction of acceptable proposed works will be permitted to continue with the contract. However, in both instances, a person is obliged to make an application for a licence for those works within 90 days after the constitution of a designated area. A person continuing to construct and complete works that have not been assessed as acceptable proposed works would be in breach of the Act, because the impact of these works has not been assessed and may only be assessed when the details of the works are provided when an application is made for the construction of those works. I have the advice here if the member would like to have a look at it.

Clause 8, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 9 to 16, as read, agreed to.

Clause 17—

Mr HOBBS (8.51 p.m.): This clause relates to one of the philosophical differences between the Government and the Opposition. The Opposition believes very strongly indeed that it is up to the Government of the day, irrespective of what political party is in power, to provide the infrastructure that is required to meet the needs of society.

The Opposition believes that, in this instance, the needs of society include water infrastructure. The Minister has seen the benefit that flows to communities from major water infrastructures, such as those at the Burdekin, St George or anywhere else. That infrastructure gives an enormous return to the Government of the day and it is totally unfair that the primary producers in those regions have to try to foot the bill, particularly in the first instance.

I am sure those primary producers will contribute if they can but, down the track, the Government cannot keep obtaining finance from them to fund these projects. It is the role of Government. Enormous funding goes into other infrastructure within the urban environment, which balances out very well when one considers the amount of revenue that is generated by the local community in those particular areas. One only has to look at the enormous return from primary producers that can be generated throughout the community and for the betterment of Government. Even in the rural industry, in relation to cattle and sheep, for every million dollars that is generated in extra production, 30 to 40 jobs are created. That is purely in the sheep and cattle industries. I am not exactly sure what the figure would be if irrigation was improved, but I would guess that it would be double, maybe even treble, that number. So there are benefits to the Government in that area.

Although I understand this is happening at present, it is important that I make the point that it is imperative that the Government at least consider what it is doing. If it believes that it can continue along this line and try to draw more and more funds from the rural industry, at the end of the day it will not be able to get them. Of course, it will end up with

farms that are not economic and the result will be——

Mr Elliott: They'll go bankrupt.

Mr HOBBS: As the member for Cunningham said, they will go bankrupt. With those few words, I would like the Government to take note of the points that I have raised.

Clause 17, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 18 and 19, as read, agreed to.

Clause 20—

Mr GIBBS (8.54 p.m.): I move the following amendment—

"At page 21, lines 23 to 27—

omit, insert—

'(d) for a proposal to constitute a designated area—must specify the purposes for which the area is proposed to be constituted; and

(da) for a proposal to constitute a designated area or alter the boundaries of a designated area—may specify acceptable existing works or acceptable proposed works for the area or any land included in the area by the alteration; and'."

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 20, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 21 to 28, as read, agreed to.

Clause 29—

Mr ROWELL (8.55 p.m.): The Minister has referred to the hypothetical case that I gave in my speech. However, the problem is that the Act contained a section that related to one person per land-holding. Dealing with those who are eligible for election to a board, the section states—

> "A person who . . . is the owner or occupier or 1 of the owners or occupiers of land situated within a water supply area or drainage area . . ."

I will not refer to any more of that section. Effectively, that section of the Act has been deleted. As I said in my speech, I am quite concerned because two, three or four members—or the total board—could come from one property, which could upset the balance for the rest of the land-holders in the area. Very often, a massive amount of expenditure is involved in areas that are covered by the board and, certainly, we could have an imbalance in the board membership. Although I raised the hypothetical situation in my speech, I believe that we should have stuck to the previous legislation which stipulated one person, being the occupier of each block of land, being eligible to be a member of that board.

Another matter that I would also like to raise relates to designated areas and relevant land. This matter is contained in the same clause and the Minister, in his reply, referred to the relevant lands section that I raised in my speech. I would like to know if those people within the relevant land would be eligible to vote as members of the designated area. Could the Minister respond to that, please?

Mr GIBBS: I am advised that they cannot vote but the amendment allows for this material to be provided in the regulation proposed in the establishment of the board.

Mr ROWELL: People cannot vote?

Mr GIBBS: No.

Mr ROWELL: In the first part of my query, I referred also to one member per land-holding.

Mr GIBBS: I am advised that the detail that the member has pointed out is, in fact, too detailed to be actually contained in the legislation. However, it will be picked up in the regulation for each board area. That is the advice that I am given.

Clause 29, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 30 to 33, as read, agreed to.

Clause 34—

Mr ELLIOTT (8.58 p.m.): It is pretty obvious what has been done in clause 34. It allows the power to be passed on from the Minister to the chief executive. I am concerned about this. Although many people might say that it is impractical for the Minister to make many of these decisions, it has always really been a fact of life that, where possible, the Minister is the relevant authority and the Minister's consent is required for many things to happen.

I for one am concerned about the way in which we are seeing a change—slowly but surely—take place. If one wanted to be a bit facetious, one could say that we have all seen *Yes Minister*. We could say that Governments come and Governments go, but the good old public servant, Sir Henry, stays there forever more.

Mr Connor: Sir Humphrey.

Mr ELLIOTT: Sir Humphrey. I am as bad as the new Minister for Education; I have done something dreadful but, fortunately, not as publicly.

It is very necessary that someone go on record tonight to say that we do not agree with it. I certainly do not. A lot of people on my side

of politics believe that a Minister has a job to do, for which he is well paid. The power is given to him for a very good reason. One would hope that he would use his experience and contacts. If he is in doubt about anything, he has a huge team of people on which to call for advice. For example, he can take advice from his department or he can take outside advice from consultants. There are plenty of good engineering consultants. I am opposed to this provision. I do not think that it is good to be passing over ministerial power to the chief executive in this way. I am not singling out this department or this Bill. Over time, in this place we have seen more and more legislation in which this is happening.

When all is said and done, we do not necessarily want public servants—career public servants—who will not always have the knowledge and experience, to make the sorts of decisions that the Government is asking them to make. I feel rather uneasy about any legislation that gives up the power of the Minister and hands it over to the chief executive. In the end, if Ministers are not careful, they will become purely and simply a rubber stamp. They will put their stamp on it—bang—and they will have no power whatsoever. They should be careful that they do not give it all away.

Mr GIBBS: I certainly do not share the opinion of the member for Cunningham. The reality is that we are dealing with what is considered these days to be probably a more modern management practice than operated in the days of, for example, the honourable member when he was in the Ministry. I point out two things. Certainly, in my situation—and I am sure that this applies to all other Ministers—when chief executives are given the responsibility under the legislation, whatever department it may be, their role is to sit down and consult with their Minister prior to a decision being made. That is certainly how my department operates. In relation to any areas for which the chief executive has a responsibility for making a decision, there is always a discussion between me and the chief executive.

Finally, as we have all heard said before so many times, the buck stops at the desk of the responsible Minister. If his chief executive, to put it bluntly and little crudely, stuffs up, it is the Minister of the day who will wear the effect of that. I do not think that the honourable member's comments are entirely in order. I am quite happy with the way in which this process is structured at the moment.

Clause 34, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 35 to 37, as read, agreed to.

Schedule, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, with amendments.

Third Reading

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

REVOCATION OF STATE FOREST AREAS

Hon. R. J. GIBBS (Bundamba—Minister for Tourism, Sport and Racing) (9.06 p.m.): I move—

"That this House—

(a) Agrees that the proposal by the Governor in Council to revoke the setting apart and declaration as State Forest under the *Forestry Act 1959* of—

(i) all that part of State Forest 274 described as Area A and shown hachured on plan FTY 1680 prepared under the authority of the Primary Industries Corporation and containing an area of about 2 289 hectares;

(ii) all those parts of State Forest 788 described as Areas A and B and shown hachured on plan FTY 1682 prepared under the authority of the Primary Industries Corporation and containing an area of about 290 hectares;

(iii) all that part of State Forest 792 described as Area A and shown hachured on plan FTY 1681 prepared under the authority of the Primary Industries Corporation and containing an area of about 2 308 hectares;

(iv) the whole of State Forest 9 containing an area of about 1 740 hectares;

(v) all that part of State Forest 289 described as Area A and shown hachured on plan FTY 1640 prepared under the authority of the Primary Industries Corporation and containing an area of about 1 485 hectares;

(vi) all those parts of State Forest 88 described as lots 8 and 9 on plan WT384 and within stations P'–O'–G'–P' on plan WT391 and

containing in total an area of 21.1136 hectares;

(vii) all those parts of State Forest 502 described as Area A and shown hachured on plan FTY 1685 prepared under the authority of the Primary Industries Corporation and as road to be opened on plan RA5102 prepared by the Department of Lands and containing in total an area of about 1.7075 hectares;

be carried out; and

(b) That Mr Speaker convey a copy of this resolution to the Minister for submission to Her Excellency the Governor in Council."

These proposals make provision for the revocation of the whole or parts of State forests near Kenilworth, Charleville, Yarraman, Injune and Gympie. Careful consideration has been given to each of these proposals and detailed consultation has occurred with affected Government agencies. In each case, the action proposed is considered to be in the broader public interest.

The first three proposals provide for the inclusion of about 5,000 hectares of forestry land in the Conondale National Park. The Conondale Range area is well known for its scenic qualities, its diversity of flora and fauna and its valuable timber resources. Public concern about the adequacy of conservation reserves in the area led to a commitment from this Government to increase the size of the Conondale National Park.

In 1990, the Conondale Range Consultative Committee was formed to prepare a land use proposal that would identify and protect areas of conservation significance while minimising the proposal's impact on timber production. The committee comprised representatives of the Department of Primary Industries Forest Service, the Department of Environment and Heritage, conservation groups and the timber industry. Computer analysis of land resource data and other scientific reports were used as the basis for its considerations.

In December 1991, the committee recommended among other things that parts of State Forests 274, 788 and 792 should be afforded permanent protection under national park status. The committee's recommendations have been endorsed by a public consultation process and the Government therefore has a solid base of research and public opinion to support this proposal. It demonstrates a balanced attitude to the twin objectives of economic development of our natural resources and the conservation of our environment. The Department of Environment and Heritage has agreed to permit existing grazing rights over the areas to continue until the expiry of their current term. Thus the current permittees will not be disadvantaged by this proposal.

I would also like to thank the timber industry for taking part in and supporting this consultation process. There has been some reduction in the quantity of hardwood timber available from affected allocation zones. However, the proposal resolves a long-running land use dispute, provides greater planning certainty regarding access to areas managed for timber production and will ensure permanent protection of habitat areas for species such as the marbled frogmouth owl, which I am sure will make the member for Kedron very happy.

The next proposal also involves the transfer of forestry land to national park status. Detailed assessments of natural regions of Queensland are being used as the basis for Labor's land conservation strategies. A National Parks and Wildlife study of the southern brigalow belt has identified areas of biodiversity not currently protected within the national park estate. Where a State forest is exceptionally diverse or strategically located, consideration has been given to converting the reserve to national park.

State Forest 9 is located about 65 kilometres east of Charleville and adjoins the Chesterton Range National Park. To facilitate this conversion action and to ensure appropriate management, the Department of Environment and Heritage has purchased the grazing rights to this area from the previous lessee. The sustainable yield of milling timber from this reserve has been assessed at about 30 cubic metres per year. The proposed conversion of the area to national park will therefore have little effect on the volume of cypress pine available to sawmills within this allocation zone.

The fifth proposal involves the revocation of about 1,485 hectares of land from State Forest 289, which is located about 13 kilometres west of Yarraman. The Department of Environment and Heritage sought an area of the State forest in order to preserve the remnant low vine forest types found in the Brisbane Valley. This vegetation type is currently not represented in the national park estate in south-east Queensland. Protection of

the diversity of species is an initiative endorsed by the National Forest Policy Statement, which calls for Australia-wide cooperation in maintaining environmental diversity. There are no grazing rights affected by this proposal.

The next proposal involves three separate areas of State Forest 88, which is located about 35 kilometres north west of Injune. As part of the Denison Trough gas project, two areas within State Forest 88 were identified as suitable sites for a gas treatment plant and for employee housing. Survey of the respective areas has been carried out, and it is now proposed to exclude 20.49 hectares of land from the reserve for these purposes. The land will be leased to Central Queensland Natural Gas Pty Ltd for the life of the project. All costs in relation to the proposed revocation will be met by the company.

It is also proposed to exclude 6,236 square metres of land from the reserve for addition to adjoining lot 4. This action forms part of a proposal to rationalise the boundaries of lot 4 and the State forest. As part of this boundary rationalisation, about 235 hectares of lot 4 will be made available for forestry purposes. When the action is finalised, a constructed road will separate lot 4 from State Forest 88. The overall effect of the proposal will be a net increase in the area of the reserve and improved management control.

The seventh proposal involves the excision of about 1.7 hectares of land from State Forest 502, which is located about 11 kilometres north east of Gympie. The lessee of land adjoining the State forest boundary has applied to convert the lease area to freehold. The State forest boundary in this vicinity had not previously been surveyed, and an existing road was adopted as the northern boundary of the proposed freehold land. Examination of the registered plan has disclosed that about 75 square metres of forestry land has been included as part of the surveyed lot. This proposal provides for the revocation of this area from State Forest 502. The balance area proposed for exclusion will enable the road along the northern boundary of the lot to be opened as a road for public use. Only the land north of the road has been managed for forestry purposes, and this proposal, based on the survey plan, merely regularises the existing situation.

I strongly support each of these proposals and commend them for the approval of the House.

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN (Caboolture) (9.13 p.m.): It gives me great pleasure to second the motion standing in the name of Mr Casey and to say a few brief words in support of three of the proposals in particular, that is, the proposals to revoke areas from State Forests 274, 788 and 792 in the Conondale Range area to form part of the future Conondale Range national park.

I have been involved in the plight of the national park proposal in the Conondale Range for a great deal of time. When I realised that this motion was coming on, I checked the records and discovered that it was the subject of the maiden question that I asked in this place in March 1990. On several occasions since then, I have had the opportunity to further my interest in this particular national park. As the Minister has mentioned, the area is noted for the marbled frogmouth owl, and that particular animal is the symbol depicted on the T-shirts produced by the Conondale Range Committee. As the former Minister for Environment and Heritage informed me, the area is also the home of the eastern bristle bird. I know that all members would have taken note of that at the time. As well, the gastric brooding frog was last seen at Booloumba Creek some years ago, and we are hopeful that it will return.

All is not well in the Conondale Range. There is still the problem of the Asterik goldmine, which was ceded to us by the former Government. Despite the expenditure of a great deal of money by my colleague the Minister for Minerals and Energy and his predecessors, that site has not yet been cleaned up to the extent that one would like. The former Government left us with that problem. The area of the goldmine was not in any way economically viable, but it did suffer massively in terms of contamination by cyanide and arsenic. There was no bond. Somebody has to clean it up, and we have been left to do it.

Back in 1990, the Minister for Environment and Heritage assured me that the area would become a national park. We put in place a system of consultation with people from the timber industry, the Forest Service, the Department of Environment and Heritage and the Conondale Range Consultative Committee. The consultation process was umpired by the alternative dispute resolution officers of the community justice section, and the revocations before the House are the result of the work undertaken by that committee.

Many people were very helpful to me in respect of this issue. I want to mention particularly Ian Mackay and Mark Ricketts from the Conondale Range Consultative Committee

and the various executives of the Sunshine Coast Environment Council. They will be highly delighted by the action that this Parliament is taking tonight. I thank the Minister for Primary Industries and I support this motion.

Mr PERRETT (Barambah) (9.17 p.m.): The Opposition supports the motion before the House, but it does so with some reluctance. Since the Goss Government came to power in 1989, some 227,000 hectares of forestry land in Queensland have been revoked. That land had been set aside by our forebears to meet the present and future timber needs of this State. Queensland already imports a lot of timber for its own needs. It is quite disturbing that we keep seeing forestry revocations coming before the House, which are whittling away prime timber-producing land that was set aside by our forebears. That land will soon be lost from the system forever. In other words, this Government is selling off the farm.

Mr Welford: You sold it off to your mates.

Mr PERRETT: It is good to see that the member for Everton is awake. I noticed him having a good sleep in the back of the Chamber this afternoon. Obviously he is like the marbled frogmouth owl mentioned by the Minister and the member for Caboolture in their contributions. Those owls are nocturnal—they come alive at night-time.

The Minister has outlined the revocations proposed in this motion. The first revocation was recommended by the Conondale Range Consultative Committee in 1991. We note that that committee was a child of the Australian Labor Party. It was established to bring down a decision which would suit the agenda of the Government of the day. The second revocation is in the Chesterton Range area. I am not all that familiar with that particular area. However, I am familiar with the third revocation in the Yarraman area, which is located in my electorate. I fully support the preservation of that particular 1,485 hectares, which contains the last remnant of that particular type of vine scrub in the area. The best agricultural areas in the south Burnett have been on areas which were previously of this type of vine scrub. It is very rich, fertile, volcanic soil. It is red in its nature and very alluvial. It is certainly very sought after by the farmers of the district.

The red soil of the south Burnett has played a major part in Kingaroy becoming the peanut capital of Australia. However, there is very little of that type of scrub left because it grew on these rich volcanic soil types. Obviously, it was much sought after by the early settlers, who cleared most of that type of land for agricultural purposes. I certainly support the revocation of this particular area because there is not too much of that land left. Certainly, if it was cleared for forestry purposes, then no doubt future generations would have little opportunity to know what type of land their forebears, their grandparents, their great grandparents and their great, great grandparents carved out with axes and mattocks in those early pioneering days.

Following a statement by the Premier on the ABC just over three weeks ago that he supported the phasing out of logging in native forests in Queensland, the forest industry in Queensland is very nervous. There are many sawmills that rely totally on native forests for their wellbeing. Particularly west of the range, many of the cypress mills in places such as Chinchilla and Roma, and many other places, rely totally on native forests for their wellbeing. The Opposition recognises the importance of the Queensland forest industry. In 1995, with more than 100 years of proud heritage, it contributes approximately $1 billion annually to the State economy. I think that should be noted by the Government.

The State Government benefits directly to the tune of about $42m each year in timber royalties which are paid by millers for the purchase of timber from Crown land. There are currently about 300 hardwood, cypress and pine mills, almost a dozen panel board and paper mills, together with hundreds of secondary processing plants generating more than 15,000 jobs in Queensland's wood and wood products sector, about 80 per cent of which are outside of the Brisbane area, making the industry a key employment generator in regional Queensland.

As I said before, Queensland does import some timber. It is currently about 59 per cent self-sufficient in sawn timber, importing about 19 per cent from interstate and about 22 per cent from overseas. Even with the burgeoning availability of local plantation timbers, supply shortages are predicted to continue over the next 30 years.

The Opposition believes that, in developing the forestry industry, utmost consideration should be given to the environment and that efficiently and sustainably managed forest estates should reflect appropriate natural resources management and should serve to maintain the forest's biological diversity. Forests should be developed on an ecologically sustainable basis for present and future generations. This is what concerns me with the motion before

the House that, if we continue to sell off the farm, this will not always be possible. We believe that this should manifest through economic benefits, affecting a broad range of indicators, including employment and regional growth across many industries.

So, it is with some reluctance that the Opposition supports the motion. We issue a caution to the Government that it would be foolish to sell off the farm, as this particular motion sells off another 8,112 hectares. We become less and less self-sufficient in timber supply as time goes by. Certainly, following statements that were made recently by the Premier, the forest industry is very nervous. It is also very nervous following the pressures from the Green movement in blocking woodchipping all around the country, even though in Queensland we chip only residue from the sawmills. I believe that we do have a responsibility—not just the Opposition but certainly the Government—to ensure the future of the forestry industry because it is a major industry in this State and certainly a major contributor to employment in this State.

Mr STEPHAN (Gympie) (9.25 p.m.): I join briefly in this debate on the revocation of these forestry areas. A number of different areas are being revoked, but I just wish to make a comment in support of what the Opposition spokesman has said about the amount of forestry land that has been revoked and that is not available for forestry production at present. It is of concern to me mainly because the Forestry Department has been a conservator of forests and still is a conservator of forests. It needs to make sure that our current forests will remain and be available for harvesting by many generations to come.

Having said that, I have been waiting for 1.7 hectares of land in the Gympie electorate to undergo revocation. I have been waiting for two major reasons, one of which is the fact that previously the land was designated as a miner's homestead area. If members have any idea of what miners' homesteads are like, they would realise that access to a miner's homestead could be legally binding through a forestry area. This Government has gone through the process of insisting that all miners' homesteads shall be freehold land and that all freehold land must have gazetted road access to it. The problem with the 1.7 hectares of land was that, legally, a few properties on that land did not have legal access to their blocks. So the revocation is necessary to enable the two or three owners of those properties to have legal access to their own land.

Another quirky aspect of this is that 75 square metres of one of these pieces of freehold land is actually a forest. There was 75 square metres in the middle of privately owned land that was in fact forestry land. By all the rules and regulations—and I suppose any member of this House would agree—it was not appropriate to have a 75 square metre block of forestry land in the middle of privately owned land. The Government has moved to rectify that type of problem.

These problems have been going on for quite some time. I can recall a number of letters, phone calls and deputations from the landowners concerned who were waiting to get legal access to their blocks of land. There were also a couple of instances where subdivision of land has been held up because of this problem. This revocation will mean that those owners will be able to enter their block of land legally and, secondly, they will now be able to go ahead with any subdivision of those lands. In relation to both of the instances, two or three landowners will be very pleased indeed that this revocation has occurred.

Along with the Opposition spokesman, I remain concerned about the number of revocations that are carried out simply for the sake of revoking forestry land. I place on record my confidence in the record of the Forest Service officers for the splendid work that they have done over a long time in looking after our forests.

Hon. R. J. GIBBS (Bundamba—Minister for Tourism, Sport and Racing) (9.30 p.m.), in reply: I point out to the member for Barambah, who voiced a concern about the Conondale Range, that the consultative committee included representatives of the timber industry. An agreement was reached on the areas now proposed for conversion to national parks. As the honourable member is well aware, the process was very consultative. I simply make that point for it to go on record.

Motion agreed to.

MEAT INDUSTRY STANDARD 1994 (SUBORDINATE LEGISLATION No. 454 of 1994)

Disallowance of Statutory Instrument

Mr PERRETT (Barambah) (9.31 p.m.): I move—

> "That Meat Industry Standard 1994 (Subordinate Legislation No. 454 of 1994) tabled in Parliament on 21 February 1995 be disallowed."

I have moved that Parliament disallow a new charging regime imposing crippling new charges to pay for the operating costs of the Labor Government's Livestock and Meat Authority. That debate will allow the acting Minister to justify what many people regard as outrageously high charges. Labor's determination that industry meet the full costs of Government regulation means that many small and even large businesses will go to the wall—and that includes significant sections of the livestock industry.

The new fee structure imposes additional and unaffordable costs for Q-Safe, the quality assurance accreditation system. For example, an abattoir with a planned weekly kill of between 101 and 200 animals will pay $720 to apply for accreditation. The initial accreditation will cost $30,000 and the annual renewal will cost $30,000. A facility with a killing capacity of over 200 a week faces an accreditation cost of $80,000 and the renewal will also cost $80,000. I have even come across the case of a small poultry abattoir in country Queensland, which faces fee increases from $80 a year to $2,000 a year on a kill of just over 2,000 birds a month. That operator must pass on those costs to his customers. A small operator such as that finds it very difficult to compete with the big operators in the chicken industry. If the Government uses its numbers here to confirm the proposed charges, I cannot see how that business can survive.

It is true that, under the new charging regime, in particular circumstances some major meat-processing facilities can make some savings. I do not dispute that, and I certainly do not criticise it. Processing costs in Queensland and Australia are much too high. They are crippling our livestock industries. If the Labor Government had a genuine concern to boost the economic prospects of the industry, it would not be fiddling around the margins with inspection fees. It would be working for genuine labour market reforms, which would allow the processing sector the chance to confront our competitors on even terms.

We should all take the lessons of our competitors in the world meat trade. They have reformed the labour market properly, and as a result, all sectors of their meat industries have boomed. If we were to do that, we would look forward to longer killing seasons in those towns that depend on meat processing. Because our meat would be more price competitive on export markets, we would see a higher throughput of stock every year. We would also see a decline in the live cattle export trade. That would be a winner all over the place. However, the Labor Government will not muster the courage to confront its mates. It will not grasp the nettle.

I do not criticise the reduction in some cases of the fees payable by the larger processors. What I do criticise is the huge increase in costs imposed on the smaller people in the meat industry—the smaller processors and the retail butchers. Those costs work against the consumers, because they drive competitors out and open the way for more and more monopolistic trading situations. The Labor Government has consistently shown a willingness to throw butchers to the wolves of the big supermarket chains. The changes in shopping hours were designed to do one thing—drive shoppers into the arms of the big chains with their unionised work forces. That has happened.

Convenience has meant that those big operators have taken more and more of the market in meat, bread, and fruit and vegetables. Some retail butchers in the big shopping centres have already gone under, and the process is sure to continue. In smaller regional centres, the situation is even worse, with shoppers being attracted from them to the larger towns. Some small country towns no longer have a local butchery.

The new fee structure imposed in those regulations will make the situation far worse for both city and country butchers and consumers. I mentioned the savings available to some larger operations. The total size of the pot will not shrink, so the difference is to be made up largely by the retail butchers. Figures coming out of the Livestock and Meat Authority indicate that the retail sector will contribute $960,000 a year towards the $1.3m cost of inspection services. Under the previous system of registration, the total revenue from butchers amounted to $174,000. That is a rise of $786,000.

A struggling retail sector fighting off the unfair competition of the big supermarket chains suddenly must find an extra $786,000 a year. Anyone who thinks that is fair should think again. Many retail butchers—in particular, those in older premises—are already struggling with the major capital expenditure necessary to achieve Q-Safe accreditation. We could argue forever about the need for that expenditure, but the accreditation process has devastated a large number of butchers financially. It is common to hear reports of butchers having to spend $40,000 to $60,000 before they get the all-important certificate. That might be acceptable for a retail butchery with a very high turnover in a big city. It is

totally beyond most country town butcheries, where the turnover is not there to support that kind of expenditure—and it never will be.

The irony is that serious problems have never been experienced with butcher shops. Under pressure from customers and regular inspections, standards have always been maintained. It is time that the Government thought again about funding for the Livestock and Meat Authority. That body has a legitimate role in setting and enforcing standards on behalf of the whole community. It is doing one of the things that we elect Governments to do. As such, it is entitled to proper funding from usual Government sources. It is entitled to funding in the same way as are the health, welfare, law and order and education systems.

The Government stands condemned for giving the authority a huge and important job to do and then denying it the proper funding to do that job. It has told the authority to find its own funding any way it can. We have the results here before us. The steep rises in charges in relation to retail butcher shops should be withdrawn. They should be replaced with revenue from Treasury. If the Government is not prepared to do that, the whole charging structure proposed here should be withdrawn and re-drafted. The sharing of costs borne by the various industry sectors must be made equitable.

The hidden side of the industry must also be forced to accept its share of the costs that the Government imposes. A moment ago, I mentioned that many small-town butchers were unable to generate sufficient income through their shops to pay the high costs of accreditation. One of the reasons for that is the activities of the so-called mobile butchers—the people who take trailer-mounted equipment from place to place. They provide an attractive alternative to those people who want to retain a beast of their own for home consumption. They also kill illegally animals that are purchased from feedlots and transport that meat to freezers in towns and other places. We cannot condone that. It is another nail in the coffin of the butchers who are struggling to make an honest living.

In such a process, there are obvious cost benefits to stock owners or the people who buy the stock direct from the feedlots or graziers, but there can be no doubt that the mobile butchers are hurting the businesses of those people who operate from accredited premises and are forced to pay expensive fees to the Government. A way must be found to spread those fees to the mobile operators and to ease the burden of the retail butchers. I know that it is difficult under the user-pays system that has been imposed on the Livestock and Meat Authority to police illegal activities. In other words, how can the Government get money from illegal operators? That is one of the problems with the user-pays system that is now being forced upon the Livestock and Meat Authority. The Meat Industry Standard 1994 is a mess. It should be withdrawn and a fresh start must be made.

Mr CONNOR (Nerang) (9.40 p.m.): I rise to formally second the motion and support the butchers of Queensland.

> "What is a socialist? One who has yearnings to share equal profits from unequal earnings; be he idler or bungler or both, he is willing to fork out his sixpence and pocket your shilling."

That quote is from Dean William Inge of St Paul's, London, in 1925. Never has a truer word been spoken about the Goss Labor Government. Sixpence is all that small business will ever get out of the Goss Labor Government. Through its so-called user fees, it wants an equal share of small-business profits while earning none of it. It talks fees for service, yet pockets almost a billion dollars a year from payroll tax. It is sucking an industry dry. It talks no new taxes while it slips its grubby fist in its back pockets.

Mr Perrett: That is why so many businesses go broke under this Government.

Mr CONNOR: As has been previously stated by the member for Barambah, the shadow Minister for Primary Industries, Trevor Perrett, the main reasons for the Opposition's motion to disallow this subordinate legislation are the exorbitant fees and structure set out in the schedule. On its own, that schedule of fees is bad enough, but it should be remembered that that is on top of a host of other taxes, charges and fees. Quite simply, the schedule of fees is too high for the industry.

The costs for most small butchers have increased in general by up to five times—from $75 per year to $400 per year—in just seven years. Those figures are for establishments employing 10 persons.

Mrs Edmond: How do they survive in the other States that have higher rates and charges?

Mr CONNOR: That is a very good question. The honourable member does not understand how business works. Business has to compete and adapt to change. The change that has occurred is a fee that has been

increased in one hit from $75 per year to $400 per year. That is what they have to adapt to. That is on top of the myriad other taxes and charges that the Goss Labor Government has introduced, the drought and all of the other problems associated with the economy of Queensland.

Mr Davidson interjected.

Mr CONNOR: That would be many, many weeks' wages for many small butchers. Quite simply, the schedule of fees is too high for the industry. Many of those smaller butchers, especially the rural and regional-based operations, have been affected as much by the drought as many of the farmers and graziers. To inflict such dramatic increases in fees when, in many cases, the drought has not broken, is simply unsustainable and unreasonable. Even when the drought has broken, the communities are so poor from the effects of the extended drought that they are nowhere near finding their financial feet.

Mr Perrett: Many communities will now be left without a butcher shop.

Mr CONNOR: Exactly! In the smaller communities, where the viability of butcher shops is marginal, they will simply close down. Members on the other side of the House will argue, "What's $400 to a business? They can afford $400." It is $400 on top of all the other taxes, charges and user fees that the Goss Labor Government has introduced. That is the problem.

Mr Davidson: They are a meeting place in town on a Saturday morning.

Mr CONNOR: Not only are they meeting places on a Saturday mornings, but they also have to put up with the fact that, as result of the trading hours legislation that the Goss Labor Government put through without industry consultation and without support of the butchers and the small-business community generally, they are forced to deal with the large retailers taking their market share.

We have heard the bleatings of a number of Ministers and especially the Treasurer over recent months and years that these are user fees and that businesses should be paying for services received. If the schedule that has been brought into the Parliament is purely for payment of services received, why have the fees increased by over 400 per cent in the last seven years at a time when inflation is running at less than 4 per cent? Even with 10 per cent inflation, the charges should not have increased by more than 100 per cent over the seven years. We have seen a fivefold—500 per cent—increase, which is totally unsustainable and unaffordable by the small-business community, especially in rural and regional Queensland. Quite simply, the argument does not stack up. What is being touted as user fees are simply new and increasing taxes. It is a sham. It is known by the industry to be a sham and gradually the people of Queensland are coming to understand that it is a sham.

Unfortunately, with the massive increases in business costs in Queensland and the way that these taxes are falling so heavily upon the small-business sector of industry, many small businesses will become unviable and close down. Jobs will be lost, and are being lost, as a result of the dramatic increases in Government taxes, charges and levies.

I will quote from a nineteenth century political philosopher, Alexis de Tocqueville.

> "Do you want to test whether a people is given to industry and commerce? Do not sound its ports, or examine the food from its forest or the produce of its soil. The spirit of trade will get all these things and, without it, they are useless. Examine whether this people's laws give men the courage to seek prosperity, freedom to follow it up, the sense and habits to find it, and"—

most importantly—

> "the assurance of reaping the benefit."

Mr STEPHAN (Gympie) (9.47 p.m.): Following on from what my colleagues on this side of the House have said, I add that the Government does not realise what it is doing. I suppose we should say, "Forgive them for they know not what they do." They do not realise what they are doing to small business or the difficult circumstances in which they are putting small business.

For example, I refer to the accreditation of premises for the retailing and distribution of meat. If the number of persons on the premises is one or two—and many small butcher shops are in that category because they used to employ six or eight people but have been reduced very substantially to become either sole traders or traders with one employee—the application fee is $280. In that case the fee for initial accreditation is $300 and the fee for renewal is $300. For premises that employ 26 to 50 people, the fee is comparatively much less. The application fee is $600. The initial accreditation fee is $3,000 and it costs $3,000 for renewal.

This makes it very difficult for the small operator—the fellow who is operating a

business on his own—to bear this extra cost. I have made the comment two or three times today that this Government is imposing the extra charges without realising how difficult it is for a business operator to bear those costs. In many instances, the operator is not bearing the cost. That operator—the owner—is making ends meet by paying himself less each week and, in many instances, not paying himself anything at all. As my colleagues have said, the problem is that the Government is imposing crippling new charges for operating costs under the meat authority.

I have referred to the initial accreditation—but it gets worse. I stopped at around the $3,000 mark, but as the Opposition spokesman has pointed out, it goes up to an initial accreditation cost of $30,000. For a poultry abattoir, the fees increase from $80 to $2,000 a year. Business just cannot afford that type of increase or that type of costing. The Government does not seem to realise that it cannot keep imposing these charges.

Mr Nuttall interjected.

Mr STEPHAN: Bob has possibly gone to sleep. He spent a bit of time out at the Gabba this afternoon. I think that he might be a bit disappointed——

Mr Beattie interjected.

Mr STEPHAN: I did not see him here just after question time. However, he came back in when he was called in for the debate. I give him credit for that, but his mind was still out at the Gabba. Bearing in mind, of course, that he is filling in for Mr Casey——

Mr Gibbs: You're just cheesed off because they wouldn't invite such a fool like you out there.

Mr STEPHAN: The Minister is disappointed and is getting sarcastic because he had to come back in here when he would have preferred to be out there with the Bulls. Of course, the Minister does not realise that the Bulls were able to achieve their win while the Minister was here. When the Minister left the cricket ground, it actually helped the Bulls, who were able to achieve their win without him. So the Minister will be very disappointed to know that he has not been able to play a part at the cricket ground and make a mark as the Bulls have done at the Gabba. I congratulate the Bulls on their win. I have digressed a little from what I was about to say.

Mr Beattie interjected.

Mr STEPHAN: I return to talking about butchers and processors. As I was saying before, the cost increases imposed on small-business people and processors in the industry actually work against the consumer. I notice that the Minister for Business, Industry and Regional Development is in the House. He should be quite interested to know what goes on in small business. I say to Mr Pitt that those charges would work against small businesses, because they cannot afford to pay the increases. Previously, the total revenue from butchers was $174,000. Under the Government's new rule, that figure has increased to $960,000.

Mr Beattie interjected.

Mr STEPHAN: I repeat that the increase that the Government has imposed on butchers is making it difficult for them to exist. It is not a funny situation. The irony of it all is that there never have been serious problems with butcher shops in this State. The Minister is creating a problem that did not exist previously.

The Minister might be interested to know that, recently, one of the butchers in my electorate was concerned and upset about what is happening to the small operator. He complained to the Premier's Department that his shop will have to go to the wall; that it will have to close down. The response that he received was of real concern to me, and it should concern the Minister. He was told, "Well, too bad. You have had it too good for too long, and it is just a pity that some people will have to go to the wall. That is just too bad." That remark came from the Premier's office, and I have no reason to doubt the honesty of that statement. It is a shocking indictment on the Government's attitude, and the Minister certainly needs to be ashamed of himself.

Mr MALONE (Mirani) (9.55 p.m.): I have much pleasure in supporting the move by my colleague the shadow Minister for Primary Industries, Mr Trevor Perrett, to have the Meat Industry Standard 1994 subordinate legislation disallowed. I realise that it may be quite difficult for the Opposition to have this regulation thrown out of the House. I have been a member only for a short time, but I realise that some Government members may be celebrating the Sheffield Shield win. I would like to be with them, because of the Bulls' great win but, unfortunately, we have work to do tonight.

Mr Perrett: The Minister is here very grudgingly tonight.

Mr MALONE: That is right. It is certainly important to get this legislation out of the way. Unfortunately, I am a little bit defeatist right now. I certainly have some great fears and

concerns about the implementation of legislation as it affects small business not only in my electorate but also in other electorates in Queensland, particularly butcher shops throughout the regional centres of Queensland. For example, in Mackay, seven butcher shops are for sale. There are no takers for those butcher shops, mainly because of the accreditation aspects of this legislation. One particular butcher shop in Finch Hatton, which is about 80 kilometres west of Mackay and has a turnover of $260,000 a year, will be closed shortly simply because of this legislation. Meeting accreditation can cost up to $60,000 with renewed refrigeration. It is unbelievably stupid to think that small business can accommodate those sorts of costs and remain viable. This legislation will mean that people in that area will have to travel in excess of 70 kilometres—and perhaps quite a distance more—to access fresh meat supplies.

Indeed, the full ramifications of this legislation could mean that greater hazards than those that already exist could occur. People make a decision to access fresh meat supplies. In doing so, they also stop in the town to which they travel. Obviously, that meat is placed in an esky or similar container and left in the boot of a car for quite a period. Therefore, in a short time, that meat would go past the five degrees Centigrade level of safety, which is part of the accreditation involved in the legislation.

Also, by 1996 a small abattoir in my electorate will close simply because of accreditation and the fact that it will not be able to meet the guidelines. Currently, it kills in the vicinity of 200 head of privately owned cattle for use in the local area. Where will those cattle be killed? It is pretty obvious that they will be killed on private properties where, obviously, the sanitary standards will not be nearly as high as they are in that abattoir. Members would realise that this legislation—in those aspects alone—will affect local and regional areas. The cost of adhering to legislation is forcing small business to close down and deliver meat to the larger supermarkets. Obviously, that is fine if that is the direction in which the Labor Government in Queensland wants to go. Unfortunately, I believe that we are delivering a disservice to regional centres throughout Queensland.

I shall take a minute to paint a picture that existed when I was young—and that was not long ago. A butcher used to deliver meat to a rail siding, put it on a wagon wrapped in newspaper and hessian, sit it out in the sun until about 8 o'clock at night, when it was picked up by the local train, taken about 100 kilometres or so, kicked out door as the train went past and picked up the next morning among the grass or whatever by the local land-holder. I do not recollect anybody dying from eating meat that was delivered in that way.

We are now hearing reports of infections and so on in our local hospitals—golden staph and so on. A lot of people are getting sick and are dying from those sorts of conditions. Is it the intention of our butcher shops to have greater and more costly hygiene standards than our local hospitals? Mr Deputy Speaker, do you realise that under the current legislation a butcher shop cannot be swept out with a wooden-handled broom? What does this cost the industry—both suppliers and consumers?

The inspectors for accreditation are not consistent in the control of the accreditation. I am told that some information is given one week and the following week it is disregarded. With those few words, I would like to support the motion that the subordinate legislation be disallowed.

Mr DAVIDSON (Noosa) (10.01 p.m.): Tonight, I am absolutely delighted to be able to support my colleagues, especially the member for Barambah, Mr Perrett, who has raised a very serious concern held by butchers in my electorate.

Members on the other side of the House obviously have very little understanding of the pressures that small-business people are under these days. The motion that we are debating tonight concerns the butchers. The poor old butchers have been around since the beginning of time. They have supplied and served the communities in major towns. In many little towns, they are one-man operations.

I have received many complaints from butchers about the inspectors who work for the DPI. This Government has no idea about business and the way it runs. It has no idea about the pressure that businessmen are under. It has no idea about the management or running of a butcher shop. It would not understand that in many cases a butcher starts work at 4 and 5 in the morning. Today, young inspectors of 24 and 25 years of age—academic whiz-kids—who are just out of university are fronting up to the butcher shops at 6 a.m. wanting to do inspections. In many cases, the proprietor of the butcher shop starts at 4 a.m. or 5 a.m. so that he can prepare his mince and sausages for the day and cut all of his meat for the window. Those first three or

four hours of the day are his most productive. That is when he sets up his shop to trade for the whole day, starting at 8 or 9 o'clock in the morning.

Now these whiz-kid inspectors are coming in at 6 in the morning to inspect the shop. They are holding up the butcher and stopping him from doing his work. They are conducting three and four-hour inspections. The Government has hit everyone else in the State. Now it is knocking out the butcher. The poor old butcher has to entertain these whiz-kid inspectors.

In days gone by under good and proper Government, there were elderly inspectors in the DPI. They were nice old blokes who would cruise into the butcher shop, have a cup of tea and a scone or a biscuit with the butcher. The inspector would have a fag with him. Mr Deputy Speaker, you would know this, because you are a good bloke. In the really good butcher shops, we would often walk out the back and see a frying pan on with a few sausages, chops and cutlets. The butcher would give people a bit of a feed and some fresh bread from the baker next door. We could sit down, have a cup of coffee and a good chinwag to the butcher. We would then go out the front and buy $30 worth of meat and go home.

Today, the days of the old inspectors have gone. The National Party, the Liberal Party, coalition-type inspectors were good blokes who would walk in and have a yarn to the butcher. The inspectors would visit the butcher shop three or four times a year in a mild-mannered way and work through the problems that they could see in the butcher shop and ask the butcher to improve, restore and maintain the equipment and the flooring and so on. Now these whiz-kids are coming in at 6 in the morning. The butcher does his most productive work for the day between 6 a.m. and 9 a.m., when his customers start arriving. These inspectors are arriving at their shops and preventing butchers from doing their work. When the inspector leaves at 9 o'clock, the butcher is then confronted with the problem of having to make his sausages and mince and cut the meat for his window. The inspectors are preventing the butcher from doing his work.

One of the biggest complaints is the licensing fee. For one of the butchers in my area, the fee has gone from $80 per year to $300 per year. Another butcher has gone from paying $80 per year—and he employs five butchers—to $500 a year. Another butcher has gone from paying $80 to paying $700 a year. What members of the Government should understand—and what they do not understand—is that many butcher shops in the country are sole operators. They are one-man shows. In lots of cases, if honourable members went to the pubs and had a talk to a few of the butchers who drink in them, they would learn that their income per year is about $15,000 to $20,000. So that fee is actually one week's wages to them.

It really saddens me that these poor butchers are battling away trying to make a quid against all the odds. These days, they have the supermarkets to compete with, and all sorts of pressures.

Mrs Edmond: And the fish and chips.

Mr DAVIDSON: And of course they have to compete with the increased demand for seafood. Fish and chicken have obviously taken over from red meat sales. They have all of these pressures to contend with. After doing their inspection, the inspectors are saying that the butchers are expected to spend $5,000, $10,000, $15,000, $20,000, $30,000, $40,000 and, in some cases, $60,000 or $70,000 per year to gain accreditation. Many of these butchers do not have that sort of money. In one case in my electorate, a butcher had to spend $15,000. He could not get any more money from the bank. His overdraft was at its maximum. He could not get the funds from anywhere. He was lucky that his mother lent him the $15,000 to buy new meat displays, new freezers, new slicers and so on. Without the ability to borrow that money from his mother—and certainly without her ability to lend it to him—the fellow would have had to close down. This is a businessman. This is one of the little blokes in Queensland working away trying to make a living for himself and his family.

As the member for Mirani pointed out, one of the other big problems that we have created with this accreditation system is that, when the inspections have been done and the requirements for upgradings have been identified—whether it be maintenance or new equipment—if the butcher does not have the funds to do the work or the ability to borrow the funds to do it, within six or 12 months—it is six months, but in some cases he may be given an extension—he will be forced to sell his shop. To any prospective purchaser of a business such as a butcher shop, with a $40,000, $50,000 or $60,000 requirement from DPI to upgrade, it makes it worth practically nothing.

I have received complaints not from butchers in my electorate but from butchers

further down the coast. Two or three butchers had to close their doors because they could not upgrade to the requirements of the inspector to gain accreditation. They have walked away. All they have walked away with is the money that they have been able to gain by selling the equipment in their shop. As everyone knows, during a fire sale, $100,000 worth of equipment, even if it is brand new, is worth about $40,000. And when $40,000 worth of equipment is five or 10 years old, it is worth about $4,000 or $5,000. In lots of cases, that will not even cover the overdraft that the small-businessman may have had with the bank, the expenses, wages, long service pay and so on.

Members opposite should get down to their butchers, do the right thing and buy a kilo of fillet steak. They should let him make a few bob. They should buy a couple of kilos of snags. They should make a donation to the little businessmen in their electorates, instead of going to the big supermarkets with their wives at 5.30 on Saturday afternoon to get all of the specials. They should go down to the butcher on Saturday morning and give the bloke a few bob.

Mr Elder: I saw you at the butchery in the shopping centre at the coast. What were you doing?

Mr DAVIDSON: I was in the butcher shop. I noticed that the honourable member had six cans of baked beans and six cans of spaghetti in his basket. At least I was supporting the butcher. I ask the Minister to consider one really important point. The time of the inspectors' inspection of these shops should be a consideration for the department, because it is placing a lot of butchers under hardships. The first two or three hours in the morning are their most productive hours of the day. In many cases, they were there by themselves without their staff because they wanted to be able to cut the meat for the window and make the sausages and the mince.

Hon R. J. GIBBS (Bundamba—Minister for Tourism, Sport and Racing) (10.11 p.m.), in reply: What an amazing outburst from the honourable member for Noosa! I can remember the member being in business, when he used to sell the most expensive worms in Queensland. He did so well at his business that he could afford to give away free beer, and he made so much money that from the first time he stepped into this place he only ever treated it as a part-time occupation. I do not think that the member for Noosa is in any position to complain about small business and how well he did!

The honourable member for Barambah has shown once again that he is blind to the great benefits of changes being introduced in the meat and livestock industry, and today he is no friend of that industry. Even though he was a participant in the industry over the years, he cannot bear to look at, and objectively take note of the way ahead. The Meat Industry Act was initiated in 1993 as a much-needed restructure and modernisation of the meat industry. An important part of that is the internationally recognised process known as quality assurance which, as the name implies, provides us with a modern and highly effective instrument for guaranteeing high standards of wholesomeness and safety to the consumer. However, the member for Barambah would deny this great benefit to the industry, this passport to recognition on growing international markets and this passport to increasing consumer satisfaction and more purchases of meat in Queensland.

Representatives of the industry took part in consultation with the Goss Government on the introduction of quality assurance every step of the way, and they have seen the advantages. The member for Barambah has ignored that acceptance and continues to blindly oppose it. He has tried to argue his case by the usual means of distorting and misrepresenting the facts. We saw quite a stunt last month from the honourable member——

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Palaszczuk): Order! The House will come to order. There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber.

Mr GIBBS: —with his sponsorship of the Toowoomba butcher who had successfully obtained accreditation under the quality assurance system but was encouraged to go public about problems he had with the trimming of carcasses. Members will recall that that stunt was put on in the limelight of sensationalist publicity that was being generated around a tragic case of bacterial infection in South Australia. As Mr Casey said at that time, in that emotional climate the member for Barambah used the butcher, Mr W. Brakels, to try to support a claim that general meat inspection services in Queensland were deficient. The problem was really that Mr Brakels should have reported all cases with which he had problems to his various suppliers and to the Queensland Livestock and Meat Authority. He went out making public statements, including radio interviews on the morning of 22 February, before Mr Casey spoke in Parliament.

The unfortunate outcome of the incident was that it hurt the livestock and meat industry, added to anxiety on the part of consumers and struck another blow at our export status—all of that activity unjustified and to no good purpose.

Mr Connor: A load of rubbish!

Mr GIBBS: It is not rubbish, and I will come to the reasons why it is not just rubbish in a moment. This was promoted by the Opposition——

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Nerang is interjecting from a place which is not his own. I will warn the honourable member the next time he interjects from a place other than his own.

Mr GIBBS: I wonder how much scrutiny the honourable member for Nerang stood up to in his former occupation as a used-car salesman!

This was promoted by the Opposition just for the sake of a cheap political shot to get in the news at the time of those tragic incidents in South Australia. The industry itself was appalled. One reaction came from operators in Kingaroy. I will quote from a respectable newspaper, the *South Burnett Times*, of 24 February last. I defy the member for Barambah to deny publicly that that is a truthful and dependable publication. Under the headline "Meat industry backs Q-Safe quality control", the newspaper stated—

> "Meat industry representatives have leapt to the defence of Q-Safe quality assurance programs in the wake of criticism by Opposition primary industries spokesman Mr Trevor Perrett . . . who claimed the quality assurance system was not working.
>
> Kingaroy's Swickers Bacon Factory manager Mr Bob Childs said Mr Perrett's statements were unwarranted and 'not for bettering the industry'.
>
> Mr Childs said he had faith in the effectiveness of Q-Safe quality assurance programs and could confidently guarantee consumers of the quality of meat processed at Swickers.
>
> 'We are undergoing accreditation at the moment and employ three full-time Q-Safe inspection officers', Mr Childs said. 'Every animal which is slaughtered here is inspected and passed. We also do a final inspection ourselves at the end of the kill line.'"

The *South Burnett Times*, published in the electorate of Barambah, goes on to quote a Kingaroy butcher, Mr Geoff Hurford, who said that meat sold at his shop and other privately owned butcher shops was "spot on" and of a high standard due to Q-Safe imposed regulations in their shops and at killing works. Q-Safe might mean more administration for butchers but "was for the benefit of all in the long run". The newspaper article continues—

> "Mr Hurford said, 'I think we butchers have for a long time offered wholesome product but there is always room for improvement.'"

I remind the House that the *South Burnett Times* is published in the electorate of the member for Barambah.

Mr Hurford, as he is quoted, understands the meaning of modernisation and looking ahead, which is something that Mr Perrett obviously does not understand. Mr Childs obviously has picked up on a sorry, sad truth that his local member of Parliament has been dudding and defaming the Queensland livestock and meat industry. That is the vile reality—that for a bit of hoped-for political gain, a great industry working on something good for its future has been dudded and defamed.

We know that the culprit in the case, the member for Barambah, was contacted and addressed in no uncertain terms by responsible persons in the livestock and meat industry about the mischief that he was making in Parliament, but unfortunately he has decided to be arrogant about it. The member is digging in his heels and trying to bring it all up again. The attack that he has made on the fees charged for accreditation under quality assurance is yet another case of distortion, abuse of the facts, misunderstanding and mischievousness. It is a pleasure to correct him by simply explaining how the fees have changed, because it is a chance to inject reason and reasonableness into the debate after all the exaggeration, sensationalism and untruth from the honourable member.

The member for Barambah has compared the accreditation fees for quality assurance with inspection fees that were charged under the old system. That is comparing chalk with cheese. They are simply not the same, but in terms of the direct financial impact on the businesses concerned, current estimates show that in the vast majority of cases the monetary cost is nil. It is the outcomes which have changed in terms of quality and safety—all for the better. The main problem with the examples that the member has been quoting by adding up the new fees is that he forgets to take away the old fees

that have been dropped at the same time. The slaughter fee was $5.50 per beef carcass or equivalent. That money was applied to employment of the inspectors. That slaughter fee has been scrapped. The member for Barambah said that he was scandalised by the example of a facility with a killing capacity of over 200 a week facing an accreditation fee of $80,000 per annum. He did not say, of course, that the figure includes the cost of employing the minimum one inspector who must be on the floor. Take away the slaughter fee and then one gets the full context and the true story.

Incidentally, The House suffered the embarrassment of this supposed upholder of Queensland industry complaining about cases where he said butcher shops have been up for major refurbishment and repairs in order to get their accreditation. Advice to me is that some establishments may well have somehow fallen short of the old standards established in the 1970s so, when the day of reckoning came, it was not the new quality assurance standards of themselves that caused major expense. The facts are that the owners of a well-run, average, clean and efficient suburban or country town butcher shop by the application of their own ingenuity can use a kit to do their accreditation not for thousands of dollars but for about $75. There is then the one-off accreditation fee to the authority and butchers are in the system and clear to really succeed with their businesses based on delivery of high quality product.

It is a pity for Parliament, consumers and the welfare of the livestock and meat industry that the member for Barambah does not manage to do his homework properly and find out these things. With antics like this disallowance motion, he is continuing to waste the time of the Parliament and the community. Queensland really cannot afford to have such incompetents misusing simple information that they are supposed to be able to understand and, by their actions, attacking invaluable and efficient industries.

Question—That the motion be agreed to—put; and the House divided—

AYES, 30—Beanland, Connor, Cooper, Davidson, Elliott, FitzGerald, Gamin, Gilmore, Grice, Healy, Hobbs, Horan, Johnson, Lester, Lingard, McCauley, Malone, Mitchell, Perrett, Quinn, Rowell, Santoro, Simpson, Slack, Stephan, Stoneman, Turner, Watson *Tellers:* Springborg, Laming

NOES, 47—Ardill, Barton, Beattie, Bennett, Bird, Braddy, Bredhauer, Briskey, Burns, Clark, D'Arcy, Davies, Dollin, Edmond, Elder, Fenlon, Foley, Gibbs, Hamill, Hayward, Hollis, Mackenroth, McElligott, McGrady, Milliner, Nunn, Nuttall, Palaszczuk, Pearce, Pitt, Power, Purcell, Pyke, Robertson, Robson, Rose, Smith, Spence, Sullivan J. H., Sullivan T. B., Szczerbanik, Vaughan, Warner, Welford, Woodgate *Tellers:* Livingstone, Budd

Resolved in the **negative**.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. T. M. MACKENROTH (Chatsworth—Leader of the House) (10.29 p.m.): I move—

"That the House do now adjourn."

Heimerl Family

Mr PERRETT (Barambah) (10.29 p.m.): The inflexible bureaucratic attitudes of the Goss Labor Government are making life hell for a young family in my electorate. They are certainly endangering the well-being of a little Down syndrome boy and could well cost him his life. Two Ministers have refused to intervene on behalf of Terry and Jodi Heimerl, who want their children to attend Proston State School in preference to other schools. The Premier has simply ignored pleas for help from the Heimerls.

Terry and Jodi Heimerl are pensioners, and their two children, Jessica and Bradley, have serious health problems of a kind which would crush most families. Jessica is a chronic asthmatic, who has been hospitalised on numerous occasions, and suffers from attention deficit disorder. Bradley, too, is a chronic asthmatic. He has Down's syndrome, a heart condition, suspected sleep apnoea and a long list of less serious medical problems. His parents have told me that he collapsed at school last year when he stopped breathing and had to be taken to hospital.

If ever a family had a case for the flexible interpretation of rules and regulations, it is the Heimerls, but the Goss Labor Government has rejected that approach. Inflexible Government attitudes became a problem for the Heimerls when they moved last year from Wondai to the west Wooroolin-Proston area. Both children continued at Wondai for the remainder of the school year, but the family began making arrangements for them to attend Proston school for 1995. They wanted Jessica at Proston because there is an ambulance centre there. Her friends also attend that school and her parents say that is important because of the attention deficit disorder. In Bradley's case, proximity to the ambulance is vital.

The rules for free bus transport result in the definition of Wooroolin as being the so-

called closest school to the Heimerl residence. That is not true in the case of kilometres on the road, but the Wooroolin bus terminates at the head of the road on which the Heimerls live. The trip to Proston school is actually shorter, both in distance and in time, but that school bus terminates a few kilometres further from the Heimerl residence.

The collective wisdom of remote bureaucrats is that rules must prevail, and that the Heimerl children must attend Wooroolin or go even further to school in Kingaroy. They are eligible to go there because of the problems their health poses for their education. However, Proston, with its access to emergency medical intervention, is out. It is out in spite of the willingness of the parents and local people to make adjustments. The Heimerls want to drive the children to the Proston school bus in order to fit in with the Department of Transport's nearest-school equation. Local officials, including those associated with the Proston school, met in November and made firm and achievable plans for Bradley's attendance at Proston this year. It is only the inflexibility of more senior officials and ministerial staff which result in the children—and Bradley has the most serious problem—going to the Wooroolin school rather than to the Proston school. There is a very real case for ministerial intervention, and I call on the Education and Transport Ministers to get together on that.

Terry and Jodi Heimerl have written to former Education Minister, Mr Comben; the current Minister, Mr Hamill; the Premier; and the Labor Party President, Bob Gibbs. I have written to Ministers Comben and Hamill, and my office has maintained contacts on the matter. I do not want to go into all the correspondence, but I do want to point to some elements. Mr Hamill, as Transport Minister, flicked the problem to the Education Minister, Mr Comben. I know Mr Comben to be a compassionate man with a strong desire to do what is right. I believe that the reply that he directed to my correspondence was prepared by bureaucrats protecting their rules.

It refused the Heimerls, who as pensioners have limited means, any hope of subsidised bus transport to Proston school and made it clear that, if the children were sent to Proston, they would have to pay. The same people must have written the letter that Mr Hamill sent this month to the shadow Education Minister. It is worth quoting—

> "Parents have every right to enrol their children at the school of their choice. If parents choose to send their children to schools other than the school to which transport assistance is provided, it is assumed that they make that decision in the full knowledge of any additional costs involved."

Surely, there is some room for a compassionate reading of the rules.

Roma Street Precinct; Energy Needs; Road Safety Programs

Mr BEATTIE (Brisbane Central) (10.33 p.m.): On Monday, 27 February 1995, State Cabinet decided that Brisbane would have a world standard inner city park based on the Roma Street rail precinct in my electorate of Brisbane Central. My constituents are delighted with that decision. The Government will now develop a concept to connect the new park through the Queensland Place car park and Albert Park, linking public land from the Normanby to King George Square. Cabinet rejected other proposals for the redevelopment of the Roma Street rail site drawn up by consultants and including commercial and residential development.

The redevelopment of the Roma Street site is a once in a lifetime opportunity. The Government's preference is for a central city park to symbolise the capital's maturity and livability. Just as New York has its Central Park and London its Hyde Park, Brisbane too will have a large, green open space in the centre of the city—indeed, the lungs of the city. It will guarantee that the inner city will be able to breathe well into the next century and be a pleasant place in which people can live, work and relax. That is especially important in the face of a rapidly growing population in the State's south-east corner. As we all know, 1,000 people a week are moving to that area.

All the land covered by the proposal is owned by the Government. The consultants who drew up the proposals considered by Cabinet were appointed by a Roma Street project team that was formed in 1993. The Premier will now appoint a team with representatives from the Office of the Co-ordinator General, the Administrative Services Department, Queensland Rail and Queensland Treasury to come up with a concept plan.

One of the major tasks of the project team was to prepare a report on the most economic and appropriate final use of the site. The plans rejected by Cabinet proposed 600 medium-density dwelling units in three-storey to four-storey developments, along with 120,000 square metres of commercial

development and 7,000 square metres of retail space. The precinct now to be developed into parkland is bounded by Roma Street, Albert Street, Wickham Street, College Road and Countess Street and has the full support of my constituents.

Another recent decision of Cabinet has also been applauded by my constituents, and that relates to energy needs. The Government has a plan for Queensland's energy needs for the future to reduce greenhouse gases and protect our fragile environment. The Goss Government's plan to protect our environment and provide for future power needs includes some exciting initiatives. A rebate of $500 will be provided to householders who install two-panel solar hot water systems and $300 to householders who install a single-panel solar unit—a commitment of $6m. Major solar hot water system manufacturers have also agreed to provide an additional $100 rebate to householders who install two-panel solar systems.

The sum of $6.5m is committed to the Hot Water Efficiency Scheme, to provide rebates to householders who use their hot water systems more efficiently. The sum of $2.9m will be provided as a rebate to householders for installing energy-efficient compact fluorescent lamps in their homes. The sum of $6.4m is committed to providing an energy advisory centre in Brisbane to promote energy efficiency and alternative energy systems and to provide advice on the way in which people can save money and help the environment. For the longer term, children will learn about energy efficiency through a new energy curriculum for local primary and secondary schools. Those initiatives can save money and the environment at the same time, and are applauded in a very wholehearted way by my constituents.

Another issue that again has received strong support from my constituents is the road safety programs that the Government has pursued since we came to office in 1989. It is worth mentioning a number of initiatives in road safety. They include the Driver Reviver Campaign and compulsory bike helmets for children and for cyclists generally. In 1991, the SchoolSafe Program was introduced to enhance traffic safety in the vicinity of schools, including the introduction of a 40 kilometre per hour speed limit. That was a very important program.

In addition, work is currently progressing on the refurbishment of a Fortitude Valley customer service one-stop shop. A new customer service centre was opened in Adelaide Street in the city. The Government has also introduced industry licensing functions in customer service centres in Fortitude Valley, Spring Hill and Adelaide Street. Those types of initiatives not only bring Government closer to the people but also take a new approach to protecting the environment and looking after constituents such as mine.

For too long, my residents and constituents have had to put up with crazy proposals such as the world's tallest building and roads being ripped through the inner suburbs. Those types of proposals for which the Government has been responsible protect my constituents, and I thank the Government for its initiatives.

Parking Stickers for Disabled

Mr LAMING (Mooloolah) (10.39 p.m.): I rise tonight to again speak on the debacle of the new parking permits for the disabled. Members will be aware that that system has recently changed for the 30,000 holders of such permits in Queensland. On 28 February this year, all of the old permits expired, and the holders were required to reapply. The new scheme involves a two-tiered system of red and blue parking permits. Blue permits now provide access to regulated and off-street parking, while red permits will provide access to off-street parking only. To be eligible for a blue permit, a person must be either unable to walk and totally dependent on a wheelchair or need to use a wide parking bay due to total dependence on large, complex mobility devices, such as walking frames.

Let me make it quite clear that I am aware that there was some abuse of the former system. Let me also concede that some amendment to the system might have been in order. However, let me proclaim quite vigorously that the consultation process was not thorough and the outcome was seriously flawed and has worked to the extreme disadvantage of many disabled drivers. Many disabled people have told me over the past few months that all that was required was to enforce the existing system.

As if this monumental foul up was not enough, the Government has been charging a $10 application fee to apply for the new permits. I will return to the subject of the fee later. First, I will provide the House with some examples of how some individuals have been disadvantaged by the change in the system. Mrs Runham of the Groves in my electorate has rheumatoid arthritis, a plastic knee, one fused ankle and a very bad back and needs a crutch to walk. As a red permit holder she will

no longer be able to use designated on-street parking. She is disadvantaged.

Mrs Hovey of Nambour believes that the criteria are too restrictive. She claims that many people like herself are not strong enough to manage wheelchairs. Mrs Hovey can walk 20 to 30 metres at any one time and managed under the previous system. In case members consider that this lady's incapacity should not warrant a blue permit, let me advise the House that she is a severe cortisone-dependent asthmatic with attendant diabetes, degeneration of the joints—especially the knees—ulcerated legs and an inoperable surgical hernia.

In February, I forwarded a letter to the Premier from another constituent, Mr Coehler. He commences—

> "I am writing to express our dismay and distaste at your latest burden you have put on disabled people and veterans . . ."

I table the letter. Mr Coehler went on to gather signatures for a petition which I tabled during the last sitting. I wrote to the former Minister for Transport on this matter, but to no avail.

A letter from Mr Alan Magennis of Wurtulla commences—

> "I am loudly protesting against the $10 fee required for a parking sticker for the disabled."

He concludes—

> "Help us, Mr Laming, we need a strong voice and as the years go by our voices are fewer and the over-bearing of some Government departments is becoming more than we can take."

That letter was signed, "Alan Magennis, Ex Seventh Division AIF". I table that letter, also.

Earlier this month, I was asked to assist Mr Gordon Darr, a TPI pensioner of Buderim, who was booked for parking in his usual disabled space outside the Maroochydore RSL. He was fined $50. That is incredible! So bad is this situation among the unfortunate minority who are affected that both local councils are in the process of altering their policing policies so as to remove this obvious inequity.

I wrote yet again, this time to the new Minister for Transport, the Honourable Ken Hayward. As a former Health Minister, I thought that perhaps he would be more considerate, but nothing has been heard.

Mrs Susan Kennedy of Buddina rang me only yesterday. Being wheelchair bound, she does qualify for a blue permit but totally rejects the principle of the $10 fee, and so do I. She has contacted the department and inquired as to the reason for the fee and she was told that it is to stop misuse and to pay for the administration and policing of the scheme and to pay for a media campaign. This is an insult. This is user pays gone mad. I believe many former permit holders will refuse to pay this fee. I call on the Government to recognise this as a mistake, to abolish the fee, to refund the $10 to those who have paid it and reconsider the problems associated with this new, two-tiered scheme.

Police Staffing, Logan Police District

Mr BARTON (Waterford) (10.43 p.m.): I rise to draw this Parliament's attention to the blatant political hypocrisy of the member for Crows Nest and shadow Minister for Police with regard to police numbers in the Logan police district. I refer particularly to the member's statement as recorded in the *Gold Coast Bulletin* of 19 January this year. I will quote briefly from that article—

> "The Goss Government displayed 'blatant political favouritism' in allocating 22 extra police officers to the Premier's own electorate of Logan, says Opposition police spokesman Russell Cooper.
>
> . . .
>
> He said acting Police Minister Bob Gibb's recent announcement to boost police numbers in Logan was an 'utter scandal'.
>
> . . .
>
> He said the boost in the Logan District police strength had been urgently needed to cope with a 'shocking crime wave' but the Gold Coast deserved similar action in light of its 'huge permanent and tourist population.'
>
> 'This is a blatant example of political favouritism and follows the Premier's public intervention to get more police to settle down in his own backyard,' he said."

How different is this recent campaign conducted by the member for Crows Nest from what he has done in the past. In this Parliament and in the media he has made numerous calls for more police in Logan. The call by the member for Crows Nest is a hypocritical, shallow, political stunt seeking to curry favour on the Gold Coast. I think honourable members should consider a few of the calls for more police that the honourable has made. On 23 February 1994, he asked a

question of the Minister for Police in the following terms—

> "I refer to police numbers at Beenleigh, which have been reduced from 119 in 1992 to 70 today. That is a cut of 49 in two years . . . what action will he take to increase police strength in the Beenleigh district to realistic levels?"

Of course, Beenleigh is part of the Logan police district. When the honourable member talks about police numbers in Logan, he should remember that it is not just the Premier's electorate that is covered by the Logan police district. That district includes five State electorates, including my own.

The member for Crows Nest did not let the facts get in the road of a good story; there were far more police in Beenleigh than he stated. In fact, the figure had increased from 117 in 1992, to 130 in February 1994. He also conveniently ignored the fact that that was before the new Logan Police Headquarters had been set up at a cost of $6m. The numbers in the region had increased from 179 to 321 from the period when he was the Minister for Police to when he asked that question.

Even the Fitzgerald report mentioned the historically low levels of police that were applied to the Logan and Beenleigh police area, something which had never been addressed properly by him when he was the Minister for Police.

I refer to some other calls for more police by the shadow Minister and member for Crows Nest. In the *Hansard* of this Parliament of 20 October 1994, in a question to the Premier, Mr Cooper stated—

> "I refer the Premier to the law and order crisis in Queensland under his leadership and to the protest by police in his own backyard at Logan last night who were threatening unprecedented strike action and have joined Gold Coast police in a desperate call for more officers."

That is hardly the sort of comment one would expect from someone who would ultimately criticise the fact that more police were being allocated to that area. How can that member of this Parliament have any credibility when he plays such hypocritical political games? He calls for increases in police numbers and then is extremely critical of the decision when those police are finally allocated.

I am very sure that the constituents of Logan City, not just those in my electorate and the Premier's electorate but also the electorates of the members for Redlands, Springwood, Sunnybank and Woodridge, are going to be quite horrified by the fact that the shadow Minister for Police and member for Crows Nest is critical that, at last, they have been allocated a further 22 police in that decision of January this year.

I make no apologies, and neither do those other honourable members and the member for Albert. I nearly missed the member for Albert, who was the subject of another stunt by that member only last week. We make no apologies for the fact that in November last year we went to the Minister for Police and urged him to give us more police in that region. We congratulate the Minister for Police for meeting that very desperate need that existed by allocating those 22 police. We will make no apologies as this growth continues and as there is a demonstrated need for more police. We will do our job to ensure that the people in all of our electorates are informed of precisely the hypocrisy that is being displayed in this place by the member for Crows Nest for shallow, political gains.

Road Safety Programs

Mr STEPHAN (Gympie) (10.49 p.m.): I did not realise that the member for Brisbane Central was going to talk about the same subject on which I intend to speak, that is, road trauma, and on the need to look after our younger generation by providing driver training.

I suppose that members have heard about the Queensland driver training complex in Gympie, which is about to branch out into other areas such as the area represented by the member for Kurwongbah. Such expansion certainly needs to be encouraged.

I want to point out to members the positives of what is going on at Roadcraft, the driver training complex at Gympie. Roadcraft wrote a letter to Mr Tom Burns, which states—

> "We at Roadcraft, like you, are appalled at the continued rate at which we are killing ourselves on the road.
>
> The enforcement angle and other secondary inhibitors to road trauma such as seatbelts, helmets, ABS etc are directed at rectifying the problem *after* it has happened. Surely the obvious and preferable solution is to address the problem before it occurs."

The letter states further—

> "Thanks to co-operation from the Department of Education, we are able to install a road safety ethic into kids

> continuously from the ages of 13 to 18—the rationale being that Road Safety and responsible, informed road use becomes second nature because of the reinforcement of the road safety principles over many years.
>
> . . .
>
> A short term alternative would be to concentrate on those students about to venture on to our highways. Roadcraft's 2 Day 'Student Driver Education' course has been running regionally with local and distance high schools for 10 years."

Roadcraft received a letter from Mr Burns, which stated—

> "Thank you for your facsimile . . . wherein you advised a number of positive ways in which the current road toll concerns could be addressed and outlined your organisation's expertise and ability to assist.
>
> I appreciate your interest in writing to me in this regard and would be happy to visit your Gympie facility at some time in the future."

However, I also have a letter from Mr Hayward, who seems to be going off on his own. That letter states—

> "It is . . . essential that efforts to improve the performance of drivers through driver licensing and training initiatives be assessed within the broad context of driver management in particular, and vehicle and traffic management in general. This is necessary to ensure that the most cost-effective mix of strategies are used to improve driver behaviour.
>
> Practical driving courses would appear from Departmental research findings to only address some part of the road safety needs of young people."

This is the point that worries me. The letter states further—

> "There is evidence which suggests that practical driver training may even increase the crash rate of younger novice drivers by instilling a sense of over confidence in their abilities."

What rubbish! I have a letter of support from the Deputy Premier, and Roadcraft has received support from Mrs Woodgate, the member for Kurwongbah, yet for some reason or other, the newly appointed Transport Minister is going off on his own tangent. That is of great concern to me. In reply to Mr Hayward's remarks, Roadcraft stated—

> "A responsible training organisation is aware of the potential danger areas and designs the course with these elements in mind. An integrated program containing responsible theory and practical components must be the answer to optimum preparation for vehicle operation and safe co-existence with the traffic environment."

Roadcraft is very keen to find out what is going on in Mr Hayward's mind. It is looking for the answers to some of the questions raised in Mr Hayward's letter. For example, the letter stated that Queensland Transport has just completed a review of the road safety needs of young people. What are the results of that review? The letter stated also that a significant amount of research and development has been undertaken throughout the world to identify effective approaches to improving the safety and competence of drivers. Roadcraft would like to know the results of that review. The letter stated also that there is evidence that suggests that practical driver training may even increase the crash rate in younger novice drivers by instilling overconfidence in their abilities. Roadcraft would like to know the results of that review.

Time expired.

Greenhouse Gas Emission; Public Transport

Mr ARDILL (Archerfield) (10.54 p.m.): I want to talk about public transport. Before I do, I want to also mention the same subject that the honourable member for Brisbane Central mentioned, that is, the problems of the greenhouse effect and what this Labor Government is doing about it. It is a worldwide problem, and an international treaty has placed certain restrictions and requirements on Governments throughout the world.

In Queensland, we are doing something about the greenhouse effect. The restrictions on tree clearing, which are now being introduced through the Department of Environment and Heritage, will have a great effect on cutting down the greenhouse problem. Although we have heard some criticism from the Opposition, those restrictions had to be imposed. There has to be some restriction on the clearing of leasehold land which can endanger not only the atmosphere but also cause an increase in soil degradation.

When I first became involved in the conservation movement, it was compulsory that leaseholders cleared their land. It was in their contract. We have seen the wheel turn

full circle, and restrictions are now being placed on that aspect of land management.

This Labor Government has also introduced incentives to encourage the use of solar hot water systems. Unfortunately, I have not benefited from that initiative because I have had a solar hot water system for years. As my family has grown up, I find now that I can virtually exist on the hot water generated by the solar plant without any boosting by electricity. Previously, it was very costly for anyone such as me having a solar hot water unit because the electricity charge increased when one had to use electricity.

The main subject I want it speak about is public transport, and that is also an area in which greenhouse emissions can be reduced by taking thousands of polluting cars off the road and replacing them with a single unit of public transport to carry up to hundreds of people. That provides a very large reduction in greenhouse emissions.

Again, this Government is doing something about it. Of all the State systems, Queensland alone still provides major rail transport in that it provides six major main line rail services throughout Queensland. This is very important, and it is quite different from what is happening in other States, where passenger rail services have either been reduced to nothing, such as in Tasmania where they have been abolished, or to very limited services, which has occurred in States such as Western Australia and South Australia. In Victoria, under the Kennett Government, passenger rail services are being reduced at an alarming rate. In New South Wales, appalling services such as the overnight services to Melbourne and Brisbane are provided. But in Queensland we still have six major main line services and a great effort is still being made to accommodate the public on public transport.

Even in Brisbane, major public transport services are subsidised by this Government. It was interesting a couple of weeks back to hear an expert talking about the need to introduce circular services in the city. That expert was quite ignorant of the fact that we already have a five-minute service between Central Station and Parliament House, which I use regularly, and a 10-minute service on a similar route but travelling on different streets. So we have a wonderful public transport service in the inner city of Brisbane. I think we have about 17 trunk services passing down Adelaide Street at any time of the day and, of course, on about a five-minute headway during peak hour, and on a 15-minute headway in off peak. So there are adequate public services in the inner city if people would only use them.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 10.59 p.m.