

WEDNESDAY, 13 SEPTEMBER 1995

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

PANEL OF TEMPORARY CHAIRMEN

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Honourable members, in accordance with the requirements of Standing Order 13, I nominate the following members to form the panel of Temporary Chairmen for the present Parliament—

Stephen Dominic Bredhauer, the member for Cook;

Darryl James Briskey, the member for Cleveland;

Gordon Richard Nuttall, the member for Sandgate.

PETITIONS

The Clerk announced the receipt of the following petitions—

Port Douglas, Electricity Supply

From Mr Bredhauer (1,919 signatories) requesting that the House reconsider the location and type of transmission line and tower to be used in the proposed upgrading of the Port Douglas electricity supply and that a more suitable alternative to be outlined by the Douglas Shire Council be adopted.

Imported Pork

From Mr Healy (537 signatories) requesting the introduction of labelling laws to increase public awareness of local and imported pork or alternatively the introduction of a tariff making imported and locally produced pigmeat the same price.

Native Fauna Breeders

From Mr Healy (2,000 signatories) requesting that fees for recreational, commercial or specialist breeders of native fauna be not increased.

A similar petition was received from Mr Slack (872 signatories).

Mooloolah Electorate, Effluent Disposal

From Mr Laming (3,224 signatories) requesting that no effluent be released into

the Mooloolah River or Pumicestone Passage and that the responsible Minister ensures that the Caloundra City Council adopts an alternative proposal.

Eventide, Sandgate

From Mr Nuttall (5,985 signatories) praying that the Parliament of Queensland will ensure the future of Eventide Sandgate and guarantee that there will be no reduction in the number of beds or number of nurses and other staff.

Maroochydore, Traffic Lights

From Miss Simpson (285 signatories) requesting that pedestrian lights be installed at the corner of Duporth Avenue and Picnic Point Esplanade, Maroochydore.

Elliott Heads State School, Crossing Supervisor

From Mr Slack (94 signatories) requesting that a school crossing supervisor be employed at the Elliott Heads State School.

Internet

From Mr Stoneman (92 signatories) praying that the Parliament of Queensland will legislate to ensure that the Internet superhighway is not used to transmit objectionable material, regardless of intended use.

Centenary Highway, Noise Barriers

From Dr Watson (52 signatories) requesting that substantial noise barriers be urgently erected along the Centenary Highway from the Fig Tree Pocket off ramp to the Brisbane River.

Petitions received.

PAPERS

The following papers were laid on the table—

- (a) Treasurer (Mr De Lacy)—
Queensland Treasury Corporation—
Annual Report for 1994-95
- (b) Minister for Transport and Minister Assisting the Premier on Economic and Trade Development (Mr Elder)—
Marine Incidents in Queensland—Report for 1 January—30 June 1995.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Ten-year Transport Plan

Hon. J. P. ELDER (Capalaba—Minister for Transport and Minister Assisting the Premier on Economic and Trade Development) (2.33 p.m.), by leave: This Government will be embarking on a 10-year plan to manage the transport needs of the Brisbane to Gold Coast corridor. It is a plan which involves several elements.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I intend to hear the Minister's statement.

Mr ELDER: The Pacific Highway will be upgraded to six lanes all the way to the Gold Coast within four years and the koala habitat in Daisy Hill and the Redlands will be preserved.

I can also inform the House of the priority construction of a dedicated busway linking the Logan Hyperdome to the city, with construction of this busway due to start early in the new year. This will mean that, for this growing area between Brisbane and the Gold Coast and the Gold Coast itself, there will be an increase in rail services, an increase in bus services and the added incentive of a dedicated busway and an upgraded road.

This Government will also be looking at a program of upgrading arterial roads in the Brisbane to Gold Coast corridor so that traffic in that corridor does not have to go onto the Pacific Highway. It will also be setting up a community consultative committee to look at further planning for transport needs in the Brisbane—Logan—Gold Coast corridor.

Today, the Government is announcing a solution for the next 10 years and laying down a foundation for a plan for the next 30 years. The upgrading of the Pacific Highway will cost \$320m, which will involve six-laning the Pacific Highway from Brisbane to the Smith Street intersection, four-laning the road to the New South Wales border with no stops for traffic lights, and a bypass at Tugun. The Government has already budgeted \$120m for these extra works, but today's decision commits an extra \$200m to accelerate the six-laning of the Pacific Highway between Beenleigh-Redland Bay Road and Smith Street. I am ruling out completely a road through the koala habitat.

The southern section of the South Coast Motorway is not part of the Government's 10-

year plan. The public consultative committee will report on measures to take us beyond the 10-year plan. The six-laning of the Pacific Highway to the intersection with Redland Bay Road will be completed by December 1996, while the four-laning of the section of the Pacific Highway from Reedy Creek—that is, behind Burleigh—to Tugun will also be completed by that time. Three intersections at Nerang with traffic lights—which are the source of considerable congestion—will be replaced by overpasses by June 1998.

The upgrading of the Pacific Highway to the Gold Coast will be completed within four years, with the Tugun bypass to be completed within 10 years. The Minister for Environment and Heritage and the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Planning will be developing a State planning policy for koala habitat protection by the end of the year.

The public consultative committee will be chaired by Professor Arthur Brownlea to report on measures beyond those already outlined and to work in tandem with the development of the Government's integrated regional transport plan. It will be supported by a technical group coordinated by economist and transport expert Professor Ted Kolsen. The community consultative committee will consist of Professor Arthur Brownlea, as chair, representatives of four local councils—Brisbane, Gold Coast, Logan and Redlands—representatives of the Queensland Conservation Council, VETO, a Gold Coast environmental group, representatives of the Queensland Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Gold Coast Chamber of Commerce, Logan/Springwood businesses, the RACQ and the ACTUQ. This is part of the partnership between Government and the community to jointly develop solutions to our transport problems.

At the end of the day, the decision on what to do will be made by the elected Government, but I certainly want to include people—including those who have been very critical of the Government—in this process. The Government is working on an integrated regional transport plan for south-east Queensland and that, together with the Government's decision to establish the South-East Queensland Transit Authority, demonstrates that we are committed to increasing public transport. A vital part of any long-term solution will be better land-use planning in these rapidly growing areas. Our new suburbs must be designed with public transport in mind.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE**Eastern Tollway**

Mr BORBIDGE (2.42 p.m.): In directing a question to the Premier, I refer to the caucus decision on the eastern tollway. In 1992, the Government was going to build it; in 1992, the Government was not going to build it; and in 1995, the Government was going to build it. I ask: why would anyone believe the Premier now?

Mr W. K. GOSS: The position has been outlined clearly by the Minister for Transport. That position has been reached after a very lengthy debate among all members of the Government and after considerable thought and discussion by the Cabinet and me. In relation to what is the best solution—as the Leader of the Opposition well knows and believes privately but will not say so publicly—the best solution is a separate eastern corridor road from the Gold Coast to the Gateway Arterial. That is the long-term solution, and it is the solution that this Government was trying to deliver: a 30 to 40-year solution to the people of south-east Queensland.

The facts of life are that that long-term solution was rejected clearly by the people at the election on 15 July. This Government has listened to the verdict of the people on 15 July. Whereas we are not now pursuing the best or the long-term solution as a consequence of that, we have not given up on the need to provide better transport in south-east Queensland. We have moved to a medium-term solution: a 10-year solution with a six-point plan outlined by the Minister. In addition to that, we will continue to renew our efforts to find a long-term solution.

The Leader of the Opposition well knows and believes privately that a separate eastern corridor road is the best long-term solution. For obvious political reasons, and to the detriment of his own electorate, he has pursued a course of action in relation to the eastern corridor that has been opportunistic and cynical. He can be pleased, in a political sense, because he and his deputy have been successful in contributing to the defeat of that long-term solution. But that will be to the detriment of the Gold Coast community and the business community. Although Opposition members have had a victory in a political sense, they cannot hold their heads high on the basis of any policy sense.

What did members opposite propose? What was the Opposition's alternative during

the course of the election campaign? Members would well remember seeing on television Mr Borbidge, Mrs Sheldon and a gaggle of shadow Ministers and candidates putting forward their policy: the road to nowhere, the highway to horror, the highway to hell—wherever it was. What did they propose? About 12 lanes! Will members ever forget that Monty Python performance, when there was a whole phalanx of them—a whole gaggle of them—and they were asked by representatives of the media: "Look, you have got this big, wide road with 12 lanes, or whatever it is, with the service roads and all the rest of it. How many resumptions will there be?" They said, "None." The media representatives asked, "How many resumptions will there be?" They said, "Oh, not many." They were asked, "How many resumptions is 'not many'?" They said, "Some." So the answers given were: "Some", "None" and "Not many." How many equals not many? Some!

This reminded me of the man behind the pet shop counter in the Monty Python skit where the bloke brings back the dead parrot. He says, "Look, this parrot is dead." The man behind the counter says, "No, he is not; he is just resting." The customer says, "Look, he is not resting; he is dead." The man says, "No, he is pining for the fiords." That is the policy of honourable members opposite. They are pining for a policy. They do not have a policy. They have contributed to the defeat of that long-term solution. I hope they are proud of that.

This Government will move to a medium-term solution, which is a responsible solution. In addition to that, as part of that medium-term approach, this Government will put in place a real commitment to public transport—something that members opposite have never done. We will do that by adding the dedicated busway to the bus reforms that have already been delivered by this Government, and by the completion of the railway link to Helensvale and Robina—a railway line that members opposite ripped up and sold. Although they might treat their constituency with contempt and take the people of Surfers Paradise for granted, we will not, because we will reform public transport on the Gold Coast and make sure that better use is made of the railway. Through the community consultative committee and the transport working group, we will also continue to seek longer-term solutions beyond the 10-year, medium-term solution outlined today by the Minister.

Eastern Tollway

Mr BORBIDGE: I direct a further question to the Premier, who is about as dead as that road. I refer to a public statement made in January by the member for Logan in support of the eastern tollway, which was quoted recently by the member for Woodridge. The Premier said, "That decision was made on the basis of what was right in the public interest long term for south-east Queensland, not what was best for the Labor Party in holding its seats." I also refer the Premier to an advertising brochure that he dropped around the south side titled "The National/Liberal—Highway Horror—Coming to your suburbs . . . Soon", and I ask: now that both the seats and the road have gone, what about the long-term public interest—at least as the Premier perceives it and in so far as he retains any relevance whatsoever to the decision-making processes of his own Government—and will he personally rule out any further consideration of an eastern tollway in the future?

Mr W. K. GOSS: The Leader of the Opposition spends all morning drafting two questions. The problem is that when he gets the answer to his second question in the answer to his first one, he does not have the wit to think up a second question. Where was the Leader of the Opposition for the last six minutes? It is a case of: "The Parliament of Queensland calling Mr Borbidge." Mr Speaker, I appeal to you: beam down the Leader of the Opposition. Beam him down! A couple of minutes ago, the Leader of the Opposition was given the answer to this question. He should have been listening.

I stand by what I said in January. As I said to the member for Surfers Paradise—and in his case I think that must be "surface" Paradise—I stand by the statement that I made in January. As I said to him, the long-term solution has been rejected by the people. Is the implication in the member's question that I should stand by the position that I took in January notwithstanding the result of the election? Is the Leader of the Opposition arguing that, because I made that statement in January, I should ignore the voice of the people on 15 July and continue to press ahead through the koala habitat? With his references to a long-term solution, is he saying that the eastern corridor is the long-term solution and that we should stand by it? He is a hypocrite with no fixed position and a person who will not be taken seriously by the electorate until such time as he is prepared to nail a firm policy.

The Leader of the Opposition began his question with a reference to my relevance to this Government. I point out to him that I am on this side of the House, and the Leader of the Opposition is on the other side. He may be born to rule, but he is elected to Opposition. Although the Leader of the Opposition and his deputy were successful in giving the people of this State many reasons to vote against this Government, I rest assured because I know that the one thing that helped us retain Government was the fact that he and his deputy never gave the people of Queensland leadership to vote for. While they are over there, we will be here.

Taxation

Mr LIVINGSTONE: I refer the Treasurer to media reports this week in which the Leader of the Opposition claimed the State Government should provide more incentives for business, such as reduced taxes, in particular land tax. Can the Treasurer inform the House whether other States have a competitive tax advantage over Queensland?

Mr De LACY: I am always amused at the way Oppositions always claim they will reduce taxes. Generally, they abolish tolls and reduce taxes. The longer they are in Opposition, the more they do it. The best example of this practice, I think, is land tax. Twelve months ago, the Opposition was going to abolish land tax and I said, "Why don't you abolish payroll tax, too? Why don't you abolish the lot?" During the election campaign the Opposition decided not to abolish land tax but to phase it out over 10 years. I imagine that change in position was because the Opposition had to cost its election promises. Yesterday, Tuesday, 12 September, I noted in the *Australian* that the coalition proposed phasing out land tax over three years. So it was 10 years during the election campaign; now, two months after the election, it is three years; and I imagine that when Parliament resumes in October the policy will be for it to be abolished again—there will be no phasing out. And why not?

When I examined the Opposition's election campaign promise, I discovered that the tax was not really going to be phased out; it was to be rebated on the basis of businesses employing long-term youth unemployed. I thought that was a pretty interesting policy, because we did not think of that one. However, we could not work out whether a business received the rebate only if it employed the long-term youth unemployed. Did the long-term youth unemployed have to

be employed on the block of land on the basis of which the rebate was being claimed?

Mr Littleproud: Say that again.

Mr De LACY: I am trying to work it out; I am trying to get to the bottom of this policy. Do only businesses that engage long-term unemployed youths receive the rebate? When the long-term unemployed youths become unemployed again, would the business lose the rebate?

Mr Cooper: Are you talking to yourself?

Mr De LACY: Well, yes, to a certain extent I was. If the youth unemployment rate went up, I wondered whether the land tax rates would actually go up. Would they go up for everybody or just for those who were employing the long-term youth unemployed? Then, if it actually went up, would that mean that the rebate would be bigger and the business could employ more long-term youth unemployed? Would it really solve the youth unemployment problem and would the Opposition eventually phase out land tax on the basis of that policy?

Mr Hayward: Maybe.

Mr De LACY: Maybe. By the time that was worked out, they would be no longer youth unemployed, they would be mature unemployed. I have to say that this is the kind of visionary policy that the people of Queensland have, no doubt, been urging upon us and we will be looking at those sorts of policies.

As a final answer to the honourable member's question, the fact is that Queensland does have by far the most competitive tax position in Australia. I say "by far" because our tax collections per capita are \$1,199 compared with \$1,751 in New South Wales, \$1,720 in Victoria, \$1,326 in South Australia, \$1,433 in Western Australia and \$1,336 in Tasmania. The reason we are creating jobs in Queensland faster than any other State in Australia is that we have the most competitive position.

Koala Coast Secretariat

Mrs SHELDON: I refer the Premier to the Koala Coast Secretariat in which staff from his department and the Department of Environment and Heritage distributed \$915,000 to six schools in the electorate of the former Environment Minister, giving one school alone an amount of \$393,000. Given the subsequent promise made to schools in neighbouring electorates that they would be given access to similar grants through a

second round of funding, I ask: in light of today's decision to scrap the south east tollway, will the second round of funding proceed as promised or will the large amounts promised to schools in the electorate of Springwood now be withdrawn?

Mr W. K. GOSS: It goes without saying that, if a scheme is created to provide for community compensation for a road and that road does not proceed, then clearly the scheme must be reviewed.

Mrs Sheldon: Are you going to cancel it?

Mr W. K. GOSS: No, the scheme is attached to the road. The scheme is glued to the road. The scheme is riveted to the road. The scheme will be reviewed.

Coastal Protection Policy

Mr T. B. SULLIVAN: I ask the Minister for Environment and Heritage his maiden question in this House: can he outline the benefits of the coastal protection policy announced in the recent election campaign and how those policies compare with the policies offered by the coalition?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I suggest that honourable members use the new terminology "first questions" and "first speeches". I am not interested in any more "maidens".

Mr BARTON: I certainly thank the member for the question and this opportunity to talk about the positive policies of the Government with regard to coastal protection as opposed to the absolute dearth of policies put forward by the Opposition. This Government's policy for coastal protection involves multiple management strategies to ensure that we protect Queensland's unique coastline. Key elements include the proposed coastal protection and management Bill that will be introduced into this House very shortly, control of coastal development, improved water quality, a coastal acquisition program and extension of the marine parks system.

The coastal management and protection Bill has been drafted to fit like a glove with the planning, environment and development assessment Bill and Government plans to introduce an integrated development approval system that will be welcomed by local authorities and developers around the State. This Bill will be supported by a State planning policy for the coastline of Queensland. The Bill includes development of Statewide and regional coastal management plans to implement the aims of the legislation, and I would like to stress that the early focus will be

on the coastline areas around Cairns, the Whitsundays and Hervey Bay, which are already facing considerable coastline development pressures.

A coastal protection advisory council will be established to advise on coastal management issues, and again I stress that it will include community representatives as part of this Government's commitment to consultation with all of the players and all of the important people in the field. I stress again that there will be controls on haphazard coastal development, including controls on building height, to avoid further Gold Coast-style developments in sensitive coastal areas and to ensure that we avoid development in areas that are erosion prone. The sum of \$12.5m will also be provided in a coastal acquisition program to purchase freehold and leasehold land for community enjoyment and recreation and for environment protection. There will be a requirement that sewage treatment plants discharging to the coast be upgraded to tertiary treatment level by the year 2010. That will be supported by a \$74m program of State Government enhanced subsidies for the upgrading of local government sewage treatment plants.

When we talk about the difference between this Government's policies on coastal protection and the Opposition's policies, I stress that during the election campaign the Government produced a 28-page strategy for protecting Queensland's unique coastline that included details on funding and a degree of implementation. Let us compare that with the Opposition's policies: the Opposition's environment initiatives document that was released during the campaign—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Minister will not debate the issue.

Mr BARTON: The question that I was asked was strictly the comparison between our policies and theirs. I will quote quickly from their document before I sit down. It stated—

"The Coalition is committed to introducing Coastal Management Legislation and will undertake an assessment of our coastal rivers."

That is the Opposition policy compared with our very comprehensive policy on coastal protection.

Eastern Tollway

Mr LINGARD: My question is to the Premier, and I refer to the caucus decision today not to proceed with the eastern tollway. I ask: how much compensation will be involved

in contracts already let for this project, and what effect will the Government decision today have on residents in the path of the eastern tollway who now wish to sell their properties? Will the Premier guarantee compensation?

Mr W. K. GOSS: I thought there was to be compensation if we built the road, and that if we did not build the road the Opposition would be happy. In terms of the first part of the question, I do not have the answer to that. The member will have to direct the question to the Minister for Transport.

Suspension of Aspley State High School Students

Mr ROBERTS: I ask the Minister for Education: is he aware of an article on the front page of the today's *Courier-Mail* regarding the suspension of a number of students from the Aspley State High School? Further, can the Minister inform the House of any action he is taking as a result of that article?

Mr HAMILL: In response to the honourable member—it was hard to miss the story on the front page of the *Courier-Mail*. I wonder whether, if the matter had not had some relationship to the French nuclear testing program at Mururoa, the *Courier-Mail* would have in fact given such prominence to this story. Nevertheless, all members of this place have registered their total opposition to what the French Government is doing in the South Pacific—what it is doing in our backyard. Students and teachers right around this State have also been engaged in protest action. In fact, if members cared to obtain a copy of the *Queensland Teachers Union Journal* of 31 August, they would see a front-page story about a protest in Paris. Teachers unions had actually contributed to sending students to that Paris protest to take the message right to President Chirac's backdoor, to tell him exactly what people in this part of the world feel about his Government and his Government's decisions.

In fact, at Miami State High School oval, I think, students demonstrated their opposition to the French nuclear testing program. There have been statements made by students from Townsville schools. I understand that, after the forthcoming school holidays, St Rita's College in Brisbane is planning a protest of schools on the north side of Brisbane. Therefore, I was not greatly surprised to see that a group of students at Aspley State High School were similarly concerned about what the French Government was doing in this part of the world.

However, I am strongly supportive of measures to maintain discipline in schools. It has been the longstanding position that principals have a discretion to suspend students for up to five days. Schools have their codes of and guidelines for behaviour which are expected to be followed by the student body.

In this particular case I understand that the principal has suspended 10 students for five days. I also understand that the principal warned the students that if his directive regarding a walk-out and other activities at the school assembly was ignored, there would be strong action taken by him.

I think there are, in fact, two issues here. The first issue is the right of citizens to protest about the French nuclear testing program. I support that absolutely. The other issue is a matter of questions of discipline within the school. I suggest it is entirely up to the school whether, as in this case, the school considers that the school parade is the right forum for the airing of such student protests. As Minister for Education, I will not interfere with the right of the school community to make that decision. In terms of the severity of the punishment which has been meted out by the principal, I think it is unfair to ask someone else what they would have done under the same circumstances. There may well be some degree of fault on both sides of this argument. Perhaps a little more negotiation between the parties would have been the better way to go.

In relation to the exercise of discretion by anyone who has to exercise discretion in relation to a matter such as this, reasonableness must prevail. I would like, however, to correct one point: there has been a considerable amount of media speculation in relation to this matter and I noticed claims made in the media that the principal and the staff were alleged to have locked students in the assembly area. I have investigated that matter and I am satisfied that that is simply not the case. Indeed, I understand that while some doors to the area were closed, none were locked and, indeed, when the students actually exited, they obviously exited through unlocked doors—in some cases they opened doors and in other cases the doors were already open.

In conclusion, this is a matter which appropriately should be handled at the school level. I believe that the school community ought to get together and sort it out.

South Coast Motorway

Mr BEANLAND: My question is to the Premier. I table an article on Janet Holmes a Court's John Holland construction and engineering company published on pages 32 and 33 of the *Business Review Weekly* magazine dated 21 August this year. In that article, the John Holland company managing director, Keith Drew, is quoted as saying—

" . . . Holland has won other major civil jobs, such as in consortiums building Perth's Northbridge bypass (a \$250-million project) and Brisbane's South Coast Motorway (about \$600 million)."

I ask: is Mr Drew correct when he says that the company of which he is chief executive is part of a consortium that won a \$600m contract to build the south coast motorway, and how much will Queensland taxpayers be required to pay by way of penalty or compensation now that the contracts are to be cancelled?

Mr W. K. GOSS: I do not know what Mr Drew is talking about. I have not seen the article. It has been suggested to me that that company is involved in the upgrade of the Pacific Highway. There may be some confusion there.

Institutional Reform

Ms BLIGH: I refer the Minister for Family and Community Services and Minister Assisting the Premier on the Status of Women to a number of community concerns raised about the process of institutional reform, and I ask: how does she intend to allay these concerns? Will she consult with those concerned families?

Mrs WOODGATE: I thank the honourable member for the question. I acknowledge that concern has been expressed in the community, particularly during the election campaign. I have had meetings already with quite a number of groups and individuals about institutional reform. During my first week on taking up this Ministry, I made it a priority to visit the Challinor Centre and the Basil Stafford Centre.

The concerns expressed to me relate to the poor history of deinstitutionalisation throughout the world, which appears to me to be motivated by cost cutting rather than providing more appropriate living options for people with a disability. I assure people who are concerned about institutional reform that this Government is committed to getting it right. Our commitment is demonstrated by a

significant injection of extra funds to ensure that the process is successful.

I emphasise one point in particular: the community will not be asked to support individuals leaving institutional care without the provision of adequate financial resources. I intend to write soon to all the parents and the families of people who reside at the Challinor Centre and the Basil Stafford Centre to reinforce the Government's ongoing consultation with families and other interested people.

Quite a number of activities that address some of those concerns have been undertaken by the staff of the Department of Family Services. They include independent family support projects, which have been established in both centres to support the families. Challinor residents are to be provided with independent representation—and by that I mean somebody who is outside of Government—to represent the interests of individuals throughout this planning process. An institutional reform coordination unit will be established to work with other Government departments. We have also worked on a communication strategy to be developed at the Challinor Centre to address some of the concerns raised in relation to education and training strategies.

In conclusion, I assure this House that this Government is definitely committed to ensuring that reform will be undertaken only where sufficient resources are available to ensure an appropriate transition process and where the necessary community support services are in place.

Corrective Services Commission

Mr COOPER: I refer the Minister for Police and Minister for Corrective Services to the report by Professor Victor Callan of Queensland University, commissioned by the Corrective Services Commission and dated 5 May—which I table—which exposed the fact that the overwhelming majority of commission staff are severely stressed and profoundly unhappy with commission management, and I ask: does the Minister accept these survey results as an accurate reflection of the views of commission staff? What specific action has been taken by the commission to improve staff morale and conditions since the report was presented more than four months ago?

Mr BRADY: I thank the honourable member for his question. At this stage, the report referred to by the honourable member is, in fact, still a draft report. It is most

important for honourable members to understand that it was a report commissioned by the Corrective Services Commission and financed by the Government.

Back in 1994, the Government identified the Queensland Corrective Services Commission as one of five agencies subject to high levels of stress over the last three-year period. It would not surprise honourable members to learn that people, many of whom work in direct contact with prisoners, are considered to be working in an agency where too often stress is almost an integral part of their job. In fact, the Government was so concerned, and so concerned about doing something about this matter, that it funded the Corrective Services Commission with \$150,000 to do as much as is humanly possible about the stress problem. Of that \$150,000, \$70,000 was used by the commission to conduct a diagnostic stress survey, which recommended management strategies arising from the research. Professor Callan, of Callan Consulting Pty Ltd, a psychologist and head of the School of Management at the University of Queensland, was engaged to head the project.

As a result of the draft report and observations and work done by the Corrective Services Commission, the commission has in place a number of strategies to address stress in the workplace as outlined. In fact, the commission has adopted a very pro-active approach to addressing the workplace phenomenon of the 1990s—stress. The QCSC has had significant success already in addressing workplace health and safety issues—and I think the honourable member who asked the question should be interested in this, but he does not appear to be interested in listening to the answer—as evidenced by, during the last financial year, a 35 per cent reduction in the number of days lost by commission staff owing to occupational injury and illness, including stress. During the past financial year, there has also been a 30 per cent reduction in the value of workers' compensation claims lodged by staff of the Corrective Services Commission. It is also very significant to note that, during the last quarter of 1994-95, only seven stress cases were reported, compared with 23 such cases reported in the previous quarter.

Clearly, we are in no way shocked by the survey, which we commissioned in the interests of the employees of the commission. Substantial benefits are flowing already from the Government's interest and the commission's interest in our workers.

Nebo Health Centre

Mr MULHERIN: I ask the Minister for Health: is he aware of funding difficulties in establishing the Nebo health centre near Mackay and approaches for financial assistance to ensure that this combined Government facility becomes a reality? Can he inform the House what action can be taken to help with the centre's establishment?

Mr BEATTIE: I thank the member for Mackay for his question and his continuing interest in this area. Recently, as part of the 100 days of consultation that I am involved in, I visited Mackay and received a delegation from the Nebo Shire Council. Today, I am happy to report to the House that one of the outcomes of that consultation—and there will be many, many positive outcomes from this 100 days of consultation, and this is one—my Cabinet colleague the Minister for Emergency Services and I have been only too pleased to come to the aid of the Nebo Shire Council and the local community to ensure that their dream of a practical, multipurpose health and emergency services facility becomes a reality.

In fact, only this week I authorised the final stage in providing a one-off grant of \$30,000 to the Nebo Shire Council to allow construction to proceed. That grant comes in the form of \$20,000 from the Mackay Regional Health Authority and \$10,000 from the Department of Emergency Services. That brings the total contribution of the Health Department to \$30,000 and the contribution of the Department of Emergency Services to \$40,000, with shared subsidies adding another \$20,000.

The Nebo Shire Council and the local community deserve congratulations on their determination to have those facilities constructed. In addition to the Queensland Government funding, the council itself is contributing \$50,000 in funds and \$50,000 in materials and labour. I congratulate them, as I am sure the member for Mackay does also, on that contribution. Another \$12,500 has been raised to provide furniture and fittings.

I can well understand the Nebo community's firm wish to build a multipurpose health and emergency services centre. Until now, the only facility for health services in the town has been a semi-mobile unit owned by the State Emergency Service. A women's clinic operated from this inadequate facility, using a canvas lean-to as a waiting room. That is totally inadequate. Other services are conducted from the home of the local HACC coordinator.

Emergency services are in a similar boat. For example, volunteer ambulance services are provided from a shed so small that patients have to be treated from the vehicle. The SES vehicles are parked outside a police station and the volunteer fire brigade vehicle is locked up in a Nebo Shire Council yard. This new \$140,000 centre will improve conditions immeasurably. It will provide parking bays for vehicles, an airconditioned office, a casualty and health service room, a waiting room and a group activity room.

As I said earlier, the Nebo Shire Council and the Nebo community should be congratulated on their efforts. I was pleased to receive their delegation as part of the 100 days of consultation with which I am involved. Queensland Health and the Department of Emergency Services recognise the significant contribution to community health services from this project, and we are pleased to be of assistance. This cooperation between departments is yet another strong indication that this Government is responsible for the only real stability emanating from this House.

In conclusion, I congratulate the member for Mackay on pursuing a matter that is not of concern to his local community. The area is not even located in his electorate; it is, in fact, located in the neighbouring electorate of Mirani.

Eastern Tollway

Mr JOHNSON: I ask the Minister for Transport: have any contracts been entered into in relation to the eastern tollway? If so, what compensation is payable? What are the contracts for and to which companies did they go?

Mr ELDER: I do not have all the details. However, to my knowledge there have been some small contracts with respect to surveying the area and project management. There is nothing beyond that. I am prepared to provide that information to the member.

Mice Plague, Dalby

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN: I direct a question to the Minister for Lands. Recently, I had the opportunity to tour the Dalby area with the Minister for Lands to inspect the progress and early results of the mice-baiting program. I ask: what are the latest results of this very important Government-initiated program?

Mr McELLIGOTT: I appreciated the company of the member for Caboolture during that visit. I thank him for the personal interest

he has taken in what has been a very successful program and one that enjoyed a very high degree of cooperation among members of the community and various Government agencies in dealing with what was potentially a very serious problem.

A Government member interjected.

Mr McELLIGOTT: That is true indeed.

I can report today that the baiting program has now been completed and some 250,000 hectares have been dealt with. The results have proven to be very successful. The overall success rate exceeded 95 per cent. This is the first time that an operation of this type has been undertaken in Queensland. In fact, the last mice plague was back in the 1970s. History will record that the Country Party Government of the day did absolutely nothing to help the farmers in that situation. We had no precedent to work on, so an enormous amount of very detailed planning had to be undertaken before we could commence the program. As honourable members can imagine, the use of strychnine required Cabinet approval. The program took a little time to set up and commence but, as I indicated, the success rates have been very pleasing indeed. As I mentioned, the program has now been completed and the "mouse house" at Dalby, which was the centre of operations for the exercise, will close on Thursday.

One of the issues that has been raised consistently is the impact on non-targeted species. I am pleased to report that there have been only four deaths of birds that could be attributed to strychnine over those 250,000 hectares. I think members would agree that that program has been very successful. Today, I would like to record my thanks for the very high level of cooperation that existed among the various Government departments—my Department of Lands, the Department of Environment and Heritage and DPI. In particular, I recognise the assistance and cooperation that came from the Queensland Graingrowers Association and the Wilderness Society and, of course, the landowners themselves, who were very cooperative and helped us to achieve success.

Finally, one of the ongoing benefits of this whole program, which was completed very successfully, is that we now have a strategy in place that can be used on future occasions. We will be conducting a symposium in November to go through the whole exercise again to make sure that we get it right and we

will be able to swing into operation much more quickly the next time the need arises.

Public Housing Liabilities

Mr CONNOR: I direct a question to the Minister for Housing. As the Minister would be aware, the housing trust account balance sheet in his department's annual report details the assets of the trust, which includes the mortgages of people borrowing for housing, and details the liabilities, which include borrowings from the QTC. Over recent months, property values have declined by 30 per cent and more. I ask the Minister: has the provision for defaults been adjusted for this new housing environment and, if so, on what basis? How will it affect the total on the trust account balance sheet?

Mr MACKENROTH: In answer to the honourable member's question—the provision for bad debts has been made taking into account what we expect can happen in the future. I would not agree that there has been a general decline in the value of houses throughout Queensland of 30 per cent, which is what the honourable member said.

Mr Connor: I did not say that.

Mr MACKENROTH: The member just said that there had been a decline of 30 per cent in the value of houses.

Mr Connor: I did not say "general"; I said some have.

Mr MACKENROTH: Some? So it is not all. There has not been a general decline of 30 per cent.

Mr Connor: I did not say there was a general decline.

Mr MACKENROTH: That being the case, there is no need to increase the amount of money that we have put aside for doubtful debts.

Mr Connor: So you're not going to?

Mr MACKENROTH: We do not need to. We reported to the Parliament in the Estimates committee—

Mr Connor: Why is Price Waterhouse doing it, then?

Mr MACKENROTH: The member asked his question; I am giving him the answer.

Mr Connor interjected.

Mr MACKENROTH: If the honourable member will just sit there and listen, I will give him the answer.

Northern Regional Health Authority

Mr SMITH: I direct a question to the Minister for Health. During the Minister's visit to Townsville three weeks ago, he announced that he had ordered a review of the Northern Regional Health Authority's financial management practices. I ask: can the Minister inform the House whether this review has been completed and, if so, what was the outcome?

Mr BEATTIE: I thank the honourable member for his question. The honourable member for Townsville accompanied me on—and, in fact, organised—an inspection of the Townsville General Hospital only three weeks ago. We looked at the best and the worst features in that hospital. I am happy to say that arising from that visit and subsequent visits there are a number of initiatives that I intend to announce today and on future occasions.

Three weeks ago, I instigated a review of the Northern Regional Health Authority's financial management practices. The review was instigated as an outcome of Queensland Health's budget review process and my subsequent visit to the Townsville General Hospital, which I have now visited on three occasions. I am pleased to inform the House that the review mentioned by the honourable member for Townsville has now been completed. This morning, in Townsville, I announced a number of initiatives to improve the budgetary position of the Northern Regional Health Authority. While I was there I took the opportunity to inspect the new oncology unit and the new oncology ward that is almost completed, as well as the cardiac ward.

A long-term financial plan and subsequent business plans will be developed now in the northern region to support service provision strategies. To assist with this planning, I announced in Townsville this morning that an acting regional director, Dr John Menzies, has been appointed for two months in the northern division to assist in the development of long-term financial strategies. Mr Mike Allsop, who is the assistant regional financial director for the Wide Bay region, will also assist. Dr Menzies is presently the regional director of the Sunshine Coast Regional Health Authority and brings with him a wealth of experience in the financial management area. He will start work in Townsville immediately—in other words, today.

To assist Dr Menzies, the Government will be providing a new financial package for the region which will address infrastructure

problems at the Townsville General Hospital. The review recommended that the region will need to develop a long-term financial plan consistent with the services available in the region to ensure adequate budget allocations for all services in the future, in particular the new tertiary services that are starting there—oncology and cardiac.

On the subject of the hospital, I turn now to the oncology unit. The review team was also asked to investigate allegations that were reported in the *Courier-Mail* that the oncology unit was asking patients to call on charity organisations for food, drinks and gowns. This is simply not true. It is a beat-up, and the report found that very clearly. It was a misleading report. In fact, the situation is this: a local service organisation did indeed donate gowns featuring an Aboriginal motif to make the unit surroundings less clinical. This was a gift and could hardly be described as a charity. It was a gift intended to improve the presence of the unit. Understandably, the local community in Townsville and hospital staff were quite upset at these misleading reports.

The new oncology services are much needed by the people of north Queensland. This Government has committed substantial resources to increasing the types of services available to the people of the north. Therefore, it is critical that we ensure that we have in place a system of financial management to guarantee that the Government's commitment to new high-tech services such as these is met.

I am confident that the process put in place today will resolve some of the short-term difficulties facing the region and will put in place long-term strategies to improve the financial management systems of the region. For the benefit of the House, I reiterate that the Government package provided will address specific issues relating to oncology and mental health services. I also advise the member for Townsville that the capital works budget forecasts that I have brought forward will in fact mean an improvement in the bathroom/toilet facilities and will provide airconditioning in the important Block A.

Cypress Millers

Mr PERRETT: I refer the Minister for Primary Industries to the plight of cypress millers facing difficulties obtaining finance because of doubts about access to timber from native forests. I ask the Minister: what urgent positive moves has he made to meet the needs of millers and their employees and

the welfare of those rural communities that will be affected if the mills are forced to close?

Mr GIBBS: I take it that the honourable member is referring to the sawmill at Mitchell which appeared on television some weeks ago and in relation to which the member was attempting to stir up a hornet's nest. The reality is that the gentleman who operates that mill is guaranteed a supply of timber. That has been negotiated through the department. The sad reality—and this was not revealed on television—is that that fellow owes the Department of Primary Industries close to \$40,000 in unpaid bills for timber that has been supplied.

I have already held some discussions within the department relating to the timber industry overall. We are moving very quickly, not only on the right to extract timber from native forests but also on plantation supplies. The member for Barambah would be aware that we have just released a major area north of Cardwell, which will represent a massive job creation program. I fervently hope that the prices offered by local companies will be competitive in order that we can keep that work with local companies and in the local area. Protracted negotiations are under way at this time. They are fairly delicate in relation to the whole question of pricing. I do not want to expand on that until that negotiation process has been completed, but I am quite happy to do so at another time. I reiterate that supply is guaranteed.

Recreation Activities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Youths

Mr BREDHAUER: I ask the Deputy Premier and Minister for Tourism, Sport and Youth: can he inform the House what action the Goss Government has taken in promoting new sporting initiatives in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities?

Mr BURNS: The honourable member for Cook represents many ATSI communities. One of the problems which he has drawn to our attention and which has been drawn to our attention through youth forums is the boredom faced by young people in those communities. There is not a lot for them to do. Since 1993, we have tried to address that problem through the operation of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Young Persons Sport and Recreation Development Program. Basically, we are attempting to decrease alcohol and substance abuse and antisocial behaviour by young people through providing them with something else to do—in other words, a bit of sport or recreation.

The department's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sport and recreation development officers have been involved in coaching clinics—because there has to be some standard and people have to be trained to a certain extent—skills development clinics, fitness leader courses, cultural recreation camps and community needs analyses. Such initiatives have attracted an extremely favourable response from the communities involved, especially from the elders in those communities. Five sport and recreation development officers were appointed to the department's regional offices in Cairns, Townsville, Ipswich, Mount Isa and Logan, and additional officers will be appointed at Thursday Island and Rockhampton. The appointment at Thursday Island came about after a request by the honourable member for Cook.

The department has undertaken other projects. For example, an officer has now been appointed for 12 months to work specifically on addressing the sport and recreational needs of indigenous women and girls in those communities. The department's Equity Unit has produced a publication aimed at encouraging indigenous young people to consider career options in sport and recreation. It is not enough to merely provide facilities; we also need to train people in how to maintain and manage those facilities, as well as providing instruction in coaching and managing sporting teams. Therefore, more programs in coaching accreditation, fitness leader training, administration and sports medicine are scheduled in 1995 and 1996. We are also developing a State Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sport and recreation policy to shape the future direction and delivery of sport and recreation services to indigenous people in Queensland.

Recently in Kowanyama, I attended a forum with leaders from gulf communities who, along with young people from communities in the area, met to talk about what we could do for young people. That process will be ongoing. We will work with those communities to help them provide worthwhile, rewarding opportunities to fill the leisure time of their people.

Student Performance Standards

Mr QUINN: I refer the Minister for Education to a *Courier-Mail* article of 17 August and to yesterday's Adjournment debate, in which Mr Campbell, the member for Bundaberg, attacked the student performance standards as "seriously flawed, educationally

unsound and impossible to implement properly". He indicated that almost 100 per cent of teachers and principals in schools in his electorate do not support the SPS concept and suggested that, if a classroom teacher ballot were held on their introduction, the outcome would be that they would be overwhelmingly rejected.

I ask the Minister: is the member for Bundaberg accurate in his criticisms of the SPS? Does he reflect the views of the overwhelming majority of teachers, as he claims? Why is the Queensland Teachers Union preparing to conduct a ballot of all affected members on this issue? Why does the Minister maintain that teachers recognise the benefits of implementing SPS, when all the evidence suggests the opposite?

Mr HAMILL: There are a number of aspects to the question. I will try to do justice to them all very quickly.

As to the substantive issue regarding student performance standards—the standards were announced in 1992 by my predecessor in the portfolio, now the Police Minister, Mr Braddy, and the Premier. The importance of student performance standards is simply to provide a uniform and indeed comparable basis of reporting on student performance across all schools. As a former teacher, the member for Merrimac would well understand that in the primary school sector there is no comparability from one school to another in the mode by which primary schools report on the academic outcomes of students. Indeed, as a parent of primary school children, I know only too well of the diversity with which schools report, giving little information of real value to parents. Parents are entitled to real information of value with respect to their children's attainments at school. That is why we are committed to the implementation of student performance standards—

Mr Lester: You've got to give the teachers a bit of a go, though.

Mr HAMILL: The member for Keppel would be the exception, because I am sure that he would not have an SPS to rub together in relation to his performance at school or in this Chamber.

We are committed to the implementation of student performance standards, because we are not committed to a system of compulsory external assessment of students in schools. That is why student performance standards are being implemented this year with respect to three strands of mathematics and for all six strands of mathematics next year. That is also why, after a review of the

implementation program, I announced that student performance standards with respect to English would be implemented in 1997.

With respect to the claims by the member for Merrimac and some reported comments by the member for Bundaberg to the effect that some students in the Bundaberg area do not like student performance standards—

Opposition members: Teachers.

Mr HAMILL: Sorry, that some teachers in the Bundaberg area do not like the student performance standards—I am sure that that is indeed the case. It is also the case that the Queensland Teachers Union is conducting a ballot of its members in relation to SPS. The outcome of that ballot will be very instructive indeed. I will not speculate as to its outcome. However, I suspect that if the ballot of the QTU comes down in favour of student performance standards there will be a lot of egg on the face of the member for Merrimac.

Business Regulation

Ms SPENCE: I direct a question to the Minister for Business, Industry and Regional Development. The Minister would be aware of the occasional claims by business operators that their operations are being adversely affected by imposts created by Government regulation. I ask: can the Minister inform the House what progress has been made in Queensland to minimise the cost imposts of essential regulation and to eliminate unnecessary regulation?

Mr HAYWARD: There is ongoing comment that more regulation applies now than has been the case previously. However, I believe that that view is based on perception rather than reality. When people are challenged on that issue, they usually say something general such as, "There is too much red tape", or they are generally unable to specify the regulation of major concern to them. My experience has been that most of the red tape about which business operators speak relates to Federal responsibilities such as taxation and superannuation. Despite that fact, the Queensland Government has undertaken to do whatever it can to address the issue in its own jurisdiction through a systematic review of business legislation and regulation. That undertaking provides tangible evidence of the Government's commitment to this issue.

That review is now 87 per cent complete. By the end of July this year, 410 reviews will have been completed or otherwise concluded under the program, resulting in the repeal of

68 regulations. The figures provided to me indicate that the economic benefits associated with the review process to date are valued at over \$360m per annum. No other State or Territory can match those results, which have placed Queensland at the forefront of regulatory reform in Australia, as has the development of a cost-benefit methodology for regulation review. That methodology will be applied to all remaining reviews—the 13 per cent that remain to be carried out—and all new significant subordinate legislation, thereby minimising regulation to the sectors in which it is truly needed. That is important to those who must deal with regulation.

I am determined to ensure, wherever possible, that the least number of impediments are placed in the path of businesses, thereby enabling them to smoothly carry out their affairs in Queensland.

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

MATTER OF SPECIAL PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Government Mismanagement of Eastern Tollway

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

"The Goss Government's mismanagement of the eastern tollway issue."

I now call the member for Surfers Paradise to speak to the proposal.

Mr BORBIDGE (Surfers Paradise—Leader of the Opposition) (3.42 p.m.): Today, in this Parliament we see the latest evidence of a deeply divided Government, a Government so divided that its Executive can no longer make decisions without having to defer to caucus. The day that the member for Logan handed responsibility for deciding on the future of the eastern tollway to his caucus was the day the member for Logan handed over his leadership. Today, the result of that abdication of leadership is clear for all to see—a four-hour caucus meeting.

Today will be remembered as a defining moment in this the Forty-eighth Parliament of Queensland. What did the member for Logan say in caucus today? What was his recommendation? What was the recommendation of his Cabinet? Was he

rolled, or was he spooked? He will not tell us. He would not tell the Parliament yesterday; he will not front the media today. Who backed him up against the wall today? Who threatened him? Who said that they would stand down and threaten the future of his Government? We do not know for sure because the member for Logan, the so-called Premier of this State, would not tell us. He would not inform the Parliament yesterday or the media today of his preferred option.

The leadership of the member for Logan is now dead and buried. In the words of his colleague, the member for Woodridge, "The Government will bleed to death." The debacle of the eastern tollway, recently renamed the south coast motorway, is indicative of the way this Government does business. It will go down in the annals of Queensland history as perhaps the most flawed public policy outcome this State has ever seen.

For the past three years, the member for Logan has championed the cause of the motorway, saying that it was necessary, that it had to go ahead, "No matter what." In an article in the *Australian* of 21 January this year, he is quoted as saying—

"The decision (to build the motorway) was made on the basis of what was right in the public interest long term for south east Queensland, not what is best for the Labor party and holding its seats."

Now he turns that all around and abandons almost four years of rhetoric and says, "Scrap that tollway", or is that what he said? What a decision! What a cop-out!

Let us also consider the comments of the former Minister for Transport the day after the project was approved. He said—

"The vast majority of people can be confident their voices have been heard and that Government has taken the necessary decisions for the future of the region."

If, in the words of the member for Woodridge, the decision to review the south coast motorway was a little like Alice in Wonderland—and again I quote him, "It gets curiouser and curiouser"—then what are we to make of today's decision? Of course, we have seen this all before. There was the plan prior to the 1992 State election, the plan that the Government put to the residents of this region prior to that election, clear in the knowledge even then that it would not work. However, it would get the Labor Party through the 1992 State election with a minimum of disruption. Do honourable members remember the

brochure that stated, "You can plan ahead with confidence"? It was all, "Build your homes, renovate your homes, spend some money on your homes because the Goss Government will not build a highway north of the Logan River." From the Premier down the message was, "Plan ahead with confidence."

Of course, the member for Logan and his ministerial colleagues knew all along that this plan would not work. Prior to the 1992 election, they kept that close to their chests, and then straight after the election we got the double cross. The official line was that Cabinet had been presented with some new and startling growth projections that cast new light on the subject and necessitated continuing the eastern tollway from the Logan River through to the Gateway Arterial. So the plans went ahead and Cabinet finalised its position in August 1994.

In further considering the decision of caucus today, let us consider some more of the comments of the member for Logan after the decision to go ahead with the tollway. On 3 May, on the Rod Henshaw program, the member for Logan said—

"I mean, why would a Labor Government put a major motorway through five seats if it didn't believe in its head and its heart that it was absolutely necessary for the good of the community and the long-term need to move people and traffic around the south east?"

The Premier continued—

"We've looked at this thing every way, sideways, from the top, from underneath. We've had half a dozen options examined by engineers. In the end, we got stuck with the fact that there has to be a new motorway link between Brisbane and the Gold Coast."

The classic comment from the member for Logan, who accuses me of shifting position, and which exposes him completely on the same radio program, is—

"Now the truth is, that no matter who is in Government after the election, the road will have to be built, and any politician who says that Queensland doesn't need a new link is not being honest with the people."

They are the words of the Premier.

Mr Connor: The Premier's not being honest.

Mr BORBIDGE: Presumably, by his own standards, he is not being honest with the people. The challenge for the member for

Logan today is: why did he not endorse the coalition's proposal to upgrade the Pacific Highway to eight lanes? Why did he stop at six lanes? Why did he not endorse a policy which is the clear favourite of south-east Queensland residents?

To back this up, in recent weeks we have seen polls conducted for two major newspapers. In the AGB McNair poll in the *Courier-Mail*, only 13 per cent of Queenslanders believed that the south coast motorway should proceed as planned. Thirty-six per cent of those polled supported our plan—the coalition plan—to widen the Pacific Highway to eight lanes. The AGB poll in the *Gold Coast Bulletin* produced similar findings, but found in addition that a massive 48 per cent of Gold Coast residents supported widening the existing highway as opposed to only 23 per cent for the Government's tollway plan—that is coming from a region which this Government and the member for Logan said was pushing for the alternative route.

The Opposition's plan—our alternative—is far and away a clear favourite, but because it is the preferred policy of the Opposition it has to be discarded. What do we get in its place—a hotchpotch, a six-lane highway that is little more than that currently being put in place by the Government. In the best traditions of this Government, we get another review. Residents of south-east Queensland have had enough of reviews and committees. This issue has been reviewed to death. This Government has produced enough reviews on this issue to sleeper the Gold Coast rail line. The Government will find out only what is already known, that is, that a highway east of the existing route cannot be sustained on social, economic or environmental grounds.

This latest decision of this minority Government proves again that it cannot provide the Executive authority and leadership that this State needs to take it through to the next century. It is clearly hamstrung and spooked by its slender margin. But for 16 votes in the now contested seat of Mundingburra, a coalition Government would be well on the way to finalising plans for the eight-laning of the Pacific Highway. Within three years, that highway would have been transformed into a highway of world-class standard. Within three years, traffic would have been moving again and the very real threat to the lifeblood of the south-east corner would have been averted.

Queenslanders, and the Queensland economy, deserve better. They demand strength and conviction in their leadership and

in their Government. However, the Premier has still not given up. In this Parliament today, in reply to my second question during question time, he said that the best solution is a separate eastern corridor road running from the Gold Coast to the Gateway Arterial. The Premier said, "That is the best solution. It is the long-term solution". Government members did him over in caucus, they humiliated him, and he comes in here and says, "That is the best solution. It is the long-term solution—a separate eastern corridor."

Mr Santoro: He's learnt nothing.

Mr BORBIDGE: The member is right; he has learnt nothing. The Premier still displays arrogance and duplicity. Queensland still has a leader of a Government that, despite this exercise today to save a few of his Federal mates in the House of Representatives, is committed to another long-term solution—down the track a little bit—which is an eastern corridor. Government members should go back and read *Hansard*, because that is what their leader said today.

Mr ROBERTSON (Sunnybank) (3.52 p.m.) When he brings on a debate such as this, we would have to question the political wisdom of the Opposition Leader talking about mismanagement—because the policy of honourable members opposite was gross policy mismanagement, if we ever saw it, and indeed political mismanagement. Late in the life of the last Parliament, the Opposition Leader lent over his seat towards me and said that, because of the Government's decision on the south-coast motorway, I was dead. Apart from reminding you, Mr Speaker, of the arrogance of that statement by the Opposition Leader, I am pleased to inform the House that I am not dead, but very much alive, thanks in part to the Opposition's own mismanagement of sensitive issues such as its transport policy. There can be no-one better placed to attest to the Opposition's own policy mismanagement than the defeated coalition candidate in Sunnybank, the former spokesperson for the residents action group against the southern Brisbane bypass. It is this candidate who suffered at the Opposition Leader's own transport policy mismanagement.

Need I remind the House what that policy said. Not only were honourable members opposite going to create the highway horror of an eight-lane Pacific Highway—I will talk more about the resurrections necessitated by that later on—but a little statement in that same policy said, "Instead of the south coast motorway we will look at a road west of the Pacific Highway." What is that road—none

other than the southern Brisbane bypass, the same road that the Opposition candidate in Sunnybank claimed would not go ahead if this mob opposite were elected to the Government benches.

So what happened with the Opposition Leader's own policy mismanagement? Honourable members opposite effectively did over their own candidate in Sunnybank. That was the effect of that form of political and policy mismanagement by the Opposition Leader. But let us look in some detail at the policy that was put forward by the Opposition Leader who, for the moment, is still in that seat. What would it mean for the people of south-east Queensland? First of all, the plan for the Pacific Highway upgrade to an eight-lane freeway was, of course, ill conceived. It was an ill-conceived policy that failed any objective analysis on engineering, economic or social criteria. Clearly, the coalition's plan had not been subjected to the most rudimentary traffic capacity or engineering design studies and it grossly underestimated, or totally ignored, many major cost items. But, of course, that did not stop honourable members opposite actually putting it forward—

Mr Johnson: That's not what the people said on 15 July.

Mr ROBERTSON: I notice that the Opposition spokesperson on Transport tried to interject. I would have thought that he would have been too embarrassed to show his head during this debate. He should have been so embarrassed. To come into this House and claim that the decision taken by the Labor caucus today reflected the policy of honourable members opposite is grossly dishonest. We would never do to the people of south-east Queensland what honourable members opposite are planning to do with the Pacific Highway. Need I remind you that there is still a wanted poster for you on every light pole in the suburb of Underwood. They know that what you wanted to do was resume their homes with your eight-lane freeway plan. You did not care about the people of Underwood—

Mr Johnson interjected.

Mr ROBERTSON: And they were happy for the people of Underwood—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Sunnybank will address his comments through the Chair, and the member for Gregory might just relax for awhile.

Mr ROBERTSON: How did the people of Underwood vote? They voted with their feet, and I was returned as the member for

Sunnybank. Thank you, Mr Johnson; thank you, Mr Borbidge; thank you, Mrs Sheldon. I am probably the only person from Sunnybank who has thanked them because I doubt that their candidate has ever done that. What does the Liberal and National Pacific Highway plan mean to the people who live in our suburbs? First of all was the plan to reduce the number of on and off ramps from 127 to 12. This proposal and subsequent press interviews during the election campaign claimed that the present 171 off ramps between Brisbane and the Gaven Way would be reduced to about 12. The coalition acknowledged the need for a general upgrade of feeder roads at both the northern and southern ends to encourage suburban and outer suburban commuters on to alternative routes. Such upgrading would, of course, require as yet uncosted property resumptions.

As the Premier pointed out in question time today, honourable members opposite never really came clean with the costing for the resumptions that would result from their plan. It would result in not only resumptions but in the need for significant upgrading of traffic signalisation and a massive increase in rat-running through our suburban streets. I remind you, Mr Speaker, of numerous speeches by me in this place during the last term calling on honourable members opposite to release their transport policy, to come clean, which they did not do until the election campaign. What it effectively meant was that suburban roads in my electorate such as Warrigal Road, Beenleigh Road, Mains Road, Pinelands Road, Compton Road and so on would all suffer at the hands of this ill-thought-out, mismanaged policy that would reduce the number of on and off ramps from 127 to 12.

Is it any wonder that I have not seen Mr Johnson in Sunnybank since the election? With only 12 on and off ramps along the coalition's version of an upgraded Pacific Highway, waiting times would be intolerable, with up to 1,400 vehicles per day seeking to enter a highway flowing to capacity at any one point. None of these effects had been examined or indeed costed by the Opposition. I have already referred to the impact that that would have on local roads. Not only would they have had to carry increased volumes of traffic but also they would have had to be widened, bringing roads in my electorate even closer to people who already suffer from living along major roads.

Mr Johnson: Did you support the caucus decision?

Mr ROBERTSON: Basically, it is none of Mr Johnson's business. Mr Speaker, your protection please?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Sunnybank has actually asked for my protection, Mr Johnson. I will ask the honourable member to stop interjecting.

Mr ROBERTSON: Thank you for your fairness, Mr Speaker.

What would be the effect of the resumptions contained in the Opposition's proposal? As the Premier pointed out, some rubbery figures were presented during the election campaign. The Nationals and Liberals claimed that the resumption costs would be approximately \$15m. Of course, that turned out to be a massive underestimate of the true cost of their proposal. The truth is that over \$100m worth of resumptions would have been required to implement their policy—their highway horror. Through its own independent study the Labor Party discovered that the resumptions would have included the Loganholme Tavern car park, seven service stations, the Logan Hyperdome, the Logan City Council pump station, three caravan parks, the Beenleigh ambulance centre, Pimpama Uniting Church, Pimpama War Cemetery, the Movie World car park and houses next to the local road widenings in suburbs along the route. I have already referred to the impact on people living in Underwood.

Mr Bredhauer: I wonder how many of those people they consulted before they made their election promise.

Mr ROBERTSON: What an excellent question by the member for Cook. I would suggest that the answer is: absolutely none.

Mr Welford: Approximately none.

Mr ROBERTSON: Approximately none! Maybe it was slightly more than none, but no more than nil.

Mr Welford: Double none.

Mr ROBERTSON: Double none! In spite of the resumptions and social dislocation, in spite of the arrogance of the members of the Opposition in respect of their policy—

Mr Grice: Arrogance?

Mr ROBERTSON: Yes, arrogance, because we know that they did not consult with the people who lived along the route. Would the proposal put forward by the Opposition actually solve the traffic problem? The short answer is "No", because with only 12 on and off ramps, the locals who live along the Pacific Highway/South East Freeway would

have been forced to wait up to three times as long as they presently do to get onto the Pacific Highway/South East Freeway. With up to 14,000 vehicles a day seeking to enter the highway at any one point, the waiting times would have become intolerable.

As I said, I am a fair person and I place on record my thanks for the Opposition's policy mismanagement and its political mismanagement because, as a result, I am still alive.

Time expired.

Mrs SHELDON (Caloundra—Leader of the Liberal Party) (4.02 p.m.): I now understand why the honourable member's fellow members in the Firefighters Union and all the wonderful firefighters call him Judas Iscariot. He betrayed them as he betrayed the people in his own electorate. After hearing the lies and untruths that have been spoken today by the honourable member, I can understand why he has that reputation.

Mr ROBERTSON: I rise to a point of order. I find that remark grossly offensive and I ask that it be withdrawn.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member finds the remarks offensive. I ask the honourable member to withdraw them.

Mrs SHELDON: Mr Speaker, since you have asked me, of course I will withdraw them. However, they were the comments of the honourable member's fellow members in the Firefighters Union, so perhaps he should ask them to withdraw those remarks.

Mr ROBERTSON: I rise to a point of order. She referred to——

Mrs Sheldon interjected.

Mr Braddy interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Minister for Police! I want to hear a point of order and I have no chance of doing so. I remind the Leader of the Liberal Party that it is her time that is being wasted. What is the honourable member's point of order?

Mr ROBERTSON: I asked for the comments in respect of dishonesty and lying to be withdrawn, and I ask again that that be done.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I suggest that the honourable member withdraw and then continue with her speech.

Mrs SHELDON: I have done that.

Mr SPEAKER: I suggest that the honourable member do it again unequivocally.

Mrs SHELDON: I did withdraw unequivocally whatever he wanted me to withdraw.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Let us go on.

Mrs SHELDON: We have a lot of touchy people over there, don't we? The member for Bundamba had better take the member for Sunnybank in hand; he needs a bit of instruction.

It is not yet two months since the State election, but the Premier appears to have forgotten already what happened on that day. The leader of this State stood in this House yesterday and accused the Opposition Leader of changing his position in relation to the tollway. What a novel reinterpretation of history; what a creative re-interpretation of the facts in relation to "that damned road"; what a classic example of the Premier's arrogance, bubbling to the surface despite his contrived and much-publicised attempts to suppress it!

The Premier sits in this House and sees the seats formerly occupied by his Labor colleagues now occupied by coalition members, but still he cannot accept the election result.

Mr Santoro: He has learned nothing.

Mrs SHELDON: He has learned nothing. It was a result produced by Premier Goss himself. He was the one who told the people of Springwood, Redlands, Mansfield and Albert in 1992 that the ALP would not build a tollway north of the Logan River. He is the man who misled the voters with this false promise. He is the one who broke his word and proceeded to build the tollway anyway. He is the man who tried to sweet-talk his way back into favour prior to the 1995 election by saying that there was no alternative to the tollway. Premier Goss is responsible for the blatant political bribes distributed by his own staff through the shonky Community Facilities Fund of the Koala Coast Secretariat.

First Premier Goss said that there would be no road. Then he planned option A, option B, and the koala tunnel. Even then he was not satisfied and, to the dismay of people who had been told that they were clear of the chosen route, he again realigned the tollway to make sure that they were on the route. Today, the Premier is back to square one, trying to tell Queenslanders that there will be no tollway after all. When it comes to changing positions over the tollway, this Premier is the original talking definition of a hypocrite.

Some might argue that the shock and trauma of being so abruptly rejected by so many voters may have driven all these memories from the Premier's mind. If so, thank heavens for this debate, because we will help cure the Premier of his sudden amnesia.

In common with Alan Bond, the Premier may have forgotten key facts that he finds distasteful. However, in common with Mr Bond's physicians and lawyers, we can help the Premier with his problem. This debate is an exercise in repressed memory therapy for the Premier. He should not have left the House, but if he listens, concentrates and avoids petulant outbursts and episodes of denial, he will soon begin to regain important pieces of data that he may have lost.

Firstly, the Premier should try to remember the claim that he repeated many times during the recent election campaign. Again and again, the Premier said that after a great deal of study, he was convinced that there was no possible alternative to the south-east tollway. According to the Premier, there was no alternative but to bulldoze a massive trench through Daisy Hill State Forest. There was no alternative but to resume hundreds of homes and properties. There was no alternative but to devalue the worth of hundreds of other homes and properties that adjoin the tollway. There was no alternative but to charge a toll. There was no alternative but to compensate schools in the electorate of the former Environment Minister to the tune of \$915,000, and there was no alternative but to require other affected schools to wait indefinitely for their share. In common with many repressed memories that are often claimed to be false, those facts sound quite fanciful. The Premier may have difficulty believing that he said those things, but I can assure him that those were the facts as he presented them to the electorate. Truth is indeed stranger than fiction.

The collapse of the Premier's grand design on 15 July has left many questions unanswered. Chief among them is the question of how much this doomed exercise has cost the long-suffering taxpayers of this State. Queensland taxpayers have shelled out for advertising, the purchase of resumed properties, drilling and testing along the proposed route, as well as engineering studies, including those that found the proposed tollway was unworkable. At the Premier's request, hundreds of thousands of public service hours have been poured into the venture. Taxpayers paid the salary of the Premier and the former Environment Minister, who both refused to listen to objections and accused those who protested of being members of—and honourable members will remember that remarkable statement of Ms Robson—rent-a-crowd.

The cost to taxpayers pales into insignificance when one takes into account the

money lost through three years or more of traffic jams, congestion and disruption while the Government procrastinated over its plans for the road. The Government promised the people of Queensland that the Pacific Highway would be upgraded to six lanes by 1995. It sits there in its miserable mess and nothing has been done. Now we are told that the State Government will not build the tollway. It will not proceed beyond its existing plans for a six-lane Pacific Highway and it will delay any further decision making until the year 2005. By the year 2005, the Pacific Highway will be Australia's longest car park. In the three years since the State Government made its false promise not to proceed with a road north of the Logan River, traffic on the highway has been slowly grinding to a halt.

With or without a busway to the Logan Hyperdome—

A Government member interjected.

Mrs SHELDON: Indeed it has been grinding to a halt. Obviously the member for Inala never travels along that road.

Mrs SHELDON: The small amount of extra capacity provided by this six-lane proposal will be insufficient to avoid the slide to traffic gridlock. That is a decision that falls far short of what was offered during the election campaign by the Opposition. In terms of its ability to carry traffic, the coalition's eight-lane proposal was superior in every way to the tollway touted by the Premier a few months ago. It was superior in that while it offered the same total number of lanes, motorists did not face the disincentives that would be caused by the imposition of a hefty toll. Compared with the damp squib of a consolation prize now being offered to motorists by the Premier, the coalition's eight-lane motorway is clearly more effective, more efficient, and able to provide for traffic needs in the long term.

An Opposition member interjected.

Mrs SHELDON: We would build it faster. I have been told that it most probably will not even start for four years. The Opposition produced an effective alternative to the south-east tollway based on data and recommendations produced for the Government itself.

Mr Ardill: What is it?

Mrs SHELDON: The member does not know what the Government's proposal is, and he was on the traffic committee. It is about time he found out the facts. Motorists seeking relief from traffic congestion under the policies of the previous Goss Labor Government would be required to wait seven years or more for the completion of the south-east tollway.

Mr Santoro: Come up to the Liberal Party headquarters.

Mrs SHELDON: No, he can just come up to my office. I will give him a copy of our policy.

An Opposition member interjected.

Mrs SHELDON: Obviously not. He has a problem with comprehension.

Following today's decision, those motorists will be waiting 10 years. If Labor remains in office, they still face a period of uncertainty while the controversial issue of an alternative route is considered. The coalition's plan to widen the Pacific Highway to eight lanes and direct roadworks away from hours of peak demand would produce immediate relief from congestion, which would reduce dramatically over an accelerated construction period that would end totally within three years.

Until today, Premier Goss insisted on building a separate motorway—against advice provided by his own departments—and defraying the costs of the project by imposing a toll. The Premier knows he cannot impose a toll on a widened Pacific Highway, because motorists would not accept it. That was why the coalition proposed to fully fund and construct an eight-lane freeway.

The issue of funding brings me to a consideration of how far the Government has advanced the project without the knowledge of this House or Queenslanders in general. In the *Business Review Weekly*, the chief executive officer of a major construction company, John Holland, claimed that a \$600m contract for the construction of the Government's tollway has already been let. Keith Drew of John Holland Constructions claims that his company is a member of a consortium which has won the job. The article was published in that magazine more than a month after the election. It is difficult to imagine that Mr Drew could have made a mistake, as he happens to be the managing director of that company. The explanation offered by the Premier during question time this afternoon was far from adequate. Also inadequate was his answer to my question about the future of the \$915,000 which was allocated to the former Environment Minister for schools in the electorate of Springwood as compensation for the construction of that road.

Time expired.

Mr ARDILL (Archerfield) (4.13 p.m.): What members are talking about today is the result of a failure by a Government to perform its planning role. For years people have seen

marks on maps, and over the years I have seen and very carefully plotted them on my UBDs. Those marks are the result of discussions within the Department of Transport about what should be done to resolve the problems that people in the Department of Transport knew were occurring but which the coalition, in Government, failed to perceive or do anything about. I am not criticising the previous Minister for Main Roads, the Honourable Russ Hinze, who did try to do something about the situation but never got enough funding to perform the task adequately.

One has to look only at the situation with the Pacific Highway, the Gateway Arterial road and, particularly, the crazy situation in Nerang, which was created not as a result of years of growing like Topsy but because of inadequate planning and funding by the Government of the day. Everyone knew about the forthcoming increase in population. Indeed, the expected increase in population on the Gold Coast was known as long ago as 1950, yet nothing was done about it. Now we are faced with having to do something about it.

For a long time I have been asking that the public be informed about where future roads will be built. I refer to the ring roads around Brisbane, which everyone knows must be built, and roads to accommodate the one million people who are expected to come into this area in the next 10 or 15 years. Today, we have had to face the fact that the public of Queensland will not accept what is the optimum solution, engineering-wise, to the problem of transport between Brisbane and the Gold Coast. There is no doubt that the optimum solution to that problem is the one that was put forward by this Government prior to the election, that is, the direct route of a motorway to accommodate 20,000 to 30,000 vehicles per day through the koala habitat. The public of Queensland has clearly said that that is not on, and this Government has had to listen to that.

All the options up to No. 5, and the totally unacceptable No. 7, were known to the coalition before this Government came to power in 1989. But it did nothing about it. The maps were in the Department of Transport. The coalition did not know what to do about transport problems way back in 1961 and 1964, and it is a shame that they did nothing about them then. The Leader of the Opposition claims that this Government did nothing about the particular startling predictions and projections in the last couple of years, yet the coalition created the problem when it tore up the Gold Coast railway in 1961

and 1964. The coalition destroyed that rail line. It was going to rebuild it; but did it? No, it did not; it left that to this Government.

The No. 1 priority of this Government in providing for future transport is, and should be, to provide public transport. We have done that. As the member for Southport would know, it is absolutely essential that coordinated connections be provided at the other end of that line. This Government is spending about \$900m on public transport in this State—most of it in the south-east corner. We are doing something about the problem. Certainly, we have to handle the problems at the Gold Coast end. If the Holm Earle railway, which was to service the National Party subdivisions in the former Albert Shire, is ever to perform its proper task, we must provide proper connections at the Gold Coast end.

The Opposition talks about its wonderful strategy for a road to the Gold Coast: upgrading the Pacific Highway. That is absolute nonsense. Opposition members are saying: not six lanes, but eight lanes. All right, let us have a look at that. Why not eight lanes? For a start, the Pacific Highway is not a motorway that is designed to carry the 20,000 vehicles per day that travel between Brisbane and the Gold Coast, except on a Sunday. It is a major arterial road servicing Brisbane, the southern suburbs of Brisbane, Logan City, Beenleigh and the areas between here and the Gold Coast. Of the 80,000 vehicles per day on average that pass through Springwood—the major constriction point on that highway, which the motorway would have negated and obviated—only 20,000 vehicles, or one-quarter of the vehicles travelling through there, commence their journeys in inner Brisbane and complete them at the Gold Coast. Of those 80,000 vehicles that travel through Springwood, how many travel over the one and only bridge that crosses the Albert River below Beenleigh? Forty thousand per day, or half of the number of vehicles that travel through Springwood.

Mr Grice: That would have been 43,000 that voted for us.

Mr ARDILL: That figure of 80,000 is updated, too. I am working off the latest figures—80,000, 40,000 and 20,000. Each day, 60,000 vehicles travel through Coombabah. Obviously, the problem to address is the need to get around the main constriction points at Springwood, the Logan River bridge and the highway exits at Beenleigh and Coombabah, which are caused by the traffic travelling between the residential areas that are now expanding to Coomera

and Ormeau from the Gold Coast—that is, the traffic that uses that road as an arterial road.

The motorway was the ideal engineering answer to those problems. The National Party's suggestion that we close down most of the existing ramps on the freeway was never acceptable to the people of Brisbane because that would have resulted in total chaos on our roads. That solution would have shifted the problem from Springwood, Coombabah and Beenleigh to intersections such as those at Garden City, Mains and Kessels Roads and various other places around Brisbane. That solution was never acceptable. That was absolutely no solution whatsoever.

A six-lane highway as far as the Beenleigh exit is absolutely essential and, certainly, more upgrading further down the highway is required. An amount of \$200m has been provided by this Government to extend those six lanes right through to the Gold Coast, and that is absolutely essential if traffic is not to get bogged down in the next few years. However, there is no way that an eight-lane road, with the existing on and off ramps, would ever be acceptable for the simple traffic engineering reason that we cannot have all of those conflicting movements. The Opposition's solution was no solution. The public has rejected the ideal transport engineering solution. The Government is now doing the best it can, and a solution acceptable to the entire caucus is to upgrade the highway to six lanes.

Time expired.

Mr SPEAKER: I am pleased to call the member for Gregory, because he has had a lot to say.

Mr JOHNSON (Gregory) (4.23 p.m.): Thank you, Mr Speaker. At the outset, I congratulate the Government for finally conceding that it has made a mistake and for adopting the coalition's policy. But it has not gone far enough; it has decided to widen the highway to only six lanes. The Opposition's policy was to widen the highway to eight lanes. I say that the Opposition's policy was environmentally, socially and economically responsible. It was also responsible transport planning, and Government members know it.

Mr Veivers: They'll probably announce eight lanes tomorrow.

Mr JOHNSON: As my colleague the member for Southport just said, the Government will probably announce widening the highway to eight lanes tomorrow. But that is beside the point. We are getting used to the Premier jumping up and down. I notice my

opposite number, the Honourable Jim Elder, Minister for Transport, getting very close to the Premier's seat. Has he done the numbers yet? I am told that he is doing the numbers. By the look of the Premier this afternoon, the Minister for Transport could be sitting in that seat by Friday. He should take the smug look off his face, because we are not here for a holiday; we are here for a hard time. I will give the Minister the mail: he thinks he knows what is going on here, but he had better start consulting with the people because he has not consulted with them yet. The Minister mentioned today that he had consulted with the people in his department. What a damn joke! He has consulted nobody. He has engaged contractors already. During the Estimates hearing, the former Minister for Transport said that contracts had already been entered into for the Gold Coast motorway and that at the moment some \$10m would probably be the cost, but they would settle for something like \$6m. How much money has this road cost so far? I want the answer to that question. The Minister said that he would give me the answer.

That is not the only amount of money that the road has cost this State so far. The Government has received reports from Connell Wagner and Rankine and Hill. How much have those reports cost? The Government has disregarded them totally. Those blokes opposite—the member for Sunnybank and the member for Archerfield—know perfectly well that the summaries of those reports were disregarded totally by the Government. Those reports stated that some 20 per cent of people would use that corridor that the Government wanted to build. That is where the Government has again sold out the people. It has not told the people of Queensland the real truth.

I say to the Government that, if it adopts the Opposition's policy, and I believe that it will because it received a real drubbing at the election on 15 July—

Mr Robertson interjected.

Mr JOHNSON: The member for Sunnybank should not have won his seat, either. I will give him the mail: if Lynne Friis was sitting in this place today instead of the member, the Opposition would have started that road on 16 July.

Mr Elder interjected.

Mr JOHNSON: The Minister for Transport can laugh as much as he likes. We had David Hamill; all he did was stuff transport in this State for five years. Then we had Ken

Hayward; they tied his arms and legs and blindfolded him so he could not say or do anything. Now we have the real show pony of the Queensland Parliament, Jimmy Elder. He cannot make a decision; so the members of the Labor caucus made the decision. How many hours did it take them to make the decision? About four? A few of them had the guts to stand up—

Mr Ardill interjected.

Mr JOHNSON: I am not talking about the member for Archerfield. I know that, privately, the member does not support the road, but he supports it publicly. At least Gordon Nuttall, the member for Sandgate, will speak out and say what he thinks. For too long, that has been the Government's problem; the Premier has been making all the decisions. They take notice of him, but they are still not consulting with the people. What counts in this game is people, and the Government has sold out the people.

I will leave the issue of roads for a moment and talk about railways. Talk about consultation! The Government has sold out the railway workers of this State—some 6,000 of them. Traditionally, they are Labor supporters, but this mob opposite sold them out. As I see it, Government members do not care about the grassroots people who support them. They care about that 5 per cent of their supporters—the multinationals or whoever they may be—that feed money into their pockets and keep them sitting in ministerial leather while the rest of the people in this State, the small business operators and others, bleed to death.

My colleague the member for Southport, who has been a member for the nearly six years that I have been in this place, has told me that, over the last couple of years, the Gold Coast has been strangled because this Government could not make a decision about that road. Small business, tourism, commercial operators, interstate travellers—the whole lot—have suffered because this Government could not make a decision about that road. That crowd opposite had to wait for six years before it could make a decision.

I ask the Minister for Transport to tell us in his contribution to this debate when he is going to start this project. When is he going to start? He has not got a damned clue. He has no idea when tenders will be called. I bet they are not called before Christmas. Day by day, the situation will deteriorate.

Mr Elder: But you would have started building it on 16 July; is that it?

Mr JOHNSON: We would have started it, all right. I give him the mail on that. We would have had it up and running. The Minister can keep yelling and screaming all he likes. He is nothing—

Mr Santoro: He's punch drunk.

Mr JOHNSON: He is punch drunk, all right.

Mr Davidson interjected.

Mr JOHNSON: Yes, Con Sciacca and Paul Keating have got to the Minster. They told him not to go ahead with the eastern corridor because it will cost Labor three Federal seats. I will give them the mail: three Federal Labor seats will be lost because I will help get rid of Labor from those seats. The Opposition will also take the mickey out of Bobby Gibbs, the President of the Labor Party. We will take the smile clean off his face. One thing that the people of Queensland will know after the next Federal election is that they will have an upgraded Gold Coast highway, they will not have Bob Gibbs as President of the Labor Party, and they will not have Bob Gibbs yelling and laughing across the Chamber. I give him the mail: he will not have a grin on his face, because the Federal Labor Party will not only lose three seats, it will probably lose four. It is terrified that it is going to lose the whole lot of its Queensland seats.

Before Mr Speaker suggests that I return to the subject, I will come back to the issue of the highway. In the early part of this administration, when Tom Burns was the Minister responsible for local government, he introduced a document into this House saying that there would be no infrastructure built on prime agricultural land; that there would be no roadways, railways or any other type of infrastructure built that would be detrimental to the prime agricultural land of this State. The Government totally disregarded that document. What has it done? All that this Government has done is subject the people of that part of Queensland to nothing but torment, agony and persecution. The Government has no idea what it has subjected those people to. It has caused broken homes and made people sell their houses, all because it could not make a decision. The members of this Government are nothing but a mob of gutless wonders. The people in that part of Queensland elected four members to this House to get rid of the mob opposite. The former Minister for Environment and Heritage, Molly Robson, knew perfectly well what the agenda was.

Mr Gibbs: You told Molly Robson she'd hold the seat.

Mr JOHNSON: The honourable member can yell all he likes. The Government cheated those people, defrauded them and cost them a lot of money. The Government broke a lot them. It should be proud.

Mr Veivers interjected.

Mr JOHNSON: My colleague the honourable member for Southport just reminded me that the Government knows all about corruption. When we get into Government, we will hold a royal commission to find out exactly what this Government has done with the money, where it has gone, and why it did not deliver. We know why the Government is going to sell the Stanwell Power Station. It is doing that to finance the upgrading of the Pacific Highway. When Ken Hayward was the Minister for Transport, he told us that the proposed koala tunnel would cost \$35m. The Budget Estimates state that it would have cost \$135m.

Mr Santoro: What an outrage!

Mr JOHNSON: That is an absolute fraud and outrage. Perhaps commonsense will prevail today. I will be interested to hear what the Minister has to say.

Hon. J. P. ELDER (Capalaba—Minister for Transport and Minister Assisting the Premier on Economic and Trade Development) (4.33 p.m.): It is amazing that during a Matter of Special Public Importance debate on the issue of the motorway the Opposition spokesperson for Transport spoke for six minutes on every issue other than the issue before the House that the Opposition put forward as a Matter of Special Public Importance. The Opposition spokesman covered every topic other than the road. He ran out of information, sting and product in four minutes.

Mr Gibbs: What about the vicious personal attacks on me?

Mr ELDER: And there were vicious personal attacks on the poor Minister for Primary Industries. Without those vicious attacks, the honourable member's speech would have lasted only two minutes. It is lucky that the Minister has a solid hide and is a former second rower. Other members might have faltered under such an attack.

Most glaring is the hypocrisy from members opposite, which is nothing short of breathtaking. We heard all the bleatings from the Leader of the Opposition and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, and the tirades on every issue other than the road from the member for Gregory. We heard all these bleatings about the road, yet the one thing

that has been recognised by previous speakers in this debate is the role that honourable members opposite played. When they were in Government right through the seventies and eighties, the members opposite failed utterly to plan for any growth in south-east Queensland.

Residential planning and development on the south side was completely ad hoc. There was no planning at all and no sign of an integrated approach to the planning and provision of transport or, for that matter, any other services. Members opposite walked away from the issue. Opposition members had no concept of integrated planning and reserved no corridors for roads during the time that they were in Government. They provided no public transport planning—none.

Honourable members opposite forget that I am now the Minister for Transport and I have the records; I can see what the former Government and its Ministers did. They did nothing! For years, honourable members opposite sat on their hands and did not do a thing in that area at all. And what about the existing rail line? What did honourable members opposite do? They ripped it up! That was the smartest thing that they could think of. They said, "We won't need rail, road and infrastructure planning. We'll just let it grow on an ad hoc basis." What did the former Government do? It left this Government the legacy of having to tackle all of those problems, not just the serious planning problems that needed to be addressed. That is what SEQ 2001 is about. The Gold Coast Mayor, the Lord Mayor of Brisbane and previous mayors have agreed that this planning is long overdue. They have been part of this process, in which they wanted to play a constructive role.

The hypocrisy of the Leader of the Opposition is reflected in an article in the *Sunday Mail*—and Government members know how members opposite abrogated their responsibility—which reported that the Leader of the Opposition said, "Oh, the decision should have been made six years ago." That is what he said. All of a sudden, when the Labor Party comes to office, there are these massive problems. Overnight these massive problems are there. Did the Leader of the Opposition mean six years to December or six years to July, when he actually made the comment? If he meant six years to July, when he actually made the comment, that would mean that the Leader of the Opposition would have then been a Minister. I agree with the Leader of the Opposition; the decision should

have been made back then. The Leader of the Opposition should have been part of that decision-making process.

Honourable members opposite have gone a bit quiet. Is the sting out of them already? How about injecting a bit of emotion into the debate? Had the Leader of the Opposition been smart—and he has never been smart, which is why we are here and members opposite are where they are—he might have said something like "three years ago". Three years ago, the Government would have been halfway through its term. However, the Leader of the Opposition did not do that; he went for the full hog and said "six years ago". The simple fact of the matter is that honourable members opposite abrogated their responsibilities and did nothing about it.

What this Government is embarking upon is at least a medium-term solution. We are giving those people a 10-year plan to manage transport needs in that particular corridor. That is what we are doing. We are upgrading the highway to six lanes and we are abandoning the proposal to build a road in that section of koala habitat. Honourable members opposite would be supportive of that plan.

Mr Johnson: We do support it.

Mr ELDER: No, the honourable member was not supportive of that plan previously. The honourable member has to remember that when he makes comments in this House those remarks always come back on him. The last words of the member for Gregory in referring to the previous Minister for Transport were—

"Yet the Minister still cannot decide whether or not a new freeway is required . . ."

Espousing policy, the honourable member for Gregory then goes on to say—

"I say that the new freeway is required, and it is required because it is a critical element in the management of the projected growth of south-east Queensland."

The honourable member for Gregory has had more identities than Helen Demidenko on this issue.

Mr JOHNSON: I rise to a point of order. The Minister is misleading the House. At no time did we say that. We were talking about the existing freeway.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member will resume his seat. The honourable member has spoken in the debate. I suggest that he allow the Minister to speak.

Mr ELDER: Thank you, Mr Speaker. It is always a little rugged for members opposite when we quote their words back to them. As I said, the member for Gregory has had more identities than Helen Demidenko. In fact, he has more front than Liz Hurley to stand up in this place and carry on in the way that he has.

What we have been about is providing a medium-term solution and putting a 10-year program in place. We have been about getting on with the six-laning works and the bus lanes.

Mr GRICE: I rise to a point of order. The Minister has spoken for seven minutes and has not yet addressed the subject. Could you ask him to move on to the subject, Mr Speaker?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! That was a spurious point of order. I do not require the advice of the member for Broadwater on how to run the House.

Mr ELDER: During the entire debate on this issue, the member for Broadwater made his feelings obvious. He was clearly supportive of the tollway. He was one of those who kept pushing for it. He was not happy with the ridiculous option that the coalition formulated hastily close to the election, namely, to widen the Pacific Highway to eight lanes with 12 ramps. The coalition proposed to abolish the current 127 ramps and substitute them with only 12 ramps. I would bet that the coalition did not tell the people of Springwood or the people of Redlands about the impact that that plan would have had on the local road network and the fact that it would have meant that the major roads in those electorates would become subarterial in nature. One did not hear that advertised in the marketplace!

The proposal by the coalition to widen the existing highway to eight lanes allowed no consideration for public transport, busways or other modes of transportation. The only ones to benefit from that proposal would have been the member for Broadwater and the member for Surfers Paradise, who, on their way to Parliament House, could have waved to all those motorists queuing to access the darned freeway. All those who would have been thrown out onto the network of suburban roads would have been struggling, but those Opposition members who represent electorates on the Gold Coast would have been zipping to Brisbane in quick time with no problems. The coalition's proposed alternative was an appalling policy. The truth of the matter is that it was criticised by those who have also criticised the Government's proposal.

Mr Johnson: Which way did you vote?

Mr ELDER: I should not do this—and I will probably be rapped over the knuckles in caucus for doing it—but I will inform the member of what occurred in caucus today in relation to the decision. The final decision was unanimous. As the Premier said earlier, the Government's proposal was the best option, but we accept that it was rejected by the people of Queensland. We are now offering what we believe is the second-best solution, and we will work with the people to resolve the long-term transport issues in this State.

Members opposite are absolute hypocrites. I recall the performance by the member for Gregory at the press conference which was called to announce the eight-lane option proposed by the coalition. The member was asked how many resumptions would occur. His response was, "There will be no resumptions." "What was that, Bob?" "Um, there will be a few resumptions." "What was that Bob?" "There will be some resumptions. We're not sure." "What was that, Bob?" "Oh, you take over the press conference from here." Up jumped Mr Borbidge, and he left the member for Gregory to meld into the background after he had tripped over his tongue half a dozen times. The simple fact is that we are putting in place a short-term, medium-term and long-term solution to the problem.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The time allotted for this debate has now expired.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. T. M. MACKENROTH
(Chatsworth—Minister for Housing, Local Government and Planning, Minister for Rural Communities and Minister for Provision of Infrastructure for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities) (4.44 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

"That leave be granted to bring in a Bill for an Act to amend the Local Government Act 1993."

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

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

Second Reading

Hon. T. M. MACKENROTH
(Chatsworth—Minister for Housing, Local

Government and Planning, Minister for Rural Communities and Minister for Provision of Infrastructure for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities) (4.45 p.m.): I move—

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

The purpose of this Bill is to clarify the general qualifications for membership as a local government councillor under the Local Government Act 1993. The provisions in the Act require a person to hold certain qualifications in order to nominate as a candidate and become a local government councillor. These qualifications include that a person lives in the local government's area and is an elector. The intention was that where a local government was divided into electoral divisions, a candidate for election to a particular division did not have to live in the division as long as he or she lived in the area of the local government. This principle had previously applied in the repealed Local Government Act 1936. In fact, the Department of Housing, Local Government and Planning released a candidates handbook for the 1994 local government elections which stated—

"Where a candidate stands as a councillor for a particular electoral division, that person is not required to live in the division."

As a result of questions raised last week over these provisions in the calling for nominations for a by-election in Logan City, legal advice was sought by the Government from senior counsel. While this advice was sought, several differing opinions were expressed on this matter. For example, it was the view of senior counsel that the Act does not provide a clear answer to the question of whether or not a person must live in the particular division he or she wishes to represent. The issue is not directly addressed, and the inferences available from other provisions of the Act are neither powerful nor consistent.

Parliamentary Counsel's view is that the councillors have been lawfully elected. Nevertheless, it is possible that a person is not qualified to nominate for election as a councillor for a local government division if he or she, whilst residing within the local government area, resides outside of the division. The amendment is being introduced to remove doubt. This is achieved by providing that a person is not disqualified from becoming a councillor for a division of a local government area merely because the person lives in another division of the area. The effect is to put beyond doubt that the election of the

councillors always was valid, and it follows that all actions taken by the councillors in relation to council matters are valid.

I believe all members will agree that it is important that the Government move swiftly to remove any doubt over the election of councillors so as to preserve the effective operation of the local government system in Queensland. I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mrs McCauley, adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. T. M. MACKENROTH
(Chatsworth—Leader of the House) (4.47 p.m.): I move—

"That the House do now adjourn."

Firefighters March, Fax

Mr LITTLEPROUD (Western Downs) (4.47 p.m.): Honourable members would be well aware of the strong feelings within the ranks of professional firefighters over crew manning levels and the recent public protests by firemen aimed at addressing the situation. Of course, the Government's position was not helped by the Deputy Premier and former Emergency Services Minister, the honourable member for Lytton, who went out to the front of this Parliament and described professional firefighters as wankers. Since that time, firefighters have maintained their rage at this Government's failure to fully deliver on its earlier promises in the Leivesley report. During the election campaign, they held another large protest rally on the Gold Coast on the very same issue. It is well known that such action produces a seething resentment in Government ranks, and this leads me to the issue that I wish to raise today. It involves the most recent protest action by firemen and the alleged involvement of a newly elected member of this Parliament to subvert such action by facilitating the issue of a false and deliberately misleading statement.

Honourable members may recall that the latest protest march conducted by the United Firefighters Union was held on 22 August, when members marched on Forbes House, headquarters of Emergency Services. In a bid to diffuse the public impact of this protest action, a fraudulent letter was concocted under the letterhead of the United Firefighters Union of Australia, Brisbane branch. It even contained a mobile phone contact number which resembled, apart from two transposed digits, the usual union contact number for the

Brisbane branch secretary. The letter, which I table, was headed "March cancelled. Rally rescheduled for 9 a.m., 23 August 1995, Roma Street Forum, Brisbane." By falsely claiming that the 22 August protest march would be replaced by a rally a day later, the letter sought to scuttle the planned UFU protest march on Forbes House. I repeat that the letter was not issued by the Brisbane branch of the UFU, and the march had not been cancelled as claimed.

In fact, I table a disclaimer issued under the signature "R. Williams"—Roger Williams, secretary of the Brisbane branch—which states—

"A bogus document has been faxed into fire stations

It has a Brisbane branch letterhead and is a forgery"

Equally intriguing is how that letter came to be placed into the firemen's system, and this is where the apparent involvement of a backbench member of this Government is exposed.

I table a copy of the activity sheet from the Kemp Place Fire Station facsimile machine, which shows that at 17:12 hours—or 12 past 5 in the afternoon—on 21 August, a fax consisting of that forged letter was received from the number 617 927 8212. A subsequent check by firemen showed this to be the facsimile number of the new member for Rockhampton, Mr Robert Schwarten. I table the documentation that proves that. One can only question why the honourable member, or any member, would allow what amounted to a forged letter to be sent from their publicly funded electorate office. I table also a copy of an activity report from the Annerley Fire Station. It shows that that station's fax machine received a message from the same number—617 927 8212—at 17:02 hours on 21 August. That is the same message, on the same day, from the same source.

Even if the member in this case happened to be the Minister for Emergency Services, this action would not be appropriate because we are dealing with a forged document. It appears that the member for Rockhampton has allowed his office to be used improperly to convey this letter to a destination where its deliberate purpose was to mislead and confuse. The honourable member for Rockhampton owes this House an explanation and an apology for his apparent actions—which, I might add, failed totally in their intended impact on the protest.

Mr SCHWARTEN: I rise to a point of order. I have no knowledge of what the honourable member is talking about.

An Opposition member interjected.

Mr SCHWARTEN: The member asked for an explanation and I have just given one. I do not know what in the dickens he is talking about.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Palaszczuk): Order! The Chair is going to make a ruling. There is no provision in the Standing Orders for a denial by the member for Rockhampton. However, at a later hour the honourable member will have the opportunity to provide an explanation. There is no point of order.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: This abuse of an electorate office, this trading in fraudulent documents, raises several questions. Was the faxed letter sent under the instruction of the Minister? Was this faxed letter organised by senior officers in the Department of Emergency Services, remembering that the honourable member for Rockhampton worked with the previous Minister for Emergency Services? Was it the work of someone in the United Firefighters Union?

One thing is certain—the honourable member for Rockhampton has either used his office or allowed his office to be used to send a fraudulent letter. I believe that the honourable member and the Minister for Emergency Services both owe this House an explanation.

Mr W. O'Donoghue; Mr H. Boland

Mr BREDHAUER (Cook) (4.52 p.m.): I rise in the House tonight to pay tribute to two former life members of the Australian Labor Party who have passed away in recent times. On 12 June 1995, I attended the funeral of William Douglas O'Donoghue from Mossman, known to most of us as Doug O'Donoghue. Doug O'Donoghue was born in Port Douglas on 17 September 1922. His parents worked a cane farm outside of Mossman. He attended school in Mossman.

In common with many children at the time, Doug left school at the age of 13 to work on the family farm. As well as working on the family farm, he worked for other farmers. While times were pretty tough, Doug was very adaptable and determined to succeed at every endeavour. His driving ambition also related to sporting pursuits. By the time he was 15, he was playing A Grade Rugby League. That was an interest that stayed with him right throughout his active life.

During his life, Doug sought travel and work in the big cities—Brisbane and Sydney—but he always returned to his home town of Mossman, which he loved dearly. In 1945, he met his wife Irene and several years later they were married. They had two daughters, Erica and Alexis. Doug worked in a number of different fields. He worked for the Main Roads Department from 1945 till 1947. He was a delivery driver for Jack and Newell. He worked as a cartage contractor for John Verri and Coy., and for a short period he operated one of the few taxis in the Mossman district.

In 1945, Doug became a foundation member of the Mossman Show Society, and he was a member of that society until he passed away earlier this year. In 1962, he joined the Mossman Mill, initially driving a cane harvester and cane trucks. In 1965, he commenced as a driver on the sugar trucks and continued as a driver until his retirement in 1987.

Doug was a man of firm principle and beliefs in the rights of the individual worker. He was active in his union and, during his time, had a number of confrontations with mill management. However, his strong stand often earned him the respect of his fellow workers and mill staff alike.

Doug was a member of the Australian Labor Party for many years, and in 1992 he was recognised with the award of life membership of the Australian Labor Party. The award was presented to Doug in Mossman by Tom Burns. In all the years that Doug was a member of the party, he never aspired to political office or to personal fame or credit; he was a real grassroots activist and campaigner for the Australian Labor Party. He was president of the Mossman branch for many years and he did a great service to the Australian Labor Party. That service needs to be recognised in this House.

I personally developed a very close friendship with Doug. He was a person who, even in his latter years after retirement, worked hard for organisations such as Meals on Wheels, Blue Nurses and the Pensioners Group. He was a real community-minded man and, as I mentioned earlier, was an active member of the Mossman Show Society until his death earlier this year.

I want to put on record my appreciation of the efforts of Doug O'Donoghue on behalf of the Labor Party and his support for me. I extend my sympathies to his family.

On 31 August 1995, I was asked to speak at the funeral of Henry Boland, a member of

the Gordonvale branch of the Labor Party for nearly 40 years. I knew Henry for only about 10 of those 40 years. I rang Tom Burns for some information on Henry. I remember Tom telling me stories about when he was working as an organiser for the Australian Labor Party in 1959. Apparently, he used to go and stay with Henry and his wife Mayse in Gordonvale. They were great supporters and bastions of the Labor Party.

Henry encouraged Warren Pitt to run for Parliament. He was immensely proud of Warren as a member and as a Minister. Henry would do just about anything. He used to run the goose club and the chook raffles, and he organised the May Day sports. He supported candidates in the seat of Mulgrave for many years, including those who ran in unsuccessful campaigns. In 1983, Tom Burns presented him with life membership. I am sure that members on this side of the House would like to join me in paying a debt of gratitude to Henry's wife Mayse and their family for the staunch efforts that Henry put in on behalf of the Australian Labor Party.

Doug O'Donoghue and Henry Boland were two life members of the Australian Labor Party who worked hard for their principles and for what they believed in. In my view, Henry deserve to be recognised.

Goodchap Street and Eumundi-Noosa Road Intersection

Mr DAVIDSON (Noosa) (4.57 p.m.): I would like to bring to the notice of this House a failed election promise of the Goss Labor Government. In the recent election campaign, a promise was made to the Good Shepherd Lutheran College on Eumundi-Noosa Road that, this year, an upgrading of an intersection, namely the Goodchap Street intersection, would be undertaken by the Department of Transport.

Many times in the past, I have raised this issue in the House and many times I have made requests to the Minister's office asking that the safety of this intersection be addressed. On Tuesday, 20 June, the Premier actually visited the electorate of Noosa. The Premier flew in to Noosa on the State Emergency Helicopter, announced the funding for this roundabout, flew back to Brisbane and announced the election. At the time, he must have thought that announcing this upgrading in the electorate of Noosa would give the Government some chance of winning the seat of Noosa, but as was proven on 15 July, it had no chance at all, with my margin being increased by 10 per cent.

The day of the Premier's visit to the school, a media release stated—

"In Noosaville to announce the Government's decision today, Premier Wayne Goss said Queensland Transport had been told to bring the project forward on its Roads Implementation Program and a roundabout would be the most likely solution. An engineering assessment of the intersection to determine the best option will be made shortly, with work to be completed early next year."

The intersection and roundabout that the Premier refers to—stating that funding should be provided by early next year—is on the main road into Noosa. The opening of the Sunshine Motorway has seen an increase of vehicle movement on that road from 7,000 vehicles a day to 18,000 to 19,000 vehicles. Approximately 600 students attend the school in question, and it is very hard for parents to access the school when dropping off or picking up their children. Many residents live in the area. Due to the high volume of traffic using the road every day, the road has become very unsafe.

After the election, I decided to follow through on all the promises made by the Government during the election campaign. I wrote to all the different departments, mentioning the promises that were made. After writing to the Department of Transport, I was advised by the District Director of Queensland Transport at Gympie that, whilst the funding for this road had been provided for, it would take in fact three or four months to design the roundabout. The letter I received in reply states—

"It is proposed that tenders will then be called in early January 1995, with the successful tenderer commencing work on site around the beginning of March, 1995. The project should then be completed by early June 1995, allowing for the usual delays due to wet weather. Favourable construction conditions could see the work completed a little earlier . . ."

The school community and residents in the immediate area, the motorists who use that road and the business people who operate businesses adjacent to that intersection are really annoyed that there has been a delay in the programming of those works. It is just not acceptable to the people of Noosa that the Premier would visit the electorate, announce the funding for the roundabout, announce that it would be completed early in the 1996 school

year, and then his own department would delay the process and schedule all those works for June or July next year. It has really upset the school community, and I bring this matter to the attention of the House to ensure that the Premier and the Minister for Transport are aware of the problems that have been raised in my electorate by people at the school, residents and business people.

From my experience with Queensland Transport, on many occasions work of this nature can run three, four or five months behind the scheduled time. That could mean that the roundabout may not be provided for in the 1996 school year, and that would take it into 1997. Next year, there will be a real increase in students at that school. I expect that another 150 to 200 students will be attending the school. I believe that for the safety of teachers, parents, students and residents, it is essential that the work commence this year and be completed as a matter of urgency for the safety of all those people.

Firefighters March, Fax

Mr SCHWARTEN (Rockhampton) (5.02 p.m.): After that attack on me by the honourable member for Western Downs, it is fortuitous that I was to speak during this debate. I note that he is no longer in the Chamber to listen to my reply; he skulked out the door. This is the first time that I have ever seen the document that I have in my hand; it was handed to me this afternoon. I can confirm that the fax number on the document is my electorate office fax number, but I have no knowledge of this document.

From the 20-odd years' experience that I have had in the trade union movement, I can smell a set-up when there is one. There is an internal conflict within the UFU, and it has been going on for some time. Obviously, the member for Western Downs wants to become embroiled in that particular game. I certainly do not. I have no interest in the UFU's current dispute; that is a matter for that union. I shall undertake to find out whether or not this document was sent from my office and, if so, by whom. If indeed it was sent from my office, it was not done with my authority.

Mr Bredhauer: Maybe the honourable member should have checked before he got up and started spraying it around.

Mr SCHWARTEN: The member for Western Downs should have had the decency to check with me and ask me man to man, but that is not in his repertoire; he cannot cop it on

the chin. He gets up here in cowards' castle and attacks me—

Mr Cooper: You're worried.

Mr SCHWARTEN: I am not worried at all. But I am getting tired of Opposition members continuing to use this place to defame people. I mentioned this yesterday. They do not bother to have the decency to check out stories before they get up and parrot them. I cannot wait for the time when we change the rules in this place so that some of those people are brought to order. Yesterday, there was another effort by the Leader of the Liberal Party, who stood in this place and, in some curious speech, talked about me. She said—

"Self-promoting Labor members, such as the member for Rockhampton, who turned blindly to the ALP propaganda manual when it came to public servants' working conditions . . ."

What a lot of rot! No member who sits on that side of the House has done more for public servants' conditions than I did in the five and a half years that I worked for the Teachers Union, when members opposite ran the education system. Mr Littleproud, who was the relevant Minister, presided over the lowest-paid teachers in Australia. And he has the hide to get up here and defame me!

That bleeding heart, the Leader of the Liberal Party, went on and on. At the end of that speech to which I referred, she could not resist the chance to say—

"That was considerably more than the number of people who endorsed the work of the member for Rockhampton in his previous capacity as a public servant who was politically appointed by the ALP."

Wrong! I was not a public servant; I was on the Minister's staff, just as honourable members opposite were. That is how it should be.

Mr Mackenroth: No, they appointed the public servants.

Mr SCHWARTEN: That is right. Sorry. They rorted them back into the public service.

Mr Mackenroth: We had to pay for them.

Mr SCHWARTEN: They rorted them back into the system.

The fact is that what Mrs Sheldon said is untrue, and Mr Cooper knows that, because he was one of the people who came to me to help him on a couple of occasions. If Mr Cooper is honest he will tell the people what I did. What about the fellow whose pub burnt

down? Mr Cooper came to see me about him. There are several other members on the other side of the Chamber—too numerous to mention—who have sought my help.

It is high time that members opposite took seriously their roles as members of Parliament and ceased the continued attacks on private citizens in this State. During the election campaign, Mr Borbidge turned these attacks into an art form. But he earned me a lot of sympathy votes, so he is welcome to come to Rockhampton any time he likes to bag me about working for the Government, and I encourage other members to do so. Members opposite should remember that, in this place, what goes around comes around; and if they continue those sorts of practices, they will stay in their rightful place.

Time expired.

Pork Imports

Mr HEALY (Toowoomba North) (5.07 p.m.): Earlier today, the Clerk read to the House a petition that I presented to the Parliament which urged the Government to help stop the importation of Canadian pig meat, which is affecting employment in the Australian pig industry because the import price is forcing local prices down and reducing the viability of locally operated pig producers and pork processors. In essence, the petition is seeking the support of the Queensland Government and, in particular, the Minister for Primary Industries to put pressure on his Federal counterparts to introduce labelling laws so that the public is aware of what they are eating—that is, either local or imported pork—and/or to introduce a tariff that makes imported pig meat the same price as locally produced pig meat.

Darling Downs Bacon Cooperative Association Limited, which is located in my electorate, is the major Queensland processor of ham, bacon and smallgoods with a turnover in excess of \$110m per annum. As a cooperative, it is owned by pig producers and its shareholders equate to approximately half of all pig producers in Queensland. It is also Toowoomba's largest private employer with in excess of 600 employees. Obviously, because of its size, it supports many other industries in Toowoomba and surrounding areas. The combined jobs of the shareholder producers, employees and support industries and their families are vital to Queensland's prosperity.

Pig producers have been battling high grain prices and the lack of water during the last four years of drought. Despite those

conditions, they have maintained high-quality produce and continued improvements in genetics and production efficiencies. As a processor, Darling Downs Bacon has invested just under \$6m over the past two years in upgrading its equipment. Despite that upgrading, it cannot compete with subsidised Canadian pork.

During the recent hearing on Canadian pork, it was indicated that only 2 per cent of total pork production was imported and, therefore, it would have no effect on producers or processors. As a result of subsidised grain prices, that pork, basically boned-out legs, sells at a price of \$4.25 per kilogram compared with the local cost of \$5.95. That 2 per cent of the total Australian market would not cause a problem if spread evenly among producers. However, when most of us support only Australian pig producers, the subsidised pork is left in the hands of a few processors who can reduce prices by up to 25 per cent, thereby destroying profitability for all.

The tabling of a petition in this Parliament signed by a broad cross-section of breeders, factory owners, workers, union members and the general public reveals a ground swell of opinion among many of my constituents, and, I suggest, many other concerned Queenslanders, about the increasing imports of Canadian pig meat. The likelihood that 15 per cent of Darling Downs pig industry shareholders will leave the industry this year as a result of these imported products is, at the very least, alarming.

I am confident that all honourable members are as concerned as I over this trend. Granted, the solution to this problem is not easy. We are constantly reminded by economists and Federal Treasury officials alike that the level playing field must be our goal. Yet this utopian environment is, at best, unrealistic. Many of our trading partners operate in markets that are excessively subsidised and protected. Why should Queensland farmers and producers be expected to exist in an environment that is quite obviously unfair and uncompetitive? We are constantly told by the Federal Government that best practice, efficiency targets and competitiveness must be our yardsticks, which are noble sentiments to say the least.

Federal coalition members are considering the reintroduction of some limited tariffs, or at least delaying the removal of existing tariffs over the medium term. This is a constructive policy and I congratulate members of the National and Liberal parties in Canberra, who are prepared to consider this

course of action when elected to Government next year. Any increases in price on Canadian pork products would without doubt serve the Queensland pork industry. Alternatively, the introduction of bold labelling requirements that let consumers know exactly where the pork products are coming from would constructively assist the local industry. I believe that it is imperative that our overseas trading activities are supported—not disadvantaged—by Federal Government actions.

I take this opportunity to congratulate the efforts of the Bacon Factories Union of Employees Queensland and Darling Downs Bacon Co-op for their combined efforts in promoting the petition tabled in this Parliament today. I seek the support of the people of Queensland in this matter also. To the mums and dads, the working people of this great State of ours, I say: let us accept our responsibility by supporting the campaigns to buy Australian-made products. Ultimately, we are all affected by the decline in Australian primary industries, and it is for that reason that we must try, where we possibly can, to pay those few extra cents to buy Queensland products whenever we can.

Honourable members, we all have a responsibility to ensure that our constituents remember this message. I hope that we return to our electorates to promote the virtues of "Queensland made and Queensland produced". I call upon the Minister for Primary Industries to actively liaise with the Federal Trade Minister and the Federal Minister for Primary Industries to ensure that the needs and concerns of the pork producers of Queensland are realised in an attempt to better protect and support the industry in this State.

Australian Occupation Forces in Japan

Mr WELLS (Murrumba) (5.12 p.m.): Next Sunday, Her Excellency the Governor will unveil and dedicate a memorial to commemorate the work of the men and women of the British Commonwealth Occupational Forces, the Australian servicemen and women who served in the occupation of Japan. This is belated recognition of the men and women of BCOF. In Melbourne, already there is a plaque in the war memorial recognising the work of the veterans of BCOF, but nowhere else in Australia, to my knowledge, has that recognition yet been accorded. This wrong is about to be righted and they will have a plaque, along with all those other men and

women of Australia who were engaged in active service on behalf of this country.

I use the term "active service" advisedly, because those veterans who served in Japan did serve on active service. For years they have had their contribution discounted by some sources on the basis that when they served the war was already over—that they were, in some sense, not in combat—but the truth was the very reverse. When they went to serve this country, they went into a hostile environment. They went onto the very land of the enemy. They were in enemy territory. They could have been shot at; they could have been assassinated; they could have been ambushed. They did not know that they were not going to be. The circumstances proved to be otherwise, but they could not have known that.

They not only served; they served also by example. It was the example of the Australian servicemen and women that had to effect the reconciliation of the Japanese people to a whole new form of government. I mention also that, when they served, they served in a radioactive environment. Many of them arrived in Hiroshima weeks after the atom bomb was exploded. They drank the water; they

breathed the air; they ate the rice and the vegetables that were grown in the area; and when they grew old they contracted mysterious illnesses and, typically, they died of freak medical events.

Add to that the stress which these soldiers of Australia experienced from working in the circumstances of a nightmare. Not for them the kind of experience of going to work which the rest of us have; not for them the experience of driving past pleasant green fields or past garden suburbs. When they went to work, they had to traverse the carcass of a murdered city. When they were at work, they stood at the dawn of the nuclear era and they stood at the very point of that dawn. When they did that, they were serving this country, so the recognition which they will receive on Sunday is a just recognition—but a belated recognition. I wish them well in their struggle for complete recognition to be placed on a par with other servicemen and women. I think that there would be no member of this Parliament who would differ from me if I said that this Parliament congratulates them on this recognition and wishes them well.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 5.16 p.m.