

## THURSDAY, 18 APRIL 1996

Mr SPEAKER (Hon. N. J. Turner, Nicklin) read prayers and took the chair at 9.30 a.m.

### PAPER

The following paper was laid on the table—

Minister for Health (Mr Horan)—

Scope of Nursing Practice— Discussion Paper.

### MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

#### Government Computer System

**Hon. R. E. BORBIDGE** (Surfers Paradise—Premier) (9.31 a.m.), by leave: Yesterday afternoon, after the Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Racing had detailed to the Parliament certain abuses of a computer by staff of the former Minister for Police and Corrective Services in his then ministerial office, there was an invasion of the Minister's computer system. Files referred to by the Minister in his statement yesterday were deleted from the system. There is currently concern that files belonging to the current Minister may have been accessed and deleted.

There was no reference to the Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Racing before this action was taken. There was no reference to the Minister for Public Works and Housing, from whose department the action was taken. There was no reference to the Deputy Premier and Treasurer, who is responsible for the Ministerial Services Branch, which was also apparently involved in this decision. The Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Racing became aware of this action last night after officers again sought to access files referred to yesterday.

**An Opposition member** interjected.

**Mr BORBIDGE:** The member will learn something.

It was subsequently established—and this should cause concern for members on both sides of the House—that the missing files were deleted by the Office Systems Management unit of CITEC on the basis of what has been described as a collective decision by CITEC and the Ministerial Services Branch to protect material which was apparently judged by those agencies to not be the property of the current Government.

This extraordinary action raises a number of serious questions. The first is the nature of the decision making itself, which is unacceptable. I have today instructed the immediately concerned Ministers—the Deputy Premier and Treasurer and the Minister for Public Works and Housing—to advise that the Office Systems Management unit manager of CITEC and the Director of the Ministerial Services Branch are requested to go on leave immediately pending a full investigation of the circumstances surrounding the extraordinary action of their agencies. Secondly—

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr BORBIDGE:** I wonder what members opposite had to do with this!

Secondly, and very much related, is the question of the security of computer systems within ministerial offices—within my office and the Treasurer's office and, indeed, throughout Government. I make the point that it has now been revealed that CITEC, as part of the same decision with the Ministerial Services Branch, has taken it upon itself to access not once but twice all the ministerial computers of the current Government.

A computer system which is open to such unilateral tampering is an extremely dangerous system. A system in which people may reach into a Minister's office—into any Government office—and excise data at will is a system in which data can be viewed at will and altered at will. It is obviously a system capable of the most serious abuse. An obvious example is the ability to intrude into computers within the Premier's office, the Cabinet office, the Treasurer's office, the Police Minister's office and the Attorney-General's office. It may also mean that there could be access to any State Government computer, including sensitive material such as health files, financial transactions and other confidential data. Certainly, via the ministerial and departmental systems, there could be access to Cabinet submissions.

As I indicated earlier, I am advised that, further to the invasion of the Police Minister's computer system, CITEC has taken it upon itself to carry out similar deletions in relation to all ministerial offices. That advice was provided by CITEC yesterday evening after it had visited the ministerial computer system. I understand that subsequently there has been an offer to reconstitute the files deleted from the ministerial offices. Not good enough!

I regret to advise the House that I have grave reservations about the security and the integrity of the State Government computer system that we have inherited. It is a system

open to abuse and overall control of Government processes, and this Government will not tolerate it. Therefore, in addition to my advice today to the most concerned Ministers in relation to leave for two senior officers, the Government will carry out an independent audit of the security of Government computer systems to reduce the potential for tampering. I will advise the House further of developments in regard to this course of action.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

**Ms R. Matchett**

**Hon K. R. LINGARD** (Beaudesert—Minister for Families, Youth and Community Care) (9.37 a.m.), by leave: Yesterday in the Parliament, I gave details of a gift of \$91,000 given by the ALP Government to remove Ruth Matchett and replace her with Jacki Byrne. I table today details of that transaction, which show a payment of \$91,750 which was clearly a gift given to Ruth Matchett when she finished as director-general.

When the payment of \$91,750 was instructed to be made, quite rightly the public servants involved—the pay clerks—questioned it. In response to questions to bodies such as the PSMC, the pay clerks received this statement—

"It has been advised that the Premier was feeling generous, and it was his decision in respect of the 20 years of service that Ruth be afforded the termination of the contract."

The Premier was feeling generous, so he decided to pay Ruth Matchett \$91,750 to remove her and replace her with the AWU person, Jacki Byrne.

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

**Mr LINGARD:** I will continue and I will tell members the entire details.

Let us have a look at how Ruth Matchett's contract expired. Ruth Matchett was given a three-year contract to expire in June 1995. That contract was extended by three and a bit weeks to end on 13 July 1995—a fair move due to the fact that an election was to be held on 15 July. But let us look at what happened immediately the ALP won Government on 15 July and Ruth Matchett was to be replaced by Jacki Byrne and Anne Warner was to be replaced by an AWU person. By 21 July, nothing had been done and the ALP needed to give Ruth Matchett a gift. In working out how to give the gift, the then Premier, Wayne Goss, the person who supposedly came to

power on the white horse of accountability, wrote to Ruth Matchett and said—

"Dear Ruth,

I now advise that I have determined that a further one month's extension be approved until 13 August 1995."

Twenty days. He continued—

"I have come to this decision on the understanding that you are agreeable that this extension also provides the final termination date of your contract and that your Minister, Anne Warner, is fully aware of your intended voluntary departure."

It is those words, "of your intended voluntary departure", that I emphasise. As all members know, if one's contract is terminated involuntarily, one is open to receive severance pay and a much larger superannuation.

Let us examine what happened on 21 July. The then Premier reaches that agreement with Ruth Matchett: "You are going on 13 August; it is voluntary; and you are about to leave." However, the ALP had to work out how to pay Ruth Matchett a gift of \$91,750, because the pay officers were saying to the PSMC, "This is not right." The Crown Solicitor was saying, "This is not right." So what had to be done? Within six or seven days of the then Premier's giving that letter to Ruth Matchett, the then Premier and Ruth Matchett signed a very special agreement on 3 August, which was seen to be a termination. He had given her an extension of 20 days to 13 August so she could be paid severance payments. So she could be given a gift of \$91,750, the then Premier arrives at a special variation of contract, which was basically an agreement between Ruth Matchett and the then Premier that her services were terminated—on 3 August, seven or eight days after the contract had been signed, and seven or eight days before she was to fall over naturally on 13 August. That was supposedly the agreement to give her \$91,750. She was supposedly terminated by the Government, and she did not leave voluntarily. I will table the letter from the then Premier which states, "You will depart voluntarily." That is what the then Premier did to give her that payment of \$91,750.

I also remind members of Parliament that that was not legal. The Crown Solicitor, Mr O'Shea, referred to that matter and said that Ms Matchett would not be entitled to severance payments under her contract of employment and it would seem for superannuation purposes her cessation of

employment would not be regarded as an involuntary termination.

Against all of those recommendations, against the recommendations of the Crown Solicitor, against the fact that the then Premier signed a document with her seven or eight days earlier giving her an extension of 20 days to her contract, seven or eight days before her contract fell over, the then Premier gave her what was supposedly a termination so that she was entitled, supposedly legally, to \$91,750 of taxpayers' money, simply to put an AWU person in the job instead of a Socialist Left person.

### **MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

#### **Queensland Racing Industry**

**Hon. T. R. COOPER** (Crows Nest—Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Racing) (9.42 a.m.), by leave: Two weeks ago I announced changes to the various boards and committees entrusted with controlling and overseeing the racing industry in Queensland. I table a list of all appointments to those various statutory boards. The changes were made in the context of the industry's ongoing disunity, and a loss of confidence from within, which has damaged and marred the activities of a sector once so robust and spirited.

While I do not denigrate the job done by the past boards, there were undoubtedly some among them who were straight political appointments. No-one could say that about the new board members, nor could they question their integrity and ability to do the job. They have all been appointed after wide consultation with, and on the advice of, the racing industry. These new appointments will, I believe, restore some harmony and cohesion to the ranks of the industry, and help repair the legacy of disrupted management and bitterness left by the previous Government.

That will be part of their job, and I wish I could hand it all to them and say, "That is that." Unfortunately, since assuming office some seven weeks ago, I found the industry faced not only a crisis of confidence in its administration but a diabolical financial fracas as well. Under its former Minister, the honourable member for Bundamba, Mr Gibbs, the sport of kings in Queensland most assuredly became the sport of the prince and the paupers. While the prince anointed a chosen few to sit at his feet, the core and the grassroots of racing in this State crumbled. While he jetted off overseas on first-class ministerial tours, racing industry funds

dwindled, blown out on ill-conceived and poorly managed projects that left the heart of the industry dead.

The former Minister supported a grant of half a million dollars to refurbish the elite gentlemen's club, Tattersall's, while the safety of jockeys and horses was being daily compromised by broken guide rails, damaged tracks and substandard safety fencing. I will shortly table a letter that states that. That was at a time when the said gentlemen's club had not even submitted an application for such funding. Where was the then Minister's alleged concern for the ordinary person, the worker, and the rank-and-file punter when it came to racing?

The parlous state of the Racing Development Fund that we inherited from the previous administration will surprise few people in the industry who witnessed the lavish but highly selective style of the former Minister. The \$11m reserve with which the fund began the 1995-96 financial year will, after commitments before it, be reduced to just \$4m after recurrent expenditure is withdrawn. I table a document outlining the status of the Racing Development Fund.

The honourable member for Bundamba can hardly defend or excuse this because it is comparatively less than the amount he found in the fund in 1990, and which he then decried as inadequate. In fact, on 4 October that year in this place, he said that with \$3.6m in the RDF, "racing simply cannot be administered in that way". Six years later, and after inflation is considered, he left the fund in a worse position than he found it. I could no better than echo and reinforce his words of 1990—"racing simply cannot be administered in that way".

After all the filibustering, all the rhetoric about racing and its future, about honest dealing and financial accountability, the RDF is depleted to the point of exhaustion. The management policies of the previous Government saw a sharp rise in the level of recurrent funding commitments, and in typical Labor Government style the policy of spending more than is earned was addressed by their refinancing the racing industry debt to cover excessive expenditure. Much of that chaos was caused because the previous Government undertook to switch the emphasis of the RDF away from its original and intended purpose of making capital works grants to making it a slush fund for prize money and pet project funding. Whereas many clubs gratefully accepted this switch and the dollars that came with it, it became all too easy for the fund to be used in pork-barrelling exercises

until it was so depleted that the safety and security of racing missed out altogether. That simply is not good enough.

Pre-1990, the target had been to repay the debt by the year 2000, but Labor was forced by late last year to defer debt principal repayments for two years and extend the term of the industry debt by a further five years to the year 2005. That is yet another ALP cop-out to extend debt into the future. That disastrous financial legacy will result in severe limitations on the options this Government can consider for implementing much-needed infrastructure development and remedying formerly neglected areas of racing.

When that is combined with a forecast that the growth of TAB distribution payments to race clubs will be sluggish, principally due to increasing competition from other forms of gambling, with the accompanying levelling out of growth in Racing Development Fund revenues from the TAB, one can see what a challenge the Government is facing. How do we fund our capital works? How do we prioritise the \$11.4m in applications now before the RDF when only \$4m is left in the coffers? Do we tell a regional race club that, no, it cannot have its track repaired, it cannot have its swabbing area upgraded, because an elite gentlemen's club in Brisbane has been promised half a million dollars for their club rooms?

I do not in any way denigrate Tattersall's and the committee which runs it. They have every right to apply for funding. However, I do question the morality of a Government which gives priority to a gentlemen's club refurbishment over safety in racing—especially when the gentlemen's club had not even formally asked for the money. How does the honourable member for Bundamba defend that outrageous action? This Government is committed to ensuring a more equitable and justifiable distribution of funding from the Racing Development Fund. Advances from the now severely limited fund will only be approved for clearly justifiable projects which benefit as many industry participants as possible, and which maintain the security, integrity and safety of the industry now and into the future.

At this point I want to clarify my intentions regarding QRIS, the Queensland Racing Industry Incentive Scheme. As honourable members will recall, I raised concerns about the operation of the scheme with the CJC while in Opposition. The CJC had recommended that a comprehensive audit of QRIS be conducted from the time of its

inception to mid-May 1995, and the financial controller of the Queensland Principal Club endorsed that recommendation. However, that did not happen. The audit which was conducted, after the failure of Mr John Needham of QRIS to cooperate, covered only the period from July 1994 to May 1995. I still await a reply. It did not cover the period prior to July 1994 despite, as I say, the recommendations of the CJC and the QPC financial controller.

Perhaps surprisingly the former Minister could see nothing wrong with any decision to snub these recommendations for a comprehensive audit, and I can only wonder why. However, I want to reiterate here that QRIS is here to stay. I have no problem with the QPC's administration of QRIS. Indeed, the only time that I am concerned about is the period up until the QPC took control. What I want to do is take a close look at it to determine whether the scheme can be enhanced so that the industry as a whole can benefit from a wider spread of the \$3m that this Government contributes to it. None of the stakeholders should have anything to fear from that.

This Government will seek to redress the existing difficulties in the racing industry with a widespread use of industry-based experience. The Totalisator Administration Board of Queensland, the Greyhound Racing Authority, the Queensland Harness Racing Board, the trustees of Albion Park and the trustees of Eagle Farm are key bodies which will characterise the Government's commitment to restoring harmony to the industry. These boards need the services of individuals with diverse backgrounds in the industry and who are representative of it. The structure and role of these bodies are essential links to wider industry consultation and input. Now that the new boards are in place, the industry can go forward in the way we all know that it can. With careful management and some strategic thinking, the financial problems now facing the industry will be corrected and safety and fairness returned to racetracks all over the State. Racing is a dynamic and respected sport and we intend to restore to it the confidence it once had.

## **MINISTERIAL STATEMENT** **Queensland Health**

**Hon. M. J. HORAN** (Toowoomba South—Minister for Health) (9.51 a.m.), by leave: The failure of Labor in the 1995 State election was in no small way due to the failure of its system of regional health authorities.

Queensland's many small, community-driven hospital boards were centralised into 13 regions, creating an extra layer of management with little or no clinical involvement. Community involvement in health management was decimated and became remote. I am pleased to advise the House that Cabinet approved last Wednesday a new structure for Queensland Health, which restores genuine community input and focuses the department on its fundamental purpose: the health of Queenslanders.

Prior to 1989, health professionals and administrators well knew the twelve words from the Act which said it all—

"The function of the board shall be the treatment of the sick."

This focus was lost—not by those at the hospital bed, nor by those serving the public in community health, but by the organisation as a whole under the guidance of Ministers whose objectives had more to do with social engineering than with the delivery of health services. The 39 health districts approved by Cabinet under 38 health councils and the Mater's board of governors will be broad in scope, recognising the commitment of this Government to integrated community and hospital services and to the importance of preventive and population health. They will provide genuine community input into the planning, delivery, monitoring and evaluation of hospital and community-based services. They will also initiate minor capital works programs and be represented on the selection panels for senior district appointments.

For the information of honourable members, I lay upon the table of the House a copy of the paper "Rebuilding Queensland Health" and a schedule detailing the boundaries of the new district health services. I seek leave for the schedule to be incorporated into *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

#### DESCRIPTION OF DISTRICT HEALTH SERVICES

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No.—District Health Service—Description of District Health Service

1—Atherton Tablelands—Shire of Atherton, Shire of Croydon, Shire of Eacham, Shire of Etheridge, Shire of Herberton, Shire of Mareeba (excluding Division 4 east of the Oakey/Blackwater Creeks).

2—Banana—Shire of Banana

3—Bayside—City of Brisbane (so much of the City as is south of the Brisbane River and east of the Gateway Arterial Road), Shire of Redland.

4—Bowen—Shire of Bowen, Shire of Burdekin.

5—Bundaberg—City of Bundaberg, Shire of Burnett, Shire of Isis, Shire of Kolan, Shire of Miriam Vale, Shire of Perry.

6—Cairns—City of Cairns (excluding Division 1 but including the Towns of Gordonvale and Alooomba), Shire of Cook (that portion of the Shire south and east of a line from Cape Flattery due west to the Normanby River then due south to the boundary of Mareeba Shire - includes Cooktown, Hopevale, Wujal Wujal & Laura), Shire of Douglas, Division 4 of Shire of Mareeba (east of the Oakey/Blackwater Creeks including the Towns of Koah and Kuranda).

7—Cape York—Shire of Aurukun, Shire of Cook (which is that portion of the Shire north and west of the line defined in the Cairns District above), Shire of Carpentaria (exclusive of that part which is south of the Gilbert River and containing the Karumba Outpatients Clinic and the Normanton Hospital), Town of Weipa.

8—Central Highlands—Shire of Bauhinia, that part of the Shire of Duaringa which is west of a line joining the towns of Woorabinda and Duaringa excluding these towns, Shire of Emerald, Shire of Peak Downs (excluding the town of Tieri)

9—Central West—Shire of Aramac, Shire of Barcaldine, Shire of Barcoo, Shire of Blackall, Shire of Boulia, Shire of Diamantina, Shire of Ilfracombe, Shire of Isisford, Shire of Jericho, Shire of Longreach, Shire of Tambo, Shire of Winton.

10—Charleville—Shire of Bulloo, Shire of Murweh, Shire of Paroo, Shire of Quilpie.

11—Charters Towers—City of Charters Towers, Shire of Dalrymple, Shire of Flinders, Shire of Richmond.

12—Gladstone—Shire of Calliope, City of Gladstone.

13—Gold Coast—City of Gold Coast but excludes that part of the City which is north of the Coomera River.

14—Gympie—Shire of Cooloola.

15—Hervey Bay—Maryborough—City of Hervey Bay, City of Maryborough, Shire of Tiara, Shire of Woocoo.

16—Innisfail—Shire of Cardwell, Shire of Johnstone, Division 1 of City of Cairns (except for the towns of Gordonvale and Alooomba).

17—Logan—Beaudesert—City of Logan, Shire of Beaudesert, that part of the City of Gold Coast which is north of the Coomera River and includes Beenleigh.

18—Mackay —Shire of Broadsound (the Coastal part of the Shire which is east of the Connors Range), City of Mackay, Shire of Mirani, Shire of Sarina, Shire of Whitsunday,

19—Moranbah—Shire of Belyando, Shire of Broadsound (the Hinterland part of the Shire which is west of the Connors Range), Shire of Nebo, that part of the Shire of Peak Downs which is the town of Tieri.

20—Mt Isa—Shire of Burke, Shire of Cloncurry, Shire of McKinlay, Shire of Mornington, City of Mt Isa, that part of the Shire of Carpentaria (the southern part) which includes the Karumba Outpatients Clinic and the Normanton Hospital.

21—North Burnett—Shire of Biggenden, Shire of Eidsvold, Shire of Gayndah, Shire of Monto, Shire of Mundubbera.—

22—Northern Downs—Shire of Chinchilla, Town of Dalby, Shire of Murilla, Shire of Tara, Shire of Taroom, Shire of Wambo.

23—Redcliffe-Caboolture—Shire of Caboolture, Shire of Kilcoy, City of Redcliffe.

24—Rockhampton —Shire of Fitzroy, Shire of Livingstone, Shire of Mount Morgan, City of Rockhampton, that part of the Shire of Duaringa which is east of a line joining the towns of Woorabinda and Duaringa

25—Roma—Shire of Balonne, Shire of Bendemere, Shire of Booringa, Shire of Bungil, Town of Roma, Shire of Waroo.

26—South Burnett—Shire of Kilkivan, Shire of Kingaroy, Shire of Murgon, Shire of Nanango, Shire of Wondai.

27—Southern Downs—Shire of Cambooya, Shire of Clifton, Town of Goondiwindi, Shire of Inglewood, Shire of Millmerran, Shire of Pittsworth, Shire of Stanthorpe, Shire of Waggamba, City of Warwick.

28—Sunshine Coast —City of Caloundra, Shire of Maroochy, Shire of Noosa.

29—The Prince Charles Hospital and District—So much of the City of Brisbane as is north of the Brisbane River, Shire of Pine Rivers, Halwyn Centre, but excludes the Royal Brisbane Hospital, the Royal Women's Hospital, the Royal Children's Hospital, Keperra Hospital, the Queensland Radium Institute, integrated adult mental health services associated with the Royal Brisbane Hospital, and Brisbane Dental Hospital/oral health services.

30—The Queen Elizabeth II Hospital and District—City of Brisbane (so much of the City as is south of the Brisbane River and west of the Gateway Arterial Road but excludes the Wacol Hospitals complex, the Princess Alexandra Hospital Complex and the Mater Hospitals complex).

31—Toowoomba—Shire of Crow's Nest, Shire of Gatton, Shire of Jondaryan, Shire of Rosalie, City of Toowoomba.

32—Torres—Shire of Torres.

33—Townsville—Shire of Hinchinbrook, City of Thuringowa, City of Townsville.

34—West Moreton—Shire of Boonah, Shire of Esk, City of Ipswich, Shire of Laidley, so much of the City of Brisbane as is east of the Brisbane River and which constitutes the Wacol Hospitals Complex being certain land excluded from the Queen Elizabeth II Hospital and Health Service.

No.—Hospital —Description

35—Mater—Mater Hospitals Complex, Brisbane

36—Princess Alexandra—Princess Alexandra Hospital, plus integrated adult mental health services for the geographical area defined The Queen Elizabeth II Hospital and District

37—Royal Children's—Royal Children's Hospital, plus all community child health services, including child mental health services, for the geographical area defined as the Prince Charles Hospital and District.

38—Royal Brisbane —Royal Brisbane Hospital, Queensland Radium Institute, Keperra Hospital, Brisbane Dental Hospital, plus oral health services for the geographical area defined as The Prince Charles Hospital and District, and plus integrated adult mental health services associated with the Royal Brisbane Hospital,

39—Royal Women's—Royal Women's Hospital and women's health services for the geographical area defined as The Prince Charles Hospital and District.,

**Mr HORAN:** Corporate office, too, will change to target the delivery of health services to Queenslanders. I know that many in corporate office look forward to working on health as opposed to the social policy games they have been forced to play for six long years. This reorganisation complements my commitment to rebuilding in the Department of Health a politically independent, career public service free to deliver frank and fearless advice to the Executive Government.

Two major divisions will encompass most of the staff of Corporate Office, namely the Health Services Division and the Planning and Systems Division. The Health Services Division will be responsible for direct health service delivery issues and will provide a range of support services. This includes line management of district health services, public health, pathology and scientific services. The Planning and Systems Division will assist the Government in setting broad health priorities. It will identify and develop services and provide corporate infrastructure support. The whole of the new structure will be underpinned by service agreements between the Planning and Systems Division and the District Health Services. These agreements will be structured in program management terms and will link expenditure to program commitments.

For six years, Queensland Health has paid lip-service, and little more, to this Parliament's demands for program accountability. Large sums of money voted by this Assembly to critical purposes, such as mental health, have been diverted and consumed by other programs. This will no longer happen. Rebuilding Queensland Health

includes restoring public accountability, and this is our commitment to this Parliament.

Finally, it needs to be said again that the failure of regionalisation was a failure of its reckless and ambitious political overlords, and not of the 200 to 300 regional office staff who did their best to improve the health and wellbeing of Queenslanders in spite of regionalisation. I have given clear and unambiguous directions to my department that these staff are to be treated with the utmost dignity and integrity. They are to be, and have been, fully informed of the processes of change and will be assisted at an individual level in the transition to the new structure. I hope that these changes will bring opportunity and success for many.

The function of Queensland Health is, once again, the treatment of the sick, the prevention of illness and the promotion of health—as it always should have been—and so it will remain under the administration of this Government.

### **MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

#### **Convergence of General and Vocational Education**

**Hon. R. J. QUINN** (Merrimac—Minister for Education) (9.55 a.m.), by leave: In late 1995, the previous Government made a number of decisions regarding the convergence of general and vocational education for the Years 11 and 12 curriculums in Queensland schools.

The Board of Senior Secondary School Studies, under delegation from the Vocational Education Training and Employment Commission, is to take responsibility for managing the convergence of general and vocational education in the senior school curriculum. Under this plan, vocational education elements are to be embedded in existing and new board subjects, which contribute to students' overall position scores at the end of Year 12. As well, hundreds of board-registered subjects, that is, subjects which do not count towards calculation of OP scores, are to be streamlined into approximately 20 and elements of vocational education are to be embedded in these board-registered subjects over the next several years.

During 1996, my colleague the Minister for Training and Industrial Relations and I have become concerned that this model for the convergence of vocational and general education in Years 11 and 12 needs to be extended and refined. In particular, there are

concerns amongst a number of education groups, including teachers and industry training representatives across the State, that this model will not adequately cater for all post-compulsory students, including those in special schools. As a result of this, my colleague the Minister for Training and Industrial Relations and I have agreed to bring the parties together to develop an appropriate framework incorporating principles and options for access to, and participation in, education and training for all school students of post-compulsory age.

We have arranged that the representatives of peak groups, such as the Board of Senior Secondary School Studies, the Department of Education, the Vocational Education Training and Employment Commission, the Department of Training and Industrial Relations, the Catholic Education Commission and the Association of Independent Schools of Queensland meet to begin this collaborative process. Within the next week, a task force will be established with terms of reference which require them to develop an agreed framework and to report to my ministerial colleague and myself at the beginning of August.

The terms of reference of the task force will ensure that appropriate consultation and participation occurs during this collaborative work and will, at least, involve teachers, parents, industry training authorities, relevant unions, universities and employers. The task force will be headed by an independent and eminent chair.

It is the intention of my ministerial colleague and I that options for access to, and participation in, education and training be developed for Queensland schools, which builds on the very good work that many people over recent years, including teachers in schools, have already done. It is also our intention that the framework developed by the task force will ensure that the curriculum caters for all post-compulsory students and that the valued pathways are available to all students at the end of their senior schooling, whether they wish to progress to further education, training or work.

### **MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

#### **Workers' Compensation Inquiry**

**Hon. S. SANTORO** (Clayfield—Minister for Training and Industrial Relations) (10 a.m.), by leave: I wish to advise the Parliament and the people of Queensland that the Inquiry into Workers' Compensation & Related Matters in

Queensland, being conducted by Mr Jim Kennedy, is progressing well and I have no doubt that it will meet the proposed reporting deadline of 30 June. Newspaper advertisements calling for submissions by 30 April 1996 were published around the State in mid-March. Mr Kennedy also has written to hundreds of individuals and organisations seeking their input to the inquiry.

The inquiry has provided information to stakeholders on many aspects of the operations of Queensland's workers' compensation system, together with other material, to assist stakeholders in preparing their submissions. I am advised that discussions have already taken place between Mr Kennedy and a wide range of business, union, community and other stakeholder groups and individuals in Queensland. Discussions also have been held with workers' compensation authorities in other States. Mr Kennedy has also formed advisory and consultative committees to ensure that a strong flow of information, comment, debate and analysis is generated among key stakeholders. Arrangements have been made for a series of public hearings to be held in regional centres across the State. Media releases and newspaper advertisements will publicise these meetings.

Mr Kennedy has maintained a strongly independent attitude towards the process of the inquiry and he has been given full access to both the Workers' Compensation and Workplace Health and Safety Divisions of my department. Mr Kennedy has repeatedly stated that he intends to maintain a thoroughly inclusive and consultative process during the entire inquiry period, and is continuing the process of exhaustive consultation on a daily basis. I invite all honourable members to maintain an interest in the progress of the inquiry.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Residential Tenancies Authority

**Hon. R. T. CONNOR** (Nerang—Minister for Public Works and Housing) (10.01 a.m.), by leave: The Residential Tenancies Authority, which is within the orbit of my ministerial responsibility, has drawn to my attention a situation which greatly concerns me, which is the matter of bond money lodged with the authority because of the statutory requirement under the authority's Act. For the great majority of bond money lodged, the system operates exactly as it was intended to—the money is lodged and held by the authority against the potential liability to repair

damage to rental property. There are adequate provisions for dispute resolution by arbitration, with an appeal process.

However, my concerns stem from the fact that there is an accumulating fund of money which the authority has been unable to return to the tenants who lodged it. This fund has now grown to an amount of almost \$400,000—an amount which the authority is unable to return to its rightful owners because it does not know where to send the money.

The authority's normal operating procedure for unclaimed bonds is to make out a cheque for the amount owed once a tenancy has been finalised, and post it to the person who paid it at their last known address. In most cases, obviously, the cheque finds the person because it is forwarded via mail redirection through Australia Post, or by the new tenants or owners who have been given a forwarding address by the former tenant. The problem arises when there is no mail redirection or forwarding address, and when the tenant involved does not, of his or her own initiative, contact the RTA for the return of the bond money. This results in some cheques for bond refunds never being cashed because they are simply returned to the authority marked "Return to Sender."

As a result, the authority is stuck with bond money which it would love to return to its rightful owners, but is unable to because it has no way of contacting the former tenants. This is now a lotto-win sized problem, involving 3,004 former tenants who paid rental bonds dating back to 1991. Together they could hold a huge champagne celebration with the proceeds of more than \$386,000 owed to them. The largest amount of unclaimed bond money is \$1,890. I am surprised that so many people have either forgotten to cash their cheques from the authority, or have not checked to see why they have not received a refund of their bond money. Unfortunately, the RTA can only send notices of rental bond claims and cheques to a tenant's last known address.

In addition, until now the Residential Tenancies Authority has given publicity to unclaimed bond moneys through localised media releases. Trying to extend the effort to match the unclaimed money with its rightful owners, I have asked the RTA to advertise the fact that it is holding these moneys, and that people who consider they are owed it should contact the RTA. Tenants whose cheques have been misplaced and have not been cashed have only to contact the RTA and they will be given a new cheque. People unsure

about whether they are owed money should contact the authority immediately.

## NOTICES OF MOTION

### Economic Stagnation

**Mr BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—Leader of the Opposition) (10.04 a.m.): I give notice that I shall move—

"That this House—

- (a) is deeply concerned that the Treasurer's capital works freeze and a lack of positive initiatives by the Government is causing economic stagnation, loss of business confidence and loss of jobs, and
- (b) believes that the Treasurer should make public all those parts of the major treasury briefing she received on becoming Treasurer which could be considered positive by the business community."

### Environmental Protection (Interim) Amendment Regulation

**Mr WELFORD** (Everton) (10.05 a.m.): I give notice that I shall move—

"That the Environmental Protection (Interim) Amendment Regulation (No. 3 1996 (Subordinate Legislation No. 43 of 1996) tabled in the Parliament on 2 April 1996, be disallowed."

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### Opposition Office Equipment

**Mr BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—Leader of the Opposition) (10.05 a.m.): I wish to raise a major concern about the theft of equipment from the Opposition offices in Parliament House. Officers of the Premier's Department have, since the Premier vacated the Opposition offices on 21 February, been undertaking an extensive audit of equipment allocated to the office of the former Leader of the Opposition and found a substantial amount of equipment missing, including laptop computers, facsimile machines, typewriters, Pagemaker equipment and a Scanjet printer interface. The equipment concerned, which disappeared from the former Opposition office during the hurried exit of both leaders and the staff into the Executive Building, and some also held in the secretive Margaret Street premises of the National Party, is being sought by the Premier's Department. Those officials have only till

11.30 a.m. today to locate the missing equipment or replace it at public expense.

What action is the Premier going to take to retrieve this expensive equipment provided to him, Mrs Sheldon and Mr Lingard by the taxpayers of Queensland? I table for the information of the House a list of material missing entitled, "Assets not Currently Found". I also table two letters to the Premier in which I said that I was amazed when we moved into the Opposition offices previously vacated by him that a huge amount of equipment had been inappropriately taken by his staff. We are still working with officers of the Premier's Department to try to recover the equipment. I table all of those documents.

This morning, we saw a disgraceful performance in this House in which the Premier endeavoured to intimidate honest public servants. He knew what he was doing: he was trying to send a signal to these officers of his department not to investigate the equipment he stole. That is what he was saying: "Do not investigate the equipment I stole." Because he is a thief, the Premier is prepared to persecute and sack anyone.

**Mr BORBIDGE:** I rise to a point of order. The suggestion that I have stolen equipment is objectionable and I ask that it be withdrawn. The Leader of the Opposition should not lie!

**Mr SPEAKER:** The Premier has found the remarks that the Leader of the Opposition has made objectionable.

**Mr BEATTIE:** The one that he was a thief? I am prepared to withdraw any inferences that the Premier found to be offensive.

**Mr BORBIDGE:** I rise to a point of order. I ask the Leader of the Opposition to unequivocally withdraw the statement that I stole equipment.

**Mr SPEAKER:** That is quite clear. The Premier has found offensive the remark that he stole. I ask the member to withdraw.

**Mr BEATTIE:** I withdraw, and in doing so I rise to a point of order. In his remarks, the Premier made reference to matters that I find offensive and I seek for them to be withdrawn.

**Mr SPEAKER:** No point of order.

**Mr BEATTIE:** Mr Speaker, he made a reference—

**Mr SPEAKER:** I have ruled that there is no point of order. The member should take his point at that particular time, if he made any remarks. The member did not do so.

### PRIVILEGE

#### Mr Speaker's Ruling on Point of Order

**Mr BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—Leader of the Opposition) (10.08 a.m.): I rise on a point of privilege. With respect, Mr Speaker, you sat me down before I had an opportunity to do so. The Premier has made a reference which slurs my character and which is untrue.

**Mr SPEAKER:** When?

**Mr BEATTIE:** During his point of order. I am entitled under the rules to have it withdrawn.

**Mr SPEAKER:** State it, please. What did he say, please?

**Mr BEATTIE:** Mr Speaker, can I ask that you seek reference from the Clerk. I fail to see why I should have to repeat his lies.

**Mr SPEAKER:** I rule that there is no point of order.

### PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

#### Government Attack on Public Servants

**Mr ELDER** (Capalaba—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (10.08 a.m.): This morning, we saw an outrageous attack on departmental officers going about their jobs, which was, of course, clearing computers. Today, the Government has gone back to the politics of fear, the politics of arrogance, the politics of intimidation. The Government has said clearly to anyone who works in the public service, "Watch out, you are next. Whatever you do, make sure you do the right thing by us or you are history!"

Not one action mentioned this morning was improper or illegal—not one. Let me tell the House about the action of members opposite. On entering the Opposition offices, we found that the computers had had their hard drives stolen. The entire network was stolen. The Government has a list of equipment that it has not returned. If the Government has not taken it—and we accept its advice that it has not done so—I ask: who has? If it is not returned, will the Premier call in the police to investigate the claim? The Government has had the list for three weeks but it has not returned the equipment.

Today, we have witnessed the politics of the jackboot. Queensland is back to being the laughing-stock of Australia. The *Australian* tells of the "big Kahuna"—all the respect that we as a State had is gone. The Government has taken us back to being the laughing-stock of Australia. We are again being ridiculed across Australia.

Time expired.

### Ms R. Matchett

**Ms BLIGH** (South Brisbane)

(10.10 a.m.): I rise to condemn the disgraceful attempt made in this House by the Minister for Families, Youth and Community Care to impugn the integrity of Ms Ruth Matchett, a former director-general of that department. The Minister claimed that she had received a gift—a grant. What he did was imply that she had taken a bribe. The Minister implied that she knowingly took something that she was not entitled to in return for taking certain actions. Nothing could be further from the truth, and I urge the Minister to check the facts.

I refer the Minister to today's *Courier-Mail* in which Ms Matchett categorically denied this outrageous and unfounded claim. In the face of this denial, one has to ask from where he got the information. He has been able to table nothing in this House to back up those claims—not one item that backs up any gift or any grant, as he has claimed. His first outrageous claim was that she received a concessional payment. I wonder who is giving him that information. There is only one meaning for the word "concessional" on a severance payment and that is that part of the payment that attracts a tax concession. Anybody who has done first-year human resource management would be able to tell him that.

The document that the Minister tabled yesterday referred to an item called "CELA". "CELA" on a standard public service pay slip refers to "cash equivalent for long service A". That is long service leave which attracts a different form of tax than long service leave B. That is the type of stupid mistake that members opposite can expect when they make senior appointments on a basis other than merit. If neither the new director-general nor anybody in the new Office of the Public Service can read a standard public service pay slip, it is no wonder the Minister makes those types of mistakes in this House. However, this is not just a simple mistake. This is a deliberate attempt to use an innocent party—

**Mr LINGARD:** I rise to a point of order. I find the comments offensive, because the CELA has nothing to do with the \$91,750. I find the comments offensive and I ask that they be withdrawn.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The Minister finds the comments offensive.

**Ms BLIGH:** I withdraw the comments.

Time expired.

### **Brisbane Festival and Brisbane Biennial**

**Mr FOLEY** (Yeronga) (10.13 a.m.): I urge the Minister for The Arts, Mrs Joan Sheldon, to abandon her announced decision of a merger of the Brisbane Festival and the Brisbane Biennial. These two great festivals deserve a chance to find their niche without the Damoclean sword of merger hanging over their heads.

It is not simply a question of two festivals but 102. It is a question of where those festivals find their place in a rich cultural environment which includes the folk festival at Maleny—now Woodford—the Laura Dance Festival and the Indigenous Arts Festival that was announced by the former Government and which I am pleased to see will be continued under the present Government. I refer to the visual arts and the Asia-Pacific Triennial and the Brisbane International Film Festival.

The importance of promoting Queensland as a place of excellence in the arts and as a place at which these cultural festivals can take place cannot be overstated. It is absolute poison to corporate support that the Minister for The Arts should have announced a merger prematurely, as she has done. I respectfully urge the Minister for The Arts, whom I commended earlier in the week for her positive action in supporting the Brisbane Festival and the Brisbane Biennial, to backflip on this point. As a person concerned with the arts, the Minister should have the courage to backflip publicly and announce that she has abandoned this decision for a merger. A backflip is not something known to classical ballet, but it is known to the art of politics. I have no doubt that if the Minister for The Arts, Mrs Sheldon, has the courage to backflip on this issue, she will be regarded as the Dame Margot Fonteyn of the Queensland arts scene.

### **Sunshine Motorway**

**Mr HAMILL** (Ipswich) (10.15 a.m.): The people of Queensland were certainly amazed at the breathtaking speed of the Treasurer in implementing an election promise that gave great benefits to her electorate. I refer to the haste with which she removed the toll on the Sunshine Motorway. Interestingly, at the time she made that announcement, the Treasurer would not tell the people of Queensland how she would pay for that very expensive promise. At the time, she said, "I'm not going to tell you today. I'll tell you next week." Next week came and went, as did the week after

and the week after that. It has now been some two months since the honourable member said that she would tell Queenslanders how she would pay for it.

The arrogance of the Treasurer can be seen in what we have now discovered to be the way in which she intends to pay for that election promise. Two months later, we have seen the Treasurer get together with the Premier and the Minister for Transport to hatch a neat little scam which will ensure that the Treasurer's pork-barrelling promise—the \$200m promise with respect to the Sunshine Motorway—will be paid for. This is how it will be done: the Sunshine Motorway debt will be loaded onto the Gateway Bridge and Logan Motorway debts. In other words, the Treasurer is saying, "It's not good enough for my constituents to pay for that infrastructure on the Sunshine Coast, but it is good enough for the people of Ipswich, Brisbane, Logan and anybody who uses the Gateway Bridge or the Logan Motorway to pay for it." That is the equity, the justice, the governing for all Queenslanders that we see from the coalition Government. It is neither justice nor equity.

The Treasurer has loaded the debt onto the Logan Motorway and Gateway Bridge debts, with the result that the people using the Gateway Bridge and the Logan Motorway will be paying for the Sunshine Motorway for the next 20 years. The Government has extended the time over which those tolls will be paid.

Time expired.

### **Pacific Highway Expansion**

**Mr D'ARCY** (Woodridge) (10.17 a.m.): I am concerned that commonsense is in very short supply in this Chamber. Commonsense tells me that 90 per cent of all Queenslanders support an alternative route between the Brisbane airport and Nerang—a route that is safer, faster, shorter, more direct, commercial and convenient, a trip which at legal speeds should take no more than 40 minutes.

Commonsense tells me that the taxpayers of Gladstone, Townsville and Mount Isa do not want to fund \$1 billion worth of infrastructure in south-east Queensland which they rarely use when banks and commercial interests are prepared to build, own, operate and transfer it on a user-pays basis. Commonsense tells me that upgrading work on existing roads is a nightmare for motorists and unsafe for workers. Alternative routes in the form of bypasses at Nambour, Pimpama and Ormeau have been very successful. Commonsense tells me that the population

explosion in south-east Queensland is going to continue and lead to a demand for a more economical and commercially based road transport system. Commonsense also tells me that the jobs generated would be welcome in the current climate.

Most Queenslanders believe that, when members of the Executive Government walk through these doors, commonsense stays outside. I believe it is time that we stopped pandering to vocal minority groups with vested interests and brought commonsense back to the issue of road transport when it is debated in this Chamber.

### Mr P. Gilding

**Mr STEPHAN** (Gympie) (10.18 a.m.): I take this opportunity to highlight that former Greenpeace International chief Paul Gilding has been appointed to the Timber Board. This indicates significant support for the environment within the timber industry. Unless there is support for a strong and sustainable forest industry, timber will be replaced with much more environmentally damaging building products such as steel and plastic. I do not think that many honourable members—particularly those on the Opposition side—are aware that the timber industry is a sustainable industry. When the steel industry digs a hole in the ground, that hole in the ground remains. A forest regenerates and sustains the timber industry. Forest products are inherently sustainable and enable the construction of the buildings that we live in.

**Mr SPEAKER:** I call the member for Mount Ommaney—

**Mr ARDILL:** Mr Speaker—

**Mr HEGARTY:** Mr Speaker—

**Mr SPEAKER:** I am sorry. I meant to call the member for Redlands.

**Mr ARDILL:** I rise to a point of order. I was on my feet before the member for Redlands.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I was looking past the member for Gympie at the time and I missed the member for Archerfield.

### Lions Club of Redland Bay and Victoria Point

**Mr HEGARTY** (Redlands) (10.22 a.m.): I want to draw to the attention of the House the very commendable efforts of a local community service organisation in my electorate, that is, the Lions Club of Redland

Bay and Victoria Point. This community organisation is sponsoring a mobile activity centre, referred to as a MAC. That centre is designed to provide a safe venue for the youth of the area similar to police and citizens youth clubs. One of these activity centres has been operating successfully for the past year or so. It is open on Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights, a time when the local youth might be tempted to get into mischief. The centre is mobile; it operates from a vehicle. Small snacks and a range of activities are provided.

The Lions Club of Redland Bay and Victoria Point is a very active organisation. It has already raised a considerable sum of money which it has donated towards the purchase of a syringe pump for the Redlands Hospital. Of course, that was greatly appreciated. That hospital is located in an area that has a growing population and requires more and more medical facilities. In fact, the hospital is to be expanded some time next year.

I return to the mobile activity centre. I encourage other honourable members to investigate the prospect of establishing similar projects with service organisations in their electorates. These centres provide the local youth with an opportunity to be involved with the police and encourages them to treat police as friends and not as people to be feared—

Time expired.

### Impact of Government Freeze on Apprenticeships

**Mr BRADY** (Kedron) (10.24 a.m.): The matter that I wish to raise is the contribution being made by the Borbidge/Sheldon Government to unemployment in this State. It is a massive contribution. The Goss Labor Government instituted a quota of 400 traineeship positions to be provided by State departments and authorities in 1995-96. Those traineeships have been put on hold because of the freeze imposed by the axe-wielding Treasurer, Mrs Sheldon. The fact is that 400 traineeships provided by State Government departments would make a big contribution towards reducing the rate of youth unemployment.

**Mrs Sheldon** interjected.

**Mr BRADY:** But there she is laughing when this part of Australia has high youth unemployment. Our former Government provided money for 400 positions but they are still on hold. Similarly, in Townsville Torgas has applied to the department to stand down

seven carpentry and joinery apprentices. The reason for that is that the former Department of Housing, Local Government and Planning awarded contracts to that company to build homes in Ayr, Charters Towers and Ingham but those projects have also been put on hold. That is why Torgas has now applied to stand down seven apprentices.

That is an example of the contribution being made by this Government, a contribution to unemployment by cancelling the programs of our Government, which would have been a real benefit to north Queensland and right across the State.

### **Pacific Highway Expansion**

**Mr ARDILL** (Archerfield) (10.25 a.m.): The Brisbane media have missed the most important issues in the Gold Coast Motorway fiasco, that is that the eight-laning of the least used section of the highway is a \$400m waste of public money; six lanes are more than adequate.

Even more important is the disgraceful proposal to empty freeway traffic onto the suburban roads of Brisbane. This proposal, which I disclosed on Tuesday and which the Minister confirmed on Wednesday, must be stopped. The people of Brisbane have put up with the disruption of resumptions and the building of a freeway which will now become the preserve of Gold Coast traffic, encouraged by the excessive capacity to be built at the Gold Coast end of the highway.

The huge blow-out in cost from \$244m to \$630m for this section comes about because the road was never designed for eight lanes, but for six, which competent engineers know is ample for decades to come. Expanding the highway to eight lanes means that all the bridges and overpasses will require incredible extensions. That should not occur.

The major issue, however, is the proposal to flood Brisbane roads with traffic and to prohibit Brisbane motorists from using the freeway.

### **Beenleigh Rail Line Noise**

**Mr ROBERTSON** (Sunnybank) (10.27 a.m.): I raise concerns in my electorate about the impact of the new Gold Coast rail service on residents who live alongside the Beenleigh rail line. As a result of the introduction of this new rail service, which has wide public support, an additional 52 trains per day use the Beenleigh rail line. As a result of this increase in train movements, residents in

Kuraby, Runcorn and Sunnybank have contacted my office complaining about the increase in noise. It is not just the increase in noise emanating from the trains' wheels on the tracks, but also the regular blowing of the trains' horns as they pass over railway crossings that is also causing disturbance and, hence, complaints by residents.

During the last sitting week, I placed a question on notice to the Minister for Transport and Main Roads requesting that action be taken to address this problem. I believe that the Minister has a responsibility to undertake noise testing along the Beenleigh rail line to determine the extent of the problem. The results of this testing must be made public so that the community has an opportunity to discuss the issue. If the results of the noise testing show that excessive noise is being generated by the increase in rail services, the Minister and the Government must be prepared to act to provide some relief from this problem.

Whilst I do not want to pre-empt the results of any noise testing that may be undertaken, I believe consideration must be given to the installation of appropriate forms of noise attenuation barriers along built-up sections of the Beenleigh rail line where noise is found to be a problem. The noise generated by the new Gold Coast rail service does not impact just on local residents but on schools such as Our Lady of Lourdes Primary School. Attention must be given to the potential for disruption to classrooms at this school caused by an increase in the frequency of trains passing close to classrooms.

I am therefore calling on the new Government to act swiftly and conduct noise testing along sections of the Beenleigh rail line as the first step towards addressing this issue, which many residents in my electorate have raised with me.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! It is now time for question time.

### **QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE**

#### **Mr R. Owens**

**Mr BEATTIE** (10.30 a.m.): I refer the Minister for Police to his statement to the Parliament yesterday that the approach for him to appear in the Concerned Citizens for Mundingburra television campaign was by the Mundingburra Liberal campaign committee. I refer also to the statutory declaration by Mr Robert Purcal Owens that the suggestion for the Minister to appear in the advertisement was made by an advertising agency. I ask the

Minister: was the same advertising agency used by the Liberal Party in any of the campaign material for Mundingburra? Would it be normal for the Minister to make television advertisements for organisations with which he has never met or of which he has no knowledge? Are any members of the Liberal Party in Townsville also members of the Concerned Citizens for Mundingburra campaign committee? Finally, how did the Liberal campaign committee come to be involved with the advertising campaign for the Concerned Citizens for Mundingburra?

**Mr COOPER:** This issue has been canvassed pretty well. The Leader of the Opposition is trying to read something sensitive, secret and sinister into this matter. There is nothing sinister or sensitive in it. As I have said, an approach was made to me by concerned persons of Mundingburra to do some ads on law and order issues. Nothing was done by me unless the script was approved and the ads were approved by the coalition campaign committee. Had I really known this fellow Robert Owens, then it would have been a conspiracy. The fact is that I kept at arm's length. But no—the Opposition believes that there is still a conspiracy. Whatever I do, members opposite will read something into it.

As there has been quite a bit of selective reporting and because of the sinister allegations by members opposite, while I am on my feet I would like to go through the statutory declaration made by Robert Owens. On 15 April, I received a note from Boulton Cleary and Kern, solicitors of Townsville, which stated—

"Dear Sir

We act on behalf of Mr Robert Owens. We enclose a statutory declaration which is self-explanatory."

The letter was then signed off. The statutory declaration goes something like this—

"QUEENSLAND TO WIT:

I, ROBERT PURCAL OWENS of Room 209"—

I had better not reveal the address, because no doubt the thugs and goons will get after Mr Owens again, as they did previously—

". . . do solemnly and sincerely declare that

1. Prior to May 1995 I lived in Victoria. I went to Port Douglas for a couple of months after that time and thereafter transferred to Townsville where I was engaged as the Far North Queensland

Manager on behalf of a Brisbane company arriving in Townsville on 22nd June 1995. I have lived in Townsville since that time.

2. I am not a member of any political party.

3. I authorised certain advertising on behalf of the concerned citizens for Mundingburra as a result of my personal concern for law and order issues for the By-election for the seat of Mundingburra in February this year. I was a resident of Touch Street, Mundingburra at the time of authorisation of the advertising and have left such address as a result of certain harassment which resulted from my authorisation of that advertising.

4. I have never met or spoken to Russell Cooper. The suggestion to feature Russell Cooper in the advertising was made by the Advertising Agency, to my knowledge, as Russell Cooper was a strong supporter of law and order issues."

Well, who isn't? The document continues—

"5. I believe that the advertising on behalf of the concerned citizens for Mundingburra that I have authorised has been linked with an alleged Memorandum of Understanding between the National Party and the Queensland Police Union."

**Mr Beattie** interjected.

**Mr COOPER:** I am reading from the statutory declaration. It continues—

"I say that I know of no connection between the advertising that I have authorised and the Memorandum of Understanding.

6. I say that I have been harassed by certain members of the media and other persons who I presume to be members of the Labor Party and issue this statement to clarify my position and in an endeavour to have the harassment cease. The harassment has taken the form of numerous telephone calls to my residence, numerous telephone calls to my aged mother in Victoria, messages left at my residence and attempts by the media to interview me.

7. I say that this harassment has caused embarrassment, is upsetting and has caused stress to my aged mother, brother, my niece and myself.

8. I believe in the right of free speech and the harassment I have referred to inhibits a persons right to free speech and I am concerned that other members of

the community may feel reluctant to express views if they are going to be harassed in the manner that I have.

9. I request that all concerned respect my right and my family members rights to privacy. Accordingly I do not wish to comment further on this matter and any queries may be directed to my Solicitors Boulton Cleary & Kern.

And I make this solemn Declaration conscientiously believing the same to be true, and by virtue of the provisions of the Oaths Act 1867-1981."

For the record, so that people are aware—we still believe in freedom of speech and in democracy in this place. Someone has to speak out on behalf of this person, and I am quite prepared to do so.

#### Concerned Citizens for Mundingburra

**Mr BEATTIE:** How many other people's driver's licences does the Minister carry? I refer the Minister for Police to his statement to the Parliament last sitting week that the Concerned Citizens for Mundingburra campaign was linked to the CJC inquiry into the Memorandum of Understanding. That is what the Minister said in this House.

**Mr Elder:** Your words.

**Mr BEATTIE:** Those were the Minister's words. I ask: on what grounds did the Minister believe that there was a link between those two issues?

**Mr COOPER:** At that time, the Opposition's questions were deliberately pointed towards muddying the waters and trying to use this Parliament for other purposes. Now that Mr Owens has had a chance to speak out, now that he has made his statutory declaration—and I am pleased that he did so, because the man has been under extreme pressure—now that he has spoken out and clarified his position, as far as I am concerned the matter has been adequately discussed and adequately canvassed. As far as Mr Owens is concerned and as far as the concerned persons of Mundingburra are concerned, that is where the matter rests.

#### Leaders' Forum

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** I ask the Honourable the Premier: will he outline to the House the results achieved at last week's meeting of State Premiers?

**Mr BORBIDGE:** The leaders' forum in Adelaide last Friday was significant in dealing with a number of issues of concern to all State and Territory Governments. I believe that the most significant breakthrough of the Adelaide forum was the agreement between all Premiers and Chief Ministers in respect of native title and the need for native title legislation to be made workable. The communique is quite extensive, but I want to read into *Hansard* the relevant section. It states—

"Premiers and Chief Ministers welcomed the move by the Federal Government to address quickly the unworkable and unresolved aspects of the Commonwealth Native Title Act. In particular, they noted the need to clarify the uncertainty regarding lease hold land and to adopt procedures to better scrutinise claims prior to registration and the right to negotiate applying."

The significance of that resolution is profound. For the first time, we have Governments across Australia—Labor and non-Labor—agreeing to a common position. One of the signatories to this declaration was the Premier of New South Wales, Mr Carr. I inform this House that the attitude taken by the New South Wales Premier has been a totally responsible one. I place on record my appreciation for the support that he has given to changes to the native title legislation.

As honourable members would be aware, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, Senator Nick Minchin, has been meeting with all State Governments in respect of the proposed changes to the Commonwealth legislation, and the Queensland position is essentially that agreed to by the leaders' forum in Adelaide. I welcome the support of Mr Carr. I would be very interested to know whether we have bipartisan support on this matter from the Leader of the Opposition and members opposite. I would be very interested to know whether the Leader of the Opposition supports these changes to the native title legislation. I wonder what the Opposition Leader thinks. I wonder what the collective wisdom of members opposite is in regard to this matter.

A little later this year, the changes to the native title legislation will be before the House of Representatives. The success of that process depends on the concurrence and the agreement of the Senate. I make the point that the Senate must heed, and has the responsibility to heed, what is now the common position of all State and Territory

Governments across Australia. From the political party that landed us in this mess in regard to native title legislation, the silence of the Leader of the Opposition has been deafening. I would have thought that that man, who rushes to be in front of the television cameras at the first opportunity, would have been endorsing the stand taken by Mr Carr and the other State and Territory leaders in Adelaide last week. That the Leader of the Opposition could make some constructive and helpful suggestions in this regard is apparently too much to hope for. I have not seen him so quiet since he has been Leader of the Opposition; he is like a church mouse.

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr BORBIDGE:** Some of my more unkind colleagues have referred to another form of rodent. I certainly would not do that.

What is important is that we now have a Federal Government that is determined to work its way through the workability of native title. This Queensland Government has been prepared, with Western Australia and now with the other States, to support that process and, as a result of action taken by this coalition Government, starting on 11 June, certain matters in regard to pastoral leases will be heard before the High Court of Australia.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition in his normal smug way is waving certain documents around. This Government makes no apology for not taking any action that would undermine our chances of success in the High Court in regard to the security of pastoral leases. The native title legislation that was given to this country by Prime Minister Keating, by Premier Goss, by Mr Farley of the NFF and by Mr Pearson of the Cape York Land Council was sold at the time on the basis of pastoral leases extinguishing native title. A lot of people took that at face value. They believed the Prime Minister and the architects of that legislation. What has come to pass has shown that that is simply not the case.

To those smug, politically correct, southern-based journalists and some local editorial writers who have discomfort with the position that the Queensland Government has taken, I make the point that on the issue of native title, the attitude taken consistently by the coalition in this State and the Western Australian Government has proved to be, as time moves on, absolutely the correct position. That is why we have adopted the attitude that we have in respect of the land agreement on the cape. There is no problem with the concept of regional agreements, but we have

an obligation to ensure that the stated intent of the native title legislation is dealt with in such a way that the security of the pastoral leases is secure, and also that we secure those other changes that the Queensland Government, is seeking in consultation with the other Premiers and Chief Ministers, that is, better procedures to scrutinise claims when they are lodged prior to registration, and the right to negotiate applying immediately.

I hope that before the end of this year we will see native title legislation for all Australians that is workable. If and when that happens, the role of all States and Territories will, of course, be important, but the Queensland Government along with the Western Australian Government and, indeed, the John Howard Government will be able to take some pride in that achievement.

#### **Concerned Citizens for Mundingburra**

**Mr FOLEY:** I refer the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice to the disclosure by the Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Racing in this House yesterday that all the advertisements appearing under the name of the Concerned Citizens for Mundingburra were, in fact, authorised and approved by the Mundingburra Liberal Party campaign committee. I ask: will he refer this matter to the State Electoral Commissioner asking him to ensure that the money, reputed to be some \$30,000, expended on the Concerned Citizens campaign is included in disclosures by the Liberal Party in relation to their expenditure on the campaign?

**Mr BEANLAND:** It is quite obvious that the member for Yeronga is becoming very desperate on this issue, together with his shadow Cabinet colleagues on that side of the House. Quite clearly, this is the last desperate act of desperate people—

**A Government member:** Losers.

**Mr BEANLAND:** Losers, as the Minister says.

The Minister for Police and Corrective Services has covered very fully this matter in the past few days in this Parliament. Now we see an attempt once again by the members of the Labor Party in this place to try to create some sensation out of that issue. Of course, they have failed to do that to date—failed very miserably—and they are failing again now to create some sensation out of that issue.

Quite clearly, when one is talking about—

**Opposition members:** Answer the question.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The Minister is answering the question. I will have some order.

**Mr BEANLAND:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I am answering it very fully indeed.

We are talking about the funding of election campaigns and, of course, members of the Labor Party know all about that. One has only to consider the amount of money that that party obtains from the union movement, via various methods, without disclosure. That is a very important point in relation to this matter, when one considers who is throwing stones from the other side of the Chamber. The Labor Party does not make the same disclosure of donations received from the union movement that is required of donations from other bodies and organisations. They must be disclosed in returns to the Electoral Commission. The members opposite excluded donations to the union movement, and each and every one of those members opposite in this Chamber voted to support that, because the then Opposition moved an amendment to set up a political purposes fund and to have those donations disclosed. However, each and every one of the members opposite spoke strongly against it, voted against it, and ensured that disclosure would not occur. That is why donations from the union movement are not required to be disclosed, and that is why there is failure to disclose that information.

### South Coast Motorway

**Mr ELDER:** I refer the Minister for Transport and Main Roads to the size of the massive resumption, relocation of infrastructure and services such as the replacement of all overhead bridges, the replacement of river crossings and the total realignment of all services for his heartless half a highway. In terms of the social, health and environmental concerns, I ask: will he now table in the House the outline for the environmental management plan for that project?

**Mr JOHNSON:** That project is currently in the design stage, and the project management team has been put in place. As that project unfolds, details of design and issues relevant to the environment and local communities in general will be furnished to members opposite. That is something that the members opposite never did for us. They

never consulted with us in relation to their proposal to deal with this issue. Members on this side of the Chamber are the ones who are going to deliver and we will do exactly that.

### Queensland Principal Club

**Mr HEALY:** I refer the Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Racing to the number of rumours circulating currently within the racing industry, mainly in country areas. I ask: will he outline the future of the Queensland Principal Club?

**Mr COOPER:** I thank the member for Toowoomba North for the question. A lot of malicious rumours have been circulating, especially in country areas, about the Government's intentions in relation to the Queensland Principal Club. It does not matter what one says, those rumours persist, because they are being generated by people who have other than decent intentions. We are fully aware that those people are trying to disrupt the industry. The member for Toowoomba North is fully aware of that; he comes from an area of the Darling Downs that is very strong in country racing. Of course, our aim is not only to ensure that country racing remains strong but also to improve it.

For the past six years, country racing suffered at the hands of the former Government. Our intention is to improve its conditions. Unfortunately, some people are spreading rumours and actually ringing around to other places. The other day the Noorama Race Club, which is out near Cunnamulla, received a telephone call from one of these characters saying that this is going to be the end of country racing, and that the country membership of the QPC is going to deteriorate at the expense of increased membership of the QPC by metropolitan clubs. I want to debunk that rumour and to say that it is utterly false. I will let people know that it is false not only through this Parliament but also by way of a mail-out setting out the contents of the ministerial statement that I made this morning, my answer to this question and also quite a bit of information that will enlighten country race clubs of the Government's intentions to debunk those malicious and deliberate rumours—if I can be so kind as to call them rumours.

For the benefit of honourable members, I will list the membership of the Queensland Principal Club. Wherever I go, I have been saying this—and I will keep on saying it. I have been saying this in the party room, and will continue to say it, "QRIS stays, QRIS stays, QRIS stays." I have said that so often, it is not

funny. I have also said, "The QPC stays, the QPC stays, the QPC stays." The membership of the Queensland Principal Club is made up of the following people—and I want to read this into *Hansard* for all people to read—

**Mr Veivers:** The QPC is staying, isn't it?

**Mr COOPER:** Well done. I will give Mr Veivers a tick. He gets 10 out of 10. The current committee of the QPC is made up as follows: Mr Bentley, who is the chairman, and who is from the Ipswich Turf Club; Mr Allom, who is the vice-chairman, and who is from the Brisbane Turf Club; Mr Black, who is from the Downs and South-West Queensland Racing Association; Mr Forster, who is from the North Queensland Racing Association—

**Mr Stoneman:** A good man.

**Mr COOPER:** Yes, he is tops. The list continues: Mr Geeves, who is from the Sunshine Coast Turf Club; Dr Guilfoyle, who is from the Central Western Queensland Racing Association. Any comment? And further: Mr Hillman, who is from the Capricornia Racing Association; Mr Martin, who is the Licences Representative; Mr McLean, who represents the Gold Coast Turf Club; Mr Stewart, who represents the Toowoomba Turf Club, and Mr Sullivan, who represents the Queensland Turf Club. For the benefit of the members of this House, I say that those people have been nominated by the various clubs and associations that I have mentioned. The composition of that committee is defined in section 11 F(1) of the Racing and Betting Act 1990.

All of the changes that I have announced recently, be they changes to the TAB, the GRA, to harness racing and all the rest, have absolutely no effect whatsoever on the QPC—none, zero, zilch, zip, nothing. The metropolitan representation remains, and the country representation remains. There will be no further metropolitan representation over and above the country representation so that country racing would be disadvantaged. The balance will be maintained. I have nothing whatever to do with those people. However, in the interests of racing, I wish them well. I think that I have made myself clear.

#### **Mr M. Miller**

**Mrs EDMOND:** I refer the Minister for Health to a story in the *Weekend Australian* in which Mr Mick Miller, chairperson of the State Tripartite Forum, made allegations of a secret deal with the Minister in relation to the Mundingburra by-election, and I ask: when

and how did it become coalition policy to establish offices of the State Tripartite Forum in places such as Torres Strait, Mount Isa, Townsville, Rockhampton and Toowoomba, as outlined in the *Cairns Post* of 13 February? When was this specific reference to more offices first revealed to the public? Did the Minister detail the promise of new offices at his media conference after that meeting outside the Townsville General Hospital during the Mundingburra election campaign? What promises caused Mr Miller and his friends to boast around town that they had got everything they wanted because they delivered the vote in the Mundingburra by-election?

**Mr HORAN:** It is good to see the honourable member up on her feet all alone. Lately, every time we see her the Opposition Leader is with her. They have become known around town as the Peter Pan and Wendy show.

So much for a secret deal! The Opposition Leader is talking about referring it to the CJC. How ridiculous can matters become? We have people with policy and policy initiatives having media conferences in front of the Townsville General Hospital, photos taken by the *Courier-Mail*, interviews with Miss Danni Cooper from the *Townsville Bulletin*, and other radio and TV journalists are there—everything. Yet in Queensland if a person has good policy and good policy initiatives, all based under the national Aboriginal health strategy of partnership arrangements in service delivery, and stands up and publicly espouses it for all to see in front of the Townsville General Hospital—talk about it, give interviews, the whole lot—what happens? Those opposite say that it should go to the CJC.

I have a bit of advice for Ms Edmond. I think she should also refer to the CJC the families and the groups in Townsville who are involved with people who have disabilities. We had meetings with those people. We developed good policy initiatives for five therapists in Townsville, which the Labor Party then copied. She had better send them along to the CJC as well. What about the doctors whom we met with and who complained about funding for the Townsville Hospital? During the course of the campaign we said that we would see that the Townsville Hospital received better funding for its budget so that it could do the primary tasks it is there to do. She had better send along the dentists, the nurses and all the administrative staff to whom we spoke about putting in a better system.

That is the ridiculous stage that Queensland politics has reached. One stands up before the public and says, "This is our policy. These people believe that our policy is better than yours. These people believe that our policy will deliver better water, better sewerage, better nutrition, better vaccination services, better diabetes control and better drug and alcohol control, all for the benefit of Queensland health." That was stated publicly in front of the Townsville General Hospital. Then the member says that it should go to the CJC!

All I can say is that I well remember the Opposition Leader on the night that the Government changed hands in this place; he stood up and said that he was not bitter. I think that he is a bit bitter because all he wants to do is report to the CJC all of those people who have publicly espoused policy and policy initiatives.

#### **Kuranda High School**

**Ms WARWICK:** I ask the Minister for Education: will he inform the House of the progress to date on the acquisition of the site at Myola Road for the construction of a high school at Kuranda?

**Mr QUINN:** Firstly, I thank the honourable member for Barron River for her question and place on record the vigorous way in which she has pursued this matter since she has become the member for Barron River. I also say that, after quite a long period of protracted negotiations between the owner of the site and the Department of Education, the department has finally secured the site in Myola Road.

Now that the site has been secured, the concept and site plans can be progressed and made available for public consultation. The estimated cost of the new school, when it is finally built, will be something in the order of \$4,200,000. It now has a target opening date of the first day of the school year in 1998. That date has been moved back one year because of the extensive and protracted negotiations with regard to the acquisition of the site.

When the school opens on that day, it is anticipated that it will have an enrolment of somewhere between 170 and 200 students in Years 8, 9, 10 and 11. To get that progress up and running so that we are not delayed any further, it is anticipated that we will, in fact, appoint an interim principal at about the beginning of the second semester of 1997.

An initial master plan has been drawn up. To date, it has met with widespread support

both from the educational community and the general community. It will go on further public display on about 2 May this year. After a long period of public consultation, the final plans will be drawn and put into effect.

The new high school at Kuranda will, in fact, be very similar to the one recently constructed in my electorate at Robina. When one looks at the new facilities offered by the Department of Education these days, they are a far cry from the facilities that were offered five to ten years ago in terms of the fit-out, the quality of the buildings and the equipment which is installed. This high school will in fact start with an administration block, a resource centre, a science block, a manual arts block, a home economics block, an arts block, general studies blocks, agricultural and multipurpose sheds and other facilities. These facilities make the State schools which are now put on stream quite a quantum leap from the facilities we provided several years ago.

In conclusion, this school will come on stream at the beginning of 1998. All of the planning is in progress and, as I said, I congratulate the member for Barron River for pursuing this matter to its ultimate conclusion.

#### **State Gas Pipeline**

**Mr McGRADY:** I refer the Minister for Mines and Energy to his Government's decision to sell the State gas pipeline to Pacific Gas Transmission Company for the sum of \$162m. I ask: could the Minister explain to this Parliament the weightage given to the cash bid, and also the tariff component of this deal? Could he further explain and elaborate on his claims that this will mean lower gas prices for the consumers of Queensland?

**Mr GILMORE:** I thank the honourable member for the question, which revolves around a most important deal announced yesterday by the Queensland Government, in terms of the disposal of the Government-owned gas pipeline to Gladstone.

The deal came out of bids received from four companies. It was very carefully considered by a number of departments, so that we have come to the very best deal for the people of Queensland, and particularly the industrial complex of Gladstone. What is going to come out of that is, of course, a guarantee of a supply of gas at world's best prices for the industrial complex of Gladstone.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr GILMORE:** I am curious about the question, and I am curious about the

interjections that are coming from the other side of the House, because this is quite an extraordinarily good deal for the people of Queensland, in so far as the reserve price on that fuel was \$111m.

**Mr McGRADY:** I rise to a point of order. The question was quite simple: in arriving at the decision, what weightage did the Government give on the cash bid and the tariff component?

**Mr SPEAKER:** There is no point of order. The Minister is answering the question.

**Mr GILMORE:** I would remind the honourable gentleman that he is now in Opposition. He asks the question and I get to answer it, and it is my turn. Let me tell the member that the bid price of \$162m was quite considerably in advance of the reserve price of \$111m.

In respect of the tariffs that were associated with that bid, it was a multi-part tariff bid. It was one which, having finally been negotiated, is inflation-protected for the people of central Queensland in respect of the tariffs. The net present value of that bid was the very best of the four bids in respect of the capital value that we receive for the pipeline, and in respect of the world's competitive tariff costs for those people. In fact, the bid, negotiated in the way that it was, reduces the tariff component to businesses of central Queensland like no other bid that was received. The Opposition can be well satisfied that this is absolutely the best deal that could have been provided. It was considered carefully and we are very pleased indeed with the outcome.

### Reopening of Hospital Wards

**Mr STEPHAN:** I refer the Minister for Health to a central plank of the coalition Government's health policy, which is the reopening of hospital wards. I ask: can the Minister explain to this House what initiatives have been implemented in this regard?

**Mr HORAN:** I thank the member for Gympie for his question. It is a pity that the Opposition spokesperson is not in the Chamber at the moment, because she would be able to hear about some of the progress achieved under the coalition Government in reopening wards that had been closed, and in giving back some basic services. Maybe she is fearful of receiving another hospital pass. Last year, we saw the honourable member for Mount Coot-tha get the hospital pass of the workers' compensation package given to her when she was made a Minister. When

Mr Beattie brought her into the office and said, "I am going to give you the position of Opposition Health spokesperson", I wonder if he told her the good news about the possible \$38m budget overrun that the Health Department is facing this year. I wonder whether he told her about the \$24m budget overrun from last year. I wonder whether he told her about the \$34m that he tried to pilfer in the night from the Capital Works Program to cover up the budget overrun.

**Mr Borbidge:** Talking about budget overruns, she got a pretty good one up in workers' compensation.

**Mr HORAN:** The track record is there. I suppose she probably knew how to handle the quantum of the overrun. I wonder whether the Leader of the Opposition told the member for Mount Coot-tha that he had made arrangements to transfer \$34m from the Hospital Rebuilding Fund—money that would have been used for Maryborough, Proserpine, Hervey Bay and Rockhampton. I wonder how the contractors would have been paid?

**Mr Livingstone** interjected.

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

**Mr HORAN:** I wonder whether the Leader of the Opposition told the honourable member how those contractors would have been paid when the \$34m was transferred to cover up the recurrent budget overrun he was leaving behind. I wonder whether he told her about the \$1.2 billion blow-out of the Capital Works Program's Hospital Rebuilding Fund. I bet he did not! Unfortunately, just as happened last year, she has received the hospital pass. I wonder how she can sit with that mob, having twice had that done to her.

It is a pleasure to tell this House that some two weeks into Government we were able to seek additional funding from Treasury to cover some of the serious hot spots in Queensland Health left behind by the previous Government. First of all, we sought funding to reopen wards at the Royal Brisbane Hospital. On 7 May, Ward 3F will reopen, and 18 additional nurses have already been recruited. On 24 May, Ward 3E will be reopened. Five extra nurses have already been recruited, and currently a substantial number of graduates are being interviewed.

In addition, of course, the allocation of these additional beds means that the hospital is able to undertake additional elective surgery every day. The previous Government had reduced the cap on elective surgery from

about 78 to 45, and then down to only 27 operations per day. However, operations are starting to increase in number and more beds are being made available.

A couple of weeks ago I visited the Gold Coast Hospital, and already 27 of a possible 30 beds have been reopened. Thirteen additional nurses and five allied health staff have already been employed because of the reopening of those beds. At the Prince Charles Hospital, we have provided funding so that an extra six operations per week can be performed, so that within a short space of time the number of people who are currently outside the guidelines for category 1 operations—30 days—will be back within those guidelines.

Not only have we been reopening wards throughout the State; in north Queensland we have also been providing good, basic services. Cairns Hospital has been provided with additional funding and has already put on staff, a principal house officer in the accident and emergency unit, and is currently advertising for a director of accident and emergency. For years, no public urology services have been available for the north of the State. We have provided over \$900,000 to the Townsville General Hospital, and the hospital has advertised for a full-time staff urologist. Already, one application and an inquiry have been received. That service, once implemented, will provide not only a full-time staff urologist, new equipment and all the non-labour costs, but will also mean that the urologist will be able to visit Mackay and Cairns for clinical sessions and Mount Isa for an out-patient clinic.

Once again, the Borbidge Government is delivering good, basic, caring services in spite of the dreadful financial mess of almost unbelievable proportions left behind by the former Minister for Health, Mr Beattie. I refer to the recurrent budget and the attempted transfer of \$34m out of capital works and also the massive \$1.2 billion budget blow-out in the Capital Works Program.

### **State Gas Pipeline; Carpentaria/Mount Isa Mineral Province**

**Mr HAMILL:** I direct a question to the Deputy Premier and Treasurer. I refer to the Government's decision to sell the State gas pipeline, and I ask: will these funds be used to upgrade the Mount Isa-Townsville rail line to serve the Carpentaria/Mount Isa mineral province in line with the Cabinet decision of the former Labor Government, or will the moneys be used to meet the debts of the

Sunshine Coast Motorway and the Government's unfunded decision to build "half a highway" to the Gold Coast?

**Mrs SHELDON:** I find that to be quite an extraordinary question coming from the failed Minister for Transport. During his reign, railway lines were closed down throughout Queensland.

**Mr Borbidge:** The former Government closed down one-third of the rail network.

**Mrs SHELDON:** One-third of the rail network was closed down, mostly in regional Queensland, and many railway employees lost their jobs as a result. That was thanks to a Labor Government! I am amazed that the honourable member has the effrontery to ask a question about rail lines, given that he was the principal architect of the closure of a third of the railway lines in this State, an action which put thousands of railway employees out of work.

The sale of the gas pipeline was very positive for the State of Queensland. The reserve price was \$111m; we received \$162m net. In addition, about another \$6m in stamp duties and so on will be paid to the State of Queensland as a result. Also, we negotiated extraordinarily good tariff prices. Gas will cost roughly 74c per gigajoule, and that is something about which all of the industrial users of the gas pipeline are very pleased.

The shadow Treasurer seems to think that this was not such a good deal for the State at all. For his benefit, I point out that ICI has told the Treasury that it was very pleased with the decision. It is the main client of the gas pipeline. QAL is delighted that existing users will also receive immediate tariff reductions, and it also considers PGT to be a very reputable company with which to do business. QMAG is over the moon with the result, and QGL is also very pleased with the outcome. It said that it was particularly happy that a competitor was not associated with the preferred bidder.

Those four major industries in this State are delighted that they will pay a reduced tariff for gas, which means that they will become more profitable, can expand and put on more staff. The Government is trying to attract a major aluminium refinery to the State. A major factor that would convince Comalco to invest in an aluminium refinery in this State would be the price of gas. It is delighted with the price of 74c. Not only are the current major industrial users delighted with the result but it also looks very much as though we will be able to attract major business to the State, resulting in job growth and a boost to the economy.

Also, average domestic consumers of gas will be much better off in that they will pay lower tariffs. There has been a great discrepancy in tariffs, ranging from nearly \$3 down to \$1. In future, commercial users will pay 74c, and domestic users will pay a much better rate as well. This contract will be signed at the end of the month, at which time there will be an immediate reduction in tariffs for both commercial and domestic users. That has been a great win for the Government, industry, jobs and domestic users. I am absolutely astounded that the Opposition does not consider that to be a good outcome for the State.

Having PGT in the marketplace will create a lot of competition, something that we will need if we are going to hook into the national competition policy. The bids of other bidders were examined independently. As with any commercial decision, there will be some losers and some winners. We have had a winner with PGT. The Government has received a very nice letter from the Gas Transmission and Storage CMS thanking us for the opportunity to be able to bid. It was very happy to see that such an extremely good deal was able to be brokered.

The Government will use the \$51m profit to the State to provide infrastructure that is very badly needed. Currently, the Commission of Audit is reviewing all infrastructure needs of the State. When the absolutely hopeless lot opposite were in Government, there were no plans for the provision of basic infrastructure, either physical or social. The Commission of Audit is examining what infrastructure is needed now and what will be needed in 5 and 10 years' time. A desperate need exists.

**Mr Elder** interjected.

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

**Mrs SHELDON:** This \$51m windfall to the State will be used to provide very basic and necessary infrastructure for the State. It is a great win for the people of Queensland, and I am delighted that the Government was able to succeed.

### **Opposition Office Equipment**

**Mr CARROLL:** I refer the Premier to the allegation by the Leader of the Opposition this morning that some equipment of the establishment of the former Opposition had been stolen by the Opposition staff, and I ask: can the Premier outline the true situation?

**Mr BORBIDGE:** What we saw today from the Leader of the Opposition was just a further shabby act of political cowardice. I challenge the Leader of the Opposition to make those allegations outside the Parliament. I challenge him to do so. He accused my staff and me of stealing equipment. Applying the same rules, I will tell the House what is missing from the Executive Building.

Honourable members would be well aware that, upon the change of Government, I offered the Leader of the Opposition new premises and new equipment to ministerial standard. To this end, the Leader of the Opposition was offered more than 400 square metres of office accommodation at 80 Albert Street, fully maintained and fully serviced to ministerial standard, not the squalor that my staff had to work in at Margaret Street for six years. Both the Leader of the Opposition and his staff inspected the premises with officers of the Premier's Department and approved of them.

Let me take this opportunity to outline some of the facts. Soon upon assuming Government, officers of my department put in place a stocktake of equipment across Government. That stocktake has uncovered a substantial amount of equipment which cannot be located at its intended location. I point out to the Leader of the Opposition that that same stocktake revealed that a substantial amount of equipment is missing from the fifteenth floor of the Executive Building. That is equipment which, according to the stocktake, should be located there. I would not accuse and I am not accusing the previous Government of stealing equipment, because clearly that has not happened.

I have sought information from my department in regard to the list of equipment tabled today, and I can advise the Leader of the Opposition as follows. He might just learn something. I am advised that there are two broken computers currently at Margaret Street which I had intended to replace for the new office of the Leader of the Opposition at 80 Albert Street. I now seek the advice of the Leader of the Opposition as to whether he would prefer the broken computers or the new ones that I was going to supply to him—the ones listed in the document that he tabled this morning. Over and above that, if the Leader of the Opposition really wants me to, I will also make arrangements to transfer the 10 broken and obsolete—I emphasise "broken and obsolete"—computer keyboards to which the Leader of the Opposition referred this morning.

I am also advised that some of the equipment mentioned by the Leader of the Opposition stretches back as far as the 1980s when, as honourable members will recall, it was the Labor Party that occupied the Opposition benches in this place. In terms of computer programs—in particular D-base 3 and PageMaker referred to this morning by the Leader of the Opposition—I am advised that the said programs were loaded onto Opposition computers and the disks were returned immediately to the Premier's Department and are currently housed there.

I also want to say a few words about the disgraceful attack that the Leader of the Opposition made against my staff this morning. That attack was particularly disgraceful in view of the working conditions that our staff were subjected to for six years and the way in which we have moved quickly to improve facilities, entitlements and equipment for the Opposition. For the Leader of the Opposition to brand as thieves staff who worked in appalling conditions which did not comply with the provisions of the Workplace Health and Safety Act shows how low this political assassin will go.

I will cite some instances. This morning the Leader of the Opposition branded people as thieves. One of those people on my staff whom the Leader of the Opposition branded as a thief paid \$4,000 out of his own pocket for computer equipment because the member's lousy predecessor would not supply it. In terms of the equipment provided to the Opposition—the National Party had to provide a facsimile machine to my press secretary and then pay the bills associated with it because the member's lousy predecessor would not approve it, and the Leader of the Opposition has the audacity to come into this place today and brand these people as thieves!

What we have seen from the Leader of the Opposition is an act of political cowardice. I just want to say—so that everyone in this Chamber is fully aware of the consequences—that I have spoken to my staff this morning and, like me, they invite the Leader of the Opposition to repeat these outrageous allegations outside Parliament, and we will see how they stack up.

### **PRIVILEGE**

#### **Opposition Office Equipment**

**Mr BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—Leader of the Opposition) (11.23 a.m.): I rise on a matter of privilege. The material that I distributed this morning—

**Government members:** Shame!

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I call the Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr BEATTIE:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. The list of missing items tabled by me this morning was prepared by the Premier's own department. It was the Premier's own department that identified what he had taken and is missing.

**Mr BORBIDGE:** I rise to a point of order. I am quite happy to table the list of equipment which, according to the definition of the Leader of the Opposition, was taken from the fifteenth floor of the Executive Building.

**Mr BEATTIE:** If I can complete my matter of privilege—I repeat that this list was prepared by the officers of the Premier's own department; it is not my list. As the Premier well knows, on two occasions I have sought in correspondence to have it returned.

**Mr Eider:** Eight weeks.

**Mr BEATTIE:** Eight weeks we have waited. I remind the Premier that that audit is to take place at 11.30 this morning. He should not try to get out of it; it is his own list.

### **QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE**

#### **Public Service Traineeships; Youth Unemployment**

**Mr BRADY:** I ask the Minister for Training and Industrial Relations: given that the Goss Labor Government ordered a quota of 400 traineeship positions to be provided by Queensland State departments and authorities in this financial year, is it a fact that the employment of public service trainees has been suspended because of the current Sheldon freeze on public service appointments? Further, I ask: what action is the Minister taking to make the "frozen" Treasurer see reason on this vital issue of employment for long-term unemployed youth?

**Mr SANTORO:** Whenever one listens to members on the other side these days, one cannot miss the fact that they cover themselves constantly with the cloak of hypocrisy. This morning, I listened very carefully to the honourable member opposite when he made his statement. He tried to link the content of his question to the whole issue of unemployment. I want to take the opportunity to refer to that part of the member's question and speak about the record of those on the other side in relation to the issue of unemployment, and in particular the issue of unemployment as it relates to youth.

Honourable members may be interested to know and be reminded of the employment and unemployment record of members opposite. If one looks at any indicator which measures the level of unemployment, one sees that under the previous Labor Party administration, under previous Labor Ministers, the record speaks for itself, and it is atrocious. I point out to the honourable member that it is one that I would not seek to ever raise in this place because it is one that is utterly embarrassing to him.

Let me refer first of all to the absolute figures. I wish I had more time to go through the few points that I jotted down. I did not bother to organise a Dorothy Dixier on this subject because the honourable member gave it away when he started talking about employment and unemployment. I wish that I had more than two minutes so as to be able to answer the honourable member's question comprehensively.

Let me deal with the absolute rate of unemployment. The number of unemployed has increased from about 69,000 in December 1989 to well and truly, and consistently, over 150,000. Let us look at this disgraceful record. The rate of unemployment at the beginning of the honourable member's administration was about 6.9 per cent, yet it was nudging 11 per cent—well above the national average—during most of the years that the Labor Government was in power.

If one has a look at youth unemployment, one will see that disgraceful record of over 30 per cent unemployment. One will also see that in various regions in Queensland under the Labor administration the level of youth unemployment was well and truly over 35 per cent and in some areas up to 40 per cent. In some cases, it was even above that figure. If one looks at regional unemployment, one sees that the Labor Government gutted the public service and the provision of public services in country centres, again adversely affecting the rate of regional unemployment. If one talks to small businesses and asks them why they are not employing young people, one will be told about the Labor Government's blatantly unfair and biased union rules and employment rules, and the unfair dismissal laws which mean that small businesses—

**Mr Braddy:** What about traineeships?

**Mr Santoro:** I will take the honourable member's interjection—the unfair dismissal laws which inhibited the capacity of small businesses to employ young people. The honourable member asked a question about unemployment; I am telling him plenty

about unemployment. I am talking about his administration's disgraceful record. According to all indicators available to the public of Queensland, it was atrocious.

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

### LOCAL GOVERNMENT AMENDMENT BILL

**Hon. D. E. McCAULEY** (Callide—Minister for Local Government and Planning) (11.30 a.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 Mrs McCauley, read a first time.

#### Second Reading

**Hon. D. E. McCAULEY** (Callide—Minister for Local Government and Planning) (11.30 a.m.): I move—

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

It gives me great pleasure to introduce this Bill, which implements a major commitment the coalition gave to those people in Queensland whose local councils were forcibly amalgamated by the previous Labor Government. The provisions of the Bill give all electors affected by those forced amalgamations the opportunity to make their views known to the Government on whether or not they want their areas to remain amalgamated. If the majority of electors in each affected area favour deamalgamation, the Bill lays out a process for their views to be considered by Parliament and, if appropriate, for the necessary arrangements to be put in place to reinstate the local governments which existed immediately prior to amalgamation.

Some people are of the opinion that it is impossible to deamalgamate an area—a bit like trying to unscramble an egg. This is not the case. It can be done, and the Bill provides a rational and logical process for deamalgamation to occur. However, the task is not an easy one and the costs of deamalgamation will have to be met by those communities which choose that path. Estimates of the likely costs will form part of

the material that is sent to all electors where a referendum on deamalgamation is to occur. The task in front of us has also been made much harder by the failure of the previous Government to respond to persistent requests from the community that all electors should be entitled to have their say about any proposed boundary change involving an amalgamation.

When in Opposition, we moved amendments to the Local Government Legislation Amendment Bill in February 1994 to require any action to amalgamate the local government areas of Warwick, Allora, Glengallan and Rosenthal to be subject to support by the majority of electors in each of the areas. The level of support was to be gauged by holding a poll under the Local Government Act. The Labor Government rejected that proposal and proceeded with the forced Warwick amalgamation. Later on, it also created the super councils for Cairns, Gold Coast and Ipswich by more forced amalgamations. In the lead-up to the State elections last July, the coalition therefore gave a commitment that, where local governments had been forcibly amalgamated by the Labor administration, legislation would be introduced to enable a referendum to be held on the question of deamalgamation. Through this Bill, the Government is honouring a principle that matters of such local significance should be dealt with democratically rather than by trampling roughshod over the wishes of the community. Another indication of the way the previous Government did not listen to ordinary Queenslanders was its decision to provide five-year terms for councillors on the Cairns, Gold Coast and Ipswich super councils. The Bill will also put in place a process for the electors of those three local governments to express their views on the retention of the five-year terms.

I will now turn to the provisions of the Bill in more detail. The proposed legislation is: time limited in nature; lays out different procedures from those in the Local Government Act dealing with the review, report and recommendation by the Local Government Commissioner on reviewable local government matters such as changes to external and internal boundaries; and applies only to the cities of Cairns, Ipswich, Gold Coast and Mackay and the shires of Burnett, Cooloola and Warwick as well as the adjoining local governments that were affected by the amalgamations. In effect, the Bill will enable the reversal of the regulations which abolished or altered certain local government areas to create the amalgamated areas. This will occur in time for any fresh elections to be held when all councils face their triennial elections next

year. As an alternative to deamalgamation, the Bill also provides the electors of Cairns, Gold Coast and Ipswich with the opportunity to say whether they want their existing councils to go back to the polls next year rather than having the elections deferred until the year 2000.

The process for achieving total deamalgamation can be broken up into five key stages—

1. the lodgment and verification of petitions calling for a referendum on the question of deamalgamation;
2. the conduct of a referendum;
3. consideration by Parliament of the results of a referendum;
4. implementation of a proposal to deamalgamate; and
5. holding fresh elections in 1997 for any reinstated councils.

Stage 1 is already under way. In this respect, the Bill recognises seven approved forms of petition specifically designed for potential use by affected electors in each of the relevant areas. The petitions call for a referendum on the question of reinstating the local government areas which existed prior to amalgamation. To provide affected electors with sufficient time to sign the petition, the forms were approved by the Director-General of the Department of Local Government and Planning on 20 March 1996 and published in an extraordinary gazette of the same date. In the case of the Cairns, Gold Coast and Ipswich areas, the approved petition form includes a statement that, if a deamalgamation referendum proceeds, an additional question will be put to electors about whether elections for these councils should be held in 1997 at the same time as the elections for all other councils.

The electors who are entitled to sign the petition are those enrolled under the Electoral Act as at 27 March 1996 in the amalgamated area or in parts of the areas which were transferred to an adjoining area. For example, when Ipswich City and Moreton Shire were amalgamated, parts of the area were then put into Brisbane and Logan Cities and Esk Shire. To be a valid petition, it must be lodged with the Minister by 10 May 1996 in the approved form and comply with the requirements set out on the back of the form. For example, the affected elector's surname, given names, address for which the elector is enrolled on 27 March 1996 and signature must be included. The Director-General of the Department of Local Government and Planning must then

verify that the electors who signed the petition were entitled to do so, that is, an entry on a petition page was made by an affected elector.

Stage 2 of the process deals with holding a referendum. Where a petition is signed by 10 per cent or more of affected electors, arrangements for holding a referendum on the question of deamalgamation are automatically triggered. A referendum of affected electors must be held before 28 July 1996 on the question of deamalgamating the area which is the subject of the petition and on the question of bringing forward the elections to 1997 for the existing councils if the petition relates to Cairns, Gold Coast or Ipswich. To enable any unforeseen circumstances to be addressed, the Governor in Council has a reserve power to fix a later date for a referendum.

The electors who are entitled to vote at a deamalgamation referendum are those who on 10 May 1996 are electors under the Electoral Act in the amalgamated area or in those areas which were transferred from the amalgamated area to an adjoining area. In the case of a referendum for an early election in the Cairns, Gold Coast or Ipswich areas, the electors entitled to vote are those who on 10 May 1996 are electors under the Electoral Act for the existing amalgamated area. The Bill has set the date for closing off a voters' roll for a referendum as 10 May 1996 to provide sufficient time for compiling the rolls prior to referendum day. To ensure that members of this House are kept informed and to preserve the integrity of the process to verify petition entries, a copy of each petition is to be tabled in Parliament together with a copy of the director-general's advice and the gazette notice indicating whether or not the petition qualifies for triggering a referendum.

Once it has been established that a referendum is to be held, a polling process based on the existing procedures in the Local Government Act dealing with the conduct of council elections applies to the referendum. Some things such as compulsory voting will apply without change. However, a number of changes have to be made to reflect that a referendum is being held. For example, as there are no candidates for election, new procedures are required to deal with matters such as the appointment etc. of scrutineers. Different ballot papers are also necessary and further procedural changes are proposed to minimise costs and to facilitate the possible conduct of a referendum by a full postal ballot—for example, the use of reply-paid rather than pre-paid envelopes, more publicly acceptable declaration envelopes and early

preliminary processing of such votes. In the case of Cairns, Gold Coast and Ipswich, the polling process will involve the simultaneous holding of two referendums, that is, one on the question of deamalgamation and the other on an early election. This is necessary due to the complexities associated with having two categories of affected electors entitled to vote in different areas.

To ensure the integrity of the referendum process, the Bill also provides for the appointment of independent returning officers and assistant returning officers by the Minister.

To have a meaningful referendum, it is essential electors entitled to vote are able to make an informed decision. For each referendum, the Bill therefore requires an explanatory statement to be sent to each affected elector. This statement is to be prepared by an independent person appointed by the Minister and will set out that person's assessment of the advantages and disadvantages of deamalgamation and the estimated financial cost. Similarly, if a referendum is held in Cairns, Gold Coast or Ipswich, the independent person is to also prepare a statement setting out the advantages, disadvantages and the financial costs of holding elections in 1997 for the existing councils. The Bill enables a different person to be appointed for the preparation of statements in each affected area. However, to support a consistent approach, a reserve power exists to allow the Minister to give directions about the format of the statements.

The Minister will also be able to enter into agreements with these persons about the preparation of the statements; for example, to set deadlines and the assistance the department may need to provide to achieve those deadlines. However, the Minister would not have any power over the content of the explanatory statement. The people preparing these statements should be beyond reproach. It is therefore intended to appoint persons with the necessary skills and experience to do the job and for those persons to be impartial and objective in the preparation of the statements. If referendums are to be held, I will discuss with the Local Government Association of Queensland the names of the people I consider are capable of preparing these statements. That would happen before any appointments occur.

As part of the process of developing the statements, the independent persons would also consult with the affected councils and interested people and groups in the community and others who hold information of

relevance. Because of the emotions that are likely to be involved amongst some supporters and opponents of a referendum question, the differences of opinion as to what might be the advantages and disadvantages and their degree of importance, the best estimates made of likely costs etc., the Bill provides that the explanatory statement is a non-justiciable document. That is, it cannot be challenged in a court. Hence the importance placed on the credibility of the independent persons.

To further assist affected electors make an informed decision, the Local Government Commissioner is to prepare a statement setting out the electoral arrangements that might apply to fresh elections for the reinstated areas. These arrangements involve the number of councillors, whether or not there are electoral divisions and, if so, the assignment of members to those divisions. The Bill requires the arrangements for reinstated areas to accord with those that applied before the forced amalgamations were implemented. However, because of the population growth for some areas which previously had electoral divisions, it will be necessary to make changes to the old divisional boundaries to meet the quota requirements in the Local Government Act. A summary of these proposals will be given to affected electors with the detailed proposals being placed on public display by the returning officer.

For a referendum question to bring forward the elections for the existing Cairns, Gold Coast and Ipswich City Councils, an electoral arrangements statement will also be prepared by the commissioner to adjust the current electoral divisions so they are in quota. Given the tight time frames, the uncertainty that could exist for some electors as to their right to vote and the different rolls for different questions, it will be more efficient to have a full postal referendum, that is, every elector on the roll will be sent a ballot paper and supporting material through the post. A power for the Governor in Council to direct a full postal ballot has therefore been included in the Bill and Cabinet has approved this process.

The results of a referendum are to be presented to the Minister in the form of a return from the returning officer. The question on deamalgamation is taken to have been approved if it has been supported by the majority of the affected electors in each of the pre-existing local government areas who are enrolled to vote. For the Gold Coast, a majority of electors on the voters roll must vote "Yes" to deamalgamation in the area of the old Albert Shire, including a portion transferred

from Beaudesert Shire into the current City of Gold Coast, along with a majority of electors on the roll for the old area of Gold Coast City. If a majority is not secured in both of these areas, the question is not approved.

A referendum in Cairns, Gold Coast or Ipswich on holding an early election in 1997 is taken to be approved if it has been supported by the majority of the affected electors enrolled on the voters roll in the newly amalgamated area; for example, in Cairns. A majority of such electors on the roll in the new area of the city must vote "Yes" to a 1997 election. If there is no qualifying petition for deamalgamation in any of these local government areas, the five-year term of office will remain. If the vote is "No" for both referendum questions, the five-year term of office will also remain.

Stage 3 of the process deals with consideration of the results of a referendum on deamalgamation. Where a deamalgamation referendum is approved, the Minister must table the result in Parliament. In view of the enormity of a decision to implement such a referendum question, the Bill requires this can occur only if the Legislative Assembly then passes a resolution asking the Governor in Council to make a regulation to abolish the amalgamated area and reinstate the pre-existing areas. If the Legislative Assembly does not make the appropriate resolution within seven sitting days, the deamalgamation of the relevant local government area cannot proceed.

Due to the requirements under the joint roll agreement between the State and the Commonwealth for three months' notice to prepare electoral rolls based on new boundaries, it will be necessary for Parliament to have dealt with the referendum results by the middle of October 1996.

Stage 4 of the process deals with the situation where Parliament endorses the implementation of a deamalgamation proposal. The Bill provides that a regulation is to be made to abolish the existing amalgamated local government area, create new local government areas and make any necessary adjustments to external boundaries with adjoining local government areas in order to restore the external boundaries applying prior to amalgamation.

The Governor in Council is also empowered to make regulations in relation to the election of councillors for the reinstated local governments and the relevant electoral arrangements. The composition, divisional arrangements and assignment of members as

set out in the referendum electoral statements are basically to apply. Both sets of regulations would have application for the purpose of enabling all the procedural steps to be put in train to conduct fresh elections in 1997 and from the conclusion of those elections.

The Bill will also allow regulations to put in place the necessary arrangements for the transition of the amalgamated area to the old local government areas; for example, approving interim corporate structures for the new councils, appointment of acting chief executive officers and senior staff, the assignment of other staff, reorganisation of accommodation, systems and processes, etc. An independent person can be appointed under the regulations to undertake the tasks outlined above. The person would have the capacity to appoint staff or co-opt existing council staff for this purpose and be able to give directions to the council or its employees.

The regulation power is couched in terms that ensure there is a process by which a council has the capacity to object to the Minister against a direction by the independent person. In view of the considerable impact deamalgamation would have on certain adjoining local government areas, the Bill also enables the electoral arrangements for those areas to be rationalised in time for the 1997 elections. For example, if deamalgamation of the Burnett Shire was to occur, the City of Bundaberg would be significantly affected by the transfer of approximately 6,000 electors to the reinstated Gooburrum and Woongarra Shires. Bundaberg is currently divided into 10 divisions with one councillor assigned to each division.

The Bundaberg City Council has requested that it go undivided for the 1997 elections. This request is currently the subject of a reference made to the Local Government Commissioner. Even if this reference was fully implemented, it may be necessary to urgently review the electoral arrangements again if the deamalgamation of Burnett Shire was to occur. For example, the city council might want to reduce its composition. The Bill provides any such review must involve consultation with the relevant local governments and the consideration of the proposal by the Local Government Commissioner. However, because of the time constraints in the joint roll agreement, the normal statutory process for examining reviewable local government matters cannot apply.

A further regulation power has been included to deal with the administrative arrangements for the reinstated councils. For

example, the application of budgets, the transfer of assets and liabilities, the recovery of unpaid rates, the keeping of records, etc. Where a referendum for deamalgamation in the Cairns, Gold Coast and Ipswich areas is not approved but the referendum for an early election is approved, the Bill enables the Minister to seek the approval of the Governor in Council to an amending regulation bringing forward the elections for the existing councils to 1997.

The fifth and final stage in the process relates to holding a general election following a decision to deamalgamate. The Bill provides that the fresh election of any reinstated local government will be held at the same time as the next triennial elections of local governments. At this stage, the elections are to be held on Saturday, 30 March 1997. However, as this date falls on the Easter weekend, consideration is being given to fixing another election day in March.

The Bill also provides that the Minister may direct all the costs associated with the deamalgamation process for a particular local government area are to be met by the relevant local government. It is intended that all reasonable costs be either recovered from or be directly charged to the relevant local government.

Finally, because of the tight timelines and the unforeseen issues that can arise—for example, in adapting existing councillor electoral procedures to conducting a referendum—a reserve regulation power has also been inserted to vary those procedures or otherwise facilitate the holding of the referendum.

That concludes my description of the significant provisions under the Bill. The Bill is seen as providing a balanced and democratic approach to dealing with quite complex issues that have been of serious concern to many people affected by the forced amalgamations pushed through by the former Labor Government. I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Mackenroth, adjourned.

## **PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

### **Resumption of Committee**

Debate resumed from 17 April (see p. 620).

Hon. R. E. Borbidge (Surfers Paradise—Premier) in charge of the Bill.

Clause 3—

**Mr HAMILL** (11.51 a.m.): I could not help believing that the Premier's comments last night in answer to the Opposition's submissions in relation to this clause were somewhat gratuitous. The Premier made comments to the effect that the Opposition was being half-smart and opportunistic, and he suggested that the Government's proposal would ensure that the Opposition had a greater say in the committees of this place.

I thought that those comments were quite extraordinary and, in the same vein, the provisions in clause 3 are quite extraordinary. I also find it extraordinary that the Government believes that parliamentary committees should be denied the right to select their own chair. I would have thought that it is only fit and proper that the people who have been selected by this place to sit on committees should determine who chairs each committee. We do not need the mandate of the Leader of the House to choose the chair of a committee. I believe that the members of the six committees that are proposed are quite able to make that decision.

**Mr FitzGerald:** Ha, ha!

**Mr HAMILL:** I take the interjection of the Leader of the House, who chuckled at my suggestion that committee members are able to select their own chair. I would have thought that six members of this place are quite able to determine who should lead their committee. I am surprised that the Leader of the House thinks otherwise.

Last night the Premier said that the committee system of this place was the product of previous National Party Governments. I will go down memory lane in relation to the history of committees. In the almost 13 years that I have been a member of this place, I have made plenty of speeches about the committee system. I remember that I made quite a number of those speeches when I was previously in Opposition. I criticised most severely the absence of a properly formed committee system in this place. Indeed, it was only under the former Labor Government that committee work in this place really came into its own. I refer not only to the committees that were established to serve the then EARC committee and the Criminal Justice Committee but also to the very good work that was done by the Travelsafe Committee in particular, which was a committee established under the former Labor Government. The member for Archerfield played a very distinguished role in the good work of that committee.

Of course, the other area of committee work that blossomed under the former Government was the Estimates committees. I well remember the processes of this Parliament prior to the election of the Labor Government when it came to dealing with Budget Estimates. At that time, the Committee of the Whole was allowed to discuss only certain departmental Estimates in any one year. Those Estimates were selected in the same way as the Leader of the House wants to select the chair of committees—the Leader of the House, a member of the Government of the day, would tell us which Estimates we were allowed to debate.

That same sort of high-handedness is being demonstrated in relation to this provision. I am all for a strong committee system; I hope that all other members are as well. However, to provide, as this provision does, that the committees cannot select their own chair is very, very wrong indeed.

The other point that I want to raise relates to the other part of clause 3, which gives the Government's nominated chair of the committee two votes. It is quite extraordinary that in his comments last night the Premier should fall back and say that that was a recommendation of EARC. Yet not long ago, when the Opposition moved a motion that the Speaker should be able to exercise a deliberative vote, the Government would not have a bar of it. The Opposition had certainly not suggested giving the Speaker a deliberative vote, that is, giving that person a second vote by way of a casting vote. The Opposition made it very clear in its motion that the powers of the Speaker would be amended so that the Speaker should exercise one vote and one vote only, and that would be a deliberative vote.

In relation to what is proposed in this clause—we have the Premier posturing that it is all about giving the Opposition a greater say and greater clout in committees. However, what the clause means is, "We will make the numbers even on the committee, but we will give one of the Government's representatives two votes just to make sure that that even-handedness does not go too far." I believe that the proposition would have greater credibility if the Premier had just said, "We want seven votes exercised on the committees—four from the Government and three from the Opposition", which, of course, has been the state of play on committees in recent years. We do not need a proposition that tries to structure the committees in a way that truly gives the Government four votes on a committee and the Opposition three

votes—a proposition that has been tarted up to suggest that there is going to be equality of representation on committees.

Consequently, the Opposition feels very strongly about these matters. I hope that the Premier might reflect a little not on what he says but rather on his deeds and see that the proposition that is contained in the clause really does not meet the very high standards that he claims to have set for himself.

**Mr BORBIDGE:** I am becoming increasingly amazed by the antics of the members of the Opposition. We offer them new computer equipment and they want the broken stuff back; we offer them new office accommodation and they do not want it; and today we are offering them equal numbers on parliamentary committees and they do not want that either. I just cannot work out the twisted logic of the Labor Party.

I can only reiterate what I said in my second-reading speech in regard to the matters that have been raised last night and this morning, and that is that the proposal that a chairperson have a casting vote was recommended specifically by the Electoral and Administrative Review Commission in its report on the review of parliamentary committees. So we are doing what the umpire suggested. We are doing something that the Labor Party, when it was in Government, was not prepared to do. I refer again to paragraph 8.197 of the EARC report into parliamentary committees, which states—

"Furthermore the commission believes that the chair of a committee should have both a deliberative and, in the event of a tied vote, a casting vote. The commission has reached this conclusion on the basis that with small committees, which may or may not have even numbers of members, there is an increased likelihood of tied votes. In order to ensure the timely conclusion of committee business the chair should have the power to resolve tied votes."

The other matter that was raised—which I dealt with briefly in response to the honourable member for Ashgrove last night but which has been raised again today by the member for Ipswich—is the method of appointment of members to parliamentary committees.

For the information of all honourable members, I point out that overnight I canvassed those concerns with the Parliamentary Counsel. It is the view of the Parliamentary Counsel that, although the Leader of the House nominates the chairperson, it is the Parliament which decides

the issue. In other words, the way the Bill has been drafted is to ensure that the person who initiates the selection process is the Leader of the House by means of a nomination. However, the selection itself is by the House, because each of these committees are parliamentary committees and there is no intention at all to in any way diminish the traditional role of the House in this process. If I had received different advice, I would have been prepared to amend the Bill, but on the basis of information given to me and the statements I have now made to the Committee, I see no practical need for further action to be taken.

**Mr BEATTIE:** I reiterate the Opposition's position that we will be opposing this clause. The Premier's response does not overcome the concerns we have previously expressed.

We do not seek to change the Opposition's numbers on this committee, regardless of which party forms the Opposition, but we do seek to have the Government represented by four members, which is the current position. It is not a matter, as the Premier tries to imply, of giving us equal numbers at all. Under the power given to the chairman in terms of voting, we effectively have four-three, anyway.

**Mr Hamill:** Let us be honest about it.

**Mr BEATTIE:** Exactly, let us be honest about it. Let us not play games. Effectively, we have four-three, anyway. Our concern, as we said yesterday, is that when the numbers in this House change and they are not as close as they are now, the Government will have enshrined in legislation a disproportionate representation in relation to the committee system that will require legislative change. That is unnecessary, it is unworkable and it is unreasonable.

The Premier said that he finds our position hard to understand, but it is not hard to understand at all. The Premier says one thing, but then does something different. He trumpets the importance of FOI legislation in Opposition, and yet the Health Minister, Mr Horan, took all his briefing notes to Cabinet last Monday to avoid people gaining access to them under FOI legislation. The Premier talks about access, yet a week ago my driver was barred from access to the Premier's Department to collect material. That never happened under our Government. I suggest that the Premier looks at that issue. I find it pretty offensive when my driver cannot—

**Mr Borbidge:** I am not aware of that.

**Mr BEATTIE:** I appreciate that the Premier was not aware of it—I am not suggesting he was—but I think that it was unreasonable. One of my assistants had to walk a great distance with a lot of boxes. Those are the sorts of concerns that I have about what is said and what is delivered.

The Opposition will oppose this provision, because when we return to Government our committee system will be based on four-three, as it was during the Labor Government under Premier Goss. I am not prepared to support a position that I will not support when I am Premier.

**Mr J. H. SULLIVAN:** I support the comments of the Leader of the Opposition completely. However, I take offence at the suggestion by the Government that the committees themselves, as constituted in this Parliament, whether they be of equal numbers or of numbers that reflect the difference between Government and Opposition parties, could not properly elect a chairman, and, therefore, the Government feels it is necessary for the chairman to be elected in the first instance by the House.

I accept that the methodology, which the Premier checked overnight with the Parliamentary Counsel, is in fact an election of the chairman by the Legislative Assembly. Nevertheless, I believe strongly that it is the prerogative of committees to elect their own chairpersons. I suggest that the Premier give some thought to reviewing this matter. If he is going to deliver committees of equal numbers—which he is able to do without recourse to legislation—then he should give some thought to the suggestion that committees be left to determine who their chairpersons will be. If a committee is unable—without a casting vote, of course—to do anything other than to divide three-three on the matter, then the matter of electing a chair can be returned to the Parliament. I think that provides a greater respect for the people who are going to serve on committees and, particularly, a greater respect for members of the Opposition.

**Mr BORBIDGE:** Good try, but no.

**Question**—That clause 3, as read, stand part of the Bill—put, and the Committee divided—

**AYES, 43**—Baumann, Beanland, Borbidge, Connor, Cooper, Cunningham, Davidson, Elliott, FitzGerald, Gamin, Gilmore, Goss J. N., Grice, Harper, Healy, Hegarty, Hobbs, Horan, Johnson, Lester, Lingard, Littleproud, McCauley, Malone, Mitchell, Perrett, Quinn, Radke, Rowell, Santoro, Sheldon, Simpson, Slack, Stephan, Stoneman, Tanti, Turner, Veivers, Watson, Wilson, Woolmer *Tellers:* Springborg, Carroll

**NOES, 42**—Ardill, Barton, Beattie, Bird, Bligh, Braddy, Bredhauer, Briskey, Burns, Campbell, D'Arcy, Dollin, Edmond, Elder, Foley, Fouras, Gibbs, Goss W. K., Hamill, Hayward, Hollis, McElligott, McGrady, Mackenroth, Milliner, Mulherin, Nunn, Nuttall, Palaszczuk, Pearce, Purcell, Roberts, Robertson, Rose, Schwarten, Smith, Spence, Sullivan J. H., Welford, Wells *Tellers:* Livingstone, Sullivan T. B.

Pair: Warwick, Woodgate.

Resolved in the **affirmative**.

Clause 4—

**Mr BORBIDGE (12.12 p.m.):** I move the following amendment—

"At page 5, line 17—

*omit, insert—*

'(3) This Act (other than section 26) does not apply to the Criminal Justice Committee.'

Basically, the proposed amendment seeks to ensure that section 26, which deals with the privilege against self-incrimination, applies to the reconstituted Criminal Justice Committee. In moving this amendment, I inform the Committee that at this stage the Government's intention is simply to maintain the status quo with respect to section 26 in that it will apply to all relevant parliamentary committees. I appreciate that there are some concerns about section 26, some of which were expressed when the parliamentary committees legislation was debated last year. Therefore, I instructed officers of my department to review this provision to determine whether any further changes were required. At this stage, it would be premature to make a substantive change in the law in such a potentially important area without having all the implications being thought through. The same applies in respect of amendment No. 2, which will be moved consequential to this amendment.

**Mr BEATTIE:** Yesterday, members will recall that I signalled that I would be moving an amendment in the Chamber which removed the requirement of people appearing before the Criminal Justice Committee to answer questions that might lead to their giving self-incriminating evidence. I am pleased to see that the Government has picked up our suggestion. It could have simply accepted our amendment. However, I accept that the Premier has moved an amendment which, in effect, achieves what we sought to achieve. I thank him for that.

My concern about this provision is very simple. It is important for powerful parliamentary committees to be able to carry

out their work. However, the rights and freedoms of individuals need to be protected. The amendment moved by the Premier, which we support—and, as I said, it is identical to ours—does not remove the opportunity for the Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee or any other committee, when experiencing difficulty in obtaining answers from witnesses, to report the matter to the House so as to be given appropriate authority to direct a witness to answer questions.

I put on record that the honourable member for Gladstone, who is not in the Chamber, expressed a particular view in relation to that matter when it was raised in a similar Bill put forward by the Goss Government. I know from her previous voting pattern on such issues that she shares the view of the Opposition.

**Mr J. H. SULLIVAN:** I rise to speak not so much about the amendment but to express some concern with respect to the circumstances surrounding the origin of the amendment, and I wish to do so in a non-accusatory way. Nevertheless, the Opposition has some concerns. At 9.30 or thereabouts on the evening before last, the Opposition asked the Office of Parliamentary Counsel to draft the amendment mentioned earlier by the Leader of the Opposition. In its final form, that amendment arrived in the Parliament at 11.48 yesterday morning. At that stage, I assure the Parliament that the Table Office was not aware of any impending amendment to the legislation by the Opposition.

A reading of *Hansard* will show that, when the Leader of the Opposition spoke about this matter in his speech in the second-reading debate, the Leader of Government Business, Mr FitzGerald, by way of his interaction with the Leader of the Opposition, was also unaware that an amendment to this clause would be moved by the Government. At that time, Mr FitzGerald was listed to speak first on behalf of the Government. Shortly after those exchanges took place, Mr FitzGerald was noticed to go into the Minister's room in the company of a person who visited the Parliament at that time and has not been seen here during the ensuing debate. Two minutes later, an amendment surfaced trumping the Opposition's amendment.

Although at this stage I do not wish to accuse anybody of anything in particular, Mr Chairman, you can understand why members of the Opposition are somewhat concerned about the circumstantial evidence of an inappropriate train of events. I wish to flag that

concern and to indicate to the Premier that we will be watching for this sort of thing in the future. We have some concerns about the drafting of Government amendments and their timing. It would have been quite appropriate for the Premier to have accepted our amendment.

This morning, I reconfirmed that in the debate on the committee legislation in September the Premier moved six amendments, one of which was accepted by the Government and later enacted through a SLUMP Bill. It was accepted by the then Leader of the Opposition that one amendment would be dealt with in another way, and the four others were rejected. The rejected amendments essentially make up this amendment Bill. Although we have some concerns about the process, the Opposition will not oppose the Government's amendment.

**Mr CAMPBELL:** I wish to make some further comments in relation to my strong feelings about section 26 of the Act, which deals with the privilege against self-incrimination. I am also concerned about parliamentary privilege, especially as it applies to the Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee.

Under sections 94 and 96 of the Criminal Justice Act, the commission is given the power to compel witnesses to give evidence, yet the Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee does not have that power. This issue has been referred to in the past. I feel that it is totally unacceptable for the committee monitoring the commission not to be able to call witnesses and compel them to answer questions when it is conducting an inquiry—for example, an inquiry into Operation Wallah—given that the commission has such a power. In other words, the body that is monitoring the commission does not have as many powers as the body it is monitoring. That is an issue of importance to the Parliament. I know that undertakings in that regard have been made before. As to the Criminal Justice Committee—it is very important that we maintain that power for the good of the Parliament.

**Mr BORBIDGE:** In response to the matters raised by honourable members—the amendment that I have moved was first flagged with me by departmental officers yesterday morning. So I do not want to get into a petty argument as to who was first; that would be really silly. I believe this shows that there was concern amongst members on both sides of the Parliament in regard to this

matter. I say in all sincerity that I do appreciate the comments made by the Leader of the Opposition and the support of the Opposition in this regard. I am pleased to place that on the record. There was no conspiracy to defrock the Leader of the Opposition to stop him from moving an amendment. Basically, I think what happened was that the timing was probably roughly the same, as members on both sides of the Chamber acknowledged that an amendment along these lines would be desirable.

In respect of the matters raised by the honourable member for Bundaberg—I appreciate those concerns. I believe that they have legitimacy amongst members on both sides of the Chamber. As I indicated earlier, I have instructed my departmental officers to review this provision and to keep an eye on it so that, if necessary, and if there is discomfort amongst members on both sides of the Chamber or there is reason to further examine it in the future, we can bring it back and have subsequent discussion if it is necessary to attend to some of the concerns which the member for Bundaberg outlined.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 4, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 5, as read, agreed to.

Clause 6—

**Mr J. H. SULLIVAN** (12.22 p.m.): As I said in my contribution last September and again yesterday, I see no reason for this power to be in this Bill in terms of any committee. I refer to the amendments moved in September by the then Opposition Leader, Mr Borbidge. He moved a similar amendment to the Bill at that time. Having been assured by our then Premier, Mr Goss, that the matter would be dealt with in the resolutions of appointments of the committee the following day, in line with practice in Westminster tradition, he accepted that assurance and withdrew the amendment. Today, the amendment that Mr Borbidge foreshadowed at that time is now proposed as an amendment to this Bill. The only conclusion I can draw is that Mr Borbidge trusted Mr Goss more than he trusts himself, seeing as it will be him who will have control of drafting the resolutions of appointment.

**Mr Beattie:** You would understand that, surely.

**Mr J. H. SULLIVAN:** I can understand that, but I had not expected Mr Borbidge to admit it quite so readily. The position I took in September and again yesterday remains the

same: these are matters that can be dealt with adequately in the resolution of appointment of committees. I do not see the need for us to depart from the Westminster tradition to make these matters a statutory requirement.

**Mr BORBIDGE:** I never thought I would hear the day when the honourable member for Caboolture said he trusted me. I thank him for that character reference. We are seeking to apply consistency across all parliamentary committees. Notwithstanding the assurance given by the former Premier when this matter was last before the Assembly and my acceptance of that assurance, I felt that it was appropriate that it be determined formally by the Parliament so that those arrangements are written into law.

Clause 6, as read, agreed to.

Insertion of new clause—

**Mr BORBIDGE** (12.25 p.m.): I move the following amendment—

"At page 6, after line 3—

*insert—*

'Amendment of s 26 (Privilege against self-incrimination)

'6A. Section 26(1)—

*omit, insert—*

'26.(1) This section applies to a statutory committee, or another committee of the Legislative Assembly authorised by the Assembly or an Act to call for persons, documents and other things.'

This is consequential to the earlier amendment accepted by the Parliament.

Amendment agreed to.

New clause 6A, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 7 to 9, as read, agreed to.

Clause 10—

**Mr BEATTIE** (12.26 p.m.): I move the following amendment—

"At page 7, lines 12 to 27, and page 8, lines 1 to 6—

*omit."*

This amendment is consistent with our opposition to clause 3, which provides that the position in relation to the Criminal Justice Committee remain four-three numerically and that either a deliberative or casting vote not be given to the chairman. In other words, we are seeking to maintain the Criminal Justice Committee in its current form. This is really consequential to the amendment proposed in relation to clause 3.

I will not reiterate the arguments that I have previously put on the record in this debate other than to say that I believe that this Parliament needs to use the committee system to give all members, particularly new members entering the Parliament, experience in the workings of the committee system, an opportunity to participate in its processes, and to not only involve themselves in the particular assigned work of the committee but also to hear evidence, take submissions and consult with the various people who appear before that committee.

I have been on public record in this Chamber on many occasions saying that the parliamentary committee system is one of the most educative things that members in this House can participate in, particularly in their formative stages after their election to the Parliament. That is why I believe it is important that as many members of the Assembly as possible have an opportunity to serve on parliamentary committees.

Increasing the Government representation to four advances in this particular committee the opportunity for one more person to serve on a parliamentary committee. That view relates consistently to all other parliamentary committees. I accept that the Premier does not support our view, but it is a view that we strongly hold. When we return to Government the composition of the Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee will be amended. There will be changes, and it will be returned to the four-three position that we have advocated here.

It would be remiss of me if I did not remind the Premier of the debate that was held recently about a private member's Bill which I introduced in relation to the voting ability of the Speaker. The Premier would be aware that on that occasion we took a different view. I am disappointed that the Premier is taking a different view—

**Mr FitzGerald** interjected.

**Mr BEATTIE:** I realise that the Government also took a different view. Both the Premier and the Leader of Government Business know exactly what occurred during that debate. They may sit there smiling like Cheshire cats, but they know exactly what I mean.

**Mr J. H. Sullivan:** If the candidate changed they might reintroduce that.

**Mr FitzGerald:** Will you support him now for Speaker?

**Mr BEATTIE:** If the honourable member for Ashgrove were the Speaker, we

would be quite happy to do that. If the Leader of Government Business is today indicating support for the return of the honourable member for Ashgrove to the Speakership, then we welcome that support. The honourable member for Ashgrove may not be sitting in his current seat for much longer. The Honourable the Speaker, who is no doubt in his chambers listening to this debate, would be less than impressed with all of us!

**Mr FitzGerald** interjected.

**Mr BEATTIE:** The member for Nicklin will come and vote.

**Mr Fouras:** I want him to relax over his lunch.

**Mr BEATTIE:** Yes, I am sure.

There is a need for consistency in these matters. We are demonstrating consistency. I conclude my remarks by saying that in my view the Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee was given one of the most important tasks of all in the recommendations of the Fitzgerald report. I believe that the committee deserves special consideration in these matters, which is why we have persisted with this amendment.

**Mr BORBIDGE:** It is interesting that the Leader of the Opposition indicates that the Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee deserves special consideration. I remind the honourable gentleman that it was his Government which abolished it.

**Mr BEATTIE:** I cannot let that cheap jibe go. The Premier is the master of cheap jibes. He is well aware that I have consistently been a supporter of the Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee.

**Mr Bredhauer:** You should have been here yesterday and heard his speech.

**Mr BEATTIE:** Had the Premier been here yesterday, he would have heard me explain clearly the democratic processes and the wonderful way in which they operate within the great democratic party that I have the privilege of leading in this place. I have made it very clear that my consistent support for the Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee since I was the inaugural chairman has not changed, nor will it.

**Question—**That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the clause—put; and the Committee divided—

**AYES, 43—**Baumann, Beanland, Borbidge, Connor, Cooper, Cunningham, Davidson, Elliott, FitzGerald, Gamin, Gilmore, Goss J. N., Grice, Harper, Healy, Hegarty, Hobbs, Horan, Johnson, Lester, Lingard, Littleproud, McCauley, Malone, Mitchell, Perrett,

Quinn, Radke, Rowell, Santoro, Sheldon, Simpson, Slack, Stephan, Stoneman, Tanti, Turner, Veivers, Watson, Wilson, Woolmer *Tellers:* Springborg, Carroll

**NOES, 42**—Ardill, Barton, Beattie, Bird, Bligh, Braddy, Bredhauer, Briskey, Burns, Campbell, D'Arcy, Dollin, Edmond, Elder, Foley, Fouras, Gibbs, Goss W. K., Hamill, Hayward, Hollis, McElligott, McGrady, Mackenroth, Milliner, Mulherin, Nunn, Nuttall, Palaszczuk, Pearce, Purcell, Roberts, Robertson, Rose, Swarten, Smith, Spence, Sullivan J. H., Welford, Wells, *Tellers:* Livingstone, Sullivan T. B.

Pair: Warwick, Woodgate

Resolved in the **affirmative**.

Clause 10, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 11 to 13, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, with amendments.

### Third Reading

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

## DEBATE ON ADDRESS IN REPLY

### Sessional Order

**Mr FITZGERALD** (Lockyer—Leader of Government Business) (12.40 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

"That for the remainder of this day's sitting the debate on the Address in Reply may resume until 5 p.m. and shall count as three quarters of an allotted day."

Motion agreed to.

## ADDRESS IN REPLY

### Fourth Allotted Day

**Mr DOLLIN** (Maryborough) (12.40 p.m.), continuing: In the run-up to and during the last State election, the Minister for Police, Mr Cooper, was a very regular visitor to Maryborough. On every visit he pointed out how understaffed Maryborough's police services were. In fact, the National Party candidate promised 65 police officers if the coalition was elected. Well, the coalition was elected. It is now the Government, and it should keep its promise. I will not hold the new Minister to the 65 officers promised by the National Party candidate, but I do ask him to replace his rhetoric with action and appoint six extra officers as soon as possible. The citizens of the Maryborough electorate are watching and will judge this Government and this Minister according to whether they keep their promises.

Another achievement of the Goss Labor Government was the establishment of one of the best travel terminals outside Brisbane. Prior to that, two large fig trees sufficed as the Maryborough travel terminus. Can honourable members imagine waiting for a bus on a wet winter's night under a dripping fig tree?

The first Government office to be established in Maryborough in over 50 years was built at a cost of some \$2.9m and now houses the regional education office and the Environment and Heritage Department. A regional office to house the Department of Family Services is nearing completion and the Wide Bay regional laundry is expected to be completed this month at a cost of \$5.5m. That laundry will service Bundaberg, Hervey Bay, Monto, Gayndah, Biggenden, Childers and perhaps Gympie hospitals. On completion, the laundry will be the most modern and hygienic in Queensland.

Some \$7m was invested in Maryborough Base Hospital over the first two terms of the Labor Government, \$2m on a new maternity facility. The former Government had little option on that as Maryborough specialists had refused to practise in the old Lady Musgrave maternity facility that the Goss Government inherited. One specialist, Dr Stokes, was reported in the media as saying that a mother and child would certainly die if something was not done about the hygiene and the 30 minutes it took in an emergency to transfer a mother from the maternity unit to the operating theatre. Caesarean section mothers were bypassing Maryborough for Bundaberg and Brisbane to give birth. This was taking place under the good old hospitals board system to which we appear to be returning.

A further \$5m was spent on new equipment such as a new X-ray machine. The old one was about the same vintage as a 6/20 Brownie camera. I was rather shocked when I had the need of an X-ray. The operator lined me up, then went outside with a button in his hand attached to a long cord, shut the door and pressed the button. That did not instil me with much confidence as to how safe was the procedure. That took place under the good old National Party and the old hospitals board system.

Maryborough Base Hospital did not have an ultrasound machine; now it has one of the latest. Nor did it have the laparoscopic equipment required to perform key-hole surgery; now it has state-of-the-art equipment. A third operating theatre has been established. As one theatre must be on stand-by at all times, the new theatre doubles the

hospital's operating capability. Most of the hospital has been repainted and recurtained. The staff were involved in the selection of colour schemes and curtains, and they did an excellent job. The wards are now bright and cheerful, in stark contrast to the drab, grey, peeling paint that we inherited from the Nationals and the hospitals board.

A further \$9m was allocated from the last Goss Budget for further upgrading of the Maryborough Base Hospital. Stage 1, which was the total refurbishment of the old Lady Musgrave Unit to a Community Health Centre costing \$1.2m, is completed and was occupied by community health officers two weeks ago. When fully staffed, that centre will house an in-patient rehabilitation unit, a pharmacy unit, an operating day procedure unit, a medical records unit, a rehabilitation day hospital, a geriatric assessment unit, a community health unit, a library and education unit, and most importantly the long-awaited soundproof room for the testing of the hearing impaired. For many years, people with hearing impairment had to travel to Brisbane for that facility.

A new ambulance centre was planned and funded in the last Goss Budget at an estimated \$800,000. That was planned to be commenced this June. I hope it has not been caught up in the Treasurer's freeze, as the ambulance officers are working out of terrible accommodation: an old hospital ward with a lean-to for ambulance vehicle accommodation. That has been the case for the past 30 years under the Nationals and the good old hospitals board.

Talking about the good old hospitals board pre-1989, the Minister for Health should familiarise himself with some of the goings on at the Maryborough Base Hospital and the Wairoonga Nursing Home by reading a report that I will table for his benefit. That is a report of an inquiry into those matters following a request that I made to the then Health Minister, the Honourable Ken McElligott, because of the dozens of very serious allegations reported to me about some of the staff, the management and the board, the latter being described by my constituents as useless. They stated that when they complained about the terrible treatment waged against their relatives, they were told by the management and the board that, if they were not happy about the treatment that their mothers, fathers, brothers or sisters were receiving at the home, they should take them home and stop complaining. I will give honourable members a brief of some of the treatment that was being dealt out to those

helpless people, which is merely the tip of the iceberg. The report of the inquiry undertaken in December 1990 states—

"The complaints covered a wide spectrum ranging from cold showers through delays in provision of medical aid to callous, vicious treatment of inmates."

**Mr Elliott:** Why didn't you raise this with the former Health Minister.

**Mr DOLLIN:** The former Health Minister conducted the inquiry and we did a lot about it; it is not like that any more. If the honourable member listens quietly, I will tell him how it has changed. The report continues—

"Relatives complain of old lazy staff. Patients are propped up in bed and in chairs.

Numerous people have complained about seeing patients falling out of chairs and not being picked up for some hours. Despite these witnesses approaching staff and requesting assistance. One lady informed us when she approached the staff who were busy playing cards she was told to"—

ping off. It further states—

"Almost all complaints have referred to bumps and bruises and cuts on patients from rough handling.

Patients within days of death are being forced to feed, shower and care for themselves.

No-one cuts up any meals for the patients. If incapable mostly they just don't eat."

These complaints are recorded in the report that I have just tabled, if any honourable member wants to read it. The report continues—

"Previous staff who claim they have left because they could not instigate any changes in the place claim patients are stripped in their rooms and wheeled in their chairs to showers down corridors etc. totally naked, showered, then brought back to their rooms naked and dressed again.

Almost all calls including staff have told of people being given cold showers if they wet the bed. It is widely claimed that buzzers are out of patients' reach so they can't ring them. Hence they soil themselves. When discovered by staff hours later, they were yelled at and given these showers. Others claim patients with false teeth have them removed if they are

naughty as punishment making eating difficult."

**Mr Nunn:** All under the old hospitals board system.

**Mr DOLLIN:** All under the old hospitals board system.

The report continues—

"Others claim they have witnessed people ring buzzers for literally hours before they received attention."

The report contains many more complaints, and I recommend that the Minister and honourable members take time to read the report that I have just tabled.

This, honourable members, is what the Goss Labor Government inherited from the National Party Government in 1989 and the good old hospital board of that time. I ask: is this what we are going back to—back to central control and boards? I certainly hope not.

A high priority for Granville residents is the widening of the Granville bridge, which was also planned and financed in the last Goss Budget. That project needs to be completed urgently before there is another casualty. I have been given an undertaking by the Minister for Transport and Main Roads that this project will start this month—a month later than was scheduled, but better late than never. On behalf of the Granville residents, I thank him for that.

The proposed start of the Tinana bus service keeps retreating month by month. It is frustrating Tinana residents to no end as they are without any public transport whatsoever. I fail to understand why it has taken over 12 months to organise a simple bus run.

I bring to the attention of the Minister for Transport and Main Roads that the No. 1 priority for 90 per cent of Maryborough electors is a successful result in freeing up the redundant QR land for a major shopping complex. Three developers are rearing to go. I say to the Minister that it just needs a little oil in the right place. The Mayor of Maryborough and I have met with the Minister for Transport, Mr Johnson, and he has given a commitment to come to Maryborough and look into this matter first-hand. I sincerely thank him for this and I am sure that the great majority of Maryborough citizens will also thank him.

I take this opportunity to remind the Premier and the Treasurer, Mrs Sheldon, of the commitment that they gave Maryborough during the last State election campaign and that was that, on attaining Government, they

would grant \$3m up front towards a community entertainment centre in Walker Street. I am sure that that is a promise that they will fulfil very soon.

To sum up, Maryborough has prospered over the last six years through the good management of the Goss Labor Government across a wide spectrum of industry and Government services. In my opinion, two areas of great achievement are education and health. I am certain that we would not have witnessed or achieved anything like the great leap forward that we had in health had we not got rid of the old Maryborough hospital board and replaced it with the Wide Bay Regional Health Authority. I thank the director of the Wide Bay Regional Health Authority, Mr Paul Kelly, and all of his staff for the great progress they achieved at the Maryborough Base Hospital during their short reign of management. I wish them well in the future.

I ask the Minister for Health to read carefully the report that I have tabled so that he is fully aware of the mess to which the Maryborough Base Hospital had degenerated, and to note the composition of the board in that period. I ask him to be very careful when he is appointing a new board. Neither I nor my constituents want to see the now good services that are being delivered at the Maryborough Base Hospital back to anything like they were prior to 1990. I am very pleased that the Minister for Health is in the Chamber. I am sure that he has heard what I said. If he reads the report that I have tabled, I am sure that he will find that everything in it is factual. The report was compiled in the right manner, setting out the witnesses to the events.

Debate interrupted.

## PRIVILEGE

### Opposition's Computer System

**Mr BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—Leader of the Opposition) (12.52 p.m.): I rise on a matter of privilege. In question time this morning the Premier misled the House by saying that the computer software program, Pagemaker, had been loaded on to the Opposition's computer system.

Officers of the Premier's Department were in the Opposition's offices yesterday. They confirmed at that time that Pagemaker was not available on the system. This information was further confirmed by officers of the Premier's Department at about the same time that the Premier was on his feet in the House this morning. This program has not at any time been available following the departure of the

coalition along with the computer hard drives from the Opposition offices. Staff who were to appear this morning in the offices of the Opposition to attend to matters including missing equipment have not yet arrived.

I understand that the Ministerial Services Branch is currently at war with the Ministers because of their spending. This should not in any way affect the return of equipment to Opposition offices.

## ADDRESS IN REPLY

### Fourth Allotted Day

Debate resumed.

**Mr MALONE**, continuing: I take pleasure in rising to join in the debate on the adoption of the Address in Reply. Mr Deputy Speaker, before doing so, I congratulate you on your appointment as Chairman of Committees and I wish you well in that role. I would also like to congratulate Mr Speaker on his progression to the high office of Speaker of the House. I am sure that he will bring to that office a sense of history, pride and integrity. I would also like to wish him a long sojourn in that position.

In rising to join in the debate on the adoption of the Address in Reply, I pledge my loyalty and that of the citizens of the Mirani electorate to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. In doing so, I express the hope that she will remain Queen of Australia for many years to come. I also express my loyalty to the Governor of Queensland and hope that the office will be maintained for many years to come under its present constitutional arrangements.

I must say that I am very pleased that the Borbidge Government has tackled head-on the source of the real problems of the previous Goss administration in relation to the provisions of services to Queenslanders and to take real counsel from local sections of the community. It will take some time for ordinary people—mums and dads, workers and business people—to get back to believing that the elected representatives, and consequently the Government, are mindful of their concerns and are willing to do something about it.

The abolition of the Office of the Cabinet will go a long way towards helping the community overcome its fear of big Government rolling on and rolling over the community's concerns and needs. The setting up in Townsville of the Office of Premier with branch offices in regional areas, including Mackay and Cairns, will enable people in north Queensland to have direct access to the

Premier's Department to discuss any problems that may arise from time to time, particularly in relation to Government departments. This initiative will enable the Government not only to be pro-active in local government representation but also to foster development and employment opportunities throughout this northern region of the State. The Deputy Director-General of the Premier's Department will be based in Townsville. The office will have full support staffing and will be represented by senior Government member Mark Stoneman, who now holds the position of Parliamentary Secretary. The office will have sufficient resources and manpower to represent all of those provincial areas for the Premier. Mark is and always has been a long-term advocate for the progression and development of north Queensland so that it realises its full potential in all areas, such as tourism, minerals, industry and rural pursuits.

The electorate of Mirani is well positioned to take advantage of these arrangements. Coalmining developments inland will have a major effect on the shipping of coal through the dual coal ports of Hay Point and Dalrymple Bay. Already, that complex is one of the world's largest coal ports and currently rivals Richard's Bay in South Africa as the world's largest coal port. The expansion of Hay Point and Dalrymple Bay will ensure that this complex will be one of the great ports of the world.

In many areas, the Mirani electorate has tremendous potential for development and employment opportunities. The new Department of Economic Development and Trade will help to achieve that. Currently, a number of manufacturers, light and heavy, are developing overseas contacts in order to move into the area. In particular, the mining industry is leading the way with innovative, imaginative products and processes.

I was pleased to note in the Governor's Speech that there will be the implementation of contemporary planning and approval systems that will be responsive to the aspirations of the community for ecologically sustainable development. It will also respect investors' requirements for planning certainty and the timely response to applications for development approvals. Appropriate provision will be made to planning approval legislation and impact assessment procedures. Approvals management will also be reviewed. That step alone will have a tremendous streamlining effect on the progression of development in my region. Quite a large percentage of calls received in my electorate office relate to the concerns of investors,

project office managers and developers in relation to delays, stonewalling and unclear guidelines, particularly in local government matters. I can nominate a number of investors who have been disadvantaged by hundreds of thousands of dollars and others who have decided that the pain is not worth the effort and have taken their money and their expertise elsewhere. Our region will move ahead quickly if those problems can be overcome.

The provision of additional funds to assist people who have disabilities and their carers, particularly those supporting people who have intellectual disabilities, will benefit those who need it most. The extension of the Seniors Card concessions will be a major benefit to many of those in our community who have worked hard all their lives and who are in need of some support in their later years.

Sitting suspended from 1 to 2.30 p.m.

**Mr MALONE:** Discussion on law matters are a high priority in my electorate, as in many others. The two-man police station in the Pioneer Valley is operating with one officer, with little hope of relief for sick leave or holiday leave, which results in the station being closed for the required period. Understaffing is also a major concern in the Mackay station. Sometimes only a single squad car is available for busy periods during the weekend, particularly on Friday and Saturday nights.

It is pleasing that the Government is committing an additional 2,780 police to be in place by the Year 2005. The Government has given a commitment to provide a recruit training centre in Townsville, to be opened in 1996, and to build a north Queensland police academy. This commitment will meet the future needs and demands of the public for more well-trained police to curb the ongoing and increasing crime rate, and will give our citizens a sense of safety within the community. The cost of this commitment is \$1.1 billion.

It is also pleasing to see a commitment to empower the courts to be able to sentence multiple and repeat murderers to a minimum number of years' imprisonment which will exceed the mandatory minimum of 20 years. Some horrific crimes have occurred over the last few years, and the animals that perpetrate these crimes should be well and truly aware that the party is over. If they do the crime they will have to do the time. Another innovation is the empowering of the courts to require the parents of a child appearing on criminal charges to appear before the court, too, and

contribute up to \$5,000 towards restitution in appropriate cases.

In the area of education—it is interesting to listen to the comments of teachers and principals in relation to the direction that the new Government has taken. The comment that I most frequently hear is that there appears to be a focus on getting teachers back to teaching; there seems to be a focus on the basics; there seems to be a focus on minimising the programs that are non-productive and pushing the programs that will encourage students to achieve their maximum individual potential. Programs such as SPS and LOTE have merit, but they must be able to be integrated into the school community without causing a negative impact and tailored to maximise positive aspects so that there is a definite enhancement to our school environment. Most teachers indicate that Language Other Than English programs should be available in primary schools but should only be offered on a voluntary basis. Emphasis and support should be given to students who are having problems with the English language. It will take time, and there is much still to do, but the focus will be turned around.

In Sarina, the centre of my electorate, the high school has been lacking a basic undercover area for many years. Since my election almost two years ago, I have made several representations to Education Ministers to have this anomaly corrected. It is a particularly important facility, considering the climatic conditions and the connection with skin cancer in that area. Sarina is in the tropics, and under the current environment of duty of care we must take good care of our young charges.

In the interests of fair play, I must say that \$230,000 was set aside by the previous Government for this facility. The facility which could be built for that money was an open multi-function complex, measuring 14 metres by 19 metres, designed by Project Services. The unfortunate fact about this scenario is that even now a building of that size cannot hold the full complement of students, let alone the staff, for a school assembly. The school is showing a steady increase in enrolments, and it will not be too long before a building of this size will be obsolete—perhaps even before it is built. The school community is keen to ensure that the building is acquired and that it meets the long-term needs of the school. I know the Minister understands the position and I will continue to consult with him.

Project Services have quoted \$230,000 as the cost of building the desired facility, which would measure 14 metres by 19 metres. The school's P & C has been very pro-active in this situation and it has actually obtained a private quote for a building that is roughly twice as big—20 metres by 40 metres. The quote that it obtained was \$170,000. This private firm can construct a building with similar specifications to that of the building proposed by Project Services, although twice as big, for approximately \$30,000 to \$35,000 less. That is rather interesting.

Again, rural industries are facing a tough year, with a wet season that has been a non-event. Most areas have had little rain since January and the country is very dry, as most honourable members would be well aware. Of course, with the downturn in cattle prices, graziers are facing a potential disaster. Sale yard prices have fallen by 40 per cent to 50 per cent in the last six months, and a dry season is forcing extra cattle onto the market at give-away prices. The position is untenable, as the industry was barely viable before the downturn. Honourable members could relate to losing up to 50 per cent of their salary with no sure knowledge of when the position will turn around. I am sure that most honourable members would be sympathetic to that case.

The sugar industry, the backbone of my electorate, is a little better off with reasonable prices over the last few years, but the price now seems to be firmly in a downward trend. From a high of around 15c two years ago, the current price is around 11.5c, and that has happened in the last two years. One must remember that while there has been a considerable reduction in price of about 25 per cent, there has been a very considerable increase in big ticket items or input costs to the industry, such as the basics of fuel and fertiliser. Over the last two years, these costs have increased by as much as 25 per cent and 30 per cent. These trends are not encouraging for the industry, and continuing dry weather in the sugar industry south of Townsville is certainly adding to those concerns.

The Sugar Industry Review Committee has been constituted under the Sugar Industry Act. The chairman of that committee is Sir Eric Neal, who comes to the position with very high credentials. Members of the committee include Harry Bonano, representing the canegrowers; Ron Verri, representing the Australian Cane Farmers Association; Graham Davies, representing the Australian Sugar Milling Council; and representatives from DPIE in Canberra and Queensland DPI. While

reviewing the Act, the committee must also take into consideration the effect of competition reforms—the Hilmer national competition policy. Hopefully, the industry can demonstrate that positive aspects of community benefits can overcome some perceived negative aspects of limited competition and maintain the single-desk seller through control of the Queensland Sugar Corporation.

Even though the sugar industry has been through more inquiries in the last few years than any other industry—and perhaps if I was a little cynical I would say that that is because the industry is so successful—it is very important that this inquiry continues. The Government strongly supports the continuation of the inquiry to enable the industry to proceed once and for all without the threat of continued and costly investigations.

Since the change of Government nearly six weeks ago, I have been pleased to announce a number of funding commitments. The Mackay Hockey Association was the recipient of \$360,000 for the development of a synthetic superfield built to an Olympic standard. With public subscription, that funding will enable the building of a complex worth \$900,000 which will cater for more than 1,500 players in the Mackay region which extends up to Bowen, out to Moranbah and down to Rockhampton. I was pleased to have the support of Rob Mitchell, the member for Charters Towers, to convince the Minister, Mr Veivers, of the potential of this project. I thank Mr Veivers for his understanding in this matter.

Another major funding commitment of this Government has been the provision of \$786,000 for the supply of water to the small coastal township of Armstrong Beach. Because of the sand-based aquifer and the soakage-type systems in place in that township—the only available water being from sand bores—the high E coli levels made the water unsuitable for human consumption. The project has been on hold for a number of years. We were not able to convince the former Labor Government that it was a priority. After a representation to the Minister for Local Government and Planning, Di McCauley, this project was able to proceed. I wish to thank the Minister for that.

Because of the gagging of the Address In Reply debate during the last session of Parliament, I have not had the opportunity to thank the electors of Mirani for their support at the State election on 15 July. I thank my friends, supporters and family for their help in

the lead-up to the election. I am pleased to say that they were not disappointed with the result. I reaffirm my dedication to serving the electors of Mirani to the very best of my ability.

**Mr FOURAS** (Ashgrove) (2.41 p.m.): All children have the fundamental right to a safe, caring and nurturing environment in which to grow up. For some, their parents are unable or unwilling to care for them. Therefore, the State has the responsibility to intervene and protect these children. However, all too often the State fails to protect the very children and young people who, through no fault of their own, have been placed in its care.

The Australian Association for Young People in Care Committee estimates that up to seven out of every ten young people in the care of the State have experienced abuse and neglect after they have been brought into the child welfare system. After the State has intervened, seven out of ten young people have experienced abuse and neglect. The States' failure to meet their statutory obligations to protect children from neglect and exploitation is horrendous. Under their own legislation, all of the States are guilty of neglecting and exploiting young people. Ultimately, the sources of child abuse and neglect are the attitudes which view children as possessions or as social and economic burdens. Parents have duties to children, not rights—just as owners have duties to dogs.

I was involved with the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission report, the Burdekin report, which stated that the process of children coming into care or attempts to have a child committed to care provided a clear path to homelessness. So the State system provides a path to children becoming homeless. That is the failure of this system. In 1988, the Queensland Government submitted to that inquiry, of which I was a member—

"Many young homeless have been or still are subject to statutory child welfare orders for reasons of care and protection (after abuse or neglect), offending or because of status."

So the Government itself said then that children under its control are in danger of becoming homeless. The inquiry concluded that State welfare authorities, poorly resourced by States Governments, have generally not been able to fulfil their statutory obligations for children in need of care and protection.

Mr Graham Zerk, the Director of the Department of Children's Services, in 1984, reported to the Parliament that—

"Child-care officers have become concerned at the rising incidence of child

abuse and neglect with a doubling of child protection notifications and also almost a trebling of the numbers relating to sexual abuse."

Mr Zerk then made the startling conclusion that departmental child-care officers were finding it increasingly difficult to meet the department's statutory responsibilities. That was in 1984. The homeless children inquiry in 1989 said exactly the same thing. The Burdekin report was highly critical of the role of the State in caring for the children for whom it is responsible. The report concluded—

"The failure of the States . . . both to provide appropriate nurture and support to children committed to, and leaving their care, is a serious indictment on the willingness and capacity of those authorities"—

**Mr Veivers:** What about the laws regarding the parents of these children?

**Mr FOURAS:** The member for Southport! I could talk to the Minister later about this. Would the Minister mind? This is a serious topic.

**Mr Veivers:** I'm asking you serious questions and you can't answer them.

**Mr FOURAS:** The honourable member can talk to me outside later.

The report continued—

". . . is a serious indictment on the willingness and capacity of those authorities to properly discharge their legal and social responsibilities. Children between 12 and 15 or 16 years of age are particularly ill-served. The States are ill-equipped or unwilling to offer appropriate services and the Commonwealth regards the matter as a State responsibility. These children fall through the nets of support, inadequate as they may be, extended by the State and Federal Governments."

Coming later in 1995 was the Morris report for the Commonwealth Government. It found—

". . . the increasing evidence of youth homelessness is connected to the inability of State welfare departments to provide adequate care for adolescents."

In evidence to that committee, the Department of Social Security stated—

"Another cause for concern is the number of young people aged 13 and 14 years approaching the Department for income support. These cases clearly highlight the withdrawal of State Welfare

Departments which previously would have supported many of these young people in institutional care.

Developments within child welfare philosophy and practice have changed the extent to which the State intervenes in the lives of children and families.

Many of the children who are now seen on the street, or housed in refuges, are children that in the past years would have been institutionalised, fostered or subject to State supervision orders.

What we have a Buckleys choice—a choice between the unpalatable 'Court wardships' model and the barely less than unpalatable option of leaving young people to fend for themselves."

While I do not support a return to institutional care, or for that matter increasing the numbers of children made wards of the State, there is serious and considerable concern about the vacuum in care options for many people, in particular adolescents. The withdrawal of State Government services for 12 to 16-year-olds was reiterated by the findings of Justice Fogerty from the Family Court. He said—

"Young people move from placement to placement without any State control and influence and have really been abandoned by the State."

In 1995, the Morris report stated—

"It is particularly disturbing that in six years since the release of the Burdekin report, little, if anything, has improved."

The evidence given to the Morris committee about the care and protection of young adolescents is a shocking indictment of the child welfare system in Australia.

With the deinstitutionalisation process that went on through the 1970s, the baby was thrown out with the bathwater, because deinstitutionalisation was not followed up with the necessary alternative of community support for families and adolescents. During the Morris inquiry, the committee was told of the numbers of State wards who were either in SAAP—such as refuges, medium-term accommodation services—or were homeless. Although there has been a sharp decline in the number of children and young people subject to orders for guardianship and control, these young people are highly represented in the numbers of homeless.

The Morris committee recommended that the Commonwealth and State Governments immediately establish funding arrangements for the extension of adolescent and family

therapy and mediation services in a national program as a preventive measure for young people leaving home prematurely, and further recommended that this be fully implemented within three years. The committee also said that the Commonwealth and State Governments should institute a national family policy which would include a family support services program.

One should note that, in 1988, tied grants to the States for family support from the Commonwealth were untied by the Commonwealth with the result that these funds were not directed by the States to family support programs.

Families under stress are a serious problem in our society. Some people often say that children and young people leave home, but in most cases home leaves them. Support for families under stress should be the major focus for preventing child abuse.

**Mr Veivers:** But the Labor Party makes them leave home. It gives them \$126 a week to leave home when they are 13.

**Mr FOURAS:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I ask for your protection from the Minister for Emergency Services.

Adolescence is a natural crisis period in the lives of children and their families. The difficulties experienced can be exacerbated by family poverty, youth unemployment, difficulties at school, absence of an extended family or community to assist parents through the crisis, and lack of accessible services in the community, including counselling, to assist the family. Family support services should be available to vulnerable families so that they are assisted with the task of child rearing. The Burdekin inquiry points to prevention programs and early intervention as the best options.

The former Government, in the last Budget, provided an \$8m package for this year, with the package to be continued for the next two years. It was intended to go hand in glove with what was proposed to be the new child protection Act. I ask the Minister to tell me how this allocated \$8m is being used. In my view, we should have parent centres for families experiencing difficulties. We should have improved State intervention in line with the proposed child protection legislation, as well as additional support for community groups and additional support and supervision for child-care workers.

One of the problems we have in our system is that child-care workers get burned out. It is about time we did something about that. I hope that this is not one of the cutbacks

by Sheldon. I do not think that we can afford in this day and age to cut back on such a program.

The current legislation to protect children in this State is now 30 years old. It was enacted in 1965. It is time to get away from the current divide of bad parents and good parents. It is time to get away from care and protection orders—the punitive approach—and locking up children for status offences.

**Mr Veivers:** You wouldn't have had this trouble if Justice Murphy hadn't let it all loose.

**Mr FOURAS:** By "status offences", I mean things such as substance abuse, promiscuity and so on, which would not be regarded as crimes if they were committed by Mr Veivers. Those children are getting locked up for things that Mr Veivers does every day of the week. It is time for a move into—

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr FOURAS:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I am trying to make a speech. I am not talking to Mr Veivers. Mr Deputy Speaker, I ask that you give me the right to speak in this Chamber.

It is time for a move into family support and early intervention. At the moment there is a heightened awareness of child abuse. With that comes the expectation that Governments will do more. But honourable members should not hold their breath about that.

**Mr Veivers** interjected.

**Mr FOURAS:** I would like to say to Mr Veivers that if he did not trivialise what I was saying I would take his interjections, but he does not know what he is talking about. If he had an idea of what I was talking about, I would take his interjections.

Let me have a look at the statistics. State and Territory welfare departments received 74,436 reports of child abuse and neglect during 1993-94, representing an increase of 26 per cent over the figure of the previous year. Of those, 64,787, or 87 per cent, were finalised. Of the 28,711 substantiated cases, 29 per cent related to physical abuse, 27 per cent to emotional abuse, 25 per cent to neglect and 19 per cent to sexual abuse. The number of cases reported increased by 75 per cent over the past five years, while the number substantiated increased by 46 per cent. For substantiated cases of physical and sexual abuse, there were more boys than girls in each age group for pre-teenage children. However—and this is important—more teenage girls than teenage boys were the subject of substantiated cases of physical and sexual abuse, with the highest number involving girls aged 13 and 14. So according

to the statistics, the biggest number of cases of physical and sexual abuse involve 13 and 14-year-old girls. What are we seeing from the evidence? States right around Australia are totally neglecting that 12 to 16-year age group. They are letting the streets look after them. Both the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission report and the Morris report stated quite unequivocally that those groups were being totally neglected; that they had Buckley's chance, which is no chance at all.

I would like to talk about some of the things that we need to do. We need a national strategy to prevent child abuse and neglect. The Commonwealth Government has signed a convention on the rights of the child. In relation to abuse and exploitation, the convention states—

"The State shall protect children from all forms of physical and sexual abuse, neglect or exploitation, including child prostitution and participation in child pornography, and all other forms of exploitation prejudicial to the child's welfare."

That refers to Articles 19, 34 and 36. It is about time that we actually accepted our responsibility.

**Mr Veivers:** Don't tell me about responsibility.

**Mr FOURAS:** People such as the member for Southport, a Minister of the Crown, are trying to say that this is an anti-parent thing. As I said, parents have duties, not rights. That statement says that we should protect families. That is very important. We should have a national child abuse and neglect policy. We also need some standards of accreditation. For example, we have standards of accreditation for child-care workers all over Australia, but we do not have standards for people who look after children in care. Why not? We are told that children in institutions are being abused; that at some stage or another seven out of ten children who come within the control of the State are abused. Therefore, there is a need for accreditation for all groups—whether they be church groups, community groups or those run by the State. We need those standards.

Consideration should also be given in Queensland and in other States to having an independent statutory authority to deliver child protection services. The task of that authority would be to ensure that there is child protection. I believe that child protection is too important to be mixed up with the other responsibilities of community service bodies. It

is time that we set up an authority with a board that is responsible to the Minister, with young people having a say in it. Some of the attitudes that have been exhibited by Ministers in this Chamber, such as the member for Southport, do no credit to Ministers of the Crown. The old-fashioned ideas and national policies do not work. We need a full range of adequately resourced services for children who need protection.

In Scandinavian countries, over 80 per cent of children whose parents cannot or will not adequately care for their children are placed with extended family or close family friends. In Australia, that figure is between 10 per cent and 20 per cent. In New Zealand, they have family conferencing. When there is a risk of a child being hived off, they get all the family together and try to place that child within the broader family—with uncles and aunties. They try to place that child within the family. That is a positive measure. What we need in this State is legislation that will allow that to happen. We do not need this 1965 legislation; it is old hat and out of fashion.

Also in Scandinavia, where placement with extended family networks is not possible, then a range of other well-supported options are provided, ranging from foster care and residential care to boarding schools and supported independent living. Options must be tailored to meet the needs of the children, rather than the children having to fit the available options. It is very important to involve the community. It is important also to involve churches, friends, relatives, neighbours, teachers, doctors, journalists—the whole community. It is important to get rid of those silly biases about parents' rights. It is about time that we started talking about the duties of parents to protect—

**Mr Veivers:** Parents don't have any rights.

**Mr FOURAS:** They have duties. The attitude of some parents is to view children as possessions and social and economic burdens. It is important to do something about that view.

I turn now to the school system. Schools are potentially in a position to identify and respond to difficulties within a family, to monitor the violation of the rights of the child and to ensure that the child's right to education is meaningfully met. Outside the family, the school has the greatest contact with our children of all social institutions. Yet school can be a very alienating place. For some young people the school curriculum is irrelevant. For some it is an inflexible

environment. Others regard schools as alienating institutional structures. Some people are ejected from schools because they are different. Some schools respond to the problems of young people by suspending or expelling them. Those children never learn to read and they remain illiterate. What happens to those young people? They end up in our gaols. This State Government is going to find an extra \$160m next year for gaols. That was mentioned in the Governor's Speech. Some proportion of that should be spent in supporting families, early intervention and school counsellors. School counsellors are an essential mechanism for the prevention of family breakdowns, and they need to be properly trained and properly resourced.

This State has an horrendous inability to protect children who, through no fault of their own, cannot be looked after by their own families. There is a gap between the programs offered by the State and Federal Governments, whereby 13 to 16-year-olds are looked after by nobody. The State intervenes, and those young people end up in refuges and on the street. There are some horrific stories about what is happening to those people. For example, I remember when I was a member of an inquiry into homeless children. This is what one young girl said—

"Yeah, I did sleep with people for a roof over my head—not for money. I had no choice, either, than to be in it or out in the cold."

I remember another young lady who said to me that she was raped by her stepfather when she was 14. She was a member of a so-called reconstituted family—a blended family. What a terrible phrase. This 14-year-old girl was raped by her stepfather. She ran away from home and ended up living in a squat. She said that the hardest aspect was trying to sleep with one eye open and often waking up with somebody on top of her. However, she would not go back home because what happened to her there was worse. Where was the intervention in that case? Where were that girl's parents? Where were the people to care about her? I was appalled by that story.

It is time that politicians of all political colours—including the member for Southport—got together to draft a national perspective on this serious issue. Recently, attention has been focused on certain paedophiles. But many kids have suffered physical and sexual abuse in their homes or when living on the streets because the State has failed them. They are living on the streets because the community has failed them. More

and more children are living on the streets because the members of this Government have failed them. Because children are underage and do not vote, politicians cannot gain any kudos by protecting their interests. Members opposite are failing to acknowledge their fundamental responsibility as legislators.

**Mr Veivers:** They don't agree with you.

**Mr FOURAS:** The member for Southport will never agree with me.

**Mr Veivers:** I do so. I said "they" don't agree with you.

**Mr FOURAS:** It is obvious that the member has not understood a word that I have said.

This is a shameful state of affairs. It is time that the Queensland Government enacted proper legislation and found more money to protect our children. It can find money for more gaols and for the Indy, but it cannot find the money to protect the children of this State.

Time expired.

**Mr BAUMANN** (Albert) (3 p.m.): It is indeed an honour as the member for Albert to speak to the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply to the Speech of Her Excellency the Governor of Queensland. In doing so, may I take the opportunity to pledge my loyalty to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. I congratulate the Speaker on his election to that high office and assure him that I will give him my full cooperation. I take this opportunity also to congratulate the newly appointed Chairman of Committees, Mr Bruce Laming. I am certain that both gentlemen will carry out their jobs with great dignity and responsibility. I extend to Margaret Woodgate, the member for Kurwongbah, my best wishes for a full and speedy recovery from her recent serious surgery.

I will now talk briefly about my electorate of Albert. As at 31 March 1996, the electorate of Albert had 29,086 voters registered on the electoral roll. The quota at redistribution in 1991 was 20,372. The electorate has shown an increase in eligible voters of almost 50 per cent in the past four years. The electorate is diverse in geographical aspects, encompassing coastal, urban, industrial and rural regions, and the needs and aspirations of the people I represent are as diverse as the demographics themselves.

The natural diversity of Albert makes the area very attractive to most people, and it is thus home to young families, Brisbane commuters, singles and retirees. The needs-based priority listing housing assistance

scheme announced by our Government and administered under the watchful eye of the Minister for Housing, Mr Ray Connor, the honourable member for Nerang, will be most helpful in delivering priority access to housing for pensioners, low-income families, ex-servicemen and women, people with disabilities and the sick. This housing assistance priority listing initiative gives a balance to community needs, and has already been welcomed by care advocates.

Furthermore, my electorate welcomes the announcement of an inquiry into the security of payments to subbies working in the building industry. For far too long, subbies have been forced into bankruptcy through no fault of their own. It is time that these honest people were protected. I am sure that this inquiry will greatly assist the public also, which has been led into a false sense of security because a builder has a certain-coloured card. Some constructive adjustments in this area will be welcomed by the genuine tradespeople and, I am sure, by the public as well.

Since the coalition came to Government, I have noticed an upsurge in hope and expectation within the electorate and a willingness for all members of the community's representative bodies to liaise with each other in a very positive manner. There is a view developing in Albert from ideas already espoused by this Government that great opportunity lies ahead, with notions of fair play, tolerance and social justice for all. Last year was the International Year of Tolerance. I am extremely grateful for the opportunity to represent people who embody this principle not only in theory but also in practice. Where I come to play a part in their lives, I aim to deliver such reasonable expectations.

The people of Albert are overwhelmingly clear in their support for the care of our environment. This is much more than just an ideological stance; it is indeed a way of life. The people of Albert show support for balanced development—the type of development that should summarise notions of contemporary progress is there in the practice of ecologically sustainable development. People serving in local and State authorities have, in only a short time, illustrated to me a level of responsibility and accessibility far beyond that generally attributed to public servants. Open and accountable government processes are already visible, with the public service in most instances playing an integral role in these processes. Development is related to progress, and I wish to convey the following message to any potential developers with an

eye purely on fast bucks: do not come to my end of Queensland and make development proposals which do not take into account the most meaningful and contemporary environmental factors. Let any developer beware that if he is looking for a mug in Albert, he had better go to the trouble of bringing one with him!

The people of Albert are competitive and progressive. Some of the most successful people in Australia now live in the electorate. The people of Albert, from the grassroots up, consider our piece of Queensland to be the most precious. I intend for my part, and as long as my influence is there, to support such municipal pride. I intend to see through, not just in Albert but by my representations in Government, the development and provision of infrastructure and incentive which by basic design and method are put in place for the public and not purely for the public service. Such infrastructure and incentive should be sound enough to encourage the risk-takers of the world. I refer to the business community, and I include in that group manufacturers, wholesalers, retailers, produce growers and exporters and especially the small-business operations run by committed families.

This State offers the best opportunities available anywhere in Australia, and we will not fob off ambition by telling people looking for opportunity, "If you fail, hell, that is tough luck. We still have the best weather in the country!" While this Government is in power, there will no longer be reports of record numbers of bankruptcies of reputable, hard-working people. Incidentally, I can assure the House that this Government is here to stay for a very long time. We are committed to proper planning practices, thus guaranteeing that the infrastructure requirements of all developing areas will be met to support the many and varied needs of the people.

We are committed to the provision of an integrated and affordable public transport system. Over the past few years, we have indeed witnessed nothing short of anarchy in the passenger transport industry. My thanks go to Mr Vaughan Johnson, the Minister for Transport, for the action plans being announced almost daily for continued improvement in this important area. My thanks to the Minister for Transport once again for the acceleration of the upgrading of the Pacific Highway to world motorway standards—a project which will deliver to the public something that was due around six and a half years ago—and the forward planning of his department for the maintenance and upgrading of the entire State roads network.

We are committed to ensuring that the lifestyles of retirees are not eroded any further—and in some instances that may benefit the gentlemen on the benches opposite. By working hand in glove with our Federal colleagues, we will within a reasonable time span reintroduce to the Australian taxpayer—and introduce a completely new concept to those people aged 30 years or younger, the majority of whom would have known nothing but the repression of a Federal Labor Government for all of their working lives, if they were lucky enough to work—that vital component of the private sector: the expanding economy. When we have this exciting prospect up and running, we will show the economic pundits who are active in the scholarly roundabouts of high-minded commentary boxes—and we hear plenty from them—how to share the wealth fairly and equitably and according to the prudent law of effort equalling reward. We will show those same pundits how to develop a welfare system that provides hope and dignity and gives help as it is required—not a welfare system that, by its very nature, is a cynical and not so subtle gerrymander in itself.

To borrow a phrase from our most capable Premier, Mr Borbidge—Queensland is now most certainly open for business. That statement alone did more for business and consumer confidence in this State in the few seconds that it took to deliver than the members opposite could achieve in six and a half years.

I turn now to the tourism industry, because my electorate is home to some of Australia's greatest attractions. The Tourism Ministry, ably filled by my colleague Mr Bruce Davidson, the member for Noosa, is a very important portfolio indeed. The tourism revenue generated from people staying in commercial accommodation for the year ended December 1995 was in the vicinity of \$5.2 billion. Those figures released from the Queensland visitors' survey indicate that 1.3 million international visitors came to Queensland in the year ended December 1995, each spending an average of \$220 per night for the duration of their stay. That figure, of course, does not include those international visitors who chose to stay with friends and/or relatives. The total number of tourists, including intrastate, interstate and international visitors, is a whopping 6.9 million people.

Tourism represents one of the State's most significant revenue generators. Perhaps of most importance is its value in export dollars for the Queensland economy. One could be excused for being more than a little dismayed

to learn of the low priority given by our predecessors to that huge generator of wealth for our State. The State's tourism industry can look forward to a much-deserved higher profile with, of course, a budget to match—which I am sure the Minister will seek—from that Ministry.

We have all seen this State slip from its former position as leader in significant State events and conventions to being a State battling to hold just one event. I speak, of course, of the Indy. I urge Cabinet and particularly Treasury to recognise the importance of tourism to the State's success and prioritise accordingly. By way of comparison, I point out that the export of merchandise generated \$1.4 billion in business for the rural industries, and crude minerals represented another \$1.3 billion, so it can be seen that tourism is certainly one of the great revenue generators of this State.

This Government has a commitment to ensuring that the youth of Queensland are provided with the best opportunities available and are trained by the best educators available. I am pleased that my colleague Mr Bob Quinn, Minister for Education, has put the teachers back in the classroom and administration back in the hands of administrators. Teachers throughout the State were disenchanted, devalued and leaving the profession disgusted and deflated. Indeed, it is refreshing to see this important department led by the commonsense approach to the inherited problems, and I am certain that our young people will reflect the benefit of that. Finally they will be able to read, write and understand arithmetic: the essential basics for every individual. I know many parents in my electorate, and although they were happy to have that extra \$50 in their pockets earlier this year, clearly they saw the stunt for what it was: compensation for inadequate services.

Health is now ably attended with huge incentives and commonsense by my colleague Mike Horan. He has opened 27 of the 30 beds closed at the Gold Coast Hospital by the Labor Government. He is currently recruiting more staff where they are so desperately needed. I praise the staff of the Gold Coast Hospital. They have suffered as much under the former Health Minister, Peter Beattie, as the patients did, although for a while the staff were at least assured of admission. My sincere thanks go to the nurses, doctors and all hospital support staff, including the many volunteers who gave way above and beyond what should be expected of anyone. We in this Government know the ordeal that they have been through, and we

commit ourselves to easing their workload, allowing them to deliver a far better health service to the people of the Gold Coast City and beyond.

There still remain in Albert the principal concerns of the electorate as of 15 July last year, concerns reinforced by the Mundingburra election result. At this point, I congratulate the member for Mundingburra, Frank Tanti. His tenacity will serve the people of his electorate very well indeed.

The priority remains the same. The potential deadly cocktail of deprivation, want and hostility gathering itself into programs of crime has been well identified by the Minister for Police, Russell Cooper, whose notable efforts in law enforcement to get to the core of the problem and put in place structures to come to grips with the filth that is growing in our society have been derided by some of the very people who will most benefit from his planning concepts. His concepts, identified by the law enforcement agencies themselves as part of the cure, could only be derided by those who either wish they had thought of them first or who would seek to benefit from a toothless police force and judiciary.

All those items and more are comprehensively spoken of in Her Excellency's Speech as an indication of the will of this Government. I will do all that is within my power to support and bring about such decisiveness.

**Mr PURCELL** (Bulimba) (3.16 p.m.): May I congratulate you, Mr Deputy Speaker, on your elevation to the position of Chairman of Committees, and would you please convey my congratulations to the Speaker, Neil Turner, on his elevation to that high office. I am sure that he will act in that position to the benefit of the House and all those present.

It gives me pleasure to rise in this House to join the Address in Reply debate. It affords me the opportunity to tell the House some of the aspirations and hopes of the residents of the Bulimba electorate. As it has been so topical of late, I will begin by discussing tollways and freeways. The link between the north and south coasts, the South East Freeway—the city bypass freeway—runs through the eastern side of the Bulimba electorate. For years, the residents of my electorate have had to put up with congestion, noise and the fumes of cars and heavy transport vehicles travelling through this mainly residential electorate. It would be very neighbourly of the Transport Minister, the Honourable Vaughan Johnson, to have noise barriers erected along the freeway to alleviate

the noise problems affecting these long-suffering residents who have been neglected for so many years. The cost to the Transport Department would be negligible, but would return some amenity to the residents who live in that corridor.

I know well that the Minister would be most interested in the major problem along that route, that is, the Gateway Bridge with its iniquitous toll: \$4.40 per round trip per car, and the toll rises to \$22 per truck per round trip. That would have to be the most expensive toll anywhere in Australia, and it must be removed. As the Minister would know, most truckers today are self-employed. Imposing a charge of \$22 per trip on workers who are being squeezed by set freight charges and high fuel, maintenance and tyre costs makes it nearly impossible for them to make ends meet. A constituent of mine who is a typical battling self-employed trucker moves vehicles around the city on a car-carrying bogey with five axles. He has to pay \$18 per round trip. For a typical six-day week, the trips over the bridge cost him over \$100. Owing to his small payload of between four and six vehicles and the fact that he is being squeezed by car dealers on set freight charges, that is money that he can ill afford. Every day, between 40,000 and 50,000 vehicles cross that bridge. That traffic is generated mainly by workers going to and from work. For the sake of the many workers who use the bridge, I urge the Transport Minister to have the toll removed.

On behalf of the constituents who live on both sides of the river where the Gateway toll bridge is located, I now ask the Honourable Treasurer Joan Sheldon: when will she be taking steps to treat the people of Bulimba and its surrounds the same as she treats her own constituents who use the Sunshine Motorway? Does the Treasurer believe that workers using the Gateway Bridge should be subsidising those who live in her electorate? Are the workers and their families who use the Gateway toll bridge going to be represented or not? Every day, 40,000 to 50,000 vehicles use the bridge. If one averages the price of a round trip at \$4.40—and if one does not count the trucks and heavy transports, which cost up to \$22 a round trip—one realises that each day \$176,000 is collected on that bridge. That amounts to \$1.23m a week, and \$64m a year. Do workers and their families have to pay for the damn bridge over and over? I think that they have paid for it already. If the toll was lowered substantially and it was used to subsidise the cost of roads in the country, I am sure that the users of the bridge would not feel

so cheated. But to pork-barrel the Queensland Treasurer's electorate, never!

**Miss SIMPSON:** I rise to a point of order. Actually, the tollway was located in the electorates of Maroochydore and Mooloolah. We thank the Treasurer and the Transport Minister for their assistance in the matter.

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

**Mr PURCELL:** I am pleased that the member got that in. That has enlightened us all. Is this fair and equitable government? No!

I would like to share with the House another small item: I assure members that the sight of the Treasurer wearing a toll-buster T-shirt, celebrating the job losses of those workers who worked on the toll booths, does not go down well. The final insult was that those same workers received letters of congratulation, which contained lines such as, "Next time get a job where you can hold your head up high." What a disgusting group of people the Treasurer is associated with. I think that the Treasurer is the poorer for that.

I will remain on the transport theme as it relates to the Bulimba electorate. When are the residents of Hemmant going to get a fair deal? After having a third freight line located through the heart of Hemmant, just to make sure that the oldest village in Brisbane does not get any peace, a high-speed, four-lane truck freeway will be located beside the railway line. The Department of Transport could have taken numerous other routes that would have had minimal impact on Brisbane's oldest hamlet. Hemmant has always been a workers' suburb and houses were reasonably priced. Now, after years of infrastructure building and planning, one cannot give away a house in Hemmant. I urge the Transport Minister to take his department in hand and give the people of Hemmant a respite by locating the freeway route to the port away from residents' homes. There is plenty of land in that area, well away from residential areas, that could take those traffic routes.

I would like to draw to the attention of the Transport Minister an article written by Phil Dickie for the *Courier-Mail* about moving coal to the port of Brisbane by means other than rail. For the benefit of the Minister and other members of the House, I will read it out. The article is headed, "Mine company to study coal pipeline", and states—

"The Minerals and Energy Department has asked a mining company to investigate the feasibility of a coal slurry

pipeline through southern and western Brisbane suburbs to the Port of Brisbane.

But while the possibility might seem initially worrying to residents, a spokesperson for a leading conservation group said a slurry pipeline was preferable to rail transport on noise and dust pollution grounds.

The instruction to the Ebenezer mine, outside Ipswich, is contained in amended guidelines for an environmental impact assessment on mine extensions.

The pipeline would run to the Port of Brisbane, where currently about three million tonnes a year of coal is exported. However, if successful, it could be extended to other south-east corner coal deposits.

Currently, there are 10 mines or prospects with about 1000 million tonnes of high grade coal and just one, the Macalister prospect near Dalby, could generate coal traffic of eight million tonnes a year."

One could imagine the impact that that sort of rail traffic would have on the Bulimba electorate. The article states further—

"Mr Brian Clark, a semi-retired engineer and volunteer energy and transport researcher for the Australian Conservation Foundation, welcomes the instruction, saying it would relieve looming rail bottlenecks and be cleaner and must less noisy than trains.

He said 10 coal train movements a day would become about 30 movements a day in about two years."

We are fast approaching that figure now, because that article was written last year. The article states further—

"In late 1995, people living along this section of track would be subjected to the equivalent of six hours of continuous train noise of varying intensity each day."

I would like to inform the Minister that twice the number of people live along this corridor than live in his electorate. Every day, their lives and their amenity are severely affected. A short-term solution to the problem, which we should be looking at immediately until a study such as that into the slurry pipeline can be finished, would be to cover the wagons. A few tarps and a few hours of work covering the wagons with those tarps would make life just a bit more tolerable for so many people living along the vital rail corridor to the port.

Enough brickbats for the Transport Minister—I have a bouquet for him. I suppose, the brickbats were for his department. The Minister has not had his backside in the seat for too long, and it is mainly his department that I have had the problems with. I would like to congratulate the Minister's rail commissioner, Vince O'Rourke, for taking the time and initiative to visit the railway stations of Norman Park, Morningside, Cannon Hill, Murarrie and Hemmant. I am sure that the upgrading of those 100-year-old stations will now be done soon.

I would like to inform the House and the Transport Minister of a wee bit of the history of the Bulimba railway line, which was laid over 100 years ago. The location of the Cannon Hill saleyards and the Brisbane abattoir in my electorate was one of the main reasons why that line was laid many years ago. The Minister, being an old bushie, would know that the Cannon Hill saleyards, along with the old Homebush saleyards in Sydney, which is now the site for the 2000 Olympic Games, were probably the major selling centres for sheep and cattle along the eastern seaboard of Australia. I remember during my time in the bush when we would make sure that we did not miss those market calls at lunch. If we missed the lunch calls, we would try to get the calls at night. They were always on the ABC and, from listening to those calls, we could make decisions about whether we would sell stock in the next week.

Going back to the 1930s, 1940s and on to the 1960s, which was my time, those saleyards were major selling centres. So I am referring to the time of steam engines when this line was laid. A steam train needs to wind up hills. I am reliably informed that the grade from the other side of Norman Park station near the overpass up to the Morningside station and beyond is one of the steepest grades on Queensland lines. One could imagine the number of twists and turns that had to be put in the line to take the heavy loads of sheep up that grade and now, of course, that is still the case with the coal and shipping containers that run down that line to the port.

When the Cannon Hill sale yards were still operating, locals tell me that it was a common occurrence, usually late at night, that, if the trains could not get a full load of sheep and cattle up that grade, the brakes would be put on half the train and that part of the load would be uncoupled. The first half of the train would continue to the yards and the stock would be unloaded. The engine would then return and hook up the other half of the train,

take it up to the sale yards and unload it. That should give honourable members an idea of how steep the grade is.

In the 1960s, Queensland Rail, in its wisdom, bought various pieces of land in the area in order to straighten the line. Like so many projects started by Governments, it was never finished. That part of the line is one of the noisiest and most disruptive sections of line in Queensland, with double-header coal trains squealing their way around corners all through the suburbs. In fact, the squeal of a bogey wheel is louder than a diesel at full throttle, which, as honourable members know, has a fair bit of throat. If members do not believe me, they can come out and have a listen. I can assure them that it is very loud. If ever a section of line needs sorting out, this is it.

While we are talking about rail, it would be remiss of me if I did not mention the walkway that has been built at the Morningside station to take passengers over the third railway line to catch trains to and from town. This would have to be the biggest monstrosity that has ever been built. It has ramps that go up, up, up—they just keep going up for about six stories.

**Mr Perrett:** Who designed it—a committee?

**Mr PURCELL:** It would have to be a committee—a committee that never had to use it. If disabled or elderly people ever got to the top of that ramp they would collapse from exhaustion, and then they would have to do it all again to get down the other side. If ever there was a case of bureaucracy gone crazy, this is it. The ramp was built without any consultation with the users or the people who live in and around the Morningside Railway Station. The matter was certainly not taken up with the local member. It remains a monument to the stupidity of those who built it. The cost of building the ramp would far outweigh the cost of installing elevators or a moving walkway for the disabled and elderly to use, but this needs to be done if we are fair dinkum about making public transport accessible to and useable by people. Otherwise, we will continue to build more roads and freeways, and fill them with cars and trucks.

An enormous amount of rail and road traffic passes through my electorate on its way to the port. Tom Burns' electorate of Lytton adjoins mine, and while my constituents do not bitch about that, they certainly bitch about the amount of traffic that moves through the

area and about the Government departments that do nothing about it.

A major concern in the Bulimba electorate is BHP's plans to build a massive metallic coating line on the Brisbane River between the river and the residential suburbs of Murarrie and Cannon Hill. At various public meetings of the Cannon Hill community and the Murrarie Progress Association, I have not heard one resident speak in favour of the project, even though this is an area in which workers live, and workers are very keen to get jobs. Following meetings I had with the Coordinator-General's Department and BHP, the "big Australian" came clean about its full proposal for the large site it has acquired in Murarrie.

BHP proposes a three-stage development: the first two stages are for metallic coating lines and the third stage is a smelter. I do not think honourable members could say that those are the sorts of operations that are appropriate for residential suburbs in which are situated schools and sporting fields—it is just crazy. There is a mile of land down towards the port, and some of it is Government owned. I am sure we would be only too pleased to have the operations of BHP situated there away from the populated areas. BHP would still have access to the Gateway Bridge and would certainly be closer to the port. It is not too late for the Borbidge Government to intervene positively on behalf of the residents of the Bulimba electorate and those electorates adjoining it, because this plant will not affect only my electorate. I urge the Premier to do that as a matter of urgency.

Turning to the policing of the Bulimba electorate, since I have been the member the police station has never been fully manned, and it is still not fully manned. The men and women at that station work their backsides off for the people of Bulimba and surrounds. Crime is a problem. It certainly is for the elderly who perceive that they are constantly under attack. They must lock their front and back doors, even when they go out in the garden to water or have a talk to a neighbour over the back fence. More police are needed to help improve the clean-up rate, because with the number of police on duty in the area it is physically impossible for it to be policed correctly.

The police accommodation at Morningside is an absolute disgrace. That accommodation consists of a tin shed stuck up on water pipes, a temporary structure that has been there for over 30 years. Until recently, that shed has been the main building used to house the police officers of the district.

There is an old house next door, and I believe that as many officers as possible are going to move there, because it is a little better accommodation. However, there is still nowhere near the amount of accommodation required for the police officers working there. On numerous occasions I have said that that shed on water pipes is a deathtrap. Government members were talking this morning about occupational health and safety. There is no exit from that building other than the one opposite the door one enters through. That certainly leaves the officers very vulnerable in the case of fire or any other abnormal occurrence. It is a tragedy waiting to happen, and something should be done about it immediately. The station is situated on enough land to build a new complex, and I call on the Police Minister to set aside money in the next Budget for a new police station.

Time expired.

**Dr WATSON** (Moggill) (3.37 p.m.): The honourable member for Bulimba takes a while to slow down once he gets going. First of all, let me begin by congratulating you, Mr Deputy Speaker, on your appointment as Chairman of Committees and as Deputy Speaker of this Parliament. I wish you all the best in your deliberations. I ask you to pass on the same sentiments to the Speaker, the Honourable Neil Turner. I am sure that both of you will carry out your functions in the debonair manner you have performed other duties, with panache and in the very fairest way possible. I take the opportunity in this address to examine, in some detail, the question of infrastructure, the economic imperatives associated with this kind of investment, the adequacy of infrastructure provision in both Australia and Queensland, how we fare internationally in this area and the opportunities and challenges that face Queenslanders.

Her Excellency, in outlining her Government's program over the life of this Parliament, referred to the provision of infrastructure, or specific aspects of infrastructure investment, throughout her Speech. For example, on page 1 she stated—

"The Government has set out . . . a program to provide for enhanced economic growth through provision of sound basic infrastructure and services."

Her Excellency also stated—

"Borrowing will only be entertained for infrastructure to the extent that projects are able to service their debts and will not be countenanced for recurrent expenditure."

Later during her Speech, the Governor referred to the hospital Capital Works Program, education expenditure, road infrastructure and water storage development.

The Government has also established a Commission of Audit which has been asked to examine a number of issues relevant to the Queensland economy, including the issue of infrastructure provision, in a report to be provided to the Government by 30 June 1996. In particular, the terms of reference request that the commission provide an assessment of the condition of Queensland's public, social and economic infrastructure in relation to: its adequacy to support efficient and effective delivery of public services to best practice standards and world competitive performance of the business sectors that depend on it; deficiencies that need early attention; medium and longer term public capital investment needs; and direction on the areas requiring further work.

So the Government has recognised the importance of infrastructure, as it should. In fact, for Australia as a whole, infrastructure services account for around 12 per cent of GDP and employ 6.4 per cent of Australia's work force. Therefore, infrastructure services make an important contribution to national output in their own right. However, more importantly, infrastructure services are also consumed as an input by all businesses. Direct and indirect infrastructure services comprise between 7 per cent and 16 per cent of the costs of producing final output. Therefore, infrastructure is a critical influence on the international competitiveness of every Australian firm. The availability of good, competitively priced infrastructure is therefore an important factor for firms making decisions on the expansion and location of new production facilities, both between and within countries.

Infrastructure services also make an important contribution to Australia's standard of living, both directly—in being consumed by households—and indirectly by affecting the costs of the delivery of all goods and services by business. In addition, infrastructure makes an important overall contribution to economic growth. The general tenor of new growth models in economics is that, where there are externalities or market failures which make private returns to innovation and investment in physical or human capital less than social returns, then market provision is likely to lead to underinvestment and suboptimal growth. This provides both the opportunity and the economic rationale for Government involvement.

There is substantial evidence that in this information age human capital accumulation is an even more significant source of long-run sustainable growth than investment in physical capital. For example, EPAC paper No. 9 of November 1995 titled "Investment and Economic Growth" stresses the importance of investment in social infrastructure for the overall development of an economy, both in terms of economic growth and standards of living.

Finally, infrastructure has a significant impact on Government finances, as a significant proportion of infrastructure assets are Government owned. The financial performance of these assets can therefore affect the level of revenue collected by Governments, which in turn affects the level of taxes and charges on the community and the overall level of public sector debt. The natural question which arises is whether or not Australia's and Queensland's infrastructure is adequate to service the needs of an economy which is fairly open to international competitive forces. This issue has recently been addressed in a number of forums.

In 1993, EPAC made a number of points about the adequacy of Australia's infrastructure. Many relate to the requirements arising from population growth and are therefore particularly pertinent to Queensland. The points made by EPAC were as follows. Continuing population growth will generate a variety of infrastructure requirements on the urban fringe and where growth is most rapid. Recent investment in roads may have barely kept up with the deterioration of roadways. In rail, the need is for increased reliability and timeliness. Maritime ports need to invest mainly in improved methods of operation rather than in equipment and facilities. Investment in intermodal links may be necessary to maximise efficiency. Some airports—for example, Sydney's—will require significant capital expenditure, but others will not. Former excess capacity in electricity is being reduced, but the establishment of the national grid might involve significant capital expenditures. Urban growth will require significant expenditure for water treatment and sewerage. Telecommunications infrastructure requirements will continue to grow strongly. The higher education and TAFE sectors will require further capital expenditure. Prisons, the courts and policing also have requirements to remedy past inefficiencies and keep up with population growth.

More recently, two studies give some insight as to how we rate. First, the Bureau of

Industry Economics November 1995 report titled "International Benchmarking—Overview 1995" concludes that, while performance gaps between some Australian infrastructure industries and observed international best practice have tended to narrow, there is still much that remains undone. Its more specific findings include the following. As to prices—Australia's best observed price performances are in waterfront coal handling, road freight, dry bulk vessel coastal shipping and electricity. The largest price gaps were recorded for waterfront container handling, telecommunications, rail freight, airport charges and gas supply. More importantly, the evidence is that Australia's road freight prices are about equal to world's best practice. However, electricity has prices around 40 per cent higher, telecommunications are around 80 per cent higher, rail is around twice as high and waterfront costs are over twice as high as world best practice.

As to service quality—Australia's waterfront industry performs relatively poorly in terms of service quality, although the aviation and road freight industries perform relatively well. As to productivity—labour productivity gaps to international best practice are largest in rail freight and electricity and lowest in gas supply and coastal shipping. Capital productivity performance gaps are greatest for the use of rail rolling stock, gas supply and aviation, and smallest for some coal-handling facilities.

The BIE report also analyses relative State performance in infrastructure services. The BIE has constructed indices to measure how each State performs in terms of both price and productivity in the provision of a basket of infrastructure services—for example, covering electricity, rail, waterfront and gas supply. The price index indicates that Queensland is the third cheapest provider of infrastructure among Australian States, ranking mid range for all infrastructure service prices. Victoria offers the cheapest infrastructure services, largely due to cheap electricity. South Australia is the next cheapest, primarily because of low prices for gas supply and waterfront services. New South Wales has the worst ranking, just below that of Western Australia. The productivity index shows that Queensland's infrastructure services are the most productive of all States, with mid to high productivity across all industries, except labour productivity in gas supply. Victoria is close behind, with high levels of productivity in the electricity sector. South Australia ranks third, Western Australia fourth, and New South Wales again ranks last.

A second recent study, the 1995 World Competitiveness Report, provides the following rankings for Australian infrastructure sectors out of a total of 49 countries in terms of their ability to meet business requirements: roads, 14; air transport, 19; rail transport, 20; port access, 32; telecommunications, 11; power supply infrastructure, 21; and electricity costs for industrial clients, 11. The evidence is mixed. Australia and Queensland seem to perform well on some indices and poorly on others. This probably reflects the distributional effects of infrastructure investment or naturally occurring competitive advantages.

However, what is less open to debate is the decline in public investment in Australia over the past two decades. Public investment reached a peak of around 10 per cent of GDP in the early 1950s and has trended down virtually continuously since the mid 1960s to reach a ratio of around 5 per cent in 1993-94. Reflecting this decline, the average age of infrastructure has risen steadily in the past 20 years. At the national level the decline in public infrastructure is virtually entirely due to declining levels of investment in economic infrastructure. Infrastructure of this type, including transport networks, communications facilities and public utilities fell from 7.4 per cent of GDP in 1965-66 to 3.5 per cent in 1992-93. By comparison, investment in social or economic infrastructure—hospitals, schools, police stations, day-care centres and prisons—has remained remarkably stable, averaging about 2 per cent of GDP over the past 40 years.

The components of economic infrastructure which have declined the most include road transport, energy and water. Together these sectors account for around three-quarters of the total decline in public investment. Infrastructure in Australia remains around 90 per cent publicly owned, although private involvement has increased in recent years, initially through contracting out and more recently through private financing and ownership. Some reduction in public infrastructure spending in recent years will be due to privatisation of infrastructure service providers. The recent successful Victorian electricity production and distribution privatisations are prime examples. However, this does not explain the large fall since the mid 1960s. Much of the debate over capital adequacy has been applied at the national level and consequently provides little guidance to Queensland, where demographic trends are considerably different.

Analyses of State expenditure on new fixed assets on a real per capita basis indicate

that Queensland's expenditure on economic infrastructure has been well ahead of other States in this period. It has been rising strongly while that in the other States has been static. Expenditure in Queensland rose from \$422 per head in 1989-90 to \$636 in 1994-95, with the annual figures averaging \$530. The average for the other States was \$371 per head in 1989-90 and \$336 in 1994-95, with the figures for the period averaging \$351 per head. By contrast, expenditure on social infrastructure in Queensland has been flat since 1989-90. It was \$249 per capita in 1989-90 and \$243 in 1994-95, with figures averaging just \$243 during this period.

Other States have also had fairly flat spending, but at a higher level than Queensland throughout the period, with equivalent figures of \$328, \$337 and \$333 respectively. A recent feature article by Queensland Treasury titled "Economic Perspective: Public Sector Infrastructure Spending" appeared in the *Queensland Economic Review* for the June quarter 1995. The authors there maintain that public infrastructure provision has been more than adequately paced to meet emerging population driven requirements. They indicate that during the period 1988-89 to 1995-96 population growth of 2.5 per cent per annum was recorded, while real expenditure on new fixed assets increased on average by 6.8 per cent per annum. Of this, social infrastructure grew by 8.8 per cent in real terms and expenditure on economic infrastructure grew by 5.7 per cent.

Not everyone agrees with these conclusions, with Marc Robinson, Associate Professor of Economics at QUT, arguing that the extremely high population growth in Queensland is particularly crucial in determining whether infrastructure provision in Queensland is adequate. Marc Robinson uses the "accelerator" principle, relating the level of capital expenditure required to maintain a given standard of capital stock provision to the rate of change, rather than the level, of population growth. According to this principle, Robinson maintains that expenditure in Queensland needs to be well above levels of other States if the standard of capital provision in Queensland is to be maintained.

Apart from this focus on the significance of population growth, the tone of Robinson's work can be summarised in the following points. Queensland's achievement of eliminating net debt has come at the expense of the standard of public infrastructure in the State. Specific reference is made to health, education and public transport. Queensland

started off with a substandard public capital stock and per capita expenditure on new fixed assets has been below levels recorded in other States. Queensland increased expenditure on new fixed assets significantly in 1994-95 and 1995-96, which has placed pressure upon fiscal outcomes. To improve the Budget bottom line, Queensland has adopted private infrastructure provision and increased its use of financial transfers from the non-Budget sector to the Budget sector. The Queensland Government is failing to make more moderate use of debt in order to meet public investment priorities. Judicious and responsible use of debt has a very useful function in fiscal smoothing and makes it possible to maintain much greater stability of tax and service levels in the face of shocks and discontinuities.

Having identified some of the problems and issues, what are the challenges that lie ahead for Queensland and where, if anywhere, should public infrastructure investment be placed? First, it must be recalled that public infrastructure is typically provided because it is believed it generates external benefits to society beyond those that go to the individual. Private firms would tend to underprovide such goods due to their non-excludable and/or non-rival nature. In this regard, two US research publications are worthy of particular note.

Aschauer (1989) uses data for the period 1949-85 to measure the spill-over benefits on United States private sector productivity arising from public capital. Key results and conclusions include: for every 1 per cent change in Government capital, private output responded by 0.39 per cent; a 1 per cent increase in core infrastructure—defined to include streets, highways, airports, public transport systems, electricity and gas, water and sewerage—is calculated to raise total private sector output by 0.24 per cent; and of the decline in private sector productivity that has occurred in the US since 1975, 75 per cent can be attributed to declining levels of public sector investment.

The second US paper worthy of note is by Cullison, who extends existing analysis to include investment by the Government in people or, if one likes, human capital. This, like other forms of investment, can increase private sector output through its effect upon labour productivity. Investment in education and labour training were found to have the most statistically significant effect on economic growth.

Within Australia, recent studies by the Allen Consulting Group have found that there can be very high social returns to expenditure on arterial roads. Recently, the Business Council of Australia, commenting upon the interim report of the EPAC taskforce on private infrastructure, noted that disaggregation of infrastructure data reveals a number of deficiencies. It states, for example, that the apparent aggregate excess capacity on the Australian waterfront masks three challenges: firstly, a combination of inadequate interport linkages, that is, coastal shipping to things such as rail, and poor decisions led to many ports being developed which were too small to access economies of scale and were thus wasteful of port capital; secondly, the equipment is ageing, particularly in Sydney and Melbourne; and thirdly, technology has changed with the introduction of fourth-generation container ships carrying 6,000 TEUs, that is, 20-foot container equivalent units, a ten-fold increase on the current generation ships servicing Australian ports. Australia has no ports capable of servicing these vessels and will need to tranship at ports such as Singapore and Colombo unless additional investments are made.

For an export-oriented economy such as Queensland, these observations present particular challenges. Government in Queensland, like the rest of Australia, has long dominated infrastructure provision. In many cases the infrastructure provider has had a statutory monopoly or faces competition restricted by statute. The incentives for efficient planning, provision and operating of infrastructure have therefore been weak. This has been of increasing concern in recent years as private firms have been exposed to increasingly intense international competition. Consequently, further reforms which encourage more efficient provision and use of infrastructure need to be pursued.

Queensland also needs to consider greater private sector participation in the provision of infrastructure, through public/private sector partnerships, the contracting out of entire projects and the sale of infrastructure assets to the private sector. Considerable benefits will flow from this, including enhancing the total capital resource base available to fund infrastructure development; providing access to a wider range of skills and technology; engendering more flexible, efficient and innovative work practices through greater competition, potentially allowing for a wider range of services to be provided at lower cost; and

diversifying the risk associated with infrastructure development.

Finally, while Queensland can benefit from a broad increase in infrastructure investment, particular emphasis on ports and their intermodal links, appropriately positioned urban arterial roads, particularly in south-east Queensland, and gas and electricity supply and distribution would appear to provide the greatest potential for boosting Queensland's productivity and competitiveness. This will ultimately flow on to higher living standards, higher employment opportunities and higher incomes for all Queenslanders.

**Mr MULHERIN** (Mackay) (3.56 p.m.): In rising to speak to the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply, may I firstly congratulate you, Mr Deputy Speaker, on your appointment as Chairman of Committees. Also, would you please pass on my congratulations to the Speaker on his election to that high office? I wish you both well in your endeavours during the life of this Parliament.

The decision by the Speaker to fly the Union Jack over this Parliament has generated considerable debate within the community. It was a decision the Speaker took alone. This is something that the coalition protested strongly against when former Speaker, Jim Fouras, removed the Union Jack from Parliament. I refer to Honourable Kev Lingard's speech to Parliament on 11 November 1992, expressing his concern over the decision to remove the flag. I quote from Mr Lingard's speech—

"It is not the Speaker's role to decide which flag should fly outside Parliament."

I gather from Mr Lingard's statement that while it was appropriate to justify attacking the former Speaker's decision, the recent decision by the new Speaker is considered quite justified. However, whilst I respect the decision of the Speaker, I and many other Queenslanders strongly disagree with his decision. I have received numerous letters and telephone calls on this matter from my constituents. To highlight the depth of feeling that his decision has generated in my electorate, I wish to refer to one of the letters by a constituent, Mr Bill Burton of Wentworth Street, Mackay. Mr Burton sent a letter to the Premier on this matter and a copy to me, which I have sent on to the Speaker. The letter states—

"Dear Mr Premier,

It has been reported in the media this week that the new Speaker has issued instructions for the Union Jack to be flown above Parliament House in

Brisbane. If these reports are accurate, I wish to protest in the strongest possible terms and request that you take immediate steps to have this instruction revoked.

I understand that there are some sections of the National Party which still regard Queensland as a Crown Colony, but after nearly a century of being part of the Australian nation, I must say I consider such a notion to be completely out of date. This is especially so when one realises that Britain, some years ago, turned its back on Australia and embraced the European Union. Nothing could have demonstrated more clearly that Britain has no interest in our welfare. You will also appreciate that Australians now enter Britain through the 'Alien' gate.

The Union Jack is a foreign flag and, therefore, is not one which is appropriate to fly above Parliament House. One could mount an equally plausible argument to fly the Italian flag in recognition of the contribution made by migrants of Italian origin to the development of this State.

I cannot find one valid reason for the Union Jack to be flown over Parliament House and, as noted earlier, I request that you arrange for the Speaker's instruction to be countermanded.

In an endeavour to give this matter the widest possible coverage, I am sending copies of this letter to various newspapers, the Leader of the Opposition and my local Member, as well as to the Deputy Premier and Leader of the Liberal Party.

Yours sincerely

W. J. Burton"

Mr Burton is a retired banker and a very proud Australian whose father fought in World War I. I believe that Mr Burton's views reflect the majority view of the people in the Mackay electorate. I totally agree with him that the only flags that should be flown on a permanent basis over this House are the Australian flag and the Queensland flag. I look forward to participating in the debate on the motion put on notice by Mr Hamill to that effect.

The decision by this Government to close the Mackay Regional Health Authority office and dismantle the region has not gone over well with the people of Mackay and district. The decision completely ignores local opinion. The former Health Minister, the honourable Peter Beattie, listened to what the people of Mackay and district were saying and

guaranteed that the old regional health boundaries would be maintained; in fact, the boundaries were to be expanded to include Bowen and Collinsville as well as keeping the regional office function so that services would be delivered in a fair and equitable manner across public, community and environmental health. So when the Health Minister, the Honourable Mike Horan, announced last Thursday that there would be two health councils based in the Mackay region—Hinterland and Coastal—it came as a real shock to the community.

There was some expectation that the region would remain intact. As recently as 26 March, the National Party member for Mirani, Ted Malone, whose electorate joins mine, said in the Mackay *Daily Mercury*—

"The Health Council areas such as Central West, South West and Mackay could open with the same boundaries as they had previously."

The Ministers of this Government are travelling around the State claiming that this is a caring Government—a Government for all, a Government that will listen to what people want and not pay lip-service to the people. The Health Minister said that the former regional offices of the Central West and South West would remain open under the new structure. Obviously the Minister listens to the people of Roma and Longreach but not the people of the Mackay region. The people of Mackay and district are saying to me that the people of Roma and Longreach are more important than the people of Mackay. All I ask of the new Health Minister is that he treat the Mackay region in the same fair manner as he did the people of Longreach and Roma. I urge him to review his decisions about Mackay.

The former Mackay Regional Health Authority was acknowledged as being the most successful of the 13 regions and had widespread community support, including that of the Mayor of Mackay, Councillor Gordon White, and the Mackay Regional Development Bureau. The reason for its success was that regional staff worked with the people of Mackay and district, consulted widely and developed services to meet the needs of the region whilst demonstrating sound financial management. There were never any budget shortfalls or budget blow-outs. The staff of the regional office were very successful in advocating our needs with Queensland Health. Regional staff fought for funds to provide for badly needed services which under the old hospital board system were available only to the people of Rockhampton and Townsville.

The achievements of the Mackay Regional Health Authority are quite extensive, and it would be remiss of me if I did not mention some of them. Take the Sarina Hospital and Primary Health Care Centre, which is situated some 40 kilometres south of Mackay in the electorate of Mirani. Hospitals such as Sarina in conservative States like Victoria were closed because of their close proximity to a major hospital such as Mackay. Instead, under the Goss Labor Government, hospitals such as Sarina were enhanced. The Sarina Hospital and Primary Health Care Centre provides acute in-patient care, an accident and emergency service, a nursing home and respite care for the aged and community follow-up nursing. In fact, this hospital is one of the two in the Mackay region which have full accreditation and was awarded first place at both State and national level by the Australian Hospital Association for its Community Outreach Program. I want to pay tribute to the staff of the Sarina Hospital and Primary Health Care Centre for a job well done.

Another first for the region was the Clermont Multi-Purpose Service, with which the member for Charter Towers would be well acquainted. The service was launched in 1994 and combines the resources of the Clermont Hospital and Community Health, HACC, the Clermont Hostel and Meals on Wheels for the betterment of the whole of the Clermont community. The small township of Nebo, which is located some 100 kilometres south west of Mackay, has benefited through health regionalisation. Under the old hospital board system, community health was nonexistent at Nebo. Through a cooperative approach with the Nebo Shire Council, the former health authority and other State Government departments saw the construction of a multi-purpose centre which houses the Queensland Ambulance Service, the State Emergency Service, the rural fire service, Home and Community Care as well as community health services. The list of benefits provided by regionalisation goes on and includes improved mental health services, additional specialist services, the Mackay birthing unit, the family health unit, the aged care and disability unit and the Aboriginal, Torres Strait and South Sea Islander Health Service. None of these services was provided under the old hospital board system.

I listened with amusement when the member for Mulgrave made this comment during the Adjournment debate on 16 April—

"Mr Horan has saved and created services for Cairns, Townsville, Mount Isa and Mackay."

I cannot speak for the other centres, but I can speak for Mackay. Mr Horan came to Mackay on Thursday, 11 April, and the results of his visit are: a divided health region that the community did not want; the closure of the regional offices of the former health authority and possible job losses that the community did not want; and the new breast screening clinic, which is part of the \$6m Mackay Community Health Care Centre—a Goss Labor Government initiative—still remains unopened to the women of Mackay and district, even though equipment is in place and staff employed. Mr Horan's comments on Seven Local News Mackay on 11 April have only added to the uncertainty for the Mackay community about the future redevelopments of our district hospitals at Mackay, Proserpine and Clermont. For the record, I quote from Seven Local News Mackay—

"Interviewer—Health Minister Mike Horan admitted that planned expansions to local hospitals may be downgraded and delayed. Visiting Mackay on a sales pitch for the new District Health Councils, Mr Horan blamed budget blowouts for the decision.

Interviewer—The State Government is boasting that the new streamlined health system will save taxpayers \$6m upfront, with further savings down the track. But today in Mackay, Mr Horan admitted it might not be enough to save badly needed expansions of local hospitals. He said capital works promises from the former Labor Government amounted to \$2.9 billion."

The people of Mackay know better. They know that the blow-out was caused by the coalition's unfunded election promises to build new hospitals at Robina, Beaudesert and Noosa. The people of Mackay are saying, "This is a Government of the south-east corner. It doesn't listen to us." I would like to place on record my appreciation for the excellent service that the former Regional Health Director for Mackay, Mr Gordon Lee Koo, and his staff have provided the Mackay district. I wish them well for the future.

In her Speech, the Governor made reference to a series of policy initiatives that the Government wishes to implement in this session—initiatives such as further assistance for people with disabilities and their carers, particularly those supporting people with intellectual disabilities. In the Mackay region, there are at least 11 families that I know of who have saved the taxpayers of this State

millions of dollars by caring for their intellectually disabled children. These people are now elderly and wish to get on with their lives. However, their major concern is the lack of choice and facilities for 24-hour care available in the Mackay district. I hope that the Minister for Families will consider these people when he puts his programs in place.

Another issue that I hope the Government will address in this term is the need for the duplication of the Ron Camm Bridge over the Pioneer River. The people who live on the north side of the river are subjected to 20 to 25-minute traffic delays each day as they travel to and from work. I urge the Government to give careful consideration to this project and look forward to meeting with the Transport Minister in Mackay to discuss and find a long-term solution to this problem.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I welcome your Government's commitment to develop new water storage projects over the next 15 years. In my maiden speech I made reference to water being the most undervalued resource and yet the most significant. The construction of the Teemurra Dam, another Labor initiative, is a significant contribution to the future water needs of the Mackay district, but it is by no means sufficient. Water resource development in the Mackay district remains a high priority, and I look forward to working with your Government to achieve suitable outcomes for the Mackay district canefarmers and other industries that may want to become established in our region. I pay tribute to the Queensland canegrowers and millers for their continuing participation in the review of the regulations that govern this great industry. Let us hope that that will be the last review that will be undertaken of that most reviewed industry.

Another group of Mackay people to whom I pay tribute is the local Maltese community, who are once again organising the Maltese Festival. The festival commences on 26 May and one of the principal organisers, Vicki Baldwin, has told me that the Maltese community wants to expand those celebrations to include all migrants who have contributed so successfully to the Mackay community. Mackay is probably the most multicultural coastal centre and the migrants who have come to that centre have contributed greatly. This year, for the first time, we will see the participation of the South Sea Islander community, who will be holding displays and celebrations at their Long Hut at the lagoons on the southern outskirts of Mackay. I look forward to participating in those wonderful events in May.

I am very conscious of the long tradition and history of support that the Mackay electorate has given to the Labor Party. I will certainly do my best to carry on that tradition. I pledge myself once again to the people of Mackay, the State of Queensland and this Parliament.

**Mr CARROLL** (Mansfield) (4.11 p.m.): I speak in support of Mr Tanti's motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply. I congratulate you, Mr Deputy Speaker, and the Speaker, the member for Nicklin, on your appointments to the high offices that you occupy. I record our appreciation for the many years of service of the member for Ashgrove, Jim Fouras, in the position of Speaker.

Since I first spoke in this House on 19 October 1995, quite a few things have changed. The Labor Government resigned on 19 February 1996, only seven months after the general election of July 1995. Her Excellency the Governor opened the second session of this Forty-eighth Parliament on 28 March 1996, with the Borbidge/Sheldon Government installed. Her Speech promised many reforms under the new Government, based on sound policies developed by the National Party and the Liberal Party and a strong, working coalition. As Deputy Whip, I am excited to be part of the new Government that will not only see Queensland reopened for business but will also see the eradication of many impediments to free enterprise. Hardworking families will be protected. Our children will be better educated and protected.

The new Premier, Rob Borbidge, has hastened to demonstrate the positive attitude of the Governor's Speech. As an effective leader, he facilitated the revival of the jammed discussions holding up the Century Zinc project. We know that the Aboriginal people, their elders and the communities likely to benefit from that mine want the project to proceed. Their many families will benefit. Ratbag opportunists such as Murrandoo Yanner cannot hold Queenslanders and their economy to ransom. In common with "Mad Dog" Kelty in the Federal industrial relations arena, that kind of troublemaker will be defeated by our new Government leaders. The Prime Minister, Mr Howard, and Premier Borbidge are strong, prepared to roll up their sleeves and look after the workers and entrepreneurs who are the engine room of this nation. Yesterday I was amazed to hear a handful of Opposition speakers suggest that the Premier should not assist the parties in the Century Zinc mine negotiations toward a solution. We on the Government side firmly

believe that the positive leadership from this State's leader will soon settle that dispute.

The wisdom of our Deputy Premier, Joan Sheldon, as part of the coalition leadership team assisted Frank Tanti to win the seat of Mundingburra and change the Government. The Tanti success story will continue to inspire battlers in Queensland for decades. I am sure that the Independent member for Gladstone, Liz Cunningham, will not regret her support of this new Government in that confidence vote at 1 a.m. on 21 February this year. Honourable members have appreciated and will continue to benefit from the input of the very hardworking and truly independent member for Gladstone.

As for my performance in the role of local member—I continue to receive encouraging input from the Queensland Liberal Party President, Bob Tucker, and the Liberal team, as well as the following local party branches: Mansfield Liberals, Mansfield National Party, Burbank Liberals and Sunnybank/Wishart Young Liberals. The hard work by members of those active branches and many other volunteers gave Prime Minister Howard's team the winning edge in the recent Federal election, and three new members of the Federal House of Representatives relevant to the Mansfield electorate, namely, Graeme McDougall in Griffith; Gary Hardgrave in Moreton; and Andrea West, daughter of the first member for Mansfield, Bill Kaus, in Bowman were elected.

With a lively electorate and plenty of committee work, I am greatly assisted by my wife, Joan, and my electorate officer, Mrs Tanya Morgan. The people of Mansfield are very pleased that the south coast motorway was finally abandoned late last year, though many are surprised that the Government has not begun to sell the many Rochedale properties bought by Queensland Transport for that project. The proceeds might help to meet the cost of the much-needed Pacific Highway upgrade announced three days ago by the Honourable Minister, Vaughan Johnson. Early reports from my electorate bring good feedback on that announcement. At least the real work will now begin.

It is a pity that we may not be able to complete planning for the transport route changes between the Logan River and Brisbane City for another few months. I hope that that will not further delay freeway noise abatement measures that are sorely needed by the residents of Portulaca Street, MacGregor. I have worked for a year to hasten

those installations. Those patient people have waited 14 years and have had enough.

Speaking of the freeway noise, I turn to the Gateway Motorway, which carries increasingly heavy volumes of traffic north-south through the electorate of Mansfield. I have studied the draft final report on the proposed Port of Brisbane impact assessment after a number of my constituents expressed concern over its route, which clearly now is not going to affect Mansfield directly. The report shows clearly that the new port road linking Port Drive with the Gateway Motorway is needed and it recommends a route somewhat parallel to Lytton Road. There does not appear to be an extra road planned to dump traffic onto Tilley Road from the port as was initially feared, but the new road will obviously bring extra vehicles onto the Gateway Motorway, which runs through Mansfield.

I have also been keeping an eye on plans for a zincaluminum plant just to the west of the Gateway Bridge toll plaza. Although that development is outside my electorate, it will undoubtedly have a beneficial effect on the availability of work for Mansfield residents. They are concerned, however, that additional heavy transport vehicles being drawn onto the Gateway Motorway and then travelling via busy Mount Gravatt-Capalaba Road to light industrial centres in Mansfield, MacGregor, Acacia Ridge and Rocklea may cause them some nuisance. We anticipate that some of that extra traffic will use the new southern bypass to avoid congestion on the east-west Griffith arterial road through MacGregor.

Whether we like it or not, the electorate of Mansfield straddles the junction of the three busiest roads in Queensland, as the South East Freeway joins those other two roads and then merges into the new Pacific Motorway announced this week. Some of that extra traffic and related commercial development has left us with additional noise and motor accidents, but the police officers from the Upper Mount Gravatt station within the electorate, and also both Camp Hill and Holland Park stations outside the electorate, have been very helpful. Not only have they done their best with limited resources on patrols and call-outs; they have also demonstrated old-fashioned courtesy. Those police officers covering my electorate have good intelligence on trouble spots, trends and best preventative measures. They also invest a lot of effort in the many Neighbourhood Watch and Safety House committees that serve the electorate of Mansfield. With their encouragement, a crime safety audit is under way in Eight Mile Plains and is about to start in

Mount Gravatt. I salute the initiative of all those involved in those projects.

I am sure that honourable members appreciate the valuable work done in Queensland by the many non-profit organisations. I trust that neither this State Government nor the Federal Government will be so short-sighted as to withdraw or reduce any of the revenue concessions presently extended to those churches, charities, foundations and trusts. Organisations such as the Mount Gravatt Meals On Wheels, based in the electorate of Mansfield, perform invaluable work. It is a real encouragement to me when I see men and women in their 70s and 80s rallying to help other aged folk who enjoy not only the hot meals delivered to them but also the warm friendship given to them by those cheerful volunteers.

The social fabric of the people in the electorate of Mansfield is further enriched by the community radio station FM101, which was established a few years ago by a small group of volunteers. It is a fine example of what community broadcasting can be in Australia. I pay credit to those who people have worked so hard for many years. I also want to mention family radio FM92.1, which broadcasts for only four lots of three weeks each year. That station is anticipating the granting of a Federal licence for full-time broadcasting soon. I certainly urge our Federal Minister responsible for that matter to make a policy decision that will facilitate the granting of that licence.

The rich fabric of our society is understood and fostered by honourable members, but I mention it here to let those many thousands of benefactors know that they are appreciated and also to entice others in the electorate to follow their example. Recently, I assisted prize givers at the Mansfield District Junior Cricket Club and also at the Mount Gravatt Junior Cricket Club trophy days. The high standard of young cricketers at those clubs is achieved only with the commitment of volunteer coaches, managers and scorers. The same goes for those responsible for our many other sporting groups—scouts, guide troops and cultural and social clubs in Mansfield. Some of those groups, such as the Queensland Rifle Association, the Sporting Shooters Association, the vintage car clubs and the Light Horse Association, are known throughout Australia for their achievements.

The Southside Chamber of Commerce is a very strong and progressive association of local businessmen. It is an ideal clearing house, or common room, for local business

owners and managers. The meetings are always well organised and optimistic with informed and timely speakers. Recently, the chamber was successful in securing a grant of money from the Queensland Government under the Main Street Program to give a fresh look and new life to the Mount Gravatt shopping centre. The Garden City Shopping Centre, which is located down the road at Upper Mount Gravatt, is halfway through a major upgrade of facilities, and I am sure that it will continue to grow in success. I only hope that the managers and owners understand that there is a need for moderation in rent, for small business has had a hiding in the last decade in Australia and needs some encouragement if that kind of large enterprise is to really get back on its feet.

Right next door at Mount Gravatt, in the electorate of Mansfield, is the historic and attractive Mount Gravatt Showgrounds. It continues to be improved by the hardworking Mount Gravatt Showground Trust under the able leadership of the new chairman, Robin Fardoulys, who is a commercial builder. I am calling on the State Government departments that are able to assist with any possible funding to assist the trust to transport to the showgrounds and renovate the Evans Deakin building to the high standard of completion that we saw occur with the Mount Gravatt Memorial Show Hall during the time that I was chairman of that trust. The showgrounds has a proven record as an accessible and popular venue for all sorts of cultural, recreational, sporting and showground activities. The trust has appointed a youth development worker, and is anxiously awaiting confirmation of funding from the State Government so that it might proceed for the next couple of years with a program that I believe will help young people in the electorate of Mansfield and adjoining areas. I also praise the community work of the Mount Gravatt Show Society under the able leadership of long-time president Bob Goss. I am sure that, on the last weekend of July this year, this city will see a great annual show.

A significant issue in my electorate of Mansfield is the Koala Coast Conservation Plan, or SPP1/95, which I discussed on 16 April. The Koala Habitat Conservation program of the Brisbane City Council does not appear to be very well coordinated with that Government policy. I urge the council to take advantage of the offer and facilities of the Queensland Department of Environment to make sure that there is a consolidated, effective and profitable plan for the people of south-east Queensland that will preserve

worthwhile koala habitat yet allow reasonable development of land in that area, part of which is in the electorate of Mansfield. A recent decision of the Planning and Environment Court showed that the many complex issues surrounding that policy need to be sorted out soon.

The same type of tensions are strengthening in north Rochedale, where a pro-development lobby is competing with the conservation of farming land lobby, which has been picked up by SPP1/92. We have a unique sample of that problem in the Levington Road, Eight Mile Plains area where a proposal to subdivide a couple of farming properties caught in a wedge between the new southern bypass, Logan Road and another main road, in my view, has demonstrated many good reasons why it should be developed into multiple dwelling-type accommodation so that workers can access easily the nearby light industrial and commercial areas.

The parliamentary prayer fellowship still continues in this House during times when the House is sitting. Yesterday morning's meeting, in my belief, revitalised that group. A number of basic concepts were agreed and I believe that speakers will continue to be organised for meetings on the first Wednesday of each future sittings. I commend it to the attention of honourable members, and I am sure that they will find it a secure and comfortable meeting place where they will be able to have fellowship, have a time of prayer and feel no barrier between members according to their particular faith or political leanings.

I support the motion, saying in summary that I am confident and pleased to serve the people of Mansfield in the Borbidge/Sheldon coalition Government. I believe that we shall achieve the objectives outlined in the Speech of Her Excellency brought to us on 28 March 1996.

**Mr FITZGERALD** (Lockyer—Leader of Government Business) (4.27 p.m.): I join in the debate on the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply, delivered by Her Excellency the Governor Leneen Forde on 28 March 1996. As is the tradition for members in this place, I pledge my loyalty to Her Majesty the Queen and her representative in Queensland. I congratulate Mr Speaker on his appointment to the high office of Speaker. Mr Deputy Speaker, I also congratulate you on your elevation to the rank of Chairman of Committees.

It is indeed tradition that members speak to a motion for the adoption of the Governor's

Speech. It is a Speech that has been written in consultation with the Government of this State. As this is a new State Government, this is the second Address in Reply debate since the State election on 15 July in which members have had an opportunity to speak. It is a very unusual circumstance that Government has changed hands since a general election.

One of our great institutions is this Parliament, in which we can change Governments at the will of the people and on the voting strength of the members of this House without a shot being fired in anger. Another great institution is that, although Governments can be defeated and new Governments can be elected, the people can have their say. At times, we may think that they get it right; other times we know that they get it wrong. At least they have a chance to reconsider their position and they can change their minds. I do not want to sound arrogant, but I know that, some day, members opposite may sit on this side of the House, and those of us who sit on this side may possibly sit on the opposite side of the House—but not if I can help it!

Replying to the Governor's Speech is an old tradition, and it is a great tradition because it stands for the Parliament. That is why I feel so strongly about maintaining the traditions of this place. I hope that this Government is able to finish the debate on the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply and present it to Her Excellency, unlike the previous Government which fell before it presented its Address in Reply.

The Governor delivered rather an interesting Speech which outlined the priorities of the new Government and the programs it is going to initiate. Government members are now looking forward to that legislation being presented; indeed, some of it has already been presented. In summing up, Her Excellency said—

"I have outlined some of the main features of my Government's program. In opening this second session of the forty-eighth Parliament of Queensland, I trust that your deliberations will be instrumental in advancing the welfare of the people of our State."

I am sure that all honourable members hope that that wish comes to fruition.

Traditionally, members talk about their own electorates during the debate on the Address in Reply. I have noticed that quite a few members of the Opposition have taken the opportunity, for the first time in many

years, to talk at length about their own electorates and the needs of the people that they represent. I have always done that and will continue to do it.

**Dr Watson:** In fact, for some of them it was many years since they have even spoken.

**Mr FITZGERALD:** I take that interjection. It has been quite some years since some of them have spoken. The major issue facing the electorate of Lockyer is the growth that is taking place in south-east Queensland. My electorate is nestled at the foothills of the eastern Great Dividing Range, from the New South Wales border and the southern side of the Boonah shire, right around to the city of Toowoomba. I cover the range all the way around. This area has experienced phenomenal growth, because Lockyer gets the spill-over of growth from other areas of south-east Queensland.

People come to this region because they like sun and surf, they enjoy the climate and they think that Queensland is a land of opportunity. I hope that they prosper and that we can accommodate them without too much inconvenience to the present residents. It is always a conflict for people who want an area to progress and develop, but do not want new neighbours, the roads clogged and the schools overcrowded. That is what happening in country areas, and in some urban areas. For example, when one sees how clogged the roads in Brisbane are, one may think, "Why do all these people have to come? We were comfortable beforehand." However, provided we plan and develop infrastructure, the inconvenience to present residents can be minimised and newcomers can have the facilities that they need. Most newcomers enjoy living in Queensland and, provided that they can find work, few tend to move on.

There is a need in the community for extra roads and, of course, railway lines, and this can cause some inconvenience to the people whose land will be affected. Presently, plans are being looked at for new road and rail routes through my electorate. An alternative road route over the Toowoomba range has been planned for 10 to 15 years' time. That is very necessary, but naturally will cause a deal of inconvenience to the people whose properties will be partly resumed. In addition, Queensland Rail is planning a new crossing of the Toowoomba range for the next 10 to 30 years. The present route down the range is most unsuitable. The tracks keep shifting, and the trains—particularly heavily loaded trains—have to go very slowly around curves which I believe are eight chain curves.

The present railway line was built in the 1860s, and in its day it was a great engineering feat. I am proud to say that my great grandfather worked as a navvy on the line to Gatton, so I have a small connection with the history of that line. Although that line represents a great engineering feat—particularly in that it crosses the two ranges, the Great Dividing Range and the Liverpool Range—it is not a suitable line for the modern, fast, heavy freight trains which now use the track.

During the term of office of the previous Government, Queensland Rail started looking at alternative routes over the Toowoomba range. I have cooperated fully with that investigation, but I ask honourable members to bear in mind the inconvenience that that planning is causing to my constituents. Queensland Rail originally released a route which was going to roughly parallel the original track, but, instead of eight chain curves, it was going to have curves of a 1.9 kilometre radius. That would allow trains to travel at close to 150 kilometres an hour, although it was hoped to increase that speed to 160 kilometres an hour. I have now been advised that, following some concerns expressed by residents—and I support their concerns and I know that they are genuine concerns—Queensland Rail is looking for another route over the Toowoomba range. Although I have received a briefing, I think it is quite right that Queensland Rail should take time to talk to the property owners on the proposed route. At this stage, it is only a proposal and Queensland Rail has not yet weighed one option against the other. It should be given the opportunity of contacting the people affected before I start speculating on where the route will be. However, it will probably pass through the Gatton Shire, which is in my electorate.

The problem is that, once there is a proposal for a road or railway line to pass through property, but which is not going to be built for 10 to 30 years, that imposes a huge burden on the property owners. Indeed, it can destroy their lives if they do not know whether or not their land will be resumed. I have a philosophy, and I believe the Government should follow it: planning should be done and the desired route worked out, but that route should be determined as soon as possible. That line is put on the map, and the people who wish to have their properties resumed are then able to sell out to the corporation that is building the infrastructure. In other words, property owners must be able to sell out when they want to. A number of properties on the proposed routes are currently on the market. It would be totally unjust if the owners had to sell

when it is known that a road or railway line is going to be built and probably within 10 to 20 years the properties will be resumed, because obviously they will not be able to get a true market price. Other people, of course, may wish to stay on their properties in the hope that the railway line will not be built for another 30 years. They may think, "I am 60 years of age and I want to live here until I die." Those people should have the right to stay on their properties, but funding has to be found to buy out the people who do want to move.

Of course, that is not as inconvenient to Government as one would think, because quite often a larger property can be bought at a fair market price. The land that is required is resumed, and the remaining areas can be sold to people who do not find it a great inconvenience to have a railway track or road going past them, even though they will not have access to either. Those people are willing to pay a reasonable price for that land, and, therefore, the cost to the State is not as great as it might have been earlier.

I wish to tell my constituents that I support strongly the provision and planning of this major infrastructure, but I will stand up for them to ensure that they get a fair deal. I will make sure that their concerns are listened to. Quite a few of my constituents have expressed major concerns to me, particularly about the proposed railway line. A couple of years ago, Queensland Rail decided to put in a signalling system, take away the railway stations along the Helidon and Toowoomba section of the railway line, and put in a central traffic control. Quite a few of the railway work force in my electorate lost their jobs as a result, but one cannot complain about advancing technology, provided the trains are running safely.

In addition, Queensland Rail decided that it needed an access road along the railway line. Putting it bluntly, it took a large bulldozer and pushed a track parallel to the road. At the time, the engineer responsible thought that he had successfully constructed a road. However, later on, some of the spoil, rock and sandstone boulders were dislodged and rolled across private property. Nobody knew exactly where the boundaries were. When it did rain, the dams silted up. At the end of that drought, when we had very heavy rain, some of the private dams silted up. Murphy's Creek and Lockyer Creek became silted. Queensland Rail is considering putting a major railway through similar country, and constituents can hardly be blamed for being concerned that the treatment they received on a previous occasion will be repeated.

Murphy's Creek is a lovely area to which people go for peace and quiet. It is a lovely brook which virtually never dries up even in the upper reaches. The people there perceive that their lifestyles will be threatened. I wholly support those people. I hope that we can come up with a solution with regard to a railway line that will be of benefit to the people of Queensland but of minimal inconvenience to the people in my electorate.

It is a priority for any Government to build infrastructure that allows commerce and industry to develop, because this creates jobs and enables people to work. It is the responsibility of the Government to provide infrastructure. In particular, long-term infrastructure is important. For instance, the Treasurer advised the House over the past couple of days that the gas pipeline had been sold off. That pipeline was constructed by the State to transport gas to Gladstone. I remember the debates that took place in this place on that issue. The Opposition at the time was totally opposed to the State building that infrastructure. It was rather ironic that a conservative Government was proposing a gas pipeline as a State-owned enterprise and yet a Labor Opposition at the time was opposed to the State owning that enterprise.

Brian Austin was the Minister for Mines and Energy at the time. The then Government's intention was to enable the supply of gas to Gladstone. Various gas consumers and producers wanted such a pipeline. Every party interested in building that line sought to take full advantage of the commercial opportunities at both ends of the line. Austin recognised the need for a common carrier, that is, a single body to supply gas to purchasers. The intention was to sell it off. I do not think there has been any criticism of that sale; it has proceeded well. Gladstone is able to take full advantage of the gas pipeline and is able to get very good prices for gas. I hope that that area continues to grow and develops as the major industrial area in Queensland.

As to infrastructure—I have a vision that some day we will have a railway line right up the middle of Australia from Melbourne inland, through Bathurst and the inland areas of New South Wales up to the Darling Downs, possibly continuing right up to Karumba and even on to Darwin. Such a major rail link would allow our exporters to export very competitively and would provide an alternative to sea transport as far north as Darwin.

Recently, a conference of National Party members was held in Darwin. I sat in on some of the debate and I was rather surprised that one of the speakers said that there is great

competition between Queensland and the Northern Territory and that Queensland was totally opposed to the north-south railway line that is proposed from Adelaide to Darwin. I did not have an opportunity to offer my point of view. However, I would have said that I was not opposed to such a railway line; it would be a great piece of infrastructure. If the southern cities of Melbourne and Adelaide can export as far as Darwin along that route, I say, "Good luck to them." I would like to see a full circle of railway networks throughout Australia, and I believe that a Melbourne-New South Wales-Queensland-Darwin route will eventually benefit not only Australia but also, more importantly from a Queenslander's point of view, Queensland.

It is extremely important that we take into consideration all the requirements of Government in the Address in Reply debate. The Governor's Speech mentioned the need for infrastructure. Another area of infrastructure that needs to be developed is the provision of dams. I have been rather critical of the former Government in that it completed very few dams. The now Opposition claims that it built a few when in Government. However, most of those projects were planned well before it came to power. The practice of planning for future dams was discontinued under the former Labor Government. The water resources design section within the Department of Primary Industries virtually disappeared and all designing virtually ceased. The Governor's Speech stated that the Government is planning to spend \$1 billion over the next 15 years on the provision of water storage infrastructure. A task force is now in place that will study where those dams will go.

Without any further ado, as the final speaker in the Address in Reply debate, I say that it was a delight to join in this debate, even though it is the second such debate that we have had since the last election. I commend the motion to the House.

Motion—That the Address in Reply be adopted—agreed to.

## ADDRESS IN REPLY

### Presentation

**Mr SPEAKER:** I have to inform the House that I propose to present to Her Excellency the Governor, at Government House, on Monday, 29 April at 2.10 p.m., the Address in Reply to the Opening Speech of Her Excellency the Governor agreed to on Thursday, 18 April, and I shall be glad to be accompanied by the mover and the seconder and such other honourable members as care to be present.

## SELECT COMMITTEE ON TRAVELSAFE

### Terms of Reference

**Mr FITZGERALD** (Lockyer—Leader of Government Business) (4.46 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

"That the resolution of appointment of the Select Committee on Travelsafe agreed to by the House on 15 September 1995 be amended by: Omitting paragraphs (1) to (3) and substituting:

(1) That a select committee, to be known as the Select Committee on Travelsafe, be appointed to inquire into and report on all aspects of road safety and public transport in Queensland. In particular the Committee shall monitor, investigate and report on—

(a) issues affecting road safety including the causes of road crashes and measures aimed at reducing deaths, injuries and economic costs to the community;

(b) the safety of passenger transport services, and measures aimed at reducing the incidence of related deaths and injuries; and

(c) measures for the enhancement of public transport in Queensland and reducing dependence on private motor vehicles as the predominant mode of transport

(2) That the committee consist of 6 members of the Legislative Assembly of whom 3 shall be nominated by the Leader of the Opposition

(3) That the committee consist of Messrs J Goss (Chairman), Dollin, Hegarty, Mitchell, Nunn and T Sullivan'."

Motion agreed to.

## PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES

### Membership

**Mr FITZGERALD** (Lockyer—Leader of Government Business) (4.47 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

"(1) That the membership of statutory committees be varied as follows:

(a) That Mr Carroll be discharged from further attendance on the Public

Works Committee and Mr Stephan be appointed as Chairperson of the committee

(b) That Mr Lester be discharged from further attendance on the Legal, Constitutional and Administrative Review Committee and Mrs Gamin be appointed as Chairperson of the committee

(c) That Mr Woolmer be discharged from further attendance on the Members' Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee and Ms Warwick be appointed as Chairperson of the committee

(d) That Mr Healy be discharged from further attendance on the Public Accounts Committee and Mr Harper be appointed as Chairperson of the committee

(e) That Mr Malone be discharged from further attendance on the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee and Mr Elliott be appointed as Chairperson of the committee

(f) That Mr Springborg be discharged from further attendance on the Standing Orders Committee and Mr Speaker be Chairperson of the committee

(g) That Mr Springborg be discharged from further attendance on the Select Committee on Procedural Review and Mr Speaker be Chairperson of the committee

(h) That Messrs Lester, Baumann, Woolmer, Hollis, Robertson and Nuttall be appointed to the Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee and Mr Lester be appointed as Chairperson of the Committee

(2) These changes in membership to be effective as from the date of assent to the Parliamentary Committees Legislation Amendment Bill."

Motion agreed to.

## SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

**Mr FITZGERALD** (Lockyer—Leader of Government Business) (4.48 p.m.): I move—

"That the House, at its rising, do adjourn until 9.30 a.m. Tuesday, 30 April 1996."

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 4.49 p.m.