

TUESDAY, 8 OCTOBER 1996

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

ASSENT TO BILLS

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I have to inform the House that I have received from Her Excellency the Governor a letter in respect of assent to certain Bills, the contents of which will be incorporated in the records of the Parliament—

GOVERNMENT HOUSE
QUEENSLAND

18 September 1996

The Honourable N. J. Turner, MLA
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Speaker

I hereby acquaint the Legislative Assembly that the following Bill, having been passed by the Legislative Assembly and having been presented for the Royal Assent, was assented to in the name of Her Majesty The Queen on 10 September 1996:

"A Bill for an Act to facilitate the establishment of a major Queensland-based financial institution, and for other purposes"

The Bill is hereby transmitted to the Legislative Assembly, to be numbered and forwarded to the proper Officer for enrolment, in the manner required by law.

Yours sincerely

(Sgd) Leneen Forde
Governor

GOVERNMENT HOUSE
QUEENSLAND

19 September 1996

The Honourable N. J. Turner, MLA
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Speaker

I hereby acquaint the Legislative Assembly that the following Bills, having been passed by the Legislative Assembly and having been presented for the Royal Assent, were assented to in the name of Her Majesty The Queen on 18 September 1996:

"A Bill for an Act to provide for the transfer of the undertaking of Challenge Bank Limited to Westpac Banking Corporation, and for related purposes"

"A Bill for an Act to amend the Civil Aviation (Carriers' Liability) Act 1964"

"A Bill for an Act to enable warrants to be created, stored and managed in computers, and for other purposes"

"A Bill for an Act to amend the District Courts Act 1967, and for related purposes"

The Bills are hereby transmitted to the Legislative Assembly, to be numbered and forwarded to the proper Officer for enrolment, in the manner required by law.

Yours sincerely

(Sgd) Leneen Forde
Governor

AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORT

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I have to advise the House that today I received from the Auditor-General the annual report of the Queensland Audit Office for the period 1995-96.

PETITIONS

The Clerk announced the receipt of the following petitions—

School Cleaners

From **Mr Bredhauer** (30 signatories) requesting the House to reverse the decision by the Minister for Education to privatise cleaning in Queensland schools.

School Cleaners

From **Mr J. N. Goss** (23 signatories) requesting the House to reverse the decision to privatise cleaning in Queensland schools, thereby ensuring clean hygienic State schools and secure long term employment of cleaners in schools.

Government Services; Penalties and Sentences

From **Mr Nuttall** (128 signatories) requesting the House to (a) ensure that all pensioners throughout Queensland enjoy the same concessions as those in Brisbane (b) alter the necessary legislation to allow for the Queensland Government Seniors Card to be made available to disabled pensioners and sole parents (c) ensure the provision of continued and increased support to services providing assistance to older people in abuse situations (d) ensure the continuation of funding for the public dental health system in

an effort to reduce waiting lists (e) ensure the continuation of funding for the provision of free prescription glasses for eligible residents and (f) call on the law makers to ensure severe and long sentences are given for murder, rape and break and enter.

Public Housing

From **Mr Nuttall** (97 petitioners) requesting the House to take actions to ensure that the coalition Government meets its commitments to (a) tenants in public housing that they are not charged more than 25 per cent of their income in rent (b) tenants in public housing that they are not disadvantaged and (c) introduce accountable strategies for addition and replacement of housing stock to ensure that proceeds of sales of public housing to tenants are reinvested in public housing.

Colmslie Beach Land

From **Mr Purcell** (8 signatories) requesting the House to support and encourage the sale of 8.99 hectares of land—Real Property description 201432, Lot 2, Colmslie Road, Murarrie (also known as Colmslie Beach) to the Brisbane City Council without delay at open space prices for the purpose of parkland to be held in perpetuity for the people of Brisbane. The majority of prime riverfront land has been sold to industry and we, the undersigned, believe the State Government should sell this site to the Brisbane City Council for the benefit of the people of Brisbane and future generations for recreational purposes.

Speed Limits, Suburban Streets

From **Mr Santoro** (18 signatories) requesting the House to introduce a lower speed limit on suburban streets in Brisbane as contained in the recommendation of the Parliamentary Travelsafe Committee's Report on Local Areas Traffic Management of April 1994.

Petitions received.

PAPERS TABLED DURING RECESS

The Clerk announced that the following papers were tabled during the recess—

16 September 1996—

Suncorp Insurance and Finance—Annual Report 1995-96

20 September 1996—

Marine Incidents in Queensland—1 January to 30 June 1996

3 October 1996—

Board of Architects of Queensland—Annual Report 1995-96

Court of Appeal—Annual Report 1995-96.

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

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

Aboriginal Land Act 1991—

Aboriginal Land Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1996, No. 254

Challenge Bank (Transfer of Undertaking) Act 1996

Proclamation—the provisions of the Act that are not in force commence 1 October 1996, No. 247

Child Care Act 1991—

Child Care Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1996, No. 252

Community Services (Aborigines) Act 1984—

Community Services Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1996, No. 236

Community Services (Aborigines) Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 1996, No. 242

Community Services (Torres Strait) Act 1984—

Community Services Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1996, No. 236

Competition Policy Reform (Queensland) Act 1996—

Competition Policy Reform (Queensland-Exemptions) Regulation 1996, No. 251

Corrective Services Act 1988—

Corrective Services (Establishment of Prisons) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1996, No. 244

Credit Act 1987—

Credit (Suncorp Building Society Limited Exemption) Order 1996, No. 243

Education (Senior Secondary School Studies) Act 1988—

Education (Senior Secondary School Studies) Amendment By-law (No. 1) 1996, No. 262

Electricity Act 1994—

Electricity Amendment Regulation (No. 3) 1996, No. 253

Fair Trading Act 1989—

Fair Trading (Darchery Dartslinger) Order 1996, No. 234

Financial Intermediaries Act 1996—

Financial Intermediaries Regulation 1996, No. 249

Proclamation—the provisions of the Act that are not in force commence 1 October 1996, No. 248

Fisheries Act 1994—
Fisheries Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 1996, No. 266

Government Owned Corporations Act 1993—
Government Owned Corporations (Queensland Rail) Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 1996, No. 250

Intellectually Disabled Citizens Act 1985—
Intellectually Disabled Citizens Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1996, No. 235

Justices of the Peace and Commissioners for Declarations Act 1991—
Justices of the Peace and Commissioners for Declarations Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1996, No. 237

Local Government Act 1993—
Local Government (External Boundaries Review) Regulation 1996, No. 246
Local Government (Internal Boundaries Review) Regulation 1996, No. 255
Local Government Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1996, No. 245
Local Government Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 1996, No. 256

Local Government (Morayfield Shopping Centre Zoning) Act 1996—
Local Government (Morayfield Shopping Centre Zoning) Regulation 1996, No. 239

Mineral Resources Act 1989—
Mineral Resources Amendment Regulation (No. 6) 1996, No. 263

Motor Vehicles Control Act 1975—
Department of Transport (Variation of Fees) Regulation (No. 3) 1996, No. 240

Nature Conservation Act 1992—
Nature Conservation (Macropod Harvest Period) Amendment Notice (No. 2) 1996, No. 241
Nature Conservation (Protected Areas) Amendment Regulation (No. 5) 1996, No. 264
Nature Conservation (Protected Plants in Trade) Amendment Conservation Plan (No. 1) 1996, No. 238

Native Title (Queensland) Act 1993—
Native Title (Queensland) Regulation 1996, No. 260

Plant Protection Act 1989—
Plant Protection (Gladiolus Rust) Notice 1996, No. 257

Primary Industries Legislation Amendment Act 1996—
Proclamation—section 20(2) of the Act commences 1 November 1996, No. 265

Radioactive Substances Act 1958—
Radioactive Substances Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1996, No. 261

State Financial Institutions and Metway Merger Facilitation Act 1996—
State Financial Institutions and Metway Merger Facilitation Regulation 1996, No. 259

Stock Act 1915—
Stock (Cattle Tick) Amendment Notice (No. 2) 1996, No. 258

Transport Infrastructure (Roads) Act 1991—
Department of Transport (Variation of Fees) Regulation (No. 3) 1996, No. 240

Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995—
Department of Transport (Variation of Fees) Regulation (No. 3) 1996, No. 240.

RESPONSE TO PETITION

The Clerk laid upon the table of the House the following response to petition received by the Clerk since the last sitting day of the Legislative Assembly, 13 September 1996—

School Cleaners

18 September 1996

I refer to your contact with my office concerning school cleaning.

I announced the decision to out source the cleaning of schools, along with a commitment to put the savings into schools to improve student outcomes. The pros and cons of my decision have been well canvassed in the media.

The Department of Education had a process set up to ensure all schools received a fax for their cleaners by the end of the school day on Friday. Unfortunately, some schools did not receive the fax until the following Monday. I regret this and apologise that our efforts were not successful.

The Government has offered a compromise proposal, regarding the cleaning of schools, to the Australian Liquor Hospitality and Miscellaneous Workers' Union. Currently the Government is waiting for the Union to respond to this proposal. No relevant decisions can be made until the Union's response is available.

For further information, please contact Mr Don Brown, Secretary, Australian Liquor Hospitality and Miscellaneous Workers' Union, on phone number (07) 3831 3355. Alternatively you could address a written enquiry to Mr Brown at PO Box 331, Spring Hill, 4004.

PAPERS

The following papers were laid on the table—

- (a) Minister for Health (Mr Horan)—
Annual Reports for 1995-96—
Queensland Institute of Medical Research Council
Queensland Institute of Medical Research Trust
- (b) Minister for Environment (Mr Littleproud)—
Wet Tropics Management Authority—
Annual Report for 1995-96
- (c) Minister for Local Government and Planning (Mrs McCauley)—
Under the Local Government Act 1993—
 - (1) A copy of each of the reports from the Local Government Commissioner on the review of the divisional boundaries of the local government areas of the Shires of Banana, Crows Nest, Maroochy, Noosa, Pine Rivers, Rosalie and Warwick and the Cities of Caloundra, Logan, Mackay, Maryborough and Rockhampton;
 - (2) A copy of the report from the Local Government Commissioner on the review of the composition and divisional boundaries of the City of Hervey Bay;
 - (3) A copy of the report from the Local Government Commissioner on the Local Government Boundaries Adjustment Review between the Shires of Crows Nest Shire and Rosalie; and
 - (4) A copy of each of the reports from the Local Government Commissioner on the abolition of divisional boundaries of the local government areas of the Shires of Burnett, Kilkivan and Mareeba and the City of Bundaberg.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Death of Mr J. Ramsamy

Hon. K. R. LINGARD (Beaudesert—Minister for Families, Youth and Community Care) (9.37 a.m.), by leave: It is with deep sorrow that I draw the attention of honourable members to the unexpected and untimely death of Mr John Ramsamy. John Ramsamy has chaired the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Overview Committee for over two and a half years and was a member of that committee since it began its work in December 1992. That committee advised the Queensland Government on the implementation of the recommendations of

the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody and monitored that implementation. I had the pleasure of tabling that excellent report in this House a few weeks ago.

I attended John's funeral in Mackay yesterday afternoon. A massive crowd of over 1,000 people indicated the tremendous respect that John enjoyed. I believe that John was only 48 years of age. I had spoken to John on Wednesday morning, and in that conversation he expressed his typical concern for several people whom he believed had not received justice. I know that he worked all day on Wednesday dealing with concerns in Corrective Services before boarding a plane for Brisbane at 5 p.m. He suffered a heart attack on the flight and passed away in the Royal Brisbane Hospital later that night.

John had a positive and diplomatic approach that did much to promote growing respect for his committee's advice and work. He guided the first such indigenous committee of advice to Queensland Government to a point where substantially more far-reaching arrangements are proposed. He has earned an historic place in this State's history. I know of John's work in the Mackay area, especially with ATSIC and how he worked to promote the development of many positive initiatives there. On behalf of all those who have worked with John in his capacity of advising the Queensland Government, I offer my heartfelt condolences to his wife, Mrs Lois Ramsamy, his surviving children and grandchildren.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Gold Coast Drug Incident

Hon. T. R. COOPER (Crows Nest—Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Racing) (9.39 a.m.), by leave: The Gold Coast rave party which resulted in the emergency hospitalisation of nine young people this weekend has shocked the State and revealed a panorama of problems associated with the so-called youth drug culture. I can assure the House that I share community concern about these so-called rave parties and associated drug taking preying on impressionable and vulnerable young minds.

Police investigations have so far revealed that the drug involved is not illegal and that the premises involved do not sell alcohol and therefore do not require a liquor licence from the Licensing Commission. However, this does not mean that the police or the Government have been, or will be, sitting on their hands in relation to this or similar types of incidents. I

will be meeting as a matter of urgency with the Premier, the Minister for Health and the Minister for Local Government to examine the current situation and discuss avenues for monitoring and regulation of such parties and venues across the State.

It is fair to say that the problem is a rapidly emerging one, the complexion of which is changing at a very fast pace. Yesterday the designer drug was Ecstasy, which is an illegal drug; today it is Fantasy. Who knows what new drug there may be around the corner? The youth drug scene seems to be heavily influenced by overseas influences and, it seems, via information available on the Internet. What is unquestionable is that an insidious culture of designer drug use has taken hold among young people, who seem either unaware of the risks of chemical drug experimentation or are otherwise prepared to gamble with their health and wellbeing.

The *Gold Coast Bulletin* today reported a number of allegations relating to the availability of this drug in Queensland schools. There is no evidence that this drug is available in schools. It would appear that the comments attributed to Superintendent Barron of the Drug Investigation Squad were misreported in this instance. Superintendent Barron had actually stated that if information was received that this drug was in Queensland schools, then that would be investigated.

The *Gold Coast Bulletin* further reported that the Licensed Venues Association had rightly raised concerns about the youth drug culture and rave parties on the Gold Coast with myself and senior police in the region but that police response to those concerns was inadequate. I can report to the House that senior police in the region had been very active in addressing the specific law and order concerns raised by that organisation and other community groups on the coast. The operational approach taken by police in response to those concerns was outlined in some detail in return correspondence to the Licensed Venues Association, and indeed police have been actively involved in the Heart of City Task Force which was formed specifically to tackle law and order issues in Surfers Paradise. I can assure the House that police regard this matter very seriously and that there had been inspections of this particular venue, the B3 nightclub on the Gold Coast, but no illegal activity was evident.

The weekend incident should also serve as a stark reminder to young people, to parents and the community generally of the dangers of drug use and abuse, particularly in

light of the upcoming Schoolies Week on the Gold Coast. While the police will do everything possible to get on top of this problem, there must be a whole-of-Government and a whole-of-community approach to the drug issue. We must all be vigilant. People should be advised of the dangers associated with drug taking, and any information relating to these types of parties or drug availability should be passed to Crimestoppers immediately to assist police in the detection and apprehension of persons involved in illegal drugs.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Gold Coast Drug Incident

Hon. M. J. HORAN (Toowoomba South—Minister for Health) (9.42 a.m.), by leave: This statement is about the episode of drug taking on the Gold Coast, which is a matter of significant public concern at a State and national level. On 6 October 1996 at 6.38 a.m. an emergency call was made to the Gold Coast Ambulance Service. The ambulance was called to the B3 dance club in Albert Avenue, Broadbeach. This is a non-alcoholic venue which operates from 2 a.m. to approximately 10 a.m. It is believed that 10 patrons took a drug believed to contain gamma hydroxy butyrate, also known as GHB and Fantasy, on the premises. Within 15 minutes of consumption of this substance, eight of the 10 experienced respiratory depression, fitting or coma. Their collapse was believed to be due to hypoxia, which is a decrease in the amount of oxygen in the bloodstream. These individuals did not appear to go through an excitation phase, which is typical of methylene dioxy meth amphetamine or MDMA, commonly known as Ecstasy. They were simply seen to fall over. Two individuals who are believed to have taken a smaller dose of the drug did not collapse.

All eight patients who collapsed required intubation and artificial ventilation at the Gold Coast Hospital and in Brisbane metropolitan hospitals. I am happy to be able to announce that all eight of these people were treated successfully and were able to breathe normally once the effect of the drug had worn off. All patients have now left intensive care, and it is believed that none of them will suffer any serious long-term effects. In this regard, I give praise to the prompt and professional treatment which these patients received.

On the basis of the evidence available currently, it would appear that the drug used by people at the Gold Coast function was gamma hydroxy butyrate, also known as GHB and Fantasy. The use of substances of this

type at so-called rave parties is of great concern to me. On 5 July 1996, the Ministerial Council on Drug Strategy endorsed a proposal to develop a national protocol and guidelines for the conduct of dance parties to minimise the potential for harm arising from the use of MDMA and other related drugs. Reports of acute poisoning with GHB led the Federal Drug Agency in the United States to issue warnings about its potential for abuse. The drug has been promoted illegally there for body building as an alternative to anabolic steroids, for weight loss and as a psychedelic substance. Legally, it is used as a research drug to treat narcolepsy, which is a rare sleep disorder, and as an anaesthetic agent.

This drug has come to prominence due to its popularity within the rave dance scene in the United Kingdom and northern Europe. Adverse effects include vertigo or dizziness, vomiting, drowsiness and memory loss. Respiratory arrest has also been reported, leading to the need for hospitalisation and breathing support. This was the case for eight of the Gold Coast users. The severity of symptoms experienced depends on the dose of the drug and the presence of other drugs such as alcohol, benzodiazepines, cannabis or amphetamines. These drugs are all associated with rave parties.

Testing of the substance found at the Gold Coast is taking place at the Government Chemical Laboratories at Nathan, and preliminary results may be available at the end of this week. Because this drug is not used for anaesthesia in Australia, or for any other therapeutic purpose, it is not currently in the National Drug Schedule, which is a system where access to a drug is restricted depending on the toxicity of the substance and its intended use; nor is it controlled by any other legislation in Australia. All drugs for human use are required to be registered for use by the Therapeutic Goods Administration in Canberra. The national scheduling system involves the specific evaluation of the drug by the Therapeutic Goods Administration and the scheduling by the National Drugs and Poisons Scheduling Committee, which consists of State, Territory and Commonwealth representatives.

The control of the illicit use of this drug could be achieved by the Commonwealth listing the substance as a prohibited import and also by inclusion of the substance in the Drugs Misuse Act in State legislation. The scheduling of this substance has previously been discussed at the National Drugs and Poisons Scheduling Committee in 1991 and again in 1994. The committee wrote to the

drugs of dependence section of the Commonwealth Government and was advised in November 1994 that the treaties and monitoring section of the Commonwealth Department of Health was not aware of any reports of the misuse of the substance and therefore did not see a need to schedule the substance at that time.

As an urgent interim measure, an amendment to the current Queensland poisons regulations 1973 will be enacted to ensure that this substance is not legally available in this State. I expect that the poisons regulation will be amended by the end of this week, thus making this substance a prohibited drug in Queensland. I have asked that this issue also be placed on the agenda for the next meeting of chief health officers, which will be held next week. It is to be hoped that other jurisdictions will follow the lead of Queensland in addressing this important public health issue. In my role as a member of the Ministerial Council on Drug Strategy, I have requested the Commonwealth Minister for Health, the Honourable Dr Michael Wooldridge, to consider urgent action in regard to this drug.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

School Violence

Hon. R. J. QUINN (Merrimac—Minister for Education) (9.48 a.m.), by leave: I refer to the editorial in the *Courier-Mail* of last Tuesday, 1 October 1996, titled "A need for safe schools". That editorial supported a recent call by the Australian Secondary Principals Association for greater powers to search students' property and remove trespassers from school grounds.

I am pleased to inform the House that this Government and my department take school safety very seriously, and current arrangements are clearly well ahead of those in some other States. For example, principals and teachers already have the authority to search students' property if they have reasonable grounds for suspecting dangerous items such as weapons or drugs. Relevant guidelines are clearly documented in the Department of Education manual. Principals and teachers also have the legal right to remove trespassers from school grounds and can use reasonable force to do so if necessary. That does not mean that our staff should be expected to confront menacing louts or thugs, but they certainly have the authority to do so. Generally, of course, we would encourage the school to call in police, who are the right authorities to deal with that

type of situation. So the simple fact is that school staff already have considerable powers at their disposal to search students' property and deal with intruders.

This Government is also about to introduce new legislation which will more than double the maximum penalty for trespassing on school grounds from \$300 to \$750. On top of that, we will soon be formalising and extending the very successful trial of police constables in schools. Further legislative changes will soon give principals greater authority to deal with violent and unruly students. Among other things, schools will be able to suspend persistently disruptive students for up to 20 school days and to expel those who refuse to behave in the post-compulsory Years 11 and 12. These measures will be supported by a range of alternative education programs and facilities for difficult students outside the normal classroom environment. Over the next three years, we will also be employing an extra 200 guidance officers and other specialist staff such as counsellors, psychologists, social workers and youth workers.

These additional programs, facilities and support staff will provide principals with meaningful options to ensure that the overwhelming majority of well-behaved students in our classrooms are not disrupted by the unruly few. They will go a very long way towards filling the void which was left by the former Labor Government in 1992 when it banned the cane in State schools but failed to provide principals with any viable alternatives.

Having said that, let me reassure the House that our schools are not the urban war zones so often portrayed in the media these days. Sure, we have problems, and this Government is absolutely determined to overcome them—but let us restore some degree of proportion and perspective to this debate. We have more than half a million students in this State, each attending school for more than 200 days a year—yet one can count the number of serious incidents on one's fingers. That is borne out by comments in yesterday's *Courier-Mail* attributed to Detective Sergeant David Preston from the Logan District Juvenile Aid Bureau. He states—

"It is not common, and you're looking at the bottom half of the assault range . . . like a punch or something.

. . .

Cases more serious than that are extremely rare. I can't recall one in this

district where there was a weapon involved."

The truth is that school is probably the safest place for our children to be. Statistically speaking, they are at far greater risk in their own homes, on the road, at the local swimming pool and just about everywhere else.

The problems which do arise in our schools are simply a reflection of the far greater problems which exist outside the school gate, in the general community. That does not mean that we should stick our heads in the sand or sit on our hands, nor should we indulge in alarmist hysteria. As I said at the outset, our schools are among the safest and best regulated in Australia. This Government is determined to keep them that way.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Priority Housing Committee

Hon. R. T. CONNOR (Nerang—Minister for Public Works and Housing) (9.52 a.m.), by leave: I wish to make a statement on the establishment of a committee to determine policy and make recommendations regarding the priority allocation of public housing to families whose circumstances demand special consideration. The new committee will act as a form of appeals court for people claiming a need to be given priority consideration for public housing.

Dr Janet Irwin has already been appointed to head this committee. A pool of 12 community representatives will be selected as members of the committee. Advertisements throughout the State appeared from Saturday, 5 October, seeking nominations for these positions. Nominations close on 21 October. Dr Irwin has been appointed for a two-year term. She has been a member of the Social Security Appeals Tribunal for almost 10 years. This experience, coupled with her medical qualifications, indicates that she is well suited to the important task she now has, that is, the introduction and oversight of a priority housing system to serve our State.

Her other relevant experience includes terms as Commissioner of the Criminal Justice Commission, Chair of an Immigration Review Panel and member of the Senate Appeals Committee at the University of Queensland. Dr Irwin was born and educated in New Zealand and graduated in medicine from the University of Otago, Dunedin, in 1963. She was awarded Membership of the Order of Australia, the AM,

in the Queen's Birthday honours in 1991 for "Services to Women and the Community".

Under the system I inherited from my Labor predecessor, it is very difficult for Queenslanders to receive priority consideration for public housing. This is because the criteria are extremely narrow. The new committee will give the system a commonsense approach, so people with genuine need will not be overlooked. The current three criteria for priority public housing allocations are: people whose homes have become uninhabitable because of fire, flood or other disaster; parents taking custody of a former State ward who have no other housing options; and people who are subject to police requests under the witness protection program.

Initially, the full committee will be responsible for developing the policy for assessing priority housing requests. Once that policy has been established, Dr Irwin and community representatives from the committee pool will conduct appeal hearings against adverse departmental decisions. Establishment of the committee will make the decision process for allocation of priority housing transparent. This will boost public confidence in the system.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Firefighter Recruitment

Hon. M. D. VEIVERS (Southport—Minister for Emergency Services and Minister for Sport) (9.54 a.m.), by leave: I rise yet again to bring good news from the Department of Emergency Services. This week, and up until 21 October, the Queensland Fire Service will be conducting information seminars around the State seeking firefighter recruits. As this Government is determined to meet its election commitment by increasing the number of firefighters by 135 in its first three years in power, there could not be a better time to apply for positions as firefighters.

These seminars began in Mount Isa last night and continue tonight in Townsville, with further seminars planned for Cairns, Mackay, Rockhampton, Maryborough, the Gold and Sunshine Coasts, Toowoomba and in Brisbane. Details will be given to the potential recruits about the necessary education levels, health standards and other mandatory requirements to become a firefighter. With high unemployment levels in Queensland—which we inherited—it is pleasing that this Government is able to address community concerns by hiring additional firefighters. I urge anyone who is interested in finding out more

about careers in the Fire Service to attend one of these seminars.

While on the Queensland Fire Service, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate it on being named the Public Sector Employer of the Year. This Queensland training award is a tribute to the service's hard-working and dedicated staff who should rightly be proud.

Mr Schwarten: Under us.

Mr VEIVERS: No, it came in after we took over. Likewise, the award signifies to the general public that Queensland's Fire Service is among the best in the world. I do not say that lightly. I recently had the opportunity to visit the West Midlands Fire Service in England—widely regarded as the best in the world—and I returned well aware that we are not far, if at all, behind.

In a career where lives are constantly at risk, high-quality training for our firefighters is vitally important for themselves and for the public. I know Queensland's fire training systems—particularly Q-STEP—are so highly regarded in Australia that many other fire services are interested in adopting the training practices and programs for their States. I have to tell honourable members that those other fire services will have to buy those programs. I can assure the Fire Service and the people of Queensland that this Government will continue to provide any assistance it can to ensure that these first-class training programs continue and are expanded.

PROFESSOR PETER C. DOHERTY

Nobel Prize for Medicine

Hon. R. E. BORBRIDGE (Surfers Paradise—Premier) (9.57 a.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

"That this House congratulates Queenslander Peter Charles Doherty on winning the Nobel Prize for Medicine."

Queensland and Queenslanders can justifiably feel proud today at the triumph of a native son. It is a rare honour indeed to win a Nobel prize. It is both significant and apt that Professor Doherty, who grew up in Brisbane and was educated here, should have won such recognition in the field of medical research, for medical research is an area of science in which Queensland excels.

While Professor Doherty's prize-winning work was performed at the John Curtin School of Medical Research in Canberra in the 1970s—and that institution also deserves the praise of all Australians for its pioneering

work—we here in Queensland can draw pride from the fact that this impetus for excellence sprang from our State. Queensland traditionally has given so much to the world. Today, Queensland's top-flight medical research needs little introduction to a global audience. Our expertise in tropical medicine and in cancer research is world renowned. Nonetheless, Queensland has always been in the export business—in the business of giving to the world the talents of men and women whose service to humanity, even today, sometimes needs to be performed on a bigger stage. Over time, we shall eradicate this tyranny of stature and indeed in many areas have already done so.

Today, Peter Doherty has won for Queensland another entry in the world list of excellence. His research, with his colleague Professor Rolf Zinkernagel of Switzerland, discovered how the human immune system recognises virus-infected cells. This is a crucial link in designing better vaccines and finding new therapies to combat cancer, multiple sclerosis and diabetes. Peter Doherty, who now works in immunology in the United States, joins three Australians in the Nobel order—Sir Frank MacFarlane Burnet in 1960, John Carew Eccles in 1963 and Howard Florey, joint prize-winner in 1945 for the discovery of penicillin.

The best wishes of all Queenslanders will go to Professor Doherty today and their thoughts will be with him in Stockholm on 10 December when he accepts his prize.

Mr BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—Leader of the Opposition) (10 a.m.): I rise to second the motion and join with the Premier in congratulating Professor Peter Charles Doherty on this award. It is not only a significant achievement for him, but one in which all Queenslanders can take a great deal of pride. Professor Doherty has made the ultimate contribution to medical research, and Queenslanders and this Parliament should express their gratitude—which we are doing—that we have again found our way, through him, onto the international medical research map as a leading light.

His work in the early 1970s was a major breakthrough in identifying ways to prevent the development of what can be a very serious and often fatal illness—viral meningitis. Actually, it is a little more complex than that, but that is one of the positive aspects of his work. Professor Doherty's collaborative work with Swiss scientist Rolf Zinkernagel looked specifically at the immune system with a view to developing vaccines which laid the groundwork for other studies of the immune

system. Clearly, the Nobel prize has taken a view that one of the most valuable contributions which can be made in medical research is that which is undertaken with an eye to long-term prevention. That is something that I am sure all members would support. Immunology holds many possibilities in terms of prevention and cure.

The importance of health promotion and preventive health measures needed to support a serious primary health care approach to medicine cannot be underestimated, and I think it is of particular significance to Queensland, which is why this achievement should be acknowledged in this way. These sorts of programs are, of course, informed by the quality of medical research resulting from the work of distinguished scientists such as Professor Doherty. In the past, Queensland's own Health Promotion Council was funded to help improve Queenslanders' health status and deliver better health outcomes, and this group worked very closely with the university and other health care providers and researchers.

There are significant areas where substantial gain in health in Queensland can be achieved through the help of research to prevent a range of specific health problems, including suicide, cardiovascular disease, cancer, injuries and mental health. However, in Queensland's case I think it needs to be said that we are always going to need to keep the fight against skin cancer alive and kicking, because we are the melanoma capital of the world, unfortunately, due to climate and a preference for the outdoors and other factors. Significant research achievements are being made in this area, as the current Minister for Health would know. There is no reason why, in the longer term, Queensland cannot have the best health status of all Australian States, if we are serious about health promotion.

This is a very significant day for Queensland and Australia. I join in seconding this motion moved by the Premier with a degree of enthusiasm so that all Queenslanders will know that, in a very bipartisan way, this is a significant day for all of us.

Motion agreed to.

SCRUTINY OF LEGISLATION COMMITTEE

Report

Mr ELLIOTT (Cunningham)
(10.03 a.m.): I lay upon the table of the House the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee's Alert

Digest No. 9 of 1996 and move that it be printed.

Ordered to be printed.

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE

Annual Report

Mr STEPHAN (Gympie) (10.04 a.m.): On behalf of the Public Works Committee, I table its 1995-96 annual report. Due to factors beyond its control, the committee did not have a very busy 1995-96. The only report it tabled during that year was its 1994-95 annual report. However, so far in 1996-97 the current committee has been busy and intends to keep up the pace. The committee has already tabled two reports, has one ready to table and has three current inquiries.

I thank my fellow committee members for their assistance during the year. Also, on behalf of the committee, I would like to thank all those who participated in our inquiries and the secretariat staff for their assistance. I commend the report to the House.

ESTIMATES COMMITTEE A

Reports

Mr HARPER (Mount Ommaney) (10.05 a.m.): It is with pleasure that I lay upon the table of the House Report No. 1 of Estimates Committee A relating to the Estimates of expenditure referred to it and contained in the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill (No. 2) 1996 and Report No. 2 of Estimates Committee A relating to the Estimates of expenditure referred to it and contained in the Appropriation Bill (No. 2) 1996. I would point out that, in an endeavour to save on paper use, the minutes of the meetings and hearings of the committee have been attached to Report No. 1 only.

I also lay upon the table of the House additional information provided to the committee, together with the Hansard transcript of the public hearing held on 17 September 1996. In tabling this report, I thank all the staff who were involved in supporting the committee, including Hansard and the attendants, but especially our research staff Kerry Newton, Sandy Rowse and Tania Jackman. I commend the report to the House.

ESTIMATES COMMITTEE B

Report

Mr STEPHAN (Gympie) (10.06 a.m.): I lay upon the table of the House the report for Estimates Committee B relating to the

Estimates of expenditure referred to it and contained in the Appropriation Bill (No. 2) 1996. I also lay upon the table of the House the additional information provided to the committee, together with the Hansard transcript of the public hearing held on 18 September 1996. I thank all those who were involved, including staff members Karen, Meg and Maree, for their assistance.

ESTIMATES COMMITTEE C

Report

Hon. V. P. LESTER (Keppel) (10.06 a.m.): It is with pleasure that I lay upon the table of the House Report No. 1 of Estimates Committee C relating to the Estimates of expenditure referred to it and contained in the Appropriation Bill (No. 2) 1996. I also lay upon the table of the House additional information provided to the committee, together with the Hansard transcript of the public hearing held on 19 September 1996. I thank all members of the committee for their input into the process and the research and other staff for their contributions. I commend the report to the House.

ESTIMATES COMMITTEE D

Report

Ms WARWICK (Barron River) (10.07 a.m.): I lay upon the table of the House Report No. 1 of Estimates Committee D relating to the Estimates of expenditure contained in the Appropriation Bill (No. 2) 1996 and referred to the committee. I also lay upon the table of the House additional information provided to the committee, together with the Hansard transcript of the committee's public hearing held on 20 September 1996. I commend the report to the House.

ESTIMATES COMMITTEE E

Report

Mr ELLIOTT (Cunningham) (10.08 a.m.): I lay upon the table of the House Report No. 1 of Estimates Committee E relating to the Estimates of expenditure referred to it and contained in the Appropriation Bill (No. 2) 1996. I also lay upon the table of the House additional information, volumes 1 and 2, and the Hansard transcript of the public hearing held on 24 September 1996. I would like to thank in particular Graeme Kinnear, Andrew and all those other people who assisted us and those members who took part in that committee.

ESTIMATES COMMITTEE F**Report**

Mr J. N. GOSS (Aspley) (10.08 a.m.): I lay upon the table of the House Report No. 1 of Estimates Committee F concerning the Estimates of expenditure in the portfolios of Public Works and Housing and Transport and Main Roads as contained in the Appropriation Bill (No. 2) 1996. I also lay upon the table additional information provided to the committee, together with the Hansard transcript of its public hearing held on 25 September 1996. I would personally like to thank Rob Hansen, Rob McBride, Tania Jackman, the Hansard staff and all other staff who assisted with Estimates Committee F. The committee has recommended that the expenditure be agreed to, and I commend its report to the House.

ESTIMATES COMMITTEE G**Report**

Mrs GAMIN (Burleigh) (10.09 a.m.): I lay upon the table of the House Report No. 1 of Estimates Committee G relating to the Estimates of expenditure referred to it and contained in the Appropriation Bill (No. 2) 1996. I also lay upon the table of the House additional information provided to the committee, together with the Hansard transcript of the public hearing held on 26 September 1996. I commend the report to the House.

NOTICES OF MOTION**Inquiry into Criminal Justice Commission**

Mr BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—Leader of the Opposition) (10.09 a.m.): I give notice that I shall move—

"That this Parliament condemns the decision by the State Government to waste taxpayers' money of well over \$1m on a politically motivated witchhunt, the Borbidge Inquiry, into the Criminal Justice Commission—money which could be better used for extra police, education, health and services."

Native Forests

Mr DOLLIN (Maryborough) (10.10 a.m.): I give notice that I shall move—

"That this House—

- (a) takes note of the deceptive statements by the Minister for

Primary Industries in relation to the Minister's position on the lock-up of 15 per cent of all native forests existing in Queensland prior to the year 1750; and

- (b) condemns the Minister for misleading the timber industry and being untruthful in stating that the Goss Labor Government had signed the agreement."

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS**Performance of Treasurer**

Mr BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—Leader of the Opposition) (10.11 a.m.): On Saturday, the people of Lytton voted overwhelmingly for the Labor Party candidate, Paul Lucas. In doing so, the Liberal Party recorded an 8 per cent primary vote against them.

Mr Mackenroth: A drop.

Mr BEATTIE: Yes, an 8 per cent primary vote against them—a drop in their vote. That was because of the seven new or increased taxes that this Government has introduced. It was a vote against Mrs Sheldon's taxes. What did Mrs Sheldon say to the media? "We're not going to change a thing", she said. She continued the arrogant approach to her job that she has demonstrated since assuming that role.

I table for the information of the House a letter that was sent to me on 18 September from the Australian Society of Corporate Treasurers, which states—

"The Australian Society of Corporate Treasurers (ASCT) urges the Opposition to vote against the increase in the Debit tax rates. These changes will have significant long term consequences for Queensland as a potential major business centre for Australian and non-resident corporates, not only for the Australian market but also potential headquarters for the Asia-Pacific region . . . taxing small and medium size businesses more than larger corporations."

The Australian Society of Corporate Treasurers has over 1,200 individual members. In Queensland, it has 65 members representing 50 companies. The letter further states that the results of the increase in the debit tax will have the following effects—

"There will be a narrowing of the credibility gap within Australia between Queensland and the rest of the country, particularly in the area of taxation of financial instruments and transactions."

In other words, the debit tax is bad for Queensland business, it is bad for regional headquarters, and is creating a situation in this State that will lead to not only unemployment but also a reduction in our competitiveness.

Time expired.

Extended Trading Hours

Hon. V. P. LESTER (Keppel) (10.13 a.m.): I have to report to the Parliament that a number of small-business people have been lobbying me in relation to the extended trading hours issue. I believe that I should at least put my personal view on this matter, that is, we do not need the extended trading hours to the extent that we have them currently. I know that this issue will not be very popular with some consumers and no doubt might cost me a few votes at the next election.

Mr Elder: You are having two bob each way.

Mr LESTER: There is no two bob each way here. We are firmly going out to support the interests of small business. Extended trading hours are creating a problem. If members opposite want to go against small business and ridicule what I am saying, they are doing it very well. In the future they will not receive one vote from anybody in small business who supports 60 per cent of our work.

We need to consider jobs, and it is at least my role to put forward in the Parliament the view of the small-business people. If I do not put forward their view, I am not doing my job. I challenge the Labor Party to stand up and be counted, and to at least try to support the efforts of people in small business to make a profit, and to support employment.

When I was Minister, everybody had an opportunity to make some money, and isn't making money what our life is all about? One can employ more people——

Time expired.

Home and Medical Aids Scheme

Mrs EDMOND (Mount Coot-tha) (10.15 a.m.): For far too long, the Minister for Health has stood up in this place and denied funding cuts to community-based health services by hiding behind the Treasurer's way-overdue Budget Statement. The Budget has now been brought down and the Minister still does not have the courage or the brains to come clean and tell the truth about the cuts that he is making to the Health budget because he thinks that he can still keep it a secret.

Mr FITZGERALD: I rise to a point of order. The Budget is before the House. We cannot debate matters relating to the Budget.

Mrs EDMOND: He is hoping that he can keep the cutbacks in Health a secret just long enough to sneak into Mr Borbidge's shoes before the people realise that he was the one who cut the funding to the Home and Medical Aids Scheme.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member will not refer to "he" across the Chamber and point. The honourable member should know to refer to members by their correct titles.

Mrs EDMOND: But he is not sincere, and the record will show that that is the case and has been the case for far too long. The Minister has been telling everybody who will listen how great things are in the Health Department, while patients in need of the most basic home and medical aids suffer.

Let us consider just one of the victims whom Mr Horan has so callously ignored. This person happens to live in the Minister's electorate. Mrs Bourke contacted my office last week in total desperation after having no success in obtaining any help from Mr Horan. The staff in his electorate office in Toowoomba promised to look at the matter closely, but nothing has happened. It is just as well that Mrs Bourke did not ring the ministerial office, because she would have received an earful of abuse from his media advisers as everyone who rings me tells me. His electorate office in Toowoomba did nothing. Mrs Bourke has had two strokes, and all that she is seeking are incontinence pads—the most basic of medical aids essential to cope with the effects of incontinence. It seems that the Minister's back to basics health system cannot cope with that. He has cut back her allowance in a shameful and disgraceful way.

Time expired.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Diabetes Prevention

Mrs WILSON (Mulgrave) (10.17 a.m.): The Health Minister, Mike Horan, has recently announced \$164,000 in new funding initiatives to combat Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander diabetes and nutrition problems. Of that, \$67,000 will go to the Cairns Tropical Public Health Unit to improve nutrition in Cape York and Torres Strait communities and \$97,000 will go to Diabetes Australia to train Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workers in diabetes education and management. In addition, the Health Minister, Mike Horan, has

announced that Queensland Health and Diabetes Australia will develop a graduate certificate in diabetes education and management for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers. That is very important because those graduates will then be able to go back to their own communities and work with their own people. That is a very big plus in north Queensland.

Queensland Health research has shown that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities have more than 10 times the incidence of diabetes in larger communities, which is an issue of great concern to the Government. The communities have asked for this type of support and we have come up with it. That response by the Health Minister is one part of the coalition's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Food and Nutrition Strategy and is proof of the coalition Government's commitment to the real health needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.

Mr Horan's initiative is proof that the coalition Government is about making the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders better, in contrast to Labor's preoccupation with throwing dollars at a few political activists. The dollars for this particular funding for Aboriginal diabetes prevention will count in north Queensland. I commend the Minister for that.

Power Supply, Daintree Region

Hon. T. McGRADY (Mount Isa) (10.19 a.m.): On Monday, 30 September, I participated in a telephone conversation with a Mrs Odette Phillpot, who is a resident of the Daintree. Mrs Phillpot was most agitated and distressed during that telephone conversation. She informed me that she had recently attended a meeting of the CILC community committee at the Daintree. A number of residents attended the meeting, and those residents had been informed that the Minister for Mines and Energy would be visiting the area to inform the people that grid power would come to the Daintree.

Mrs Phillpot informed me that she raised the question of what would happen to her because she had recently installed an HRAP system at her home and had committed herself to the expenditure of a large amount of money. She asked what would be her position if the power was to come through the Daintree.

Mrs Phillpot claims that the following day the Minister for Mines and Energy rang her at her home and, in her words, abused her.

Some days later, on Cairns radio, a number of people rang in to a talkback program to speak to the Minister. Mrs Phillpot informed me that she has used this talkback program but, on the day in question, she certainly did not. I am informed that the Minister rang her place of work and spoke to her supervisor demanding to know the movements of Mrs Phillpot on the day in question. When Mrs Phillpot complained to the Minister's office, she was told that a mistake had been made and that one of the Minister's staff had in fact rung up the radio station and had checked to ascertain the names of all of the callers.

The Minister is referred to clause 21, which the residents in that area signed. I am informed by a senior officer of the department that the Minister has been advised to seek Crown law advice on clause 21 because the information that was given was incorrect.

Time expired.

Mrs S. Huang

Mr CARROLL (Mansfield) (10.21 a.m.): Yesterday, one of my better-known constituents in the electorate of Mansfield, Shirley Huang, was appointed honorary diplomat to the Republic of China on Taiwan for Logan City. This honour was conferred at an impressive ceremony at the Logan City Council Library function rooms by popular Independent Mayor, Rod Gollidge, whose council has long recognised the good sense of pro-active diplomacy to enhance the social, cultural, trade and economic relationships between Queensland and Taiwan. I applaud those initiatives of the mayor and his council.

Mrs Huang has earned this recognition for her extensive and positive work in Queensland and in Taiwan through not only enhancing the relationship between Queensland and Taiwan but also through her social work with the Taiwan Women's League of Queensland Inc. She has been very capably assisted and encouraged by her husband, Jerry Huang and their family, particularly their son, Steven. Last evening, at that celebratory dinner, Shirley and Steven made stirring speeches and exemplified the strong family values and hard work ethics that are so important to Taiwanese people. I was pleased to see hundreds of high-profile people attending both of yesterday's events, including the Federal member for Moreton, Gary Hardgrave, Mrs Huang's parents and many other relatives and friends.

As I said last night and as I have said previously, it is a pity that we are not able to

recognise an official diplomatic appointment of this nature. It will be a great day when Taiwan's attainment of adulthood as a separate nation on the world stage is finally recognised by other nations, because they would benefit from that.

I repeat here what was made plain in speeches yesterday and elsewhere previously, especially last week: I disapprove and reject statements of any person which are discriminatory of any person in Australia. Along with all other members, I value the rich multicultural society we enjoy in Queensland and the valuable contribution made to it by people from all countries ranging from Ireland to Taiwan.

Shopping Hours

Mr SCHWARTEN (Rockhampton) (10.23 a.m.): I rise to draw to the attention of the House that, over the weekend, my electorate office received some 700 faxes from electors in my area concerned about the possibility of a change to shopping hours. I want to pay particular—

Mr Borbidge: Ha, ha!

Mr SCHWARTEN: I am pleased to hear that the Premier is mocking my constituents, whom I represent. He regards them as a joke! I will be happy to pass on to my constituents that the Premier of this State believes that they are jokes when, in fact, they are most concerned about the statement that he made recently. I note what Mr Lester has had to say about small business. Of course, what he said flies in the face of the Premier's own report to this place, which cost \$400,000 and which found that small business would not be adversely affected by the retention of the existing shopping hours and that their problems were more deep seated.

I would have to say that a lot of small-business people in Rockhampton agree with that statement. However, the overwhelming majority of the people of Rockhampton have bothered to ring my office or drop me a line and, indeed, have signed their names to form letters—and if the Premier regards them as a non-representative group of people, then I feel very sorry for him. That shows why the coalition went so badly in the Lytton by-election. It proves that he has arrogantly overrun the wishes of the people of this State.

However, I am here to stand up for those people and to say that they have every right to expect this Government to not only honour its report but also to honour their wishes. I particularly want to make mention of the fact

that Mr Lester made some comments about those people who signed these form letters. He said that they were not up to much if they just merely signed such a letter. Let me say to him that quite a considerable number of those people are electors in the electorate of Keppel, and I will be happy to pass on to them his remarks.

Time expired.

Rural Australian Resources

Mr STEPHAN (Gympie) (10.25 a.m.): I refer to a report by Julian Cribb of the CSIRO, in which he made trailblazing comments about the twenty-first century and the role of Australian agricultural research and developments in a perilous world.

Of course, he realises the great importance that we should place on agricultural development that has been carried out in the past. Julian Cribb has campaigned to make Australians realise the enormous natural resources that exist in rural Australia and why they need to be transformed back to a productive asset. We need to be cognisant of what he said, and also get some inspiration from it. It is vital to understand that this campaign to revive the bush is not based on some kind of misplaced sentiment but is the responsibility of every thinking Australian.

The decision on what to do with the untapped resources of rural Australia is looming as one of the most important decisions we have to make in this century. We need only to go out into some rural areas and look at what is there now and think about what was there 15 years ago or 20 years ago. Unfortunately, the resources in rural Australia have diminished to such an extent that we are importing a lot of products that in the past we used to export.

Time expired.

Wahroonga Nursing Home

Mr DOLLIN (Maryborough) (10.27 a.m.): On 7 October, in a media release to the *Maryborough-Hervey Bay Chronicle*, the Minister for Health, Mr Horan, falsely accused me of telling Labor lies about the coalition's decision to close the Wahroonga Nursing Home. The Minister does not have his facts straight. I have not accused the coalition of closing the nursing homes, which I hope it never does. What I have accused the Minister of is closing 140 units and cottages by attrition—simply not accepting any additional persons to occupy the 122 units and cottages

that, to the great shame of this coalition, today stand empty.

The Health Minister should check carefully the facts contained in a statement made by his staff member, Mr David McClune, concerning an alleged decision by the previous Government that no new applications would be received. I had certainly never heard of any mention of such an instruction. To be doubly sure, I made further inquiries and I have been assured by the two previous Health Ministers, the Honourable Jim Elder and the honourable Peter Beattie, and the Chairman of the Wide Bay Regional Health Board, Mr Terry McCorley, board member, Mayor Alan Brown, and former director of Wide Bay Regional Health, Paul Kelly, that no such instruction existed. They have all denied categorically hearing about such a plan.

I asked the manager of the Maryborough/Hervey Bay Health Service, Mr Ron Wynn, if he would send me a copy of the directive allegedly made on 7 December last year. However, he said that he could not find any. Since then, another of the Minister's advisers, Mr Anthony Havers, claimed to have in writing an instruction directing the downgrading of the Wahroonga Nursing Home. I ask the Minister to table in Parliament this direction. It is obvious to me that this Government has decided to close the Wahroonga Nursing Home by attrition.

The coalition is now the Government and, clearly, it is its decision as to whether the Wahroonga Nursing Home is closed or kept open. It cannot continue to hide behind the skirts of the previous Government. I call on the Minister to come clean and table any existing documentation that supports his claim regarding the downgrading of the Wahroonga Nursing Home, or to forever hold his peace.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Inquiry into Criminal Justice Commission

Mr BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—Leader of the Opposition) (10.30 a.m.): I refer the Treasurer to yesterday's Cabinet decision to initiate the politically-motivated Borbidge inquiry into the CJC, and I ask: how much money has Cabinet set aside for this inquiry? Is it correct that the inquiry will cost, at the very least, \$1m? As no money has been set aside in the Budget for this inquiry, will the money be pulled out of Health, Police or Education? If not, where will the money come from?

Mrs SHELDON: Certainly discussion went on in Cabinet about this issue. It was felt that it was so important that the State know

exactly what was happening with the CJC that this inquiry should go ahead. It was an election commitment to review the CJC and, as we are honouring our election commitments, it is being honoured as well. The Attorney-General has indicated that the inquiry should only be of 12 weeks' duration, so that it will not cost the State an inordinate amount of money.

Mr Elder: How much?

Mrs SHELDON: That has not been adequately and finally determined, and cannot be at this stage, as the honourable member would know. Exactly what the commissioners will receive has been set. That is quite up front and it is very much in accordance with what other eminent people in such positions receive. As a Government, we will adequately cover it because it is an important initiative for this State.

Inquiry into Criminal Justice Commission

Mr BEATTIE: I refer the Minister for Police to yesterday's Cabinet decision to establish the politically-tainted Borbidge inquiry into the CJC. I table a copy of the Cabinet submission dealing with the establishment of the inquiry, supplied by a National Party Minister despite its top security classification A rating. I ask: if the Minister was at Cabinet yesterday, did he do the right and proper thing by excluding himself when the terms of reference and the selection of the commissioners were being discussed? If he did not exclude himself, why did he not recognise the fact that he had a conflict of interest in that he is the subject of a CJC-initiated inquiry which will shortly be reporting on whether he should face charges?

Mr COOPER: I have no knowledge of where the Leader of the Opposition obtained the document he has referred to. As to the report and the inference made by the Leader of the Opposition about whether I should absent myself or not, he may also have received a copy of the terms of reference. He should have a look at them. As far as I am concerned, they have nothing to do with me.

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

Mr SPEAKER: I inform the House that present in the public gallery is a group of United Kingdom parliamentarians, led by the Right Honourable Michael Jopling, who are travelling around Australia on a CPA trip. They are in the Chamber now.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Sunshine Motorway

Mr SPRINGBORG: I ask the Premier: can he inform the House of the Opposition's position on the removal of the tolls on the Sunshine Motorway?

Mr BORBIDGE: In reply to the honourable member for Warwick, it is a little difficult to know just what the policy of the Leader of the Opposition or the Deputy Leader of the Opposition is in regard to the removal of the tolls on the Sunshine Motorway. We are aware that the Leader of the Opposition has been mounting a very concerted and vicious campaign against the Treasurer because, unlike the previous Labor Government, this Government honoured its election commitment to remove the tolls.

However, my attention has been drawn to the *Sunshine Coast Daily* of Tuesday, 27 February 1996. The front-page story of that paper is titled, " 'Mrs Sheldon should get on with it and do it' Labor turns tollbuster", and it quotes the Leader of the Opposition. The article states—

"Mr Beattie said his party would not stand in the way of the election commitment to abolish the tolls made by Treasurer and Member for Caloundra Joan Sheldon.

"Mrs Sheldon should get on with it and do it. It doesn't take time," Mr Beattie said, throwing down the gauntlet."

Mr Beattie might have thrown down the gauntlet, but he picked it up again pretty quickly. He expanded on his policy in respect of the Sunshine Motorway. The article continues—

"The former health minister said he was concerned that Mrs Sheldon may try to blame Labor and independent Liz Cunningham if the Coalition was unable to deliver on its promise."

Mr Beattie was quoted as saying—

"We are not going to be seen to be playing a negative and petulant role. I have promised a positive approach. Here it is."

It gets better. Mr Beattie said of Mrs Sheldon—

"She has made a commitment, she has said it is funded, now it is a matter for her."

Let us go through this slowly; let us enjoy the Opposition's agony. The article further states—

"The Opposition leader said Mrs Sheldon could abolish the tolls in a week, and could even reduce them in the meantime. He said four to five weeks would be a reasonable time limit.

Mr Beattie said if there was some reason why the issue had to come to Parliament, the Labor Party would support the Coalition to abolish the tolls . . ."

The article goes on—

" 'So there is not a problem for her,' Mr Beattie said of Mrs Sheldon."

It gets better. Obviously we know that from time to time there is a bit of friction between the Leader of the Opposition and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. In fact, as late as Friday, 27 September, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition was quoted in the *Sunshine Coast Daily* in direct opposition to the comments made by the Leader of the Opposition. The article states, "Mr Elder said Mrs Sheldon was wrong in lifting the tolls." What are we meant to believe? Who are we meant to believe? Do we believe the Opposition Leader, who said that Labor would vote with the coalition to remove the tolls, or do we believe the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, who said that Labor did not support the removal of the tolls? The question is: do these two ever talk?

Mr Davidson interjected.

Mr BORBIDGE: My colleague the Minister from the Sunshine Coast raises a very interesting question: what is their policy? I challenge the Leader of the Opposition today to state his policy in regard to putting back the tolls on the Sunshine Motorway. Does he stand by the front-page story of the *Sunshine Coast Daily*? Here he is—"Tollbuster Pete", "Bandwagon Beattie", at it again on the Sunshine Coast saying, "We'll get rid of the tolls", yet we know that, at the same time, he is orchestrating a campaign to discredit the Government for honouring an election commitment.

I can understand the sensitivity of honourable members opposite. Let me just remind the Leader of the Opposition and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition that in 1989 the then Opposition Leader, Mr Goss, hand signed a letter which was distributed to every home in the then electorate of Cooroora, stating that Labor would remove the tolls. In 1990, the then Labor Government broke that promise. They have been campaigning against us keeping our promise, but they are on the public record on the Sunshine Coast saying what they would do.

The Leader of the Opposition has a favourite saying when he criticises people. He tells them that they are not up to the job. Let us see who is not up to the job. I have a letter from the Leader of the Opposition, dated 21 August 1996, making representations to the Minister for Environment on behalf of a constituent. He addressed the letter to the Honourable Tom Barton. Just so that there is no confusion in Opposition ranks, I point out that after he made representations to Tom Barton as Minister for Environment and Heritage, the Leader of the Opposition wrote on the bottom of the letter, "c.c. Rod Welford, shadow Minister for Environment and Heritage". All I can say is: come on over, Tom! The Leader of the Opposition says one thing in regard to the Sunshine Motorway tolls when it suits him, campaigns massively, dishonestly and deceitfully when it suits him and, at the end of the day, does not even know who the Minister for Environment is.

Health Tripartite Forum; Mr M. Miller

Mr ELDER: In directing a question to the Premier, I refer to the letter sent to him last March by the Deputy Government Whip in which he suggested that, in addition to the \$80,000 for the tripartite forum, Mick Miller be paid \$1,500 a day for expenses plus a \$5,000 bonus to settle the question: what is in this for him? I ask: was this the only money—and I repeat "the only money"—the Government paid to Miller and his Health Tripartite Forum, and was this the pay-off for the secret deal between the Health Minister and Miller prior to the Mundingburra by-election?

Mr Horan: Answer that on notice if you like.

Mr BORBIDGE: If the honourable member would like to place the question on notice, I will make sure that I give——

Mr Elder interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member asked a question. The Premier is answering it.

Mr BORBIDGE: In reply to the honourable member opposite—I have not paid Mr Miller anything.

Australian Society of Corporate Treasurers

Mr CARROLL: I direct a question to the Treasurer. In light of the Leader of the Opposition's reading of a letter from the Australian Society of Corporate Treasurers in this Parliament earlier today, I ask: can the

Treasurer tell the House whether this criticism is justified, or are the Opposition and the society just playing politics?

Mr Schwarten interjected.

Mrs Edmond interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Rockhampton! The member for Mount Coot-tha! I know there is a desire to impress the visiting parliamentarians in the Speaker's Gallery, but we will have order.

Mrs SHELDON: I find it very interesting that this group has decided to stick its head up now. I do not remember the Society of Corporate Treasurers making any comment against the former Government and former Labor Treasurer Keith De Lacy. Opposition members should remember that it was the Labor Treasurer who not only raised the debits tax in his own Budget but also broadened it to include all EFTPOS and ATM transactions. I wonder where Mr Beattie, Mr Hamill and Mr Elder were then, given their negative comments now, because their own Treasurer did that. All we have done in this Budget is lift that tax to the level at which it is in every other State. I wonder why the Society of Corporate Treasurers has decided to raise this issue now and not when the former Labor Treasurer introduced the tax into the Queensland Budget. The fact of the matter is——

Mr De LACY: I rise to a point of order. I heard the Treasurer say that the former Treasurer—me—introduced the debits tax. I find that offensive. That tax was introduced in 1982 by a Liberal Treasurer. It was transferred from a Liberal Federal Treasurer to a Liberal State Treasurer. It was not introduced by the Labor Party. It was certainly not introduced by me. I find it offensive that the Treasurer should say that. I heard her say that on the news yesterday. The Treasurer seems to have no concern about the correctness of what she says.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member will state his point of order.

Mr De LACY: I ask the Treasurer to withdraw the comment, because it is wrong; it is a lie.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member will not use the term "lie" in reference to the Treasurer. The honourable member will withdraw, and then I will deal with his point of order.

Mr De LACY: Mr Speaker, I withdraw the word "lie". It is manifestly untrue.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Cairns has found the Treasurer's

remarks offensive and has asked for a withdrawal.

Mrs SHELDON: Before I withdraw, I would like to make a statement.

Mr Fouras interjected.

Mrs SHELDON: No, the honourable member has made this a debating point, and so will I. The fact is that, while he was the State Treasurer, the honourable member did bring into the State Budget the debits tax which had been a Federal tax, and he knows he did that. There is no way I will withdraw my comment, because it was a matter of fact.

Mr De LACY: Mr Speaker, I have asked that this be withdrawn. It is wrong. It is false. We did not introduce the debits tax. It was introduced in Queensland in 1982. That is long before we came into Government. I insist that it be withdrawn, because this Parliament cannot function if misstatements and misinformation such as those are allowed to be promulgated.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: I call for order in the House! The honourable member has indicated that he has found the remark offensive and has asked for a withdrawal. I ask the Honourable Deputy Premier and Treasurer to withdraw that remark. If the Treasurer has evidence that she can bring to the House to prove otherwise, she can do so at a future time.

Mrs SHELDON: Whatever the honourable member finds offensive I will withdraw, but I would also ask him to withdraw a comment which I found extremely offensive, that is, that I was a liar. The honourable member is the one with a problem with the truth.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I understand that the honourable member for Cairns withdrew that comment.

Mrs SHELDON: If he did withdraw, I am pleased he withdrew his misinformed comment.

Mr Fouras: You've done very well.

Mrs SHELDON: The honourable member for Ashgrove, Mr Fouras, certainly did not do very well as Speaker, did he? That is why he is sitting on the back bench.

An Opposition member: Caught out again.

Mrs SHELDON: No way. The fact of the matter is that this had originally been a Federal tax which was brought in as a State tax. The former Treasurer broadened that tax

to include all EFTPOS and ATM transactions. Is he going to deny that as well? He knows that is a fact. When he broadened that tax to include EFTPOS and ATM transactions, did we hear from the Society of Corporate Treasurers then? No, we did not. Where were Mr Hamill, Mr Elder and so on at that point? The fact is that the debits tax was part of the revenue Bills and the Budget. I notice that the Opposition is talking about blocking the revenue Bills and the Budget. Indeed, it has made suggestions that——

Mr BEATTIE: I rise to a point of order. The Treasurer is misleading the House.

An Opposition member: Again!

Mr BEATTIE: Again! I have made it absolutely clear that we will support the Budget. We will not block it. To suggest otherwise is simply an untruth.

Mrs SHELDON: The honourable member was on television on Saturday night saying that he would block the Budget because the taxes should not have been brought in.

An Opposition member: Rubbish!

Mrs SHELDON: He was. The Leader of the Opposition back-pedalled the next morning, but he made those statements and he knows it. Yesterday, the Leader of the Opposition was trying to come through the back door by saying that we should use the Treasurer's Advance Account instead of bringing in new taxes. What an absolute nonsense! The Leader of the Opposition has no economic credibility at all. I would like to elaborate on that point further.

The Treasurer's Advance Account—which was also in place under the previous Treasurer—was brought in so that contingent expenses could be paid, such as drought relief and so on. However, there has been an increase in this year's Treasurer's Advance Account for two major reasons. Firstly, State public servants are looking for a pay increase. There has been a considerable amount of money put into the Treasurer's Advance Account for enterprise bargaining No. 3. Obviously, the Leader of the Opposition does not want public servants to have any increase in pay. Secondly, there has been provision in the Treasurer's Advance Account for paid maternity leave. Obviously, the Labor Leader of the Opposition does not want workers to have paid maternity leave, either. Those are two of the major items in the Treasurer's Advance Account that the Leader of the Opposition obviously wants to have abolished. The Leader of the Opposition is also

suggesting that a one-off payment in the Treasurer's Advance Account should go to recurrent expenditure. That would mean that we would have to sack police, teachers, nurses, etc., and the Leader of the Opposition knows it.

Mr BEATTIE: I rise to a point of order. The Deputy Premier is misleading the House. She knows that that is simply untrue. If the \$125m was taken out, there would still be a surplus amount of \$134m. It is simply a dishonest comment.

Mrs SHELDON: Wrong again—wrong, wrong, wrong!

Mr BEATTIE: The Treasurer is desperate to save her taxes.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! We are not debating the Budget now. The Deputy Premier and Treasurer will come to the conclusion of her answer.

Mrs SHELDON: Mr Speaker, you would agree that I have been provoked by the other side. I was trying to answer my question in a minimum amount of time.

I want to point out that Queenslanders pay a total of \$841m in tax less than other States. We are still the lowest tax State in the nation. That is a major incentive for business. We have no FID tax. We do not have a fuel tax. We pay about \$400 per capita less than residents of New South Wales and Victoria in State taxes.

I want to respond to the comments by the Leader of the Opposition regarding the increase in the debits tax—which was increased initially by the former Treasurer—which will allegedly be detrimental to the business community. I point out that Clive Bubb from the Queensland Chamber of Commerce and Industry labelled this a back to basics, works for business Budget. He said—

"The QCCI applauds the commitment to a \$4 billion Capital Works Program."

The *Courier-Mail* ran an article headed "Budget okay by us, says business" which stated—

Mr HAMILL: I rise to a point of order. My understanding was that the report of Estimates Committee A is going to be soon debated by the House. It would appear that the Treasurer is debating the Budget rather than answering questions in question time.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the Deputy Premier and Treasurer, and I ask her to complete her answer.

Mrs SHELDON: Yes, Mr Speaker, but I draw to your attention that these comments were made by the Leader of the Opposition this morning in this House regarding what the Australian Society of Corporate Treasurers said about the debits tax. That certainly relates to the Budget. If it is good enough for him, it is good enough for me.

I want to remind the House of a couple of other comments by business leaders. As I said, a *Courier-Mail* article carried the heading "Budget okay by us, says business". The Metal Trades Industry Association said that it was heartened by the Government—

Mr HAMILL: I rise to a point of order. Mr Speaker, it would appear that the Treasurer is arrogantly disregarding your ruling in relation to the conduct of question time.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I do not need any advice from the honourable member. He will resume his seat. The Treasurer will complete her answer now.

Mrs SHELDON: I am winding up. In general—and I will answer this more fully later—the business community has supported our Budget very well.

Health Tripartite Forum; Mr M. Miller

Mr BREDHAUER: I refer the Premier to the letter sent to him last March by the Deputy Government Whip about the Century Zinc negotiations, and I ask: did he condone the Deputy Government Whip's suggestion to him that the Health Minister pay an \$80,000 bribe to Mr Mick Miller and his State Health Tripartite Forum, which is under investigation for misappropriation of taxpayers' funds? If not, what action has the Premier taken to have this conspiracy to bribe investigated by the proper authorities?

Mr BORBIDGE: I suggest that the honourable member opposite get out of the gutter and ask the Minister for Health the appropriate question. I note that he does not have the guts to do so. If the honourable member asks the responsible Minister, he will get the appropriate answer.

Office of the Cabinet

Mr GRICE: I ask the Premier—

Mrs Edmond interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I warn the member for Mount Coot-tha under Standing Order 123A.

Mr GRICE: I ask the Premier: can he inform the House as to what level of

accountability existed in the former Labor-based organisation known as the Office of the Cabinet and whether any human resource or corporate service records of its operations were maintained as part of the Premier's Department?

Mr BORBRIDGE: The activities of the former Office of the Cabinet in respect of accountability speak volumes for the special rules that were put in place for the special mates of the Labor Party when it held high office in this State. Honourable members would be aware that one of the first decisions of this Government was to abolish the former administration's elite Office of the Cabinet. Members will recall that this was the hand-picked body that controlled and manipulated Government; the body that more than anything else destroyed morale within the public sector; the body that was at the very heart of the downfall of the former Government.

It is well known that the 100-person-strong Cabinet Office, a refugee station for Labor Party operatives headed by Mr Rudd, had a separate division for almost every area of Government responsibility. For example, there was an Economic Unit in the Office of the Cabinet. Its job was to keep an eye on the Treasury. There was an Environment Unit in the Office of the Cabinet. It was there to keep an eye on Molly Robson. There was a Legal and Administrative Unit within the Office of the Cabinet to keep an eye on the member for Yeronga and the member for Murrumba. There was a Land Use and Planning Unit in the Office of the Cabinet to keep an eye on that poor old soul, the member for Townsville. There was virtually a unit for every area of Government activity. The reason for this was quite simple. It related to the fact that the Ministry in the previous Government could not be trusted to make a decision, so all the decisions had to be taken on the 14th floor of the Executive Building.

Honourable members will be unaware of the extent to which the Office of the Cabinet went to maintain its privileged and elite position in Queensland. Not content with duplicating the role of other Government departments, the Cabinet Office set about attempting to duplicate its own Premier's Department. I am advised that in July 1992 the Cabinet Office created its own corporate services section to provide financial, human resources and administrative sources within that 100-person office. The former Premier and Mr Rudd did not trust their departmental staff—they did not trust the Premier's

Department—so they created their own corporate services section. I am advised that these functions were established after it was suspected that a financial detail concerning a social policy consultant was leaked to the media.

So how did it work? Firstly, no-one from the department was allowed access to the corporate services area. More than 1,000 files were transferred out of the department and into the Cabinet Office. The Office of the Cabinet alone was responsible for the evaluation and creation of all positions within the Cabinet Office. No consultation was entered into. Despite the fact that the Director-General of the Premier's Department was accountable for the office, he had no control or supervision of the financial records of the Cabinet Office. Little wonder it was known as Special Branch!

But the most concerning aspect of all of this is that when officers of my department were preparing for the Estimates committee meetings, it was found that financial records were maintained in such a manner that they were rendered totally useless and totally inaccessible. Information could not be accessed; it could not be located. It had effectively been scrambled. It had been dispersed. It had been disguised. It had been put away in areas and broken up so that it is totally impossible for the people of Queensland to ever know what went on and how much it cost behind the walls of the Cabinet Office on the 14th floor. It was impossible to access information, and they had put in place a special corporate services section away from that of the Department of the Premier and Economic and Trade Development.

We have abolished the Office of the Cabinet. We have done away with its secrecy. The only problem now is that the people of Queensland will never know what went on for five long years behind the closed 14th floor doors, how much it cost and what activities were engaged in. The sort of accountability that this Government has opened up in regard to the Estimates process can never be applied to the elite Office of the Cabinet, the special Labor Party machine that drove Government in Queensland for five years.

Mr W. K. GOSS: I rise to a point of order—in two parts. Apart from the slur on the Auditor-General, who audited the whole department, including the Office of the Cabinet, I make this point: Mr Borbridge is now the Premier; he is no longer the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order.

Mr BORBRIDGE: The honourable member who interjects is neither. He should be hanging his head in shame. He created an Office of the Cabinet in this State and he put his mates in charge—Labor Party candidates—which took control of accountability away from the corporate services section of the Premier's Department. Now, questions about accountability, consultants and all those types of questions—questions that members of the Opposition can quite rightly ask us—can be answered. No-one will ever know of the shabby and secret deals that the member for Logan presided over when he was the Minister responsible for the Office of the Cabinet.

Westminster Tradition

Mr BARTON: My question is to the Minister for Police and Corrective Services. I refer to page 2 of the Coalition Government of Queensland Protocols Handbook which says—

"Ministers shall subscribe to the convention of the Westminster system of representative Government."

I refer also to the Minister's comments in the *Sunday Mail* that he would not resign if charges are laid against him, and I ask: what makes him so special that he will thumb his nose at the Westminster tradition, defy his own Government's protocols and refuse to resign if charges of electoral bribery are recommended against him?

An Opposition member: Good question!

Mr COOPER: Good question—it is obviously one of those ridiculous questions the member has been cooking up for so long. God knows where he gets his inside information from. I will give him two pennies for where he gets this inside information he is trotting out. He seems to get his information from misreading articles like that.

The member can wave his protocol handbook around all he likes. He knows as well as I do what has been behind that whole situation. I will go no further than that. He knows as well as I do—as do the whole lot of them over there—exactly what is going on. When the member talks about resignation etc., all I have to say is that I resile from nothing that I have said in the past.

Korea Zinc Project

Mr TANTI: I ask the Minister for Economic Development and Trade: can he

inform the House of the progress that has been made regarding the Korea Zinc refinery project in Townsville?

Mr SLACK: I thank the honourable member for Mundingburra for his question. As members of the House know, that member has been and is a very strong supporter of the development of the Korea Zinc project in Townsville. It is my pleasure to inform the House that recently State Cabinet took the step of signing off the IAS—impact assessment study—for that project. As members will appreciate, the initial stage of that project is worth \$530m to the city of Townsville and to the State of Queensland. It will be the first major development to occur in far-north Queensland in the last 20 years. It has had and will have a major impact not only on the economy of Townsville and that region, but also on the economy of the State.

For the benefit of the member for Mundingburra, I would like to take the opportunity to place on record my appreciation of the officers of the Department of Economic Development and Trade for the facilitation work they did under the previous Government and under this Government between the various Government departments and Government entities such as the Townsville City Council, the State Government and the Commonwealth Government in putting this project together.

Mr Palaszczuk: How much money?

Mr SLACK: The member should know the answer to that question. The amount of money that was going to be negotiated in respect to the development of that project was negotiated under the Labor Party Government, but let me say that that Government did the easy part. The hard part was in bringing it together. I pay respect to the officers of this department for dealing with those harder issues.

The success of this project will send a message to investors not only throughout Australia and Queensland but also throughout the world that Queensland does deliver on its projects. The process is open and accountable. It is there for all to see. This project will result from that process.

For the benefit of members, I would like to outline some of the key points in respect of this project. There will be 590 initial jobs in Townsville during the construction and 350 jobs when the project becomes operational. Townsville and the region will benefit from the downstream creation of 1,670 jobs and the generation of \$84m a year of additional income. Nationally, this project will create an

additional 2,000 jobs. The wealth creation of this project is immense. Stage 1 will produce up to 170,000 tonnes of refined zinc a year and annual sales will earn Queensland \$250m, of which 85 per cent to 90 per cent will be export revenue. Korea Zinc will purchase \$150m of raw materials, much of which will be sourced in Australia. The latest information I have from Korea Zinc is that the refinery will be operating with material 80 per cent of which will come from the north-west area, when it comes on stream.

As many members would be aware from the reports in the paper, with the support of the Townsville City Council, we will be introducing enabling legislation. We will also be looking to expedite zoning and ensure that those requirements that are associated with this development are met. Finally, I would like to point out that all the requirements of all the environmental provisions of all State legislation—particularly the Environmental Protection Act—will be met. I have no doubt that the confidence of the people of Townsville, the member for Mundingburra and the member for Burdekin, Mr Mark Stoneman, who led a group to Korea recently, in this project will be rewarded.

Police Corruption

Mr FOLEY: I ask the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice why he failed to inform Police Minister Cooper of "significant corruption of police by criminal elements" on Tuesday, 17 September 1996, at the same time as he informed Estimates Committee B in writing of this? What possible reason could he have for concealing this disturbing information from the responsible Minister, obliging him to wait until after CJC Chair Frank Clair gave oral evidence of it at a public hearing the following day? Is it not a fact that he simply did not read his own answer delivered to the committee on Tuesday, 17 September?

Mr BEANLAND: I thank the member for Yeronga for the question, the same person who presided over the black hole in the Workers Compensation Fund that led to \$105m having to be provided by the taxpayers of this State.

Mr Borbidge: He didn't inform the Estimates committee.

Mr BEANLAND: He did not inform the Estimates committee, nor did he inform the public of this State prior to the last election of that scandalous, outrageous situation that was allowed to occur. He did not have the courage to tell the people of Queensland that he

presided over that disaster. What a shameful display it was by all of them, including the member for Logan, who sits down in the back seat. Not one—not one—of them had the courage to tell the public how their Government had presided over this enormous black hole—some \$400m worth. Now the public are having to prop up that scheme.

The member for Yeronga is now trying to build on Mr Clair's comments to the Estimates committee. I would have thought that those comments speak for themselves. I am certainly not going to be guilty of inflaming the situation. I indicated then to Mr Clair, the Chairman of the Criminal Justice Commission, that I believed it was an ongoing, ordinary investigation, but Mr Clair was overplaying his hand at that time. I think the situation speaks for itself.

Kirwan Hospital for Women, Townsville

Mr ROWELL: I ask the Minister for Health: would he inform the House of what improvements the coalition Government has been able to provide for Townsville's Kirwan Hospital for Women?

Mr HORAN: It is indeed a remarkable improvement to the Kirwan Hospital that the coalition is bringing about. In 1993, the Labor Government commissioned a special report to look into the inadequacies of the hospital. The hospital had been left without proper support and service for a number of years. As a result of that report, do members know what the previous Government did? Absolutely nothing! The hospital was left on its own. There was the report, in black and white, of all the sorts of services that the hospital needed, but nothing was done about it. In fact, only through my actions as then Opposition spokesperson was I able to pressure that Government into putting some decent funding into the neonatal unit at that particular hospital.

We held a meeting at that hospital not long after we came to Government. I can say with great pride that, recently, I went to the Kirwan Hospital and took with me the director-general and the deputy director-general. We went through that entire hospital. It was our second visit in two weeks. We were there just two weeks before that. As promised, we went back and went right through the hospital. We talked to the nurses and the doctors in the maternity section. We went through the theatres. We went through the physio section. We talked to the social workers and obstetricians. We discussed with everybody what their particular problems and needs were. They know—and have great confidence—that

this Government knows and understands what is needed, and we are acting upon that.

Earlier this year, a position for an extra obstetrician was promised verbally by someone up there, but there was no money to pay for that. At the same time, we had a financial mess in Townsville, as we had financial messes all over the State. We inherited an absolute mess of millions of dollars of budget overruns and a mess of millions of dollars of unpaid accounts throughout the State. Townsville and the Northern Regional Health Authority are no different from the rest. There are unpaid accounts from the previous year, and things were on track for the same this year. We have straightened out the financial mess. We have cleaned up their situation and given them a clean slate to start with from 1 July. We have given them good professional management so that all those services within the Townsville district health service can be properly and effectively managed.

Most importantly, for the Kirwan Hospital for Women, we have been advertising and recruiting to provide obstetrics services at that hospital. We are providing for one additional full-time obstetrician. That will take the number from three to four. In addition, we are considering up to eight VMO sessions per week. That is exactly what the staff want—eight VMO sessions split among three people. So there will eventually be four full-timers and three VMOs attending that hospital, which will give great flexibility to the staff.

I am happy to tell the House that the recruitment program is going successfully. Already, Dr Green from Adelaide has been appointed as the new director of obstetrics at the Kirwan Hospital for Women. He will be taking up his appointment immediately in the new year. We have already appointed a senior staff specialist who will be assisting Dr Green in that particular role. We also have interest from an overseas doctor and an interstate doctor for two additional positions. We also have a locum commencing in November and the possibility of another locum. If we have an oversupply of obstetricians—and I do not think that has ever been achieved before—we will certainly be negotiating with them to go to other parts of the State where there is an urgent need for additional obstetricians. As well as providing an extra quarter of a million dollars for that position, we have provided \$1.2m for extra neonatal cots.

I thank the staff at the hospital, particularly Dr Likeman and his staff, for the work that they have done in the past—this

being the tenth anniversary of the Kirwan Hospital for Women. We would be happy if any of those existing staff would like to remain in the visiting medical officer position. They now know that they have the support of this coalition Government throughout all sections of the Kirwan Hospital. We have backed up our words with cash and action. We are recruiting. We have senior people going to Townsville. The hospital will retain its registrar status, so that training positions will be there in the new financial year. I believe that the people of Townsville can have great confidence in the way that this Government has brought about such a vast improvement to the Kirwan Hospital for Women. It has lifted the morale of the staff. They now know that they have a Government that hops in, finds out what is wrong, supports them and brings about improvement. We are a Government of action.

Inquiry into Criminal Justice Commission

Mr BRADDY: I refer the Premier to his speech in this House on 1 October 1991, when he was the Leader of the Opposition—a position in which he obviously felt comfortable and to which he intends to return—when he said of the then Labor Government—

"They have cut funding to the CJC and they have done it as part of their politically motivated vendetta against that body."

How does the Premier reconcile this statement with his politically motivated witch-hunt into the CJC after slashing its funding by \$2m?

Mr BORBIDGE: I seem to recall that the previous Government slashed funding to the CJC by close to \$3m.

Aboriginal Deaths in Custody

Mr BAUMANN: I refer the Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Racing to an article by Tony Koch which appeared in the *Courier-Mail* yesterday, 7 October 1996, stating that the Queensland Health Department and the Corrective Services Commission are ignoring the recommendations detailed in the 1991 Aboriginal deaths in custody report. I ask the Minister: what is he doing to ensure that the Corrective Services Commission complies with the recommendations of this report?

Mr COOPER: I do appreciate that question, because this issue has been of ongoing concern, certainly to members on this

side of the House. Quite obviously, for the last six years, members opposite ignored coronial recommendations. That is sad. This Government is not going to allow the QCSC to ignore any coronial recommendations, especially those relating to Aboriginal deaths in custody. I have certainly asked for a copy of the transcript of the coronial findings on the death of Anthony Borey, which members would have read about recently and about which most people should be concerned.

I have spoken to the QCSC executive about those media reports. I have also told the QCSC that I want to see within a fortnight an action plan to deal with those coronial recommendations that were made by Mr Casey. Some of those recommendations cross other departments. I have already had discussions with the Minister for Health on these issues that have been raised and will be dealing with them as a matter of urgency.

Mr Casey's recommendations included: that all staff at John Oxley Hospital must be conversant with recommendations of the royal commission; that the hospital develop proper systems to ensure information is passed on to other institutions on a patient's transfer; that all prison staff have a workable knowledge of the commission's recommendations; that the ethnicity of all inmates be recorded; that the history of a prisoner's previous at-risk observations be included in their database; that counselling be available for prisoners, particularly at high intake times, such as Christmas and Easter; and that Aboriginal counsellors be encouraged to contact Aboriginal Legal Service staff and family members to establish information relevant to the prisoner's wellbeing.

I would find it absolutely incomprehensible if members of the QCSC staff are not fully conversant with recommendations about Aboriginal deaths in custody. I do not expect them to know them all chapter and verse, but I certainly do expect them to know the very basis of those recommendations, which came out at least three years ago. I have also instructed my staff to set up meetings with the Minister for Health to resolve once and for all those protocol issues that were raised quite rightly by the coroner. He said that prisoners have a unique and distinguishing status and that the rules relating to patient confidentiality must be modified to recognise the management responsibility of others. I am sure that a very prompt resolution of that outstanding matter can be achieved, and I believe that it will be.

It is important that initiatives taken by the QCSC to reduce deaths in custody work effectively. We have certainly gone over and over the recommendations and we have been able to deal with most of them in certain circumstances; however, still more can be done. I would expect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander correctional counsellors to make contact with all new receptions, at least on the very first working day after those people come into the institutions. I would also expect those counsellors to contact the appropriate family members and outside sources and institutions to get a pretty good understanding and background of the people entering institutions, so that they can help them to deal with their problems and in order to pre-empt any problems, such as suicides, that may arise.

I note that a recommendation has been made for the development of computer systems to upgrade databases, which is a good recommendation. The provision of extra psychological services has also been recommended. I believe they are an absolute necessity. I will have those recommendations costed. Obviously, my next move would then be to try to make sure that I have good relations with the Treasurer so that we can do something of value.

I have had the QCSC take a number of measures to address the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody so the number of deaths in custody can be further reduced. I want to keep focusing on those recommendations so that we can reduce deaths and ensure that those recommendations are put into place. I had quite lengthy discussions with the previous acting Chairman of the Aboriginal Deaths in Custody Overview Committee, John Ramsamy. Yesterday, the Minister for Families, Youth and Community Care attended his funeral. I acknowledge what he said about him. That person did an extraordinary amount of good work in the operation of the overview committee and in ensuring that the recommendations were put into place. I commend his work and effort. We will certainly make sure that we continue, along with the Minister for Families, Youth and Community Care and the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, to maintain the necessary rapport with the overview committee. That was ignored by members on the other side of the House, which was an absolute tragedy. Those people are genuine in their attempts; we are genuine in our attempts and we intend to work continually and closely with them.

Inquiry into Criminal Justice Commission; Payment of Legal Costs

Mr LIVINGSTONE: I refer the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice to his royal commission into the CJC. I ask: does he propose to pay the costs of parties given leave to appear? If so, does he expect that the Police Union will be one of the parties concerned? What are the anticipated costs of the Police Union?

Mr BEANLAND: I presume that the Government will be looking at the payment of costs, yes. As to the Police Union or other people who might or might not appear—that is a matter on which I cannot comment. Only time will tell who might or might not be required to appear. In order to keep down legal costs, the Government has been looking at the operation of the Wood royal commission in New South Wales, where a legal representation office has been set up under a senior lawyer in order to manage the need for people who are appearing before the inquiry to have legal representation. That system has worked fairly well in New South Wales. It allows full and proper legal representation for people at the inquiry and manages to keep down the costs.

It would be very easy for people to have legal representatives at such inquiries week in and week out, day in and day out, when they might need to have them there for only a very short period. It is a matter that we are addressing. We are considering setting up a separate legal office to manage that. As to who might or might not be required to appear—it would be totally improper for me to comment on that. In fact, it would be impossible for me to say at this stage. That is a matter for the commissioners in due course.

Drugs in Schools

Mr MALONE: In directing a question to the Minister for Education, I refer to the recent shocking revelation about the designer drug GHB. I ask: can the Minister outline to the House what efforts are being made in Queensland schools to combat the spread of drugs?

Mr QUINN: I was somewhat disturbed this morning to read the headline on the front page of the *Gold Coast Bulletin*, "It's in our schools". I was glad that the Minister for Police and Corrective Services was able to clarify some of the comments made by the police officer involved. He had no evidence that that particular drug had found its way into our schools and, by and large, the newspaper

paper report had misconstrued or misquoted him in some measure.

The ongoing problem of drugs in our schools is one from which no Government can walk away. Indeed, the previous Government was committed and this Government is committed to providing additional resources, both monetary resources and skilled personnel, to ensure that the effect of drugs in our schools is, as far as possible, minimised if not completely eradicated. We would be fooling ourselves to suggest that there are no drugs in schools and that we can put a barrier around the fence line of schools and effectively keep out every drug from every school in Queensland. I do not think that there would be a teacher, principal or Minister in Queensland who could give that guarantee honestly. All that any Government can do is to put in place proper funding and proper resources and then rely upon its principals and teachers and, more importantly, try to get the message across to students and parents that schools cannot combat that type of activity; students need parental supervision and close involvement by parents in the education of their own sons and daughters.

Over a number of years, the department has conducted ongoing professional development programs for its teachers and put in place a large range of resources, both in print and video form. Only recently, some new ones have been included in the collection. A new video was released at a three-day conference that is under way currently at the Bardon Professional Centre, which is aimed at spreading the word about best practice in reducing the impact of drugs upon schools. That is an ongoing program within the department. Some 70 teachers are currently attending that in-service activity.

During the school holidays, 200 teachers from the Metropolitan East region gave up their time to come together to try to work their way through some of those particular issues and upgrade their skills with regard to managing the impact of drugs in schools. As I said before, a range of material, both video and print, is available. A range of policy documents exists to inform teachers and, more importantly, principals, about how to manage drug-related issues in schools in an effort to lessen the impact of drugs.

Although an impressive range of measures is available, I suggest that there will never be enough. There will never be the definitive drug program that works. If there were, we would have found it by now. All that we can do is try to ensure that the resources

are available to impress upon parents and teachers the need to be ever vigilant, to try to put in place programs to show students the best way of attacking those sorts of problems and resisting peer pressure, and to address other issues that can impact upon adolescent life in general in high schools. Programs are ongoing and in time all Governments will be supporting them.

Mr T. B. SULLIVAN: My question is to the Premier. In view of the—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The time for questions has expired. It is now time for matters of public interest.

MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Inquiry into Criminal Justice Commission

Mr BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—Leader of the Opposition) (11.30 a.m.): Yesterday, the Borbidge/Sheldon Government announced an improper inquiry into the CJC. By making that announcement, it is guilty of using in a very improper way the powers of a royal commission.

This inquiry is designed simply to save the political hide of Russell Cooper, the Police Minister. It is nothing more than that. The National Party has never forgiven the Fitzgerald process for ending its three decades of corrupt power and sending four of its finest Ministers to gaol. This inquiry is all about turning back the clock to the bad old days. The National Party never apologised to the people of Queensland for the reign of Bjelke-Petersen and all that dreadful and far-reaching harm and corruption that we saw caused to this State and its institutions. The problem is that the National Party does not recognise that what it did was wrong. That is why it wants to turn back the clock. That is why the National Party is even happy to continue to use the name of Bjelke-Petersen as the name for its headquarters when any other organisation whose leader had been exposed so badly would have hastily torn down the name plaque and just used the street number.

This matter is nothing short of a disgrace. Today, the Police Minister admitted that he was in Cabinet when the decision was made to establish this inquiry and its terms of reference, yet he did not care. He is subject to examination by the Carruthers inquiry; he may well be charged with a range of serious offences, including bribery, yet he sits in Cabinet totally oblivious to those issues. Like the National Party, which has always demonstrated its belief that it is above the law,

the Minister does not care because he thinks that he is above the law. What a contempt for the people of this Parliament and for the people of this State that the Police Minister could actually sit in Cabinet while this matter was being debated. Talk about having no understanding of conflict of interest, propriety and proper behaviour! Absolutely none!

We have found that, at a bare minimum, this inquiry will cost at least \$1m. The Treasurer does not have any explanation for how it will be funded; it has not even been budgeted for. No wonder people think that her role as Treasurer is nothing short of a sick joke. She cannot even budget effectively for a major inquiry. We are going to have at least \$1m—and maybe more; maybe as much as \$2m—used to pursue a political agenda for the National Party and the Liberal Party. Is this sort of money being used in schools, or in hospitals, or on providing extra police? Of course not! This is taxpayers' money. The Government is prepared to pay these inquiry heads \$3,000 a day—not bad if one can get it—in addition to any judicial pensions that they may receive. It is little wonder that the Opposition can say very clearly that that money could be better spent looking after Queenslanders and providing services.

One of the people who will head the inquiry is none other than former Supreme Court judge Peter Connolly. I notice in today's *Courier-Mail*, which published his details, that he successfully excluded the fact that from 1957 to 1960 in the Queensland Parliament he was the Liberal member for Kurilpa. I am sure that it was a small oversight.

The problem with what the National and Liberal Parties are doing is that they have removed the bipartisanship that Tony Fitzgerald put into the reform process and which was established in the legislation that came out of the Fitzgerald inquiry. For example, in relation to the Criminal Justice Act, all political parties or their representatives must agree on the appointment of the head of the CJC. That was bipartisanship. However, under Mr Borbidge and Mrs Sheldon, all of that has gone out the window. They want to turn the clock back to the days of corruption. There was no attempt to consult the Opposition and no attempt to keep that bipartisanship.

As to Mr Connolly's appointment—I am not questioning his legal scholarship but let us look at the issue of whether the Opposition, as the alternative Government, can have confidence in this inquiry. Mr Connolly provided legal advice to Mr Cooper for the Carruthers inquiry. He is quite entitled to

provide that legal advice. However, in providing that legal advice, which is being used by Mr Cooper as part of his defence, Mr Connolly has disqualified himself. He should not have been appointed as one of the people to head this inquiry. Mr Connolly is entitled to give that opinion to assist Mr Cooper but, in my view, in doing so he is then disqualified from sitting as one of the commissioners. I say that with a great deal of seriousness because that means that the recommendations of this inquiry will not be given the sort of regard that they should by a large section of the community and certainly by the Opposition.

I go back to the heart of where this inquiry started and refer to the allegations that were made in this House by the member for Broadwater. Under parliamentary privilege, he made very serious allegations. One of the people who provided him with support for those allegations was a gentleman called Chris Nicholls. Let us look very clearly at the basis of those allegations and who made them because they go to the credibility of whether this inquiry should have been established in the first place or whether it is simply nothing more than a crude, blunt political instrument being used against the corruption fighter in this State.

I contend that the record of Chris Nicholls is such that not only is he not a person to be believed, not only is he not a person with credibility but also he is a person who is prepared to lie and prepared to cheat to achieve a particular purpose. What he has done is to perpetrate a fraud on the people of Queensland, who are now going to have to pay for an inquiry that is not necessary and that simply has only a political purpose.

For seven months, Nicholls worked for the member for Broadwater. No doubt he and staff of the Premier's office put together the speech of the member for Broadwater in an attempt to lay the groundwork for an investigation into the CJC. If Mr Grice's speech is to be believed, Mr Nicholls, in providing any evidence to a CJC hearing on Mark Le Grand—or to any other hearing—runs a grave risk of committing perjury. When it comes to ethics, Nicholls has a chequered history. In 1990, he was fined \$200 by the Australian Journalists Association for contravening the journalist's code of ethics. On that occasion, Nicholls' fascination with crime authorities got him into trouble. He tricked high school staff into letting him interview a 15-year-old student who was the daughter of a National Crime Authority investigator. How low is he prepared to go? Nicholls was described in the South

Australian Parliament as "unethical and unprofessional". It is little wonder that he got glowing references to join the staff of the Minister for Primary Industries. What is his role on that staff? He is working in fisheries. Queensland taxpayers need to be concerned about Nicholls moving to Queensland and joining a Minister's staff. In November 1995, he resigned as a senior adviser to Grant Chapman—a senator from South Australia—for wrongly claiming \$3,800 in overtime. So Nicholls is prepared to rot his overtime payments, yet the member for Broadwater expects us to believe him, to give him credibility.

If that is not enough, Nicholls wrote a letter to the Hanson inquiry, which I table along with supporting newspaper reports, in which in relation to Le Grand he states—

"To conclude, I hereby state, unequivocally, that, at no stage, did Mr Le Grand provide any information or documentation to myself or Senator Chapman with regard to the Operation Wallah investigation."

So either he lied in 1995 or he lied to the honourable member for Broadwater in the material that he provided for him. Either way, Nicholls is a liar; either way, his allegations should not have been the basis of an inquiry which will be paid for out of taxpayers' funds in this State.

I table that letter for the information of the people of this State so that they know about the people whom the members opposite are dealing with and upon whose allegations the Government operates. This inquiry is simply a scurrilous waste of taxpayers' money.

Time expired.

Far-north Queensland Health

Mrs WILSON (Mulgrave) (11.40 a.m.): I wish to speak about far-north Queensland health issues and related funding. Recently, the Minister for Health, Mike Horan, met a large group of Cairns doctors face to face. He answered a lot of their questions pertaining to the Cairns Base Hospital, its redevelopment and other issues on far-north Queensland health. The Minister also responded to certain inaccuracies with reference to funding for the redevelopment of the Cairns Base Hospital, which is on track, despite the doomsday merchants and despite the \$75m budget blow-out of the previous State Government. The State coalition Government is bringing health back to the people. It is opening wards, cutting waiting lists and providing the health

services which have diminished for people right across this State. I will focus on north Queensland.

In the Cairns district, the final realisation of community health centres—one in Mulgrave and one in Barron River—for local communities to access allied health services has met with very positive responses. A lot of people are moving to north Queensland from southern States and other parts of Australia, and many of these newcomers expect that health services will be practically the same as those that they have left behind. The concept of localised community health centres, which was developed by allied health workers in the north who saw the need to bring health services to the community, has been very well supported by the State coalition Government. Many families with young children and, indeed, senior citizens will find easier access to health services a great boon. It will mean that the long time spent in travel—and many people use public transport—and the long waiting time for allied health services will become a thing of the past.

The Cairns Base Hospital will be \$4.87m better off, with an improvement of some 5.16 per cent in the district's current funding base. The \$4m worth of improvements has been possible for a number of reasons, including a reduction in the number of one-off expenditures, a reduction in the costs associated with the former failed regionalisation system, and increased funding forecasts for the Cairns Base Hospital from elective surgery waiting list incentive programs and other bonus funding programs. A few weeks ago, the Minister also announced that the Cairns Base Hospital will receive \$2.1m in funding from the 1996-97 Waiting List Backlog Program. This is an increase of some \$200,000 on last year's allocation.

Other services have also been enhanced at the Cairns Base Hospital through the coalition Government's 1996-97 Budget. These include \$600,000 announced recently to be used to fund four additional registrars and registered medical officers at a cost of \$200,000, the remaining \$400,000 to fund other services at the hospital's discretion. That is a plus for our area, because a number of issues that need to be addressed pertain only to the north. That \$400,000 is a real boon to the medical fraternity in Cairns. Other funding includes \$92,000 to fund the paediatrics and gynaecology chairs, the first for the northern region.

Those needing ear, nose and throat surgery will be pleased to hear that \$20,000

has been found to fund additional ear, nose and throat surgery sessional work. That will be welcomed by families in the far north, many of whom, over the years, have had to travel long distances to seek treatment.

Many north Queenslanders rely on dialysis services and the Minister has announced \$260,000 funding to enhance the dialysis services in the north.

Mr Mitchell: Additional funding?

Mrs WILSON: Yes, it is additional for the far north. A further \$246,000 in increased funding for waiting lists is separate from the \$2.1m announced just a couple of weeks ago.

The Minister has announced \$240,000 to fund three accident and emergency medical staff at the Cairns Base Hospital. With the increase in population in the north, this is a welcome move because many accident victims have had to be transferred to Townsville or other hospitals.

A sum of \$186,000 has been provided to enhance the Cairns Base Hospital's diabetic program, which will provide a much-needed service to far-north Queensland where diabetes is a major medical problem, particularly among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. In Queensland, health research has shown that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities have more than 10 times the incidence of diabetes than the larger community. That, of course, has been a great concern to my Government. The Minister has also provided \$150,000 for increased research appointments in the northern area.

I also point out that, despite the knockers who have constantly told us that the north has been forgotten in the recent Budget, each of these funding improvements is part of a record \$106.5m budget announced for Cairns in the recent State Budget. It is important to detail how the coalition Government has dramatically improved health funding to Cairns and far-north Queensland since coming to office in March 1996. Apart from the specific initiatives I have mentioned, the following achievements should also be noted.

There is confirmation that the Cairns Base Hospital Redevelopment Program will proceed—indeed, work has commenced on that program. With respect to elective surgery, an allocation of \$60,000 has been provided for specialist operating theatre equipment to reduce elective surgery waiting list times. An allocation of \$1.1m has been provided for minor capital works for health facilities in Cairns and Cape York. An allocation of \$900,000 has been provided for a north Queensland urology

specialist with support services. This service will cover the Cairns region and is the first of its kind in north Queensland.

The Thursday Island community has certainly welcomed the confirmation and contract letting of the \$34m Thursday Island Hospital redevelopment program. This will provide local services for people who usually have to travel to Cairns or other hospitals for medical attention. Therefore, it will certainly reduce the stress-related factors that are often associated with patients taking such trips.

The announcement of an additional \$300,000 funding for indigenous health issues has been made specifically for Cairns. Provisions from this funding include a mental health worker for Yarrabah, funding to support Mookai Rosie, the centre for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women from the north, and other alcohol and drug services in Cairns. I advise the House that founder of Mookai Rosie, Mrs Rose Richards, was recently awarded a Premier's award for the work she has done for the women of the north. The announcement of an additional \$3m for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in remote areas of north Queensland has been provided for diabetes reduction strategies, community health centres at Badu and Boigu and also research/data planning for health services.

A number of claims have also been made that the Cairns district has had the lowest health funding per capita throughout Queensland. Bearing in mind the specific health needs of Cairns, this claim is simply not true. Cairns received three times the health funding per capita of the Gold Coast and twice the health funding per capita of the Sunshine Coast, based on ABS figures. Both the Gold Coast and the Sunshine Coast can be compared with Cairns in terms of economic, population and tourist growth trends. Cairns is a high growth rate area. The coalition has recognised the health needs of the north and has responded accordingly. We may be out of sight, but we are certainly not forgotten. The coalition State Government is committed to improving health services to Cairns and it will continue this ongoing support.

As people can see from the figures I have quoted in the last few minutes, the Budget certainly supports the north. The Minister has travelled to the north on a number of occasions to talk to the people about their health concerns. He has spoken to the nurses and doctors, and he has certainly spoken to a number of patients who, in the last few years, were unable to have the treatment that they needed.

Inquiry into Criminal Justice Commission

Hon. J. P. ELDER (Capalaba—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (11.49 a.m.): Over the past few months, Queenslanders have witnessed a sustained and brutal attack by the coalition on the Criminal Justice Commission. It has been as well orchestrated as it has been sinister in its motives. The coalition stooped so low as to leak utterly false information about the fees being paid to Mr Ken Carruthers in an attempt to discredit him before he brought down his expected adverse findings against Police Minister Russell Cooper and the Premier of the State, Mr Rob Borbidge. Mr Carruthers warned that it was "impossible to over-state the seriousness of this history of disinformation".

The motive behind this orchestrated campaign against the CJC has been popularly interpreted as relating solely to the Carruthers inquiry. Nobody in Queensland doubts the independence of Mr Carruthers. He is a cleanskin. He is conducting an investigation without fear or favour. This is the way such investigations should be conducted. Not only should they be independent; they should be seen to be independent. Let me assure members on the other side of the House that many Queenslanders have grave concerns about the independence of the Government's politically motivated witch-hunt into the CJC. Many believe that in large part the Government already knows the results that will come from that inquiry. Along with many Queenslanders and many in the legal fraternity, the Government is only too well aware of the views held of the CJC and other non-judicial bodies by Mr Connolly. The Government knows his views. It is clear that he will recommend at the very least a curtailment of the CJC's powers.

Mr Welford: He's got his riding instructions.

Mr ELDER: My word he does. He does not fully accept the findings of the Fitzgerald inquiry, which led to the establishment of the CJC. There are many people around town claiming that they already know the detail of many of the findings which Mr Connolly will make. That is not good enough. An inquiry should be independent. We should not know the results before the witch-hunt even starts. I repeat that not only should such investigations be independent; they should also be seen to be independent.

There is no doubt that the coalition is desperate to discredit the Carruthers inquiry and the CJC before the report is handed

down, just as the Premier sought through his notorious Public Service Bill to nobble the Director of Public Prosecutions, whose job it would have been to lay charges against the Police Minister. However, there is a second equally important reason, as I see it, behind the Premier's frenzied attacks on the CJC. That reason is the secret hit list of public servants drawn up by the coalition and its cronies.

Mr Acting Speaker, you will remember that I referred that hit list to the CJC on Wednesday, 28 August. At that time, Mr Borbidge and his department head, Mr Peter Ellis, were overseas. Upon his return from overseas, Mr Borbidge denied any knowledge of any hit lists. Yet we are informed by Government sources that upon his return from overseas the Premier's director-general, Mr Peter Ellis, went into the bunker with other senior Government advisers to work out how to handle the public exposure of their involvement with the hit list. Mr Ellis remained bunkered down for the best part of a week. When Mr Ellis emerged from the bunker, the *Courier-Mail*—surprise, surprise—obtained a leaked secret Cabinet submission recommending that a judicial inquiry into the CJC be held in late 1996 or early 1997.

Two weeks later, a National Party backbencher, the member for Broadwater, Mr Grice, accused the head of the Official Misconduct Division, Mr Mark Le Grand, of leaking sensitive information in relation to Operation Wallah. Mr Grice used this Parliament to accuse Mr Le Grand of lying, cheating and perverting the course of justice. The source of these allegations is none other than Chris Nicholls, who, as the Leader of the Opposition said, in a letter to the Hanson inquiry set up to investigate the leak, stated categorically that Mr Le Grand was not the source of the leak. As the Leader of the Opposition has stated, the only conclusion that can be drawn from the allegations by Mr Nicholls—his account and his words—is that he was lying then.

Mr Beattie: Or he is lying now.

Mr ELDER: Or he is lying now. As the Leader of the Opposition said: either way, he is a liar. As has been outlined, he is the man who left the staff of South Australian Liberal Senator Grant Chapman for falsifying \$3,800 in overtime claims. As a liar, a fraud and a cheat, Mr Nicholls clearly has all the necessary credentials to receive the full backing of the Premier and his cronies, and back him they did. So concerned was the Premier with these startling new allegations against the head of

the Official Misconduct Division of the CJC that he decided to bring forward the judicial inquiry to begin an immediate investigation into the allegations about Mr Le Grand and other matters.

It defies belief that Mr Nicholls, after having worked for Mr Grice for five months and having already begun working for the Minister for Primary Industries, raised these allegations for the first time. It defies belief that, when Mr Grice defamed the head of the misconduct division on 13 September, that was the first time the matter had been raised. The truth is that it was a good time to trot out these outrageous allegations to attack the credibility of the Official Misconduct Division, as it was conducting an assessment of whether the CJC had a duty to investigate the Premier and his cronies for their role in the preparation of a hit list.

When the *Courier-Mail* revealed that the CJC was considering evidence against senior bureaucrats relating to that list, the Premier's attacks on the CJC reached new levels of frenzy. It was like a scene from *Psycho*, with a frenzied Premier plunging the knife into anyone who dared to stand in the way of these determined attempts to destroy the CJC. On 29 September, the Premier briefed the *Courier-Mail* that he was considering referring Mr Clair's behaviour to a judicial inquiry. The Premier went on to indicate that he believed changes to the Criminal Justice Act were needed. They sure are, that is, if the Premier and his cronies are to survive!

Firstly, the Premier must secure from the judicial inquiry a recommended change to the definition of "official misconduct". As it is defined at present, the Premier's senior public servant cronies and members of his personal staff are gone for all money. Secondly, the Premier must secure a recommended change to the power of the CJC to compel witnesses to give evidence. So many people know who was involved in drawing up and implementing the hit list that it would be impossible to maintain a conspiracy of silence in the face of the CJC's powers to compel witnesses to answer questions under oath. Thirdly, the Premier must seek the agreement of Parliament for those changes, which in this case means the agreement of the member for Gladstone. We will not have a bar of the Premier's attempts to cover up official misconduct by officers in the Public Service and his close advisers.

The Premier's strategy is to distract all of the resources of the Official Misconduct Division by having it defending itself against

the judicial inquiry so that it will not have the staff, time or, for that matter, money to investigate the hit list. The cut to the CJC's budget is of great value in thwarting any effort by the CJC to investigate that list. If the Premier can tie up the CJC's remaining resources until he can change the Criminal Justice Act, he will have achieved his goal of protecting himself and his advisers from a CJC investigation into the hit list.

Mr Welford: Muzzling the CJC.

Mr ELDER: As the member for Everton said, he is muzzling the CJC. It is quite apparent to me and many others that a pall of corruption is again descending over Queensland. If the Premier has nothing to hide or to fear from a CJC investigation into the Public Service hit list that I referred to the commission, he should cease his frenzied attack on the chairman and let that commission get on with its work. Every day that passes, as the Premier continues to behave hysterically in his determination to destroy the CJC, is just another day in the march back to the darkness of the 1980s. There will be a muzzling of the CJC. Every day that passes will be another day in the march towards the sleazy secret deals with police unions and the cronyism and impropriety condemned by the Fitzgerald report. It will be another day in a march towards corruption descending on all Queenslanders—something which all decent Queenslanders hoped would never again be inflicted on this State but which, sadly, is becoming a fact of life under this National Party Government.

Smoke Alarms

Mr HEALY (Toowoomba North) (11.59 a.m.): I am pleased to say that next week Government building experts from around the country will be meeting on the Gold Coast to discuss changes to the Building Code of Australia. Among the issues to be discussed will be changes to the code which will make it compulsory for all newly built homes in Australia to have smoke alarms fitted when they are built. In most cases, this will cost the average house builder around \$200, which most members would agree is a price that all new home owners would happily pay for the increased fire safety that it brings.

Most of the States and Territories that will have delegates attending the conference have had this legislation in place for many years. But for some reason Queensland, along with Western Australia and the Northern Territory, has not. What is most surprising is

that the Queensland Fire Service has been calling for this type of legislation for more than five years and yet, until now, it has achieved very little success. A little bit of research does not take long to find out where the fault lies. It appears that the former Minister for Emergency Services, Tom Burns, fought long and hard to get smoke alarm legislation, only to be thwarted at every turn by the then Housing, Local Government and Planning Minister, the member for Chatsworth.

The reason for the previous Minister's reluctance is unclear, because research and figures collected by his department at the time were clear cut on the lifesaving virtues of smoke alarms. They even indicated that most housing groups were in favour of the proposal. Other States realised the benefits of smoke alarms as far back as 1991, when Victoria became the first State in Australia to bring in legislation requiring detectors in all newly built and renovated homes. Overseas, this has been commonplace for even longer. In Victoria, it is estimated that almost 70 per cent of all homes now have smoke alarms, while the death toll from fires has been cut threefold. The Queensland Fire Service approached the Labor Government requesting smoke alarm legislation back in 1991 and until recently, frustrated by the continuing delaying tactics, were almost at their wits' end.

I have a couple of newspaper articles from 1994 and 1995 which clearly state that the member for Chatsworth and Mr Burns were at loggerheads regarding smoke alarms. I will outline some of the comments made in those articles. The *Sun Herald* of 3 July 1994 under the headline "Smoke alarm battle looms" states—

"Queensland Deputy Premier Tom Burns will take on the housing industry and another minister in a bid to make smoke detectors compulsory in new houses.

Mr Burns yesterday vowed to step up his fight for detectors after the tragic deaths of three men and an eight-year-old girl in two separate house fires in Brisbane . . .

Firefighters have been arguing for decades for compulsory detectors, which cost about \$200 for an average home, while the Housing Industry Association, the Master Builders Association of Queensland and State Housing Minister Terry Mackenroth have spoken out against them.

. . .

On Friday smoke detectors became compulsory in NSW new homes and extensions.

The NSW legislation allows for councils to insist hard-wired . . . detectors be fitted in homes being renovated as well as new homes."

On 20 August 1995, the same newspaper stated—

"Australia's largest real estate group has backed a 10-year fight by Queensland firefighters for mandatory smoke alarms in homes.

First National Real Estate Network chief executive Bill Hamill said it was time for agents to take a stand on house safety."

The article goes on to state—

"Firefighters expect the average annual death toll of 20 will again be reached in 1995.

They have fought for 10 years to have mandatory alarms fitted in new homes but have been frustrated by opposition from some sections of the building industry and from the Department of Local Government."

On 18 September the same newspaper states—

"Queensland had wasted 20 years and seen many lives lost without legislating for compulsory smoke detectors in homes . . .

Director of the University of Queensland's Occupational Health and Safety Unit Barry Pratt—a former fire officer—said more than 50 per cent of deaths in building fires were caused by inhalation of the toxic components of the smoke.

. . .

Mr Pratt said the Government's refusal so far had been based on opposition from various construction groups who claim installation costs would be prohibitive."

It seems that the former Minister was on his own in rejecting the smoke alarm legislation call. I can imagine the embarrassment when the then Governor-General, Bill Hayden, came to Brisbane to attend the Fire Australia conference last year and widely espoused the virtues of smoke alarms. Again The *Sun Herald* of 18 June last year stated—

"Governor-General Bill Hayden has backed a 20-year battle by Queensland

firefighters for mandatory smoke alarms in new homes."

It goes on to state—

"At the opening of the Fire Australia conference in Brisbane last week, Mr Hayden said about 150 people died each year in Australia as a result of fires.

'These are tragic figures, although there is evidence that they are starting to fall, largely because of requirements in a number of States now making it mandatory to fit smoke alarms in new and substantially renovated private residences,' Mr Hayden said.

. . .

Mr Hayden said private research showed the percentage of homes with smoke alarms in Victoria had risen to about 60 per cent from below 1pc in 1991 . . .

'The success of smoke alarms in Victoria shows the value of a public safety program that combines both legislation and education,' Mr Hayden said."

The former Department of Housing, Local Government and Planning initiated two separate research projects into the suitability of smoke alarms in Queensland and their success rate in other States. The department commissioned the Australian Housing Urban Research Institute and the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology to conduct the research projects. The findings of the research were due to be presented to the department in September 1995. Those findings have not been made public. It is understood, however, that both reports were highly supportive of legislating for smoke alarms and confirmed the Queensland Fire Service's position on the lifesaving benefits of installed smoke alarms.

Independent research conducted by and for the Department of Emergency Services and the Queensland Fire Service has also indicated that the public is strongly in favour of smoke alarm installation legislation. It is interesting to note that a Brisbane-based real estate company has recently taken a proactive step by installing smoke alarms in all of its rental properties at no cost to the tenants. A fire in a rented property in Brisbane in early April highlighted the immediate success of that program. The family was woken by the smoke alarm, alerting them of the fire. Everyone escaped safely and damage to the property was kept to a minimum.

So it can be seen that even one of the most senior and respected Labor politicians in Australia supported smoke alarm legislation.

More than 100 Queenslanders have died in house fires in the past few years. How many of them could be alive today if the previous Government had listened to the Fire Service and, indeed, some of its senior Labor colleagues and taken the obvious form of action? As I said earlier, the cost of having hard-wired smoke alarms fitted to newly built homes is around \$80. The average home could be fully fitted out for around \$200. I believe that is a price that most home owners, whether they are buying or building a new home, would be willing to pay for the safety and advantages that these devices offer. I am certain that anyone building a new home would happily pay that little extra for the benefits that smoke alarms give in terms of fire protection.

Mr T. B. Sullivan: Good insurance.

Mr HEALY: I take the interjection. It is good insurance. I am sure that most members have learned from television news broadcasts of the tragic deaths of people who became trapped in fires in houses where smoke detectors were not installed. Equally, there are cases where smoke detectors have in fact saved the lives of many people. Last year alone, 27 people died in house fires in Queensland, and in every case they were in properties which did not have properly fitted smoke alarms. Sadly, two of those tragedies were in my own home town of Toowoomba. Already this year three people have died in house fires in south-west Queensland.

The Queensland Fire Service, which acts to protect the safety of all Queenslanders, has done a great job in raising public awareness about the benefits of smoke alarms, and that will again be a feature of Fire Awareness Week '96, which will be held from 20 to 26 October. To help raise awareness, the Fire Service has also requested legislative help from Government. This should not be a political issue. Sadly, it seems that the previous Government made it one. More homes have been built in Queensland in the past five years than in any other State, so the impact of changed legislation should be quite obvious. I commend the Minister for Emergency Services, Mick Veivers, and the Local Government and Planning Minister, Di McCauley, who have taken a pro-active stance on this issue. Next week's conference is expected to develop uniform national legislation as part of the Building Code of Australia, which will be in force from 1 July next year. In the meantime, I urge all Queenslanders to invest in smoke alarms for the security and safety of themselves and their

families. These lifesaving devices cost as little as \$10. I commend the Fire Service for its continued fire safety commitment, which will undoubtedly lead to many, many more lives being saved.

Inquiry into Criminal Justice Commission

Hon. M. J. FOLEY (Yeronga) (12.09 p.m.): The announced inquiry into the CJC is politically tainted by the Government's improper motive in setting it up, by its timing, by its usurping of the role of an all-party parliamentary committee and by the Government's inappropriate appointment to chair it.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Laming): Order! It is out of order to be critical of commissioners.

Mr FOLEY: With respect, Mr Deputy Speaker, I am not aware that, firstly, the commissioner has yet been appointed by the Governor in Council.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! It has been.

Mr FOLEY: In any event, my comment was directed at the Government's appointment. I did so quite carefully. I have no criticism of the legal scholarship of Mr Connolly; however, I do criticise the appointment by the Government of Mr Connolly to chair the commission, and I am entitled to make that criticism.

This is the fourth important commission of inquiry in four decades. We saw the 1956 National Hotel royal commission, chaired by Sir Harry Gibbs, the 1977-78 commission of inquiry chaired by Justice Lucas, the 1987-89 inquiry chaired by Mr Fitzgerald, QC, as he then was, and now the 1996 Connolly inquiry. That there have been four commissions of inquiry dealing with police corruption in one form or other indicates a disturbing theme in Queensland's modern political history.

Let me outline the context to which I point for asserting that the Government's motive in setting it up is improper and political and that the timing is calculated to make this inquiry politically tainted. The first fact that honourable members cannot escape is that Mr Borbidge and Mr Cooper entered into a memorandum of understanding with the Police Union by which they agreed in writing to—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I believe that that matter, too, is before the CJC and it is out of order to be brought into this House in debate.

Mr FOLEY: With respect, I am entitled to address matters which are common knowledge. This is not a detailed matter before the Carruthers inquiry, it is a matter of common knowledge that Mr Borbidge and Mr Cooper gave their signatures to a document which resulted in a memorandum of understanding. This is the subject of conversations in every taxi and in every cafe in Queensland. With respect, I am entitled to refer to it.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! It may well be, but it will not be the subject of debate in this House while it is before the commission. There are plenty of precedents for that.

Mr FOLEY: Mr Deputy Speaker, of course I abide your ruling. I do point out that fact and I point out also the fact of the existence of the Carruthers inquiry, which has placed Mr Borbidge and Mr Cooper under scrutiny and which has led Mr Borbidge and Mr Beanland to make attacks on the Criminal Justice Commission; I point also to the fact of budget cuts to the Criminal Justice Commission in the order of \$2m; I point to attacks by senior Government Ministers on the Chair of the CJC, Mr Frank Clair; I refer to attempts by senior Ministers to put on the agenda a re-run of inquiries into ALP politicians, namely inquiries in respect of allegations made by Mr Davies and in respect of the Heiner documents; and I point also to the re-opening of the alleged leak in respect of Operation Wallah done in this House by the member for Broadwater, Mr Grice. I point to all those things to show the context which gives rise to the inescapable conclusion that this inquiry is politically motivated.

I point also to the issue of timing, because this is not something which is the fruit of some reflective process. This was brought on without any budget provision, without any planning made for it in the budget. It has been brought on early for what purpose? For a political purpose! That political purpose is in part to set bush fires going at a time when Mr Borbidge and Mr Cooper expect to be engulfed in an inferno upon the release of the Carruthers report, at a time when they are the subject of investigation in respect of the hit list of public servants and also in an attempt to inflame public opinion against the Criminal Justice Commission in order to protect themselves from what they expect to be criticism of them from the Criminal Justice Commission in the Carruthers inquiry and in respect of any investigation of the disgraceful hit list of public servants. All of those are matters of public record which point to a political motive and to an indecent haste in

bringing this on without adequate planning and without relevant budget preparation.

I point also to the usurping of the role of an all-party parliamentary committee. By the Executive setting up a commission of inquiry, it is attempting to usurp the role of the Parliament. The genius of the Fitzgerald report was that there should be an all-party parliamentary committee. That bipartisan approach is part of the strategy of combatting corruption because it builds a community consensus to fight corruption and to oppose the old "she'll be right" attitude of turning a blind eye to corruption which got this State into so much trouble.

There is a wide public perception that this inquiry has been established to save Russell Cooper's hide. It is therefore inappropriate to have a person chairing it who is a legal adviser to Russell Cooper in respect of the very matter which has been the subject of the Carruthers inquiry. It gives me no pleasure to criticise the appointment of a fellow member of the Bar.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I remind the honourable member again, it is not acceptable to be critical of commissioners in this House.

Mr FOLEY: Mr Deputy Speaker, I have chosen my words very carefully and my criticism is of the appointment. I make no attack at all upon Mr Connolly's legal scholarship. I have appeared before Mr Justice Connolly as he then was.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I remind the member that I have chosen my words very carefully, too, and I will not allow the commissioner to be criticised in the House.

Mr FOLEY: Mr Deputy Speaker, I understand your ruling and I make no criticism personally of Mr Connolly. I do say, however, that it is not possible for bipartisan confidence to be given to the appointment of a hard-line legal conservative to chair such an inquiry. I refer in this regard to the words of a legal scholar who criticised the High Court for making social policy and who insisted that that was not the job of the court. That scholar stated—

"... policy is better developed by Parliament which, by design, is responsive to the community."

Those are the words of Mr Peter Connolly himself, and it demonstrates the wisdom of leaving these decisions to the Parliament and to the all-party parliamentary committee, for this inquiry has terms of reference so broad as to descend into areas of policy, not simply law, and in that respect it is much better done

through an all-party parliamentary committee than by the Executive using former members of the judiciary to overhaul parliamentary processes. This is a most unusual and politically tainted use of the royal commission power.

Time expired.

Voluntary Conservation Agreements

Mr CARROLL (Mansfield) (12.19 p.m.): Today I want to mention as a matter of public interest the voluntary conservation agreements which can be entered into between private landowners and levels of our Government to preserve land which has valuable flora and fauna and any remaining habitat for that fauna. I have diligently and forthrightly examined issues appearing for the three levels of government affecting Queenslanders and their wishes to conserve worthwhile native flora and fauna in their natural habitat. This is not easy when we strive to respect and minimise interference with the important rights of landowners to enjoy that land and their homes for which they have worked so hard.

I have spoken several times in this House on these issues and how they are handled in regard to the people of the electorate of Mansfield. Today I have the pleasure of congratulating the city council and our Government's Department of Environment on significant steps taken last week towards replacement of at least one acquisition proposal with a plan to set in place a voluntary conservation agreement with the landowners. It appears that there will be two agreements there to ensure that the Brisbane City Council and the State Government are satisfied that the landowners will be compliant with the long-term conservation of these particular lands.

I know that the history of some of the acquisition proposals has been heated and stressful. I hail the news that I received last week as a real breakthrough. I am confident that both levels of Government here will reach valuable agreements with the landowners. I think that the conclusion of voluntary conservation agreements on these particular lands in the electorate of Mansfield will demonstrate the good faith of environment officers and advisers in both levels of Government that I have mentioned. I believe it will also be an interesting opportunity for some of the various conservation groups to show their sincerity.

Voluntary conservation agreements on private lands, including areas that may be

established as part of tenure conversions to ensure Crown stewardship of key areas, represent a significant aid to future nature conservation strategies. Even though there is a significant amount of goodwill for some people to enter into agreements of the type that I have mentioned without reward, it is recognised that, for the system to be implemented extensively, there needs to be some threshold incentive on some occasions. Many of these voluntary conservationists believe that the execution of agreements of this type will enhance the value of their land in the future and will protect the conservation and enhancement work that they undertake. I believe that voluntary conservation agreements will be a badge of approval and that these properties will be sought after by people who really believe that that particular attractive land will be protected.

My interest in these agreements was inspired by an interest in the issues of how best to conserve koala habitat. I have been encouraged by some of my constituents who have been very hardworking and very earnest in their efforts to find a satisfactory resolution of what appears to be an intractable dispute. I will always do my best to assist people who are sincere and hardworking in an effort to deal with big public issues.

As a forerunner to the possible introduction of pro-active off-park conservation programs where financial incentives are provided to encourage people to enter into VCAs, the Department of Environment is currently investigating two schemes. The first one is in the mulga lands, where applications are currently being invited for land-holders to enter into VCAs with financial assistance to protect key types of habitat, for example, riparian corridors, particularly endangered ecosystems or known habitats of rare and threatened species. This has been made possible with a \$100,000 grant from the Australian Nature Conservation Agency.

The second scheme is a proposal that, in areas such as where retention of mahogany glider habitat is critical, to investigate the possibility of providing a short-term rebate to local government to adopt a differential rating scheme for areas protected as nature refuges. This would apply to specific targeted parcels of known mahogany glider or other key habitat. Both of those examples—one dealing with the conservation requirements of a more extensive particular type of landscape and the other with the specific habitat requirements of a particular species—will play a vital role in the development of integrated regional conservation strategies and will complement

the development of a representative reserve system to protect the kind of biodiversity that I have mentioned.

To date, two nature reserves have been established, and another 30 are in the pipeline. I believe it is important that the debate and the public examination of the issues relevant to these be fully open and honest. I have made comment on that aspect of it before. If it is not, then the members of the public will be unwilling to cooperate. The first nature reserve is the Berlin Scrub near Laidley, which has been strongly supported by the local council, which has offered a 100 per cent rate rebate for the area that has been gazetted. This has been a far-sighted action by that shire council to encourage conservation on private land. Although many ecosystems are conserved within the protected area estate on Crown land, others are not represented and occur only on privately managed land. I am told that over two-thirds of Australia—approximately 500 million hectares—is managed by private land-holders, so there is a need for a consistent and integrated approach to nature conservation on leasehold, freehold and Crown lands.

It has become increasingly obvious that the protected area reserve system is not adequate if Australia is to retain current levels of biodiversity and meet its obligations under the Biodiversity Convention. The National Strategy for the Conservation of Australia's Biological Diversity—Commonwealth of Australia 1996—recognises the need for conservation of biodiversity on private land given that the threats to biodiversity extend across administrative and tenure boundaries. That strategy notes the need for increasing the standards of management and protection and also the levels of technical and financial assistance. The strategy seems to recognise the need to establish voluntary wildlife refuges and to negotiate conservation agreements and heritage agreements between owners, managers and Governments. These need to be backed up with sufficient resources, including trained facilitators, on at least a regional basis to assist in the implementation scheme.

Apart from the National Strategy for the Conservation of Australia's Biological Diversity, a number of other documents have reflected the need for nature conservation on private land. Many rural land-holders and communities are aware that protecting remnant vegetation and increasing the amount of natural or semi-natural habitat on their farms can add to the long-term economic

viability of their farms through decreased soil erosion, conservation of water and biological pest control. However, the benefits of land protection measures accrue not only to the land-holders but also to the local community and to the wider society, so there should be a proper place for investment of at least some public funds in this resource for our future.

We cannot rely on national parks alone to conserve that native flora and fauna which we might think worthy of preservation. Governments of all levels must proceed cautiously with Government-imposed conservation measures. That is why I am very pleased to acclaim the serious commencement of a program of voluntary conservation agreements in this State. Many national parks have become islands of natural plants and animal communities within the broad regional landscape. Unfortunately, wildlife knows no boundaries, so a broad-scale conservation approach is the only effective way, if the majority of land-holders incorporate nature conservation objectives in the management of their lands adjoining. This is an area where our Government wants to work by negotiation and agreement. I commend the Honourable the Minister, Brian Littleproud. I know that, with his leadership, we shall have open and honest dealings.

Time expired.

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL (No. 2)

APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 2)

Committee (Cognate Debate)

Estimates Committee A

Report No. 1

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The question is—

"That Report No. 1 of Estimates Committee A be adopted."

Mr HARPER (Mount Ommaney) (12.30 p.m.): In rising to support Report No. 1 of Estimates Committee A, I am thankful to the Speaker and his staff for the manner in which they approached the whole process. I will touch briefly on a number of issues that I think are important to all members on both sides of the House. I take the point of view, as I am sure do other members, that for us to do the job that we have to do we need support. It is through the funding provided through the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill that we are able to obtain that support.

In regard to electorate offices, I am pleased to see that the telephone systems will be addressed over this financial year. As one

who has severe problems with the telephone in his own electorate office, often having to dial four, five or six times to get a line out, I can see that they well and truly need addressing. I believe that the funding for computers in electorate offices for members and their staff to operate is important. To function properly in this modern day we need the relevant computer facilities and it is good to see that that program is continuing. Part of the key to the success of that program is in training. That point needs to be stressed strongly at all times. Proper training and backup must be available and it is good to see that that is being addressed.

As Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee, I was pleased to see the funding of the committee system addressed. I believe one of the strengths of the Queensland Parliament, especially as we do not have an Upper House, is the continuing development of our committee structure. That system serves a very important role. That role will continue to grow in importance as it has a very important place in our democracy in Queensland. It is good to see that the committees have been given the necessary funding to allow them to carry out their very important role.

Another area of importance to all members is the Parliamentary Library. I was pleased to hear the words "user friendly" used when discussing funding and initiatives in the library. Members will continue to receive great support from the library staff, and they will be concentrating on developing user friendly systems.

As to information technology—I specify the importance of electronic publishing. In this day and age, more and more information is available to people no matter in what endeavour they may be involved. In our endeavours, when one considers the amount of paperwork that flows across our tables and comes in the mailbox each day, one can see the need to try to cut down on the use of paper and unnecessary publication. Using electronic publishing, we can select the information we need rather than printing out everything. I think that is great. It is to the credit of the Speaker that electronic publishing, Internet and information technology initiatives will be concentrated on.

As one who thinks, and always has thought, that this a beautiful building, I believe that the continuation of the restoration of Parliament House is very important. I rate this as one of the most important buildings for the people of Queensland. It is part of our history,

because of the things that have happened and from an architectural perspective. That is why I think that it is important that the restoration continue. The matter of security is being addressed. That is of concern to all of us. I think the Speaker and the staff involved in addressing those problems are to be commended for taking up that challenge.

I turn now to the issue of the televising of Parliament. Quite a bit has been said about this. It is important to the people of Queensland that Parliament is televised so that those who are interested can see what happens here. However, we also have to be responsible in the way we spend taxpayers' money and about who pays the major costs, given that the——

Time expired.

Mr BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—Leader of the Opposition) (12.35 p.m.): Members would be aware that there is one dissenting point made by Opposition members of Estimates Committee A. That appears on page 8. We indicate that non-Government members would view with the utmost concern any attempt to make savings at the expense of the important program of televising Parliament, which we consider to be essential to maintaining an accountable Parliament. We would oppose vigorously any attempt to downgrade the televising of this Parliament. It is one of the most important aspects of a parliamentary process that the people have a chance to see not only their members perform but also to see that the Government of the day is accountable.

We are very disappointed at the very partisan way that the Government pursued the non-televising of the procedures of the Estimates committees. Bearing in mind that Parliament is televised, it seems only appropriate that the Estimates committees should also have been televised. Our resolution, which is recorded in *Hansard* on page 13, indicates that our resolution to have Estimates Committee A televised was defeated along party lines. I think that is a shame. It is disappointing. I hope that next year the Government will reconsider its position and enable the full televising of the Estimates committees. I understand that there was a desire to hide the Treasurer because of her poor performances, particularly in relation to tax; however, I do not believe that the Treasurer's poor performance warrants the non-televising of the Estimates committees.

It is important to refer to an answer the Speaker gave to a question I raised in relation to where the Opposition office is located and

to whom it is accountable. I note for the record that, in his response to my question, the Speaker felt that the office should be put under the Parliament. I have no problem with that. I indicate to the Speaker and the Premier that we need to resolve this issue. There is no point having part of the Opposition office under the Parliament and part under the Office of the Premier. That is a ludicrous, unacceptable state of affairs, which, as the Premier would know from the former position he held as Leader of the Opposition, is a crazy situation in anyone's language. I am happy to accept the Speaker's proposal or, if the Premier wishes, the Opposition office could be totally under the Premier's office. Owing to the need for the Opposition to be seen to be separate, I suspect that the Speaker's proposal is perhaps the most sensible option for us to consider. I thank him for that response to my question.

However, in terms of accountability, I have no difficulty in the full accounts of the Opposition office being tabled in this Parliament under the auspices of the Speaker in a procedural way. It should be done in the same way as the accounts of a Minister's office to ensure full accountability. I have no problem with that. I know that the hybrid situation as it exists now causes enormous difficulties for my staff and for the Opposition in terms of the effectiveness of its operation. I would have thought that the Premier would have understood that because he went through the same process. I think we can improve that dramatically.

I raised the issue of witnesses appearing before the Estimates committees. Under the current Standing Orders, Estimates committees request the appearance of public servants before them. I think that, if a request is made and an officer does not appear—which occurred before Estimates Committee A—a full explanation should be provided as to why that is the case, otherwise we will reach a stage at which Estimates committees will be treated with disdain and disrespect.

Again, I place on record the need for that issue to be considered by the Leader of the House between now and next year. I am not about persecuting public servants or making things difficult for them. I do not want to do that. However, I believe that if there is a legitimate question to be asked and the committee has made a unanimous decision to request someone to attend—which is what happened in relation to Estimates Committee A—then that person should appear.

In terms of other matters, I place on record my thanks to the Parliament—to Hansard, to the support staff, the kitchen staff, the various attendants and security—who do an excellent job and who work incredibly hard, often under very difficult circumstances. I include the library and the parliamentary committees—all sectors of this Parliament—who I believe serve the members with distinction and commitment. I said that to the Speaker and I say so this afternoon in this debate.

Mr SPRINGBORG (Warwick) (12.40 p.m.): In joining to participate in this debate on the Estimates for the Parliament, I would certainly like to place on record my thanks to the Speaker for his cooperation. I think the Speaker has done a great job in standing up for the rights of members of Parliament. In the time that he has been Speaker, he has taken up with a great deal of gusto some issues that have been of concern to members of Parliament. I also note those other little things around the place which have been made to improve the general atmosphere of the Parliament, and I refer to the placement of plants and tables around Parliament House. That has certainly lifted the appearance of this place, and I congratulate the Speaker on that.

I would like to thank the committee staff, particularly Kerry and Sandy, who did an excellent job. The chairman of the committee touched briefly on that matter when he spoke earlier on. Certainly, they did a great deal and they were of invaluable assistance to our committee. I know that the members of the Opposition who participated in the committee share that sentiment. I would also like to thank all of the staff of Parliament House, whether they be in catering, Hansard, the library, security staff, or parliamentary staff, for the wonderful work that they do in keeping this Parliament up to a certain standard and providing various support services for members of Parliament.

The Leader of the Opposition touched on the Estimates committee process and referred to a couple of matters which the committee believes need to be reviewed next year. We felt that this process was in need of further review and further consideration next year. The parliamentary Estimates committee process is an evolving process and it would be very unfair to say that there would be any year by which we could say that we have perfected it. Certainly this year innovations were introduced, such as questions on notice, which provided a further opportunity to open up the process and to allow further scrutiny. However,

the committee believes that there is a need to look at issues such as the appearance of witnesses at committee hearings, the number of questions taken on notice—and this year that was basically broken down to 10 each for Government and Opposition members—and the process of taking questions on notice during the committee hearing.

As well, the committee believed that—and this matter relates particularly to those committees which are sitting earlier on—the time between the introduction of the Budget and the Estimates committee process could be extended by another week or another few days. The committee believes that such an extension of time would be invaluable to Estimates Committee A in that it would allow members of that committee more time during which they could prepare questions.

I would just like to touch on a couple of issues, which I believe are going to benefit members of Parliament next year. Certainly, one issue is the commitment of this Government, as per the recommendations of EARC, to establish five new electorate offices in those major electorates which are over 100,000 square kilometres in area. That will be a great service to those members of Parliament who represent those electorates.

Mr Johnson: We'll see a difference in those electorates.

Mr SPRINGBORG: Certainly that helps those members of Parliament to do their job and to respond to the very important needs of their constituents.

Electorate office photocopiers is another issue which, for a while, has been a festering sore. I note that some time ago the honourable member for Bulimba said that a couple of times during the day his photocopier had a kindy nap. However, I think that it is fair to say that, after the passing of this Budget, we are going to see a major improvement in the quality of those photocopiers. I believe that we are going to have machines that will be much faster and machines that will be able to collate and staple. For a long period, the electorate secretaries of members of Parliament stood over photocopiers photocopying one page at a time. The machines are not very fast, and they break down. There is going to be a staged process of replacing those machines and also the facsimile machines.

I would also like to congratulate the Speaker on the review of the Members' Salaries, Allowances and Services Handbook, which I believe is overdue. A number of issues have to be addressed in that regard, one of

which is members' travel. I am on record in this Parliament, and again today I will go on record in this Parliament, as saying that members of Parliament should be able to travel internationally. We have the one pool of money—and I am not advocating an increase in that pool of money—and we should be able to travel further to be able to expand our knowledge on issues. Certainly, all of that knowledge cannot be obtained in Papua New Guinea, New Zealand or Australia.

Time expired.

Hon. D. J. HAMILL (Ipswich) (12.45 p.m.): I am pleased to join the debate on the Estimates committee report and particularly to raise a number of issues that I consider to be very important and that were raised in the evidence given by the Speaker.

I want to revisit the comments of the Leader of the Opposition with respect to the televising of Parliament. I refer particularly to the evidence that was given to the committee that, in the Budget process, it appeared that that was one area which may well have been the victim of a budgetary pruning back. There was a move by the Government to seek to reduce the funding which might have been available to facilitate the televising of Parliament. I think the offsetting area was the restoration program of Parliament House, particularly the stone restoration work. I made the point in the Estimates committee hearing, and I will make it again today, that both the televising of Parliament and the stone restoration work are important programs; one should not be offset against the other.

If we cannot provide properly for the maintenance of what is—and I will use the words of the member for Mount Ommaney—one of the most significant structures in this State and one of the most important public buildings in this State, we are being negligent. Consequently, the restoration and proper maintenance of the fabric of this building is very important and it should not be offset against other important programs such as the televising of Parliament. That program is important—indeed, vital—in terms of maintaining the accountability of the Parliament and being able to ensure that our constituents are able to see what is going on in their Parliament.

I believe that the televising process ought to have been extended to the hearings of the Estimates committees. From recollection, one committee resolved to have its proceedings televised; other committees did not. It would have been far preferable to have all

committees open and accountable through the televising of their proceedings.

Ms Spence: The Independent member of Parliament changed her mind.

Mr HAMILL: I take that interjection from the honourable member for Mount Gravatt. As I recall, the initial decision was that one committee was going to allow in the cameras but the Independent member changed her mind. That is a tragedy because it detracted from the accountability of the process.

I wish to make other points in relation to the services provided to this House. I, too, wish to add my name to those who have offered congratulations to those who provide support services to the Parliament. Given the Government's professed agenda to outsourcing and privatising Government services, we were concerned that the same spectre was looming in front of the Parliament. Mr Speaker, I say to you to continue your fight against those forces who would want to outsource services such as catering, security and maintenance. The parliamentary staff provide a sterling service to the Parliament and I believe that the services provided are done efficiently and cost effectively. There is nothing to be gained and much to be lost if that privatisation agenda is allowed to run rampant in this place.

Mr Speaker: I totally agree with you.

Mr HAMILL: Mr Speaker, I know you do and I thank you for your interjection. The other issues that I want to canvass are those set out on page 7 of the report. The Leader of the Opposition has canvassed the issue of the appearance of witnesses. The witness whose failure to appear which certainly concerned us was the witness, Ms Armstrong, who was advised of the committee's request that she appear. The whole committee requested that she appear. The Premier's Department advised us that she would be appearing, but she did not turn up on the day. If it is going to be the practice of the Government to override the wishes of committee members, that will undermine the Estimates committee process.

There seems to be a need for a little education to be delivered to some Ministers as to how the process of questioning can be conducted, particularly with regard to questions on notice. The Treasurer, for one, seemed to think that unlimited questions could be placed on notice and, therefore, that she did not have to answer questions on the day. I think that was unfortunate. It must be recognised that there are limitations placed on the committees' ability to put questions on

notice prior to the hearing. There should also be a preparedness, as there was with most Ministers and, indeed, Mr Speaker, to take questions on notice that were requested in good faith on the day.

I also endorse the points made by my colleague, the member for Warwick, in relation to the timing of the Estimates committee process. By pushing the Budget's presentation and the Estimates committee process close together, it makes it difficult to do the job properly.

Mr GRICE (Broadwater) (12.51 p.m.): I touch briefly on the matter of televising committee hearings. It is apparent that the Leader of the Opposition is eager to tread the stage in front of the television cameras as much as possible.

Mr Beattie interjected.

Mr GRICE: Probably, there was some disappointment. I think the honourable member's book had a very small print rate. It did not get too far.

Mr Beattie: It sold out.

Mr GRICE: It had the member's face across the front, so I thought that that was why he might have been a little disappointed. That is why he loves to tread the boards and act so much.

Every one of us would have been pleased that Committee G was not televised. The members for Capalaba and Mount Coot-tha put on a disgraceful performance. The committee system is not, and will never be, served by that sort of bullying nonsense. I was in the House and I saw——

The CHAIRMAN: I remind the honourable member that Report No. 1 is being debated at this time. That committee's report can be debated, at some length, later.

Mr GRICE: I was just making a passing comment about television.

Mr Beattie: We can talk about it later.

Mr GRICE: We certainly can talk about it later. I endorse the comments that have been made about Mr Speaker. In doing so, I do not mean to in any way denigrate the previous Speaker, who I think had the ideals of this Parliament at heart, although perhaps he did not have the same support of his Cabinet as the current Speaker has. The Speaker's attitude to this place is completely appropriate and I hope it carries on with whomever is the Speaker in this State. His general touch around the place——

Mr Veivers interjected.

Mr GRICE: He is the right bloke to crawl to, of course! For example, he has chosen not to treat smokers as lepers.

All parliamentary staff did a great job. Hansard has an incredible job and does it extraordinarily well. The catering staff and all the people who help us to do our job deserve nothing but the highest credit from us all. We can overlook these people so easily because they do their jobs so well that they almost blend into the background. We do a difficult job and it is made a lot easier by the support we receive.

I repeat comments that I have made to the Government about the extra assistance that is needed in electorate offices. That issue was addressed by the Speaker. He has achieved an enormous feat, I believe, in having his budget increased by approximately 6.9 per cent. He is also keen to offer assistance to backbench electorate officers and Opposition electorate officers. I am sure that if he has as much success with the budget next year, that will occur. Other issues, some of which have been touched on and some not, include the updating of electorate offices and equipment—telephones, as has been touched on, Internet access to the Parliamentary Library, and software upgrades which is an ongoing process. Very recently I was pleased to see that a glitch in the new system, whereby its capacity was not sufficient, has been very quickly corrected. I think that ongoing support is something that we all should be very thankful for. I support the motion.

Ms SPENCE (Mount Gravatt) (12.55 p.m.): At a time when conservative Governments in this country exhort us all to tighten our belts, take some pain and eliminate waste, the Queensland Parliament is not prepared to live up to its own rhetoric. I refer specifically to the increases in expenditure in the Speaker's Office, where there is no evidence of the restraint requested of the rest of the population.

We see increases in printing from \$2,000 to \$5,000, an increase in computer equipment to \$5,000 and an increase in office equipment to \$3,000, all of which are solely for the Speaker's Office. I expect that backbenchers in this Parliament who are currently putting up with out-of-date, barely adequate photocopiers can understand the Speaker's desire to upgrade the Speaker's Office, and indeed they appreciate the funds allocated in this budget to upgrade the equipment in electorate offices. However, I believe that members of Parliament and the general public

find the other increases in the Speaker's Office budget far less palatable.

The Speaker's expenditure for gifts has increased from \$500 to \$5,000 in one year. I do not know how many Queenslanders have ever received a gift from the Queensland Speaker, and they may well question where this money goes.

The Speaker's expenses for air fares have climbed from \$15,000 to \$18,500 this year—and this is for air fares only, for only one person. This does not include the travel allowances, hotel costs and so on which Mr Speaker undoubtedly incurs when he travels overseas. I think \$18,500 is an extraordinary amount for air fares for a person whose office does not require him to consult a constituency or make policy in this State.

While the Speaker of the Parliament has a Rolls Royce budget for air fares, the Queensland Liberal/National Government has pulled money from employment programs, reduced funding for public housing and reduced the budgets for child-care and domestic violence programs. That shows where the priorities of this Government lie.

What other increases have been provided to the Speaker's Office? The clothing allowance drew my attention. Do we not all wish we had one? The Speaker receives \$1,800 a year to spend on clothes—terrific! I am reliably informed that the Speaker was able to buy nine shirts and two suits with his new clothing allowance. I expect that many Queenslanders sitting at home having been made redundant by this Government would indeed be very envious and question how their taxpayers' money was being spent.

I applaud some of the other spending initiatives in this budget. The upgrading of hardware and software in electorate offices and the training of electorate officers are welcomed and, indeed, needed. I remind the House that the upgrading of electorate offices began under the Goss Labor Government. We inherited appalling electorate offices and I am pleased to see that the new Speaker is carrying on the tradition set by his predecessors. Other initiatives, such as the review of the members handbook and the creation of our own botanical promenade in the corridors of the Parliament House, are appreciated by the members of this establishment.

What is not appreciated around this Parliament is the behaviour of the Speaker's driver/assistant, Mr Choveaux, the young man who was discredited by the Carter commission of inquiry and described as untruthful,

immature, arrogant and so on. The Queensland taxpayers paid a high price to get a person of this calibre in their employ. The previous Speaker's driver was given a voluntary early redundancy. Indeed, Queensland taxpayers paid \$248,815 in VERs for staff from this place so that the Government could put its own people into the positions it wanted them to hold. My colleagues and I do not believe that a person such as Mr Choveaux should have a position which virtually gives him free rein in this place. Many young women who work in this parliamentary complex have complained to me about this man——

Time expired.

Sitting suspended from 1 to 2.30 p.m.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I call the honourable member for Cunningham.

Mr LIVINGSTONE: Mr Chairman, I rise to a point of order. I draw your attention to the state of the Chamber.

Quorum formed.

Mr ELLIOTT (Cunningham) (2.31 p.m.): Prior to the luncheon recess, I was rather disappointed by the attack by the member for Mount Gravatt on the Speaker and her claim that he spends a lot of money. In all of my 21 years in this place, I have never attacked the Speaker. That the member stooped to that level is disappointing. Obviously, the Speaker is not in the position of being able to refute those claims. Although I would not normally offer a response to such comments, I feel they should not go unchallenged. What I am about to say is not motivated by any feelings that I have towards other members of Parliament. In all fairness, these issues should not have been raised in the first place. However, given that they have been raised, and in the interests of a balanced debate, both sides of the case have to be put.

I found it incredible that the member for Mount Gravatt canvassed these issues. The honourable member referred to an amount of \$5,000 in the Speaker's budget for gifts. All members who have been here for some time would realise that Speakers have a certain role to fulfil. Most of the members who have served in the high office of Speaker have done so in a very dignified way. At times, Speakers are expected to give gifts to people. That is why that item is in the budget. Without wanting to cast aspersions on the previous Speaker, I draw the attention of honourable members to the spending on gifts by the previous Speaker. In 1991, the then Speaker spent \$6,831 on gifts. Why would the

honourable member for Mount Gravatt raise the fact that the current Speaker had a budget for gifts of \$5,000?

There was a \$5,000 increase in the budget for computer equipment due to planned periodic replacement and upgrading of existing computer equipment. Also, the budget for office equipment increased by \$3,000 to accommodate the replacement of a facsimile machine, which, of course, is a periodic replacement. The budget for air travel of \$18,500 increased from \$15,000 to cover one overseas and two domestic flights. Traditionally, all incoming Speakers visit Westminster. In 1993-94, the then Speaker spent money on overseas travel. However, no-one seems too concerned about that. There was expenditure of \$10,000 on a trip to Cyprus and \$3,000 was expended in respect of other presiding officers. Also, travel to Darwin at a cost of \$4,000 was undertaken by the then Speaker and his wife, something which he was perfectly entitled to. No-one is arguing that point. There were also trips to South Africa, Perth and Melbourne at a cost of \$12,095.96. I find it quite amazing that such issues were raised by the member opposite.

What economic geniuses ALP members are! I find it hard to imagine why the honourable member for Mount Gravatt would attack the Speaker over minuscule increases in the budget, yet other ALP members have called for the Speaker's budget to be increased by \$400,000 to provide television coverage of Parliament. In addition, there would be \$50,000 a year in ongoing costs to administer that novel scheme. Currently, the television stations are allowed to televise the Parliament, and it is not costing us a cent. What is the honourable member's rationale? It is little wonder that the ALP Government, whenever it has been in Government, has always managed to destroy the economy. I do not know whether the honourable member for Mount Gravatt is in the habit of reading. However, I venture to say that she ought to read *How to Win Friends and Influence People*.

Time expired.

Hon. J. FOURAS (Ashgrove) (2.36 p.m.): All honourable members would realise how well we are looked after in this place. The service provided by catering, security, gardening, library, Hansard and corporate services officers is given without fear or favour and in the true spirit of the Parliament. I commence my speech by saying that parliamentary officers do a very good job. I am quite happy to go on record as saying

that they will continue to do a good job. Parliamentary officers have to deal with members on both sides of the political fence. Governments change, but members are well looked after in this place irrespective of politics.

I have two concerns to raise. We should congratulate the Speaker on finding money for the telephone system. Spectrum Gold is an initiative that I would have introduced this year were I still Speaker, because it was time for that change to be made. Similarly, concerns were expressed to me by members about photocopiers not working. The ongoing program of replacing out-of-date equipment is being continued, and I give credit to the Speaker for that.

I am concerned about the issue of televising Parliament. Although members on this side of the Chamber have spoken about this issue already, I specifically wish to speak about it. With respect, I beg to differ from the Speaker's approach to the issue. There is always a position for more than one view on issues such as this one. I noted during the Estimates committee hearing that a couple of processes were involved with respect to this issue. Firstly, there was an allocation of money in the mid-year budget review in 1996 of \$354,000 to televise Parliament. That amount would have provided for fixed cameras, a computer room and an operator to press the buttons. The member for Mulgrave is listening attentively. For example, under the proposed televising system, the camera would pan and then her face would appear on the television screen together with the words "honourable member for Mulgrave" at the bottom of the screen. That could have been achieved at the push of a button. That would have removed the need to have idle cameras. After a three-year review, the Western Australian Parliament, which has two Houses, is implementing that system and is spending over \$1.2m on it. That Parliament feels that it is worth while, and it has less money than we have.

My experience from talking to other Speakers is that there is always a very big danger in having cameras being operated by people who are not employed by the Parliament. The member for Ipswich said before that we should not outsource parliamentary services. We are very careful about keeping catering and even Hansard under our control. There was some movement to bring outsiders in to do the work of Hansard. If we are not going to outsource those services, I think it is just as important to the Parliament that we own the video footage of Parliament. It would cost about \$30,000 a year for an operator and film. That is a

minuscule amount. The money was there. There has been a suggestion that that money was required for stonework restoration. That program will be undertaken over 15 years. I would not be impressed by any suggestion that Treasury would require that the money for the stonework would be taken from the budget for televising Parliament. I suggest that the Speaker look at that issue.

Another issue of concern is the fact that \$248,000 was paid out for redundancies. I am aware that two of those redundancies involved people who left this place to work as ministerial staff, and then the change of Government occurred. We should be very careful about such matters. I do not believe that the Parliament should pay for those who go to departments and then come back to us. Another case was the job-sharing arrangement that existed in my office. I can understand the Speaker not wanting his assistant to be employed under a job-sharing arrangement. The other point that concerns me is that we got rid of the Clerk Assistant—Committees. We paid a big redundancy in that case. Then there was the decision that I believe was taken off the cuff to remove the Deputy Clerk. In my view that was a bad decision. I thought she was a visionary. I thought she was an assertive and intelligent lady. Her problem was that she was a woman. There is also the case of the Speaker's driver. In many ways, we should be careful about the expenditure on redundancies. I believe that we paid a lot of money for unnecessary redundancies.

Time expired.

Mr STEPHAN (Gympie) (2.41 p.m.): It gives me pleasure to join the debate on the Estimates for the Legislative Assembly. I want to highlight a couple of aspects that I feel are of importance.

The Education and Protocol section of the report notes the Parliamentary Internship Program, which aims to give university students first-hand appreciation of the relationship between political practice and theory. That brings to mind the school children of all ages who visit this place. When I see them looking down from the balcony, I wonder just what they think of the vigorous debate that occurs here—the interjections and so on—when they compare it with what they are allowed to do at school. From time to time, I hear fairly derogatory comments from school children about the behaviour of members of Parliament. It is one thing to have a theory, but it is another thing to see it in practice. In this particular instance, the practice may not

be what the students expect or admire. It behoves all of us to bear that in mind.

Another aspect of the report that I have been involved with recently is the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. It was my pleasure to attend a CPA conference in the last couple of weeks and to be part of the discussion with members from New Zealand, the rest of Australia and the Pacific Rim. At present, not one New Zealand member is feeling comfortable about his or her position. That country has just introduced a new electoral process, and there is a great deal of doubt as to who will be representing the people in the next three or four years. Many of the sitting members to whom I spoke were very concerned about the instability that the new process has created. However, the decision was taken to adopt the new system, and it is one that the rest of us will be able to learn from. Perhaps it will work out well and we will be able to say, "We can do that, too." On the other hand, bearing in mind that it will be very difficult for one particular party to win Government in New Zealand, it is one that we should examine closely.

I turn now to the parliamentary committee system. It is relatively new to this Parliament. The former Subordinate Legislation Committee goes back quite some time, and some of the other committees have been around since 1988-89. During its time the Subordination Legislation Committee played a very important role in the legislative process. It was established to ensure that what is legislated is in fact what is put in place. It succeeded in that aim. In the past we saw many instances of Henry VIII clauses and the late notification of Government regulations in the Gazette. Because of the late notification of a regulation in the Gazette, even though someone may have paid a particular fee, that transaction may not have been legal. As a Parliament we have been lucky enough not to have been faced with that type of situation.

Of course, the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee now performs the role of the Subordinate Legislation Committee. I note the appearance of the following statements in the committee's Alert Digest: the committee thanked the Minister for the response to a concern that it had in one particular area; the committee referred a certain matter to the Parliament for its consideration; the committee thanked the Minister for undertaking to introduce an appropriate amendment. These are three items that I have picked out that are of importance.

Time expired.

Mr CAMPBELL (Bundaberg) (2.46 p.m.): It is with pleasure that I join the debate on the parliamentary Estimates. In common with other members, I want to give thanks for all the services that are provided around the Parliament. They are provided very well. I also want to acknowledge the savings that have been made in many departments of the Parliament, especially *Hansard* and catering. I know that during the time of the previous Speaker major savings were made. We should acknowledge the work that has been done in this regard.

One area in which further savings may be made was identified in the transcript of the hearing of Estimates Committee A. It was highlighted in reply to a question from Peter Beattie concerning red tape. I know that a review of the handbook is to be undertaken in an effort to reduce red tape. As Mr Bob Fick said during the hearing, the accounting procedures we have are often simply a waste of time. We must formulate a better system that is more effective and efficient. I seek to have incorporated in *Hansard* a table that shows the 28 steps it presently takes to have a \$7 taxi voucher accounted for through Parliament.

Leave granted.

One seven dollar taxi fare—electorate office to airport for travel to Parliament:

1. Member signs taxi docket in taxi.
2. Taxi docket (invoice) sent in monthly account.
3. Account sent to electorate office—account collected from post office.
4. Electorate Officer opens account—sorts—puts into Member's in-tray.
5. Member checks invoices—approves—puts in out-tray.
6. Electorate Officer collects—types letter and envelope for Member—puts in Member's in-tray.
7. Member signs letter—puts in out-tray.
8. Electorate Officer collects. Puts letter and invoice in envelope, puts stamp on envelope, records in postage book, posts/also account paid to taxi company.
9. Letter received at Parliament House.
10. Letter sorted—sent to Accounts.
11. Accounts Section distributes to appropriate officer.
12. Officer photocopies invoice and attaches travel form.
13. Officer files invoice.
14. Officer sends photocopied invoice and travel form to dispatch.

15. Dispatch generates envelope, stamps and places in mail box.
16. Electorate Officer collects mail, sorts, and places on Member's desk.
17. Member authorises expenditure on travel form and puts in out-tray.
18. Electorate Officer collects, addresses envelope, stamps, records in postage book, and posts.
19. Parliamentary office sorts mail.
20. Photocopied invoice and travel form sent to Accounts Section.
21. Accounts collects original invoice, matches with travel form, and approves payment.
22. Paperwork sent to appropriate officer for generation of payment voucher.
23. Cheque and voucher generated and approved for dispatch.
24. Paperwork enveloped, stamped and forwarded to Member.
25. Electorate Officer collects mail, sorts, puts on Member's desk.
26. Member deposits in electorate account.
27. Cheque credited, balanced and reconciled with Parliament bank statement.
28. All paperwork filed for Auditor.

Mr CAMPBELL: This table identified some red tape that could be reduced. We could consider providing something like a global budget for members. The report on the Parliament reveals that 12,000 vouchers are processed for the 89 members. We should be looking at some way of reducing that amount of paperwork and allowing the members themselves to undertake that responsibility. There are ways of achieving that.

In reading through the transcript, I noted the work that needs to be done on Parliament House and the Parliamentary Annexe. I think that is very important. The stone work needs to be done, and it should be done fairly urgently. There is also work to be done on the Annexe. People driving on the riverside expressway will note that the Annexe looks quite dirty. A major need exists to go up there and reclean it.

Mr Gibbs: It's the talking point of Brisbane.

Mr CAMPBELL: I think it is something we should be proud of. That building has been there for 20 years. That refurbishment needs to be undertaken. I support the work that is being done in that regard.

I turn to the major new initiatives section of the report. When we are looking at improvements to electorate offices, we should

be fair in what is being done. A couple of years ago, a \$3,000 allowance was given to members. Some people got a mobile phone; others did not. Others decided to buy paper shredders. What happened last year? It was decided that everybody got a mobile phone. But we did not turn around and ensure that everyone had a paper shredder. Those types of things should be equated to make certain that the same facilities are provided in all offices. At present, there is an anomaly in that regard.

Another matter I wish to raise about the review of the Members' Salaries, Allowances and Services Handbook is one that country members should be considering. This is the only Parliament I know that does not provide for an allowance to cover for other costs that members from a country area incur when they come to Brisbane. That is one allowance that was taken away; it is one anomaly that has not been fixed up. I think that is important.

Mr Stoneman: You took that away.

Mr CAMPBELL: Yes, I know. I was very disappointed that it was taken away; it should not have been.

I found it interesting that the big cost increases of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association have gone towards looking after visiting delegations. I wonder why this Parliament does not send delegations to other areas on reciprocal visits.

I also wish to mention security. I agree that perhaps we have to have better security and that something should be done, but we must not forget that the Annexe is the home of members for the time that they are here. We cannot put in so much security that it makes it uncomfortable for members and their families to be in the Annexe. We have to ensure that we do not go overboard in that way.

I would also like to mention internships. That has been a very good initiative. I know that the previous Speaker was also involved in taking on university students to do internships here. I think that could do only good for the whole Parliament.

Dr WATSON (Moggill) (2.51 p.m.): It is with pleasure that I enter the debate today on Estimates Committee A, Report No. 1 on the parliamentary appropriations. Can I begin by congratulating the Speaker on—

Mr Speaker: You can.

Dr WATSON: I thought I probably could. I would like to congratulate him on improving the ambience of the parliamentary precincts. It is important that we have a bit of pride in the

institution and the place in which the Parliament is conducted, and I think it is appropriate that a small amount of funds be devoted to those causes. In doing so, I also pay tribute to the staff of the Parliament. Certainly in my time as a member of a number of committees of this Parliament, the committee staff have supported all members of Parliament on both sides of the House to the best of their abilities and with no hint of political bias at all. I would like to congratulate them on the way that they conduct their affairs. Given that there are a couple of parliamentary staff here in the Chamber, I will not embarrass them any further by referring to their performance, but I will say that we are well served by the staff at Parliament House.

I would also like to follow up briefly on a couple of matters raised by the member for Bundaberg. On previous occasions, he and I have spoken about some of the issues he raised. I agree with him that, in reaction to the problems that occurred in the past, or were assumed to have occurred in the past—certainly reaction to reports from the CJC—we have gone overboard in the administrative processes adopted in the Parliament. His suggestion of having a global budget for members of Parliament or some other way of addressing the allocation of funds for members to carry out their legitimate business as a member of Parliament deserves investigation to see whether or not we can improve the efficiency of the administrative process while in no way diminishing the accountability of members of Parliament for the expenditure of their money.

Mr J. H. Sullivan: The tax man is as accountable as you can get.

Dr WATSON: I agree with the member for Caboolture. We all have to file our returns for the Tax Department. Irrespective of what we do, we have to account for what we do there. That is certainly a fairly rigorous accountability process.

I also wish to refer to a couple of items in the report. Firstly, let me refer to CPA expenditure. Having just returned from a CPA conference, I think it is important that, if we are going to be part of the Commonwealth, we do participate in Commonwealth proceedings. There is a significant benefit for members of this Parliament in hosting delegations from other parliaments as well as going overseas or elsewhere in Australia. We expand our horizons by interacting with people perhaps with different viewpoints and, by doing so, that improves the decision making and the parliamentary process.

I think it was the Whip who suggested earlier that we ought to be looking at how we spend our travel money because, as members of Parliament, if we are doing our job properly, if we are spending our travel allowance to educate ourselves and to improve our performance in Parliament and in discussing legislation, then as a Parliament we should be willing to ensure that members increase the perspectives they bring to the Parliament, and we can do that by interacting with people of different viewpoints from everywhere.

I was a little surprised—and I am glad the member is in the Chamber to hear this—by the Leader of the Opposition's concern about the non-televising of the Estimates committees. From the part of the Treasury estimates that I saw, I would have thought he would have been glad about that because at one stage I almost wanted to write some questions for him so that he could ask the Treasurer some better questions. I think the standard of the questioning in that area was extremely poor. He was well-served by the fact that the committee was not being televised to a wider audience.

Time expired.

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN (Caboolture) (2.57 p.m.): As I rise, let me say that it surprises me somewhat that this Parliament has not got enough guts to stand up for itself to say something critical about the budget allocation given to the Parliament. The transcript of proceedings by Hansard has the Speaker saying that in his view there is something that definitely needs to be done but that he does not have the money to do it. That something is the provision of second electorate officers for our offices. I believe the question was asked of him by Mr Grice. This issue has been around this Parliament for a long, long time. Many of us would admit both publicly and privately that our electorate officers are overworked.

Mr McGrady: What's wrong with the system?

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN: I acknowledge the interjection of the member for Mount Isa. I believe that the advancements that were made for those members sitting in the larger electorates were good advancements and I would say that it is probably likely, despite the addition of a second office in his electorate, that his electorate officer in Mount Isa could do with some paid assistance rather than having the member's wife come in on a voluntary basis. I know that the member's wife has done that for the seven years that he has been in this Parliament because this

Parliament is not providing well enough for his electorate.

Mrs McCauley: He's got a wife to do it, my wife won't do it.

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN: I am happy to acknowledge that the member for Callide has a wife. Having said that, I think it is important that at some stage in our history, we have got the guts as a Parliament to stand up to those people who are providing budgets for this place and say that we, as members of Parliament of all political persuasions, insist that this Parliament be given the funding to provide for this job because, after all, our principal purpose is out there in our electorates.

The second issue I would like to raise about committees has already been raised by the honourable member for Gympie, but I would like to take it one step further. I was somewhat distressed to read in the report the boast of the committee that the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee was to receive a casual position at the AO4 level part-time as a consequence of a request from that committee. Over a period of time and through various methods, that committee has told this Parliament—and Governments of both persuasions—of its requirements for staffing. Just so that it is on the record, I lay upon the table of the House a table that shows the staffing requirements suggested for the Committee of Scrutiny of Legislation in two reports of EARC, one report of the parliamentary committee and by the parliamentary officers themselves in a report to Cabinet. As a consequence of this new move, the current level of staffing will be a part-time legal consultant, a research director, a research officer, a part-time research officer/administrative assistant and an administrative officer. That falls way short of the resources this committee should have.

Members of the Cabinet have stood in this Parliament and suggested that, on occasions, the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee has been somewhat lax in its determination of matters that come before it. This is a direct result of the lack of resources that this Parliament provides that committee. If the Cabinet members want the committee to be more precise in the time frames that are available to it, then they have to resource it properly. The committee is not resourced properly in staff or in office space.

Time expired.

Report adopted.

Clauses 1 to 4, as read, agreed to.

Report No. 2

The CHAIRMAN: The question is—

"That Report No. 2 of Estimates Committee A be adopted."

Mr HARPER (Mount Ommaney) (3.01 p.m.): Once again it is a pleasure to rise to speak to Report No. 2. For the first time since their implementation, Estimates committee hearings were widened to allow greater scrutiny of Ministers and senior departmental staff. As I said earlier today, the process of the committees is obviously an evolving process. I make that comment bearing well in mind that I am a new member and that this is the first time I have participated in the Estimates process. However, I am one of those who, in previous years, have sat in the gallery and watched the process. So I can make that comment having observed the practice in previous years and seen the process evolve. I reiterate my statement from this morning, when I said that the committee system—be it Estimates committees or our statutory committees—is a very important process within our democratic life here in Queensland. I make the observation that, from a lot of the questions that were asked during the Estimates committee process, especially during this section of Estimates Committee A's hearing on the Tuesday, I felt that non-Government members did not look at the broader picture but certainly homed in on some very minor matters, which might be regarded as nitpicking, rather than worrying about the total process for the State.

I want to speak specifically to a few issues. In regard to the Audit Office—issues were raised as to the independence of the Auditor-General. I remind all members that the independence of the Auditor-General is safeguarded by the provisions of the Financial Administration and Audit Act 1977. I believe that the Auditor-General's role is quite clearly set out there. His independence, which is also clearly set out there, is safeguarded by that Act and his ability to report back at any time to this Parliament on any matter that is of concern to him. This should be borne in mind when members try to make assertions as to his independence or otherwise.

I wish to comment on the issue raised in regard to funding for a commission of inquiry into the CJC. I believe that the points raised in relation to that are, in some ways, humbug. It does reflect some members' inability to grasp the need for the CJC to be rejuvenated—to be refocused to its charter contained in the Criminal Justice Act 1989. Perhaps non-Government members do not want the

Criminal Justice Commission to be retuned so that it will be better and more efficient and spend the money of Queensland taxpayers in a better fashion. As was said this morning, the amount of money spent there must be remembered—well over \$100m in the last six years. I believe that the taxpayers are certainly saying to all of us—whether or not we admit it—that they want to see value for money in that sector.

In regard to provision to the Opposition and the Opposition office—members would well remember the situation when the present Government was in Opposition and the legitimate concerns about resources which were expressed in the much-talked-about EARC report. We raised those with the then Government, but it took very little action. I believe that the Premier and the Government should be applauded for the steps they have taken in increasing resources and making sure that the Opposition office is well and truly supported. It is certainly in a much better position than it was in the past.

In regard to the Treasury aspect of the committee hearing—one item that came up was the Treasurer's advance. The increase from \$104m to \$259m has been much talked about. Obviously deliberately, the Opposition has failed to recognise the points that were needed for that increase—the issues that are before the Government and which may well arise within 12 months of this Budget and have to be met out of this Budget. A responsible Government had to set those aside to ensure that they could be covered.

Time expired.

Mr BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—Leader of the Opposition) (3.06 p.m.): At the beginning of this debate, I indicate for the record that the Opposition will be supporting the Government's Budget and its appropriations, not only in relation to these major areas but the rest of the appropriations as well. So we will be voting for the Government's Budget. However, I make it very clear that we will be examining each one of the new taxing measures on their merits—

Mr Hamill: The broken promises.

Mr BEATTIE: The broken promises—when they are introduced into the House a little later in this session, perhaps in November. So we will be supporting the Budget.

Mr Borbidge: Budget measures—you vote against them, you vote against the Budget.

Mr BEATTIE: I am delighted to hear the Premier express his support for the fact that the Opposition is supporting the Budget. We will be supporting the Budget, but we will be examining each one of the broken promises, each one of the increases in taxes and each one of the new taxes based on its merit. There is no reason why the Treasurer's slush fund, which increased by \$155m this year—from \$104m to \$259m—cannot be used to fund the \$125m income which will come from these new taxes this year. I want to make it clear that we are supporting the Budget. So we are voting for the Supply of this Government.

One of the things that concerns me greatly—and I referred to this during the Estimates process, and it was included in our report—is that, on 12 September in this Chamber, the member for Mansfield made comments which suggested that the Auditor-General had been critical of the previous Labor Government. During the Estimates process, I raised those issues with the Auditor-General. I also raised them with him in correspondence. The Auditor-General has dismissed what the honourable member for Mansfield said. I believe it is very important that we set the record straight so that there is no possible doubt about the impartiality of the Auditor-General. In fact, the Auditor-General said this—

"I don't know why the member for Mansfield read into that that by supporting the current Minister I was in some way pouring buckets on the previous Minister—that's just silly. It is not the truth of it at all."

In other words, the honourable member for Mansfield not only misled the House but, in the words of the Auditor-General, was silly.

Mr Carroll: That's silly.

Mr BEATTIE: Does the honourable member think the Auditor-General is silly? The member ought to read what he said. What he said to the House was—

"Recently, I visited far-north Queensland with the Auditor-General. He explained to us on that trip, in a meeting with the community council chairpersons, the neglect of the Labor Government in that no guidance was given to community council chairpersons . . ."

That was fairly critical of the previous Government. The member has been exposed for being—in the words of the Auditor-General—silly. This is consistent with the sort of behaviour that members have seen him display in recent times.

During the Estimates process I asked the Treasurer whether she could give a commitment that there would not be increases in taxes and charges in next year's Budget. She refused to give that commitment. I say to all Queenslanders that they should brace themselves for more tax rises when the Budget is brought down in May next year. Queensland's status of being a low-tax State is being eroded by this Government. The National and Liberal Parties are demonstrating themselves to be high-taxing parties. We have seen that from the seven new or increased taxes. They are certainly not the National and Liberal Parties of old, which would certainly not have been supporting those high-taxing positions.

In relation to Queensland's new overseas offices, I am a little concerned that they are being established with only skeleton staff. The Minister advised the committee that establishment costs for those offices had exceeded expectations. That is accepted, but we do need to make certain that they are working effectively.

I am concerned that the Government has not properly funded the Ombudsman. He is unlikely to make substantial inroads into the backlog of 1,400 cases. I am concerned to hear today that neither the Premier nor the Treasurer—and at the Estimates committee hearing the Treasurer—have budgeted for the inquiry into the CJC. That raises concerns that moneys will be pulled out of the Police budget and elsewhere.

Finally, I am concerned by the contempt that was demonstrated to the Estimates committee by Wendy Armstrong, a public servant employed by the taxpayers of this State, who simply refused to appear. That is a contempt not only of the Estimates committee process but also of this Parliament. I was disappointed that the Estimates committee divided on party lines on that matter even though the committee had unanimously invited her to attend. If public servants are able to treat the Estimates committee process in that way, it will simply become a hollow process.

Time expired.

Hon. D. J. SLACK (Burnett—Minister for Economic Development and Trade and Minister Assisting the Premier) (3.12 p.m.): I place on record my appreciation to the Estimates committee members and particularly the chairman, Bob Harper, for the way in which the hearing was conducted during the section in which the Department of Economic Development and Trade

participated. I also express my appreciation to the Leader of the Opposition and Opposition members for their bipartisan approach to the matters of trade and investment.

I note that in this debate the Leader of the Opposition raised the issue of overseas offices and the resourcing of overseas offices. That matter was addressed during the hearings of the Estimates committee, and he asked a similar question of me. I did indicate to him that the allocation for those offices was not as much as we later found to be necessary and that they were more expensive than we had anticipated. However, I will say that we are reviewing that situation, and we are looking for other avenues within our own budget from which to cover an increased service from those particular offices. However, I certainly take on board the point that he is making about our not being able to provide personnel to the degree that we would like.

I also make the point that we are in the process of opening three overseas offices additional to those that existed under the previous Government. We have opened the office in Los Angeles, which everybody realises is a very costly exercise. We have an office in Shanghai, which will be opened by the Premier on 21 October. Again, that is a very costly location for the establishment of an office. We are proposing and have in train the establishment of an office in Jakarta, which again is a costly place in which to do business and will eat up considerable departmental funds. We will be establishing an officer in Central Java to attend to the problems that might develop were an officer not present.

In reply to the Leader of the Opposition in respect of other issues of trade, he has written to the Premier indicating the need for a senior officer to represent the Government in India. I will be fulfilling that role at the New Horizon Conference in India. We are very conscious of the need to develop increasing trade links overseas, particularly with our neighbours to the north. We are also very conscious of the need to do that on the basis of prosperity for Queenslanders and jobs for Queenslanders. It is an essential part of our program, and we will be pursuing that with all vigour.

The Estimates committee hearing took up a considerable amount of the department's time. That has to be recognised. I think it would be appropriate at some stage to conduct a cost/benefit analysis of the Estimates committee hearing in respect of the amount of time and cost to the individual departments. From my own department's perspective, my officers have informed me

that it cost in the vicinity of \$100,000 in time. That is an expensive exercise in anybody's book. When one adds that figure to those of the other departments and the cost of the exercise for the Parliament, one sees the need to consider measures to make the process more cost efficient. I am not saying that there does not need to be or that there should not be a proper analysis of the expenditure, efficiency and operation of departments; however, at some stage a cost/benefit analysis must be conducted. We do not want, as one person said recently, to enter a stage of paralysis by analysis through project evaluation in our department. We do not want to have so much down time that we are not applying ourselves to the real core business of the department and providing benefits to the taxpayers of Queensland. That is an issue I put to the Parliament. I think there should be an adding up of that cost.

The requirement for public servants to give evidence should be reviewed. That requirement puts a lot of pressure on public servants who are not, in many cases, used to that sort of forum in their own personal—

Time expired.

Hon. D. J. HAMILL (Ipswich) (3.17 p.m.): The point that was just being made by the Honourable the Minister, the member for Burnett, regarding the giving of evidence by public servants is a very important part of the Estimates process. I believe that that is a vital reform. I compliment the Government for that reform. I have already made some remarks in relation to the question of accountability. We should not see a situation in which the wishes of the committee are overridden by the intervention of Ministers to deny the appearance of public servants when those public servants have been requested to attend.

That leads me to the other important point that I wish to make in relation to the committee report which is before us, that is, the issue of accountability. I trust that the Treasurer will take these remarks to heart. It was very difficult to try to arrive at information from the Treasurer in respect to one very important area of the Treasurer's ministerial responsibilities. I refer particularly to the matter of ministerial expenses. We saw the Treasurer seek to flick responsibility across to other Ministers, saying, "It is not a matter for me; it is a matter for the individual line Minister." It was only by virtue of having present the officer from the Treasurer's department who is responsible for the administration of ministerial expenses that we were able to obtain the facts

in relation to this very important area of the Treasurer's own responsibilities.

In relation to ministerial expenses I make a couple of points in passing. At the Estimates committee hearing, it was established that the guidelines for ministerial expenditure had not been changed materially by the incoming Government; yet we were able to find that, in the case of the Treasurer's personal staff, some \$475.30 in accounts from hotels were processed for accommodating the Treasurer's chauffeur in Brisbane. Over \$2,000 has been chalked up in hotel bills in Brisbane by a member of the Minister for Education's staff. It is quite extraordinary that ministerial staff should be so accommodated in hotels in Brisbane at the expense of the ministerial office. I regard that as quite a radical departure from the probity of ministerial accounting which had been the case under the former Government.

I turn now to the Treasurer's advance. We have heard in debate that the \$259m advance or the slush fund—whichever term one prefers to use—is a justifiable provision in the Budget. It is my contention, and that of non-Government members, that that is simply not so. In the former Government's 1995-96 Budget, an amount of \$104m was set aside to cover contingencies, and it was more than adequate to do just that. A \$259m provision is excessive. When members look at that amount in the context of the other deceits that have been perpetrated by this Government in relation to its Budget management, then well they might question such an excessive provision by this Government. After all, were we not told that the Budget position was one of deficit? Time and time and time again, through a variety of accounting procedures, we were told that; yet in the Treasurer's own Budget Speech she had to admit that, on all of those accounting procedures, the former Government's Budget was in fact in surplus. Were we not told that Commonwealth payments had been cut savagely by some \$250m? Was it not the case that, under questioning and from the Budget papers themselves, we discovered that payments from the Commonwealth to Queensland for 1996-97 actually increased? Indeed, as I pointed out, Budget Paper No. 2 reveals \$5 billion from the Commonwealth, which is more than last year's \$4.8 billion. Most people would accept that, but the Treasurer does not.

Of course, the Government claimed that, on the basis of reduced Commonwealth funding and an alleged underlying Budget deficit, there was a need for new taxes. Quite frankly, that conclusion simply does not stand

up. It is a blatant breach of the confidence that the people of Queensland believed they could have in the coalition Government, which came to power on a platform of no increased or new taxes.

The other very great concern I have is in relation to the asset stripping of Government owned enterprises, the Government's privatisation agenda and the Treasurer's philosophy that one can use productive assets, realise them and then use those funds to acquire less productive assets. That philosophy flies in the face of one of the key recommendations of the Government's own FitzGerald Commission of Audit, which encouraged the Government to look at underperforming assets and to seek more prudent investments.

The other matter is the \$200m carryover in capital funds—something which the coalition promised that it would never do and something which has contributed to rising unemployment, the freeze on capital works and a worsening economic situation in this State.

Time expired.

Mr GRICE (Broadwater) (3.22 p.m.): From the point of view of the parliamentary process, in many ways the Estimates committees have been disappointing. As we all know, for the first time since the introduction of the Estimates committee process, the powers of the committees were widened to allow greater scrutiny of Ministers and senior departmental staff. Unfortunately, non-Government members did not rise to the high standard reflected in the new and widened opportunities offered to them. Instead of using the Estimates committees as a forum in which they could examine the spending priorities of the Government, non-Government members were more interested in personalities and petty point-scoring.

During the Estimates committees, the standard displayed by non-Government members was appalling. In many of the questions that they asked there was little substance, and if it had not been for the incisive questions of Government members, the Estimates process could be described as a farce. Non-Government members did not apply themselves to the discipline of a thorough examination of the Program Statements and the questions that they asked revealed their lack of a studious analysis of the Program Statements. Instead, the members opposite had a political hit list of questions which were drawn up by their backroom boys and doled out accordingly. Opposition

members know that that is a fact. Non-Government members played to the press gallery rather than applying themselves to the serious business of an analysis of the Program Statements. The questions that non-Government members asked were framed to get media coverage and to get their names in lights. However, their performance did not receive accolades.

Attacks on officers and ministerial staff do not suffice for probing, incisive questions. Non-Government members showed little concern for the answers that were given by Ministers. That was demonstrated by their frequent interruptions and their inability to listen. As I said before, it was a disappointing outcome to the Estimates committees. The reservations expressed by non-Government members are not of a quality standard. They are superficial, reflecting narrow thinking and the inability of non-Government members to grasp the fundamentals of the Estimate committees. In many ways, the reservations were just a beat-up. They contained tired old matters, to which non-Government members did not even want to hear responses during the Estimates committees.

With regard to the Audit Office—non-Government members raised the issue of the independence of the Auditor-General. The independence of the Auditor-General is safeguarded by the provisions of the Financial Administration and Audit Act 1977. The defunct Electoral and Administrative Review Commission, supported by the then parliamentary committee for that body, reported on the Auditor-General's Office. One of the outcomes was the establishment on 1 May 1993, under section 47 of the Act, of an independent statutory office. Section 48 of that Act provides that the Auditor-General is to control the office. Under the provisions of section 50 of the Act, the Auditor-General is appointed by the Governor in Council, and the Public Accounts Committee is consulted during the selection and appointment process. With respect to the conduct of audits, the Auditor-General is free from direction by any person as to the way in which the powers in relation to audit are to be exercised or the priority given to audit matters. Non-Government members are being too precious and too pious.

With regard to the non-Government members' reservation about the funding for the commission of inquiry into the CJC—that is just a lot of superficial nonsense. It reflects the inability of non-Government members to grasp the need for the CJC to be rejuvenated and to be refocused on its charter contained in the

Criminal Justice Act 1989. Non-Government members do not want the Criminal Justice Commission to be retuned so that it will be a better, more efficient institution that can serve Queensland and Queenslanders into the next millennium. A lame CJC suits the non-Government members; it does not suit the coalition Government. If the non-Government members had their way, Queensland would be wrapped in cotton wool and nothing would be improved or bettered.

It is time for the ALP to stop thinking that it is a Government in exile waiting for Prince Charming to slip the mantle of government on it. Non-Government members have to earn Government. By their whingeing and complaining and through stopping process and progress, there is no hope of those members opposite sitting on the Treasury benches. Non-Government members can relax: the commission of inquiry into the CJC will be funded from consolidated revenue.

As to the non-Government members' reservation in relation to the Office of the Queensland Parliamentary Counsel—that shows that they did not listen to the Premier's answer. The reason for the reduction in parliamentary staffing from 48 to 43 is a decision by the office not to fill a number of positions because of the completion of the Acts Reprinting Program, the Acts Review Program and the Acts Repeal Program. Further, the operations and funding of the office are being reviewed. As to the decrease in funding—that reflects the reduced labour and operating costs associated with the completion of the programs to which I have referred and the non-requirement to outlay large amounts on information and technology.

Time expired.

Hon. M. J. FOLEY (Yeronga) (3.27 p.m.): Shakespeare once wrote, "All that glitters is not gold." That is particularly true of the Arts budget. At first blush, the Arts budget appears to be substantially enhanced from last year. However, upon analysis, one sees that in fact it is an increase based largely upon capital works, namely, the construction of the Playhouse or Stage 5 of the Cultural Centre commenced during the term of the Labor Government.

Upon analysis, one sees a disturbing pattern of cuts to basic arts and cultural services. I refer to the cuts to the State Library of \$363,000, cuts to the museum of \$471,000, and cuts to the Art Gallery of \$565,000 or 6 per cent of its budget in cash terms. The explanations given to the committee for those cuts to the basic cultural

institutions of the State were fanciful and unacceptable. The explanation was that savings would be achieved through centralising corporate services; yet, on the other hand, it was argued that the Government would save money by the decentralisation of building services. It is a curious and inconsistent form of reasoning.

However, let me turn to the impact of those cuts on regional Queensland. Under the Arts budgets, the funding for book purchases by regional libraries has been slashed in half—from \$2m in 1995-96 to \$1m in 1996-97. That means that, throughout Queensland, regional libraries will be denied the opportunity to purchase books to enable regional Queenslanders access to books for them to read. That is a very sad state of affairs and it comes on the heels of cuts to libraries. Under Labor, some \$900,000 was provided to assist projects such as the establishment of a library in far-north Queensland, an Aboriginal and Islander unit and the distribution of microcomputers and CD-ROMs to small country libraries. This year, no such funding has been provided by the coalition Government. The regions and, in particular, regional libraries have been hit hard.

It has also hit regional artists and local government councils, which have waited for a decision to emerge in relation to the Regional Arts Development Fund. I am pleased to say that protests throughout this State have led the Government to back down on its attempts to abolish the Regional Arts Development Fund. It has cut the figure from \$15m, which Labor had committed on a notional capital base, to \$12m. The Government argues, of course, that this is an increase from the \$10m notional capital base previously provided. However, that is a specious argument because the Government well knows that it was the subject of a review in 1994-95 and the Labor Government committed itself to the \$15m capital base. Indeed, the Government knows that local government councils throughout the State had been proceeding with and receiving their submissions on the basis of the increased amount.

Another disturbing aspect is the scrapping of the Indigenous Arts Festival. It is particularly disturbing that this Government has still failed to speak up for Queensland. Mr Borbidge and Mrs Sheldon have been absolutely silent in public while Senator Alston has taken from Queensland the planned National Institute of Indigenous Performing Arts. This Budget takes the proposed Indigenous Arts Festival, which was established under the Labor Government, off the agenda and removes that contribution

to indigenous arts. At a time when indigenous art is so important to the cultural life of Queensland, it should be supported. Therefore, one sees the surface feature of an increase but, upon analysis, one sees cuts in areas that will adversely affect regional Queensland, major cultural institutions and indigenous arts.

Hon. R. E. BORBIDGE (Surfers Paradise—Premier) (3.32 p.m.): It is disappointing that non-Government members have ignored so much of the information that was made available to them during a most enlightened Estimates process that this Government initiated. Firstly, in regard to the backlog of cases with the Ombudsman, under the previous Labor Government, budgeting constraints and consequent resource limitations meant that officers had to cope with a huge backlog of approximately 1,300 cases each year. In 1996-97, additional funding of \$110,000 is being provided for an additional temporary officer for the FOI Commissioner and two administrative review officers for the Parliamentary Commissioner. This increase is in stark contrast to the reductions in funding imposed on other Government departments and agencies to contain the deficit inherited from our Labor predecessors. This increased funding, in combination with demand management strategies, will enable the office to continue to reduce the backlog of cases.

Honourable members have referred to the independence of the Auditor-General. The Government reaffirms, in the clearest and strongest terms, the independence of the Auditor-General in Queensland.

Honourable members opposite have referred to an alleged 25 per cent funding increase in the Department of Premier and Cabinet. As explained to the committee, the Budget increase of \$10.213m principally reflected additional funding of \$6.55m for the South Bank redevelopment and the costs associated with the establishment of regional offices at \$2.268m. In fact, after taking these factors and machinery of Government changes such as the Government Air Wing and Bureau of Ethnic Affairs into account, a more valid comparison reflects a decrease of \$6.7m, or 10 per cent, in the budget to the department.

In relation to the commission of inquiry into the CJC, the final implications of the Government's decision will be evaluated within the context of the Government's ongoing review of its Budget. In this regard, funding will be considered by the Cabinet Budget Committee, having regard to resource

availability within the Department of Justice firstly and, subject to that, within the context of the overall State Budget. This is normal Budget practice.

In respect of the Office of the Parliamentary Counsel, there will be no reduction in service delivery from the office as a result of the review. The outcome of the Government's new focus for the office is the refocusing of activities from legislative reviews and reprints, which are almost complete, to drafting new legislation.

In regard to the Coordinator-General's advance, it is appropriate for the department, and in particular the Premier and the Coordinator-General, to have the flexibility to be able to swiftly respond to funding priorities and needs as they arise. The COG advance of \$2m is not significant, but represents a commitment to getting things done. As the committee was previously advised, a vast proportion of the funding set aside has already been committed: \$1m to the Century Zinc native title negotiation, \$200,000 to the St Johns Cathedral restoration project, \$190,000 to the reinstatement of the Orchid Beach airstrip, and funding for an interpretative centre at Cooktown. If honourable members opposite wish me to tell those particular people that this is a slush fund with which we are facilitating those particular projects, I will have no hesitation in informing them of the attitude of the Labor Party.

In respect of the Corporate Communications and Information Office, the increase in the Budget will support staff costs for an expanded establishment which now includes the former speech unit, special events coordination such as Queensland Day and the Colonial George Street Festival, \$250,000 for whole-of-Government advertising and major funding for new public communication and information programs including gun laws, a directory of information resources, a ministerial directory, business and investment promotional publications, and business investment opportunities awareness and stimulation.

In respect of resources for the Opposition, for the record honourable members should note that the accommodation provided for the Leader of the Opposition within the Annexe has been subsequently upgraded and expanded from 277 square metres to 437 square metres. In addition, a new office has been established at 80 Albert Street, providing the Opposition with an additional 484 square metres of office space of ministerial standard. Office IT enhancements have been completed

with substantially improved equipment for the Opposition. Certainly in regard to additional staffing, this review has my full support and will result in enhanced resourcing for the office of the Leader of the Opposition, albeit with the final details yet to be determined.

Time expired.

Ms SPENCE (Mount Gravatt) (3.37 p.m.): I turn to the Office of Women's Affairs in this Estimates debate. Opposition members were concerned at the Estimates hearing that the Treasurer and her officers were unable to provide specific details on Government initiatives and programs targeted at assisting Queensland women in this Budget and could only talk about global figures which were included in the women's statement. It would appear that the Treasurer and the Office of Women's Affairs, while purporting to have a coordinating function, do little more than collate statistics and have little input, influence or comprehension of the Government's policy initiatives directed at women. Neither the Office of Women's Affairs nor the Treasurer as the Minister responsible could provide evidence of their input into the policy development of line departments which have carriage of the development and implementation of programs and initiatives directed at women.

When questioned at the Estimates committee, neither the Treasurer nor the Director of the Office of Women's Affairs could comment on their Government's child-care initiatives, because they did not know what they were. One would expect that the Office of Women's Affairs would at least know something about an issue as vital to women as that of child care, but this is not the case.

Women in Queensland must be asking themselves what it is that this office does. It seems that its major function next year will be to conduct a survey of 5,000 Queensland women and to present a quarterly newspaper, Mrs Sheldon's own rag, entitled *Queensland Woman*. I will comment on each of these functions in turn. I will first address the survey. There is great scepticism amongst Queensland women about the need for another survey. Women tell me that they are surveyed to death and that they are sick and tired of filling in surveys. They say that they never know the outcome of these surveys—indeed if there is any at all. Therefore, I am interested in the kind of women the office is going to be surveying, what kind of questions it will ask and what it hopes to achieve from the survey.

Secondly, the newspaper was an idea with great potential. However, in the first copy we see that this is little more than a propaganda vehicle for the Minister, the Treasurer, and all other Government Ministers. It has not escaped the attention of women that the Treasurer's name was mentioned about 34 times and that the Director of the Office of Women's Affairs, Ms Jackson, had her name mentioned 26 times. Indeed, I know many women who have sent that newspaper to Stuart Littlemore. They want him to do it over on his show. I am waiting for him to do that. Let us hope the next issue is a big improvement.

The Liberal Party has no policy on women. It did not have one when it went to the election and it still does not have one. I expect that the Office of Women's Affairs will play a very useful role for the Liberal Party in that it will go out into the community and do the market research so badly needed by the Liberal Party in this State. However, it is very difficult to envisage this office playing a proactive role in encouraging line departments to develop good policies for women.

One of the new initiatives which concerns me is the change in focus of Women's Infolink. In the last few months, valuable staff in that office have been told to take VERs because their positions are to be downgraded. I am concerned about the loss of corporate knowledge and great talent from Women's Infolink because of this Government's desire to downgrade those positions. It also concerns me that Women's Infolink has moved the focus away from disseminating information via pamphlets and brochures to the Internet. A considerable amount of time and money has been allocated to information technology and establishing web sites on the Internet so that women can have access to information that they previously received through the mail via pamphlets. I stand to be corrected, but I believe half a million dollars has been allocated for this purpose. Although I firmly believe that women need to keep up with new technology and I advocate their computer usage, I have serious doubts that women at this time are able to access the Internet in sufficient numbers in order to justify this change in policy by Women's Infolink.

I was told at the Estimates committee hearing that 40 per cent of women have access to the Internet. I do not know about that. Do 40 per cent of the women in Woodridge, Inala, Rockhampton or Ipswich have the Internet connected to their homes? If not, where are they going to access it? Not at their local women's health centre, not at their

neighbourhood centre, and not at the office of their State member of Parliament, because none of those State Government centres has access to the Internet. I think the Office of Women's Affairs has made the decision to change the direction of Women's Infolink from communicating via the print media and via the mail to the Internet without reference to any statistics on Queensland women's access to the Internet.

Time expired.

Hon. J. M. SHELDON (Caloundra—Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for The Arts) (3.42 p.m.): I thank the Chairman of Estimates Committee A, Bob Harper, and the Government members of Estimates Committee A for their great work. It is a great pity that the Opposition members of the committee, by their statements, have turned Estimates Committee A into a political farce.

I would like to cover a few issues that have been raised—firstly, that of the Treasurer's Advance Account. There has certainly been a lot of misinformation about the advance account and its increase in funding. However, let me once and for all put to rest any comments that have been made about this issue. The account is in place to cover a great many contingencies—outstanding legal liability claims, implementation of competition policy, major project facilitation costs, provision for cash equivalent of long service leave, funding for drought relief and for natural disaster relief. Of course, the largest provisions are for paid maternity leave and enterprise bargaining agreements. I would have thought that the Labor Party would have supported this. It evidently does not. Of course, the Leader of the Opposition now wants to abolish it. I guess public servants will not be receiving any wage rises and women will not be receiving any paid maternity leave.

As to the comments about carryover expenditure—the levels of carryover were very close to those in previous years under Labor Budgets. Labor's Budgets certainly indicated that it thought that was the way to go. The promise that I made in March is one I intend pushing through but only with respect to coalition Budgets, not Labor Budgets such as that for 1995-96. Any temporary pause in capital works imposed was used to ascertain a great number of projects—about \$140m worth—which Labor had announced and which were unfunded. The great bulk of capital works continued and, in fact, capital works in the June quarter of 1995-96 were \$476m higher than in the previous seven quarters and

\$81m higher than that in the June quarter in the previous year.

Comments were made about dividends from GOEs. Actual dividend payments by GOEs in 1996-97 relate to the 1995-96 financial year profit performance. Because annual reports in respect of 1995-96 are, with the exception of Suncorp, not yet publicly available, operating profit before tax figures for 1995-96 and forecast receipts for 1996-97, or on an individual enterprise basis, are still commercial-in-confidence, as the shadow Treasurer should know. These figures will become available to the public and the Opposition as annual reports are progressively released in the second half of 1996.

Comments were made about Budget security. The claim that "sensitive, market distorting information" was released is fanciful. There was public debate about what would possibly be in the Budget. That was not based on a tax leak; people were purely discussing issues. In fact, the receipts from the tobacco tax in June and July were significantly higher than normal due to the debate, a lot of which was run by the Opposition. That increase is attributed to some stockpiling during the progress of the debate. As Mr Hamill said, the loss of revenue between the leaking of the decision and the announcement of the Budget is considered to be insignificant.

There were comments about privatisation and asset sales. The Government has given assurances that the current income stream from Suncorp and QIDC will be maintained through the investment of part of the sale proceeds. The Government is also committed to maintaining the net worth of the Government as disclosed by the Commission of Audit. While the mix of assets may change, it is the net worth of the public sector that must be maintained. The Commission of Audit recommended that some of the Governments "lazy assets" be sold to provide additional funds for the provision of infrastructure—something which I know people in Queensland applaud. The only people who do not applaud that move are members of the Opposition.

There were comments made about Budget surplus and deficit. The Opposition committee members' misreading and misrepresentation of the deficit/surplus position has been going on since February. The facts remain the same. The Government inherited an underlying deficit position of \$180m in 1995-96 and a projected deficit of \$240m for 1996-97.

Mr Hamill interjected.

Mrs SHELDON: Opposition members hate to hear it, but it is true. As the 1996-97 Budget states, due to overexpenditure by the previous Labor Government, expenditure exceeded revenue by \$45m in 1995-96. A positive balance was only possible due to an opening surplus at the beginning of the 1995-96 year of \$51m. The 1995-96 position was only possible due to one-off funding sources of just over \$180m which do not recur. The Opposition has struggled with the various measures of surplus and deficit. The three main measures, all identified within the Budget, are Consolidated Fund, Government Finance Statistics and the Commission of Audit—accrual.

The GFS surplus identified by the non-Government member of the committee include superannuation and other financial assets but does not offset them against liabilities. It is purely a mechanism to gauge how well a State can repay its debts. Therefore, the GFS surplus is not available for the Government of the day to spend on Budget line items and should not be used as an indicator of the accurate position of the deficit/surplus.

Mr Hamill: Tell us about the accrual surplus.

Mrs SHELDON: Yes, the Opposition did say that it was.

For the 1996-97 State Budget, the coalition faced several hurdles, as I said, a \$245m projected deficit—

Time expired.

Mr D'ARCY (Woodridge) (3.48 p.m.): In speaking to the 1996 report of Estimates Committee A, I point out that the reorganisation of the Estimates process over the past few years has been of advantage to the Parliament. However, it worries me that, from looking at the overview, we still see a curtailment of the real operation of the Budget within this place. It is difficult enough for most people to realise that it is just income and expenditure at a household level. Basically, under the new procedures we have attempted to make the Budget more understandable to members of Parliament, to the committee and to the public. Unfortunately, in my humble opinion, the process has not gone far enough. At the moment, in respect of the overall budgetary position, the new system still has a lot of problems.

Every time a Government attempts to curtail the information to the public we get to the situation where there is less information coming out. There are more public servants

hiding information than disseminating that information to the public, and the bureaucrats still have control. This year, some of the limitations placed on the committees were unnecessary. They were too stringent and they did not give members the opportunity to delve into and open up some of the areas that are now being pursued via Estimates committees in other States.

I was disappointed in this area of the Treasury in particular, where most of the workings of Government are held—or hidden, depending on how one looks at things. The system has prevented our delving as deep as we should be able to. The system still needs further refining. In refining the system further, we ought to be able to be more accountable to the people. That does not mean more staff and so on. It means that we as parliamentarians must open up the system a lot more.

I have spoken about the Metway merger several times in this place. I believe that the Government has well and truly missed the boat in that regard. The figures are yet to come down. Although currently the stock market is improving generally—as it normally would at this point—I believe that early in the new year banking shares will not be getting the returns they normally would, even though, as I said, they are presently rising. Treasury has probably underestimated the amount of taxpayers' money that will be needed to float the new bank.

I often refer to transport and road issues. Once again, I believe that we have totally missed the boat. We have heard so much about tolls. I am not against tolls, provided that they provide a service to the public. Members would be aware of my proposed system for the Gold Coast highway. I believe that the Government's budgetary position will blow out beyond all expectations.

One aspect in which Governments seem to place a lot of faith in this day and age is gaming revenue. The gaming dollar continues to be attacked by Governments. I believe that the Government has overestimated the revenue that it will obtain from gaming. For example, if it continues to bleed the racing industry, the money will go elsewhere, and the gambling dollar only goes so far. It can now be spent in a number of areas. I note that Keno has come on-line, and we are probably allowing hotels to install more poker machines. Treasury must control this industry for the benefit of the people of Queensland. Once again, in my view the Government does not have a proper handle on this matter.

The Treasurer just raised the two accounting standards. The Estimates still do not have a clear dividing line as to whether we are working on an accrual accounting or a cash accounting basis. This system is not fully in place. It is not understood by many of the bureaucrats, and it is still not understood by some of the departments. It certainly has not been implemented fully. It is disappointing that this matter is being addressed so slowly. Until the Government clarifies the accounting basis on which it is operating, the public will not understand what it is all about. This matter must be addressed in real terms for the future.

Time expired.

Mr SPRINGBORG (Warwick) (3.53 p.m.): I rise to participate in the debate on the departmental aspects of the report of Estimates Committee A. I congratulate the Premier, the Treasurer and Deputy Premier and the Minister for Economic Development and Trade on their understanding of their portfolios, the expenditure under their portfolios and the information provided during the course of the hearing.

I want to talk first about the Regional Arts Development Fund and the contribution it makes to rural areas. I point out that in the 1996-97 financial year—despite all the scaremongering and wrong information provided by the member for Yeronga in particular over the last couple of months—\$920,000 has been allocated to the fund. That represents an increase of \$100,000, or 12 per cent, over the 1995-96 financial year allocation. The additional funding has been utilised to support arts and cultural policy development for 31 participating councils, which adds up to \$85,000; to support the introduction of the Regional Arts Development Fund into seven Queensland councils joining for the first time, which represents an additional \$15,000; and to support project activities in 97 councils, which adds up to \$820,000. These additional funds allow the Queensland Government to maintain its financial commitment to participating councils. It should be noted that outlays in the arts area have increased from \$100.1m in 1995-96 to \$123.7m in the 1996-97 Budget—an increase of some 24 per cent. This includes new initiative funding of \$2.3m for regional libraries, the replacement of the State Library mainframe computer and an additional \$31.3m for construction of Stage 2 of the Cultural Centre.

While I am on the subject of the Estimates for the Treasury Department, I want to mention that I am very pleased with the

ongoing commitment to rural areas, particularly through funding for the Queensland Rural Adjustment Authority. It is widely recognised that there is a great deal of commitment from this Government to rural areas. In 1996-97 approximately \$4m will be allocated for a range of existing drought assistance programs, including rural family support services. There will be \$45m in assistance for replanting and restocking, for productivity enhancement and for small business drought assistance and \$14.5m for a range of activities in the Department of Primary Industries. Those schemes will do a lot to benefit people west of the Great Dividing Range who have been suffering for a long period.

I turn briefly to the issue of ethnic affairs. A major contribution in this year's Budget through the Premier's Department will be an initiative which includes the provision of \$100,000 for the Ethnic Communities Council of Queensland, which will be recurrent for three years and is designed to improve the ability of the council to fulfil its function as the key ethnic community body in Queensland. I believe that this demonstrates the ongoing commitment of this Government towards ethnic communities in this State. I have a large ethnic community in my electorate, and I certainly appreciate the wonderful work and the marvellous contribution they make to my particular community. I believe that factor is recognised by the community in my electorate as a whole.

I want to touch briefly on another issue relevant to the expenditure of the Premier's Department. I congratulate the Premier on his initiative in the establishment of Premier's offices in Cairns, Townsville, Rockhampton, Mackay and Gladstone. This will demonstrate the commitment of the Government to Queenslanders in rural, regional and provincial areas.

Mr Fouras: Pity they don't know about it.

Mr SPRINGBORG: They do know about it, and they are embracing the concept in north Queensland.

Mr Fouras interjected.

Mr SPRINGBORG: The member for Ashgrove must be speaking to different people from those to whom we have been speaking. This move gives those in regional and provincial areas a direct line into the Premier's office in this State. I believe that this will prove to be very beneficial in the future.

Briefly on the Department of Economic Development and Trade—there are a number of major projects either being considered or actually under way which are being presided over by that particular department. There is the ongoing involvement of the Minister in Korea Zinc Australia. Members would be aware that Bill Hayden is currently establishing the mediation process in relation to the Century mine. There is also the Pandora gas pipeline, which will benefit this State greatly in the future.

Time expired.

Mr PALASZCZUK (Inala) (3.58 p.m.): Queensland Labor is committed to supporting a multicultural Queensland. We support the Bureau of Ethnic Affairs being transferred to the Premier's Department. We also support the program goal for the bureau, which is stated in the Ministerial Program Statements for the Premier to be—

"To increase harmony, cohesion and participation in Queensland's culturally diverse society—with particular focus on the needs and endeavours of ethnic community members—for the benefit of all Queenslanders."

I certainly hope that all members take note of that statement.

As honourable members would be aware, the Goss Government established overseas trade offices for Queensland in Hong Kong, strengthened our relationship with Japan and opened secretariats dedicated to trade with Indonesia and Vietnam. I understand that the Premier will be opening an office in Shanghai and one in Jakarta later on. In addition, the Goss Government promoted courses in languages other than English and promoted in our primary schools the teaching of Chinese, Indonesian and Japanese. We did this because we believed, and still do, that Australians should have an insight into the rich cultural traditions and religious beliefs of our trading partners. I very much regret, though, that the Borbidge Government has watered down these initiatives, which I believed promoted a greater understanding between our country and our near neighbours.

I very much value our trading relationship with our Asian neighbours because, as the elected representative for an area which has one of the largest industrial estates in Queensland, I am very much aware of the employment opportunities that are created in my electorate as a result of trading with Asian countries. These firms range from trucking companies, architectural firms and building

firms who are winning large contracts in Asian countries. As a State, our primary production depends very much on maintaining strong economic ties with the growing Asian economies. Mr Chairman, I seek leave to table and have incorporated in *Hansard* a table containing major markets for our primary industries.

Leave granted.

Major Markets

Meat—Canada, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, United States

Wool—China, Italy, France, South Korea, Japan, Taiwan, Germany, United Kingdom, United States, Malaysia

Fisheries—Japan, Hong Kong, Taiwan, USA, Singapore, Thailand, Spain, Malaysia, New Zealand

Sugar—United States, New Zealand, United Kingdom, New Caledonia, Singapore

Cotton—Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, China, Thailand, Italy, Spain, Vietnam, Pakistan

Mr PALASZCZUK: I want honourable members to consider whether it is important to trade with Asian countries, to accept jobs that such trade brings us and the standard of living that we enjoy as a result of those employment opportunities. It is therefore a matter of great concern that the Borbidge Government has no moral courage in distancing itself from a number of incidents that have occurred recently—including the member for Greenslopes' outburst against the Asian community, the vote of thanks to the Federal member for Oxley by the member for Mansfield and the presence of the Federal member for Oxley at the opening of the electorate office of the Minister for Emergency Services and Sport.

The issue of race should not be tolerated as a means of alienating one group of Australians from another. As a country, we have a proud tradition of accepting people like myself from other parts of the world and making our homes here. Together we can become one nation, one voice and one trading partner in broadening our trading relations with other countries. We in the Labor Party stand up for all Australian interests, whether these interests be economic, cultural or religious.

Report adopted.

Estimates Committee B

Report No. 1

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The question is—

"That Report No. 1 of Estimates Committee B be adopted."

Mr STEPHAN (Gympie) (4.01 p.m.): Firstly, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the research director Karen Sampford, research officer Meg Hoban and executive assistant Maree Lane for their assistance and cooperation in the presentation of the Estimates Committee B report. I would also like to thank the member for Yeronga, Matt Foley, the member for Waterford, Tom Barton, and the member for Rockhampton, Robert Schwarten and, of course, also Frank Carroll and Liz Cunningham. Their help and assistance has been greatly appreciated.

The committee has considered the proposed expenditure utilising the various Budget papers together with the ministerial statements received in evidence from the Honourable Denver Beanland, the Honourable Russell Cooper and the Honourable Mick Veivers, and I also thank them for their cooperation during the committee hearing.

The committee examined proposed expenditure of \$272m for the Department of Justice. As noted by the Minister in his introductory statement to the committee, the 1996-97 Budget allocation represents an increase of some \$36m over last year's allocation. The two major projects to be funded from the allocation are the construction of a courthouse in Rockhampton and the extension of the courthouse at Southport. Other smaller areas will see improvements to their courthouses, including the courthouse in Gympie, and I thank the Minister for that consideration.

I take this opportunity to refer to the matter of deaths in custody. Specific details were sought of the current strategies being implemented to reduce deaths in custody. The committee was advised that procedures and programs introduced by the Corrective Services Commission included the use of techniques to identify persons at risk of self-harm and the establishment of units to provide intensive supervision to persons identified as being at risk.

Recently Mr Justice Dowd spoke on this subject, saying that there is a perception that Australia has an Aboriginal deaths in custody problem. Nine out of 10 people, or in some instances 99 out of 100, would say that Australia has an Aboriginal deaths in custody problem but Mr Justice Dowd said that we do not. He believes that we have two problems: we have a deaths in custody problem, as does every other nation, but we also have an Aborigines in custody problem, but the two are

not the same. We have to bear that in mind. We must realise that the problems are there. Hopefully they will be addressed.

I refer now to the Department of Emergency Services. I note that, in response to a question concerning the transfer of a King Air aircraft from Queensland Emergency Services to the Royal Flying Doctor Service in north Queensland, the Minister advised the committee that the aircraft had been handed over the previous week. The committee was told that the aircraft would now undergo refitting and, in response to further questioning, the committee was advised that the aircraft would be operational in late January. The committee received the undertaking that the Christmas period would also be catered for.

Another important aspect of Minister Veivers' portfolio is that of sport. In his opening statement, the Minister advised that, as part of a long-term solution to planning for the provision of facilities, the Office of Sport and Recreation is presently formulating a strategic plan as well as preparing a 10-year plan to guide the development of international, national and regional sports facilities. I also note that, over a period of time, a lot of support has been given to sport in various areas, not the least of which have been the junior sports policies and subsidies that have been put in place. Those are subsidies for training and facilities.

Time expired.

Mr BARTON (Waterford) (4.06 p.m.): The 1996-97 Budget is a fraud with regard to police numbers. Our analysis indicates that the police numbers promised simply cannot be met and that the Budget is fatally flawed with regard to how it calculates the numbers that will be provided. In addition, the promise of an additional 139 officers cannot be met and I should say that that promise appeared only in the Minister's press release, not the Budget papers or in the program statements of the day.

After allowing for the claimed separation rate of 3.5 per cent to 4 per cent, we estimate that the real increase will be at best 20, but that it is more likely to be a real reduction of 12. This figure is determined after allowing for the numbers to be trained by the Oxley and Townsville Police Academies and, in addition, our estimate is that after two years the actual increase will be 90 less than the claimed increase in the 10-year plan. Under questioning, Minister Cooper failed to answer our analysis. He simply restated his figures, and he said, "we can play around with

figures", and "that we", meaning the Government, "obviously have the intention of meeting those targets." He may have that intention, but the reality is that the numbers still do not add up no matter how one analyses them.

Another area of major concern is with regard to police regional budgets. We did obtain global figures for each region but a complete breakdown of the expenditure across those regions was not provided. The Minister claimed that that was the commissioner's responsibility and that those breakdowns were not yet determined. Here we are, in early October, three months into a Budget, and we cannot be given detailed figures. It was disturbing that the regional budgets have only been increased in the order of 2.5 per cent to 3 per cent, and this was acknowledged by the Police Finance Director, Dick Warry, in the hearings. This is outrageous, particularly when it is compared to an overall increase in the Police budget of 7.3 per cent, itself lower than the last Labor Budget's increase of 7.5 per cent, that does not even keep up with the inflation rate over the past 12 months, let alone allow for population growth.

We are also very concerned that we are getting information that specific regions are in fact getting a real cut in funding with some of the support services that they used to depend on headquarters for actually being withdrawn, meaning that they have to provide that funding themselves. That has the effect of lowering the numbers of operational police. We are particularly concerned at the failure of the Minister to provide more detailed information on that regional breakdown.

The figures that have been promised in particular regions are also of concern. We took the liberty of asking three assistant commissioners to attend the hearing. The assistant commissioner for the southern region was not able to give us a definitive figure but the assistant commissioner for the south eastern region was, indicating that he would be receiving 25 additional police, he hoped, over this next year, with them coming from the next two intakes. That is a very small figure compared to the promises for that region that had been made by the Police Minister when in Opposition.

Also, in the northern metropolitan region, that assistant commissioner advised that, at any stage—currently included—he has 50 vacancies. So much for police numbers from a Government that came to power promising that it would totally address that issue and

increase numbers by a substantial amount. They must be on the never-never plan, because the start will not be made in this financial year.

There are also many references in the Budget papers to traffic fines and speed cameras. One has to search for them, because they are spread throughout the Budget papers and the Program Statements. This shows an increase in revenue from traffic fines of almost \$15m this financial year, of which \$11m will be attributed to camera-detected offences, most of which would be speed cameras. In a full year's operation, this would mean a \$20m revenue take. This is a very clear indication that the use of speed cameras is primarily for revenue raising, not road safety purposes. In this financial year alone, 150,000 additional Queenslanders will be booked to swell Treasury's coffers, with a far higher number in a full year.

Mr Gibbs: She won't be booked, though.

Mr BARTON: I would bet that the Treasurer will not be booked. That is for certain. We have already seen that precedent.

We should all object to the Police Service being used in such a blatant revenue-raising operation for this Treasurer. The committee itself expressed dissatisfaction with this occurring—despite the protestations across the Chamber of the chairman of that committee. We are also very concerned that over half of the—

Time expired.

Mrs CUNNINGHAM (Gladstone) (4.11 p.m.): I would like to thank the Government for the opportunity to be involved in the Estimates committee process. I acknowledge that the Government relinquished one of its positions to offer me that opportunity. It certainly was an enlightening one, to say the least. The fundamental opportunity for scrutiny of the Budget Votes and to question the Ministers and the officers responsible for the allocations and expenditure is important, as they are the sponsors of public money. Accountability is of great importance to residents.

A lot of issues were raised during the Estimates committee process—some positive and some negative. I know that it is always the negatives that get highlighted. I suppose that is because they are usually the issues of concern, so I am going to do the same. In relation to the Department of Justice, we heard a lot about the initiatives that the Minister has taken. They are commendable.

However, one of the major issues that has erupted since those hearings—the issue of the CJC and its funding—continues to be a concern. I asked questions during the hearing about what appeared to be disproportionate impacts of the approximately \$2m reduction in the CJC budget. Even to this day, I still cannot understand why the cut of about \$2m would have such an expansive impact on the CJC's operations. The Estimates Committee B process has expedited what has resulted in the last day or so, that is, the establishment of the inquiry into the CJC. In part, the results of that inquiry will—

Mr Fouras: Do you think the two events are related?

Mrs CUNNINGHAM: No, I do not, but I think that one was used perhaps to expedite the other.

In relation to Police and Corrective Services—I again raised my concerns about the expenditure of money and where that money is going to come from for the weapons legislation. Those questions were not able to be answered by the Minister, not because the Minister is at fault but because this is legislation that is being foisted on us primarily by the Federal Government. If all the promised moneys do not materialise from the Feds, it would be assumed that the State Government would be required to fund the implementation of the weapons legislation. The cost of that implementation will be high. The community feeling about that legislation is certainly divided. It is one of the most divisive issues that I have seen for a long time. It would be a grossly inappropriate request if the people of this State were asked to fund a Federal shortfall for legislation that they did not invite.

With regard to police numbers—I reinforce the concerns that have already been expressed. In the last couple of elections, our community has addressed the issue of law and order. Members on both sides of the Chamber have made clear statements about the need for increased police numbers. Those promises need to be fulfilled and fulfilled quite visibly. Concerns about speed cameras have already been outlined. I have received quite a number of letters from people in my electorate who are worried that the speed camera issue, rather than being primarily for safety, will be a revenue-raising exercise. I hope that that is not the case.

With regard to Emergency Services and Sport—I am sure that other members will raise the issue of the funding of the helicopter service in our region. There are great distances to be covered in country

Queensland. The helicopter service is important. At the moment the community is being asked to bear a great deal of that funding.

There is one other issue that I wish to raise. It relates to country Queensland. I refer to the recreational camps that are run by the Government. I gather from the Minister's answer that there is a possibility that they may be considered for privatisation or sale. That would be a most regrettable step. Country Queensland children have minimal access to recreational opportunities to develop personally and to develop their sporting skills. They need to be able to access those low-cost, good facilities, and they are very good facilities. They need to be maintained for our communities and our children so that they can get away and have a great time of refreshment and enjoyment while developing themselves socially and emotionally. I suggest that the Government retain the recreational camps.

Hon. R. J. GIBBS (Bundamba) (4.16 p.m.): I wish to raise a number of matters relevant to the Estimates debate. Firstly, I believe that the racing industry is becoming very much aware that it has a Minister who has no idea of the industry that he represents but, more importantly, is not going to deliver on a number of the funding undertakings that he gave, particularly in the lead-up to the Mundingburra by-election. This leads me to the sort of representation that the honourable member for Mundingburra is making on behalf of his constituency.

The people of Townsville are still waiting for harness racing to be reintroduced in Townsville. It is simply not going to happen, because there was no funding whatsoever in the Budget for it. If it were to take place, I believe that the industry needs to be well aware of the Minister's reply to one of my questions during the Estimates committee hearing. He stated that, if it should take place, it will be funded by the harness racing industry itself. That simply means that they all need to be aware that every club in Queensland, that is, Albion Park, Rocklea, Rockhampton—all clubs—will be paying by way of a dramatic slashing of prize money. It is interesting to note that the members of the Harness Racing Board—the board appointed by this Minister—are divided and split on the issue. So the Minister is now in conflict with the board which he appointed.

Another interesting point is the mooted privatisation of the Queensland TAB. All members of this Parliament should have grave

concerns about that because, on my calculations, it would simply mean that there would be something like 80 race clubs in this State which would go to the wall, because shareholders of a privatised TAB are simply not going to subsidise country racing or support it in any way, unlike the Government. I say this from my time on both sides of the Chamber. When we were in Government, we supported clubs that simply could not compete. Privatisation would also mean that TAB services in many country areas throughout the State would suffer.

The same scepticism applies to the undertaking given by the very same Minister, Mr Cooper, that the greyhound club on the north side of Brisbane would be resurrected. There was no funding in the Budget for that. The Minister was not prepared to respond to a question on the subject. This left the committee with every indication that no funding will be forthcoming. That simply means that the resurrection of greyhound racing on the north side of Brisbane—which I still do not favour, because it will mean that the club will not be able to compete, and it will mean less prize money for other clubs—will not take place.

One of the major questions to which the Minister was unable to respond was the issue of pay television, which has the potential to be the biggest thing to happen to racing in this country in the last 200 years. It is interesting to note that the Minister was not only unable to answer the question but seemed unwilling to address the question of why he has not made the clubs that have signed the private deals—the so-called confidential deals with Sky Channel—produce the documentation and the contracts that they have signed.

It comes down to a concern that I had when in Government—and I was always supported in that concern by the then Opposition and now supported by this Government—that is, that the Queensland Turf Club is holding the rest of the Queensland racing industry to ransom by its own greed and lust to return to the folds of power and running of the racing industry in Queensland. At the same time it is holding a gun to the heads of the rest of the clubs throughout this State through its own private deal with Sky Channel. It will not make public the details of that deal. It refuses to make them available even to the Minister of the day. It is high time for this Government to take the initiative, to go to the Queensland Turf Club and all the clubs who have signed privacy agreements and to say that it wants copies of them. If those clubs are not prepared to deliver, the Government

should legislate in the Parliament to make those clubs put their hands up. The Opposition would certainly support that. In simple terms, if the Minister does not take that sort of hard stance with a number of those clubs, the reality is that we will see a racing industry in the not-too-distant future that will be involved in a debacle identical to that we are now seeing between the ARL and Super League.

I turn now to the Minister's continuation of the deliberate untruth of Labor leaving the Racing Development Fund in debt. The bottom line is that, when Labor took office, we inherited a debt of \$72m. We reduced that to \$32m over the period that we were in Government. Had it not been for the former National Party Government, Mr Cooper would have an additional \$10m per year to use throughout the racing industry in this State. I will not attack people who are no longer here to defend themselves; that is not my go. However, I will say that the largesse that was practised by the previous Government was a disgrace.

Time expired.

Mr CARROLL (Mansfield) (4.22 p.m.): This was my first opportunity to be involved in the Estimates committee process. I found it quite acceptable. I think that there was ample opportunity for the press to be present and to record or to take note of the proceedings. Overall, the Budget that we considered, and particularly that part examined by Estimates Committee B, is a Budget about delivering promises. I think the people of Queensland can be very pleased with what has been presented to them by this Government. There has been a positive response from all sections of the community and from the departments that we examined, except for the CJC and the Local Government Commissioner. I shall return to those shortly. I am pleased to say that, in the community, there is a very positive response from private business entrepreneurs for what they see as a Budget that will stimulate and allow for economic growth in this State. I was particularly impressed with the opportunity that our Government found for providing extra money for Legal Aid and for the Director of Public Prosecutions.

Turning to the question of the Criminal Justice Commission's budget, I found it difficult to understand and peculiar that the time spent on examining the Estimates of the CJC was two out of three hours, yet in reality it is only one fourteenth of the Minister's budget. Although the two are not necessarily connected, I am glad that the inquiry was

announced yesterday by this Government. That inquiry was an election promise and was always contemplated. I believe that some of the answers to questions put by the Estimates committee to the Minister and the Chairman of the Criminal Justice Commission revealed a situation that, I expect, prompted the decision to be made earlier than it may otherwise have been. It appears to me that it is time that there was an examination of the matters that were mentioned in Parliament on 13 September by Mr Grice and on 18 September in the Estimates committee public hearing.

In my belief, it is a great pity that the chairman of the CJC was apparently unable to follow the Budget procedures that are followed by all other departmental heads. We had the unhappy spectacle of the CJC Chairman coming into a public hearing of an Estimates committee and virtually saying, "I wasn't going to follow", or "I couldn't follow the processes that others followed." It was a pity that the Police Service was also apparently brought into disrepute and used almost as a scapegoat to justify a budget increase. It was necessary that the Budget involve some cuts for various departments. There is no doubt that the public see that the CJC has a job to do, but a review is due and, at first glance, there is no reason why it should not be subject to budget cuts in common with other departments.

I was pleased to see funding for victims of crime has been increased. The Government is doing what it can to ease the pain of those people. I believe that we have to bring in a system whereby criminals are made to pay for the damage that they cause.

I was very pleased to see the topic of enhancement of a computer database for comparative sentences in the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions. I hope that that can be the subject of a thorough examination within the next year or two.

I was pleased to be able to flag my concerns about the growth in the number and quantity of gambling devices in this State. We heard only recently the comments of a Victorian judge who had the difficult job of sentencing a lady caught in a web of gambling addiction.

The debt collection problem for the Department of Emergency Services was another concern.

Time expired.

Hon. M. J. FOLEY (Yeronga)
(4.27 p.m.): I thank the Chairperson of Estimates Committee B, the member for

Gympie, Mr Len Stephan, and the staff: research director, Ms Karen Sampford; research officer, Ms Meg Hoban; executive assistant, Ms Maree Lane. It is significant that the majority report of Estimates Committee B contained a number of references that were significantly critical of aspects of the Budget. I refer to page 3 of the Estimates Committee B report, which states—

"The Committee expresses concern that any loss of the Commission's independence"—

that is referring to the Anti-Discrimination Commission—

"could result in a reduction of accessibility by the community."

I ask the Attorney-General to take note that that was the majority view of the committee.

Similarly, I draw the Committee's attention to the reference at page 4 of the report, which states—

"The Committee expresses concern that no budget provision has been made to increase the number of District and Supreme Court judges from the 1995-96 number of 53, to reflect the five additional District and Supreme Court judges pledged by the Coalition before the 1995 election."

That is another broken promise. We are still a judicial quintet short of a bench in respect of the Government's approach to appointments.

It is puzzling to note that the Government can find fully \$6m to put away in the Budget for the holding of a referendum for an Upper House, yet it quibbles over money necessary for important work such as fighting corruption by the Criminal Justice Commission. Similarly, I draw the attention of the Committee to the passage at page 4 of the committee's report, which states—

"The Committee expresses concern that the cut in funding for training for justices of the peace/Magistrates Courts in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities may result in less opportunity for indigenous participation in the administration of justice."

I know that the Attorney-General wants to wind back the justice of the peace reforms introduced by my predecessor, but I do draw to the attention of the Committee that in remote areas, in Aboriginal and Islander communities, it is of vital importance that there should be opportunities for people to train to obtain justice of the peace (Magistrates Court) qualifications.

The Honourable the Attorney-General need only go to the Torres Strait and to the far-flung parts of Cape York to see the vital importance of allowing indigenous participation in the administration of justice.

Let me turn to the statement of reservations by the Opposition members. The cuts to the budget of the Criminal Justice Commission are deeply disturbing. On the evidence, the budget cuts will compromise the ability of the CJC to combat corruption. The alternative explanation offered by the Minister that those savings could be achieved through corporate services cuts is a bogus explanation. It is quite false, and demonstrably false. Indeed, it is so false that the Minister did not even have the temerity to raise it with the Criminal Justice Commission at any point prior to the announcement of the budget. So there was no expression of concern by the Minister to the Criminal Justice Commission about the corporate services spending. That has been advanced as a pretext after the event.

There is a broken promise in respect of the extra \$1m for victim support services. Although that extra funding was promised by Mr Beanland, it has not been delivered. I draw attention to the most disturbing aspects in relation to procedural matters. The absence of televising represented a change of heart in the majority of the committee. There has been a disgraceful attack on committee witness Frank Clair by the Attorney-General and by the Premier. However, the most extraordinary thing was that the Minister did not read his own answer to the committee delivered on 17 September in which it is stated that, on the advice of the CJC, there was "significant corruption of police by criminal elements". The Minister expressed himself to be "surprised" and "staggered" when he heard of that in the public hearing, although he himself had provided that information fully a day before. Indeed, he was so surprised that he had not even advised the Police Minister. It was a dereliction of duty by the Minister.

Time expired.

Hon. M. D. VEIVERS (Southport—Minister for Emergency Services and Minister for Sport) (4.32 p.m.): I rise to thank all those involved in the conduct of Estimates Committee B by which the financial administration of the Department of Emergency Services and the Office of Sport and Recreation was examined vigorously.

Numerous individuals put in many hours of work to ensure the objectives of the committee were achieved. There is no doubt that accountability for one's actions are of

considerable importance and there is no doubt that financial accountability to the people of Queensland through the parliamentary Estimates committee procedure is of paramount importance. To ensure financial accountability to the people of Queensland, many long and arduous hours are spent in preparation for the committee. Regrettably, often the dedicated efforts of the many individuals involved in the procedure is not recognised or is not given adequate credit.

The Department of Emergency Services and the Office of Sport and Recreation operates on a budget in excess of \$500m and employs more than 4,500 people as well as looks after something like 70,000 to 80,000 volunteers. With a change of Government comes a change in priorities and, with that change of priorities, the amount and direction of funding differs from that of previous funding arrangements of previous Governments. It is a priority of this Government to improve emergency service delivery and to encourage the development of sport and recreation at all levels throughout the State. The Government's policy objectives have been reflected in a 10.3 per cent budget increase for fire services and a 10.3 per cent increase for ambulance services.

This financial year, more than \$68m in sport and recreation programs and facilities will be provided—a \$1.1m increase on the last financial year. This \$1.1m increase indicates the importance that the Government places on sport and recreation and the corresponding promotion of Queensland's social and economic development.

The funding increases to the Fire Service and the Ambulance Service will be directed to areas that will achieve improved emergency services delivery. The Government is committed to increasing firefighter numbers by 135 over three years and the provision of new firefighting equipment and other things. The provision of an efficient and effective ambulance service is also a priority of this Government. With that in mind, 33 additional staff will be employed with 14 of those new staff being ambulance officers. To further enhance ambulance service delivery, the budget has allowed for an expansion of the paramedic program.

There is no doubt that, prior to the holding of the Estimates committee, departmental and committee staff worked many late nights. I give my personal thanks to the director-general, Mr John Hocken, and the Executive Director of the Office of Sport and Recreation, Roger Plastow, for their enormous effort and

contributions to the Estimates committee. I also give my thanks to the Commissioner for the Ambulance Service, Dr Gerry FitzGerald and to the Acting Commissioner of the Fire Service at the time, Mike Hall, for their tremendous contribution to the Estimates debate.

To my ministerial staff and my departmental executive directors and other staff, I extend my very real thanks for their valuable assistance. I also thank my personal secretary, Mrs Darlene Heenan, who worked very many late nights with the rest of my personal staff getting everything together and making sure that everything fitted the bill. They do a great job. I must also thank the staff of Hansard and the attendants because as they moved out of this Chamber into the other Chamber, it became more difficult to do things. We really appreciate it. I know that now and then we mumble, but Hansard seems to get it all down and get it right, which is amazing. To the Government and Opposition members of the committees—

Mr Palaszczuk: Is this a valedictory speech?

Mr VEIVERS: I say to the member to take the thanks while I am nice and sweet because one of these days I might not be as kosher. I thank the members of the committee for their vigorous questioning, especially the member for Rockhampton, and also the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Jim Elder. I also congratulate the Chairman of the Committee, the member for Gympie, Mr Len Stephan, on handling a difficult situation because we were really outnumbered. Also, the member for Mansfield, Frank Carroll, asked me the most difficult questions—actually more difficult than those asked by Mr Schwarten. They kept up our concentration. I also thank the Independent member for Gladstone.

Time expired.

Mr SCHWARTEN (Rockhampton) (4.37 p.m.): I thank the Minister for saying "thank you". I join in giving my appreciation to those associated with this process, most particularly to the staff, Karen Sampford, Meg Hoban and Maree Lane, who was the executive assistant. In common with the Minister, I also acknowledge the effort that the public servants put into this process. I do not think that it does them any harm, but in terms of the hours that they put in, most of which is overtime for which they are not paid, they probably argue that it does not do them a lot of good, either. Having worked in that process from a ministerial office, I appreciate that work

and I lend my support for the views that the Minister expressed about their commitment. Hansard and the attendants covered the process admirably well.

The Opposition compiled a dissenting report in this case over a number of issues. They were largely to do with the nature of the unsatisfactory answers that were obtained via the questioning. The most telling of those were in response to questions asked about rural fire brigades. It was revealed that this year some \$1.5m less would be spent on rural fire brigades than there was last year. I have to say that a most unsatisfactory answer that was forthcoming indicated that the \$1.5m would be picked up by levies struck on local authorities. Let me say that the issue is starting to burn—pardon the pun—because I notice that yesterday in the *Gold Coast Bulletin*, which is circulated right in the Minister's backyard, an article stated that 20 rural fire brigades in that area are not very happy with the Government's attitude towards rural fire brigades. I trust that the Minister takes heed of that article and that he at least will fund rural fire brigades to the level at which the Labor Government funded them last year, which was around \$8m. The Minister's own advice is that he should fund rural fire brigades to \$10.5m.

The member for Gladstone made reference to the Helicopter Rescue Service. Her question was also evaded by the Minister and some of the departmental staff. The Minister knows full well, as I do—even though he did not make the guarantee, which was made by the then Opposition Leader, now the Premier—that it was promised that, should the coalition win Government, \$1.5m would be paid to the Rockhampton Helicopter Rescue Service and to the Mackay Helicopter Rescue Service. That promise was put in black and white and was well reported in the media. In fact, both rescue services indicated that they understood that that would be the case. The Mayor of Rockhampton received a letter from the Premier which stated that that would be forthcoming.

Quite frankly, the mumbo jumbo that came from the Minister and others when trying to explain wet leasing did not wash.

Mr Veivers: But it was right.

Mr SCHWARTEN: It was not correct. The document that was taken to Treasury on 22 June states that the coalition election commitments include capital funding for helicopter rescue services at Rockhampton and Mackay. Let the record show that there is no doubt whatsoever that that commitment

was made. I feel sorry for the Minister that he has not been able to convince "Tweetie", the Honourable the Treasurer——

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The member will refer to the member by her proper title.

Mr SCHWARTEN: It was a slip of the tongue. The Treasurer's canary yellow suit overcame me for a moment. The fact is that Treasury was not forthcoming with that funding and the Minister is left with an explanation to make. I do not hold him responsible; I hold the Premier and the Treasurer responsible because they did not honour that commitment. I assure them that I intend to keep them honest in that regard.

On page 6 of the dissenting report, there is a note about the hiring of a consultant to review the Ambulance Service. I think that the Minister erred in that regard. I am not commenting on whether or not Lyn Staib did a satisfactory job, but I do say that she should have gone through a competitive process in order to win the contract from the Ambulance Service.

Lastly, I think it was a great failure of the whole system that there was no media coverage of the Estimates committees per se. I believe that those committees should be televised, as is the Parliament.

Time expired.

Hon. D. E. BEANLAND (Indooroopilly—Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (4.42 p.m.): In rising to speak in this debate, I firstly thank the Director-General, Mr Kevin Martin, his departmental officers and my own ministerial staff for their assistance and support in the preparation and presentation of the department's budget processes. I also thank the other two accountable officers who come within my portfolio area, the Electoral Commissioner and his staff and the Public Trustee and his officers.

In looking at the report and the reservations which were tabled today, I notice that they contain a list of matters that have already been answered. Quite frankly, it is a bit of a farce for Opposition members to simply say that they do not like the answers they have been given. They do not have the ability to come up with other issues to list in the reservations, so we have what is largely a repeat of the points that Opposition members wanted to make, and have made, in relation to questions on the Notice Paper. They asked questions prior to Estimates committees sitting, and quite fulsome answers were supplied. Then they come forth with these points in the reservations. Quite frankly, it begs

the question of whether or not they have the ability to come up with some other issues, because these reservations are a continuation of that debate and do not in fact raise issues that were not answered. This is a recycling of questions in what was, for the first time, a fully open and accountable process, unlike that held in previous years when Ministers did in fact dodge questions.

A number of points have been made in relation to the Justices of the Peace Program as outlined on page 3 of the reservations in relation to the Department of Justice. In the answer to a question, it was pointed out that only an appropriate number of people will be trained. In this case, training for justices of the peace (Magistrates Courts) has been completed in 31 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities throughout Queensland. The communities of Mornington Island and Napranum are currently receiving training. Negotiations are continuing in relation to the training of applicants at Doomadgee. The reduction relates to the number of trainees—which is 30—who still require training in these centres. All other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities have received the appropriate training, which includes 159 persons trained in 1995-96. Most of these appointments have been approved since I have been the Minister. We have been pleased to keep the process running.

One is not going to put through 159 justices of the peace (Magistrates Courts) every year in these areas, because that means that it goes on indefinitely. The point is that that is an appropriate number to have in each of these communities; we are training the appropriate number of people. Therefore, it really makes a mockery of the whole exercise to start repeating the issue.

The Alternative Dispute Resolution Program is another issue that was raised. An answer was forthcoming which again outlined the position fully: there was no destruction of the Alternative Dispute Resolution Program. The Opposition does not like the fact that the Government is going to extend these services throughout the State not only through the courts but also through community justice programs. Not only people in Brisbane but also people throughout the State will be eligible for these services for the first time. I know the Opposition does not like it, because it is an extension of the service. Of course, we saw an appalling Alternative Dispute Resolution Program during the Labor Party's time in Government. Little work was done in this area, apart from a number of points being raised from time to time about community

youth conferencing, victim/offender conferencing and so on. In 1993-94, \$22,000 was allocated by the then Minister, and 19 conferences were conducted at a cost of \$1,184 each. When the member for Yeronga was the Minister, only 22 conferences were undertaken at a cost of \$6,045 per conference; an overall outlay of \$133,000.

I see also that the saga of the Supreme Court Library has raised its head again. Ample funding has been allocated to the Supreme Court Library, which this year will receive an estimated \$925,000. That is slightly more than the funding provided in the 1995-96 financial year. In no way will that be cutting back the operations of the library. These moneys are coming from the solicitors' trust accounts. Of course, as at 30 June 1996, the cash held by the Supreme Court Library Committee was in excess of \$1.2m. Of course, on it goes.

Time expired.

Hon. J. P. ELDER (Capalaba—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (4.48 p.m.): I will keep my remarks to those parts of the dissenting report which dealt with Sport. I must say that throughout the Estimates process I was particularly concerned about the evasiveness of some Ministers and the fact that they had to rely continually on staff to provide me with information which I would have thought would have related directly to their portfolios.

One thing that concerned me significantly in regard to the Sports Program was that, as the Minister said, the department had changed priorities with the change of Government. Certainly the Office of Sport and Recreation has changed; it no longer has the Youth component, which has gone to the Department of Families, Youth and Community Care. However, there is a significant increase in salaries, wages and related payments in the Office of Sport and Recreation, as shown in the Budget. I had estimated approximately a 36 per cent increase, and I admit that I was wrong. It happened to be a 40 per cent increase. That worried me. I asked the Minister about the increase, but he could not relate the details.

I have received the answer to my questions on this issue, and I find that the increase is largely due to the costs of restructuring the program following the amalgamation of the department and the transfer of funds from the former Department of Tourism, Sport and Youth to the Office of Sport and Recreation. I cannot understand how it will cost the Minister more to deliver a program that has a narrower focus than it did

when we were in Government. That question was not adequately answered at the Estimates committee, nor has it been adequately answered in the answers that I have received to questions on notice.

In fact, when one looks at the increases, one finds that they are significant—\$2m for salaries, wages and related payments—yet there has been no increase in funding for grants and no increase at all in funding for sports in this year's Budget. In fact, in some areas there have been cuts. However, the Government is doing this under the guise of increasing the size of the department—

Mr Schwarten: In other words, less money for kids in sport.

Mr ELDER: And more money—

Mr Schwarten: For bureaucrats.

Mr ELDER: More money for bureaucrats with a narrower focus. That would have to be the point that received the most condemnation during the Estimates hearings, particularly as it relates to sport. If there has been \$500m in cuts across departments to meet this efficiency requirement in the Budget, I would like to know where the cuts will be made in sport and recreation. The only place cuts can be made is in respect of grants to kids and sporting organisations.

Of greater worry are the high-priority programs, particularly community centre programs, that we had in place for high-need areas, such as Riverview, Beenleigh and Glenala. For areas which needed those centres and areas that the previous Minister had pro-actively supported because the kids there needed these facilities, the funds have been withdrawn. Glenala high school is still under consideration.

Mr Palaszczuk: The Minister has promised it.

Mr ELDER: If the Minister has promised it, I would be pleased if Glenala high school gains the centre it deserves. Some interesting information arising from the Estimates process concerned the Caloundra sports centre and the Toowoomba aquatic centre. I ask the Minister: is Glenala going ahead?

Mr Veivers: You're doing the talking.

Mr ELDER: The point is that high-need areas in Labor constituencies have been rolled under this program. The Government even rolled the sports centre at Cooloola, which is in the electorate of the member for Gympie. I know that is creating a lot of pain for that member. High-need areas were rolled in favour of areas such as Caloundra and others.

Caloundra received a \$1m grant for a centre. Toowoomba received \$750,000 for an aquatic centre. The Labor high-need areas have missed out completely. In respect of Statewide sport development programs and community development programs, there will be less money for a smaller number of communities and associations. That is reflected in the Ministerial Program Statements.

The area of greatest concern is the recreation camps. By the end of this year, the Minister will recommend the selling and privatising of recreation camps in this State. That is what will happen at the end of this year. I will take an interjection from the Minister. I challenge him to tell me now that he will not sell or privatise recreation camps.

Time expired.

Hon. T. R. COOPER (Crows Nest—Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Racing) (4.52 p.m.): Five minutes is not long in which to get through all of the matters raised in the debate, but I want to try to cover as many issues as I can. Firstly, I will address the important issue of police numbers. The budgeted 1996-97 increase of 139 additional police is a net figure comprised of 244 new recruits which accounts for replacement of attrition and growth. In addition, there is a projected increase of 166 people rejoining the service. That adds up to a gross increase of 410 officers.

The shadow Minister referred to projected separations of between 3.5 per cent and 4 per cent, or between 224 and 256 police leaving the service. Even if the honourable member is right, that leaves a projected net increase of between 154 and 186 officers. That really makes our projected increase of 139 officers more than reasonable and well and truly achievable. I acknowledge the critical need to achieve increases in police numbers. Every member in this place is interested in that. That is why we introduced the 10-year plan. That is why we are going for 9,100 officers by the year 2005 versus the Opposition's 7,740 officers. We have budgeted for 2,780 extra officers as opposed to the Opposition's 1,420 extra officers. That is 1,360 more officers than members opposite provided. We have demonstrated that that goal is eminently achievable. That is the way we are going.

As to unspent funding on police capital works—I note the Opposition's complaint that some \$19m worth of capital works were rolled over from the previous financial year. I explain yet again that that rollover is principally attributable to the continuation of programs

which may span a number of years. However, the Labor Government's record shows that its 1995-96 police capital works budget amounted to some \$37m, of which \$12.4m was a carryover from the previous year. The 1994-95 capital works expenditure was \$3m, with \$22m rolled over. In 1993-94, \$11.6m was carried over from the previous year out of the total of \$22.8m. In 1992-93, the total budget was \$26m, with a rollover component of \$10m. The Labor Government set the scene. We want to move away from that. We want to spend the money on something of value and get the job done. That is what we are doing.

As to the resource implications of the Weapons Amendment Act—there was criticism in the report with respect to the administration of the gun buyback scheme. The honourable member for Waterford said that it was highly unsatisfactory. I ask the honourable member for Waterford, as a member of the committee, what he would consider to be an appropriate response. Is he suggesting that we should cut the police budget and hurt other vitally important areas? That is what he wants. He is not going to get that from me; I am not going to do that. Or does the honourable member want administration to take precedence over operational policing or recruiting? That would be ridiculous. As I outlined in my answer, obviously we want more reasonable funding for the administration of the scheme from the Commonwealth. That is what the Opposition should support. The Opposition should get behind that. We need an extra \$8m. Then we could do the job better.

Mr Barton interjected.

Mr COOPER: What else can I do if the Feds are not going to cough up at this point? We can only do the best we can. It is as simple as that. That is what one would call an honest answer. We are still going for more funding. If the Opposition wants to help us, it should do so. We would welcome the help.

As to regional police budgets—the suggestion that service delivery at the operational police level may be diminished is rubbish. The regions will be the main beneficiaries of the 139 additional police, with some 102 officers expected to be posted to regional areas. Funding will also be provided to enable a further 84 police positions to be civilianised, mainly in communications rooms throughout the State. Again, that is where we are heading. We are trying to get them out into the regions as well as to places such as Logan—an area of which we are fully aware.

As to speed cameras and revenue—I point out to the committee that revenue questions are not part of the Estimates process. Nevertheless, I am more than happy to respond. Members opposite say that it is a revenue grab, but it is not. Even though revenue is certainly estimated to rise, it is about saving lives, cutting down injuries and preventing people from being injured and maimed and having to undergo very expensive, sad and tragic rehabilitation programs. That is what it is all about and it is what the Travelsafe Committee was driving at. We are about trying to save lives and reduce costs so that we can devote any extra revenue to education programs and programs that will prevent speeding, accidents and injuries to people. That is the constructive and responsible approach that we are taking.

As always happens, my time allocation is running out. There are plenty of things I would like to add with respect to Corrective Services and Racing. I thank those people involved—Hansard and everyone else—as well as some of those on the committee who did not do a bad job. At least members opposite were civil enough to ask fairly sensible questions.

Time expired.

Ms SPENCE (Mount Gravatt) (4.58 p.m.): I intend to make a few brief comments on the Estimates committee process, because I had the opportunity to be involved with three Estimates committees this year. For Opposition members in this Chamber the Estimates committees are a very important vehicle for allowing members to gain an appreciation of the Budget.

Having observed quite a number of Ministers appearing before the Estimates committee this year—I think seven or eight appeared before the committees on which I served—I can say that the success of the committee was very much dependent on the ability of the Minister who is before the committee. Most of the committees were very successful and the Ministers who appeared before the committees adopted a very positive spirit and answered the questions they were asked. One or two Ministers were determined to filibuster and avoid answering questions at all costs. I am not going to name names, but those committees before whom those Ministers appeared were not as successful.

In the very brief time I have left to me, I would like to say a few things about the Office of Consumer Affairs in the Attorney-General's portfolio. That office has experienced a severe cutback in its corporate affairs budget this year. The budget was reduced by half. We

learned that there was no reduction in the number of people employed in that office. However, the positions have all been downgraded in order to accommodate that budget shortfall.

The Opposition is generally satisfied with the direction of the Office of Consumer Affairs, which is a continuation of the direction that the office was taking under the Labor Government. However, we are concerned about a number of issues. The first is the telephone system. I and other members I know get constant complaints from members of the public who cannot get through to the Office of Consumers Affairs via the phone because it is always engaged. They are always put on hold. I am not saying that this is the fault of the present Government or the present Minister, but it is something that we are going to have to confront and improve on in that office. I note that there was no money allocated this year to do that. I hope that is something that the Minister will look to do in the next year.

I turn now to the issue of education. The Office of Consumer Affairs has dismantled the education and marketing branch and halved the amount of money spent on educational purposes for the office. What does this mean to Queenslanders? In the past, the office was a valuable tool in presenting training workshops in the community—in clubs, etc.—to provide valuable information sessions.

Time expired.

Report adopted.

Estimates Committee C

Report No. 1

The CHAIRMAN: The question is—

"That Report No. 1 of Estimates Committee C be adopted."

Hon. V. P. LESTER (Keppel) (5.01 p.m.): I am very happy to report on the hearings of Estimates Committee C into the Department of Training and Industrial Relations and the Education Department. We wish to thank the two Ministers and their staff very much for their attendance and their cooperation. The research staff of the committee—Louise Hepworth, Andrea Musch and Maureen Barnes—all worked long hours and worked hard to ensure that the hearings of Estimates Committee C were a success. I thank those members who attended—Mr Bredhauer, the Deputy Chairman, Mr Braddy, Ms Spence, Mr Hegarty and Mr Tanti—for their cooperation. Two other members of

Parliament called in: the member for Archerfield, who has just come into the Chamber, and the member for Bulimba. They made worthwhile contributions as well.

An Opposition member: And the member for Mackay.

Mr LESTER: The member for Mackay, Mr Mulherin—who I was just about to come to—made some comments in relation to issues that affected the Mackay area.

The hearings went like clockwork. Generally speaking, there was good cooperation all round. There were lots of searching questions and detailed answers. However, we should not lose sight of the fact that we need to examine just where we are going with Estimates committees. I believe that they are a great way of giving members of Parliament an opportunity to ask those questions that they need to ask. This applies not just to the members of the committees. The fact that other members of Parliament can come in and ask questions is a very desirable way to go, and it is working. Perhaps we need to do a little bit more work to ensure that it works better, but generally speaking the progress we have made since the inception of these committees has been reasonably worth while and will continue to improve if we are all prepared to learn from the experience.

I want to note a few issues covered in the hearings. In terms of workplace health and safety, \$1.23m will be allocated over three years to continue the employment of workplace health and safety inspectors to improve compliance with construction industry project notification requirements. That is a worthwhile allocation. An amount of \$0.45m will be allocated over two years to improve a pilot program using partnerships to promote industry self-management of workplace health and safety issues through the development of industry codes of practice, self-audit tools for targeted industries and accreditation of private workplace health and safety service providers. That is very commendable. The more we work to lessen accidents in the workplace, the more productive our nation will be and the more we will be able to compete on the international market.

The committee sought justification for a major focus on compliance and fraud within workers' compensation. I will not go into all the issues now, but work is being done in that regard. Perhaps more work needs to be done. Throughout the length and breadth of our nation, and indeed internationally, fraud is a constant issue that Parliaments must deal

with. In relation to TAFE—the Minister was asked why TAFE had underexpended a fixed capital budget by more than \$16m. The Minister went on to answer those particular issues. The field of education will be dealt with by other members, but the committee asked the Minister about what appeared to be a 35 per cent cut in the amount of money allocated for the Computers in Schools Program. A departmental officer said that the program was almost complete.

Time expired.

Mr BREDHAUER (Cook) (5.06 p.m.): I rise to speak on the report of Estimates Committee C. I will confine myself substantially to those Estimates relating to the Education portfolio. The first thing that should be placed on record is the Minister's response to my first question in relation to the Education Department's proportion of the \$500m in Budget cuts that had been indicated by the Treasurer. The Estimates committee report identifies that the Minister indicated that the \$53m which was coming through Education's share of the \$500m in cuts was to be made up of the following areas: occupational stress management, \$600,000; school uniform allowance, \$29,330,000; NALSAS, \$4,048,000; behaviour management/school discipline, \$3,134,000; Supporting People with Disabilities, \$14,800,000; Flying Start, \$5,064,000; Exporting Queensland Campaign, \$15,000; Say No to Drugs, \$300,000; and cultural heritage renewal, \$529,000. I note also that the Minister, in answering that question, identified that some of those programs had been cut and then been replaced with other programs. It appears to me to be a bit of a pea and thimble trick that Treasury and the different portfolio areas are involved in. But there are significant areas which have been cut in this budget.

I want to talk now about the reservations which I and other non-Government members of the committee indicated. Probably one of the most notable features of this Budget in a global sense has been the series of broken promises that has characterised the Budget, particularly in regard to the seven new or increased taxes that the Treasurer has introduced. Education is another of those areas which is characterised by a significant number of broken election promises which I will identify as I go through. Firstly, I want to make a comment about the statements by the public servants to the committee about the likelihood of the Government being able to make any savings on school cleaning throughout the remainder of 1996.

It is not to the credit of the Minister that he and the Premier, after the school cleaners issue was to all intents and purposes resolved, tried to save face on their backflip by arguing that \$30m would have to be saved by the school cleaners by the end of this year. That is demonstrably untrue. The public servants have in fact identified to the committee—and the Minister was eventually forced to own up to this fact—that there would be almost no savings in the Education budget. As I say, it was just an exercise by the Minister to try to cover his gaffe and mishandling of the school cleaners issue.

Prior to the last State election, the Minister promised that he would be doubling the number of guidance officers. He was quite specific in his terminology: he said that he would be doubling the number of guidance officers in Queensland schools in his first term in Parliament. He did not say "guidance officers and associated personnel". He identified that there are 349 guidance officers in Queensland, and both he and public servants who were addressing the Estimates committee attested to the fact that it would be impossible for this Government to honour its election promise and to double the number of guidance officers in Queensland schools, as it committed itself to doing. It was in fact a foolish promise, but now that the promise has been made, the current situation we have amounts to yet another broken election promise.

Another area about which I want to express concern is SIMS, the Statewide Network for Information and Management Systems, a computer system for administration in schools. In my view, there has been a deliberate attempt by the Government to bandy about different figures about how much it was going to spend on SIMS—on this computer management project. I identified six different figures the Government had given, and eventually the figure we got from the public servants was a different figure from anything in the Budget papers or the related documents produced by the Minister. I think it is an attempt by this Minister to hide the fact that this Government has cut the Computers in Schools Program by 35 per cent.

I want to mention Sunsmart. Sunsmart is an important health initiative in Queensland schools to encourage and educate children about the dangers of sun exposure in Queensland. It has been abolished. I also want to talk about the Minister's promise that, when he got rid of the school uniform

allowance, he would redistribute that money to schools. The Minister has once again reneged on that promise that he made to the P & Cs when he wrote to them, saying that he would give them back the money. He has taken away the money; it has been consumed by Treasury. The Minister will argue that the money comes back elsewhere, but the fact is that he broke his promise.

Time expired.

Mr HEGARTY (Redlands) (5.11 p.m.): At the outset, I would like to acknowledge my pleasure at being part of an Estimates committee on this occasion, my first year in the Parliament. I was very pleased with the way it was conducted, under the very able hand of the member for Keppel as chairman, and the cooperation of the members for Kedron, Mount Gravatt and Cook made it a very fruitful and productive period to draw out from the respective Ministers for Training and Industrial Relations and Education the highlights of their portfolios' budgets.

Firstly, in relation to the Training and Industrial Relations portfolio, I would like to point out that during the public hearings questions were asked of the Minister as to why the Division of Workplace Health and Safety was not actively enforcing its legislation by prosecuting poor-performing employers, as indicated by the fact that only 58 employers were prosecuted for serious breaches of the Act during 1994-95. The weapons of the armory of the Division of Workplace Health and Safety are not restricted to simply obtaining prosecutions under the Act. Critics focus upon 58 prosecutions for serious offences; however, they seem to forget or they choose to ignore that there are other enforcement and compliance measures used by the division. They do not mention that, during 1994-95, the division issued 2,751 warning notices, 2,706 improvement notices and 596 prohibition notices following the 2,036 investigations.

The real facts are that there were more than 6,000 actions against employers for workplace health and safety breaches, not the 58 focused on by some people. The figures for 1995-96 show a further improvement in the division's performance. During the last financial year, the number of warning notices issued increased to 3,677, while 3,573 improvement notices and 497 prohibition notices were issued. That is over 7,700 notices issued after more than 20,000 investigations and audits of workplaces across all industry sectors. That is a far different picture from that painted by some selfish people and groups.

The Inspection and Advisory Service Branch of the Division of Workplace Health and Safety has over 220 staff, including 77 support personnel and trainees. This is exactly the same total as last financial year. The existing 129 inspectors cover around 150,000 registered industrial and construction workplaces. Many of these locations include offices such as professional and clerical workplaces. The division has continued to increase the number of prosecutions in recent years and with the change in Government it will be able to achieve even greater improvements. The number of prosecutions does not reflect the true effort and value that this division is contributing to society. With over 20,000 field actions and 7,700 notices last financial year, this division is working hard to protect Queensland workers and the future of Queensland businesses.

It is true that in the Kennedy report Mr Des Knight, in his performance audit into the Division of Workplace Health and Safety, said that 132 policy holders were responsible for 30 per cent of workers' compensation claims. This figure has often been quoted by the opponents to the rescue package put forward by Mr Jim Kennedy to save the Workers Compensation Fund from the brink of disaster. What is not being said by those individuals and groups who have such a large and vested interest in the workers' compensation industry is that these 132 policy holders are some of the largest employers in the State who also pay approximately 30 per cent of the fund's premiums, and in all but one case received a merit bonus for a favourable claim-to-premium ratio. These employers are clearly not the unsafe employers that they are being made out to be.

I would like to conclude by mentioning that the new initiative of the airconditioning of schools in the Education budget above the 20th parallel will be a welcome and much-needed initiative for the children and teaching staff in that part of the country. I point out that those schools that will not have the capacity to fully fund the installation on a \$1 for every \$2 of Government funding will not be neglected; they will not be forgotten by the Minister. Certain options are being investigated to put that in train and they will benefit along with those communities that are a little more affluent.

Time expired.

Hon. P. J. BRADDY (Kedron) (5.16 p.m.): I would also like to congratulate Estimates Committee C. I believe that it was conducted in a good atmosphere and

everyone concerned tried to carry out their part well, including the Chair and the Ministers. Of course, the Government and the Opposition does not agree and there are some significant factors and details that arise from the process which confirm the differences between the Government and the Opposition, but the process is working and I believe that it will continue to work. It is encouraging to see that on both sides there is a real determination to make the process work.

In the short time available, I want to speak about some of the matters which I believe indicate the greatest problems in this Government department and Ministry. As I did in the Estimates committee, I will open with workplace health and safety. What has become apparent to us, after an examination of what is occurring in Queensland and in other States, is that we must do considerably better in this field. It does not just mean that there will be benefits in terms of the workers themselves, which of course is the most important thing, and efficiency for industry; if we do better in workplace health and safety, that will have a significant impact in relation to the claims being made under workers' compensation, which this Government has made such play about. Yet again we meet on the first day of this parliamentary sittings and we still do not see the legislation. It is now over three months since the Kennedy report was brought down and all we have heard is rhetoric.

In terms of workplace health and safety, what we know from other States is that when it has been seriously looked into, it has brought about such beneficial effects that the numbers of workers' compensation claims drop. It is disappointing to the Opposition that the Government has taken the road of bashing the worker by taking away workers' compensation rights and that it has been slow to act on the review of the workplace health and safety programs. In the committee report we see promises in that regard but insufficient activity.

I refer also to the information which became clearer in relation to the long-term unemployed. What we have seen from the Budget, and it was confirmed by the Estimates committee details, is that this Government really has no plan for the long-term unemployed. All we have heard from this Government is talk. Unemployment is a serious concern in this country. I see that today's *Courier-Mail* mentions the matter. We are now into the eighth month of this Government and unemployment is rising. Page 2 of today's *Courier-Mail* carries an

article headed "Job ads falling—ANZ." The article states—

"The ANZ Bank yesterday warned employment growth might not be sufficient to prevent the jobless rate topping 9 per cent.

The bank's chief economist . . . said the Federal Budget had not created any jobs boost and employers were disappointed . . ."

The Queensland Budget complemented the Federal Budget in this regard. But what do we see in relation to the figures? In Queensland, the number of job advertisements this month compared to last year, when we had Labor Governments federally and in Queensland, fell by 0.7 per cent. That was 9.1 per cent lower than at the same time last year. Under this Government, in its eighth month, unemployment has worsened. The Estimates prove that the Government does not really know how to handle it. Its vision is to do something in relation to industrial legislation—again, no action. The Government says it is going to wait until the Federal legislation is improved. If the Government thinks that that is the panacea and the answer, it has to move more quickly, because unemployment is rising and people are finding it even more difficult to find jobs. We do not agree with the Government's answer to the problem, but it has not even put it into place.

In relation to workers' compensation—despite the scare talk, the Estimates show that we have \$1.25 billion worth of assets still available in workers' compensation. Despite the Premier saying that perhaps by the end of this year it will be \$1 billion down, the figure is nothing like it—\$312m in deficit.

Time expired.

Ms WARWICK (Barron River) (5.21 p.m.): I rise to speak on an issue which was raised during the hearings of Estimates Committee C in relation to the Department of Training and Industrial Relations. It is an issue of importance not only to the Government but to all Queenslanders. I speak of the Government's industrial relations reforms, which will herald a new era of greater flexibility in which the focus of industrial relations will be where it belongs, that is, at the workplace and enterprise level. The reforms are about encouraging cooperation, which can only lead to better harmony, satisfaction, productivity and profitability for all. This new direction will be implemented through legislation which will shortly be brought into the Parliament. The legislation will harmonise with the Federal

Government's Workplace Relations Bill. Having complementary legislation will ensure that the reforms are effective and readily accessible to employers and employees. Whereas harmony is clearly desirable, the integrity of Queensland's industrial relations system will be maintained. It is important for Queenslanders to be aware that we will retain a strong and effective State industrial relations jurisdiction.

The Government's commitment to establishing an effective Queensland industrial relations framework which provides for a fair, balanced and truly flexible system includes: unfair dismissal procedures based on a fair go all round; freedom of choice, that is, maximum choice for workers and employers in setting workplace arrangements and conditions; a simplified award system which provides a safety net for employees; fair agreements underpinned by a set of guaranteed minimum conditions; a strong and independent umpire to assist parties in the making and keeping of agreements and to settle disputes; guaranteeing freedom of choice, through the abolition of preference provisions and compulsory unionism and removing restrictions on the establishment of unions at the enterprise level; and facilitating genuine enterprise bargaining between employers and their employees through non-union enterprise agreements and workplace agreements. Put simply, these reforms are all about cooperation and freedom of choice.

The Government has a strategy, which was outlined in the Budget and by the Honourable the Minister for Training and Industrial Relations during the Estimates hearings, which will ensure that businesses and workers are informed of the changes to the industrial relations legislation and of the new opportunities that will be available. This Government has allocated \$1.175m in the Budget to implement these changes. The allocation will fund a number of initiatives, including the establishment of an Office of the Employment Advocate. This body will advise employees and employers entering into workplace agreements and will ensure that all parties abide by those agreements. Other initiatives include the establishment of a Workplace Information Unit to promote and advise on enterprise-level industrial relations, particularly to small and medium businesses; to provide advice on workplace agreements and to promote a team culture within firms; and the implementation of strategies to promote the new industrial relations laws. This will help to ensure that the reforms achieve the goals of increased productivity in business and greater accountability for industrial

organisations. Another initiative is the establishment of a Work and Family Program, which will help employees effectively balance their work and family responsibilities through the development of mutually beneficial work practices.

I would like to congratulate the Honourable Minister, Mr Santoro, on initiating this funding. What this illustrates to all Queenslanders, including members opposite, is that when they were in Government they paid only lip-service to industrial relations reform. Clearly, true reform will be achieved only under a coalition Government.

Mr T. B. SULLIVAN (Chermside) (5.26 p.m.): Minister Quinn, Treasurer Sheldon and Premier Borbidge were always going to have a difficult task following the six record Education budgets under the leadership of Wayne Goss, Keith De Lacy and the Labor Education Minister. Although the coalition has provided adequate budget allocations in a number of areas, it has failed to live up to the promises that it made in June 1995 and February 1996. There are many such areas where the coalition's budget allocation fell well short of its promises. In the short time available to me, I will comment on some of these.

One glaring example is the provision—or non-provision—of guidance officers. This Parliament would recall that, prior to the State election, the Minister promised to double the number of guidance officers in Queensland schools. Yet the Minister told the Estimates Committee that, although there are 349 guidance officers currently employed in Queensland, the 1996-97 Budget provides for only an additional 38 guidance officers. The Minister might say, "But in talking to the schools, they said that they want a variety of additional resources. So we are actually going to provide family services, youth workers and some other teachers." That amounts to only 70 full-time equivalent teachers, which comes nowhere near doubling the 349 guidance officers throughout the State. We also have a problem in that there is a shortage of guidance officers in Australia, as members would be aware. Unfortunately, many Queensland-trained guidance officers are heading interstate. The people who are suffering the most are those in regional and remote areas. I would have thought that some of the National Party members of the coalition would be disappointed that that promise was not fulfilled.

Mr Palaszcuk: Their faces are frozen.

Mr T. B. SULLIVAN: Their faces are frozen, are they? I am not quite sure about that, but there is some disappointment being expressed in country areas.

The Minister told the Estimates committee that an additional 934 teachers are planned for this year's budget. That may appear to be a significant increase, but when one takes into account that the vast majority of these positions will simply fill in for enrolment growth, non-contact time and specific programs, such as behaviour management, one realises that the implications are that class sizes will certainly not decrease and will probably increase.

Mr Quinn: They didn't decrease in the six years under you, either.

Mr T. B. SULLIVAN: The Minister is wrong. There was a very slight decrease. One thing we did not do was what the Minister and the Treasurer did, that is, go around the State saying, "Class sizes are a major problem. We are going to have significant improvements. Trust us to bring this about." Some people did trust them. Unfortunately, they are not happy about what has occurred.

Providing adequate school transport has always been a difficult problem. The Minister told the Estimates committee that last year's \$96.7m has been increased to \$98.47m, which is less than a 2 per cent increase. He also added that there was no change in the policy. Yet in July last year the Minister indicated, especially to the non-State school sector, that significant additional funds would be extended to non-State school students, particularly in regional areas. There is great disappointment that this has not occurred. I await with interest the comments from those in the non-Government sector, particularly in the regional areas, who have been let down.

One of the most remarkable failures in this Budget is the scrapping of the \$2.9m Sunsmart Program. With Queensland having the highest death rate in the world for skin cancer, it is truly remarkable that a relatively cheap program of \$2.9m has been scrapped. To say that those funds have been rolled into the general allocation budget for schools is a cop-out, because the Minister and I both know that schools will not target the problem in the same way that Sunsmart has focused on it. It is most efficient to target schoolchildren in the early years. I know that the Health Minister will be very sorry for the increased cancer rates that will occur.

Budget Paper No. 2 foreshadowed a downtrend in funding for the education budget over the next two financial years. That is the

first time that there has been a downturn in the Education budget over the past seven years and it occurred when the coalition came to power. Certainly, the coalition does not give students and education the same high ranking that the Labor Government did. It is a shame that, in some of essential areas in which the coalition promised to provide increases, it did not deliver.

Time expired.

Mr TANTI (Mundingburra) (5.31 p.m.): It was very interesting to be involved in the Estimates committees and to see the differences between the two Ministers, Santo Santoro and Bob Quinn. It was interesting to examine the departments and how they were handled. The biggest disappointment was watching Mr Bredhauer scratching for questions, because the committee could have adjourned a lot earlier.

I thank Vince Lester for running the committee in a very, very good manner.

Mr Bredhauer: You didn't have enough questions to ask. Who was scratching for questions?

Mr TANTI: We had plenty of questions; we just wanted the member himself to make a fool of yourself. So we went along nice and steadily.

Everyone in the committee did a wonderful job. There was a good spirit in that committee.

Mr Palaszczuk: Come on. Get back to the Estimates.

Mr TANTI: I thank the honourable member. It forms a very good process—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr TANTI: Let me have my say, please.

I wish to thank all the staff involved, who did a wonderful job. Estimates Committee C dealt with Industrial Relations and Education. I refer to an issue of importance to this Government that was raised during that Estimates committee hearing, namely, the need to balance work and family responsibilities. That is an issue that will affect more and more Australians as the need to work as well as care for family members increases. As a result, an increasing number of people have dual roles in their home and work environments. It is the Government's goal to assist workers and employers to strike a balance between their work and family commitments.

Demographic, social and labour market trends have changed the nature of work and the profile of the workforce. The Australian

Bureau of Statistics released national data in June 1995 which showed that just over 60 per cent of two-parent families with dependent children had both parents in the labour force. Consistently, 1996 data shows that in Queensland nearly 58 per cent of all couples with dependants have both parents in the workforce. The data showed that 46 per cent of women with children under five were in the labour force, and 94 per cent of fathers and 65 per cent of mothers in two-parent families with dependent children were in the labour force.

I am confident that this trend is going to continue as people want and deserve to have fulfilling careers and happy family lives. It is therefore the responsibility of Government, employers and employees to look at current work practices and devise ways that can make the system more flexible and more supportive of workers with family responsibilities. This Government believes that both employers and employees can benefit from policies that enable businesses to better meet the needs of workers with family responsibilities. Employees are able to enjoy greater job satisfaction through increased control over their working lives, while employers gain from a cooperative, skilled and committed workforce that is more willing to participate in and achieve organisational goals. Therefore, it is a win-win situation.

It is a shame that such an important issue did not receive any priority from the ALP while it was in Government. Had the ALP been proactive in recognising that increasing trend and had it taken the initiative to act on people's changing circumstances, workplaces—and in particular employees with families—would be better off today.

In recognition of the importance of work and family and of the growing trend for both parents to be part of the work force, the Government has allocated \$75,000 to the Department of Training and Industrial Relations to implement the Work and Family initiative. The initiative will provide advice to employers and employees on the potential benefits of family-friendly policies, possible implementation of new work arrangements, and practical examples of successful, family-friendly practices and policies. Officers from the department will do that through on-site visits, providing one-on-one advice to clients, producing publications and conducting seminars. In particular, the initiative will target and assist employers from small to medium-sized businesses. That is yet another example of the coalition Government's commitment to helping small business.

Importantly, officers from the department will work with employer associations so that they can encourage their members to introduce family-friendly policies and work practices. That reflects the Government's belief that initiatives such as Work and Family should have a practical application and should echo the needs of industry. In the Education Department, there was a very big range of initiatives—

Time expired.

Ms SPENCE (Mount Gravatt) (5.36 p.m.): It pains me to have to agree with the member for Mundingburra, but I have to agree that I saw an extraordinary difference between the two Ministers when watching them in action in the Estimates committee. However, I will not make those comparisons as the member for Mundingburra did not do so.

Firstly, I will comment on the Education Estimates. This year, there were many disappointments for the students of Queensland in the Education budget. Most of those disappointments lay in the fact that, when in Opposition, this Liberal/National Party Government promised the world to children and parents with respect to what it would do in education if elected. One of the greatest promises it made, which some foolish people believed, was that it would double the number of guidance officers. Let us consider what it has done in its first Budget. In Queensland we have 349 guidance officers. This year the Government has added only 38 additional guidance officers. I am wrong—38 is a gross exaggeration.

Mr Quinn: I've got to make an explanation because the information given in the Estimates committee wasn't right.

Ms SPENCE: We will look forward to the Minister's reassessment. I can believe that 38 is a gross exaggeration.

Mr Palaszczuk: It's going to be his apology.

Ms SPENCE: I am sure that the Minister will make an apology. One of the greatest frauds perpetuated in the education community was the promise of doubling the number of guidance officers. The Minister is not a fool. He knew that it could never be done. It takes a long time and a lot of money to train a guidance officer in this State. We have only 349. To double that would be extraordinary. It would take years and years, perhaps a decade, to double that number and to train those people. That will not be done in one term of Government. I doubt that anyone could do it in two terms of Government. That

was a fraudulent promise made by the coalition before the election. Unfortunately, many parents in the education community believed that promise and believed that their children who need extra attention and special assessment would receive them from the promised number of guidance officers. That is the first disappointment.

The second disappointment is the loss of the Sunsmart Program, which has already been alluded to by Opposition members of the committee. That \$2.9m program has gone; it has disappeared. As a previous speaker said, Queensland has one of the highest rates of skin cancer in the world. The schools will no longer be provided with any money for Sunsmart. Some schools thought that the Sunsmart kits that were given to preschoolers and children in Year 1 had outlived their usefulness. Other schools still thought that they were terrific. However, the money that was given to schools to provide sunshades, cover the playgrounds and for education programs was money, and that was valued by all school communities. That has gone. The Minister says that those funds are being given to P & Cs.

Mr Quinn: Make Shade is still there.

Ms SPENCE: Make Shade is still there. The Minister is saying that that money is being given to P & Cs in their general budgetary allocation, but he knows that that amount will no longer be spent for Sunsmart purposes.

The Government has cut back the Computers in Schools Program by 30 per cent. The money that schools are going to get from the Sunsmart Program is going to be gobbled up quickly by P & Cs and school communities in making up for their loss of funding for their Computers in Schools Program. That is where the Sunsmart money will go.

I want to tell my school communities that there is no money in this budget for school councils. That Liberal/National lot opposite went around and promised every P & C that they would be funding, supporting and promoting the whole concept of school councils. I will be telling schools in my area that that also was a sham. In the Minister's first budget, he has not put forward one cent for school councils.

The other lie is that the school uniform money would be given back to the schools through the P & Cs in their budgets. That money has gone. I refer members to point 12 of the Opposition members' dissenting report, which states—

". . . the Minister's reply that 'Obviously we have not done it. What we did was use the funding in other areas.' "

That was another untruth by this Minister.

Time expired.

Hon. S. SANTORO (Clayfield—Minister for Training and Industrial Relations) (5.41 p.m.): I join with other members of this place in saying that the Estimates committee process has been very successful. I believe that the way in which the new Government has tackled the Estimates committee process has enhanced the accountability of Ministers and their departments. Of course, I am referring mainly to the new initiative of involving public servants directly in being accountable to the Estimates committee. In that regard, I say a very sincere "thank you" to my ministerial staff and to the senior officers of my department, including the director-general and the other senior officers of the various divisions, for making themselves available at the request of both the Opposition members and myself as Minister and for the very frank way in which they answered the questions. I think it is fair to say that the officers were asked many detailed questions and were allowed a free rein in giving their answers. I am sure that the Opposition would agree that their answers were constructive and contained a wealth of statistical and logistical information, which enhanced the appreciation of the committee of the important issues involving my department.

I also say "thank you" to the committee. I agree with the shadow Minister, who said that the committee was conducted in an atmosphere of cooperation and goodwill. Obviously, in many ways these committees are still partisan and still political; nevertheless, we got on well. I think that the process was enhanced by that goodwill. I compliment the Honourable the shadow Minister for obviously agreeing with most of what I had to say because I notice that there are no qualifying, dissenting or minority reports in relation to the portfolio of Training and Industrial Relations. In terms of the general direction of the department, I modestly take that as a vote of confidence in what we are about.

During the shadow Minister's speech, he expressed some reservations, particularly in relation to the timing of the legislation. I have said to the honourable member and I have said to the Parliament that in terms of the industrial relations legislation, we are consulting extensively. If we did not consult, we would be criticised for it; when we do consult and we take a little bit of time,

including trying to fit in with the Federal timetable, which I think everybody in this place recognises is essential, we get criticised for it. It does not matter what I do, I just do not seem to be able to win with some of the honourable members opposite.

Of course, in relation to the workers' compensation legislation, we are trying to fix up a very big problem. As the honourable member for Kedron, being a lawyer, would know, it is a very complex piece of legislation. It requires an enormous amount of effort by the implementation task force, which is working very hard. I go on record as saying to the implementation task force and also to the many, many hardworking officers within the Workers' Compensation Division of my department a sincere "thank you" for working well above and beyond the call of normal duty to get that legislation ready for the consideration of the Parliament.

In terms of the workplace health and safety legislation which is currently in place and of which the honourable member for Kedron seemed to be slightly critical, I simply wish to remind him that, in fact, it was the previous Government's legislation to which he was referring. This Government has acted very promptly on the recommendations of Kennedy to set up the review. Either late today or tomorrow we will be officially appointing the independent consultant.

Mr Braddy: I'm not criticising the legislation, I'm criticising the lack of activity.

Mr SANTORO: Hang on a moment, the member cannot say that he wants to amend his own legislation. His party was in Government for six years. He cannot criticise that legislation because it was his Government's legislation.

Mr BRADDY: I rise to a point of order. I made no criticism whatever of the legislation; I criticised the lack of activity of the Government. The Minister is misquoting me and I ask him to withdraw.

Mr SANTORO: Of course, if the honourable member finds it offensive, I will withdraw. However, the claim of a lack of activity is spurious; it does not stack up. If the honourable member had been attentive—and I do not want to get too personal, but usually he is not very attentive—about a month and a half ago I made a ministerial statement as to what this Government was doing in relation to that legislation. However, the member has overlooked that.

In terms of the long-term unemployed, I think that I have spoken enough in this place

about the Opposition's abysmal track record while it was in Government. Again, because the time in which I have to speak is short, I will not remind members of the Opposition's abysmal and shameful record in terms of unemployment.

With regard to workers' compensation, the member pointed out that we have reserves. However, he does not seem to understand that we do not have a cash flow problem. I have stated that previously. We have a serious underfunding in a long-term actuarial sense. The sooner the member understands that, the more productive will be his contributions to debates. In relation to my department, I think that the committee process was constructive.

Time expired.

Mr ROBERTS: (Nudgee) (5.46 p.m.): I wish to make a few comments about some aspects of the Estimates committee as it relates to the Minister for Training and Industrial Relations. Firstly, I shall speak about workplace health and safety. I will follow that by making some comments about the unfair dismissal provisions in the Act.

In relation to workplace health and safety, I speak with some experience as a health and safety trainer with the ACTU for about a year and a half. I go back to the history of many of the reforms in the workplace health and safety field that were adopted by this country. Many of those reforms can be traced back to the Robens inquiry, which I understand was undertaken in Great Britain in the late 1970s. In many respects, it was a forerunner to many of the changes to workplace health and safety legislation in this country and in other countries. In particular, in the 1980s in Victoria, quite innovative legislation was introduced relating to that issue. That legislation contained provisions relating particularly to the rights of workplace health and safety representatives and the role that they played in any effective strategy to deal with the problem of health and safety in the workplace. Of course, one of the key issues arising from the Victorian legislation was the right for workplace health and safety representatives to stop a job.

The key issue that arose out of that new legislative approach towards workplace health and safety was in tackling problems at their source. As I have stated, one of the main features of that legislation was to ensure that there was a properly trained and effective network of workplace health and safety representatives throughout workplaces in the country. A key feature of that strategy was

providing appropriate training to those people. So I viewed with some concern the decision in the budget to cut funding grants to the training of workplace health and safety representatives and safety officers.

Mr Santoro: That was scheduled by your Government to come into place. It was part of the program.

Mr ROBERTS: The funding was cut in the budget, and I am expressing disappointment that it was cut. It provided a proper level of funding for a very effective training program conducted by Safe Work Queensland. The provision of that training to workplace health and safety representatives and the knowledge that those people gained, which they took back to their workplaces through those courses, was a very effective measure in dealing with the prevention of workplace injury. In effect, it created a network of safety inspectors in virtually every workplace in the State. Of course, since the announcement of the cutbacks, many employers are now no longer willing to send their employees to those training courses. As a result, the number of people attending those courses will drop dramatically. Since Safe Work Queensland was established, it has trained in excess of 9,000 representatives in both general representative courses and in specific hazard courses. Again, I believe that a detrimental effect of those cuts will be the lack of training for people in the workplace who are required to.

I want to make a few brief comments about the unfair dismissal laws. I note that in the Ministerial Program Statements there is an indication that the number of cases is expected to be about the same next year, or projected to be about the same as occurred last year, which is about 1,900. I speak with a little bit of experience about the unfair dismissal laws because, as an industrial advocate, I ran quite a number of unfair dismissal cases. I am pleased to report to the Minister and to other members that I won a few as well.

Mr Santoro: You did well.

Mr ROBERTS: I won a few.

There has been a lot of noise and criticism in the community about these laws. I take honourable members to some of the provisions of the Act and question some of the concerns that are being raised. The unfair dismissal laws say to employers that, prior to dismissing any employees, they must firstly have a valid reason for doing so. There is nothing unreasonable about that. The Act requires that employees must then be given

an opportunity to defend themselves. There is nothing unreasonable about that and no genuine, reasonable employer could complain about it. The other requirement is that employees be given a proper period of notice in respect of their dismissal. When one examines the unfair dismissal laws, no legitimate criticism can be levelled at them.

Time expired.

Hon. R. J. QUINN (Merrimac—Minister for Education) (5.51 p.m.): I place on the record my appreciation of the spirit in which Estimates Committee C conducted proceedings. From my point of view, it was an extremely valuable exercise for all members of Parliament. The best results are achieved in a committee when in fact committee members, the Minister and the public servants involved cooperate to try to facilitate a flow of information backwards and forwards. The committee process itself is not a replica of what happens in this Chamber, and I think that too many members make the mistake of trying to score political points and do not achieve results for the benefit of everyone. That was obvious on occasions. I thank the committee members of Estimates Committee C because, by and large, that was not the spirit in which the committee was conducted.

The committee was allocated some four and a half hours in which to examine the Estimates of the Education Department, which I think is the most time given to a committee during my time in this place. We traversed a large number of topics and, hopefully, provided the information sought by members on all occasions.

In answer to an interjection I have indicated that I do have an adjustment to make, which is not to my benefit I might add, but I do so in the spirit of trying to keep the committee record accurate. When the Hansard report of the committee was forwarded to my department, the officers went through it. We found that in fact we did provide incorrect material with regard to guidance officers, of all things. I will now correct that mistake.

On the first occasion I provided the correct information that there are 18 officers to be employed for behaviour management and that we are training approximately 20 others. Further on, I was advised by a departmental officer that those 20 would also be employed. I have been subsequently informed that that is not the case, but that my original answer was the correct one. Eighteen guidance officers will be employed. Twenty officers will be trained,

but they will take up employment only if there are vacancies within the current guidance officer numbers.

Much has been made about guidance officers. It is true that we did have a policy of increasing the number of guidance officers. However, I make the point that, when we put the behaviour management policies to the schools themselves, we asked them to indicate to us what range of skills they needed. We could have stood our ground and said, "You will have guidance officers." Rather than doing that, we took the approach that we would supply the schools with the types of resource people that they wanted in order to get the job done. We do not resile from that because, at the end of the day, we think we will get a better outcome for our kids if we give the schools the type of personnel that they want. As I have said before, the policy did contain an increase in the number of guidance officers, but we have since modified it to suit the requirements of the schools. The behaviour management initiative is an important one. We want to see it work in schools and we are willing to make that change so that it does.

Much has also been made about the Sunsmart Program which provided Year 1 students with a bag containing sunscreen, a hat and so on. As the member for Mount Gravatt said, some schools wanted it and some schools did not want it because the kids were bringing their own gear to school. All that we have done is give schools the flexibility to apply the money as they see fit. If a P & C group or a school community thinks that Sunsmart is a good idea, they have the money via the school grant to buy the hats and sunscreen themselves. If they do not want it, they can apply the money to something else. Therefore, we have again given them flexibility, and we do not resile from that either. School communities are saying that a centrally driven program from head office in Brisbane might not be suitable to their particular circumstances. Therefore, we will allow them to spend the money in the way that they see fit.

Another issue that has been raised is the school uniform allowance. For the benefit of the member of Cook, I make this point: I did not say that we would give the money back to the P & Cs. I said that that was one of the suggestions that they may like to make to me. On that basis I wrote to all the P & C associations in Queensland and asked for their suggestions.

Time expired.

Mr ARDILL (Archerfield) (5.57 p.m.): When I appeared at the Estimates committee I was shown every courtesy by the Chairman, the Honourable Vince Lester, and I thank him for that. It is a shame that Mr Lester is not again the Minister for Industrial Relations, because he would make a much better fist of the job than the present incumbent. In fact, I do not believe that we would have the sort of industrial climate that we have in Queensland if Vince Lester was the Minister instead of the present incumbent.

At the committee I asked questions relating to two subjects, the first of which was a misguided attempt by the Minister to close down three schools in Acacia Ridge, a suburb of Brisbane which needs all the help it can get. One of those schools is the Acacia Ridge State High School. In an area of high unemployment, that school happens to be the only State school in Queensland which is accredited by the ASTF program Australiawide for the work that it is doing in placing students in employment and its activities towards work experience. It is the only State school in Queensland that has received that high honour. In fact, the school has just received a \$30,000 grant to continue that work. The school communities are totally against this proposal, and I believe that the Minister has not heard the last of the issue. I will represent my constituents and I will be guided by what they want in the action that I take.

I criticise the proposal to abolish regional offices and the school support system. Those bodies are doing a great job for the education system in Queensland. It is a retrograde step to abolish any of those sections.

I am pleased that the department is proceeding with the initiative of the previous Education Minister, Mr Hamill, to give priority to a program to enhance numeracy and literacy, which fell by the wayside during the 1980s, particularly in primary schools. Behaviour management is still a problem which is not being addressed in the present Budget. The Budget will not assist in providing the facilities or the staff needed to handle behavioural situations. The promised increase in guidance officer numbers will obviously not materialise.

Time expired.

Report adopted.

Progress reported.

INQUIRY INTO CRIMINAL JUSTICE COMMISSION

Mr BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—Leader of the Opposition) (6 p.m.): I move—

"That this Parliament condemns the decision by the State Government to waste taxpayers' money of well over \$1m on a politically motivated witchhunt, the Borbidge Inquiry, into the Criminal Justice Commission—money which could be better used for extra police, education, health and services."

At a time when we have schools wanting extra teachers, when people are dying on waiting lists in our hospitals, and when crime is such that we need extra police, we have a reprehensible situation in this State in that this Government is not prepared to spend money on delivering those services but rather will spend at least \$1m, perhaps \$2m, on pursuing a political exercise for political gain. That is typical of this Government, which is not interested in delivering services. It is not concerned about our ill, our children or those affected by crime, it is concerned only about politics—cheap National and Liberal Party politics.

Mr Braddy: They are proud of that, too.

Mr BEATTIE: Indeed they are. Members opposite are seeking to turn back the clock on every occasion, to look after their mates from days gone by, to go back to the days when there was no level of accountability and when there was no corruption fighter such as the CJC to ensure that politicians behaved in an appropriate way.

A Government member: Your mob are slow learners.

Mr BEATTIE: I can understand the National Party member's interjection; his four mates did go to gaol. I can understand his level of concern. What is important is that we maintain standards. Clearly, Premier Borbidge is out to get the CJC before it gets him and Police Minister Russell Cooper. That is what this is all about. The Government's calculated and coordinated attacks on the CJC seek to discredit the commission before its investigations damage the Government. In Opposition, Mr Borbidge was happy to refer any alleged sin by Labor Ministers to the CJC with a great deal of flourish. However, in Government he finds independent scrutiny too uncomfortable. He is not prepared to be accountable. He has attacked the CJC over its investigation of the memorandum of understanding, even though that inquiry was requested by Police Minister Cooper himself.

The Premier's current assault on the commission seeks to discredit the Carruthers inquiry findings before they are delivered. It is also a desperate attempt to stop a further CJC investigation, one which threatens the

reputation of the Premier and those closest to him. Mr Borbidge knows that numerous public servants and statutory office holders have complained to the CJC about the Public Service hit lists. Even the most cursory reading of the CJC Act would inform Mr Borbidge that firing professional and independent public servants based on scandalously inaccurate information is potentially official misconduct under the Criminal Justice Act, with all of the consequences that that entails.

Mr Borbidge has taken to claiming that no such hit lists exist. He says so in the latest issue of *Sector Wide*. He stated that the "claims that my Government had 'hit lists' to sack public servants are untrue". Why then does every base-grade public servant in this town have a copy of at least one of the three hit lists floating around prepared by members of this Government? How was the *Sunday Mail* able to publish an interview with one of the contributors to those lists? We have the nonsense whereby the Premier says that the lists do not exist, yet the *Sunday Mail* is able to publish a story by one of the people who contributed to those lists. How did the Premier feel when that same article revealed a lengthy CJC interview about this dishonest and corrupt practice?

Mr Speaker, make no mistake, Mr Borbidge wants to discredit the Carruthers report. But Mr Borbidge also knows that the CJC is assessing his role in the transition to Government. This time, it cannot be someone else's fault. It could cost him his premiership. Mr Borbidge knows all about the hit lists. He knows that they were used to sack dozens of professional public servants. He knows the lists contain defamatory and wildly inaccurate information about key statutory office holders in this State, including the Director of Public Prosecutions. Who would initiate any action against someone recommended for charges arising out of the Carruthers report? The Director of Public Prosecutions!

Mr Bredhauer: Put him under threat.

Mr BEATTIE: So this man who is under threat is the one who will have to consider any recommendations from the inquiry and yet he is on a hit list. Mr Borbidge knows that, if the CJC finds evidence of authorship or publication in relation to these hit lists, charges of official misconduct will follow.

Mr Bredhauer: Wasn't he also on the hit list in the Public Service Bill?

Mr BEATTIE: Indeed. What interesting meetings he and his advisers must be having on the fifteenth floor thinking up ways to make the CJC go away! How nervous must some

directors-general feel knowing that their own role in framing and using the hit lists is under scrutiny? They should now know just how inaccurate were the comments about individuals on the lists—inaccurate and highly defamatory. Out there is a long line of angry former public servants waiting to take civil defamation action against the authors of that list. These are former public servants who have lost their livelihoods and their reputations. These are former public servants with strong legal advice about the damages to be claimed not from the Government but from the individuals who prepared and used the hit lists. So is the Government worried about an inquiry? Let us consider its actions.

Whom did it attack first? Why, Mark Le Grand, whose Official Misconduct Division has already begun interviewing people about the hit lists. The Government began discussing cutting back the anti-discrimination legislation which provides protections against politically motivated discrimination and it embarked upon a sustained smear of the CJC as politically biased to cast doubts not only on the Carruthers findings but on any damaging revelations about the hit lists. The inquiry into the CJC is a deliberate distraction for the CJC and a contempt of the Parliament, which properly should be the only body investigating the CJC. This inquiry will divert CJC energy and resources. More importantly, it will make the commission appear partisan if it pursues this latest scandal inside the Borbidge Government.

Let me make it clear to this House tonight that we expect the CJC to do its job and to investigate those hit lists properly. We want to make absolutely certain that justice is not only done but that it is also seen to be done. As the terms of reference of this inquiry make clear, the Borbidge review is designed to define away official misconduct and its investigation by the CJC. Mr Speaker, make no mistake that this is a race—can the Government destroy the CJC before the CJC reveals the truth about those who signed a memorandum of understanding and who authorised Public Service hit lists? Mr Borbidge knows he must destroy the CJC or be exposed himself and put his premiership at risk. He is prepared to destroy an important institution rather than to see further damaging revelations about his Government and his behaviour.

In Opposition, Mr Borbidge championed greater scrutiny of the Executive. In Government, it seems he has developed a perspective about openness and honesty in public life that has not been seen since the

last time the National Party ran this State. Mr Speaker, I table for the information of the House public comments made in this House on 23 October 1990 when the Premier attacked the Goss Government for doing what he is doing today and what he did yesterday in Cabinet. That shows the hypocrisy of his standards. He is a weak man seeking desperately to survive. He is a man who will not even pick up the telephone and ring the head of the Criminal Justice Commission, Frank Clair—a man whom he has never met.

All we have in this House are allegations from the member for Broadwater to try to substantiate the establishment of the inquiry. I remember the last allegations the member for Broadwater made in attacking the CJC in relation to certain issues. His source was a gentleman called Tony Grosser, who, following a 40-hour siege, was subsequently arrested by the South Australian police and charged with shooting a policeman. That is the level of source that the member for Broadwater has! He does not care. He is prepared to use any dishonest information to try to substantiate his allegations.

Time expired.

Hon. J. P. ELDER (Capalaba—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (6.10 p.m.): It is my pleasure to second the motion. As the Leader of the Opposition said, this Government is about turning back the clock, increased taxes in the Budget and very little for the people of Queensland in terms of services, but it is prepared to spend at least \$1m—if not \$2m—on this particular investigation. As the Leader of the Opposition said, fancy relying at the end of the day on a petty thief like Chris Nicholls to kick off this inquiry! He is a key adviser, so it has been claimed, to the member for Broadwater. I have to say that petty thuggery must be a prerequisite for being a staff member of the member for Broadwater, who continually specialises in and peddles half-truths in this place.

This Parliament has seen the member for Broadwater produce sensational allegations time and time again. As the Leader of the Opposition said, in 1994 there were allegations based on information from crooks in South Australia. That was when he alleged that information provided to the CJC had been leaked to the Mafia by the CJC. The Leader of the Opposition was right: that source was Tony Grosser, who had been arrested in South Australia after a 40-hour siege for shooting a police constable. That is the sort of stuff peddled by the member for Broadwater.

What about his allegations on the illegal activities of the Toowoomba Turf Club? Even the member for Toowoomba South, the now Minister for Health, said that those matters had been investigated by the CJC and were without foundation. But that is just typical of what the member for Broadwater peddles in this place. Given his record, if the Minister for Health—who has more experience with untruths than most people in this House—did not believe him, then why is he any more credible now? Why would the Government be setting up an inquiry into the CJC based upon anything from the member for Broadwater, written for him by a discredited former journalist and a petty thief like Chris Nicholls? That is the question everyone is asking. Even if we get Grice before the inquiry, it is likely that he will not be any more—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member will refer to the honourable member for Broadwater by his correct title; he will not call him "Grice" or names like that.

Mr ELDER: Even if we get the member for Broadwater before the inquiry, is he likely to be any more open than he was before the Hanson inquiry when it was investigating the alleged leaking of information? When the member for Broadwater was called to give evidence at that inquiry, this is what happened—and I quote from page 73 of the report of Mr Hanson—

"When (the member for Broadwater) gave evidence, counsel for the Speaker of the Queensland Parliament took the objection that parliamentary privilege prevented any questioning of (the member for Broadwater) about his sources for the information contained in his speech."

Mr Hanson went on to say—

"The claim of parliamentary privilege seriously impeded a proper examination of (the member for Broadwater) about his sources."

If the Government is serious about an inquiry and the member for Broadwater and Mr Nicholls are to be key witnesses, then the inquiry ought to be vested with sufficient powers to compel the member for Broadwater to answer relevant questions in relation to leaked information.

A Government member: Oh!

Mr ELDER: The honourable member is the one who has something to hide. I am advised that there is no clear power in a royal commission to compel a member of Parliament to respond to questions relevant to

the inquiry notwithstanding a claim of parliamentary privilege. The Government should give Mr Grice the opportunity to say what he has to say without hiding behind parliamentary privilege. As the privilege is this Parliament's, it seems likely that it could be waived only by the Parliament, and it may require a specific amendment to the Act to give him that ability. It will be interesting to see whether the Government really wants to investigate the allegations of the member for Broadwater or whether it will let him crawl away, as he did last time. He has repeatedly sullied reputations in this place without the slightest hint of any evidence or proof, and when he is called upon to prove it, he—as he always does—ducks for cover.

At the end of the day, the Government is at it again. At the end of the day, this Government is about undermining the CJC. It has owed the CJC for some time. I recall Mr Littleproud's comments back in 1990 when he said that members of the Opposition have memories that are long enough to ensure that things will be put back the way they were. Too right! That is exactly what members opposite are doing now. They are at it again. They are undermining the CJC. What members opposite want is retribution, and they are seeking it through this inquiry.

Mr FITZGERALD (Lockyer—Leader of Government Business) (6.15 p.m.): The Government will be opposing the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition. In the last couple of weeks we have heard a fair amount from the Opposition about election promises. Members opposite have quoted election promises made by the coalition when in Opposition. I know that the Opposition claims that we cannot implement all our promises at once. But did we claim that we would implement those promises in the first Budget, or were we saying, "As a Government we will implement such and such a policy"?

What was our election promise with regard to a review of the CJC, and what did the Opposition say about it at the time? To refresh the memories of those opposite, I point out that the editorial in the *Courier-Mail* of Thursday, 19 September 1996, stated—

"The present Government in June last year, as part of its platform for the general election, promised such a review."

That editorial was referring to the Government's relationship with the CJC and the proposed inquiry. So a commitment was made by us in Opposition that we would review the CJC when we came to Government. What did the Labor Party say

about that election promise when we were out on the hustings, when we were out after votes? Nothing! It did not criticise the promise by the coalition to review the CJC.

I ask: after \$120m has been spent on an institution over a period of about six years, is it responsible for any Executive Government to seek a review of how that money is being spent, whether the legislation is appropriate and whether the parliamentary committee has sufficient powers? Is that the attitude of a responsible Government? I contend that it certainly is. Members opposite have claimed that this inquiry will cost over \$1m. They put a figure on it; I certainly could not put a figure on what the inquiry will cost. When we are talking about \$120m already expended and about \$20m a year in recurrent expenditure, it is quite responsible for a Government to ask whether the money is being well spent.

The terms of reference have also been raised. We have heard the Leader of the Opposition and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition put forward what I call their fertile, fanciful ideas on the motives of this Government. Are the terms of reference appropriate? Of course they are. I will not quote all of them, because that will take up my time. However, I point out that the terms of reference include—

"To examine and review whether the Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee established under Part 4 of the Criminal"—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I do not wish for the terms of reference to be discussed.

Mr FITZGERALD: Certainly, Mr Speaker. I am just attempting to prove that the terms of reference are adequate. We have discussed one of the terms of reference, that is, the matters raised by the member for Broadwater.

Mr Beattie: Did you go to an election on that? No, you didn't.

Mr FITZGERALD: What I say about the terms of reference is that serious allegations were made and presented to this House by the member for Broadwater.

An Opposition member: Spurious.

Mr FITZGERALD: I am not going to say whether they are or whether they are not. They certainly were very serious. If the member does not believe that the two former judges who have been appointed can determine whether those allegations are spurious, as he claims, or whether there is some substance in them, and if he believes that those gentlemen will not give an honest

report on this, then he is not the person I thought he was. I believe that the judges will do their duty with regard to this issue.

Any suggestion that this investigation is just hogwash so that the findings of the Carruthers inquiry will be muddied because the CJC will have been criticised and dragged through the mire is quite fanciful thinking. At what stage is the Carruthers inquiry at this moment? I presume that Mr Carruthers is already writing his report. When is the inquiry into the CJC going to commence? Next week. When is the report of Mr Carruthers going to come down? Let us face it: Carruthers is already making up his mind on what he is going to put in his report. If the member believes that the inquiry into the CJC by these two honourable gentlemen is going to have any effect whatsoever on Mr Carruthers' deliberations—which are obviously taking place right now—then he is rather fanciful in his thinking. He has a rather fertile imagination. The member is looking everywhere to find the motive behind this—

Time expired.

Hon. M. J. FOLEY (Yeronga) (6.20 p.m.): The people of Queensland should be worried about the Government's actions because those actions weaken the fight against corruption. Police corruption is a matter about which we should all be very concerned. I well remember giving evidence some 19 years ago before the Lucas inquiry. That is one of four royal commissions in the last four decades that dealt with issues of police or police corruption. I well remember that Mr Justice Lucas recommended that there be a rotation of police officers in the Licensing Branch to avoid corruption of police officers exposed to the brothel industry. I also remember that we had a weak Liberal Attorney-General at the time and an arrogant, powerful Premier. It was a dangerous cocktail which led to that recommendation not being implemented.

Bill Lickiss and Joh Bjelke-Petersen represented the opportunity to nip corruption in the bud, but it did not happen. That is because the National Party, aided and abetted by the Liberal Party, has failed consistently to attack corruption in this State. What we are now seeing is a continuation of this dangerous cocktail of an arrogant, overbearing Premier and a weak, Liberal Attorney-General failing to stand up for the integrity of the legal system. If that one recommendation had been introduced in 1977, if there had been a rotation of police officers through the Licensing Branch so as to

prevent Jack Herbert's joke from being set in the body of this State, then Queensland would have been a much better place. Lest members think for a moment that corruption is just something that happened back in the 1956 National Hotel royal commission or that it happened back in the 1977-78 Justice Lucas inquiry, or that it happened back in the 1987-89 Fitzgerald inquiry, they should just look south of the Tweed and they will see endemic corruption in the New South Wales police force. That means that drug dealers and paedophiles get to run free because they do not have an effective police service. That is why the people of Queensland should be worried about the actions of this Government, because corruption flourishes when there is an arrogant and overbearing Premier and a weak, Liberal Attorney-General who fail to stand up for fundamental legal institutions to combat corruption. A few years ago, corruption had this State by the throat; we need to be vigilant to prevent it from happening again.

The CJC is an important legal institution. It is a legal institution which the people of Queensland should respect and cherish. It is not above criticism; it is not above accountability. That is why it is accountable to the parliamentary committee; that is why it is accountable to the Executive, that is, the Minister, for the Budget process; that is why it is accountable to the Estimates committee; that is why it is accountable under the Act to the Supreme Court, where any person who is adversely affected by a decision may take an application for judicial review. This debate is about whether or not this Parliament will set itself against the evil of corruption or whether we are to allow this politically motivated inquiry to go ahead in order to serve the short-term political ends of Mr Borbidge and Mr Cooper to the detriment of an important legal institution, an institution which helps Queenslanders combat corruption and which helps to ensure that we do not allow the National Party and the Liberal Party to go back to their days of political convenience and allow the return of corruption.

Time expired.

Mrs GAMIN (Burleigh) (6.25 p.m.): This motion is nothing more than a political exercise to hide Labor's own miserable record in office between 1989 and 1996. It is based on the foolish notion that the CJC is above review. I am amazed that Labor speakers today have had so little to contribute to the debate. However, I implore them to cast aside their bias and prejudices and be prepared to listen to alternative arguments.

The duties and responsibilities of the Government in relation to the CJC have best been summarised in the editorial in the *Courier-Mail* to which the honourable member for Lockyer referred. It provides a concise statement to which honourable members, particularly those opposite, should pay attention. The member for Lockyer quoted a little from that editorial, I will continue with it. It states further—

"It is to be hoped that the terms of reference which are eventually established include the role of the parliamentary committee, which seems to have failed either to monitor the work of the CJC or to provide the Parliament with intelligent information about the CJC and its processes. The politicised nature of the PCJC"—

which has been caused by Opposition members of the PCJC—

"makes it quite an inappropriate body to conduct the kind of review which the Government (and The Courier Mail) considers necessary."

I am aware that Opposition members are paranoid about Sir Max Bingham and his refusal to kowtow to their dictates during his term of office. However, this should not make them blind to the truths of what Sir Max says, and he said about the CJC—

"On the basis of its track record in relation to its supervision of police, I don't think its really got a lot to crow about."

I am concerned that Labor is so rigid in its thinking that it is unwilling to accept that there are better ways of doing things than simply following the dictates of the past.

It should not be forgotten that, under the previous Government, scores of recommendations from the Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee about the better functioning of the CJC were ignored time and time again. It is ironic that the head of this committee between 1989 and 1992 was none other than the current Leader of the Opposition. What this House should be demanding to know is why that honourable member did not insist that the Goss Government respond to these recommendations. The fact that he was eventually rewarded with a Ministry in the last desperate days of the Labor administration gives some indication of why we heard nothing from him for so long. His compliant response is nothing short of pathetic.

It is incumbent upon Labor to say just what it fears from a thorough inquiry into the

CJC. What other public body—and one that has cost \$120m since its inception—is free from review? The simple answer is none, yet Labor seeks to place the CJC in quarantine—on a pedestal where it is beyond the reach of the public. This is totally unacceptable to fair-minded people. It is even more difficult to accept when it is remembered that the CJC has extraordinary powers that are not even available to the police or the judiciary.

The member for Yeronga mentioned the word "accountable" several times. Why should not the CJC be accountable? Every public body has to be accountable. Government owned corporations, statutory authorities, and all bodies and groups supported by public funds have to be accountable, why not the CJC? I suggest that Labor pay some attention to Peter Morley's words in the *Courier-Mail* of 31 August 1996, when he wrote—

"Beanland's is the appropriate office when it comes to making a final recommendation about CJC powers."

It is misleading and mischievous for Labor to claim that the PCJC should conduct this review. Despite the strengths of that committee, no fair-minded person would suggest that in a review of the CJC and its relationship with the PCJC such a review should be the responsibility of the parliamentary committee. There could be no more stark example of Caesar investigating Caesar. That Labor supports such a proposal is a deeply disturbing feature of our political landscape. I call on Labor to repudiate this foolish and short-sighted proposal, to embrace an independent review of the CJC and to ensure Queensland has an efficient, effective and accountable CJC. If they fail to do this, they are more interested in political gamesmanship than in sensible public administration. The Opposition stands condemned for moving this motion; this motion deserves to be defeated.

Time expired.

Mr BARTON (Waterford) (6.30 p.m.): I rise to support the motion. This judicial inquiry is nothing more than a diversion by this Government. It is intended to try to save the hide of the unsaveable: the Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Racing. It is an outrageous attempt to discredit the CJC. Even before its findings have come down, and because of what has already been put to it, the inquiry has been exposed for outrageous actions by this particular Minister—actions that have already seriously embarrassed his Premier and may embarrass

him even worse when the findings are handed down.

This judicial inquiry is attempting to confuse the public's mind so that they will be unsure of who is correct and who is wrong when these findings are handed down. I do not think there is any doubt about who is correct and who is wrong. The CJC itself is the body that has been conducting that hearing. The public already knows that outrageous things were done by this Government when in Opposition. It is an attempt to save a Minister who says, "I will not resign if adverse findings are made against me and charges of electoral bribery are recommended." He says that he will not abide by the Westminster principles or the coalition's own protocols for Government. He said that this morning in this House. He arrogantly intends to tough it out and will not answer questions put to him in this House about serious issues.

This inquiry is part of the National Party-led Government's revenge against the CJC—revenge against the Fitzgerald process, which it blames for turfing it out of Government on its ear over six years ago. The National Party wants revenge for its loss of Government. It wants revenge for the Joh jury inquiry, which left no doubt in people's minds about what occurred there. We have seen a few of those people rewarded in the last six or seven months. The National Party wants revenge against Inspector Huey. This inquiry will dredge up many of the already discredited allegations of the past six years by National Party members in particular which have been fully investigated by the CJC and were found to have no basis—particularly those outrageous allegations by the member for Broadwater.

This inquiry totally undermines the PCJC. Most importantly, it destroys this Parliament's capacity to review the CJC. Sadly, from watching the decisions that have been made public coming out of the PCJC, the PCJC has already been heavily politicised. I was a member of the second PCJC. The current PCJC Chairman, the member for Keppel, was a member of that PCJC. It was very hard for—

Mr Nuttall interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Sandgate will not interject from other than his correct seat. I warn him under Standing Order 123A.

Mr BARTON: It was very hard to get the current Chairman of the PCJC to come to meetings, or certainly to stay there, unless there was a media opportunity. We were very

careful in the second PCJC to maintain consensus and ensure that it was not politicised. But, sadly, the PCJC has been politicised already on this issue. This judicial inquiry has been called for political reasons. This is a Government Executive takeover of this Parliament's role. The CJC reports to this Parliament via the multiparty PCJC—something that members on the Government side of the House were very keen to defend a short time ago. But this role of the Parliament to monitor, oversee and review the CJC through its own body, the PCJC, has now been taken away from it by the Executive Government.

This motion is also part of defending the rights of this Parliament. We want the CJC to answer to this Parliament, not to the Executive. This judicial inquiry removes our rights as members of this Parliament to oversee the CJC, as provided for by the Fitzgerald process and as provided for in the current Criminal Justice Act. The Government does not have the fortitude to come into this Parliament and try to change that. It is usurping it through the backdoor by this inquiry. It is the PCJC's job to review the CJC and report directly to this Parliament—not Executive Government's. I have no doubt what the public want. The public want the CJC to be independent of Executive Government, and they want it to be accountable through this Parliament directly.

Time expired.

Mr HARPER (Mount Ommaney) (6.36 p.m.): It is a pleasure to rise in this debate, because this motion shows the hypocritical nature of Opposition members. It shows that they are making a purely political grandstanding issue of it. That has been backed up by many of the comments made by members opposite tonight. It is an entirely hypocritical motion. If we examine the facts, members opposite must have little faith in Mr Carruthers if they think that he is going to be influenced by this inquiry. Yet they have tried to make a point of that by saying that it is purely to do with that. What a lot of rubbish!

Further, it was an election promise of this Government. The member for Lockyer has already addressed that. Members opposite seem to have forgotten that. Labor seems to have a paranoia about this matter. One has to ask: given their total paranoia about it, what are they worried about? Why are members opposite worried about looking into this matter? What other body in this State is beyond question? That is the question that Opposition members have not answered.

What other body is beyond examination and question? In 1989, a predecessor of mine in the former seat of Sherwood, now Mount Ommaney, raised the point that perhaps the CJC should have a five-year term with a sunset clause and then a review. I think his words then are bearing fruit now—that it is well and truly worth doing.

Something that members opposite have tried to say tonight and at other times is that the Executive are the ones who have made the decision and the Executive will carry out all the results. That is absolute rubbish. The terms of reference are totally reasonable. They will come back to this House, when the full Parliament will have the say as to what is happening. But members opposite will not face up to that and take that into account. It is this Parliament that will make any decision that comes out of any recommendations.

Nobody on this side of the House has said that we do not need to stand against corruption and fight against it by having some form of misconduct division. Yet from the way that members opposite speak, one would think that we are totally opposed to anything like that. Once again, those are false statements by members opposite. One has to reflect on some of the previous PCJC reports. I mention in particular 10, 13, 26 and 34 under former chairmen from the Opposition ranks, the current Opposition Leader especially and the former member for Mundingburra, Mr Davies. I seem to recall that, on reviewing these, there was a call for better processes and better access to information by the Parliament and certainly by the committee. Yet members opposite are silent about that tonight. I wonder what the Opposition Leader really can say about that. I believe there has been a change in tune. He has already been challenged tonight, but he has not risen to that challenge to answer those comments.

In this hypocritical motion the Opposition talked about a waste of money and said that it could be better spent on education, health and services. That is another hypocritical statement. Opposition members seem to have forgotten the money that they wasted for six and a half years. One has only to mention a couple of examples to highlight this. What about the Cabinet Office, where excessive staff numbers resided in the Executive Building looking after the former Premier and his Ministers? What about the media advisers who were tucked away in various places on Government funds helping prop up the then Government? Yet they have the hide to come in here tonight and talk about a waste of money. I am blown if I know!

Mr Beattie interjected.

Mr HARPER: The Opposition Leader certainly does not seem to know. I guess we have to excuse him slightly because he was in that set-up for only a few months.

Much has been made about Mr Connolly and his ability and suitability for carrying out the inquiry. Much has been made by the members opposite about his Liberal Party membership. Let us examine the facts. He was a member of this House from 1957 to 1960. I seem to recall that, in 1960, he actually lost Liberal Party preselection. He was beaten by another person, lost preselection and did not stand for Parliament. The members opposite are dragging up events from 36 years ago. They fail to remember that Lew Wyvill, who in 1969 stood for Labor in Greenslopes, was appointed to the commission on merit and had our support.

Time expired.

Mr BREDHAUER (Cook) (6.41 p.m.): I rise to support the motion before the House tonight about the politically inspired witch-hunt into the CJC that has been set up by the Government. I will talk particularly about the credentials of the person who is behind the establishment of this inquiry. I refer particularly to the allegations made in this Parliament recently by the member for Broadwater about the head of the Misconduct Division of the Criminal Justice Commission. I will take the minds of the members of this Parliament back to a speech that I made in this Parliament on 7 September 1994. We might just add another chapter to the saga that I outlined before the House that night. I want honourable members to consider the track record of the member for Broadwater in rising in this House and tipping buckets on people, and the veracity of those allegations, which have been subsequently investigated and not borne out. Some of those allegations have been alluded to already in this debate.

On 31 August 1993, the member for Broadwater called for an investigation into the alleged Medusa tapes which were supposed to contain information on a secret deal to pay out two detectives involved in investigations into former policeman John Huey.

On 14 September 1993, Grice told Parliament—

"Recent events convince me of a close and sinister relationship between the Goss Labor Government and John William Huey."

He said that Labor was covering up things which should be brought out into the open.

There was no sinister relationship and no cover-up, and an embarrassed *Sunday Mail* that had run the stories had to apologise. It admitted—

"We accept that there is no foundation for these statements and regret that they were ever made."

On 14 October, the member for Broadwater claimed to have been threatened by the Chairman of the CJC. In Parliament the member said—

"I will not concede his right to use threats as an inducement to me to change my tack on a matter which is clearly my duty as a member of this Parliament."

The claim was referred to the Privileges Committee. On 12 November 1993, a unanimous report by that committee, including two National Party members, found the claims to be without foundation. Not even National Party leader, Rob Borbidge, at the time the Leader of the Opposition, could recall any actual words at the meeting which might have been threatening or intimidating.

On 28 April 1994, the member for Broadwater alleged in Parliament that information provided to the CJC had been leaked to the Mafia by someone working for the CJC. The member's source for this pearl was Tony Grosser. CJC Chairman O'Regan described the member for Broadwater's allegations as romantic fiction and said the member for Broadwater had been briefed about Grosser's penchant for prolific correspondence with Australian law enforcement agencies. Grosser was later arrested in South Australia by police there following a 40-hour siege and charged with shooting a constable. That incident has already been alluded to in this debate.

The member for Broadwater was not to be denied. On 28 April of that year, he alleged in Parliament illegal activity on the part of the Toowoomba Turf Club and its chairman, Neville Stewart. Stewart, the President of the Toowoomba South Branch of the Liberal Party at the time and former Liberal State election candidate, was alleged to have been involved in bribing professional punters to conduct their business through the club's on-course tote facilities.

Honourable members will remember the reaction of the National Party's two Toowoomba-based MPs. The member for Toowoomba South said that the member for Broadwater had never set foot on Clifford Park and that the matters had been investigated by

the CJC and were found to be without foundation. The member for Toowoomba North said that he was bitter at the member for Broadwater's actions, and the two dissociated themselves from him. Then we have the stuff that has been rehashed in these complaints.

Undeterred by a string of failures, in September 1994 the member for Broadwater once again waded into the mire of his own making. Asked on the *7.30 Report* whether he thought that senior police and the CJC would do the Government's bidding to cover up the matters to which he had alluded, he replied—

"I don't want to be that specific because I don't know all the information from their side of the fence."

He even admits now that he did not know the facts. At that time he was given an opportunity to table his information in Parliament. He failed to do so. He has now tipped another bucket, this time on Mark Le Grand and the CJC.

The inquiry is a politically inspired witch-hunt by this Government. It is an attempt to discredit the CJC. As today's *Cairns Post* states—

"Queenslanders should regard with a jaundiced eye the State Government's attempts to muzzle the Criminal Justice Commission.

...

And it does seem to be just a little more than coincidental that the heat of the Government's rage against the CJC seems to have increased with the organisation's continued probing into the Memorandum of Understanding between the Queensland Police Union and the State Police Minister Russell Cooper.

When it comes right down to it, would Queenslanders prefer to put their money on the CJC's . . . or our politicians?"

Time expired.

Hon. D. E. BEANLAND (Indooroopilly—Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (6.46 p.m.): On rising to speak in this debate I will make a couple of very pertinent points. It was only today on radio that Dr Paul Reynolds, a reader in government at the University of Queensland—a person who could not be claimed to be biased towards this Government—said on radio that this inquiry is not a witch-hunt. When asked whether it is a witch-hunt, Dr Reynolds said, "No, of course not." When asked, "Why not?" he says—

"Why not? Because, because the inquiry will be independent of Government. It won't get its marching

orders on a day-to-day basis from the Government."

He further states—

"There's no reason to suppose that it would be a witch-hunt and I think that's to slur the Commissioners to suggest that that's what they're on about."

That quote from Dr Reynolds speaks for itself.

Secondly, I turn to the comments of the Leader of the Opposition and his position in relation to the CJC. I refer to one of the many reports from the time when he was Chairman of the Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee. On 25 August 1992, a report was tabled which stated—

"The Committee recommends that the next Parliamentary Committee prepare a detailed report for the Parliament at the end of 1994 or the beginning of 1995 on the future direction of the Commission and the future of its various Divisions. Such an evaluation would include the desirability of a sunset clause."

So much for the position of the Leader of the Opposition. We can see his position exactly. Of course, none of those recommendations has been acted upon.

I now turn to the comments of the member for Yeronga. In the report of the Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee in July 1991, the member for Yeronga made a submission—

"In my submission consideration should be give to defining the Criminal Justice Commission more clearly as a body responsible for the investigation of complaints of official misconduct and transferring its other responsibilities to the appropriate Commission or Department.

The reform function of the Research and Co-ordination Division, for example, should, in my submission, be transferred to the Law Reform Commission for the reasons discussed above.

The Witness Protection Division should ultimately become the responsibility of the Queensland Police Service. The discussions of this Division at pp.27 and 29 of the CJC Annual Report includes a reference to the Division's plan to establish a pool of trained personnel within the Queensland Police Service for witness protection.

...

Similarly, the Intelligence Division has functions which should properly be

located within the Queensland Police Service and subject to strict privacy controls in view of the sensitive data accessible by way of criminal intelligence."

That submission highlights clearly the need to have an appropriate review of the efficiency, effectiveness and roles of the Criminal Justice Commission.

No amount of chasing around by Opposition members to try to create sensationalism, as they have been trying to do, will overcome those points. Even they agree that there should be an investigation of the commission's functions, because some of those functions ought to be returned to the Police Service or other places.

Over and over again it has been made quite clear by speakers on this side of the Chamber that we believe that there does need to be an ongoing investigation of corruption. That must always be the case. There must always be someone checking the police, no matter who it is or in what form it is, because there must be a continuation of the checks and balances applying to the Police Service. That applies anywhere in this nation, not only for Queensland but also for other States. If those checks and balances do not exist, there will be other problems.

For the Opposition to suggest that in some way this inquiry will influence Mr Carruthers indicates that it has very little faith in Mr Carruthers. He has finished his examination and we are simply waiting for his report to be released. It has well and truly gone past the hour for anyone to have input into his inquiry. That is over and done with. On no account will this matter interfere in Mr Carruthers' process in any shape or form.

This motion is a continuation of that cheap form of politics that we have come to expect from the Labor Party, particularly the Leader of the Opposition. He gave the same old tired speech. This inquiry is not a witch-hunt; far from it. The whole exercise is designed to accommodate the very points that the Leader of the Opposition and other members opposite have raised. They do not like it because, when they were in Government, they did not have the courage to get on with this matter and to tackle these hard issues. No, as usual, they could not do a dashed thing. The former Government was tired and worn out. It went to sleep on the public of this State. To suggest that an organisation that has a budget of over \$20m should not at some stage have checks and balances—

Time expired.

Hon. P. J. BRADY (Kedron) (6.51 p.m.): If any Government in Australia was required to behave with probity in relation to these matters, it is this Government. Only a few short years ago, two reports in this State damned for all time in the history of this country the administration of justice by the Liberal and National Parties in this State—the 1988 Kennedy report into prisons and, in 1989, the Fitzgerald report which, after 32 years of conservative rule, summed up a situation which showed that the prison system was in total disarray and the justice system was in total disarray. Of course, that report culminated in the arrest, conviction and sentencing of the Police Commissioner—a man chosen specifically by the predecessors in title of those members opposite; a man plucked from obscurity to become Police Commissioner because he would go along with the rorts and the nonsense that were being carried out by people opposite a few short years ago.

So what do we see? A Government that understands the history? A Government that shows remorse? Not at all! Today, it comes to this place and says that it is conducting this inquiry because it was an election promise. What hypocrisy!

A Government member interjected.

Mr BRADY: If the Government was undertaking this inquiry because it was an election promise, it would do it properly. For a start, there would have been an allocation in the Budget for it. A submission spelling out how much the inquiry was going to cost would have gone to Cabinet. I know that because I have been in Government. I know what Cabinet submissions are like—that Cabinet submissions spell out the cost for initiatives, and they always have. If the Minister was genuine, he would have prepared a proper Cabinet submission—the same as would have occurred under the former Labor Government—setting out how much the inquiry was going to cost, and that amount would have been allocated in the Budget. The Minister is not fair dinkum.

I ask Government members to think about this point, and I ask them to listen very carefully. They have been in Government for eight months. Despite many pleas, many requests and many suggestions from the media and from others throughout Queensland, the Premier of this State, the leader of the Government, has refused to meet with the chairman of the CJC. What an absolute disgrace! Yet Government members ask us to believe that they are genuine and

fair dinkum in their relationship with the CJC. Mr Clair has said publicly that he has tried time and time again to meet with Mr Borbidge and, although Mr Borbidge has not openly refused, in eight months he has not found the time to meet with the chairman of this most important commission. That is an absolute disgrace! It is more than a disgrace; it says that the Government is not genuine. It is rushing this submission through Cabinet. It is attempting to rush this inquiry through the community because it is running scared.

The Minister for Police stands in dire trouble before one inquiry, as does the Premier stand in dire trouble, and so to make up for that Government members say suddenly, "Did we not promise an inquiry into the CJC? Let us rush it through." This has occurred immediately after the Government has delivered its Budget and when, instead, it should be sitting down and working out all its costs for the rest of the year. However, it has not done so. The Government has had an opportunity to cost all its election commitments. This Government is not genuine and should stand condemned as a successor in title to the Bjelke-Petersen Government and all the errors that it made during its term in office. The Government also stands condemned because it is not prepared to face up to its responsibilities.

The Fitzgerald report said that in future, if anything important was being done about justice in this State, all politicians should try to be bipartisan. Today, the Opposition has made it very clear to the Government that it objects to the appointment of Mr Peter Connolly, QC, to head the inquiry not—as the member for Mount Ommaney said—primarily because he was a former member of the Liberal Party but because recently he was part of the defence team for Mr Russell Cooper in a matter analogous to this inquiry into the CJC. No-one in Queensland could do other than to believe that this inquiry relates to some extent to what has occurred during the Carruthers inquiry.

Time expired.

Question—That the motion be agreed to—put; and the House divided—

AYES, 43—Ardill, Barton, Beattie, Bird, Bligh, Braddy, Bredhauer, Briskey, Campbell, D'Arcy, De Lacy, Dollin, Edmond, Elder, Foley, Fouras, Gibbs, Goss W. K., Hamill, Hayward, Hollis, McElligott, McGrady, Mackenroth, Milliner, Mulherin, Nunn, Nuttall, Palaszczyk, Pearce, Purcell, Roberts, Robertson, Rose, Schwarten, Smith, Spence, Sullivan J. H., Welford, Wells, Woodgate *Tellers:* Livingstone, Sullivan T. B.

NOES, 44—Baumann, Beanland, Borbidge, Connor, Cooper, Cunningham, Davidson, Elliott, FitzGerald, Gamin, Gilmore, Goss J. N., Grice, Harper, Healy, Hegarty, Hobbs, Horan, Johnson, Laming, Lester, Lingard, Littleproud, McCauley, Malone, Mitchell, Perrett, Quinn, Radke, Rowell, Santoro, Sheldon, Simpson, Slack, Stephan, Stoneman, Tanti, Veivers, Warwick, Watson, Wilson, Woolmer *Tellers:* Springborg, Carroll

Resolved in the **negative**.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr FITZGERALD (Lockyer—Leader of Government Business) (7.01 p.m.): I move—

"That the House do now adjourn."

Inquiry into Criminal Justice Commission

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN (Caboolture) (7.02 p.m.): Today's *Courier-Mail* describes the Government's judicial inquiry into the Criminal Justice Commission as having been "handed a virtually unlimited brief". The editorial of the same paper states—

"There are suspicions that the inquiry could be diverted into matters which have excited the attention of the Premier . . ."

It is not inconceivable that this judicial inquiry could revisit a celebrated matter currently being considered by the CJC.

If the Attorney-General is so interested in setting up inquiries to investigate election deals, he should also see to it that the coalition's role in the election in the seat of Gladstone in July 1995 is also scrutinised. In the *Courier-Mail* of September 11 this year, State Liberal Party President, Bob Tucker, confirmed that there was an "understanding" with the now member for Gladstone and, further, that the Liberals were "very comfortable with her" . . . so we decided to co-operate with her". Part of this arrangement, we are told, was that the Liberal Party decided not to stand a candidate so "she could have another go".

Mr Tucker needs to explain the extent of this cooperation and what the coalition expected in return for the cooperation from the member for Gladstone. The Attorney-General must surely recognise the implications of these comments and initiate an inquiry to include the Gladstone election in 1995.

The National Party was up to its neck in this Gladstone contrivance as well. Its candidate, Jenny Elliott, started campaigning only days before the July election, and according to Mr Tucker ran only "to soak up

some of the votes to direct preferences to her"—"her" being Mrs Cunningham. What has not been revealed until now is what Federal National Party Leader and now Deputy Prime Minister, Tim Fischer, told a luncheon at the Country Plaza Hotel in Gladstone on 5 September last year. Mr Fischer told stunned local business people, who had gathered to meet members of the shadow Cabinet, "The Liberal and National organisations in Gladstone are to be congratulated in getting Liz up."

So if the characters on the other side of the House are so keen to set up inquiries to investigate arrangements for an election, why do they not investigate the comments made by Mr Tucker and the Deputy Prime Minister of this country? What offers did the Liberals and Nationals make in the Gladstone electorate? What role did the Premier and the Leader of the Liberal Party play in this understanding? After all, this would not be the first time that the Premier has been a party to a secret election deal.

Unless these matters surrounding the coalition's role in Gladstone are fully investigated, the member for Gladstone, Mrs Cunningham, will continue to be the victim of an unwarranted slur cast by Mr Tucker and Mr Fischer through their public comments. As a result of those comments, it is open for people to believe that a secret pre-election deal was in existence, thus explaining why the member for Gladstone has voted so overwhelmingly with the coalition parties in this place. That is the disgraceful slur that Mr Tucker and Mr Fischer have implied upon the member for Gladstone. It stands, despite her own denials.

Why would the Attorney-General not want to investigate this attack on the good name of the member for Gladstone? As the defender of equal justice his office requires him to be, the Attorney-General must demand that the Liberal Party President and the Deputy Prime Minister appear before a properly constituted inquiry and explain their public statements about Gladstone. That is the only way that the slur they have cast upon Mrs Cunningham can be lifted.

Queensland Small Business and Tourism

Mr HARPER (Mount Ommaney) (7.06 p.m.): I take this opportunity to support what the Government is doing for small business and tourism in Queensland. This Government recognises the value of Queensland's 140,000 small businesses and is committed to help them advance, develop

and diversify. It is this commitment which last month saw the Minister for Tourism, Small Business and Industry appoint 15 small-business people from throughout the State to the inaugural Small Business Council. The council, the first of its type in Australia—and that is an achievement—was formed by the Government to provide Queensland small business with direct input into decision making. The Small Business Council will provide this Government with direct access to the opinions of small-business people across the State at a grassroots level.

The Government recognises the crucial role that small-business people play, both in the general economy of the State and also in employment. Its priorities, highlighted in the first meeting of the council, include the proliferation of shopping centres and seed funding for small business. I will expand briefly on the matter of the shopping centres.

Much has been said over recent times about shopping hours and their effect on consumers and small business. Something that we as a Government, councils and small-business people throughout the State have to face up to is the number of shopping centres that are being built around the State. Small-business people are drawn into those centres. They are signing leases and then finding that the business is not available to support the overhead costs, let alone make a decent wage for the owners. The council is addressing this problem.

The Small Business Council complements another initiative of this Government, the establishment of a Red Tape Reduction Task Force. The amount of red tape in terms of the forms and returns that small-business people have to fill in is well known in all circles. One often wonders what happens to those forms. The amount of feedback that small-business people get is fairly low. One cannot blame a small-business person for saying, "Why am I doing this? Why am I taking the time and the cost to do this if I get no feedback and no apparent benefit?" The Government is well aware of this problem at the State and Federal levels. We are setting out to make sure that we are able to reduce that burden.

The task force, which met for the first time last month, has been established to review the compliance burden placed on small businesses and to make recommendations to the Government in order to reduce the burden. The task force comprises business people and industry representatives. Those people, who have practical experience of the burden of those returns, will be able to report

to Government so that we may properly address the situation.

Both the Small Business Council and the Red Tape Reduction Task Force will be supported by the Department of Tourism, Small Business and Industry. This Government, as it has clearly demonstrated, is also determined to develop Queensland's important tourism industry. Tourism has grown to become one of the State's largest industries, contributing 10 per cent of Queensland's gross State product, generating \$7.7 billion in expenditure in 1995 and providing 122,000 jobs.

The tourism industry is a major source of employment and a significant creator of new jobs—something that is very crucial—providing opportunities for people of all ages and skill levels and across all regions throughout the State, including those suffering economic decline and population loss. The Tourism Council of Australia estimates that every 17 international arrivals create a job in tourism, and every 32 domestic travellers also create a job. After years of leading the nation Queensland, unfortunately, with its tourism performance in recent years in some key areas, has fallen behind.

This year, the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation plans to enhance promotional and marketing initiatives, including the development of a new domestic marketing campaign and the launch of an on-line information and bookings service. Because of Queensland's vast geographical expanse, there are many assets to promote throughout the State. The QTTC has increased its funding to the State's 14 regional tourist associations by \$65,000 per region. This will allow regions to further promote their particular areas, both intrastate, interstate and internationally.

It is pleasing to see that the Minister has also reviewed the operations of the Queensland Events Corporation. This will provide Queensland with a greater ability to identify and bid for major international events and an ability to broaden its focus beyond just sporting events to include cultural, recreational and industry-based events which have the potential to generate significant economic benefits for Queensland.

Time expired.

Adoption Fees

Mr DOLLIN (Maryborough) (7.11 p.m.): I rise to bring to the attention of this House the misery, pain and anguish being caused to infertile couples throughout Queensland by

the massive almost 800 per cent increase in adoption fees applied by this Government as of 1 October. I have received dozens of phone calls and several letters from couples who have little hope of accommodating this huge increase in adoption fees. It is a deathblow to their hopes of ever having a happy, normal family that only parenthood can bring, and for infertile couples this can happen only through adoption. Why put that out of their reach?

This State coalition Government says that it is bringing fees into line with other States and that good business practice requires cost recovery. I ask: does this Government not have a heart or a soul? Surely money has not become its most important criterion and its God? I ask members on both sides of this House to do everything possible to have these cost increases removed for the sake of some 10,000 childless couples across Queensland and for the sake of the orphaned children who would be rescued from war torn Europe and saved from death and starvation in some African states. These children would be loved and nurtured to become excellent Australians by parents who would consider them very precious indeed.

I will read to honourable members one of the letters that I have received from a couple. The letter states very plainly and from their hearts the anguish that they are trying to cope with. The letter reads—

"Dear Mr Dollin,

I am writing this letter in the hope that it will move you to stand against the heartless and discriminatory increase in Australian and Inter Country Adoption (I.C.A.) assessment and application fees.

I am 30 years old and my husband is 36. We have both come from hardworking ordinary families and are hardworking ordinary people. There is only one thing that makes us different from a lot of other people whether rich, poor, good or bad, we are infertile.

For the last four years we have been prodded and poked, taken drugs with nasty and sometimes irreversible side effects, had countless operations, needles and blood tests, all in the desperate desire to have children and to be a mum and dad.

During this time we have gone through four unsuccessful I.V.F. attempts. Due to my worsening medical condition, (endometriosis) I will be undergoing a drastic, but necessary operation in

November, that will leave us unable to achieve pregnancy and have children.

For the last four years infertility has ruled our lives, it never leaves our side and leaves us physically, emotionally and financially drained.

The only light at the end of this long tunnel is Inter Country Adoption. (I.C.A.) With an age cut off point of 35 (my husband is 36) and 10,000 couples on the Queensland list with an 8 to 10 year wait, we looked at (I.C.A.) The waiting period for Inter Country Adoption is an average of 3 years, a vast improvement on local adoption. The cost, however, averages \$10,000 but can be as high as \$30,000, depending on fees, airfares and accommodation in the country applied to.

After years of costly infertility treatments our finances are pretty drained, but if we made sacrifices we could have saved the ten to fifteen thousand dollars needed for (I.C.A.) Now the Coalition Government wants to increase the application and assessment fees for (I.C.A.) from \$694.00 to \$5,200.00, a 749% overnight increase. Local adoption increases from \$496.00 to \$3,950.00, a 790% increase, how can this be justified! Who could budget for a 749% increase in paperwork fees.

I am hurt, angry and scared as yet another door to parenthood is being closed to us, not through medical reasons, but through the decision of a heartless greedy and prejudiced Government, who jumps on the family values bandwagon only when it benefits them as a vote grabber.

We have as much right as the next person to be parents, but this decision, if not blocked, will leave many ordinary people with empty cradles, only the rich will be able to become parents. I am sure the Ministers concerned enjoy the lifestyle and joy their own children and their grandchildren bring, not sparing a thought for the 10 to 15% of couples facing infertility who ache at the sight of a typical family.

Where do we fit in to this so called typical Australian family? There is no place for us, the sterile people, but remember, even sterile people vote, and so do their family and friends and with 10 to 15% of couples facing infertility, can you afford to forget about us again!

Please act now to block this increase, prove to us you have a heart, after all, actions speak louder than words. Give us a break, lord knows we need one."

I make this plea to the members of this House on behalf of these couples and for the little children, the many orphans, they would love and cherish as their own if they could afford to do so.

Keppel Electorate, Police Staffing; Kinka Beach

Hon. V. P. LESTER (Keppel) (7.16 p.m.): Tonight I am delighted to announce to the Parliament that Emu Park now has two police officers. Previously, we had a constable who, no matter how hard he tried, found it difficult to keep up with the workload. Constable Paul White and prior to him Constable Beard, who incidentally is the son of a former member of this House—

Mr Fitzgerald: He served in Gatton for a while—a good constable.

Mr LESTER: He was excellent. We have been successful in getting the Emu Park area upgraded to sergeant status. Sergeant Arty Perry has now taken over there, and Constable Kevin Ongheem will be in charge from here on in. I also wish to thank the public for supporting me and Councillor Fay Owens, who pushed extraordinarily hard for this to occur over quite a period. At 9.30 a.m. on 18 October at the Cultural Centre at Emu Park, Councillor Owens and I will be hosting a morning tea—and everybody is invited—to welcome the two new police officers to Emu Park.

Dr Watson: Are we all invited?

Mr LESTER: Yes, all members are invited. Everybody should come along. I will give members a special welcome if they attend. Also, the ambulance and fire stations are working well. There is continuing work being done on widening the road between Emu Park and Rockhampton. However, we would like to see a 24-hour Police Service established at Yeppoon. Ironically, that was promised by the Labor Party prior to 1989. That was not achieved in the time that the Labor Party was in power.

Dr Watson: They didn't expect you to win.

Mr LESTER: No, they did not expect me to win. We are in power, and I still have to say the same thing. We do need a 24-hour Police Service there. There have been a couple of severe bashings. In recent times, a

young chap by the name of McGuire, who comes from an excellent family, was bashed up outside Bonkers nightclub. He had his head kicked in. He is going to survive, but just how we are not quite sure. It was an horrific incident. The police did an excellent job, and they are working to see what can be done to overcome these problems. We are still working on getting a 24-hour police station at Yeppoon, but we are deeply grateful for what we have been given at Emu Park, that is, the additional police officer.

We are still working on Kinka Beach. The good people there talk to me daily about what is happening. Officers from the department have met with the Kinka Beach people, as well as the Minister and, formerly, the Premier. We are seeing some progress to the point at which the department has accepted some alternative suggestions put up by the learned local people. It now comes down to a question of funding. It is important that we obtain some funding. The Department of the Environment tells me that it only tells us what to do; it does not give us any funds. So it comes down to the Department of Local Government, which I understand can, in special circumstances, grant funding to the level of 25 per cent of the cost. We are also negotiating with the Main Roads Department, because the road is coming awfully close to where the erosion is occurring. The Transport Department recently told the Livingstone Shire Council that it will organise some funding provided that it comes out of another project in the shire. I imagine that the council was not very happy with that suggestion; nor were the other ratepayers. Nevertheless, we are working on this matter.

I want to compliment the Main Roads Department on continuing the widening of the road between Yeppoon and Rockhampton. We now have quite a considerable stretch of four-lane highway. Additionally, in recent times we have been given a passing lane. This is very helpful to motorists, although I would have liked to have seen the passing lane a little bit longer, because the current road design creates a bottleneck. We are reaching the stage at which we are going to need a four-lane highway all the way between Rockhampton and Yeppoon.

Time expired.

Population Decline in Regional and Remote Centres

Hon. T. McGRADY (Mount Isa) (7.21 p.m.): One of the major issues facing this country today is the decline in population numbers in regional and country Australia. In

Queensland, that problem is many times worse. As the numbers reduce, so too do the services, and it becomes a vicious circle. Actions by Governments, both State and Federal, in closing down Medicare offices, immigration offices, taxation offices and many other offices around the State and the country mean a further loss of jobs in regional and remote centres. As politicians, we can sit back and allow the gradual death of regional and remote Queensland, or we can say, "Enough is enough", and devise policies and programs which will arrest this decline. The sad and sorry story is that the closure of offices and the loss of facilities has escalated in recent times under National/Liberal Party Governments.

Private enterprise has a role to play but they cannot simply make decisions without taking into account the social consequences of their actions. They have a responsibility to the community. One of the concerns that has been expressed many times is the fly in, fly out operations around Australia today, particularly in the mining industry. The sad and sorry story is that some of these mining companies pay little, if any, regard to the local community. Most of them do. Most of them have a sense of corporate responsibility and are in fact good corporate citizens, but some of them simply move in, dig up the ground and move off somewhere else. But the lead and the vision must come from Governments.

I am somewhat sick and tired of Government departments withdrawing services from my electorate. The latest is the Fire Service, which has recently announced that it is going on to the 000 number. As most of us know, that means that when a person picks up the telephone and dials 000, that call goes to anywhere at all in Australia. What that means is that the communication room in my home city closes down, and with it four jobs simply disappear.

There is also great difficulty in getting people to work in remote and regional centres, because as the jobs disappear people are reluctant to come and work in these places. I have spoken many times about the problems associated with trying to get doctors to come and work and live in regional and remote parts of the State. We also have problems with teachers, ambulance officers, fire officers, nurses, local government officers and, indeed, all public servants. The recent initiatives in offering a decent Remote Area Incentives Scheme to teachers was applauded and welcomed by most people in the remote parts of the State. I was one of the first people to congratulate the Government on its actions. But it cannot stop there. We have to offer

incentives to get people to come out and work and live in these centres.

Whether people understand it or not, it is an additional cost to live in the Dajarras, the Mornington Islands, the Doomadgees and the Cloncurrys of this State. If public servants are simply going to receive \$15 or \$30 a week as compensation, there is no way in the world we are going to get people to come and work in these centres, which means that we cannot provide the facilities and we cannot provide the services to the people who live there, and hence the vicious circle starts all over again.

It is up to people such as myself to remind this Parliament at every single opportunity that it is the people who live in electorates such as mine—and others, but in this case, my electorate of Mount Isa—who produce the wealth for this State. Every tonne of ore which is extracted from the ground is new wealth. Every kilo of beef which is raised on those properties out there is new wealth for this State. People have to start to realise that it is the people in these centres who are creating the wealth which Mrs Sheldon and other people spend willy-nilly. That wealth comes from the places such as those in my electorate.

Tonight, I want this Parliament to understand that there is a crisis in rural and regional Queensland. We are losing services left, right and centre. This has to be arrested. People in Government have to understand the reasons why this is occurring. Unless we sit down and try to devise some policies and programs which will arrest this trend, this State will not continue to prosper.

District Health Councils

Mr HEGARTY (Redlands) (7.26 p.m.): The advertisement on 28 September seeking expressions of interest in the new District Health Councils represents a turning point in health administration in this State. Coalition Health Minister Mike Horan has made clear that the establishment of the 38 district councils firmly establishes the coalition model of community input into health delivery. These District Health Councils will be comprised of a very workable 8 to 10 community leaders, health professionals, business people and concerned citizens.

The health council that I have been most interested in is the Bayside, which covers the Redlands and Wynnum Hospitals as well as a number of school dental clinics. I have put forward for consideration for inclusion on the Bayside District Health Council several capable

local community leaders who will be ideal monitors and who will identify community health needs so that relevant services can be provided. The formation of a health council could not have come at a more opportune time: just before the expansion of the Redlands District Hospital from its present 40-bed capacity to 144 beds. This will include provision for maternity services as well as a new initiative of 24 beds for mental health patients; all in all, providing a range of services only short of the tertiary treatment facilities available at the major hospitals like Royal Brisbane, Princess Alexandra and the Mater.

Mike Horan has put on public record that the role of the District Health Councils will include monitoring service delivery and business plans, contributing to strategic direction and policy, allocating and overseeing minor capital works programs and monitoring financial compliance. These District Health Councils will report directly to the Health Minister, allowing them to sidestep bureaucratic red tape and address any problems directly to the person who is in a position to solve them without the endless

meetings, memos and committee deliberations that can paralyse public administration. Direct access to the Minister also means that these councils cannot be sidelined and are assured of the real power needed to function effectively.

Mike Horan's low-cost, community-friendly District Health Councils stand in stark contrast to the vastly expensive bureaucratic monolith that Labor imposed upon this State. Labor's failed regional health authorities, which soaked up so much of the money which should have been used to fund hospital beds and services, are an allegory for the failure of the last Labor Government. Mike Horan summed up the real triumph of his District Health Council model when he described it as health administration getting back to basics and ensuring that ordinary people have a real say in the health services of their local community. This kind of no-nonsense, community-centred approach to health services exemplifies——

Time expired.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 7.30 p.m.