THURSDAY, 10 OCTOBER 1996

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

PETITIONS

The Clerk announced the receipt of the following petitions—

Bill of Rights

From **Mrs Cunningham** (435 signatories) requesting the House to (a) uphold the Bill of Rights as a long standing and highly successful social contract of grave and momentous import which cannot be fiddled with nor altered at the whim of any Parliament not indirectly through stealth via legislation which attempts to subtly counter any of our traditional safeguards granted to us "forever", (b) continue to allow all Queensland citizens of good character their right to have arms for their defence and (c) call a referendum to allow the citizens of Queensland the right to debate and vote to retain or reject entirely our ancient inherited social contract, namely The Bill of Rights of 1688, including the provisions which give parliamentary privilege to words spoken in Parliament.

Queensland Anti-Discrimination Commission

From **Mr Fouras** (9 signatories) requesting the House to (a) ensure that the Queensland Anti-Discrimination Commission is fully and properly funded and resourced to carry out its legislative purposes under the Anti-Discrimination Act 1991.

Nundah Commuter Bikeway

From **Mr J. N. Goss** (130 signatories) requesting the House to abandon the proposed Nundah Commuter Bikeway concept on Sandgate Road between Eton Street, Nundah and Jefferis Street, Virginia.

Suncorp

From **Mr Welford** (4 signatories) requesting the House to reject any move to sell-off Suncorp.

National Parks

From **Mr Welford** (4,829 signatories) requesting the House to prevent (a) private enterprise development (such as resorts) within the boundaries of any Queensland national park, (b) national park's facilities and assets such as camping grounds and picnic areas being leased to private developers and (c) fees or charges being introduced or extended to cover all visitors to national parks and to ensure that the existing entry fees are abolished.

Petitions received.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Heiner Documents Inquiry

Hon. R. E. BORBIDGE (Surfers Paradise—Premier) (9.33 a.m.), by leave: On 7 May this year, Cabinet approved the briefing of Mr Morris, QC, and Mr Howard to provide advice to me as to whether it would be in the public interest to hold an inquiry into two well-known whistleblower cases. I now table that report.

The first matter concerned allegations by Mr Kevin Lindeberg that: one, the decision of the then Queensland Cabinet on 5 March 1990 to destroy records of interview and related material gathered by retired Stipendiary Magistrate, Mr Noel Heiner, in the course of an inquiry into the John Oxley Youth Centre, Wacol, and its manager, Mr Peter Coyne, in late 1989 and early 1990, was illegal; and, two, the payment of a redundancy package to Mr Peter Coyne, in the sum of $27,190 was illegal.

The second matter concerned allegations by Gordon Harris and John Reynolds that impropriety occurred in respect of: one, the withdrawal of proceedings against John Huey on 6 July 1990; and, two, the subsequent decision not to bring fresh charges against John Huey in respect of allegations that he had fabricated evidence, committed perjury, interfered with Crown witnesses and committed other offences.

The two barristers have now presented their report. It was considered this morning by the Cabinet, and it is now being tabled and made available to all interested members of the community. Both of these issues have been the subject of lengthy debate both inside this Chamber and in the press. They have also been the subject of a report by the Senate Select Committee on Unresolved Whistleblower Cases.

Much has been said one way or the other, and it was the Government's desire to allow, for the first time, independent legal officers not connected with any agency of the Government or the Crown in any capacity to

review all the documentary evidence and provide me with independent advice. In summary, the barristers have advised that the Harris and Reynolds allegations not be the subject of any further inquiry or investigation. In reaching this conclusion, the position of the Director of Public Prosecutions, Mr Royce Miller, has been clarified. Suffice it to say, I am advised that throughout Mr Miller acted properly and the advice he tendered was professional and correct.

However, it is the Heiner shredding controversy about which I have been most surprised. In essence, the barristers have found that it is open to conclude that there was a deliberate and calculated strategy employed by officers of the Department of Family Services to deny Mr Coyne and others access to documents required for potential legal proceedings which they had a legal entitlement to access and to destroy those documents so that the legal proceedings could not succeed.

To quote the barristers—

> "It is open to conclude that other people involved in the destruction of the Heiner documents were well aware that they may be required in a judicial proceeding, and sought their destruction for the very purpose of preventing their being used in evidence in judicial proceedings."

Moreover, the barristers have uncovered evidence which they believe shows that it is open to conclude that officers of the then department deliberately lied and misrepresented to the lawyers acting for Mr Coyne and a trade union the existence of relevant documents. In this context, it is important to quote the following extract from the report—

> "We are of the view that it is open to conclude that responses to correspondence from Mr Coyne and his solicitors was deliberately delayed until the documents were destroyed, and it may even be concluded that particular items of correspondence were intended to obfuscate the true state of affairs. Those considerations are relevant in the present context, as possibly supporting a conclusion that Departmental officers acted with deliberate stealth and lack of candour so as to achieve the destruction of the Heiner documents before proceedings were instituted, thereby supporting a possible conclusion that their destruction occurred with intent thereby to prevent the Heiner documents from being used in evidence."

The barristers then deal with what they refer to as the "smoking gun", namely, the photocopies of statements originally sent to the department in October 1989 by the Queensland State Service Union which led to the establishment of the Heiner inquiry. These photocopies were returned to the department by the Crown Solicitor in April 1990. These documents were sought by both the solicitors for Mr Coyne and the Queensland Teachers Union. On 22 May 1990, the director-general of the department wrote to these persons, informing them that the department did not have in its possession or control any documents of the kind which those parties had sought on behalf of their respective clients or members. In fact, the department did have these documents, and in a hand-written notation uncovered on the files by the barristers, it appears they were destroyed the very next day.

On this point the barristers state that in their view it is highly relevant that the then director-general—

> ". . . misrepresented the true position to Mr Coyne's solicitors (as well as to his Union, the POA) by letters of 22 May 1990, falsely asserting that the Department 'does not have in its possession or control any documents in the nature of complaints leading to the investigation', whereas the true position was that the Department retained photocopies of the statements 'in the nature of complaints leading to the investigation', which were not in fact destroyed until the next day."

The barristers have advised that it is open to conclude that an officer or officers of the then Department of Family Services may have breached sections 129, 132 or 140 of the Criminal Code for destroying the Heiner documents and the photocopies of the material forwarded by the Queensland State Service Union. Breaches of section 55 of the Libraries and Archives Act and section 92 of the Criminal Code are also referred to.

In addition, the barristers believe that it is open to conclude that "official misconduct", within the meaning of sections 31 and 32 of the Criminal Justice Act, was committed by an officer or officers of the department in denying to Mr Coyne his lawful right to obtain copies of documents, in returning original documents to the State Service Union and destroying the photocopies of those documents.

There is then a second limb to this disturbing episode. Mr Coyne was paid out in February 1991 in the sum of $27,190. The barristers conclude that this payment was illegal and involved the commission of an offence under section 204 of the Criminal Code by the then Minister and an officer or officers of the Department of Family Services. As the barristers say—

> ". . . the real issue of concern is not the fact that the payment 'was technically unauthorised under the Act', but the fact that the payment appears to have been made principally to buy Mr Coyne's silence."

Even more damning comments are contained in paragraph 59 of this section, which honourable members and others can read for themselves.

The barristers quote legal advice given to the department by the then Crown Solicitor of 3 June 1993 informing the director-general that this payment was illegal and that only by validating legislation could the illegality be cured. But what troubles me greatly is the conclusion reached by the barristers that—

> "It cannot be supposed that anyone seriously imagined, for a moment, that the sum of $27,190 represented an amount to which Mr Coyne was entitled on the basis of his remuneration arrangements with the Department."

The barristers suggest that there was an ulterior motive in giving Coyne this sum, and point to the fact that he had to sign a deed of settlement preventing him from raising "the issue of his removal from the John Oxley Youth Centre with the media, industrial unions or the State Industrial Commission", preventing him contacting "any member of the staff of the Department to discuss the matter" and preventing him addressing the matter as "the subject of any authorized biography, autobiography or any published article".

Amongst a number of the points made in this report is the suggestion that it is open to be concluded that the persons who negotiated and paid this sum committed conduct which constituted or involved a breach of the trust placed in them by reason of their holding those appointments. To quote from the report—

> "We believe that the public of Queensland are entitled to expect, and do expect, that individuals who hold the public purse strings—especially Ministers of the Crown, and senior public servants—will not take their personal interests into account in disbursing the taxpayers' money. In our view, it is open to conclude that the personal interests of individuals involved in making the payment to Mr Coyne—specifically, their personal interests in preventing public discussion of disclosure of matters which are politically and personally embarrassing—constituted a substantial motivation in respect of the payments to Mr Coyne."

In short, the barristers have advised that it could be concluded that the payment was not calculated on the basis of sums Mr Coyne was legally entitled to, but instead constituted, in common parlance, hush money.

Also, it is evident from this report that the Leader of the Opposition refused permission to allow the barristers to peruse the relevant Cabinet decisions of the previous Government that led to the destruction of the Heiner documents. That was his right but, as the barristers point out, it meant that they were not able to reach a considered view on this aspect of this sorry affair. They point out that this was a factor—and no doubt not a small factor—in their recommending that a public inquiry now be held.

As the barristers point out in their report—

> "Mr Beattie's decision has had the consequence that we are unable to resolve the question whether members of State Cabinet may have committed criminal offences, or may have committed 'official misconduct' within the meaning of the Criminal Justice Act by their participation in the decision to destroy the Heiner documents. The objective facts are well established: State Cabinet did resolve on 5 March 1990 to destroy the Heiner documents. What is not established and what Mr Beattie's decision has prevented us from establishing is whether members of State Cabinet may have known, at the relevant time, that judicial proceedings were then being threatened by Mr Coyne and his representatives and whether Cabinet members may have intended, at the time, that the destruction of the Heiner documents would prevent their being used in evidence in such proceedings. As matters stand that issue can only be resolved by a public inquiry which has access to relevant Cabinet documents and which can take testimony from members of State Cabinet who participated in that decision on 5 March 1990."

In summary, for the first time we now can see this matter in almost totality, and what we see is a troubling picture of public administration in post-Fitzgerald Queensland. We see the unfolding of a series of events which it is now open to conclude were designed to prevent people, whose reputations had been slurred, from defending themselves in the courts, and then to—and I quote the barristers—"buy . . . the silence" of one of the persons whose personal and professional career was destroyed. In short, we see a deeply disturbing tapestry of apparent deceit and misinformation, of the abuse of power and of subsequent half-baked investigations. Once again, the barristers highlight what an amateur job the CJC did in investigating this. I draw the Leader of the Opposition's attention to comments directed to him and Mr Clair in this report. I suggest he reads them carefully.

For the information of the House, I will read one final quote from the report which is relevant in this regard—

> "Whilst we are of the view that the events which occurred between January 1990 and February 1991 involved very grave and serious matters, we are even more concerned that those matters have remained successfully covered up for so many years. In what is commonly referred to as the 'post-Fitzgerald era', there are many people in our community who feel a measure of confidence that serious misconduct by senior public officials cannot go undetected. Even the Criminal Justice Commission's strongest supporters like Mr Clair and Mr Beattie, must have cause to reconsider their confidence in the exhaustiveness—to say nothing as to the independence—of the Commission's investigation into this matter."

The barristers have recommended that a public inquiry be held. The Attorney-General and Minister for Justice——

Opposition members interjected.

Mr BORBIDGE: Opposition members should read the report. They should be ashamed of themselves.

The Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and I will soon be taking a joint submission to Cabinet on this question. At that meeting the issue of whether further action should be taken will be considered. For the moment, however, I suggest that we all read this report carefully. I am staggered by some of the material the barristers have uncovered, and I am deeply concerned about the possible ramifications of some of this material. In fairness to all concerned, I will say no more, as I do not want to prejudice the outcome of any further possible processes.

To all of those whistleblowers in the community—and today I make specific mention of Mr Kevin Lindeberg—today is the day that the iron curtain is lifted on some of the more unsatisfactory aspects of our recent past. In addition, those persons whose reputations have been slurred in these matters—whether they be whistleblowers or professional public servants—can be pleased that this report goes some way towards righting the balance sheet. On behalf of the people of Queensland, I thank Mr Morris and Mr Howard for their report.

Mr FOLEY: I rise to a point of order. The Honourable the Premier is misleading the House in his assertion that the barristers commissioned were not connected with the Crown. It is a serious misleading, because the Treasurer herself tabled in this House an opinion from Mr Morris, QC, in her capacity as Treasurer, that is, representing the Crown, in respect of the Allen Callaghan affair. It is a misleading of the House, and the Honourable the Premier should apologise and withdraw.

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

Mrs SHELDON: I rise to a point of order. I take offence at what the honourable member said. He is speaking of someone who was independently asked by this Government to give a legal opinion, as he in Government—and in Opposition, I would imagine—asked for independent legal opinions. Now he is endeavouring to slur the independence of that eminent QC. I ask the member to withdraw his comments.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! An honourable member cannot take a point of order in relation to another person. If there were a slur against the honourable member, I would accept her point of order.

Mr BEATTIE: I rise on a point of order. I refer members to page 215 of this report. The Premier quoted from it. I draw to the attention of the House so that the record is very clear——

Mrs Sheldon: What is your point of order?

PRIVILEGE

Heiner Documents Inquiry

Mr BEATTIE: I rise on a matter of privilege.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable Leader of the Opposition is raising a matter of privilege.

Mr BEATTIE: The Opposition allowed the Premier the courtesy of a response in silence. I expect the same courtesy.

Point 24 of the recommendations states very clearly that they have no criticism of Mr Clair or me. Let the record stand clearly so that the Premier's attempt to mislead the House and the people of Queensland is buried. I am happy to accept that there is no criticism of Mr Clair or me.

Mr BORBIDGE: I rise to a point of order. I suggest the Leader of the Opposition go home and read the report.

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

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Queensland Investment Corporation Annual Report

Hon. J. M. SHELDON (Caloundra—Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for The Arts) (9.52 a.m.), by leave: It is with pleasure that I table the annual report of the Queensland Investment Corporation for 1995-96. In 1995-96, the QIC continued its strong record of performance in terms of both the investment returns achieved for its clients and the financial return to the Queensland Government as the owner of the funds management business. For its clients, the Queensland Investment Corporation once again delivered a better investment return than the average result obtained by the industry generally. The return on the QIC's largest investment fund, the QIC Investment Trust, was 10.7 per cent. That exceeded the average return of public and private sector competitors by approximately 0.3 per cent and also exceeded the benchmarks adopted internally and by the QIC's clients. On more than $12 billion in funds in the QICIT, the additional return over and above the average is worth tens of millions of dollars to the QIC's clients.

Several new clients committed funds to the QIC during 1995-96: the Queensland Fire Services Superannuation Plan, the Public Trust Office and the Building Union Superannuation Scheme (Queensland). As a Government owned corporation, the QIC earned a very satisfactory profit from its funds management activities. Dividends of $1.8m and $2.32m in lieu of income tax provided a healthy financial return to the Queensland Government. One of the themes of the annual report is that the QIC is celebrating its fifth successful year since inception and a very strong financial institution has been built over that period. I commend to the House the annual report for 1995-96 of the Queensland Investment Corporation, which I table.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Queensland Rural Adjustment Authority Annual Report

Hon. J. M. SHELDON (Caloundra—Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for The Arts) (9.54 a.m.), by leave: I am pleased to report to the Parliament on the activities of the Queensland Rural Adjustment Authority for the financial year to 30 June 1996. The Queensland Rural Adjustment Authority is responsible for the administration of the various schemes of assistance offered to primary producers and small business by the Commonwealth of Australia and the State of Queensland. The year 1995-96 was another difficult year for Queensland's primary producers. There are still many people doing it tough in the bush.

The effects of the worst drought in the history of the State were compounded by poor commodity prices in certain industries. The authority processed a continuing high number of applications for a variety of programs. During financial year 1995-96 the Queensland Rural Adjustment Authority provided $54.3m in interest subsidy grants, providing interest cover on $565.3m of farm and small business debts. In addition, $7.4m was provided by way of concessional loans, professional advice, re-establishment and training grants, under a variety of Commonwealth and State programs. The support provided through the Queensland Rural Adjustment Authority has greatly assisted in maintaining a viable rural sector for the future.

The Queensland Rural Adjustment Authority has also been closely involved in the processes surrounding the Agricultural and Resource Management Council of Australia and New Zealand. The eighth ARMCANZ Conference was held in Cairns on 26 and 27 September 1996 and I am pleased to report that Federal Primary Industries Minister, John Anderson, and the council have guaranteed by that there will be a continuation of current drought relief measures during the present drought crisis. I would like to thank John Anderson and my fellow ARMCANZ Ministers for this welcome show of support of Queensland during our current dreadful drought. That proves that it is indeed possible for problems experienced predominantly by

one State to be addressed through a national forum such as ARMCANZ, rather than become the subject of petty rivalries between States. The spirit of cooperation shown at ARMCANZ8 bodes well for the future resolution of pressing rural problems. The drought relief measures supported by ARMCANZ8 are primarily interest rate subsidies for farms which are long-term viable.

Rural producers have lost income of $3 billion since the drought began in 1991 and the Queensland and Federal Governments have spent over $307m in drought assistance over the same period. Drought policy for the future will be more focused on downturns in agriculture and can be more properly considered as a risk management policy. The draft new drought policy has now been referred to State and Territory Governments for further comment. Minister Anderson has also agreed to appoint a working group to examine transitional issues for Queensland producers as they emerge from drought conditions. The Queensland Government will be to the fore in looking after the interests of our rural people, particularly those still caught in the grip of drought. I table the annual report.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Danpork

Hon. D. J. SLACK (Burnett—Minister for Economic Development and Trade and Minister Assisting the Premier) (9.56 a.m.), by leave: Last Friday I inspected the site of the proposed Danpork project near Warwick on the Darling Downs. It is a major export and job creating project that has recently become the subject of mischievous and inaccurate statements. I am pleased to report that the inspection clarified in my mind the quality and value of the project and the propriety of the environmental and planning approval process that the Danpork company has been required to satisfy and has satisfied.

The company's choosing of Queensland to invest in and develop the $40m project will be a major benefit to this State. The project will include a 10,000-sow piggery and abattoir. It will create 550 jobs—I repeat, 550 jobs—and generate $75m in income a year for the Darling Downs. Danpork gained planning approval only after fulfilling all environmental requirements under Queensland's rigorous environmental impact assessment process which is based on objective scientific investigation and evidence. The Government has provided normal facilitation and assessment process and I congratulate my department on its thoroughly professional work. I emphasise that this project has been approved not as a result of negotiations with the Government but only after satisfying the highest environmental standards laid down by the State and any implications to the contrary are obviously questioning the professionalism and integrity of officers responsible for the assessment.

Despite the spreading of misinformation about the project, the environmental impact assessment statement says that water supplies will not be affected, that local bores and rivers will not be polluted. Effluent will not be discharged into rivers. It will be treated through a series of settlement ponds. The resulting water will then be used to irrigate crops. In addition, Danpork will also be subject to normal State licensing requirements. Contrary to some inaccurate and emotional statements, the project will not take work and jobs away from local farmers. To the contrary, the Danpork project will create much-needed opportunities for Darling Downs pig farmers. The piggery will produce 200,000 pigs each year. The abattoir, however, will require 850,000 pigs a year. There will be a huge annual shortfall. That shortfall will be made up by local farmers supplying the pigs and helping supply a vital new export industry for the region. Danpork has the capacity to enable Australia to become a world pork exporter for the first time. Investors from around the world can have confidence in Queensland's environmental and planning approval process. It is fair, it is transparent, and it is responsible.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Tourism Week

Hon. B. W. DAVIDSON (Noosa—Minister for Tourism, Small Business and Industry) (9.59 a.m.), by leave: I wish to inform the House of one of Queensland's major tourism activities taking place next week. Tourism Week will be held throughout the State from this Sunday, 13 October, through to Saturday, 19 October. Tourism Week is a great opportunity for the QTTC, Regional Tourism Associations and the Queensland industry to work together to promote the importance of the tourism industry to the community. It is about community education, increasing the awareness and highlighting the benefits of tourism among the local public, businesses and all levels of government. A key issue and strategic goal of the QTTC's future direction is "to communicate the value

of tourism to the community directly and through our regional partners".

For this reason, the community awareness campaign will have more profile this year and has been extended to continue to run for another three months following Tourism Week. The theme for Tourism Week is "Tourism. Works for Queensland". Promotional material includes 30,000 name badge stickers, 50,000 bumper stickers and 5,000 copies each of three different styles of poster.

The QTTC has negotiated community awareness spaces on two well-positioned billboards in Brisbane. Three different television and radio community awareness commercials have been produced. These are being forwarded to all TV stations in Queensland and 37 radio stations. I hope Queensland's media will take the opportunity to support this vital industry and run these ads on a regional basis. Some of the highlights of Tourism Week are—

the high profile launch of Tourism Week on Sunday, 13 October at Francy's Bakery, Rosalie;

the launch of the new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Holiday Experiences brochure;

the production and distribution of Tourism Week material;

the production and distribution of television and radio commercials as community awareness advertisements, distributed directly to metropolitan and regional media;

the generation and distribution of media releases and media kits on tourism;

the production of tourism information kits for schools;

a tourism investment seminar, in conjunction with the Australian Stock Exchange on Tuesday, 15 October;

the Seafood Festival being held on Friday at South Bank; and

I will also be announcing the new Queensland Events Corporation board and a CEO during Tourism Week.

Mr Gibbs: At long last!

Mr DAVIDSON: Good on you, Bob. Some of the regional activities taking place include—

the world's largest cocktail being made in Buderim;

a dog show and obedience display in Mackay;

markets and camel rides in Chinchilla;

regional tourism awards for the Outback;

Sunshine Coast and Central Queensland Southern Reef;

tourism seminars in regional centres;

displays in shopping centres;

breakfast and lunch sausage sizzles at information centres and tourist attractions; plus

much, much more real community involvement.

As I mentioned previously, the launch of Tourism Week will take place in a Brisbane suburban bakery, Francy's in Rosalie—a Queensland small business which recognises the importance of tourism to its business as a supplier to visitors and locals alike.

I am looking forward to my particular role during this week and invite members of the House to participate in the activities being conducted within their regions during Tourism Week 1996.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Kedron Brook Pollution

Hon. B. G. LITTLEPROUD (Western Downs—Minister for Environment) (10.03 a.m.), by leave: I wish to inform the House of two matters of concern with regard to Kedron Brook in Brisbane. One incident is in regard to Schulz Canal, an extension of Kedron Brook in the Brisbane Airport area.

In August, a meeting was held between representatives of the Department of Environment, the Australian Marine Conservation Society, Port of Brisbane Corporation, Brisbane City Council and Queensland Wader Study Group. This followed concerns raised after it was discovered there was a lack of benthic infauna, that is, small marine animals such as molluscs and worms, in the area. The department carried out water and sediment sampling, which showed water quality was normal but sediment was otherwise. Traces of organochlorine chemicals were found in the sediments, but these were typical of background levels throughout much of the region and within ANZECC guidelines.

Of concern, though, is the presence of a new pesticide, bifenthrin, also known as talstar and brigade, which has been registered in Australia for only 12 months. Its registered uses include pre and post-concrete slab construction for termite proofing and a range of agricultural and domestic uses. Data for this

compound indicate very high toxicity to aquatic organisms but a negligible risk to humans and domestic animals in the levels detected.

Following preliminary results, more extensive sampling was carried out on sediments from estuaries in the Brisbane and near-Brisbane area for specific analysis with regard to bifenthrin. A report is expected next week. If investigations indicate a problem, the matter will be referred to the National Registration Authority, the body which gives approval for such pesticides.

In the other incident, the Department of Environment on Tuesday was informed of a large number of dead fish being found in Kedron Brook in the suburb of the Grange. Departmental officers were on the scene within 30 minutes to begin investigations. Other affected fauna such as eels and tortoises was also found. Investigations have included collection of water samples and fish specimens at various locations for analysis and evaluation of local stormwater drainage paths.

Early investigations indicate that the contaminant may have originated from a stormwater drainage system serving residential areas in Enoggera. It could be difficult to identify the source in such a residential area. There is no evidence of sewage, oil or other gross pollutant, so a chemical is the most likely pollutant. Results of sample analysis are expected in the next week or so.

There is no obvious connection between the two incidents on Kedron Brook but the possibility cannot be ruled out. Both matters are being dealt with as a high priority.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Cooper Creek

Hon. H. W. T. HOBBS (Warrego—Minister for Natural Resources) (10.06 a.m.), by leave: I wish to update and inform the House of events that have taken place at Cooper Creek in the State's far south west. A New South Wales consortium has applied for a licence to irrigate from the Cooper to grow cotton at the Currareva property near Windorah. This happened last year under the Labor Government and, as required by law, the correct process was followed, involving the project being advertised and a detailed assessment being made. This assessment, involving a detailed and lengthy study of the likely impact of further irrigation on the stream and development of a flow management plan by my department, is nearing completion and is within the original time frame. Only then may it be possible to decide whether the Cooper, its sensitive environmental surrounds and the major cattle industry it services, can sustain the loss of the amounts of water needed for water harvesting.

Local cattlemen, Windorah residents, environmentalists and, just lately, scientists have all expressed their strong opposition to any irrigation going ahead. They have formed a powerful lobby group, which has exercised its muscle at a number of public meetings and through an awareness campaign. However, the current legal process must be followed unless the law itself is changed, and I can only ask the people of the Channel Country to be patient for a few more weeks when the assessment is due to be finalised.

I have mentioned a number of times that legislation is being prepared that will allow the rejection of a water harvesting application if it is clearly shown it would be detrimental to the local area. Cabinet has supported this course of action and legislation will be introduced in the near future.

I have attended meetings on three occasions in recent times at Windorah to listen to local views, the most recent being last Friday when the Deputy Prime Minister, Tim Fischer, and Veterans Affairs Minister, Bruce Scott, were both present. I have also made it plain on a number of occasions that I fully understand the anxieties of the people there and share their deep concerns. I reiterate that I would not condone any development on the Cooper that would jeopardise the beef industry or the environment of that great river system.

A recent conference at Windorah attended by arid zone scientists called for the rejection of the irrigation proposal. At the time I expressed my disappointment that I received out of this conference only a two-page political letter containing no objective, factual ecological data that could contribute to my department's assessment. The decision being faced is an extremely important one that deserves to be based on the best information available. Since then, however, I am pleased to say that scientific details have been provided that could play an important part in the finalisation of this matter. Once again, I urge the people of the Cooper Creek to be patient.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Housing Waiting List

Hon. R. T. CONNOR (Nerang—Minister for Public Works and Housing) (10.08 a.m.), by leave: Queensland has

experienced a significant drop in its public housing waiting list, defying a trend of rising numbers over a decade. The number on the waiting lists fell from 29,580 to 26,890, or 9.1 per cent, between 30 March and 30 September this year. The Statewide reduction includes a drop in the number of people waiting four years or more for a home—down from 728 applicants in April to 397 in September. While I am optimistic that the trend towards rising waiting lists may have started to turn, I want to see the next set of figures before being prepared to welcome the news unreservedly.

This is the most significant turnaround against the tide of rising wait lists in recent years. I am advised by my department that Queensland has been performing better than other States in this area. While the reasons for the drop have not been fully determined, it is obvious that the Priority Spot Purchase Housing Acquisition Program and case management of people waiting four years or more for a home have contributed to reducing numbers waiting for homes.

The applicants waiting four years or more have been actively managed since the creation of a case management committee last April. The drop is welcome news, but economic factors and seasonal variations could have a significant effect on future trends. Any wait list will always be unsatisfactory, and numbers waiting will always trend up and down. It is possible that after this news of a sustained reduction in the waiting list is made public, more applicants will register and the lists will again rise.

Under the Priority Spot Purchase Program, almost 400 new or near-new homes have been purchased or are in the process of being acquired. The Gold Coast has the largest number of additional homes purchased under the program, with 192 either acquired or in the throes of being purchased. Brisbane has the next highest total with 113 extra public rental homes out of a Statewide figure of around 400.

The State's $110.5m Community Housing Program, including $93.6m for the building of 992 additional homes, has the potential to provide housing in areas of regional and rural Queensland where it had been extremely difficult to locate new or near new homes for acquisition under the Priority Spot Purchase Program. Homes purchased or in the process of being acquired under the Priority Spot Purchase Program include: 180 on the Gold Coast; 113 in the Brisbane area; 29 in far-north Queensland; 21 on the Sunshine Coast; and 52 are in the process of being assessed. Around 2,526 submissions have been received Statewide, including more than 900 on the Gold Coast.

The emphasis on new or near new homes is not only about providing better quality accommodation for tenants. It is also intended to help stimulate the building industry, as settlements flow through and stock is soaked up. At the same time, we have raised the standard of public housing with the longer-term outlook for public housing in mind.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The time for ministerial statements has expired.

PRIVILEGE

Heiner Documents Inquiry

Mr BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—Leader of the Opposition) (10.11 a.m.): I rise on a matter of privilege suddenly arising. Earlier the Premier read to the House certain aspects of the Report of an Investigation into Allegations by Mr K. Lindeberg, Mr G. Harris and Mr J. Reynolds which sought to denigrate my standing in relation to the release of Cabinet documents. It is important that I draw to the attention of the House pages 8 and 9 of the report, which state in part——

> ". . . we wish to make it clear that we fully accept the propriety of Mr. Beattie's decision to withhold his consent to our inspecting relevant Cabinet documents. With respect, we entirely agree with Mr. Beattie's contention that the 'principle of Cabinet confidentiality is a cornerstone of good government in the Westminster tradition'. In the circumstances, we cannot—and do not—criticise Mr. Beattie's decision to uphold that principle.
>
> . . .
>
> Mr. Beattie's letter to Mr. Borbidge on 20 May 1996 sets out a number of reasons for his refusal to consent. The first reason is that the 'principle of Cabinet confidentiality is a cornerstone of good government in the Westminster tradition'. As we have said, we entirely agree with that view of Mr. Beattie's and we cannot criticise Mr. Beattie's decision to the extent that it is motivated by a desire on the part of Mr. Beattie to uphold an important Constitutional convention. "

Further, the report states—

> ". . . Mr. Beattie had arguably valid reasons for withholding his consent to our inspection of relevant Cabinet documents . . ."

It goes on—

> "It is our experience that Mr. Beattie is widely regarded in the community, even amongst many of his political opponents, as a man of integrity."

ADDITIONAL SITTING DAY

Mr FITZGERALD (Lockyer—Leader of Government Business) (10.13 a.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

> "That pursuant to Standing Order No. 26, the House will meet for the despatch of business, in addition to the days agreed to pursuant to the Sessional Order of 2 April 1996, at 9.30am on Friday, 11 October 1996 on which day the routine business shall be as follows-
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> (a) 9.30 am to 10.30 am—
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> Prayers
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> Messages from the Governor
>
> Matters of Privilege
>
> Speakers Statements
>
> Motions of Condolence
>
> Petitions
>
> Statutory Instruments
>
> Ministerial Statements
>
> Ministerial Notices of Motion
>
> Ministerial Statements
>
> Any other Government Business
>
> Personal Explanations
>
> Reports
>
> Question Time
>
> (b) 10.30 am to Adjournment of the House—
>
> Government Business."

Motion agreed to.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Personal Explanation by Member for Gladstone

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN (Caboolture) (10.13 a.m.), by leave: Yesterday I was accused of lying when I made a speech in this House on Tuesday evening. I wish to make it clear that I told no lies, but simply gave a straightforward and accurate report on exactly what Liberal Party President, Bob Tucker, and National Party Deputy Prime Minister, Tim Fischer, said about the Independent member for Gladstone, Liz Cunningham.

It is Mr Tucker who says that there was an "understanding" with Mrs Cunningham. It is Mr Tucker who says that they were "very comfortable with her" so they "decided to cooperate with her". It is Mr Tucker who says that the Liberals stood aside "so she could have another go". It is Mr Tucker who says that the Nationals ran a candidate just "to soak up some of the votes to direct preferences to her". It is Mr Fischer who says "the Liberal and National organisations in Gladstone are to be congratulated for getting Mrs Cunningham up". If these are lies, they are not my lies.

SCRUTINY OF LEGISLATION COMMITTEE

Report

Mr ELLIOTT (Cunningham) (10.14 a.m.): I lay upon the table of the House the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee's report on Workplace Health and Safety Amendment Regulation No. 1 1996. I move that it be printed.

Ordered to be printed.

NOTICE OF MOTION

Social and Community Services Award

Mrs WOODGATE (Kurwongbah) (10.14 a.m.): I give notice that I shall move—

> "That an allocation be made from the Treasurer's Advance to meet the costs of implementing the SACS Award in the non-government community sector in this financial year."

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Inquiry into Criminal Justice Commission

Mr BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—Leader of the Opposition) (10.15 a.m.): In the House this morning, the Premier tabled a political document which is designed to denigrate the CJC and which seeks to attack former Labor members of Cabinet. I refer members to pages 210 and 211 where, under the terms of reference for this suggested inquiry, we have another dip into the public purse. Looking at the top of page 211, we see that the inquiry heads will be paid $2,500 to $3,000 a day, and counsel assisting will get another $2,000 a day. How much longer can the people of Queensland suffer this Government dipping into the public purse? The Government is motivated by inquiries and is prepared to take money out of health, education, police and

everywhere else to run inquiries. This is not a Government. What the Government cannot handle incompetently, which is most things, it has an inquiry into.

I table a letter from Ken O'Shea, the former Crown Solicitor, which sets out exactly where the mistake in all this began. It began in the previous National Party Government, because it did not set up the proper terms of reference. This is an inquiry arising out of National Party incompetence, designed to come up with a political outcome to serve the National Party.

One of the lawyers who provided this advice was none other than the barrister who appeared for the Deputy Premier at the Carruthers inquiry, Mr Morris. He also provided advice to the Deputy Premier in relation to the Callaghan matter. Who is providing this advice to the Government? The lawyer who advised the Deputy Premier at the Carruthers inquiry and also provided her advice in relation to Callaghan. This is a politically motivated exercise.

Time expired.

Involvement of Indigenous People in Sport

Mr HEALY (Toowoomba North) (10.17 a.m.): As part of the Government's total commitment to the development of sport and recreation at all levels throughout the State, the Honourable Mick Veivers, Minister for Emergency Services and Minister for Sport, has completed a preliminary investigation of indigenous involvement in sport and recreation. The Honourable Minister has recently challenged Queensland's peak sporting bodies to be more innovative in their attempts to get more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people playing sport.

There is no doubt that the outstanding efforts in Atlanta of athletes such as Cathy Freeman, Baedon Choppy, Nova Peris and Kyle Van Der Kuyp clearly demonstrates what indigenous Australians could achieve if given the right encouragement and opportunities. Under the guidance of the Honourable Minister, the Office of Sport and Recreation has surveyed all State sporting organisations to determine what initiatives had been taken to encourage indigenous participation and to identify any barriers. The results of the survey were both interesting and revealing, to say the least. Most sports reported that their sport was "open to all" and that no barriers existed and, to be fair, some very good initiatives were cited. However, being "open to all" by not putting up any barriers and actively encouraging participation from community members are two very different things.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people approach sport differently from non-indigenous people. Within indigenous communities family and community affiliation are both very important. To achieve increased indigenous participation in sport, they must be deliberately made welcome or they are likely to feel excluded. It is important for all members to understand that equity of access does not mean treating everyone the same but, rather, recognising different needs and addressing them.

With this in mind, the Honourable Minister will continue to work closely with local communities and the Office of Sport and Recreation to identify the special measures or initiatives required. This Government will remain committed to the development of sport and recreation at all levels throughout the State, and through the active encouragement of indigenous participation in sport, a small but very important part of the Government's commitment will be addressed. I commend the Honourable Minister for this pro-active initiative to actively encourage participation in sport and recreation in this area of great need.

Roma Street Railway Site

Ms BLIGH (South Brisbane) (10.19 a.m.): Over the past 24 hours we have seen nothing but evasion and double speak from the Premier, his Minister for Public Works and Housing and the Treasurer over the redevelopment of the Roma Street site. The member for Surfers Paradise and his Minister can wriggle and squirm all they like about plans, meetings and workshops and they can try to muddy the waters, but the clear fact is that they reduced the planned allocation for the project from $35m to $500,000 in this Budget.

The Minister reported to the Estimates committee that the Government was seeking a cost-neutral outcome based on commercial and residential interests. The Premier and his Minister for Economic Development and Trade are on the public record promising that this site offered the community an enormous development opportunity. There can be no clearer indication that the Government was intent on selling off this site as a one-off money grab. Its pathetic allocation of $500,000 will buy nothing on the site in this financial year. This Government had no commitment to redevelop the area for the people of this State. And then the members

opposite got caught out. What did they do when they got caught out? They did another backflip. The Premier is becoming known as the "somersault man". Every time he makes a decision, he has to do a backflip on it.

What did the Premier say this morning? He said that the Roma Street park could be paid for through cross-subsidy revenue from a jazzed up South Bank and the redevelopment of other sites, such as the Boggo Road gaol site. But the question is: from where is the Government planning to get the money? There are only two ways in which to raise money from South Bank. One is to turn it into a concrete jungle. The people of Queensland and Brisbane can choose where they have their concrete jungle—on South Bank or at Roma Street. Alternatively, the Government can charge people to access the South Bank site—in other words, there would be toll booths at South Bank. I know that officers in the Minister's department have been preparing documentation about user charges for access to the South Bank site. If the Premier is not aware that that is what they are doing, he should find out more about what those officers have been doing. Clearly, the Government cannot have it both ways. Who has been involved in this debacle? The member for Surfers Paradise and the member for Nerang!

Time expired.

Rochedale Rovers Soccer Club

Mr WOOLMER (Springwood) (10.22 a.m.): This morning, I congratulate the Rochedale Rovers Soccer Club on its successful hosting of the national under 14s and under 15s soccer titles. This week-long event saw the arrival last week in Brisbane of some 300 to 400 junior soccer players. The competition is the primary talent scouting event for teams of the future.

Interestingly, with respect to the under 17s team, which is travelling the world at the moment representing the country, every single player in that team had played in the under 14s and under 15s tournament two and three years ago. I especially congratulate Ean Schofield, the tournament chairman; Peter Walklate, the tournament manager; Sue Wake, the secretary; and, of course, Keiran Cooper, the club soccer manager and, once again, the Fourex League's leading scorer for the 1996 season.

Queensland won the under 14s tournament with many fine victories in that competition. Unfortunately, we did not do quite so well in the under 15s tournament, which was won by New South Wales. The future of soccer in Australia is in good hands if the administration of this event is anything to go by. The event ran smoothly at the Rochedale Rovers Soccer Club. It recently put about $750,000 into its clubhouse and facilities, making it one of the highest-standard clubs in this State. The club has a proud association with the people of Rochedale. It now has some 6,000 members. I am very proud to be the patron of that club.

I also congratulate the Minister, Mick Veivers, on agreeing to visit the club next week. He will see first-hand the good work which has gone into the area. We have some of the best playing fields and the best soccer players in the State. The tournament was well run. A dinner was conducted on Tuesday night, attended by David Hill, the Chairman of Australian Soccer——

Time expired.

Ms S. Williams

Ms SPENCE (Mount Gravatt) (10.24 a.m.): Yesterday, I was contacted by a very distressed constituent, Ms Sharon Williams, who on the advice of staff at the PA Hospital sought my assistance in the hope that her operation currently booked for next Thursday at the PA goes ahead after a series of cancellations. Based on the Minister's grandstanding in this House about the success of Surgery on Time, I thought he might like to know what is really going on at the PA with respect to surgery delays.

Ms Williams has had her surgery cancelled five times. She is desperate to know whether she can expect another cancellation of this surgery she needs to remove a tumour on her pituitary gland. This is one of the patients Mr Horan keeps telling us is no longer on waiting lists! I want the Health Minister to know what Ms Williams goes through each time she prepares herself for this operation. As a single mother, she has to arrange child care for her son for the time she will be in hospital as well as for the duration of her post-operative care at home.

Her friends and relatives have five times taken leave from work and flown in from other cities to help her out. Luckily, Ms Williams has an understanding employer who has allowed her to take time off work five times, but she feels she can inconvenience him only so many times. Five times she has had to make the mental preparation for this major surgery due to the high risk associated with complex

neurosurgery, only to get another call from the PA cancelling her operation.

Yesterday, the staff of the PA Hospital advised her to seek the intervention of the Health Minister to ensure her operation goes ahead next week. This is Queensland Health under the National Party! Ms Williams is embarrassed that she has to use her local member to try to get her operation, but she has nowhere else to turn. My constituent knows that neither the staff nor the surgeon at the PA are to blame for these cancellations, because the staff admit that the real problem is the inadequate allocation of operating theatre time.

Time expired.

Health Department Land, Mount Ommaney Electorate

Mr HARPER (Mount Ommaney) (10.26 a.m.): I refer to the matter of Health Department land at Mount Ommaney. The previous Government was going to sell that land under the current Opposition Leader, despite supposed commitments prior to last year's election. The throwaway line was used by the then Health Minister, now Opposition Leader, that the promise went with the member. The current Health Minister, Mike Horan, halted the process of sale to allow the community to have a say about the land and to put forward suggestions.

I have had the full assistance and support of Councillor Christine Watson, councillor for Jamboree, in the project, and many, many citizens and groups in the area. Their efforts are to be applauded. Councillor Watson has worked hard for many years to bring about a community centre for the area, and she has also put in a tremendous effort on the hospital site. I was very surprised to see the ALP candidate for the Jamboree ward at the coming council elections in a *Community News* election handout jumping on the bandwagon by suddenly wanting to fight to save the site for the community and circulating a petition. That fight is already well advanced, including a petition in January/February to stop the ALP Government selling the site. A fight was not necessary after the Government changed hands and Mike Horan cooperated with us. I am sure local residents will see this move for what it is: a cynical attempt to jump on the bandwagon when the matter is already well advanced. The candidate should have followed the events in the local press. Has she contacted Councillor Watson, me or the groups? I would be very doubtful.

Also, at public meetings which I have attended the Lord Mayor has been asked his view about the council taking up some of the land. He has said he will pay only the normal 10 per cent price. He even accused Councillor Watson of being hypocritical in fighting for the land, yet now his team member is doing the same thing. Is he going to call her hypocritical? I am happy to have Councillor Christine Watson and the large number of local residents continue—yes, "continue"—to work on this matter. I also applaud Councillor Watson for her long-term efforts to gain a library for Centenary and skating facilities for young people next to Amazons.

Time expired.

Blackwater Hospital

Mr PEARCE (Fitzroy) (10.28 a.m.): I wish to bring to the attention of the House yet another matter which is part of a campaign of misinformation on health issues right across Queensland by the Health Minister. The issues relate to the Blackwater Hospital.

Firstly, the Minister has taken credit for providing $15,000 for refixing the roof so as to meet current Building Act requirements. The work has been done in the time of the coalition Government, but the funds and the work were approved by the Labor Government. I have a faxed notification of the project dated 12 February 1996. Since then, the issue of laundry services for the Blackwater Hospital has been drawn to the attention of the Minister.

On Tuesday, 23 July, I sat alongside the Minister in this place and discussed the rumoured closure of the laundry at Blackwater Hospital. It was suggested that the service would be provided by Emerald Hospital. He gave me an insurance that the laundry would stay at Blackwater and that maintenance and repair work would be carried out. On 25 July, in a press release, the Minister said that he had authorised a number of maintenance contracts for the hospital, including the repair of the laundry drier and new electrical wiring. In response to an interjection from me on 9 September about Blackwater Hospital——

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The time for Private Members' Statements has expired.

Mr PEARCE: I was just getting wound up, Mr Speaker.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member had a short two minutes.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Health Tripartite Forum; Mr M. Miller

Mr BEATTIE (10.30 a.m.): I ask the Minister for Health: since he was made aware when he first became Health Minister that Mick Miller's State Health Tripartite Forum was suspected of financial irregularities, why did he soon after authorise $50,000 to be paid to Miller's Health Tripartite Forum from his special ministerial account?

Mr HORAN: I thank the honourable Leader of the Opposition for the question. On coming to Government, we were advised of a number of allegations made against the State Health Tripartite Forum. We quite correctly referred all of those allegations to the CJC. There were allegations that were there when Labor was in Government, and there were allegations made when we were in Government. We referred all of those matters to the CJC. As a result, certain requests were made to us for police investigations. We made sure that those particular processes occurred. As the member is aware, matters have been brought before the court.

With regard to the State Health Tripartite Forum—additional funding was provided under the Labor Government in the two Budgets prior to 1995-96. The additional funding provided in 1993-94——

An Opposition member interjected.

Mr HORAN: I will get to that. In 1993-94, additional funding of $80,000 was provided, which included $40,000 out of the then Health Minister's grant in aid fund. What was happening with the State Health Tripartite Forum was this: there were certain funding allocations for the office of the State Health Tripartite Forum in Brisbane, and there was also an allocation of funding of $170,000 per year for the office of the chairman based in Cairns. Each year for the previous three years, there has been a need to re-fund that during the year because they could not meet the wages and they could not meet the travel costs, and it has always been at the request of the regional health authority. In 1993-94, there was an additional $80,000 put into that particular office of the chair. In 1994-95, under the former Health Minister, $138,000 was put into that particular office of the chair, including $20,000 from grant in aid. As I said, $40,000 from grant in aid was also provided in the year before.

When we came to Government, there was still a serious situation in that forum. The regional health authority advised that wages were unpaid, accounts were unpaid, travel was unpaid, etc. These accounts had to be paid. Exactly as occurred under the previous Government, there was supplementation. I made sure that the supplementation was the same as occurred under Mr Elder, the member for Capalaba, the year before. The total supplementation provided under Mr Elder was $138,000. The total supplementation provided in the 1995-96 year—which consisted of a number of sources, including grant in aid, as in previous years—was $141,000. This was taken on the legal advice that prior to any particular charges being preferred these funds had to be provided. The regional health authority advised—exactly as it advised Mr Beattie, Mr Elder and Mr Hayward—that there were accounts to be paid and there were wages to be paid whether or not any charges were actually laid.

Health Tripartite Forum; Mr M. Miller

Mr BEATTIE: I refer the Minister for Health to his secret Mundingburra deal with State Health Tripartite Forum Chairman Mick Miller, and I ask: why is Mr Miller still receiving full pay when he has been on suspension from all duties since May while his organisation is investigated for misappropriation of taxpayers' funds? Is this not a pay-off for the Minister's secret Mundingburra deal with Miller, and how does the Minister justify this disgraceful situation?

Mr HORAN: I thank the honourable Leader of the Opposition for his question. Let us get the first point clear: there was no secret deal. As I have clearly told this House before, I stood in front of the Townsville General Hospital and held a public media conference. The ABC was there. The *Courier-Mail* photographer was there, but the reporter did not turn up. The *Townsville Bulletin* was there, and some three or four other reporters were also there. I held a public media conference in which we espoused our policy and our initiatives. Members opposite call that a secret deal—standing up at a public media conference with the *Courier-Mail*, the ABC, the *Townsville Bulletin* and everybody else! At that conference, we detailed our initiatives.

As to the second part of the question—I said previously that these allegations were made under the previous Government. We found out about them when we came to office. Additional allegations were made after we came to Government. We correctly referred everything to the CJC. We have correctly referred everything to the Police Department, as requested by the CJC. As a result, particular processes have occurred through

the court. Those processes are continuing, so I will not talk about them.

In accordance with the best legal advice that we have, it has been correct to continue the payment while these people are there, until such actions occur in the court which then determine what we can do.

Child Immunisation Strategies

Mr SPRINGBORG: I ask the Honourable the Minister for Health: will he outline what strategies the coalition State Government will be putting in place to increase the rate of child immunisation across Queensland?

Mr HORAN: I thank the honourable member for Warwick for his question. Indeed, it is a pleasure to once again stand in this House and talk about more improvements brought about by the coalition Government as we get back to basics. Yesterday, we delivered all the details of the first three months of Surgery on Time and how, in each of the 10 hospitals, the actual waiting time has decreased as we gradually reduce the dreadful waiting lists and the dreadful waiting times inherited from the previous Government.

Today, I am proud to announce on behalf of the coalition Government the introduction of a seven-point immunisation action plan. In Queensland last year, only 29 per cent of children were fully immunised at school entry. This was the second-worst level of any State in Australia. Between 1990 and 1995 there were more than 14,000 notified cases of vaccine-preventable diseases in Queensland. This year alone, the Statewide notified outbreaks of preventable diseases have included: measles, 61; whooping cough, 466; and rubella, 564. Like Surgery on Time, we have set targets and made these targets quite public. By the end of next year—by 31 December 1997—we plan to increase the percentage of children aged two years who are fully immunised to 75 per cent. By the end of December 2001, we plan to have 95 per cent of children aged two years fully immunised.

I will now outline the seven points of the action plan. It is designed to give leadership, to give action and to give results. It involves the general practitioners and divisions of general practice throughout Queensland. It involves the Local Government Association of Queensland. It is a plan in which Queensland Health puts up its hand and says, "We will take lead action. We will be the sweeper who picks up all of those children who are not immunised through the divisions of GPs or through local government clinics."

The first point is an injection of $500,000 for public awareness campaigns. There is a further funding package of $500,000 to provide additional vaccines over and above those currently funded by the State and Federal Governments. Part of this second $500,000 in funding will be for the seven new child health nurses that we will be appointing throughout the State to provide the safety net. There will be an audit of immunisation services across all district health services to ensure the facilitation of the delivery of flexible services. This will involve GPs, local councils and our own community health centres. We are going to develop a process of immunisation certification at school so that at-risk children can be quickly identified and prompt action taken in the event of a disease occurrence. We are going to develop procedures that enable Queensland Health facilities to take advantage of all contact with children—that is, through all of our centres—to ensure that vaccination status is reviewed and, whenever possible, vaccination provided on the spot. We are going to improve the quality of services provided by vaccine service providers through training programs for general practitioners and nurses in general practice.

Very shortly, we will be introducing legislation into this House that will enable the provision of nurse immunisers. We have worked through this process with the AMA and the College of General Practitioners. A project officer has been appointed for 12 months to oversee the improvement of Queensland Health's vaccination database so that we can proceed with the issuing of reminders for overdue vaccinations and include vaccine distribution systems on the database.

I want to thank the staff of Queensland Health for their role in the development of this seven-point immunisation plan, in particular Dr John Scott, who has recently been appointed the director of public health services. There is a meeting today of the Immunisation Reference Group. It includes representation from local government—from the Brisbane City Council and rural councils. We are hoping that, through this plan and getting back to basics, we can protect our young from killer diseases such as polio, diphtheria, tetanus, measles, mumps, rubella and HIB.

This is just another example of how the coalition Government is getting back to basics, setting targets, showing action and leadership and bringing about real, solid improvements to the health of Queenslanders. This cannot be

better demonstrated than by a seven-point plan backed up by staff, backed up by money and backed up by action to bring about a dramatic increase in immunisation rates from the current level of 29 per cent to 95 per cent.

Mr S. Collard

Mr ELDER: I refer the Treasurer to her appointment of former National Party Senator and Conservative Club convenor Stan Collard to the State Library Board and media reports that his businesses are now in liquidation and that legal action is being considered against him for trading whilst insolvent. In light of the Treasurer's ill-fated appointment of convicted thief Allen Callaghan to the Library Board, my question is: if she is going to appoint a political crony to the board, can the Treasurer at least find one who is not facing bankruptcy or Fraud Squad investigations?

Mrs SHELDON: I will not call the member "honourable"; I will call him the member for Capalaba. I would like to read to the House and have incorporated in *Hansard* a letter that I received from Stan Collard which will very clearly describe the man whom the member for Capalaba is trying to slur. I will put the record straight. The Labor Party says that it is a party for social justice and equity, but day after day in this House all we see from those opposite is personal assassination of people who are in no position to defend themselves.

The letter from Mr Collard to me is dated 9 September, and it states—

> "Dear Minister,
>
> I wish to let you know the following information. In April 1995, I put a small company, of which I was a non-executive chairman, into voluntary liquidation. I must confess to thinking that that was the end of the matter and Gloria and I could start rebuilding our lives. However, after all of this time, I have been summonsed for public examination on 17 September."

He continues—

> "I received nothing from the company, either by way of remuneration or allowances, but have subsequently used most of our life savings to pay secured creditors. Normally, such procedures simply proceed, but in my case, even with my low profile, such examination may attract some publicity and so I am advising you accordingly."

He has also verbally advised Erik Finger and Greg Andrews.

I believe that this matter should be dealt with in the way in which it is being dealt with at the moment. Stan Collard is an honourable man doing his best in these circumstances. I suggest that the member for Capalaba looks at his facts before he starts to slur people, which seems to be a major performance of his in all of his dealings.

Mr ELDER: I rise to a point of order. I have all the facts and I will table them for the information of the House.

Recreation Industry Jobs Guide

Mr CARROLL: I direct a question to the Minister for Emergency Services and Minister for Sport. Recently, the Minister officially launched a new guide which aims to give young people advice on how to get a job in the recreation industry. I ask: can the Minister explain to the House how this guide will achieve that?

Mr VEIVERS: Recently, I had the pleasure of launching the book *Seeking Active Employment—Your Guide to Careers in the Recreational Industry* at the South Bank TAFE. The guide features advice from professionals about careers in the recreation industry.

Mr Welford: Are they currently on the dole?

Mr VEIVERS: I am trying to get them off the dole.

Mr Gibbs: Jobs with the ARL?

Mr VEIVERS: I thought that the member for Bundamba was applying for one of those.

The guide has been compiled by my department in conjunction with the Fitness Sport and Recreation Training Centre, and it is worth reading. When one considers the size of the recreation industry throughout Queensland and Australia, it is no wonder that Governments and communities around the country are starting to take notice of this giant industry and its employment potential.

I can assure honourable members opposite that the Queensland Government is committed to helping the industry reach its full potential.

Mr Gibbs: Pick it up and read it.

Mr VEIVERS: Unlike the member who interjects, I need only a few helpful notes.

The good thing about the recreation industry is that it is typically made up of small businesses. It is therefore very labour intensive and is a highly suitable area for job creation for

young people. Central Queensland academic Professor Trevor Arnold has also been quoted as saying that last year employment increased in the sport and recreation industries by 23 per cent. Currently, over 60 per cent of Queenslanders participate actively in sport and recreation, and I am thinking of joining them! As a result, job growth in the Queensland recreation and related service industries in the last 10 years was estimated at 45,000 people.

There is also an increasing body of evidence supporting the importance of regular exercise and active lifestyles to improve health, and, I might say, the Health budget. I am also thinking of adding myself to that. With so many businesses deriving a healthy income from direct or indirect involvement with the sport and recreation industry, there will be a corresponding increase in the opportunities available for all Queenslanders, particularly young people, to build a solid and lifelong career in our recreation industry.

Extended Trading Hours

Mr HAMILL: I refer the Treasurer to the protocols of the coalition Government of Queensland, which state—

> "Ministers shall accept full responsibility for the department for which they have been commissioned as Minister."

Given that the Treasurer abides by this protocol, I refer to the submission to the Knox inquiry by the Acting Under Treasurer, Dr McTaggart, in which he says—

> "The arguments against liberalisation of trading hours and for further restriction are not supported by the evidence."

He states further—

> "This impact (on small retailers) is not sufficient reason to continue conferring a privileged position on this group at the expense of other retailers and the community generally."

Who in the Government are members of the public to believe about shop trading hours—the Treasurer, the Premier or Mr Santoro? Or has the Under Treasurer given them all up as not having a clue about what they are doing?

Mrs SHELDON: Anyone was able to make, and should have made, a submission to that inquiry. The member is obviously suggesting that certain people should be restricted. This is yet another example of the Labor Party trying to manipulate the public. The matter is also currently being considered by Cabinet.

Surat Basin/Dawson Valley

Mr ELLIOTT: I ask the Minister for Economic Development and Trade: can he update the House on the response by business to the Queensland Government's call for expressions of interest in the integrated development of the Surat Basin/Dawson Valley areas.

Mr SLACK: I thank the honourable member for the question and for his interest in what will be one of the most exciting developments of the latest resource frontier in Queensland, and I inform the honourable member that it is a massive resource frontier. The development of this resource will be an example of the cooperation between private industry and the Government.

I am pleased to inform the House that calls for expressions of interest in the development of the Surat Basin/Dawson Valley were advertised in the paper on Saturday and that the Government has received 120 inquiries about the development of this massive coal resource and the agricultural potential in that region. Honourable members would or should know that there are about 4 billion tonnes of steaming coal there waiting to be developed.

The Government has received 120 inquiries, and 220 kits explaining the development have been sent to those inquirers. For the benefit of the House, I table that information package. It is an invitation to private sector companies to avail themselves of infrastructure development opportunities.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SLACK: Members of the Opposition are calling out loudly, but I cannot understand a word that they are saying. The members opposite know that this resource has existed for many years. They were in Government for six years and they did nothing about it. No imagination and no innovation was shown on their part, and when this Government starts to show a bit of imagination and innovation, what happens? All that those opposite can do is mutter. They show their negativity. For the whole time that I have been a member of this Parliament, I have heard nothing positive come out of the mouths of the members opposite.

Inquiries have come from many overseas companies—large and small—but particularly from companies in Japan and Hong Kong. They have requested information kits, as have

many Australian companies—leading engineering firms, finance and accounting firms, mining companies, and energy and construction companies. The requests have come by mail, by phone and via the Internet. We have used every possible means to get them——

Mr Schwarten interjected.

Mr SLACK: Is the honourable member for Rockhampton knocking the scheme?

Mr Schwarten interjected.

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

Mr SLACK: This will mean jobs for Queenslanders, which the member's Government did nothing about.

In relation to this exciting development—we have asked the private sector to submit expressions of interest, to seek information associated with the development, and to provide us with novel ideas. This the private sector has done enthusiastically, according to the responses that we have received. This is a new and innovative approach that the members opposite did not have the capacity to adopt. We are welcoming that input. There is no doubt that there will be some benefits to the electorate of the member for Cunningham when this area is developed.

Roma Street Railway Site

Mr MACKENROTH: I refer the Minister for Public Works and Housing to the proposed redevelopment of the Roma Street railway yards and his answer yesterday to the Parliament wherein he stated that the report for the proposed redevelopment was a result of a workshop meeting between his department and the Brisbane City Council on 19 August 1996. I refer also to the Premier's statement yesterday to the Parliament wherein he stated, "I am advised that the plans in question were submitted to the Brisbane City Council following a workshop on 19 August involving officers of the Department of Public Works and Housing and the Brisbane City Council." I ask: will the Minister confirm that this report and plans were prepared as a result of this workshop?

Mr CONNOR: The Minister should refer to the answer——

Mr Mackenroth: I am a member. I would like to be the Minister again, but I am a member.

Mr CONNOR: The member should refer to the answer I gave yesterday.

PRIVILEGE

Roma Street Railway Site

Mr MACKENROTH: I rise on a matter of privilege. The Minister wants me to refer to the answer he gave yesterday. Yesterday he and the Premier stated that the plans were a result of a meeting on 19 August 1996. It is a matter of privilege. The Minister is misleading the Parliament. I have the report here. The dates of the plans are 2 July, 4 July, 9 July and 10 July—all dated on the plans that were provided to the Brisbane City Council. Therefore, they could not be a result of a meeting that was held on 19 August. I move—

> "That this matter be referred to the Members' Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee."

Mr CONNOR: I rise to a point of order.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Question—That the matter raised by the member for Chatsworth be referred to the Privileges Committee—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, Palaszczuk, 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**.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Kuranda High School

Ms WARWICK: I direct a question to the Minister for Education. Recent media reports in my electorate, initiated by the member for Cook, have raised some serious concerns about the future of the proposed Kuranda high school. I ask: is the Minister able to reassure the people of Kuranda that this long-awaited high school will definitely go ahead?

Mr QUINN: I acknowledge the honourable member's deep interest in making sure that that high school does open at the beginning of the 1998 school year. When the Budget was brought down, I was aware that the member for Cook did make certain statements on that date—amongst them the spurious claim that the Kuranda high school was not to proceed because there was no mention of the said high school in the Budget. The member for Cook made a number of claims. He also made the claim that we were not going to proceed with the Wilsonton high school or the one at Tannum Sands. Those unfounded claims caused considerable hardship in those communities where we have worked for quite some time to put in place plans to bring those high schools to fruition.

I can well understand the community's scepticism in regard to the Government's plan, because for six years the Labor Party had promised to build schools in those three locations and in six successive Budgets had failed to allocate any money for them. I can well understand why communities in those areas were viewing our plans with some concern.

I am happy to say that the member for Cook was wrong. He needs a lesson in how to read a Budget paper. Budget Paper No. 3 clearly outlines in detail the planning options for those three schools. I refer the member for Cook to the three pages. For instance, on page 53, the Kuranda high school is mentioned moving into a planning phase. On page 42, the high school at Tannum Sands is mentioned. On page 37, the high school at Wilsonton is mentioned. The Budget provides half a million dollars for the planning and documentation for each of those three new high schools in Queensland to open at the beginning of the 1998 school year. The commitment to open those three high schools is part of our record capital works budget. A total of $333m is being spent on new schools under the Capital Works Program. That is a record for any Government in Queensland.

At the beginning of the 1997 school year, eight new schools will open as part of our commitment to the ongoing provision of educational services for Queensland students. That will be followed in 1998 by a further 12 schools opening, of which the three I have mentioned are part. As to the spurious and unfounded claims being made by the member for Cook—I make the point: be very, very careful when that member mentions something in the House or in the media. His first claim was that we were going to sack 2,000 teachers. What happened in the Budget? We employed another 1,000. His next claim was that the Government was not building three high schools. Those three high schools are in the Budget. I issued a warning before; I now repeat it: be very careful when that member makes claims.

Inquiry into Criminal Justice Commission

Mr FOLEY: I ask the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice: is he aware of the convention that Governments should not establish royal commissions as a device to attack the conduct of their political opponents in former Governments? Is he aware of the dangers in his Government's setting a precedent in doing so? Did the non-inclusion by his Government of the Davies' allegations and the Heiner documents matter in the terms of reference of the Connolly commission come about as a result of any advice from Mr Connolly or Mr Ryan regarding the inappropriateness of dealing with such matters in a commission of inquiry?

Mr BEANLAND: I thank the member for the question.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr BEANLAND: I notice some excitement on the other side of the Chamber. The terms of reference are plain for all to see. They have been put forward by the Government, because we want to ensure that we look at the issues of the accountability, performance, efficiency and effectiveness of this operation. It is only fair to say that that is something for which members of the Opposition when in Government had asked for some time. Of course, they did not have the courage to set up a commission of inquiry along the lines that we have. We have set it up so that it can also look at the methodology and approach of the CJC to a number of matters and its accountability on those matters.

Of course, a whole host of issues might or might not come before this inquiry. It is sufficiently broad ranging to look at those issues. I am not going to say what the inquiry might or might not cover. Indeed, it would be quite inappropriate for me to say exactly what the situation is. I have already indicated quite clearly that the Government is very satisfied with the terms of reference, as are the commissioners quite satisfied with the terms of reference, which have been drawn carefully to ensure that it is not the very thing that the Opposition would always be trying to claim that it was, that is, some sort of witch-hunt.

However, we know that the Leader of the Opposition made his statement on that subject days before the terms of reference were known. In fact, the terms of reference cannot in any way be construed in that light. The Government has been very careful in the drawing up of those terms of reference so that it cannot be so construed.

Mr FOLEY: I rise to a point of order. The Standing Orders of this Parliament require an answer to be relevant to the question. The question related to any advice received——

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Standing Orders also require points of order to be relevant. There is no point of order.

Mr BEANLAND: The Government drew up those terms of reference very carefully so that, although they are broad, the inquiry cannot be construed in any shape or form to be doing other than what it is: looking at the efficiency, performance, effectiveness and most certainly the accountability of the Criminal Justice Commission either to the Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee or to this Parliament. I think that is a terribly important aspect of the way those terms of reference have been drawn. I believe that I have answered the question quite fully.

Harness Racing in North Queensland

Mr HEALY: In directing a question to the Minister for Racing, I refer him to the coalition's commitment to recommence harness racing in north Queensland. I ask: what progress has been made to date on reintroducing harness racing events? When does he expect those plans to come to fruition?

Mr COOPER: Harness racing in north Queensland, which particularly means Townsville, has been an issue of contention since the Willows was closed in August 1991. It should never have been closed because it was quite a viable operation, as was harness racing in Charters Towers. The member for Charters Towers will support that assertion. Nevertheless, it was closed for whatever reason, and there has been a desire for the past five or six years by north Queenslanders, particularly those in the Townsville/Charters Towers area, to recommence harness racing. We are going to do that.

Right now, there is no harness racing north of Mackay, yet we have one heck of an investment from Mackay north to the tip of the cape, way out to the west and up to the north west which can, in my belief, sustain a harness racing industry, and that is what this Government is going to do. The Government made an election promise that harness racing would recommence in Townsville, and it is going to do just that. Quite frankly, we are moving ahead with that pretty well. Just recently, the North Queensland Harness Racing Association made a submission to the Harness Racing Board, and it received favourable consideration from the board. As early as 18 September, the proposal was for a 12-month to 18-month period of trial racing. So every month there will be about three race meetings at the Townsville Showgrounds where the facilities are good—the stands are good, the lighting is good, and $70,000 has been provided to put up a running rail, which came from Parklands, which has a new collapsible rail. So they are on their way. They are very happy with the way things are going. They certainly have a lot of support from sponsors in the area. Quite a bit of gear has been provided—a tractor for maintenance, a computer, a portable office and a motor vehicle from a consortium of local Toyota dealers to be used for promotional purposes. Also, the Mayor of Thuringowa, Les Tyrell, is supportive. The Mayor of Townsville, Tony Mooney—people have heard of him and I know that he comes from the other side of the tracks; nevertheless he is very supportive—has written letters, which I will table because they, too, are very supportive of harness racing recommencing in north Queensland, just as the Government is supportive of it.

I believe that members opposite, particularly the member for Bundamba, who again is not present in the Chamber, and who as I said in 1991, for whatever reason, closed harness racing down, might now like to get behind the industry, be it harness racing or whatever. Members should not forget that racing does not just involve horses and riders, it also involves strappers, vets, produce people—all of those people right across-the-board.

Mr Pearce: What about Rockhampton?

Mr COOPER: The member is worried about Rockhampton. I know that the member for Mirani is also worried about Mackay. They should not worry. Those matters are being worked out so there is harmony to make sure that we get the industry back on its feet in Townsville and in the north west, where it should always have been and should never have been closed down.

The good news is that racing is recommencing and that it is going to keep going. There is tremendous support behind that industry, which augurs well for all of those

people who have a genuine interest in harness racing in north Queensland. The member for Fitzroy is one person who should have an interest, and I know that the member for Mirani has an interest. So how about members opposite getting behind the industry instead of shutting the industry down, which is what they did. The closed the greyhound racing at Lawnton—a viable track. It did not matter that people lost their employment or lost their livelihoods, members opposite just shut down that racing. That is exactly what they did. This Government's job is to get things going again, and that is exactly what it is going to do. Members opposite should make sure that they support it.

Oil, Tyre and National Park Taxes

Mrs BIRD: I refer the Treasurer to criticism by her Small Business Minister who, when asked about new taxes, said, "It is pointless to try to reduce red tape to small business when we have Ministers introducing four or five other issues for businesses to deal with in a month." I ask the Treasurer: why should small business believe she is serious about reducing the burden of red tape when in just one day she slugged small business with new oil, tyre and national park taxes?

Mrs SHELDON: As the honourable member well knows, the Minister was referring to regulations. As usual, she chooses to give misinformation. However, this gives me the opportunity to be able to tell the House about the very excellent reception that the coalition's Budget received from around the nation. I think that honourable members should rightly know exactly what has been said. Firstly, I would like to draw the attention of the House to the *Business Queensland* editorial, which was titled "State budget sends a clear message". It stated—

> "Treasurer Joan Sheldon should be congratulated on her 'back to basics' budget—a growth budget which should restore confidence and promote business investment.
>
> The Treasurer can proudly assert that she has achieved far more at state level than her federal counterpart, Peter Costello, managed with his budget."

It states further—

> "The Queensland budget sends a clear message that the state is back in business.
>
> Small business operators particularly do well from the budget, not the least from the raising of the payroll tax threshold to $800,000.
>
> Small business will benefit from new and exciting programmes, which have received substantial funding."

The editorial also stated that the Budget delivered opportunities to stretch our means by initiating public works and encouraging business to get out there and seek new markets nationally and internationally. The editorial also stated—

> "The ball is back in the court of business, and business leaders should follow Sheldon's lead in examining their own operations."

Opposition members: Oh!

Mrs SHELDON: Opposition members do not like to hear this from a publication such as *Business Queensland*. The editorial states further—

> ". . . to determine which activities add to the bottom line and which are less necessary."

The editorial stated further—

> "They should also look for opportunities—both within government funded projects and in the wider community—to ensure that the impetus of this budget is not lost."

In *Queensland Country Life* under the heading "Qld budget a Winner", the newspaper——

Mr Santoro: Is this a dorothy dixer?

Mrs SHELDON: No doubt Mrs Bird wanted the whole House to know exactly what all the editorials around the nation have said about the coalition's Budget. Under the heading "Qld budget a Winner", *Queensland Country Life* stated that the Queensland State Budget rated an "8" or even a "9" on the John Howard scale of assessing budgetary responsibility. The article stated further—

> "The budget hasn't been designed yet which satisfies all people and parties, but Sheldon and Borbidge this week went a long way towards establishing their credibility in this department."

That was an editorial from *Queensland Country Life*. An editorial in the *Courier-Mail*, under the heading "A Budget for the future", stated—

> "This is an expansionary Budget which will lead to some much-needed improvement in the state's infrastructure."

An editorial in the *Australian*, titled "Borbidge's first Budget a fair start" stated that, given the

constraints imposed by its minority status, the Borbidge Government's first Budget heads in the right direction. The editorial stated further—

> "It promises a continuation of the strong economic management that has characterised Queensland administration while acknowledging the need identified by Dr Vince FitzGerald's commission of audit for the State government to shift its focus from liability management to better handling of the assets and programs."

The editorial stated that the Budget commits the Government to delivering a modest surplus and signals a start to the structural reforms needed for Queensland to avoid a long-term deterioration of its public finances. It stated further that those reforms cut to the heart of how the Government manages itself.

Mr Purcell: We can all read the paper.

Mrs SHELDON: I bet the member is sorry that his colleague asked the question. An editorial in the *Townsville Bulletin* titled "Budget gains outweigh pain" stated that the coalition appeared to have produced a workmanlike and generally acceptable Budget. The editorial stated further—

> "Mrs Sheldon, the first woman to present a Queensland Budget, has done a reasonable sort of job, with the good effects projected to outweigh the smaller pains."

An editorial in Rockhampton's *Morning Bulletin* titled "CQ fares well in Joan's Budget" stated that Rockhampton and district fared comparatively well from the first coalition Budget for 13 years.

Mr Schwarten interjected.

Mrs SHELDON: It stated further—and I would like Robbie Schwarten to really listen to this—

> "Treasurer Joan Sheldon has hailed it as a 'back to basics' Budget: and first glance indicates she is on the mark with a heavy emphasis on more teachers (particularly in remote areas), more public hospital staff, more police, big spending on CQ electricity suppliers."

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I ask the Treasurer to wind up her answer.

Mrs SHELDON: There have been so many glowing reports, it has taken me some time. In the interests of democracy in this House, I will cut short reading all the rest of the glowing editorials about the Budget that I was going to read to members. I think that they have had enough. I thank the honourable member for her question.

Apprenticeship and Traineeship Systems

Mr WOOLMER: Can the Minister for Training and Industrial Relations please explain to the House how the reform of the apprenticeship and traineeship systems of Australia will be of benefit to the Queensland economy and especially to Queensland businesses?

Mr SANTORO: I thank the honourable member for Springwood for asking me that question, because it enables me to follow through on the very good answer just provided to the House by the Honourable the Treasurer. The Treasurer outlined very eloquently what this Government is doing for small business.

The question from the honourable member for Springwood, of course, arises out of his concern for the many small businesses with which he comes into contact regularly in his electorate. One of their key concerns is the state of the training market, particularly considering the state that it was left in by the Federal and State Labor Governments. Therefore, it is rather appropriate, given that we do not get too many questions from the Opposition in relation to training, that I take the opportunity that has been presented by the honourable member for Springwood to outline what is happening in training.

The Federal coalition, when in Opposition, went to the election with a policy to dramatically and drastically reform the training systems of Australia. In fact, it went to the election with a policy called MAATS, which is aimed at the reform of the Modern Apprenticeship and Traineeship System. Implementing the MAATS reforms will in fact involve a very radical and comprehensive review and a range of reforms to vocational education and training.

The Commonwealth and State Governments have come to an agreement on six principles which will underpin the development and the implementation of MAATS from July this year. The six principles which are consistent with the Queensland Government policy are—and honourable members should pay very close attention to these, because they are at the heart of the Government's policy in relation to small business—that a good training system should be an industry-led system and that there should be streamlined regulation, expanded training opportunities, regional and community

involvement, a national framework, and—a principle that I hope is dear to all members of this House—access and equity.

The key elements of MAATS will collectively support the attainment of each of those objectives. These elements include the full application of user choice as a demand-driven funding mechanism within MAATS from January 1988, which will encourage a more open and responsive training market. I am sure that all honourable members will appreciate and embrace the potential for efficiency that exists within the implementation of that objective. Also included is the introduction of the national training framework, with its cornerstones of national competency standards and qualifications under the Australian qualifications framework. This will ensure a quality training system which allows more flexibility in matching training delivery to the actual skills needs.

The reformed training system will encompass and update the existing apprenticeship and traineeship arrangements. I place it on the record that we are not saying that the existing apprenticeship and traineeship arrangements are useless or that they should not be incorporated within the existing systems. All apprentices have benefited tremendously from such schemes, particularly from training undertaken on the job. However, by increasing the flexibility in apprenticeships and traineeships and by giving employers a greater say in delivery, it is expected that the apprenticeship and traineeship systems will become a more attractive option for a greater number of enterprises. I am sure that this will help to increase employers' interest in and uptake of apprentices.

The Queensland State training profile, which is currently being finalised, estimates that commencements of apprentices and trainees will grow with the introduction of MAATS from 60,600 in 1996 to 21,500 in 1997.

Mr Foley: You just turn your back on the unemployed. At least we were trying.

Mr SANTORO: It is expected that this growth will continue with the number of commencements estimated at 24,250 in 1998 and 27,500 in 1999.

Mr Foley interjected.

Mr SANTORO: If the honourable member would keep quiet and listen, I will answer the question.

Mr Borbidge: He's at the wrong end of George Street.

Mr SANTORO: The Honourable the Premier is right: the honourable member for Yeronga does think that he is at the wrong end of George Street. Maybe he should retreat there, because he may be a little better received there than he is in this Chamber. I will answer his question.

Mr Foley: You want to go and talk to some of the Skillshares and hear what they're saying about you.

Mr SANTORO: When the honourable member for Yeronga and, indeed, any other member wants to ask me a question about labour market programs, I will answer those questions. In the meantime, I remind the honourable member that the unemployment problem that he is referring me to is the unemployment problem which the State Labor Party and the Federal Labor Party left behind for us.

To address the point by the honourable member very specifically—in 1996-97 the Queensland Government will allocate $1.8m for systems which will see the development of MAATS pilots. During 1997 approximately $28m will be allocated to expand the user choice arrangements for apprenticeship off-the-job training. From 1 January 1998, all apprenticeship off-the-job training in Queensland, amounting to approximately $60m annually, will be offered under the user choice arrangements. I say to the honourable member for Yeronga that that is the real answer to the unemployment problem—real training for real jobs.

Oil and Tyre Taxes

Mr T. B. SULLIVAN: I refer the Treasurer to comments made by the Environment Minister that the oil and tyre taxes will be collected even though they may be illegal under the Constitution, and I ask: will the Treasurer quarantine any revenue collected in a special fund so that Queenslanders can be repaid in full if these taxes are successfully challenged in the courts?

Mrs SHELDON: The member has incorrectly stated what the Minister said, so the question is irrelevant.

Youth Homelessness

Mrs GAMIN: I ask the Minister for Families, Youth and Community Care: what is the Government doing about youth homelessness?

Mr LINGARD: Yesterday I referred to $18.2m which is coming from the Federal Government to be used in the prevention of youth suicide. I invited honourable members to participate in this matter, and I am pleased to announce that members from both sides of the House who are concerned about youth suicide saw me yesterday.

Mr Palaszczuk: Talk to Mick Veivers.

Mr LINGARD: The honourable member's question about youth homelessness is also relevant, especially to the member for Inala whose electorate would experience problems of youth hopelessness as much an anyone else's. A sum of $18.2m is being provided by the Federal Government and, as the member opposite knows, this program was implemented by the previous Federal Government through the Prime Minister's Youth Task Force.

At this stage, we have invited applications for pilot programs. I am pleased to announce that 285 applications have been received form around Australia. In Queensland, 85 applications have been received for funding to commence pilot homeless programs. These programs will be implemented through Federal Government funding, and they will also receive State Government support. Details of that will be announced by November. I invite all members to participate as much as possible in those programs.

As honourable members would realise, we are dealing with young people aged between 12 and 18 years. At this stage, any youth who applies for a youth homeless grant and is aged between 12 and 15 has to be assessed by the Department of Families. This has certainly decreased the number of young people who apply for a homeless grant. I honestly hope that, through the Department of Social Security, the Department of Families can also assess young people aged between 15 and 18 years, so that at least their families will know that they are involved in this program.

My department has done as much as possible to assist homeless youth. I have announced the provision of 22 family support workers, which will be followed by another six. A further 22 workers gives us a total of 50 family support workers. I have said that the original 12 rural support worker positions that the previous Government implemented will certainly continue.

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

REVENUE LAWS AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. J. M. SHELDON (Caloundra—Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for The Arts) (11.30 a.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

> "That leave be granted to bring in a Bill for an Act to amend the Debits Tax Act 1990, the Pay-roll Tax Act 1971 and the Tobacco Products (Licensing) Act 1988."

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

Bill and Explanatory Notes presented and Bill, on motion of Mrs Sheldon, read a first time.

Second Reading

Hon. J. M. SHELDON (Caloundra—Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for The Arts) (11.31 a.m.): I move—

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

The purpose of this Bill is to implement three of the taxation initiatives which were provided for in the recent Budget. In line with our election commitments, the exemption threshold for payroll tax will be increased by $50,000 to $800,000 from 1 January 1997. This increase will benefit over 4,000 Queensland employers who will have their payroll tax liability reduced or eliminated. The increased threshold and our low tax rate of 5 per cent ensures that Queensland's payroll tax arrangements continue to be the most favourable to business of any State or Territory. The Government is also committed to undertaking regular reviews of the payroll tax threshold to evaluate its effect on business.

The Bill will increase the rate of the tobacco products licence fee from 75 per cent to 100 per cent, with effect from 11 September 1996, making Queensland's rate now comparable with those applying in all other States and Territories. As September sales and purchases are relevant when determining November licence fees, the rate increase will first have effect for November licences.

There will also be an increase in the rates of debits tax from 1 October 1996, bringing Queensland's rates into line with those in New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia. However, unlike those States, Queensland does not impose a financial institutions duty,

which represents a significant saving for all Queensland account holders. Debits tax at the increased rate will first be payable by financial institutions in early November 1996.

While it has been necessary to increase the rates of debits tax and the tobacco licence fee to rectify shortfalls imposed by Commonwealth cutbacks, this Government is committed to continuing Queensland's long tradition as the lowest taxing State in Australia. To this end, I will introduce another Bill early next year to implement three-year averaging of land tax. I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Hamill, adjourned.

STATUTORY BODIES FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. J. M. SHELDON (Caloundra—Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for The Arts) (11.33 a.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

> "That leave be granted to bring in a Bill for an Act to amend the Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act 1982 and for other purposes."

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

Bill and Explanatory Notes presented and Bill, on motion of Mrs Sheldon, read a first time.

Second Reading

Hon. J. M. SHELDON (Caloundra—Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for The Arts) (11.34 a.m.): I move—

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

The Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act—the SBFA Act—was introduced in 1982 during a period of considerable change in the Australian capital and financial markets. The Act was introduced to establish the Queensland Government Development Authority and to facilitate the vesting of financial powers in statutory bodies in circumstances where their authorising Acts provided only limited or outdated borrowing and investment powers.

To this end, the Act has proved over the period since its introduction to be invaluable to many statutory bodies in terms of facilitating access to a broader range of financial powers. However, as all honourable members would be aware, the financial and capital markets have continued to grow and develop enormously over the past decade. The number and range of borrowing techniques and investment products available to borrowers and investors has grown, along with growth in other innovative and sophisticated financing techniques. Accordingly, the existing SBFA Act needs to be updated to ensure that the range of financial arrangements which statutory bodies may undertake keeps pace with market developments and practice.

Further, the existing SBFA Act is not without its interpretative difficulties. As the interaction between the existing SBFA Act and statutory bodies' authorising Acts often is unclear, uncertainties about statutory bodies' power to enter into financial arrangements regularly arise. At present, a statutory body's power to borrow, invest or enter into other financial arrangements could be derived from its authorising Act, the SBFA Act or a combination of both. These uncertainties usually necessitate the obtaining of legal advice to clarify the position, which often results in lengthy delays in arranging the legislative approvals for the arrangements.

Accordingly, the need to standardise and centralise statutory bodies' financial powers in one Act has been recognised in a number of areas for some time. In particular, the current partially decentralised legislative framework has led to the ad hoc, and often inconsistent, development of statutory bodies' financial powers, which, as I have already mentioned, has resulted in widespread uncertainty as to the extent of statutory bodies' financial powers.

Moreover, the legislative approvals required by statutory bodies to enter into financial arrangements are not uniform and, in many cases, are administratively cumbersome. At present, the process generally requires a legal opinion followed by three separate levels of approval.

As a result of the delays caused by the existing legislation, statutory bodies often experience difficulty in negotiating borrowing arrangements because lending institutions are reluctant to hold interest rate offers or funding commitments open for extended periods while the necessary approvals are being obtained.

The Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Amendment Bill 1996 will improve significantly the management and regulation of statutory bodies' financial powers by amending the SBFA Act and the authorising Acts of Queensland's statutory bodies. These amendments will remove the relevant financial powers from individual statutory bodies' authorising Acts and

centralise the powers in the SBFA Act. The amendments also will—

- categorise and standardise the financial powers and enable allocation of the relevant and appropriate powers to statutory bodies;
- update and refine the range and description of financial arrangements dealt with in the SBFA Act to accord with current market practice;
- simplify the administrative procedures required for approval of such financial arrangements by replacing existing cumbersome approval requirements with a single stage approval process;
- clarify the manner in which a State guarantee may be given for the obligations of a statutory body under a financial arrangement; and
- confirm the State guarantee of loans provided by QTC to statutory bodies.

Apart from the amendments to the SBFA Act, there also will be consequential amendments made to individual statutory bodies' authorising Acts to replace any existing financial powers with a cross-reference to the SBFA Act and to remove conflicting or alternative provisions in such Acts.

The SBFA Act will be the primary, and in most cases the sole, source of borrowing and investment powers for most statutory bodies. However, in the limited number of situations where a statutory body is empowered specifically to invest or borrow within its authorising Act, the SBFA Act shall operate in addition to the powers contained in the authorising Act so long as the exercise of the power under the SBFA Act is not inconsistent with provisions contained in the authorising Act.

The definition of a "statutory body" will be similar to that contained in the Financial Administration and Audit Act 1977, except that local governments will be included.

There are various entities to which the amended SBFA Act will not apply, including—

- Queensland Treasury Corporation and Queensland Investment Corporation;
- a statutory body which acts as a trustee of a superannuation fund;
- companies incorporated under the Corporations Law, even where the State holds the majority of shares or otherwise has voting control;
- Government owned corporations under the Government Owned Corporations Act 1993; and
- bodies such as the Queensland Office of Financial Supervision and Australian Financial Institutions Commission which do not represent the Crown and operate independently of the Government.

Also, the amended SBFA Act will not apply to any statutory body prescribed by regulation not to be a statutory body for the purposes of the amended SBFA Act. This flexibility is necessary to allow any future statutory bodies to be dealt with in terms of the applicability of the provisions of the amended SBFA Act to them.

The provisions proposed by the Bill that deal with the power to enter into financial arrangements have been divided into four separate parts—

- general banking powers;
- borrowing powers;
- investment powers; and
- power to appoint funds managers and to enter into derivatives and other financial arrangements.

The powers to borrow, invest and enter into derivatives will be allocated to statutory bodies by regulation. This allocation will be determined in consultation with administering departments having regard to statutory bodies' functions and objectives and existing powers.

General Banking Powers

Under the amended SBFA Act, each statutory body will be given general powers to operate deposit and withdrawal accounts with banks, building societies and credit unions. These powers are intended to cater for statutory bodies' day-to-day operations and activities.

Power to Borrow

Each statutory body allocated power to borrow by regulation will be able to exercise that power with the prior approval of the Treasurer. The Bill relies on the general meaning of the term "borrow", which is defined to include the raising of money, credit and other financial accommodation, including transactions such as a finance lease used primarily to finance the purchase of the property leased and a letter of credit provided by a financial institution. The Bill is not intended to capture minor day-to-day financial arrangements entered into by statutory bodies, such as the provision of normal trade credit or payment arrangements under maintenance and service contracts. The Bill provides that a body is not necessarily taken to have "borrowed" merely because, in the ordinary course of performing its functions, it

enters into a hire purchase agreement, an operating lease or a credit card facility. However, in some cases it may be appropriate for such an arrangement to be treated as a borrowing for the purposes of the amended SBFA Act, whether by reason of the size of the transaction or the way in which it is structured. In such cases, the Bill provides flexibility for these matters to be dealt with by regulation.

In this regard, the Bill allows a regulation to prescribe that a form of financial accommodation is, or is not, covered by the definition. In an environment of ongoing financial innovation, this regulation power is necessary to enable future clarification of the types of borrowing transactions regulated under the Bill and, in particular, to provide flexibility to efficiently deal with modern innovative financing techniques which may not be a "borrowing" in the strict sense, but have an equivalent commercial effect. For example, in the case of an arrangement such as a long-term service contract forming part of an infrastructure project and involving large amounts of money and/or extended payment periods, a regulation may prescribe that the arrangement is a "borrowing" for the purposes of the amended SBFA Act. Any approval granted under the amended SBFA Act for a statutory body to enter into a borrowing is not intended in any way to obviate the need for the body and its administering department to observe established administrative arrangements and guidelines, such as obtaining State Borrowing Program approval.

Power to Invest

The legislation classifies investment powers into three categories, which may be allocated to statutory bodies by regulation according to their needs and existing powers. Where a statutory body has control of more than one fund, the investment powers may be separately allocated in respect of each fund. Those statutory bodies which are allocated a category of investment power will have power to invest in accordance with the category without requiring further approval. The three categories are as follows—

Category 1 provides for investments either at call or for a fixed time of not more than one year in a range of investment arrangements.

Category 2 provides for power to invest either at call or for a fixed period of not more than three years in a range of investment arrangements.

Category 3 provides for power to invest in any category 2 investment arrangement or in any other investment that may be made by a trustee under the Trusts Act 1973 without limit of time.

Each category of investment power allows a statutory body to enter into certain investment arrangements with financial institutions, including banks, building societies and credit unions which are subject to prudential oversight and are regulated by either the Reserve Bank or the Australian Financial Institutions Commission. In a similar fashion, each category also allows a statutory body to enter into investment arrangements which are appropriately rated by one of the international credit rating agencies.

Overall, rather than there being a necessity for the Treasurer to consider each of the range of investment products on offer in the marketplace, a more flexible system of "approving" investments for statutory bodies will exist.

Power to appoint Funds Managers

Those statutory bodies which are allocated investment powers will be able, with the Treasurer's approval, to appoint a suitable person to manage the investment of the body's funds. Subject to any conditions imposed on the appointment by the Treasurer, the funds manager may, for the purpose of managing the investment of the body's funds, enter into other financial arrangements, including derivative transactions, which the funds manager may validly enter into under its own corporate governance structure.

Power to enter into Derivative Transactions and Other Financial Arrangements

A statutory body only will be able to enter into derivative transactions if it is prescribed under the regulations as having that power and has obtained the prior approval of the Treasurer. Further, a statutory body may enter into derivative transactions only if the transaction is to hedge against a risk to which the body is or will be exposed. The Bill also provides for reporting and monitoring requirements for derivative transactions entered into by statutory bodies. For any other financial arrangements that a particular statutory body may not have power to enter into under its authorising Act or the specific borrowing or investment powers proposed by the Bill, the body may seek the Treasurer's approval to enter into the financial arrangement. For example, a statutory body may seek the Treasurer's approval to lend money, to give a guarantee or to invest in other than Australian money or outside of Australia.

Treasurer's Guarantee

The amended SBFA Act provides that the Treasurer, on behalf of the State, has exclusive power to give a guarantee and/or indemnity of a statutory body's performance obligations under a financial arrangement under the amended SBFA Act or another Act. Therefore, subject to delegation, the Treasurer will be the only Minister entitled to give such a guarantee or indemnity in respect of the obligations of statutory bodies under financial arrangements.

The amended SBFA Act confirms legislatively the guarantee by the Treasurer, on behalf of the State, of statutory bodies' loans from QTC. This guarantee previously has been assumed to exist, but needs to be clarified legislatively. The conditions applicable to the guarantee are to be approved by gazette notice, but the legislation provides flexibility for the conditions to be varied, or for the guarantee to be withheld, in particular cases.

Treasurer's Approval

The Treasurer's approval of a transaction under the amended SBFA Act may be given, withheld, given subject to conditions, withdrawn or varied as the Treasurer considers appropriate. The Treasurer's approval may be specific or general and may be given on a limited or "blanket" basis. This also will apply to any terms and conditions imposed on an approval.

Treasurer's Delegation

In some cases, it may be more efficient or appropriate for a particular power of the Treasurer under the amended SBFA Act to be delegated to another person. To facilitate this, the amended SBFA Act will contain provisions enabling the Treasurer to delegate powers to another Minister or a chief executive of a department, except in the case of the power to give guarantees, which only may be delegated to another Minister.

Summary

The Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Amendment Bill 1996 has been drafted with the intention of improving the management and regulation of the financial powers of statutory bodies in this State. The previous cumbersome approval processes have been replaced with a streamlined and efficient system whereby the SBFA Act will be the primary and, in most cases, the sole source of borrowing and investment powers for the majority of statutory bodies. Further, the Act recognises the vast developments that have been made in the financial and capital markets since 1982.

This Government is committed to ensuring that the process for regulating statutory bodies' financial arrangements is efficient and administratively simple, yet provides adequate safeguards for prudential operations at all times. This Act provides the framework for such a system of regulation and will allow statutory bodies to operate effectively in the current financial arena. Accordingly, I commend the Bill to this House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Hamill, adjourned.

TRANSPORT OPERATIONS (PASSENGER TRANSPORT) AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. V. G. JOHNSON (Gregory—Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (11.47 a.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

> "That leave be granted to bring in a Bill for an Act to amend the Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994."

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

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

Second Reading

Hon. V. G. JOHNSON (Gregory—Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (11.48 a.m.): I move—

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

This Bill has two objectives. The first is to provide a more streamlined approach to the determination of taxi fares in Queensland. The second is to ensure that scheduled bus operators continue to operate in an environment of certainty and confidence while the new system of service contracts is implemented.

Taxi fares remain the only public transport fares in Queensland specified in legislation. Increases in fares under the current system are approved by the Governor in Council on an ad hoc basis, leaving the taxi industry with no basis for long-term planning of its affairs. More importantly for the users of taxis, new and innovative services are, and have been, stifled under the current system. This Bill seeks

to remedy that situation by removing taxi fares from legislation and making the determination of the maximum taxi fare an administrative decision to be taken by the chief executive of the Department of Transport.

In providing for this change, the Bill gives the chief executive greater flexibility to decide that certain types of taxis may be exempted from the maximum fare. Exempting some taxis from the maximum fare is not new. Such taxis have existed for some time. High-occupancy taxis and luxury taxis have, for example, been able to charge patrons a fare higher than the maximum when such taxis are specifically requested. The Bill, however, allows for exemptions to become an administrative process, rather than a legislative process, that can be progressed quickly by the department. This change will ensure that taxi operators planning the introduction of new and innovative services will be able to do so with the certainty that they will be able to charge a fare that makes the service viable.

The second object of this Bill is to extend certain transitional arrangements for three more years. The Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994 provides for a system of service contracts specifying minimum service levels and funding arrangements for operators of certain scheduled bus services. Chapter 13 of that Act, in part, provides transitional arrangements to ensure existing service licences and permits under the State Transport Act 1960 continue in force until new service contracts are entered into.

The transitional arrangements that this Bill extends expire on 8 November 1996, after only two years of operation. Let me make this clear. The Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994 gave the Department of Transport only two years to implement a process of reform that was without precedent in Australia. One of my first actions as Minister for Transport and Main Roads was to initiate a review of the reforms provided for in the Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994. That review found that the difficulties of the reform process and the enormity and complexity of the task had been completely underestimated. It also found that in trying to meet the timeframes imposed by the Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act, the department often had to meet unrealistic deadlines which, at times, resulted in inadequate levels of consultation and policies and procedures that were developed on the run and in an ad hoc fashion. The extension of the transitional arrangements will allow these problems to be addressed while ensuring that bus operators throughout Queensland can be assured of continued protection and financial assistance while negotiating new service contracts.

At the same time, it is not intended that the old arrangements will continue indefinitely. One of the findings of the review was that under the existing transitional provisions relating to financial assistance, urban bus operators had a strong incentive to delay entering into a new service contract until as late as possible. The incentive occurs because, under the existing arrangements, the assistance received by bus operators who have entered into service contracts reduces over time while the subsidy for urban bus operators who have not entered into a contract continues at traditional levels until a contract is agreed.

To remove the incentive to delay the signing of contracts, the transitional financial arrangements have been redrafted so that operators who have not entered into a service contract by l December 1996 will receive funding as if they had entered into a contract on that date. They will be entitled to receive transitional funding until 30 November 2001 as long as they enter into a contract within the next three years. That is, an operator who enters into a contract before 8 November 1999 will be able to receive the maximum amount of assistance available under the transitional arrangements. Operators who delay signing contracts until after this date will face a shortened period of transitional funding.

While the proposed amendments to the transitional funding arrangements will have little or no immediate impact on urban bus operators, it will remove the incentive to delay entering into contracts over the medium term. More importantly, perhaps, is that in addition to removing the incentive to delay entering into contracts, the proposed changes ensure equity in a system where the 14 bus operators who have entered into contracts already have had their funding capped and face reducing financial assistance over the term of their contract. In effect, this Bill will place all urban bus operators on a level playing field in terms of the financial assistance they receive from the State.

The Government promised to minimise and simplify existing regulation as part of an on-going and continuous process. This Bill contributes to that promise. It simplifies the administration of taxi fares, allowing the taxi industry to better plan its business and encourages the introduction of new and innovative services. Simplified regulatory

arrangements are of no use, however, if the administering department cannot meet the timeframes imposed upon them. To this end, the Bill provides an appropriate timeframe within which the reforms embodied in the Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994 can be implemented in a way that is both appropriate and equitable. I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Elder, adjourned.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Remaining Stages; Abridgement of Time

Mr FITZGERALD (Lockyer—Leader of Government Business) (11.55 a.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

> "That so much of the Standing Orders and Sessional Orders be suspended to enable the Criminal Justice Legislation Amendment Bill to pass through all its remaining stages at this day's sitting."

Hon. D. E. BEANLAND (Indooroopilly—Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (11.56 a.m.): I second the motion.

Mr BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—Leader of the Opposition) (11.56 p.m.): Because of the extraordinary nature of this motion, I move—

> "That all words after 'that' be deleted and that the following words be inserted—
>
> 'the Criminal Justice Legislation Amendment Bill be referred to the Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee to conduct public hearings on the Bill and report back to the House
>
> and further, that debate on the Bill not occur until the Parliamentary Scrutiny of Legislation Committee has also reported on its contents.' "

I wish to speak in favour of the amendment and against the original motion.

The crooks are back in town. This is an extraordinary measure, where a Bill has not been allowed to lay on the table for seven days to allow appropriate debate and consultation. Bearing in mind the extraordinary attacks that this Government has made on the Criminal Justice Commission, I would have thought that we would have had adequate opportunity to consider such legislation and, importantly, have an opportunity to consult with the member for Gladstone, Mrs Cunningham, in relation to our views on this legislation.

These Criminal Justice Commission issues are complex and diverse. It is unfair to the Opposition and it is unfair to Mrs Cunningham that these matters be dealt with in this way, where Parliament is used as a sausage machine. What we have by this Government is a corruption of public administration where it is prepared to use the resources of the State to achieve a party political outcome. That is what we have. We have a corruption of public administration in this State where this State Government is prepared to use the resources of the State for party political interests and not in the interests of the community.

Earlier today, we have heard that there will be another inquiry; another judge or ex-judge or inquiry head is to be paid $3,000 a day. How long are Queenslanders going to tolerate $3,000 a day being paid to these inquiry heads for inquiry after inquiry? This is a Government of inquiry. No decisions are being made. Business cannot get a decision out of this Government; there are no decisions being made. We have simply a Government of inquiry. Who is paying for all these inquiries? They are being paid for by the taxpayer, the long-suffering taxpayer. Taxpayers are dying on waiting lists in hospitals, there are schools in which children need more teachers and there are communities that need more police, yet what do we have? We do not have a Government concerned about more police or more operations or more school teachers, we have a Government that is committed to inquiries. We have a Government that is pursuing a vendetta for political purposes to try to save its political hide and the hide of its mates. This inquiry is all about trying to save the Borbidge/Sheldon Government and its mates. That is what it is all about; nothing more.

I say to all Queenslanders today that we will fight to save the dignity of the institution of this Parliament and we will fight to save the Criminal Justice Commission from this political onslaught from this Government pursuing these political agendas, and we will fight to stop this Government spending $3,000 a day on inquiry heads—inquiries that will cost somewhere between $1m to $2m. That is how much the inquiry that has already been announced will cost, but heaven knows how much this next inquiry will cost. We will fight to put that money into services. We will fight to put that money into schools, hospitals and more police.

I am astounded—bearing in mind the seriousness of this matter—that we could have Parliament used as a sausage machine. What does the amendment that I have moved, which will be seconded by the honourable member for Yeronga, do? It refers this Bill to the Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee. That is the body that Tony Fitzgerald said should have the responsibility of monitoring the Criminal Justice Commission. That all-party committee has the role of ensuring the dignity of the process.

Tony Fitzgerald established that committee because he was concerned about the powers of a unicameral Parliament. In his report he talks very clearly about the need for parliamentary committees to have this role. It is worth referring at this time to what he said on page 124 of his report—

> "The operation of the party system in an unicameral assembly, the continuing growth in the scale and extent of Government activity, and the increasing complexities of policy making affect the ability of Parliament to review the Government's legislative activity or public administration."

He went on to say—

> "There is need to consider introducing a comprehensive system of Parliamentary Committees to enhance the ability of Parliament to monitor the efficiency of Government."

That Fitzgerald report recommendation was implemented through the establishment of the Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee and the EARC committee.

This amendment is moved by myself, as chair of the first Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee, and seconded by the first chair of the EARC committee, because we are committed to the parliamentary committee process of this Parliament. We are committed to the bipartisanship that Tony Fitzgerald talked about but which has been discarded by the Government not only in terms of this motion but also in terms of the Bill that will be debated following the debate on this motion.

On page 15 of the Fitzgerald report one sees reference to the need for bipartisanship and how important it was for the success of the Fitzgerald inquiry. On page 15 Fitzgerald said—and he said this in 1988—

> "The present Premier, the Honourable Michael John Ahern . . . came to office during the course of the Inquiry and gave personal commitments to the Chairman which were fully honoured. Neither he, Gunn, nor the Honourable Theo Russell Cooper . . . after he replaced Gunn as Minister for Police in January 1989, could have provided greater"—

help. Then he said—

> "The leaders of the Labor and Liberal Parties, Wayne Keith Goss M.L.A. and John Angus MacKenzie Innes M.L.A., received briefings from time to time. They observed all confidences and assisted wherever possible. The multi-partisan support which they provided was essential to a serious attempt to expose the deterioration which had occurred in critical aspects of public life in this state."

So in other words, the bipartisanship of all political leaders was fundamentally important to tackling corruption, and it still is important. But what has this Government done? It has thrown it out the door.

On page 17 of his report, Fitzgerald said—

> "Encouraging the provision of information to the leaders of the Opposition parties was part of the vital maintenance of independence and integrity."

He said that providing information to them about inquiries and who is appointed to head them is vitally important to the maintenance of independence and integrity.

What we have is a report—the Fitzgerald report—which came out of some bipartisanship which, until the shameful behaviour of the crude political thugs who now run this Government, was very much present in the Fitzgerald reform process and the children of Fitzgerald, namely, EARC and the CJC. What we are seeing today is a destruction of the Fitzgerald principle—a destruction of the whole sentiment, feeling and spirit of Fitzgerald. That is what the Government is doing today. It is destroying the spirit of reform that Tony Fitzgerald provided. It is throwing it out the door. Queenslanders need to be aware of the scant regard which this Government has for principles, for Parliament and for the institutions of integrity that make democracy a success. That is what this Government is throwing out the door. We saw it with the Heiner report. This Government is prepared to use anybody to achieve a political outcome. This form of thuggery today is no better. I am disappointed, as are other Opposition members, that bipartisanship has been thrown out the window.

Mr T. B. Sullivan: Disgraceful!

Mr BEATTIE: It is not only disgraceful, it is also destructive of the reform process. We are not prepared to sit by and see the National Party, with the help of the Liberal Party,simply turn back the clock to the bad old days of corruption when four National Party Ministers went to gaol. Those are the days that Government members are longing for—the days of crude political corruption.

Queenslanders should know very clearly that, out of this motion today, firstly, the National and Liberal Parties are trying to use Parliament as a sausage machine. Secondly, they are trying to turn back the clock to the bad old days. As I said, the crooks are back in town. Thirdly, Queenslanders need to know that this Government is prepared to use public resources, which should be put into services, simply to achieve political outcomes by inquiry.

Why is this piece of legislation being put through today? Honourable members would know that we will have a special sitting of Parliament tomorrow. Why is this being put through today? Because the Heiner report was tabled earlier by the Premier. This is an attempt to slip through this Bill on the CJC while there is public debate about the Heiner report. It is an attempt to steal media time to focus on the Heiner report so that this act of parliamentary thuggery will be ignored out there in the community. Let me put the Government on notice: we will be campaigning against this political thuggery between now and the next election. I know exactly what Queenslanders will be saying to Opposition members when it comes to this political thuggery. Every time I get into a cab and every time I go to my local shopping centre, people ask me, "Why is this Government paying judges or former judges $3,000 a day to run an inquiry?" That is what they want to know. There are schools that need to be painted. There are hospitals that need additional assistance and nurses. They want to know why this Government is paying $3,000 a day to heads of inquiries, at a total cost of $1m to $2m. How many more inquiries are we going to have? One has been announced already—the one which the Bill that is about to come in provides. Another one is in the pipeline. How many more inquiries are we going to have?

There is no doubt that this Government has had a long-term hatred of the CJC, because genetically members opposite cannot govern honestly. Corruption is in their genes. They cannot govern while having a CJC sitting out there looking over their shoulders. I know that, in the first and second terms of the Goss Government, there were tense moments between the CJC and the Goss Government. But did the Goss Government seek to destroy the CJC? No! It was prepared to accept the importance of the independent umpire—the corruption fighter. That is what it was prepared to do. But after less than eight months, is this Government prepared to behave like that? No! It wants to get rid of the CJC. It wants to destroy it, because it is not prepared to be accountable.

It is all about what "Government" means to people. To the Labor Party, "Government" means an opportunity to improve services—to improve people's lot in life. What does it mean to the National Party? To the National Party, "Government" means that you buy bottles of Johnnie Walker scotch for your mates; that you try to look after Russell Cooper because he is appearing before the Carruthers inquiry. To the Liberal and National Parties, "Government" means rorts; it means looking after your mates when you are in Government; and it means that the white-shoe brigade comes through the door. That is what it means. Government is not about a high ideal for the National and Liberal Parties; it is about a base ideal. It is called corruption. It is called looking after your mates. That is what it is all about.

They did not like having an independent watchdog looking over their shoulder, as the Goss Government had for six years. So what did they do? They cut its budget and set up an inquiry into it. We have a Premier who has not even met the head of the Criminal Justice Commission. What does that say about the Premier? He will not even meet the head of the Criminal Justice Commission. I know that many members in this Parliament and many people in the public can pick up the phone and ring Frank Clair and talk to him; yet the Premier of this State cannot talk to him. What is wrong with a Premier who will not set aside time in his diary to talk to the head of the Criminal Justice Commission? The Premier is prepared to be seen on television berating him and attacking him, but he is not prepared to sit down and talk to him. This is a Government that is run like the Keystone Cops. The Premier had the hide to throw that accusation at the CJC. If ever a group was run by the Keystone Cops, it is this Government.

Mr Palaszczuk: He'll meet Mr Murdoch, but he won't meet Mr Clair.

Mr BEATTIE: That is a clear indication. I cannot believe that we have before us legislation that will direct the CJC to behave in a particular way, yet we do not have the opportunity to consult with that body or

anyone else who has a view on this matter. To not give the Opposition and Mrs Cunningham that opportunity—the member for Gladstone will speak for herself; it is not my place to do that—is unfair, improper and wrong. This is not legislation to make a pipeline a reality, it is not legislation that should be rammed through this House like a sausage machine. This legislation is fundamental to the Government's inquiry, which has been the basis of debate for weeks and weeks and weeks. We can debate the issue, yet this legislation—which the Opposition did not see until it was introduced last night—is rushed through without any opportunity to consider it. If the Government allowed that long debate in the public arena, why did we not have this legislation to consider as part of that debate? We have not had it. This legislation has been secret. It has not been part of the public debate. It has not been examined in a public way. We have not had an opportunity to consult widely on it.

One of the hallmarks of the National and Liberal coalition when it was in office previously was poor legislation. Russell Hinze was the best example of that. He would introduce legislation and he would be back before the House within weeks or months amending it. That was because there was not adequate public consultation or debate. The Government has returned to the bad old practices that Russell Hinze used to pursue. It does not allow adequate and proper consultation, nor has it sought to discuss this issue with the Opposition in the bipartisan spirit of Tony Fitzgerald.

For the benefit of the Attorney-General, I point out that, when Angus Innes was Leader of the Liberal Party, he was prepared to behave in a bipartisan way. Why is the Attorney-General not prepared to do the same? For the benefit of the Premier, who is not in the Chamber, I point out that Mike Ahern was prepared to behave in a bipartisan way on these matters. Why is the Premier not prepared to do the same? If it was good enough for Mike Ahern and Angus Innes, why is it not good enough for this Government? The reason is that this Government is not up to the standards of those two individuals; it is up to the corrupt elements of the National Party and the Liberal Party who want to turn back the clock. The corrupt elements who became a minority during the Fitzgerald inquiry have resurfaced. They have had a re-emergence. Now once again, in common with the Don Lanes and all other corrupt Ministers, the corrupt forces, the dark forces, now run the National Party and the Liberal Party.

On behalf of the Opposition, during the debate on this issue on three separate occasions, I offered and suggested a bipartisan meeting of the leaders to try to avoid the sort of debate that we are having today, to try to avoid the political conflict that we are having today. I sought a meeting with the Premier, the Leader of the Liberal Party and me along with Frank Clair to try to resolve these issues, in order to take the politics out of the Fitzgerald reform process. I wrote to the Premier; I wrote to Mrs Sheldon; and I wrote to the head of the CJC. I did not receive a positive response from the Premier. I did not even receive a response from the Deputy Premier, which is typical of her arrogance. There was no attempt to commit the Government to a bipartisan approach. There was no attempt to sit down. Politically, the party that would have lost out had there been a resolution would have been my party, but we did not care because we believe the Fitzgerald reform process is too important.

Since I came into this place in 1989, I have consistently supported the dignity of the Parliament and the Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee. When Government members were in Opposition and sat on this side of the Chamber, they applauded the role that I played. They applauded that role because I had the courage to fight for the Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee, for the Fitzgerald reform process and for the Criminal Justice Commission. I have been consistent. I have done today what I have done for the past six years. The Opposition will stand proudly in this place knowing that we are the ones who are prepared to fight corruption. The people who are in the back rooms toasting the Government are the crooks, the organised crime figures, the drug barons and the sleaze bags. They are delighted with this Government, because it stands for a system that will enable the clock to be turned back. It stands for the corruption of the past, but it is bringing that corruption into the present. This is a heck of way to go to save the hide of Russell Cooper!

The Opposition will be vigorously opposing this motion. We will be vigorously supporting the amendment. I hope all members, including those Government members sitting on the current Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee, have a pang of conscience and support the dignity of that committee. This amendment is referring the inquiry to that committee. For once those members should stand up for their principles.

Hon. M. J. FOLEY (Yeronga) (12.17 p.m.): I second the motion of the

honourable the Leader of the Opposition. The Borbidge Government is treating this Parliament with contempt. This is a brazen attempt to rush through legislation to fix up the humiliating bungle committed by Mr Borbidge and Mr Beanland in setting up this commission of inquiry. They have set up a commission of inquiry devoid of legal power to inquire into the CJC. What an error, what a fundamental breach of their responsibilities to this Parliament and to the people of Queensland.

The motion before the Chamber is offensive to the Parliament in two ways. Firstly, it is offensive to the Parliament because it seeks to rush through sensitive legislation affecting the rights and liberties of citizens. Secondly, the legislation that it is seeking to rush through is legislation which shifts power away from this Parliament to the Executive, namely, by ousting the exclusive role of the Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee, which has the exclusive role of monitoring and reviewing the Criminal Justice Commission and being the recipient of confidential information, and allowing a creature of the Executive, namely, the commission of inquiry, to inquire into the CJC and compel the production of confidential information.

I turn to the amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition. Firstly, it states that the Bill should be referred to the Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee to conduct public hearings on the Bill and report back to the House. That is entirely in accord with the functions of the Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee set out in section 118 of the Criminal Justice Act. Those functions contemplate a role for that committee in monitoring and reviewing the Criminal Justice Commission and, in particular, reporting to the Legislative Assembly. That is the body upon whom this Legislative Assembly should be entitled to rely for advice as to amendments to the Criminal Justice Act.

I turn to a very important point in the Leader of the Opposition's motion, namely, that debate on the Bill not occur until the parliamentary Scrutiny of Legislation Committee has also reported on its contents. This Bill dramatically affects rights and liberties of the citizen and, in particular, dramatically affects the confidentiality of information in the possession of the Criminal Justice Commission and allows that information out to a broader range of persons than would currently be the case.

I make this point in support of the amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition: there is a great need for this legislation to be considered by the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee. It may be argued by the Government that this is a short and simple piece of legislation that does not require too much thought and effort or that it does not require too much reflection. However, if that is what Government members thought, then they are sadly mistaken. The Bill itself sets out in clause 3 a power whereby the Commissions of Inquiry Act 1950 prevails over the Criminal Justice Act. Of course, that is consistent with the intention that the Attorney-General revealed, namely, a desire to give power to the Connolly commission. However, the question is whether the Government has bungled this legislation as well.

If one reads the legislation carefully, in the short time that the Opposition has had, one sees that the provisions of clause 3 enable the Commissions of Inquiry Act to prevail over the Criminal Justice Act. What does that mean? It means that not just the Connolly commission can plunder the confidential information of the Criminal Justice Commission but a whole host of other bodies can do so as well. In its typically rushed way, the Government has forgotten a few things. For example, it has forgotten the provisions of section 22 of the Podiatrists Act, which sets up the Podiatrists Board as having "all the powers, authorities, rights, privileges, protection and jurisdiction of a commission of inquiry under the Commissions of Inquiry Act". Do we want the Podiatrists Board getting confidential information from the Criminal Justice Commission? What about a matter of great interest to the Treasurer and Minister for The Arts—the Physiotherapists Board?

Mr Hamill: What a manipulator.

Mr FOLEY: I thank the Honourable the shadow Treasurer. The Government seems to have forgotten the provisions of section 21(5)(A) of the Physiotherapists Act 1964, which states—

> "Subject to subsection (5), the board in holding any inquiry or hearing any complaint under this section shall have all the powers, authority, protection and jurisdiction of"—

members guessed it—

> "a commission of an inquiry under the Commissions of Inquiry Acts 1950 save such jurisdiction, powers, rights and privileges as are confined to a chairperson of the commission when that chairperson is a judge of the Supreme Court."

In that respect, it is significant that clause 3 says specifically in new section 132A(2) that it does not limit subsection (1), that being the operative section which states that the Commissions of Inquiry Act 1950 prevails over the Criminal Justice Act.

Section 49 of the Gas Act sets out certain powers that attach to the Gas Tribunal. In fairness, I have to say that, although it states that the Gas Tribunal shall be deemed to be a commission of inquiry within the meaning of the Commissions of Inquiry Act, it is limited. It provides—

> ". . . the provisions of that Act, other than sections 4, 4A, 5A, 5B, 10(3), 13, 14(1A), 19A, 19B, 19C and 26, shall apply in respect of the conduct of the inquiry."

So it may be that the Gas Tribunal has some limit on its powers.

Those are but a few of the boards of which the Opposition has had the opportunity, in the limited hours since the tabling of the Bill yesterday evening, to discover will be affected. Yet this is the legislation that the Government wants to rush through. This is the legislation which is intended to fix up the Government's bungles. For example, does the Government know whether there are other provisions of other Acts which deem certain bodies to be commissions of inquiry? Will those bodies be picked up? There is certainly nothing in the Bill, in the Explanatory Notes or in the second-reading speech which limits the exercise of powers to the Connolly commission.

One has to wonder why these mistakes and ambiguities arise. They arise because of indecent haste. They arise because the Attorney-General and the other law officers of this State are not running the agenda; it is being run by "Bungles" Borbidge. This is the man who wanted to introduce special legislation relating to Century Zinc to override the native title legislation only to discover, lo and behold, that even the mining company did not agree with him. This is the same man who bungled the Public Service Bill and who was subject to attacks from the legal profession, only to meet those attacks with his black knight defence, that is, as the limbs of his arguments were cut off one by one, he kept bravely asserting that everything was under control.

Mr Hamill: Just a flesh wound.

Mr FOLEY: As the shadow Treasurer says, just a flesh wound. Oh, dear for the Premier, fresh from his recent conversations with Mr Hampson at the Carruthers inquiry, when Cedric Hampson and the Bar Association came out and disagreed with him. No doubt, the Premier had a particularly fond estimation for the gravity of Mr Hampson's views because then we saw some change. It is the same pattern: "Bungles" Borbidge is at it again.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Laming): Order! I am sure that the member for Yeronga is well aware of how to address other members of the Assembly.

Mr FOLEY: Mr Deputy Speaker, I am deeply indebted for your correction.

I turn to the question of what other little mistakes are contained in this Bill about which we have not yet had time to find out. This is the Bill for which the Government wants to suspend Standing Orders and rush through. One might ask: why? Members should keep in mind that this inquiry is not something that was planned in the Budget. The Honourable the Attorney-General was candid enough in his dealings with the Estimates committee to make plain that the Government had made no plans for it in its Budget. No, this inquiry has suddenly become urgent. Why would it suddenly become urgent? Why is it so urgent that it has to be brought on all of a sudden? Why is it so urgent that legislation has to be rushed through this House contrary to Standing Orders? Could it be perhaps that there is a little uneasiness around the gills about the forthcoming report of the Carruthers inquiry? Could it be that this indecent haste is motivated by a desire to get this commission of inquiry going to set up as many bushfires as possible before the wall of flame runs through the senior ranks of the National Party upon the release of the Carruthers inquiry report? What possible justification is there for this indecent haste? After all, this is an inquiry which was set up by the Government. Then it discovered that it did not have the power to inquire into the very matter which was the subject of its inquiry.

I would not like to limit the number of other matters or other boards that are picked up in legislation to be deemed to be commissions of inquiry or exercise the powers of commissions of inquiry because, frankly, the Opposition has had only since yesterday evening to study this matter. For example, in addition to the Podiatrists Board, the Physiotherapists Board and the Gas Tribunal, it may be that the Appeal Costs Board under section 6 of the Appeal Costs Fund Act is also deemed to be a commission of inquiry. Do we want the Appeal Costs Board to be able to compel the production of information of a confidential nature from the Criminal Justice Commission? What about the Beach

Protection Authority under section 35 of the Beach Protection Act? Do we want it to act as a commission of inquiry with the power to compel the production of information from the Criminal Justice Commission?

It may be that the Government wants to reply to these matters and will say, "No. A fine reading of this Act means that these bodies are not picked up." It may be that it will argue that these things are confined to bodies which are appointed in the normal way as commissions of inquiry pursuant to the Commissions of Inquiry Act itself, and that the deeming provisions and the picking up of powers and authorities by virtue of the operation of other Acts does not impact upon the provisions of this legislation. However, is that not the very sort of matter that we have a Scrutiny of Legislation Committee to look at? Is that not the very reason why we have a bipartisan approach to seeing whether legislation infringes upon the rights and liberties of subjects? Is that not the very reason why we have a committee set up to carry out the functions of the Legislative Standards Act, so that we do not return to the bad old days when we had an arrogant, overbearing Premier of the National Party and a weak, Liberal Attorney-General willing to do his bidding and rush through legislation?

These attacks upon legislation made at short notice in a bungled attempt to fix up the original bungle of setting up the commission of inquiry without powers to investigate must cause the people of Queensland distress and dismay. Frankly, I am sure that the people of Queensland are sick of hearing about the controversy that this Government is inflaming with the Criminal Justice Commission. I am sure that the people of Queensland want the Government to get on with the serious job of organising itself, aiding in the fight against corruption and ensuring that the Criminal Justice Commission goes about its important work. Instead, we have a piece of legislation with all sorts of ambiguities in it. I hasten to say that the Opposition has been obliged to make these researches at very short notice. That is the very reason why these things should lie upon the table of the House.

One knows how criminals return to the scene of the crime. I am mindful of this because, back in 1987, the National Party Government did the same thing in amending the Commissions of Inquiry Act. It amended it to give power to the then commissioner, Tony Fitzgerald QC, but it forgot that a whole lot of other bodies were deemed to be commissions of inquiry. The Tow Truck Appeals Tribunal and the Hen Quota Tribunal of that time stick in my mind as examples of the fine jurisprudence that we saw emerging from the National Party of the time. Unfortunately, it would seem that it has learnt nothing from the lessons of history.

I look forward, with bated breath, to having my concerns dispelled by the Honourable the Attorney-General. I look forward to him assuring the House that these other bodies, deemed to be commissions of inquiry or expressed to exercise the powers and authorities of commissions of inquiry, are not included in the operation of this legislation. I invite him to do so, because, frankly——

Mr FitzGerald: We are not debating the legislation now, are we? You are not debating it now.

Mr FOLEY: Quite so, and I thank the honourable member for his interjection. It is precisely because we should not be debating the legislation now that I make this point—we should have the benefit of deliberation. We should have the benefit of a report of an all-party Scrutiny of Legislation Committee. What is the point of this Parliament passing a Legislative Standards Act and setting up an all-party parliamentary committee to scrutinise important legislation that impacts upon the exercise of great powers unless, when that legislation is brought in, it goes to that committee? The Government is perfectly happy to allow the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee to deal with legislation which is not sensitive and which is not involved in the exercise of great powers but, let us face it, what we are talking about here is the exercise of powers of search and seizure, the power to install bugging devices, and the power to track vehicles. These are the sorts of powers that commissions of inquiry exercise.

I pose the question: does the Government of the day really want the Podiatrists Board to have the ability to compel the production of information of a confidential kind from the Criminal Justice Commission? Can the Government give an assurance that this is not some sinister attempt by podiatrists and physiotherapists to have a grab for power under the guise of some other piece of legislation?

The Parliament is entitled to consider legislation carefully. On 2 December 1989, the people of Queensland sent a message, namely, that they wanted this Parliament to operate properly. That is a message that the National Party and the Liberal Party have forgotten. They should remember that message and treat this Parliament with respect, because this Parliament represents

the people of Queensland. The people of Queensland expect that this Parliament will consider legislation carefully and properly, and will ensure that the exercise of great powers by commissions of inquiry are overviewed by parliamentarians who guard the liberty of citizens fiercely.

Mr HARPER (Mount Ommaney) (12.37 p.m.): I rise to speak to this amendment because the Opposition is obviously putting up a smokescreen. One may well ask: what is it up to? A number of assertions made by the Opposition are unfounded and need to be corrected. We need to ask: why are Opposition members making assertions which they themselves know are incorrect?

Parliament is sitting today and will sit tomorrow and, if necessary, tomorrow night. That is a fact that Opposition members know, although they carry on as if they do not. I have been advised by the Leader of Government Business that there will be no guillotine of the debate on the Bill, yet our friends opposite are attempting to give that impression.

The Opposition is using delaying tactics; I understand what it is up to. By moving this amendment, the Opposition is using delaying tactics to prevent the start of the inquiry. One has to ask, why is the Opposition trying to do that? What is it up to? One knows what it is up to; it is up to its own cheap, political tricks.

The motion of the Leader of Government Business is to enable the Bill to proceed; it does not prevent the debate running through until tomorrow. However, our friends opposite seem to be trying to give a different impression. If necessary, the debate can continue through tomorrow night and will not be guillotined. Members opposite will all be free to speak if they want to.

I think it is worth turning to another point that Opposition members have raised. The Opposition is trying to assert that there has been a bungle by the Attorney-General, an assertion which again is totally incorrect. There has been no bungle. The advice of the Solicitor-General was known by the Attorney-General prior to the introduction of the Bill. He knew what had to be done and I think it is worth taking a fresh look at that advice.

The Solicitor-General advised that the commission of inquiry set up under the Commissions of Inquiry Act 1950 does not possess the power to obtain information held by the Criminal Justice Commission or to compel the CJC, or its officers, to give evidence to it and that specific legislation would be necessary to achieve that result. Why are our friends opposite wanting to stop that if they want a proper look at this situation? Are they trying to hide something? Because of their actions, I am very suspicious that they are the ones who are hiding something. They have something up their sleeves that they do not want the Queensland public to know about. They are the ones doing the hiding, not this Government. The legislation introduced by the Attorney-General will implement the recommendations put forward by the Solicitor-General.

I will conclude, because I do not wish to delay the debate on this amendment. Once again, we are seeing a smokescreen being put up by Opposition members. They will have time to debate the matter properly today, tomorrow and tomorrow night, if necessary. They should not give false impressions.

Hon. J. P. ELDER (Capalaba—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (12.40 p.m.): What a disgraceful performance by the Government and in particular the member for Mount Ommaney. What a shameful day this is for Queensland. The question is: just how incompetent is this Government?

A Government member interjected.

Mr ELDER: I will tell the Government what we are up to today. We are preserving the Standing Orders of this Parliament. A little later on in my speech, I will explain what the National Party is up to. It has been incompetent. The fact that the Government needs to put through this legislation to support the inquiry shows just how incompetent it is. The incompetence of the Government has been articulated by the shadow Attorney-General.

Through this piece of legislation and the setting up of this inquiry, the Government is trying to usurp the role of Parliament. The Government is about usurping the role of Parliament and governing by Executive. That is exactly what Fitzgerald warned us about. That is exactly what the Government is about. As the shadow Attorney-General and the Leader of the Opposition have said, members opposite have learned nothing in six years. They have not learned one thing from the Fitzgerald process. The Leader of the Opposition is so right: the crooks are back in town. My word they are back in town! They are back in force, and they have the protection of the Government.

Mr Hamill: And with a vengeance.

Mr ELDER: They are back with a vengeance. An honourable member asked, "What are you up to?" I know what the

Government is up to. As I said the other day, we have only to look at the words of the member for Western Downs, Mr Littleproud. His words will come back to haunt him time and time again. The Heiner documents, this inquiry and a number of issues stick in the minds of Government members. The member for Western Downs said that members of the Opposition have memories that are long enough to ensure that things are put back to the way they were. Too right! This is all about putting things back to the way they were. Those were the exact words of the member. Those words are now coming to fruition. The Government supports that 100 percent.

This Government is vindictive and is about getting everyone. That is its agenda. Over the past eight months, the Government has been preparing the ground for this inquiry. That is what the National Party has always been about. For eight months it has been undermining the CJC and trying to get the corruption fighter so that, as the Opposition Leader said, the National Party can go back to the days when it was not accountable and crooks flourished. The crooks are back in town. They are happy that the National Party is back in Government.

Right from day one the Premier has buried the Fitzgerald report—the blueprint for a corruption-free Government. Right from day one the Premier has set about destabilising and discrediting the Criminal Justice Commission. The Premier has not resiled or changed from that direction. That is what he has been about from day one. I will go through a sequence of events which demonstrates that point. The Premier and the Police Minister, Russell Cooper, know that their futures are in the hands of the report to be delivered by Mr Carruthers. He was appointed to look into that memorandum of understanding and the secret deal between members opposite and the Police Union. When he reports, I suspect that both the Premier and the Police Minister will have a case to answer. The Government has been about white-anting the inquiry from day one.

In the corruption-ridden days before the Fitzgerald inquiry, the National Party—and members with long memories can recall this—often resorted to dirty tricks to try to destabilise and destroy the credibility of those seeking to expose the dirty crooks. Do honourable members remember what they did to Hooper in the days when he was in this Parliament? They pulled dirty trick after dirty trick to try to destroy his credibility. They are back. The same tactic is being used in relation to the CJC. The Premier, Mr Borbidge, openly criticised the merits of the Carruthers inquiry, saying that CJC Chairman Frank Clair had overreacted in setting it up. On 27 March, Vince Lester, the National Party chairman of the parliamentary committee——

Government members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Laming)**:** Order!

Mr ELDER: The member for Keppel said that he wanted to see someone else, possibly in the police force, acting as the initial filter for complaints against police instead of the CJC. We could see this coming upon hearing comment after comment from the National Party.

Mr Schwarten: He said he could go to buggery.

Mr ELDER: I recall what he said. I take the interjection.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Rockhampton! That word is not to be used in this House.

Mr ELDER: Mr Deputy Speaker, you are probably right; it is unparliamentary. But he did say it. This was a similar line——

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! That language is not acceptable in the House even if it is put in the mouth of another person.

Mr ELDER: Mr Deputy Speaker, I have acknowledged that, and I have said, "But he did say it." The words will not appear in *Hansard*, but they were his words.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! They will not be heard in this House, either.

Dr Watson interjected.

Mr ELDER: How many times do members want me to agree with the Deputy Speaker?

Mr Braddy interjected.

Mr ELDER: He said it, and that is all that matters.

This was a similar line to the intent of the secret deal. In April, the member for Keppel was saying that he would be very surprised if any adverse findings came from the Carruthers inquiry. In that same interview, the member for Keppel also said he would make a priority of probing——

Mr LESTER: I rise to a point of order. I find that remark offensive, because I was not the chairman of the PCJC at the time.

Mr ELDER: I am talking about this year. I know that the member has problems——

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member finds what the member for Capalaba said offensive.

Mr ELDER: Mr Deputy Speaker, what does the member find offensive? Can you repeat it? What does the member find offensive about what I just said?

Government members: Withdraw.

Mr ELDER: What, withdraw that he was not the chair of the parliamentary committee in April? That is what he was. He was the chair. What, is the member's memory going backwards as he walks backwards?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member has asked the member for Capalaba to withdraw. I ask the member to do so.

Mr ELDER: I withdraw the fact that he was chairman of the Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee.

Mr Hamill: Let the parliamentary record record the truth.

Mr ELDER: I take the interjection.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member has been asked to withdraw.

Mr ELDER: I have withdrawn. I withdraw the comment. Let me say that it is my understanding and that of those of us in the Parliament that the member for Keppel happens to be the chairman of the Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee. He was the chairman, as best as I can recall, this year.

Mrs Edmond: He is saying that he is only the nominal chair.

Mr ELDER: Either nominal chair or chair, the way I see it: the member was still responsible for overseeing the role of the Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee. He was saying that he would be very surprised if there were adverse findings. I now know why the Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee has its problems in meeting. I now know why the member has some difficulty in standing up for the rights of committees in this place.

Mrs Edmond interjected.

Mr ELDER: No, they do not have a chair of the committee. The chairman wants to vacate the chair; it is obvious that he has some problems with this. In the same interview, the member for Keppel said that he would be making it a priority to probe the CJC's budget. How was he going to do that if he was not the chair? I am bewildered by the point of order. The member for Keppel has destroyed my whole speech. He was not the chair of the PCJC all this time! What will I do from this point onwards? They are deserting in droves; they do not want the responsibility. No wonder you do not want the responsibility. You should be standing up for the role of this Parliament. It is quite obvious that you do not want the role of chairman of the PCJC.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member will not refer to members across the Chamber as "you". The member will refer to honourable members by their electorate.

Mr ELDER: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. I accept your ruling. No wonder the member for Keppel does not particularly want the role. I understand and appreciate why the committee has been a failure from day one; it has obviously been because of his chairmanship.

Honourable members will remember that the CJC chairman, Mr Clair, went on the record revealing that there was a deliberate program of misinformation designed to publicly discredit and devalue the Carruthers inquiry. At the time, Mr Carruthers referred to a serious example of disinformation coming from sources on the Government side of the House. Counsel assisting Mr Carruthers referred to an insulting and inappropriate comment from a spokesperson for Mr Cooper. Again, one can see the technique. One can see how the National Party works. One can see how this Government works.

An Opposition member: You can see the strategy.

Mr ELDER: Exactly—one can see its cumulative strategy.

The member for Keppel, the National Party Chair of the CJC's watchdog committee—and he was the chair at the time, even if he does not realise it—forced through an inquiry—and we all recall the debate within the committee which he did not chair—into the way in which the CJC obtained damning evidence against that National Party fixer in Townsville, Mr Matthew Heery. The member for Crows Nest appointed former Liberal Minister Sir Max Bingham to usurp the CJC's role in monitoring the performance of the Police Service and then released his report in advance of the findings of the Carruthers report. Again, one can just see it rolling—an eight-month concerted campaign to undermine the CJC; everyone in everyone's pocket white-anting the CJC.

In his Contract with Queensland, the Premier promised integrity and public faith in the processes of Government. How those words must scald his lips: "integrity and public faith in the processes of Government". But remember this: the Police Minister refused to rule out putting that National Party fixer and self-confessed liar, Matthew Heery, on the public payroll by employing him on his staff.

The Premier, Mr Borbidge, publicly backed his Police Minister, as he publicly backs him now.

Ms Bligh: Was he Premier at the time?

Mr ELDER: Was he Premier at the time? Was the Police Minister the Police Minister at the time? If we follow the logic of the member for Keppel, we are on the wrong side of the House—the people of Queensland certainly realise that—and we should probably change after lunch!

The Premier refused to sack Heery after the Police Minister refused to sack him. In other words, he came out in full support of that liar and National Party fixer in Townsville. But when the Premier was asked to stand up for the Chair of the CJC, Mr Frank Clair, what did he do? He refused to. Where is the integrity of the Premier in relation to that display? There is a significant difference, I would think, between Matt Heery and the role that he has played and the role that Mr Clair plays in chairing the CJC in this State.

Almost immediately, Cabinet decided that senior police officers—and members will remember this one; again it just rolls on—should be made to reapply for their jobs, which could result in assistant commissioners losing their jobs, in line with the Premier's secret deal with the Police Union in Mundingburra. The CJC was pilloried for its predictable and rightful opposition to that particular decision. Despite its charter, the CJC was snubbed by not being represented when the Bingham review implementation team was named. This campaign has rolled on like a juggernaut for the last eight months.

The Attorney-General, who has no statutory power over the CJC apart from funding requirements, took a submission to Cabinet to create the judicial inquiry into the CJC that we will be debating shortly. The point that interests me is that the terms of reference of that inquiry originally included a review of the Davies affair. A question was asked this morning about the Heiner documents. The answer tells me that those two retired judges knew well and truly what the Government was up to, and they advised it to walk away from that matter—to turn its back on it and not to touch it. I am sure that that is the way it went.

Mr Schwarten: Leave it alone.

Mr ELDER: Exactly—leave it alone.

Even Primary Industries Minister Perrett got in on the act by saying that the activity of the CJC would have to be looked at and that the CJC had to be asked why it was "picking on conservative politicians instead of getting the real crooks it was set up to catch". Do members recall that statement? Members opposite are, without exception, totally vindictive. The vitriol has been ongoing day after day.

Ms Bligh: Government by malice.

Mr ELDER: This is certainly Government by malice.

Where did the Government hit the CJC next? $2.7m was slashed from the CJC's budget, giving it only as much as it received in its first full year under a Labor Government in 1991.

Ms Bligh: Implementing the MOU.

Mr ELDER: Implementing the MOU, as members opposite have often said—and they probably now wish they had not—lock, stock and barrel. The attitude of the Government was: if we do not get the CJC through the front door, then we will slash its funding and get it through the back door.

Then the member for Broadwater—"the mouth from the south", that notorious bucket tipper—came into the Parliament, with the blessing of the Premier, because the Premier knew exactly what he was going to do——

Mr Beattie: He admitted that.

Mr ELDER: He certainly did. The member for Broadwater made those outrageous allegations against senior CJC officer Mark Le Grand. That was another stage in the campaign, and the timing was perfect. Also on this day, it was reported that the PCJC—the committee that the member for Keppel does not chair—had brought forward its review into the CJC's bugging powers. Time and time again, we see it. Even National Party director Ken Crooke—because the National Party administration wanted to get in on the act as well—attacked the submissions to the Carruthers inquiry which could lead to charges being laid against the Police Minister. The attacks were made at every opportunity.

Then the Premier announced that the judicial inquiry would include the Heiner documents and the Davies affair. However, I believe that the Government was given the right advice that there should be no inquiry in the first place, and it should have stuck to it. The inquiry has now been put into place and the two commissioners have been named. I have to say that that was a sad day for Queensland. This is not a slap in the face for the CJC—no way; it is intended as a knock-out punch for the CJC. That was the Government's intention from day one. It is, and always has been, about getting even. It is, and always has been, about protecting the Premier and protecting the Police Minister. It

is, and always has been, about turning back the clock. I return to the words of Mr Littleproud—

> "Members of the Opposition have memories that are long enough to ensure that things will be put back to the way they were."

That is so true.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: I rise to a point of order. The honourable member for Capalaba is using my words in a different context. I find their use in that way insulting, and I ask that they be withdrawn.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Laming): The Minister asks the member to withdraw those words.

Mr ELDER: If he wishes them to be withdrawn, I withdraw them, but they are on the record, and the Minister knows it. His vindictive nature is intact. I withdraw, but his words are on the public record, and people can make their own judgment about what the Minister meant.

Let me just say this in conclusion: Fitzgerald was right when he said—

> "If the community is complacent, future leaders will revert to former practices."

How right; how true; how prophetic! That is exactly what we are seeing today in this Parliament: members opposite reverting to their former practices.

Sitting suspended from 12.59 to 2.30 p.m.

Mr BARTON (Waterford) (2.30 p.m.): I rise to support the amendment of the Leader of the Opposition and to oppose the original motion before the House. The Opposition very clearly supports the role of the Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee, which is a role that this Government is attempting to usurp by this legislation in a most outrageous way by rushing this Bill through the Parliament with what can only be described as indecent haste.

This matter should not be handled by a Bill before this Parliament and it should not be handled by way of a judicial inquiry. It must be handled by the Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee because that is its role. I support the amendment that has been moved by the Leader of the Opposition, and if this Bill is to proceed, then we believe that it should proceed only after public hearings have been conducted by the Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee—I repeat, as part of its role—so that all interested parties can get together to allow for proper public input into this proposed legislation before it comes back to this Parliament. To do otherwise is to remove the Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee's role in the whole process. That can be construed only as a direct attack on the Fitzgerald process. The Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee is an integral part of the entire Fitzgerald process to which this Parliament and all parties in this Parliament have been committed since 1989.

What I said two nights ago in another debate in this Parliament certainly bears repeating: the Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee is a creature of this Parliament. It is this House's representative. It looks after this Parliament's interests as far as the Criminal Justice Commission is concerned. The Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee is multi-party—it is representative of the three major parties in this Parliament—and it seeks to operate in a bipartisan way.

The Criminal Justice Commission reports to this Parliament via the Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee. The CJC does not answer to Executive Government, it answers to this Parliament. As has been said by several of my colleagues already today, the CJC should not answer to Executive Government. The commission was set up to be independent of Executive Government and, in line with the Criminal Justice Act and the Fitzgerald process, it must be responsible to this Parliament via the Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee.

I suggest to every member of this House that a vote for this motion before the Parliament and a vote for this legislation would have the effect of removing this Parliament's role in overviewing the work of the Criminal Justice Commission and it hands it directly to the Executive Government. That would be a great breach of the original intentions of setting up the Criminal Justice Commission and the Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee. If this Government wants to do that—if it wants to overturn the Fitzgerald process in totality, if it wants to usurp the role of this Parliament, if it wants to throw out the current Criminal Justice Act—then it should do it very openly. It should not do it by stealth, by setting up a judicial inquiry, it should not do it by all of the other actions that it has been taking in recent months to muddy the waters to try to discredit the Criminal Justice Commission. It should have the fortitude to come out and put an amending piece of legislation to totally modify the Criminal Justice Commission to make it answerable to Executive Government, if that is its intention. It should have the courage to come out and say

to the public, "This is what we are doing." The Government should do that openly—let there be a public debate—it should not do it by stealth, which is what is currently occurring.

We all need to ask ourselves, particularly all members who will be voting on this motion and the Leader of the Opposition's amendment, whether this is what the public wants. There can be only one answer to that, and I would suggest that the answer to that is: no, the public does not want the Government motion that is before us. When will the public find out about it? Some members of the public may be aware that there is a Bill before the Parliament that was introduced late yesterday, but if in fact this Bill is to be debated today and if the legislation is to be considered and if it is passed later today, then members of the public will find out about it only when they come home from work and see it on the television news tonight.

Mr FitzGerald: It's never been done before?

Mr BARTON: It has certainly been done before. I will take that interjection. I used to spend many nights down here, when I was the Assistant Secretary of the Trades and Labour Council of Queensland, and I would see Joh Bjelke-Petersen come into this House and hand to the member for Keppel, who was then the member for Peak Downs, a Bill and a second-reading speech and tell him that the Government would be suspending Standing Orders so that they could rush legislation through. It has been done many times before. It happened with the Essential Services Act, the Electricity (Continuity of Supply) Act and the Electricity Authorities Industrial Causes Act.

Mr FitzGerald: Was it even done between 1989 and the beginning of 1996?

Mr BARTON: I am talking about as far back as 1979, from my experience, and right through 1985 in particular. That is the era that was discredited; that is the era that led to the excesses of the National Party in Government; that is the era that led to the Fitzgerald inquiry; that is the era that led to Ministers going to gaol; and that is when the National Party got dragged, kicking and screaming, out of office. I say to the member who made the interjection: yes, it has been done before. It was certainly done in that era, during the excesses of the National Party Government.

Mr FitzGerald: Ever done by Labor?

Mr BARTON: Any suspension of Standing Orders done by the Labor Party certainly were not done with legislation that had the impact of this legislation. This legislation is not about some mechanical change, it is about tearing the heart out of the fabric of the Fitzgerald process. This legislation is about to whom the CJC will be accountable in the future. This is all about removing this Parliament's capacity to oversee the work of the CJC through the Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee.

Mr Carroll: Who should it be accountable to if not to the Parliament?

Mr BARTON: It should be accountable to the Parliament; that is what I am saying. The CJC should be accountable to the Parliament—and it should be accountable via the PCJC—not to the Executive Government. That is what the current legislation says. I will not take any more interjections. The member who just interjected is so obviously green that he does not understand how the Criminal Justice Act works.

There is no opportunity for public input because if this piece of legislation is debated and passed today, then members of the public will not have the opportunity to scrutinise it; they will not have any capacity to debate it within their community organisations; and they will not have any capacity to come back and talk to their member of Parliament to express a view. If this Government proceeds in this manner, it will find out to its detriment that the public still has very warm feelings about the Criminal Justice Commission, whatever its weaknesses. I certainly accept that it has some weaknesses because, as most members of this Parliament would be aware, I spent three years as a member of the second PCJC, so I know a fair bit about how the CJC operates and about its strengths and weaknesses.

One of the other awful aspects of the way it is intended to rush through this legislation is that it will not only usurp one parliamentary committee's role—in the PCJC—it will also totally wipe out and usurp the role of the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee. That committee is an important part of the process. It has found significant errors in Bills that have been brought before the Parliament. If this Bill had been sent to the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee, and if the Bill were to lie on the table of the Parliament for seven days, as required by Standing Orders, there is no doubt that that Scrutiny of Legislation Committee and its staff would have discovered the blunders that are in this Bill and which were mentioned earlier by the shadow Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, the member for Yeronga, and detailed by him. I will not repeat the detail that he gave, but that is an

example of why this Bill should not be rushed through today, why it should go to that Scrutiny of Legislation Committee and why it should be considered by the PCJC at a public hearing.

To give an example of why this Bill should go back to the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee—I am sure that all members would recall the circumstances of the Bill that was in this Chamber only some five or six weeks ago amending the Juvenile Justice Act. The Scrutiny of Legislation Committee found major flaws in that Bill. This Government was so embarrassed when those flaws were detailed before this Parliament that it ultimately did agree to adjourn that debate to allow for a public hearing at which the major interest groups were able to be represented. As a result of that, the Attorney-General did move a number of amendments when it came back—not as many as the Opposition would have liked to have seen—and certainly we ended up with a slightly better piece of legislation than otherwise would have been the case.

I will not repeat all the comments that have been made by my colleagues who have spoken earlier other than to say that I agree fully with them. This is a smokescreen. It was laughable for the member for Mount Ommaney to be carrying on about what we are scared about—that this is a smokescreen by us—because this Bill is a smokescreen by the Government to hide what it is doing. It is a smokescreen to try to protect the Minister for Police and the Premier from further embarrassment. We have seen their position in terms of the Criminal Justice Commission. It is certainly no smokescreen by us. But this Bill is a total smokescreen. If this Bill has to be debated all night, all tomorrow night and all weekend then, by heavens, we will be here as members of the Opposition to expose this even further.

I certainly oppose the motion that has been moved by the Leader of the House and support fully the amendment that has been moved by the Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. D. J. HAMILL (Ipswich) (2.43 p.m.): I am one of those who are becoming members of a select band in this House. I refer to those who remember quite vividly the days when the National Party sat on the Treasury benches. This debate—and, indeed, the issues that members are discussing in this debate—evokes memories of another time, a time to which this Government now seems determined to take us back. This motion that has been put forward by the Leader of the House, whilst not exceptional in itself, is certainly one that deserves to be defeated because of the subject matter of the Bill which the Leader of the House seeks to put through all its stages.

Mr Lingard: Did you ever do it, though?

Mr HAMILL: I take the honourable member's interjection in these terms: there are times when Governments need to put legislation through quickly. There are times when it is justifiable to put legislation through quickly. Generally, if a Bill is of such import, then often it would actually attract support from members on both sides of the House. I have seen that occur on numerous occasions. What I find totally objectionable in relation to this piece of legislation is that it was introduced yesterday and today it has to be pushed through quickly.

Mr Lingard: Do you remember something called the gun laws?

Mr HAMILL: The Honourable the Minister seems to be obsessed with gun laws. I would have thought that another piece of legislation which ought to be given some priority is the Weapons Amendment Bill. Why is it not being brought forward for debate? After all, it is No. 2 on the Notice Paper. In fact, according to the Notice Paper that was distributed in the House this morning, this Bill—the Criminal Justice Legislation Amendment Bill—sits at No. 26. By trying to put this motion before the House, the Government is saying that Bill No. 26 on the Notice Paper is of greater priority than every other Bill that has been presented before this House. It has been given priority over and above every other Bill on the Notice Paper. Why should that be so? There is no good reason why that should be so, except that we know that, by these actions, this Government is determined to press a political agenda. It is not interested in good administration; it is not interested in propriety in Government; it is all about pushing its own craven political agenda.

As I said, this evokes those memories of a time 10 years ago when another National Party Government used or abused the legal processes to try to persecute the Opposition in this place and outside this place. I remember very, very well indeed when the then Bjelke-Petersen National Party Government adopted a political tactic of using litigation to try to silence the Opposition, when Ministers used public funds to take out writs against Opposition members in an endeavour to stifle debate and to stifle public comment in relation to the scandalous maladministration which became the hallmark of that Government. I

suspect that, from the words and deeds of this Liberal/National Party Government, it is back on the same old track. It is trying to dig itself out of a political hole by using public funds to run what is, in fact, its political agenda. In Victoria, they recently changed the slogan on their numberplates. It used to be "Victoria Garden State", now it is "Victoria on the Move". At the rate that this lot are going, they will be changing the slogan on numberplates here from "Queensland Sunshine State" to "Queensland State of Inquiry". Members have seen a succession of politically motivated inquiries being established at considerable public expense. Many of my constituents would not know what it would be like to get $3,000 a day, which seems to be the going rate for those who are being charged to do this Government's business. The Government's tactics are clear. It will use and abuse the commissions of inquiry process to further its political agenda. As I said, this is all evocative of what happened in this place 10 years ago.

It behoves all members to have another look at the report of commissioner Fitzgerald—no, not the audit commissioner, but commissioner Tony Fitzgerald. The Fitzgerald report had a lot to say about the way this State was run by former coalition and National Party Governments. On page 358 of the Fitzgerald report, commissioner Fitzgerald said—

> ". . . reform will not work if attitudes do not change. It is informed public opinion which will ensure the maintenance of political will to implement this report. The community cannot afford to be complacent, or lapse into self-fulfilling cynicism."

Those were very prophetic words indeed. What we are seeing here is a barefaced attempt to turn back that reform process—to undermine what was a turning point in public administration in this State as a result of the implementation of the Fitzgerald report.

I also refer honourable members to one of the key recommendations of the Fitzgerald report, which is also found on page 358, where the report recommends the setting up of two new bodies, the Electoral and Administrative Review Commission and the Criminal Justice Commission. As we all know, the Electoral and Administrative Review Commission has done its work. Time has moved on and so did the need for that commission. But the Criminal Justice Commission still has an important job to do, a vital job to do.

I remind honourable members of a couple of other key recommendations of Fitzgerald in order to get into his thinking as to why the Criminal Justice Commission that he recommended was so important. The Fitzgerald report documents maladministration on a grand scale. It documents a Government that had politics rated one, two, and three in its priorities and sought to use the machinery of Government to further its own political ends. Good Government really did not come into the picture at all. The Fitzgerald report made a very clear recommendation in relation to the establishment of the Criminal Justice Commission and in relation to the criminal justice reform process. On page 361 of his report Commissioner Fitzgerald stated—

> "Criminal justice law reform should be removed as far as possible from sectional political interests. Any body making recommendations on these matters should be constituted so as to avoid bias, and the issues should be reassessed on a continual basis as social conditions alter."

Commissioner Fitzgerald was most emphatic about the need for an independent body. He went on at page 366 of his report to state—

> "The administration of criminal justice should be of independent of Executive controls. It is an apolitical, vital public function. However, it should be open to public review and accountable to Parliament."

It does not say "accountable to the Executive". Fitzgerald went on to say—

> "One mechanism which satisfies these requirements is an all party parliamentary committee."

That was the genius of the Fitzgerald report. Commissioner Fitzgerald recommended that there be a Criminal Justice Commission as an integral part of the reform of the administration of criminal justice in this State. Because of the excesses of the National Party Government at that time, Commissioner Fitzgerald's key recommendation was to establish the Criminal Justice Commission and have it answerable not to the Executive but to the Parliament, and that its work be overseen by an all-party parliamentary committee. Yet what we have seen from this Government, and this Attorney-General in particular, is a barefaced grab for power whereby the Attorney-General is trying to drag the Criminal Justice Commission under the wing of the Executive, under his wing, so that it can no longer provide the independent function which Commissioner Fitzgerald sought of that Criminal Justice Commission;

rather, it is to become another arm of the Government, another arm of the Executive. Of course, in that environment, it is to be used as a political weapon in the hands of this unscrupulous Government.

These are very critical issues. The debate in relation to these matters no doubt will be a lively one. Where does it leave the Government in its bid to try to bring the debate on with such haste? It is little wonder that the Government does not want its legislation to be subjected to the public scrutiny that it deserves. There cannot be too many things that are more fundamental to public administration in this State than the role, powers and the independence of the Criminal Justice Commission, yet the Government seems afraid to allow its legislation to be examined in the full glare of public light. It is denying the mechanisms of the Parliament to analyse the implications of its Bill. It is not prepared to allow the parliamentary committee—that very body which by statute is established to monitor the work of the CJC—to comment and report upon this very important legislation. Nor is it prepared to allow the normal processes of the Parliament to scrutinise this legislation.

We have established a committee system in the Queensland Parliament. One of the great failings of the Queensland Parliament in the past was that its committee system was concerned about libraries, refreshment rooms, buildings and printing and was not concerned with the legislative program. We now have a committee system that is charged with examining, among other things, the quality of legislation that is brought before this House. Yet the Government is denying that all-party committee the opportunity to analyse the implications of this legislation. It is denying the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee its role to report on the provisions of these amendments to the Criminal Justice Commission Act. The Government really is trying to scuttle the parliamentary process. It has no regard for propriety in relation to the Parliament process. It has no regard for the importance of this institution in relation to the legislative process. Clearly, the Government has no regard for the Fitzgerald process of reforming public administration in this State.

The Government is taking us back to the time when a former Premier, who is now the Police Minister, when asked about the separation of powers tried to bat the question back because he thought it was a trick question. We are returning to the time when others thought the separation of powers was a reference to the bubbles rising in a brand of beer that was being marketed at the time. By the Government's actions today, it is quite clear that many Government members subscribe to those views and hanker for those less complicated days when they did not have to worry about public administration in Queensland.

Hansard shows that a little over of a third of the current membership of the House was present in the days pre-1989. Not all of those members were sitting on the Opposition benches. I say to those Government members who were here prior to 1989 that their actions today bring shame to the Queensland Parliament. They have learnt absolutely nothing in the time that they have been here. They learnt nothing from the days when the corruption, which was endemic within the Queensland Government that was led by Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen, was put under the spotlight. They certainly did not learn in the days when they were in Opposition, when they had plenty of time to analyse where they went wrong, to read the Fitzgerald report, and to take on board those key recommendations about how public administration should be cleaned up in Queensland. They ought to have learnt that an institution such as the Criminal Justice Commission needs to be independent of the Executive. I do not care which Government we are talking about—whether it is a Labor Government or a non-Labor Government—the Criminal Justice Commission needs to be independent; the Criminal Justice Commission needs to report to the Parliament. All Governments need to respect the independence of the parliamentary committee. By way of this motion and by way of the amending legislation that is before the House and soon to be debated, the Government is marginalising the parliamentary committee and denying it its proper function of overseeing the work of the Criminal Justice Commission. In so doing, it is seeking to undermine the independence of that body.

I said before that Queensland is fast becoming the "State of inquiry" because we are seeing a set of politically motivated inquiries being established by a Government that is on the run—I might say a Government that is on the skids. The Government knows it is in tons of trouble over the dealings in which it engaged on its slippery road to office. It knows full well that——

Mr FITZGERALD: I rise under Standing Order 142 and move—

"That the question be now put."

Question put; and the House divided—

AYES, 43—Baumann, Beanland, Borbidge, Connor, Cooper, 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

NOES, 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, Palaszczuk, Pearce, Purcell, Roberts, Robertson, Rose, Schwarten, Smith, Spence, Sullivan J. H., Welford, Wells, Woodgate *Tellers:* Livingstone, Sullivan T. B.

The numbers being equal, Mr Speaker cast his vote with the Ayes.

Resolved in the **affirmative.**

Question—That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the question—put; and the House divided—

AYES, 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

NOES, 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, Palaszczuk, Pearce, Purcell, Roberts, Robertson, Rose, Schwarten, Smith, Spence, Sullivan J. H., Welford, Wells, Woodgate *Tellers:* Livingstone, Sullivan T. B.

Resolved in the **affirmative**.

Question—That the motion be agreed to—put; and the House divided.

AYES, 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

NOES, 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, Palaszczuk, Pearce, Purcell, Roberts, Robertson, Rose, Schwarten, Smith, Spence, Sullivan J. H., Welford, Wells, Woodgate *Tellers:* Livingstone, Sullivan T. B.

Resolved in the **affirmative**.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 9 October (see p. 3200).

Hon. M. J. FOLEY (Yeronga) (3.15 p.m.): Yet again, we have the spectre of the Executive trammelling over the rights, powers and privileges of this Parliament. A debate has been brought on less than 24 hours after the Criminal Justice Legislation Amendment Bill was presented to the Parliament. The debate on this Bill raises a fundamental question about who is to conduct the inquiry into the Criminal Justice Commission—the Parliament or the Executive.

Under the structure of the existing Act, the Parliament, through the Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee, has the power to monitor and review the Criminal Justice Commission. However, what is contemplated is the destruction of that framework. This Bill is an attempt to give to a creature of the Executive, namely a commission of inquiry, the power that has previously been reserved for the Parliament through its Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee. As such, this Bill is repugnant to those who care about the proper role of the Parliament in supervising, monitoring and reviewing the Criminal Justice Commission.

There are grounds to be very concerned about the scope of this rushed legislation which is designed to overcome the humiliating bungle that Premier Borbidge and Attorney-General Beanland made in setting up this inquiry, which is devoid of the legal power to do the very thing for which it was set up, namely, to investigate the Criminal Justice Commission. In so doing, they have used a blunt instrument.

The Bill provides that the Commissions of Inquiry Act 1950 prevails over the Criminal Justice Act. Clause 3 of the Bill states that—

> ". . . the commission or a person who is, or was, a commissioner, a commission officer or member of the commission's staff"—

that is, a member of the Criminal Justice Commission's staff—

> "or other person engaged under section 66 must comply with any summons or requirement of an inquiry chairperson

under the Commissions of Inquiry Act 1950, section 5."

The question is whether this provision simply confers the power upon the Connolly Commission and upon other commissions of inquiry specifically appointed by the Governor in Council pursuant to the Commissions of Inquiry Act, or whether the power extends far beyond that to bodies such as the Podiatrists Board, the Physiotherapists Board, the Beach Protection Authority and so on. A wide range of legislation confers powers upon boards and tribunals to exercise the powers and authorities of commissions of inquiry under the Commissions of Inquiry Act. Certain legislation deems those boards and bodies to have to be commissions of inquiry under the Act.

Let us take, for example, the Podiatrists Act. Section 22(2)(b) of that Act states that in the conduct of an inquiry, the Podiatrists Board is—

". . . subject to subsections (1) to (1B), shall have and may exercise all the powers, authorities, rights, privileges, protection and jurisdiction of a commission of inquiry under the Commissions of Inquiry Act 1950 save such as are by that Act reserved to a chairperson of a commission who is a judge of the Supreme Court."

On its face, that confers upon the Podiatrists Board the same power as a commission of inquiry. Similarly, as I indicated prior to lunch, the provisions of the Physiotherapists Act confer similar powers on the Physiotherapists Board.

I point out that the Opposition has not had the time to conduct systematic, legal research. In the short time since this has been tabled, however, it would appear that there is a strong argument for believing that the Government has bungled this legislation yet again. Our preliminary research indicates that there are about 70 bodies with the powers of a commission of inquiry. In addition to the ones that I have already mentioned, they include the Auctioneers and Agents Committee, under the Auctioneers and Agents Act, section 12; the Architects Board, under the Architects Act, section 43——

Mr Stoneman: What about the Auctioneers and Agents Act? What about ripping off the money out of that?

Mr FOLEY: It may be that the member for Burdekin has so little regard for the rights and liberties of citizens that he does not care who constituents a commission of inquiry. It is extraordinary that the member should treat so blithely the question of whether or not these powers are confined to commissions of inquiry proper or are extended. We see typical National Party arrogance towards civil liberties and a typical refusal to examine matters carefully and in detail. It is this which led the National Party to make so many mistakes. It is this which caused such dismay in the people of Queensland over the systematic corruption that prevailed in this State when the National Party was last in Government.

It behoves people like the member for Burdekin to pay attention to legislation that comes before this House, to study and analyse it to see what its impact is. He may prefer the approach of gagging debate and rushing legislation through. However, if the member were to take the trouble of doing some research to satisfy himself on whether the Architects Board should be given the power to compel the production of confidential CJC information, he would be doing the Parliament a service.

For example, do we really want the Appeals Tribunal constituted in section 11 of the Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road Act to have access to the confidential information of the Criminal Justice Commission? Do we really want the Casino Control Board, under section 81 of the Casino Control Act, to have that power? One looks carefully through this legislation to see any indication that those boards have been specifically excluded from the scope of the legislation, but that is nowhere to be seen.

Indeed, it is distressing that the Government should be rushing this legislation through without affording the Opposition adequate time, on behalf of the people of Queensland, the people whom we represent, to scrutinise it. We have not even had an opportunity to confer with the departmental legal officers who are briefing the Government on this matter. The matter has been brought on and rushed through such that one has to ask: why is there such indecent haste? The answer to that question is not to be found in any matter of high principle. The answer to that question is to be found in the fear of coalition members of the impending release of a report from the Carruthers inquiry. They want desperately to get this commission of inquiry up and running so that they can have some distraction prior to the release of that report.

For example, do the people of Queensland want the Chiropractors and Osteopaths Board to have these powers to compel the production of information of a confidential nature from the Criminal Justice

Commission that would appear to be given to it by the operation of section 25 of the Chiropractors and Osteopaths Act? Similarly, do the people of Queensland really want the Teachers Registration Board under the Education (Teacher Registration) Act to have that power? It would be very interesting to hear from the Attorney-General whether he has consulted with the Queensland Teachers Union on this matter to see whether or not the teachers of Queensland are happy at the prospect of the Teachers Registration Board, exercising powers of a commission of inquiry, gaining access to confidential information held by the Criminal Justice Commission about teachers.

The researches undertaken by the Opposition must necessarily be of a preliminary kind, because the indecent haste with which this Bill has been brought on has prevented further and more extensive research from being undertaken. I make this point: it is contrary to the principles of good legislation that matters affecting the exercise of powers by royal commissions should be dealt with in so cavalier a fashion. One is stunned by the monumental hypocrisy of the coalition Government in this respect. The Attorney-General has waxed loud and long about issues of accountability in respect of the Criminal Justice Commission. The Attorney-General has said that this is a body which exercises great powers and therefore should be subject to scrutiny. Yet when the Attorney-General wants to come into this Chamber and confer great powers upon commissions of inquiry—powers to override the confidentiality provisions of the Criminal Justice Act—he wants to do so with indecent haste and without the benefit of scrutiny.

All this is directed at the operation of the confidentiality provisions of the Criminal Justice Act. It is instructive to look at those provisions in order to see what the scheme of that Act is and in order to understand the architecture upon which the anti-corruption fight contemplated by Mr Fitzgerald was built. The confidentiality provision set out in section 132 of the Criminal Justice Act of 1989 provides—

> "A person must not wilfully disclose information that has come to the person's knowledge because the person is or was a person to whom this subsection applies unless the information is disclosed for the purposes of the Commission or of this Act."

The scheme of that provision is to ensure that information was held confidential and could be supervised by the relevant parliamentary body. The structure of that Act returns to this Parliament the power to monitor and review the operation of the Criminal Justice Commission. That is as it was contemplated by Mr Fitzgerald, QC, as he then was, in his report.

This Bill seeks to blow away the architecture contemplated by the Fitzgerald report and to replace it with a different structure. What this Bill does is to override the principle that the commission should be responsible to an all-party parliamentary committee and should not be capable of being inquired into by a creature of the Executive, namely, the commission.

Mr Stoneman interjected.

Mr Veivers interjected.

Mr FOLEY: It is interesting that these matters are treated with such disdain by members who were a part of the Government in which people were engaged in corrupt and illegal practices. They no doubt treat this matter lightly. It was their colleagues who sat around and allowed corruption to take this State by the throat. They showed so little regard for the rule of law and the need for independent legal institutions that they allowed Don Lane and his colleagues, one after the other, to be engaged in corrupt practices. They are trying desperately to dismantle the Fitzgerald legacy. They know that the Criminal Justice Commission plays a vital role, and they want to attack it. They want to ensure that they can set up a creature of the Executive, that is, a commission of inquiry, to attack it. What cavalier disregard they show for the institutions which protect us from corruption, which preserve the rule of law. It would be instructive if the people of Queensland could see the blithe disregard with which members of the coalition regard these matters. I can assure members of this House that the people of Queensland do not show a blithe disregard in respect of matters of corruption and the need to ensure the vigour and independence of those bodies which are set in place to oppose corruption, to investigate it and to root it out.

Let me turn to another provision of the Bill which also attacks the parliamentary privilege attaching to members of this House. I refer in this respect to the position of members, both past and present, of the Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee. It is not only the Criminal Justice Commission that has information which can be accessed by these amendments and made accessible to commissions of inquiry; it is also members of Parliament. At least that appears to be so on

a reading of the provisions of new section 132B(3). That provision states—

> "if the person would otherwise be required under an Act, oath, rule of law or practice to maintain confidentiality about anything disclosed by the person to the CJC inquiry—the person—
>
> (i) does not contravene the Act, oath, rule of law or practice for making the disclosure; and
>
> (ii) is not liable to disciplinary action for making the disclosure."

What that means to honourable members of this House is that if any of them have been a member of the Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee and they have received confidential briefings, on its face that provision would enable them to be hauled before this commission of inquiry and required to disclose information——

Mr Beattie: Maybe publicly.

Mr FOLEY: Quite possibly publicly, as the Leader of the Opposition says—information which was given to them on a confidential basis, which they believed to be confidential and, what is more, which they believed to be covered by parliamentary privilege. It is not just the provisions of the Criminal Justice Act that protect the workings of the Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee; it is also the privilege of this Parliament.

Mr Veivers: Forty-five more minutes of this.

Mr FOLEY: Again, one sees the member for Southport scoffing at the idea of the privileges of this Parliament. Let me remind the honourable member for Southport that the privilege of free speech is one of the things that stands between us and tyranny. It is the likes of him who would dearly love to trample even more the privilege of free speech, but he will not stop me from speaking out against this legislation, and he will not stop the Opposition from pointing out to the people of Queensland the horrendous attack that the Government is making with this legislation. Let me tell the honourable members of this House that the people of Queensland have a respect for the institution of the Parliament, even if the member for Southport does not.

Mr VEIVERS: I rise to a point of order. I take extreme objection to that, and I ask for it to be withdrawn.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr J. N. Goss): The member has taken exception and asks for it to be withdrawn.

Mr FOLEY: The requirements of withdrawal are that the matter be both offensive and untrue. I am not aware that I said anything which was untrue.

Mr VEIVERS: I rise to a point of order. I find them offensive and I ask the member to withdraw.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Minister has asked that they be withdrawn.

Mr FOLEY: Very well, I withdraw. What we have here is the honourable member relying upon the authority of this Parliament at the same time as his Government is introducing legislation which overrides certain basic aspects of parliamentary privilege which attach to the work of members of the Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee. He shows the extraordinary hypocrisy of coalition members on this matter.

It is astonishing enough that this legislation would be introduced by the National Party, but it is doubly sad to see the way in which the once proud Liberal Party is willing to genuflect at the National Party altar on this issue. There once was a time when the Liberal Party purported to stand for principles of liberalism. There once was a time when the Liberal Party in this State purported to be on the side of the civil liberties of citizens. There once was a time when the Liberal Party of this State would stand up to the National Party.

Mr McElligott: When?

Mr FOLEY: It seems lost in the mists of time. It must cause deep embarrassment to the member for Moggill, who brings to this House commitments to principle, to see the shambles in which the Attorney-General is leaving the Liberal Party.

Dr Watson: The Liberal Party asked for it to be reviewed and is innocent.

Mr FOLEY: I take the interjection from the member for Moggill.

Dr Watson: And you voted against it.

Mr FOLEY: Absolutely, because the Labor Party is committed to the proposition that the Criminal Justice Commission should be a permanent body designed to investigate allegations of police misconduct and official misconduct, and it is precisely because of that sleazy deal done by Rob Borbidge and Russell Cooper to take away from the CJC that role that we now find ourselves in this position.

Can anybody in Queensland now be left in any doubt that Mr Borbidge and Mr Cooper are doing their level best so far as is politically open to them to give effect to that secret memorandum of understanding with the

Police Union? Let us remember what was in that memorandum of understanding. It was a deal to downplay the role of the Criminal Justice Commission, and in particular to downplay and avoid the role of the CJC in investigating complaints of police misconduct and official misconduct. It has a striking ring to it, because it is exactly the same point that the Liberal Party and the National Party went to water on back in 1978 when Mr Justice Lucas reported to the Attorney-General of the day, Bill Lickiss, a recommendation designed to nip corruption in the bud. He recommended that there be a rotation of police officers serving in the Licensing Branch. That recommendation would have made the work of Jack Herbert and his colleagues in the joke impossible to flourish. But was it carried out? No, because the likes of the member for Burdekin and the member for Southport or their colleagues of the day simply failed to take the one step that——

Mr Veivers: What about the shredding that your blokes did? You talk about fairness and righteousness!

Mr FOLEY: The member for Southport might try to shout me down, but he is not going to take away my privilege of free speech. He is not going to take away my opportunity to tell the people of Queensland the infamy that he and his Government are up to. The more he squeals about it, the more the people of Queensland realise that something is rotten about this Government, that something is deeply suspect about the way it has campaigned hard on this issue.

I just wish that the National Party and the Liberal Party would show some vague flickering of the same sort of enthusiasm about combating youth unemployment that they do about tackling and abusing the Criminal Justice Commission. Why do we not see the members of the Liberal Party and the National Party getting excited and energetic and enthusiastic about combating unemployment, about generating jobs? Instead, what do we see? We see the continued practice of inflaming public opinion in respect of the Criminal Justice Commission, which is being continued in the Bill before the House.

The provisions for the inquiry into the CJC that are set out in this Bill include the provision that overrides the confidentiality that members of this House would have thought attached to them by virtue of their work on the Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee. I wonder whether Mr Borbidge and Mr Beanland pointed out to their colleagues in the parliamentary parties that their position would be affected. I wonder how many of the Government back bench and the Government Ministers, for that matter, actually know that they could be hauled before this commission of inquiry, and I wonder how many of them realise that the confidentiality and the parliamentary privilege that they once thought protected them is blown away by this Bill.

Dr Watson: No.

Mr FOLEY: I invite the honourable member for Moggill to back up his interjection by contributing to the debate. On its face, the legislation provides that the Commissions of Inquiry Act prevails over the Criminal Justice Act. That authorises commissions of inquiry——

Dr Watson: It's got nothing to do with parliamentary privilege.

Mr FOLEY: I am talking about the parliamentary privilege attaching to members of the Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee in their deliberations on the receipt of material placed before them in a parliamentary committee. I would have thought that the honourable member, being a very fine contributor to the Parliamentary Papers Bill which we introduced to this House, would recall that submissions made to a parliamentary committee are themselves covered by parliamentary privilege, and what this does is to render that compellable in circumstances where otherwise the privileges of this House require that material considered in camera by a parliamentary committee are not to be published until such time as they are published before the House.

Dr Watson: No, and the reason it doesn't is because that is received as a member of a parliamentary committee. There is nothing in that Bill that overrides parliamentary privilege.

Mr FOLEY: With respect, I suggest to the honourable member that he read the Bill more closely, because if he has been led to believe that this does not impact upon the position of members of the parliamentary committee, then he is sadly mistaken. They currently have the benefit of provisions of confidentiality as well as parliamentary privilege, but this makes them subject to the direction of a commission of inquiry to disclose information that they would not otherwise have been required to disclose—indeed, that they would have been under a duty not to disclose.

What this Bill does is wrong in principle and it is doubtful in execution. It is wrong in principle because, as a matter of principle, the

Criminal Justice Commission should properly report not to a creature of the Executive but to a creature of the Parliament. The Criminal Justice Commission should properly report to the all-party Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee rather than to a commission of inquiry of any kind, but that is more so when the commission of inquiry is politically tainted. I say that it is politically tainted because of the background surrounding its creation, the timing within which it is done and the inappropriateness of the appointment of the chairman of the commission. All those matters point to a political witch-hunt being conducted on the part of the Government.

It is really the bungling and the incompetence of the Government that must lead Queenslanders to feel dismayed. Here we have a Government that did not have the presence of mind or the foresight to even make provision for this in the Budget. Here we have a Government that has brought this matter on without ensuring that there would be in place relevant powers to enable the commissioners even to carry out the tasks that have been asked of them. The Opposition does not believe that the tasks that have been asked of the commission are appropriate, but one would have thought that elementary competence would require the Government to give to the commission the powers that it needs to investigate the task which it was set. It must be perplexing for members of the Government back bench to look to the Ministry and see the spectre of it announcing a commission of inquiry on Monday, the appointment of a chair to it on Tuesday, and then having to come before the House later in the week to give it the power that it needs to do its job. It is a very curious way of going about business.

Why is it that the matter has to be rushed through this Parliament without the Parliament having the benefit of advice from the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee or the Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee? No explanation has been advanced and no argument has been put forward by the Leader of the House or by any Government member in support of that. The Attorney-General has been silent, trying to avoid and evade debate on the subject. He has not offered any good reason, or indeed any reason at all, why this matter should not be considered by the Parliament in the normal way, with proper scrutiny. We simply have to guess at the reasons why the Attorney-General and his colleagues are doing this, because they have not condescended to give us their views in the form of a debate.

After having had drawn to its attention during the course of the previous debate potential drafting problems in the Bill—when the Opposition urged on the Government the need to investigate those matters—why has the Government been so silent? In the previous debate, I invited the Attorney-General to give an assurance that the power that he wants to give to Mr Connolly and Mr Ryan to get access to confidential CJC information would not extend to the Podiatrists Board and the Physiotherapists Board, but he has not given that assurance; he has not sought to reassure the House in any way about the exercise of these great powers.

As this issue unfolds, we see a pattern that is so common with this Government. We see the same sort of pattern that we saw with the Century Zinc fiasco and with the Public Service Bill fiasco. Firstly, we have the Government adopting a conflict strategy, producing a confrontation and inflaming public debate; secondly, we see the phase of Government where it has to climb down, where it realises that it has made a dreadful blunder as it made with Century Zinc and as it made with the Public Service Bill; thirdly, we see the phase of attempting to patch it up, and this particular attempt to patch it up is yet another product of the "Bungles" Borbidge school, aided and abetted by a Liberal Attorney-General who, far from standing up for the independence of the legal system, is simply willing to carry out the wishes of his National Party political masters. When are we going to see in this State the Attorney-General standing up for issues of principle, defending the institutions of our legal system, rather than simply doing the bidding of his National Party political masters, trying to score some political points and inflame public opinion against important legal institutions?

It is a sad day when the Attorney-General is put into the position of carrying out the dirty work on behalf of Mr Borbidge and Mr Cooper. After all, it is Mr Borbidge and Mr Cooper who have got the most to lose when the Carruthers inquiry report comes down, because they signed the squalid deal which set about trying to dismantle the Criminal Justice Commission and the actions by Mr Cooper and Mr Borbidge in signing that document.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr J. N. Goss): Order! The member will refer to other members by their electorates, not by their names.

Mr FOLEY: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. The action by the then member for Surfers Paradise and the now Police Minister,

in signing that memorandum of understanding with the Police Union prior to the Mundingburra by-election, was the first step down the path of an attack on the Criminal Justice Commission. It is very difficult for corruption to flourish if we have an active, strong Criminal Justice Commission. Mr Borbidge and Mr Cooper have sought to do their best to carry out that squalid deal but, in so doing, they have had to pay a high political price. They are attempting to use a conflict strategy to crash through on this issue.

What is at issue in this debate is not the question of whether or not there should be a review of the Criminal Justice Commission. The question is: by whom should that review be done? Should it be done by a creature of the Parliament or by a creature of the Executive? The Opposition says that the proper approach is that it should be done by a creature of the Parliament. Why? Firstly, because, in being a creature of the Parliament, it represents both sides of the political fence and, in so doing, can help to build a community consensus against corruption. The reason corruption flourishes is that people turn a blind eye to it. We need to change attitudes. To do that, one needs cooperation and consensus. Honourable members opposite no doubt were happy in the days when the she'll-be-right attitude prevailed; when their Government, as it then was in the latter part of the 1980s, was happy to turn a blind eye to the corruption that had Queensland by the throat. But if we are to change those attitudes—and Mr Fitzgerald pointed out very eloquently the need to do so—then we need to build a community consensus upon which that exercise can be done.

Mr Veivers: You have that holier-than-thou attitude—a man responsible for wasting hundreds of millions of dollars of taxpayers' money.

Mr FOLEY: It would behove the honourable member for Southport to spend a little less time socialising with Pauline Hanson and criticising the gay community and a little more time in devoting himself to the task of supporting independent legal institutions. Then one might see a better contribution from him than he is now making.

The legislation before this Parliament is fundamentally flawed. It is fundamentally flawed, firstly, because it proceeds on the basis of a wrong principle, namely, that the Executive, rather than the Legislature, is to be given the power to monitor and review the operations of the Criminal Justice Commission; and, secondly, because of, at the very least, the ambiguity of its provisions, which would seem on their face to confer this broad-ranging power not just upon commissions of inquiry, such as the Connolly commission, but upon the wide range of other bodies to which I have referred.

The attack has been made upon the Opposition on the grounds that we are arguing that the Criminal Justice Commission is somehow beyond reproach and should never be the subject of investigation. Nothing could be further from the truth. The Opposition does not believe that the Criminal Justice Commission is beyond criticism. The Opposition does not believe for a moment that its actions should be beyond scrutiny. Indeed, we believe that the Criminal Justice Commission should be the subject of ongoing and continuous review by the Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee in accordance with the principles set out in the Criminal Justice Act.

What possible harm could be done to the Government or the people of Queensland by the Government permitting this debate to occur in the fullness of time? What possible harm could be done by having this considered by the Parliament with the benefit of reports from the Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee and the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee? The Government has had eight months in office. There is no particular urgency with which it needs to proceed in the establishment of this inquiry. Instead, it has sought to do so for reasons at which honourable members can only guess, that is, reasons of political expediency. Why has it brought on this debate today? It has brought it on because it hopes that the introduction of the report in relation to the Heiner documents might somehow distract public attention from its attempts to rort the parliamentary process in this Bill. If it did so, I think the Government would find that it is mistaken. It takes more to fool the people of Queensland than a hastily convened Cabinet meeting and the mere coincidence of controversial matters being brought before the Parliament. This is the stuff of which petty politics is made. It is not the stuff on which the political history of this State should be founded.

I am only too mindful of the fact that this is the fourth royal commission in four decades dealing with the issue of police or police corruption. The 1956 National Hotel royal commission, chaired by Sir Harry Gibbs, the 1977-78 commission of inquiry into the enforcement of criminal law, chaired by Mr Justice Lucas, the Fitzgerald commission of

inquiry from 1987 to 1989, and now the Connolly commission of inquiry, have all been concerned in one form or another with the issue of police corruption. Yet we still do not see, from the political leadership of the Government, a strong and unequivocal determination to root out corruption and to support those bodies that are fighting to root out corruption. We see a Government which is willing to talk with all sorts of people but not willing to talk with the Chair of the Criminal Justice Commission—the body charged by this Parliament with the responsibility of being the investigator of allegations of misconduct by police and official misconduct by public officials.

The task that falls on Government is an onerous one. It has a duty not just to treat the law with respect—and in this regard it has treated the detail of the law with contempt—it also has a duty to provide leadership in the community in respect of attitudes towards contemporary social and political problems. There can be no doubt that police corruption is a very important contemporary social and political issue. It has been tearing apart public life in New South Wales in recent months, in the way that it tore apart public life here in Queensland between 1987 and 1989. What one expects to see from the leaders of the Government is some respect for the processes of law, respect for the processes of this Parliament, and a common bipartisan determination to attack corruption. Instead, what we see is the arrogant swaggering attitude of the Government, which is determined to thumb its nose at bipartisanship, to thumb its nose at the proper conventions and traditions of this Parliament, and to proceed to give extra powers to a commission of inquiry established by the Governor in Council.

The attack made by clause 3 of this Bill upon the confidentiality provisions of the Criminal Justice Act and upon the position of members of this Parliament in their role as members of the Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee is something that should give a good deal of cause for reflection on the part of all members of this House, but, sadly, to date it has not done so. Again I ask the Attorney-General to give such assurance as he may upon advice to him from Crown law officers as to the operations of those other Acts to which I have made reference—namely, the Podiatrists Act, the Physiotherapists Act, the Gas Act, the Appeal Costs Fund Act, the Auctioneers and Agents Act, the Architects Act, the Beach Protection Act, the Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road Act, the Casino Control Act, the Chiropractors and Osteopaths Act, and the Education (Teacher Registration) Act—as to whether those bodies deemed to be commissions of inquiry or given the powers and authority of commissions of inquiry will exercise the powers conferred by this Bill before the House.

From the stony silence that has emerged from the Honourable the Attorney-General during the course of this debate and the previous debate, one can only surmise that the Honourable the Attorney-General does not have a clue at this stage what the position is. His silence during the course of the previous debate and now must be disturbing to all those who care about the law. I say to the Attorney-General: it is never too late to repent of one's ways. There are certain times in the career of a first law officer when one should stand up for principles of law, when the Attorney-General of the day should say to other members of the Cabinet, "This is wrong at law. This is wrong in principle. We should not do it. It is wrong to push this through with such indecent haste. This requires further reflection." It is a mark not of weakness but of strength for an Attorney-General to do that. One looks to see whether the Attorney-General will show weakness or strength on this matter.

It is not just the bungles of Premier Borbidge that have been characteristic of recent debate; we have an Attorney-General who set up a commission of inquiry on Monday or Tuesday only to come into the House on Wednesday and seek to introduce legislation to be passed on Thursday to enable the commission to do its job. This is the same Attorney-General who told his department in its newsletter that Labor's Criminal Code had been repealed. Sadly for the Attorney-General, it has not been repealed, and the Honourable the Attorney-General showed such a lack of basic knowledge of the law that he wrongly advised his own department. One can imagine the humiliation and shame that he must feel and one can well imagine the embarrassment——

Mr Ardill: No, no shame in him.

Mr FOLEY: The honourable member for Archerfield has perhaps a less charitable view, but one can feel only some sympathy for the poor members of the Government back bench who must squirm in embarrassment in circumstances in which the Honourable Attorney-General simply does not know whether a particular Act, namely, the Criminal Code Act of 1995, has been repealed or not.

We find ourselves in the position where, in respect of this very matter of police corruption, Mr Frank Clair, the Chair of the Criminal Justice Commission, has been attacked publicly by the Attorney-General and by the Premier for making public the information as to significant corruption of police by criminal elements in this State. Yet who was it who first put that information into the public arena? It was not Mr Frank Clair; it was none other than the Attorney-General himself. It was the Attorney-General, Mr Beanland, who delivered an answer to Estimates Committee B on 17 September on advice furnished to him by the Criminal Justice Commission that a proposed public inquiry into significant corruption of police by criminal elements was considered under threat. What staggering hypocrisy it is for the Attorney-General to attack Mr Clair for putting into the public arena the very claim made by the Attorney-General himself in his answer to the Estimates committee on Tuesday 17 September!

Similarly, the Honourable the Attorney-General, when seized of that information, did not even notify the Police Minister. Here we have an Attorney-General who had been informed by the Criminal Justice Commission of significant corruption of police by criminal elements at least on Tuesday, 17 September, and on 18 September we heard evidence from Police Minister Cooper that the first he had heard about it was after Mr Clair had given evidence the following day! One has to almost feel sorry for poor old Russell Cooper: he is the Police Minister, and the Attorney-General did not even let him know that he had material indicating significant corruption of police by criminal elements. If that is the way the National Party and the Liberal Party talk to each other in Cabinet, one can only feel sorry for the people of Queensland. Yet we saw that being made the subject of an attack by the Attorney-General and by the Premier upon Mr Clair in his role as Chair of the Criminal Justice Commission.

Mr Clair was doing nothing other than his duty according to law in responding to questions put to him by the Estimates committee.

Mr Beattie interjected.

Mr FOLEY: I note the interjection of the honourable the Leader of the Opposition. He knows very well from his work as Chair of the Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee that the Criminal Justice Commission must be responsible to parliamentary committees. In this instance, despite all the criticism that we have heard from the Attorney-General about a lack of accountability, what Mr Clair was doing was in fact giving an account to a parliamentary committee that had asked certain questions in relation to the Budget. In other words, Mr Clair was carrying out his very duty in being accountable; nonetheless, he was still criticised by Mr Beanland and Mr Borbidge, who were intent on making their political attack upon the Criminal Justice Commission.

This Bill is flawed in principle; it is flawed in detail. It is being rushed with indecent haste. It is an attempt to cover up a bungle, but in so doing it has itself been done in a bungling way. I urge all honourable members of this House to reject the Bill.

Mr BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—Leader of the Opposition) (4.09 p.m.): The only contract that this Government is keeping with the people of Queensland or with anyone is the contract that it reached with the Police Union. That is the only contract that the Government is completing. Through this Bill we are seeing the corruption of public administration and the use of the resources of the State to pursue the interests of the National and Liberal Parties. Today is a sad day for Queensland.

What we are seeing is an inquiry-led recovery by this State Government. It is seeking to revive its flagging political fortunes by using inquiry after inquiry to try to re-establish some credibility in the electorate and by attacking not only the Criminal Justice Commission but also previous Labor administrations. When it comes to a Government, there is nothing more crude or base. That is its modus operandi. One could be forgiven for not thinking that this Government has 44 members in this House. It has the identical number of members to the Opposition; 44, 44, 1 is the numerical balance in this House yet, from the way in which this Government behaves, one would think that it had a majority of 20 or 30.

I refer to the Fitzgerald report, which gives us many warnings about where we should go and where we should not return. On page 30, there is an accurate summary of the political and administrative circumstances at that time—a period to which this Government is determined to return this State. On that page Tony Fitzgerald stated—

> "Successive governments and their departments, including the Police Force, have either failed to eradicate corruption or ignored or even condoned it. Meanwhile, the community's confidence

> in public institutions has been undermined."

That is where this Bill is taking us; that is where this Government is hell-bent on returning.

On this occasion, it is important to remember another quote from the Fitzgerald report, which appears at page 8. It states—

> "It is now generally accepted that openness and accountability have been missing from the political process."

That is what this Government is seeking to destroy—openness and accountability. This Bill has been introduced by virtue of a gag—a gag designed to limit the debate on this Bill and to bring it on an unsuspecting Opposition, an unsuspecting Independent member and an unsuspecting community who have had neither the opportunity to see its detail nor the opportunity to provide any input into its deliberations.

Anybody who has any concerns about integrity and this parliamentary process will oppose this Bill. On this occasion, it is important to say that it is how a member votes that matters—not rhetoric about the conduct of the Parliament, not the nice platitudes about the way in which this place is run; the real determination of whether someone is committed to honesty and integrity and cleaning up corruption is how a member will vote in relation to this Bill.

As I said, this Bill has come about through a gagged debate and it is designed as part of a strategy to turn back the clock and as part of a strategy to implement that secret deal between the Police Union and Mr Cooper and Mr Borbidge. This is delivery time. This is implementing the secret deal. This is one of the first stages. What an embarrassment to the history of this State that they are going through these processes.

Let me place on record my concern and the concerns of the Opposition that this National/Liberal Party Government has learned nothing from the past. Even the report in relation to the Heiner documents, which was tabled today, came about as a result of an inquiry set up by the previous National Party Government. The National Party Minister at the time, Beryce Nelson, set up the inquiry without the necessary legal immunities. In other words, the Heiner inquiry was a botched inquiry set up by a National Party that did not do its homework properly.

The shadow Attorney-General has already addressed major concerns about the legislation. We appear to be repeating the same mistake of 1989 and mistakes made on previous occasions. The Government cannot even get the law right. So are we going to have another repeat of those mistakes? It seems likely that we are.

I return to the question of who pays for this inquiry. Who is going to pay for this? The long-suffering taxpayers will pay for it. As to the issue of costs, I alert the Government to the comments made at page 217 of the report that was tabled today from Mr Morris and Mr Howard in which they state—

> "The only countervailing consideration, against establishing a public inquiry, is the cost of that exercise."

So the Government's two lawyers who compiled this report are raising concerns about inquiry costs. They were the ones who said that the only countervailing consideration against establishing a public inquiry is the cost of that exercise. In relation to the Heiner matter, they are right, and in relation to this inquiry into the CJC, they are also right. The same principle stands.

Even in this report mention is made about the sums of money that are paid to the heads of these inquiries. On page 211, the report refers to the inquiry head being paid between $2,500 and $3,000 per day and the counsel assisting—junior counsel—being paid $2,000 per day. Not bad money if one can get it! Not bad work if one can get it! That is what the authors of that report are recommending in relation to an inquiry into the Heiner documents, yet the two heads of this CJC inquiry are going to be paid $3,000 a day—$6,000 plus supporting counsel, plus all the other costs such as leasing. It will cost at least $1m and maybe $2m. Yet do I see a Government coming into this House arguing for law and order issues? Do I see this Attorney-General coming into the House arguing about the penalties for criminals—the people who are breaking into houses, stealing cars, assaulting people, rapists and murderers? Do we see a fundamental piece of legislation to do something about the crooks and the criminals in this State? No, we do not see that; we see instead a piece of legislation that is dealing with yet another inquiry.

In July, the police intake at the Oxley academy was cancelled. The Government said that it did not have enough money so the academy intake was cancelled. Yet we find that this Government is prepared to rush into this place with indecent haste and find $1m to $2m to hold yet another inquiry. It is prepared to pay inquiry heads $3,000 a day, yet it cannot find enough money for extra police officers. It cannot find enough money for new

recruits. It cannot find enough money to help people dying on waiting lists or to find extra teachers for schools, yet it can find enough money for this inquiry. Why? Because the Government is delivering on the only contract or deal that means anything to it, and that is the secret deal with the Police Union! That is the only deal that matters to the Government.

Let us look at this issue of cost. I table for the information of the House an article which appeared in the *Courier-Mail* on 7 February 1992 in which a certain gentleman, a Mr Peter Connolly—one of the State's senior legal figures—was quoted. Seeing that Mr Connolly will be one of the heads of this inquiry, it is relevant to this debate to find out what he said. He stated—

> "Everybody likes a bit more, so the temptation is there to be thought of as one of the mates and to get the plum jobs from the government."

By the way, to be fair to Mr Connolly, he was being critical of this process. He stated further—

> "It doesn't take long for the message to get around that if you want a respite from the humdrum of day-to-day work on the bench"—

and he was referring to judges—

> "to get on side with the government and go off and sit on some inquiry somewhere with all expenses paid and extra pay for it."

Is that not interesting? Through his own words, Mr Peter Connolly exposes what this Government is doing. True, he was referring to judges on the bench, but his statement applies equally to what the Government is doing in this case. It is little wonder that it is fair to say that this Government is run by the keystone cops. Unfortunately, to say that is a defamation of those fine actors of the past. As Mr Connolly said—

> "Everybody likes a bit more, so the temptation is there to be thought of as one of the mates and to get the plum jobs from the government.
>
> It doesn't take long for the message to get around that if you want a respite from the humdrum of day-to-day work on the bench, to get on side with the government and go off and sit on some inquiry somewhere with all expenses paid and extra pay for it."

I could not have said it better than Peter Connolly. I table that article for the record of this Parliament. Peter Connolly is dead right; he sums up exactly what this Government is doing.

When one looks at what this legislation will do, one sees why we need more time and why there are grave concerns about it. I refer to the provisions for the CJC inquiry. Under clause 3, section 132(B)(3)(b) of the Act would state—

> "if the person would otherwise be required under an Act, oath, rule of law or practice to maintain confidentiality about anything disclosed by the person to the CJC inquiry—the person—
>
> (1) does not contravene the Act, oath, rule of law or practice for making the disclosure; and
>
> (2) is not liable to disciplinary action for making the disclosure."

Therefore, members of the Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee will be required to provide information to this inquiry, which destroys a fundamental plank of parliamentary privilege. The security of the information provided to the Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee has been destroyed by that clause.

I ask the Attorney-General to explain to this Parliament in his reply why this Bill is prepared to destroy parliamentary privilege and why it is prepared to destroy the security and integrity of information provided under secrecy to the Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee, because that is what the Attorney-General is doing.

Mr Fouras: All they are trying to do is take control. The Executive is trying to take control of the Parliament.

Mr BEATTIE: That is exactly what they are doing. Contrary to what Tony Fitzgerald said, they want the Executive to have its hands all over the Parliament, all over the Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee and all over the Criminal Justice Commission.

Mr Fouras: It is disgraceful.

Mr BEATTIE: Indeed it is disgraceful. Tony Fitzgerald set up the Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee as an all-party committee to establish a commitment to bipartisanship in the Fitzgerald reform process. Fundamental to that succeeding was keeping the Executive's hands off the Criminal Justice Commission. It had to be accountable to a parliamentary committee. However, what does this Attorney-General do? He comes into this place, on behalf of the Government, and wants to destroy the Fitzgerald reform process and the integrity of one of the major

recommendations establishing parliamentary committees. He will go down in history as the first Minister to start turning back the clock to the bad old days and destroying one of the major planks of the Fitzgerald report. That is not something that any of us would be proud of.

This is a sad day for Queensland. I would have thought that the pain that we all went through in the 1980s—the pain of the Fitzgerald report and the pain of the revelations of corruption at political and administrative levels and in the police—would have taught us a very solid lesson. That pain should have said, "Do not do this again." However, what does the Attorney-General do? At the first opportunity, he comes in here, on behalf of the Government, to turn back the clock so that the things that happened in the 1980s will be able to happen again. As I said earlier today, the only people who are toasting this Government in champagne are the corrupt, the drug barons, the organised criminals and the sleaze-bags in our society who know that while this political exercise is being pursued they are not having the amount of attention focused on them that they should have.

Had the Attorney-General been committed to the bipartisan approach that his predecessor was, he would have sought to have discussions about these matters with the Opposition; he would have sought to have an inquiry established in a bipartisan way. However, he did not seek to do that, and the three attempts that I have made to re-establish that bipartisanship have been rebuked because this is about politics. This is about a crude political agenda. This is about muddying the waters, so that when the Carruthers report comes down and recommends whatever it will recommend in relation to Mr Borbidge and Mr Cooper, the water will be muddied so badly that the community will not listen to the recommendations and will not treat them with the respect and the integrity that they deserve. This is about crude politics to shape the political landscape in order to get Russell Cooper, the Honourable Police Minister, and the Honourable Premier out of the tight spot that they are in.

As I mentioned in the House the other day, it is also about getting the Premier and his senior staff off the hook, because the CJC is investigating the Public Service hit list. That will have very serious ramifications for a number of people. It was not the CJC that drew up a secret hit list of six public servants; it was the Premier, Wendy Armstrong, Peter Ellis, Kevin Wolfe and some of the other cronies that this corrupt and incompetent Government has made directors-general of departments. They drew up the hit list and they are subject to an investigation. They are the people whom this legislation is seeking to protect.

I say this to the Attorney-General and the Government: where is the legislation fighting crime? Where is the legislation which shows that this Government is getting on with the business of providing good government to this State? Where is the legislation to help our hospitals? Where is the legislation to do something about giving police the support they need? Where is the legislation to help our schools? Where is the legislation to help in the areas of development? Where are the major projects? This Government is not doing the work of a Government. It is not getting on with business. It is not delivering services. It is playing politics and performing cheap political stunts, because two of its members ended up before the Carruthers inquiry.

It was not the CJC that signed the MOU; it was the Police Minister and the Premier. It was not the Opposition that signed the MOU; it was National Party representatives. That is why this legislation is being moved today with indecent haste, to try to attack the CJC. This is a Government of inquiries, not a Government of action. It is time that Mr Borbidge started acting like a Premier and started governing. He does not need another inquiry to do that. He does not need to put his hands into the pockets of every Queenslander to pull out more money to run yet another inquiry. This is a Government of inquiry.

This Government is trying to do away with an independent watchdog, so that it can turn the clock back to the crooked old days of previous National Party Governments. We have every reason to believe this, because of the way the Police Minister refuses to abide by Westminster traditions if found guilty of electoral bribery.

In conclusion, I will say two things in relation to the CJC. We have seen a disgraceful performance by both the Premier and the Attorney-General, who have waged a public campaign against the CJC. The Premier will not even meet with the head of the CJC, Frank Clair, or any of its representatives. To his credit, at least the Attorney-General met with Frank Clair, and so he should. However, I suspect that the acrimony of his attacks, both previous to, during and after the meeting washed away any good that would have come out of that meeting. Frank Clair was required

to answer the questions put to him during the Estimates committee process. If he had not answered those questions, he would have been in contempt of this Parliament. This public official was denigrated under parliamentary privilege by the honourable member for Broadwater, he was denigrated in the most extraordinary way based on the evidence of a liar and a thief, Chris Nicholls—and both of those charges have been proven—and, under parliamentary privilege, he was maligned, as was the CJC.

If we have reached the stage in Queensland at which we seek to destroy our public officials, as the Government has attempted to destroy Frank Clair, no-one who is worth anything will apply for the job of the head of the CJC. All applicants will be second-rate. They will be people unable to do the job. This is a sad day for Queensland.

Mr Fouras interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: They will not close their mouths, nor will the Opposition. We will fight for some integrity in this process. This legislation is a disgrace, as is the way it has been dealt with. I hope that things can only improve.

Time expired.

Hon. P. J. BRADDY (Kedron) (4.29 p.m.): The Parliament is discussing this legislation in circumstances which are amongst the worst that have obtained in Queensland since the defeat of the Bjelke-Petersen and subsequent National Party Governments in the late eighties. We are discussing this legislation on the same day as the tabling of a report into the Heiner documents. When viewed together, that report and this Bill clearly signal what this coalition Government is about. I hope that at least some Government backbenchers who support the Government's decision will come to understand the dark road that they are walking down when they view this Bill and the report together. Both follow very closely together in time. Therefore, they serve to highlight just how serious the situation is.

It is true that a cornerstone of the Westminster convention is that Governments should not use their Executive power and financial muscle to pursue their predecessors. Inquiries should be set in train only for the best of motives. All Governments which follow previous Governments—as they must—find things about which to complain. However, pursuing each other politically with financial and legislative muscle merely because it is politically advantageous to do so—or particularly, as in this case, to distract the community from the Government's own problems, as it hopes to—is very serious. What I will deal with this afternoon will show that we face a very dangerous situation.

An inquiry is being established, yet one of the commissioners is not considered suitable by the Opposition. Governments and Oppositions come and go. However, a spirit of bipartisanship has surrounded all that has occurred in relation to the Criminal Justice Commission subsequent to the Fitzgerald reforms. In his report, Mr Fitzgerald, QC, as he then was, pointed out the value of being bipartisan, and he successfully urged on the Parliament of Queensland that that principle should apply in relation to the CJC; that there should be a Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee which should work without members behaving in an overtly party political manner. He successfully recommended to us all that the chairperson of the CJC should not be appointed only by the political party in this place which had the numbers.

The principle is there to see for those who have eyes. When a major review of the CJC is proposed, the same principle should apply. Firstly, the principle should have been applied that the Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee was the appropriate body to carry out the review. However, if that was rejected, at the very least the people appointed to carry out the review should have had the support of the Opposition as well as the Government. We were not consulted as to who the reviewing officer should be. Surely the message should have got through to Government members that, when dealing with matters in respect of the Criminal Justice Commission, that is the appropriate way to behave. The appointees should have our support as well as the Government's.

We warned Government members openly, because the corridors were buzzing about the fact that it was going to appoint Mr Connolly and that he was not an appropriate appointment. My objection to him, and that substantially of the Opposition, is not because he was a Liberal member of Parliament. That raised suspicions, but that might have been overcome depending upon his subsequent conduct. But his subsequent conduct includes the fact that Mr Connolly, as he was entitled to do with all propriety, gave a legal opinion which was used in the defence of the Honourable the Police Minister in the Carruthers inquiry. That alone should rule him out.

There is a long-held principle in our society that, if one acts for someone in Government, one should not be entitled to

don the white guernsey of the referee, or the umpire. It is as simple as that. It is a case of justice being seen to be done as well as being done. Mr Connolly does not have the confidence of the Opposition. Whether we are right or wrong on that point, nobody should have been appointed to review the CJC who did not have the confidence of the Opposition. That principle was spelled out well and truly in the Fitzgerald report. There has been a deliberate attempt to politicise this issue.

The Government is saying, "We've got the muscle, if the Independent member for Gladstone votes with us." A Government that is not even a majority Government is determined to rub this in our faces and say, "Whether you like it or not, Mr Connolly, QC, is going to be one of the reviewers." We do not like it. He should be disqualified from sitting on this review, and we will continue on all appropriate occasions to say so.

What do we see now? Immediately following the passage of this Bill, which is being rushed through the Parliament in the usual incompetent way of this Government, the situation will be made worse. This is also occurring in the context of the Lytton by-election, at which the Liberal Party, the representative of the coalition, received a massive 27 per cent of the primary vote! I am sure the Government's research would show what our research shows, that is why the people did not vote for the Government's candidate in Lytton. Its support dropped by 8 per cent and our two-party preferred vote went up. The people of Lytton believe that the Government is not capable of governing, that the Government is taking Queensland back to the bad old days. Whether the Government likes it or not, that message was delivered in Lytton. We know that. If the Government was honest, it would acknowledge that its research shows that, too. We know that. We know what the people of Lytton are saying and why they changed their vote and increased the vote for the Labor Party.

What do we see in relation to the Heiner report? It is an even more insidious attack. It is a very, very dangerous precedent. I have had an opportunity to read only some of it. On page 7, the authors, the barristers Mr Morris and Mr Howard, said that they felt obliged to make observations in relation to Mr Beattie's letter refusing to waive the privilege that Cabinet documents from a previous Government be shown to the subsequent and current Government. Further on, the barristers said that at all times they accept and believe that Mr Beattie was honourable and that he was quite right to do what he did. However, in this report an invidious position arises. At the bottom of page 7, in reference to Mr Beattie, the barristers commented—

> "We do not propose to enter into any political debate as to 'the legitimacy of (Mr. Borbidge's) Government's actions in this matter', or Mr. Beattie's reference to 'the dangers to democracy in an incoming Government's use of an inquiry as a witchhunt into the actions of its predecessor'. However, it should be stated very clearly"—

and this is very significant—

> "that the focus of our investigation was (as we understood the situation) never intended to be, and was not in fact, the actions of the former Goss Government. Rather, the focus of our investigation has been the conduct of police officers and public servants, albeit during the period in office of the Goss Government."

Early in the report, at page 7, they avow that they are not pursuing anybody in any way and that they are not going to be used politically. They say that the focus of their investigation was not the actions of the former Goss Government. Then this comment appears at page 8—

> "But in any event, whatever motivated Mr. Borbidge's Government to institute our investigation, we have proceeded on the basis that it is an exercise in ascertaining the truth, and has no connection with any 'political attacks' which may have been mounted at any time by any member of the Government Parties in the Queensland Parliament."

Then they say this in praise of themselves in advance—

> "We are confident that the absence of any political influence will be apparent from the contents of this Report, and its conclusions."

Does the report in fact bear that out?

We come now to page 210 of the report. Having concluded that there should be an inquiry, they say in the last two dot points of paragraph 5.2 that amongst the witnesses should be—

> "The then Minister for Family Services, Ms. Warner;
>
> Other members of State Cabinet who participated in the decision of 5 March 1990 to destroy the Heiner documents."

From page 7 where they asserted that they had no intention of pursuing the Goss Government and in fact did not do so and

their praise of themselves on page 8, we then come to page 210, where it is suggested that Ms Warner and the rest of the then Cabinet Ministers should be witnesses.

Dr Watson: But you are forgetting the important point. The important point was that you didn't give them access to your documents.

Mr BRADDY: I have quoted from page 7 of the report in which Mr Morris and Mr Howard said that they were not pursuing the Goss Government and had no intention of doing so and that the report would show that they were then aware that they did not have access to the Cabinet documents, because that was the very context in which they made that particular comment. The authors say on page 7 that they are not pursuing the Goss Government. They praise themselves on page 8. By page 210, we have a recommendation that the then Ministers of the Goss Government should be witnesses at any inquiry.

By pages 217 and 218, things deteriorate even further. Paragraph 35.1 on pages 217 and 218 of the Heiner report states—

> "The recent Carruthers Inquiry, established by the Criminal Justice Commission, involved allegations of possible criminal offences very much less serious than those raised by Mr. Lindeberg's allegations. As we understand the situation, at the conclusion of the Carruthers Inquiry, a submission was made by counsel assisting that the evidence may disclose offences under s.155 of the *Electoral Act 1992*, involving a maximum penalty of 85 penalty units or two years' imprisonment. By contrast, the offences which may arise in respect of Mr. Lindeberg's allegations include offences attracting maximum penalties of seven years' imprisonment (*Criminal Code*, s.132) and three years' imprisonment (*Criminal Code*, s.129)."

Then this important sentence appears—

> "The analogy is, we think, a relevant one, given that both the Carruthers Inquiry and Mr. Lindeberg's allegations raise the possibility of the commission of criminal offences by persons who were at the relevant time, or subsequently became, Ministers of the Crown."

Early in the report, in the full knowledge that they did not have access to the former Cabinet's documents—and, indeed, they discussed that issue—it was stated clearly that the focus of the investigation was never intended to be and was not in fact the actions of the former Goss Government. The report says—

> "Rather, the focus of our investigation has been the conduct of police officers and public servants, albeit during the period in office of the Goss Government."

In the context of the authors regretting not having access to the Cabinet documents but being fully aware of that fact, they stated that they were not going to investigate the Goss Government. They said that it had nothing to do with it; it was not the focus of their attention. On the next page, the authors asserted that politics had not influenced their deliberations. But by the end of the report of these so-called non-political people who had earlier praised themselves, it was apparent that the actions of the Goss Government was one of their major focuses.

I reiterate that the comment on page 7 was not made in the hope that perhaps down the track the authors would have access to the Goss Government Cabinet documents. Such access had been refused. That chapter was closed. In my view, these people are being political, and they are being used for political purposes by this Government.

Mr Elliott: But they are saying that wasn't so.

Mr BRADDY: They say that that was not so. Early on, the report claims that they are not pursuing the former Government. I reiterate that it says—

> "Rather, the focus of our investigation has been the conduct of police officers and public servants, albeit during the period in office of the Goss Government."

However, the conclusion of the report suggests differently—to the delight of this Government in the short run, but not in the long run, because the wheel turns. This Government has behaved abominably, and the wheel will turn. At the end of the day—although it says clearly that it would not focus on the actions of the Goss Government—the report recommends that the 18 Ministers of the day, particularly Ms Warner, should be hauled before any inquiry as witnesses, and this Government hopes that their actions will be subject to serious scrutiny.

This Government stands condemned. It is behaving in the most foolish manner possible. It is behaving like an Opposition rather than a Government. It should get on with the business of Government. The Lytton by-

election should send any sensible Government a message. The Liberal Party attracted only 27 per cent of the primary vote with a candidate who has stood for it several times—and this only eight months after the coalition's coming to Government. This Government is already in disgrace in the eyes of the community. If it thinks that it can regain political favour by attempting to persecute its predecessors, it is sadly mistaken and it sadly misunderstands the Queensland people.

The Government has made a dreadful mistake in setting up these two inquiries without reference to the Opposition and without our agreement in relation to the appointment of the two former judges. It is behaving in a despicable and disgraceful manner, and it will pay the price. No Government can sustain itself in office by behaving like an Opposition. This Government talks about a crisis in workers' compensation. We are now three and a half months down the track from the delivery of the Kennedy report, yet no workers' compensation legislation has been presented to this House, and I understand that there is no sign of it. This Government talks about a crisis in relation to the delivery of services, but it does not deliver. It froze the Capital Works Program, resulting in a blight on the construction industry of Queensland that still exists to this day. This Government has failed to deliver services.

This Government believes that with the Heiner report—in relation to which no doubt it will shortly establish an inquiry—and the inquiry into the CJC, it can reinvigorate itself. I assure the Government that it will not succeed. Members opposite will be caught out for what they are: people who are attempting to wind back the clock. We know from our political research and contacts that all over this State people are saying that the Government has brought itself into disrepute because of that. The two efforts of this week will be another chapter in bringing the Government further into disrepute. I repudiate this legislation. I repudiate the Government's future behaviour in relation to the Heiner matter. I believe that time will show that these two events will be signal chapters in the saga of this Government's defeat at the next election in Queensland, whenever that occurs.

Mr BARTON (Waterford) (4.49 p.m.): I rise to oppose this Bill. I will be repeating some of the things that I have said earlier today and indeed earlier this week, but some of them bear repeating. However, I will be brief on those aspects. This Parliament should support its own structures; it should support its own legislation. It should be supporting the Criminal Justice Act in its current form and it should be supporting the committee of this Parliament, the Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee, because it has the role of overseeing the work of the CJC on behalf of this Parliament. In introducing this legislation, this Government is usurping the very role of this Parliament and the very role of that parliamentary committee, and it is doing it in a most unacceptable way and in a way which I have no doubt the public of this State will also find to be totally unacceptable. The Government is rushing this legislation through, without the consultation of which the member for Kedron has just spoken and without proper public debate, or without the public even being given the opportunity to know what is in the legislation, what is intended and how it could potentially affect them.

I recall that period of time just over four years ago, when I first entered this Parliament, when the then Chairman of the CJC, Max Bingham, was retiring from that position and there was consultation with the then Leader of the Liberal Party and Leader of the National Party about the new appointment to the Chair of the CJC. When that decision was made, it was made with the PCJC, which is a multi-party committee. Similarly, on the retirement of Mr O'Regan as Chairman of the CJC, Mr Clair was appointed in the same multi-party circumstances. All of that now gets thrown out the window. This Government wants to throw existing legislation out through the back door, it wants to put commissions of inquiry into place without any reference to the Opposition, and it wants to put it in place without there being any capacity for public debate about the legislation that is being used to usurp this Parliament's role and its current parliamentary committee's role.

I find it incredible that Government members or even potentially the Independent member for Gladstone could possibly entertain the idea of lowering the standard of public accountability with a body as important and as powerful as the Criminal Justice Commission. It is incredible that any member of Parliament could entertain that idea. The Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee should be given the freedom to get on and do its job, and it should be allowed to get on with its job without the broad range of interference that it has been receiving to date.

Mr J. H. Sullivan: Don't forget the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee.

Mr BARTON: I take that interjection. I will not forget the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee because the chairman knows the

great weight that I put on its findings and on the importance of that organisation.

A Government member: Deputy chairman.

Mr BARTON: The deputy chairman and previous chairman. I will clarify that. He should still be the chairman and he will be the chairman again in the not-too-distant future, if he is not in an even more august spot in this place. That committee's role has also been usurped today. I accept that, because we have another member elected who has not been sworn in as yet and because the independent member for Gladstone for some reason did not make the division, that on a minority vote this Government has taken away the capacity of that Scrutiny of Legislation Committee to do its job because of the rushing through of this particular Bill.

Mr Livingstone: Did you see Mrs Cunningham in the next room?

Mr BARTON: It is for other people to decide where the member for Gladstone was, but I find it incredible that somebody could be in a room next to this Chamber and miss a division after the bells had rung for four minutes.

The role of the parliamentary CJC is being usurped. It is simply not acceptable for the Executive Government to be taking over the role of a committee of this Parliament and to be taking over the role of the CJC, in many ways via the back door. I will repeat what I said earlier—this Government does not have the intestinal fortitude to do it up front; it has to slither and slime its way through the back door, by this judicial inquiry, rather than fronting up to the public of Queensland and this Parliament with a Bill that very clearly achieves its ends.

If this Parliament votes for this Bill, then this Parliament has a problem in the future because the Parliament, as currently constructed, is basically saying that we are not prepared to accept our responsibilities as a Parliament or as members of Parliament and that we are prepared to hand over our responsibilities to the Executive Government. As the Opposition Leader said earlier, that will be a very sad day for Queensland. The fact that this debate is occurring today makes this a very sad day for Queensland, but it will be an even sadder day for Queensland if this legislation is passed.

I have already made mention of the fact that the great majority of the public do not even know that this legislation is before the House, let alone do they have any chance to understand what it means and let alone do they have any chance to have some input into it before it achieves an outcome. The public will not even have the opportunity of expressing a point of view to the member who represents them in this Parliament, and they will not be allowed to discuss it in community groups of which they may be a part.

This legislation is usurping the role of the Government. I will not repeat everything that I said before other than to reinforce——

Mr Stephan: That's a good idea.

Mr BARTON: Here is an interjection! Did Hansard get that interjection? I am afraid that all I heard was a mumble. It comes from the man who cannot chair a committee, the man who has nothing to say. All he does is mumble away to himself.

Mr Stephan interjected.

Mr BARTON: Sorry, "Mumbles", I cannot understand that.

I stress that this Bill already has a large number of unintended outcomes, as has been demonstrated by the shadow Attorney-General and member for Yeronga. Already, great flaws in this legislation have been demonstrated. I, too, will be awaiting the answer from the current Attorney-General as to how he intends to fix those flaws. This has been a real bumbling effort on his part, but then again, what more could we really expect?

What is this really all about? We know what it is all about—it is all about the great smokescreen to try to protect the unprotectable, the unsaveable Minister for Police in this State and his Premier. The Minister for Police is unsaveable and, in my view, the Premier is unsaveable from significant further embarrassment when the report of the Carruthers inquiry is brought down. I have followed that inquiry very closely and I have about a three-feet-high stack of transcripts from it, and I can assure honourable members that, as soon as we are able to debate that matter openly in this Parliament, when the report comes down—which we cannot do at this point in time because it is sub judice—and the public really finds out what has been happening in that hearing, then nothing will save the Police Minister and nothing will save the Premier from further harm. What those two did is already on the public record, even though it may not be totally on the record in this place.

This legislation is also about trying to protect Matthew Heery, and it is about trying to protect the Alice River branch of the National Party, that is, the Concerned Citizens for

Mundingburra. We are facing a smokescreen. This Government is deliberately trying to pull the wool over the public's eyes by creating such a smokescreen that the public will not know who is correct and who is wrong. I suggest that the public of this State know a lot more than the gullible people who follow the leaders of this minority coalition Government know. The public will see through this smokescreen, they will not be fooled, and this Government is going to walk away even more critically damaged than it is already, if that is possible.

This legislation is also about trying to protect what little credibility the Treasurer and the Minister for Training and Industrial Relations have left. For other reasons, their credibility is already at an all-time low. We have a Treasurer who could not even answer a question about her Budget on Budget day, even to the extent of how much funding was in it or what the percentage increases were, and a Minister for Industrial Relations who talks about the urgency of workers' compensation reform while we sit here growing long, grey beards waiting for him to put some legislation before this Parliament to address it.

They are also very damaged by the Carruthers inquiry and will be even more damaged when that report comes down. So it is all a big smokescreen. It is all about the retribution by the National Party for its failure to hold on to Government because of the high levels of corruption that that Government contained in the late 1980s. It is about retribution for the Joh jury inquiry. It is about retribution for the types of issues that the member for Broadwater has been raising. It is retribution against Inspector Huey. It is retribution for Gordon Harris. As a former member of the PCJC, I do not know how many times we looked at the information from Gordon Harris. I do not know how many times the previous PCJC had looked at it. I do not know how many times the CJC had looked at it. Finally, two pet solicitors of the Liberal Party looked at it with the report that was tabled today, and they cannot find any substance in the complaints made by Gordon Harris and his colleagues, either. But mark my words, it is about retribution for those mates of the National Party of the past. So it is a deliberate program to try to discredit the Criminal Justice Commission in the eyes of the public.

Another element of that discrediting smokescreen was the Bingham inquiry—the inquiry called by the Minister for Police to try to head off the Carruthers inquiry. But everybody would remember that he is the person who dobbed himself in to the Carruthers inquiry and now complains that he was investigated, when he himself handed the material to the CJC and asked it to investigate the matter and tell him whether or not it believed it was improper. One does not have to be very smart to work out whether or not it is improper. My oath it is improper! But when the Carruthers report comes down, we will have no doubt that, even after a full and thorough inquiry, it is definitely improper.

The Minister for Police set up the Bingham inquiry to create another smokescreen. He set up the implementation committee for the Bingham inquiry and the Bingham inquiry report simply so that he can usurp and undermine the role of the CJC even further, because it is the CJC's role to oversee police reform in this State. But we have a Minister for Police who is running his own agenda. I think all members need to be worried about just what his total agenda might be. Already there is an agenda to discredit the Criminal Justice Commission.

What is the other pearler from today? The Heiner inquiry! My colleague the member for Kedron has already covered that pretty thoroughly, but there is one small thing that I want to say about it. When all of that was raging before I entered this place, I had the misfortune to have something to do with one of the principal parties to that. He has been before Senate inquiries. He has been before PCJCs. He has been everywhere. I think he has been before the Cooke inquiry pushing his barrow. I assure every member of this Parliament and the public that anybody who has ever had the misfortune to have anything at all to do with Mr Kevin Lindeberg knows just what a farce this Heiner inquiry nonsense is that has been tabled in this Parliament today.

I turn now to a matter involving the Attorney-General. This issue was very eloquently put forward by my colleague the member for Yeronga. However, as another member of Estimates Committee B, I saw that answer to that question. As the shadow Minister for Police, I had an interest in it. It was an answer to a question on notice to the Attorney-General. In it the Attorney-General advised that there was suspected corruption at a relatively high level in the police force. The Attorney-General cannot walk away from that. If you are a Minister and you put your name to a document, the document is yours. Members saw yet another example of bumbling effort yesterday and this morning from the Minister for Housing, who was trying to say that a document from his department was not his document. The Attorney-General is just as bad, if not worse. He claimed that a document

that he provided as an answer to a question to him—his answer to the question—which stated those facts about possible corruption at a relatively high level in the police force, is not his answer. That is really innovative in terms of Westminster conventions, but it is an issue on which the public will not be conned. The Attorney-General used that answer to blame Mr Clair yet again. It was his answer.

This Government is prepared to spend much more than $1m on this inquiry, but it does not have the money to recruit additional police. It did not have the money to keep the July intake of recruits going. However, it will spend money which would provide significantly increased numbers of police on an unnecessary and unwarranted inquiry. This Bill is before us today to correct a bungle that the Attorney-General and the Cabinet made on Monday. We have an even bigger bungle fixing the bungle. I am sure that the member for Caboolture would agree that we should put the Attorney-General and the Premier into dark suits, dark pork-pie hats and dark glasses and call them the "Bungles Brothers", because that is where they are going.

I turn now to a few very concerning issues in terms of the Commissions of Inquiry Act being able to prevail over the Criminal Justice Act. It is a very dangerous and very sticky wicket. Much of the information that is held by the CJC, particularly the Official Misconduct Division and the Intelligence Division, which investigates organised and major crime, is information about hard drugs. It is about the Yakuza, the Triads, Italian organised crime, the outlaw motorcycle gangs, the Romanians, and Vietnamese crime. There are individual drug deals that are worth many millions of dollars and sometimes hundreds of millions of dollars. People die if that information gets out.

Information is frequently gathered from informants, or people who have been caught and decide to cooperate, or those who have been forced to answer questions due to the powers of compulsion of the CJC. If that information were to accidentally get out because people in this inquiry, searching for something else, accidentally got that information and made it public, we could have the spectre of people dying or reputations being destroyed. Much of the information is fact, but much of the information is pure intelligence. Pure intelligence is not necessarily fact. Frequently it is a collection of information that can lead one to the facts, but it is not necessarily proven. But if it is wrongly interpreted, then reputations could be destroyed. I believe that, if certain types of information were wrongly interpreted, we could have that spectre of organised crime moving on people and people dying because members of organised crime believed that they had been informed on by those people.

The other issue that is of great concern to me as a former member of the PCJC is that the protections that were given to members of this Parliament who were elected by this Parliament to serve on past PCJCs and the current ones will cease to exist. So we could have the spectre of members of this Parliament being called before that judicial inquiry without the effective privilege of the Parliament and being forced to answer questions about information that they hold—and hold in a very confidential way. It worries the member for Springwood that members could be subject to five years' gaol if they released that information. It could be forced from those people in front of the inquiry. That is also very dangerous, because what reasonable, responsible members of this Parliament would be prepared to serve on that committee in the present or in the future if they think that anything they do could be forced out of them by a judicial inquiry? It is a very dangerous step for this Parliament to take.

This is a very bad Bill. It is even worse because of the way it is being rushed through without proper scrutiny and without any capacity for public debate. It should have been subject to the proper parliamentary processes. It will be back here soon being amended.

Time expired.

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN (Caboolture) (5.09 p.m.): I echo the words spoken by the honourable member for Waterford: this is a bad Bill and it is made doubly so by the way that it is being dealt with. I know that Governments have applied the gag previously. I know that Bills have been brought on when they have not laid upon the table for the required six calendar days. But in this instance, the Government is setting a brand-new first. This is the first time that this Parliament has actively sought to bypass the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee in this way.

I am sure that members would be aware, because I am sure that they read it regularly, of section 22(1)(a) of the Parliamentary Committees Act that was passed in this place last year, which established the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee. Honourable members would be aware that that subsection of the Act restricts the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee to dealing with Bills. Once this Bill is passed, the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee has no

role. That is very dangerous, particularly in respect of what is being done in this instance. In this instance there are, if not absolute flaws in the legislation as pointed out by the honourable the member for Yeronga, at least very grave concerns that there may be. I know that the member for Yeronga is presenting this Parliament with a legal view. I am quite certain that the Attorney-General will respond with a view that says something quite contrary to the view that is being expressed by the member for Yeronga. There is no reason in the wide world why the view that I expect to be expressed by the Attorney-General should take precedence in this matter. It is a well-known fact that if one wants three legal opinions one need ask only two solicitors, because advice can be tailored to suit the circumstances. The former Attorney-General, the Honourable Dean Wells, once told me about a departmental officer who was employed to give him advice. He said that when he asked that fellow about certain legislation, the fellow said to him, "Well, Mr Attorney, if I was advising a Liberal Attorney-General, I would say this; but as I am advising you, I am saying this." The Honourable Dean Wells then asked that fellow, "But what do you believe?" The fellow answered, "I believe what it is appropriate to believe." I believe that is the situation with solicitors.

At the very least, we have an issue of concern. In a very short period I have been able to expand upon the list that was cited by the Honourable member for Yeronga. This list is a little over a page of a normal writing pad, and it contains some fairly interesting Acts: the Workplace Health and Safety Act, the Dental Act, the Pharmacy Act, the Queensland Law Society Act—a raft of Acts exist in which powers are derived from the Commissions of Inquiry Act. At the very least, that requires a thorough examination before this Parliament puts this legislation through. I see the Attorney-General nod in agreement with that thorough examination. I have absolutely no confidence that the Attorney has yet been able to give the Bill that thorough investigation.

To conclude this section of my speech, which is the speech that I would have made in the previous debate which was gagged, I point out that I think that it is appalling that, in such a sensitive matter as the one that we are now considering in which very grave rights issues are raised, the Government would move in the fashion that it has to not allow this Bill to be scrutinised by the committee that is set up to scrutinise our legislation for its adherence to those matters of individual rights. This is a first in this place. I sincerely hope that it is the last time that this is done.

I note in passing that the Government was elected on a very strong anti-crime platform and that, when the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee asked, the Government did delay the juvenile justice amendments to allow the committee to complete its investigations. Why is this legislation different? A review of the CJC was a minor plank of the Government's election platform. The Government will not delay legislation to allow the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee to examine a minor plank—it goes full bore on it; however, in the case of an issue that was central to the matter that it took to the electorate in July 1995 and in the Mundingburra by-election, it was quite prepared to allow the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee to complete its work. The Scrutiny of Legislation Committee has a particular problem in this instance because the Bill was introduced into this Parliament yesterday and, at that time or subsequent, there was no indication that this was to be a Bill that the Government treated as an urgency Bill.

I notice the member for Crows Nest sitting in the Chamber. I congratulate him. I think he must have something on everybody on that side of the Chamber because, more than anything else that can be said about this Government, it has a desire to find any way, method or means by which it can protect the member for Crows Nest. We saw that in relation to section 110 of the Public Service Bill. That legislation is also before the Parliament so I will not talk about it too specifically. Honourable members will hear a lot from me in the Committee stage of that Bill when it comes on subsequent to this debate. Section 110 of the Public Service Bill allowed the Government to manipulate certain office holders to enable it—if one would like to think the worst of the Government—to ensure that, no matter what the findings of the Carruthers inquiry, no prosecution was commenced. Of course, it was caught out the long way. Firstly, the Premier went to the newspapers saying that the Government needs that kind of power and it is perfectly all right. Then he went to the newspapers saying, "We are going to exempt all of those people by regulation and that should be good enough." Then the Premier called anybody who did not understand the regulation-making process ill informed. I can see the Minister for Transport looking on interestedly. From the time that he takes a regulation to Governor in Council on a Thursday and gazettes it on the Friday, it can take seven months before a disallowance

motion is heard in this place. All the actions taken in the meantime are saved. They are legitimatised, even if that disallowance motion is won and the regulation struck down. There is no protection for people in having their jobs protected through regulation. Finally, the Premier conceded that certain office bearers need the protection of the Act. Mr Miller, who was quite vocal in respect of his concern about his position, will have his position protected in the Public Service Bill. However, the Government still has a problem: the honourable member for Crows Nest might find himself in some trouble as a consequence of the matters being considered by——

Mr Johnson: You are an absolute gutless wonder, you are.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Laming): Order!

Mr Johnson: Come outside the place and say what you want to say. Come on, you gutless wonder.

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN: I take that last interjection from the member for Gregory because I think that his language ought to be recorded in this place. I think that the kind of gutter language that he uses ought to be recorded. I think that his language and his threats ought to be recorded for the people of this State to understand just what sort of low-life cretin the member is.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Minister for Transport and the member for Caboolture!

Mr JOHNSON: I rise to a point of order. I ask the honourable member to withdraw that remark. At the same time, if he wants to make innuendos against people along those lines, he could come outside any time.

Mr Fouras interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Ashgrove! I am discussing a point of order. I ask him to remain silent. I remind all honourable members that challenges across the Chamber are not parliamentary. The Minister has asked the member for Caboolture to withdraw his remark, and I ask him to do so.

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN: Of course, I shall withdraw accordingly. Let me continue to say that the powers that have been provided to the commission of inquiry by the Attorney-General are so wide ranging that the judges undertaking the inquiry can look at anything that is currently being undertaken by the CJC as well as anything that it has undertaken previously. An article on page 1 of Tuesday's *Courier-Mail* states—

> "Mr Beanland said the commissioners could decide which matters should be investigated."

Under the powers that are being given to the commission through this amending legislation, it is open to the commission to decide to investigate the Carruthers inquiry and it is open to this commission to engage in an investigation of an ongoing inquiry at the CJC. That is not a power that is available to the parliamentary committee. As I understand it, the parliamentary committee is only able to look at matters once the CJC has concluded them. However, this commission can look at ongoing inquiries, and I think that we should all worry a little bit about that.

If we made a movie about the last eight months of the National/Liberal coalition Government in this State, I am sure that it would be called "Free Russell". There probably has not been a piece of legislation so offensive brought to this place since 1977 when the then Attorney-General, Bill Lickiss, introduced a Bill to amend the Criminal Code, the Evidence Act and the Justices Act. Why did he do that? In the first instance, because Don Lane wanted him to do it. The amendment was introduced to protect members of this Parliament from prosecution. I acknowledge that the reason that the Bill was to be brought forward was to protect Mr Lane and his mates from both sides of the Parliament—some Labor Party members were embroiled in that. However, I understand that, on that occasion, the legislation was withdrawn.

This particular legislation relating to this particular commission of inquiry provides the methodology whereby this Government can control what might occur in the Carruthers inquiry, and it ought to be disregarded on that point. The member Kedron spoke about the fact that one of the eminent jurists who has been engaged to undertake this inquiry provided an opinion for one of the defendants, or one of the people appearing before the Carruthers inquiry. Certainly, if that does not disqualify that eminent jurist from participating in this commission of inquiry at all; it certainly should disqualify the commission of inquiry from examining anything to do with the Carruthers inquiry. I would be interested to hear from the Attorney-General as to whether or not he is prepared to give that fetter to the commission of inquiry to ensure that it does not interfere or intervene in any way, shape or form with the affairs currently being considered by the Criminal Justice Commission.

In conclusion, let me reiterate that this Bill, if it is not flawed, contains very grave matters that need to be settled. They need to be settled not just to the satisfaction of the Attorney-General, but to the satisfaction of all members of the Parliament of all political parties and the Independent. These matters cannot be settled simply by one member of Parliament saying, "My legal advice is better than yours. My opinion stands." There are likely to be differing views in relation to whether or not this amendment opens up the CJC to all manner of bodies around the State and enables those bodies to enter into search-and-seizure exercises at Milton.

For those reasons alone, this legislation needed to be referred to the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee for examination. It has not been possible for the committee to do that because of overt actions by the Government. It is the actions of the Government that have ensured that this Bill will not go before that committee for examination. The committee will not be able to advise this Parliament in respect of any breaches of individual rights that may be occasioned by the operation of these amendments.

Let us for a moment consider the issue of somebody who has given information to the Criminal Justice Commission on the understanding that that is as far as that evidence will go. Despite the confidentiality provisions of this legislation, the guarantee that may have been given to the person providing the CJC with information has now been changed, and it has been changed after the information was given. Simply put, I think that this kind of activity has the potential to diminish the CJC's information-gathering ability. We are changing the rules retrospectively. No matter what rules the Criminal Justice Commission might wish to discuss with potential informants, the informant will never be confident of the extent of those rules because, in a quite unprecedented and dangerous way, this Government has decided that it is going to shift the goalposts in relation to the CJC in this matter.

I share the indignation of the Opposition leadership that they were not consulted in relation to this inquiry. I remember the indignation expressed by the then Opposition Leader and now Premier, Mr Borbidge, when he felt that he might not have been going to be consulted about a certain appointment. I think Mr Borbidge should sit back and think about what it was like for him in Opposition and think about what it might be like for him in Opposition in the near future. If he is going to treat this place with contempt and the Opposition with even more contempt, then he will reap what he sows.

Time expired.

Mr ROBERTSON (Sunnybank) (5.30 p.m.): I rise in opposition to this Bill, not only as a member of the Opposition but also as a member of the current Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee. Today's events represent extraordinary behaviour by this Government in denying all members of this Parliament the right to properly scrutinise what is, in fact, an extremely important Bill.

Since the gagging of the debate earlier today, other members of this place have spoken about the importance of allowing that debate to run its course. I join in those calls because, when Opposition members were objecting to the gag being applied, many Government members said, "You'll get your opportunity to debate the Bill as the gag is not being applied." I remind those members of what the amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition earlier today was all about. It was not about the rights and wrongs of the Bill before the House which we are now debating. The purpose of this debate is to debate the rights and wrongs of the Bill. The Opposition Leader's amendment to the motion moved by the Leader of Government Business was about calling for greater scrutiny of the Bill. That is a much different argument and is fundamentally more important.

As other speakers have said, today the Government has trampled over the rights and responsibilities of at least two parliamentary committees and, of course, it has trampled over the rights of all members of this Chamber to speak on the amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition. In supporting that amendment, we were calling for the right, as members of this place, to properly scrutinise the Bill.

I want the record to show that I was one of the members denied the opportunity and the right to speak on the amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition. In denying me the right to speak by applying the gag, the leader of this House effectively gagged 28,000 electors in the Sunnybank electorate and denied them representation in this place. That is the effect of the gagging of the debate earlier today. Of course, we should not be too surprised about that gag being applied, because it was just another example of the Government attempting to turn this place into a less effective Chamber. It was another attempt to stop the scrutiny and accountability of the Government.

I remind the House of a speech I made yesterday in which I brought to the attention of honourable members the performance of the Government during question time. We were able to show that each sitting day the Government is answering, on average, 25 per cent fewer questions without notice than the previous Government did. The record of the Government is that it has 25 per cent less accountability during question time.

The accountability of this Government is further brought into question by the performances such as that of the Attorney-General who, earlier today, refused to give an appropriate response to a question asked by the member for Yeronga on matters pertaining to the inquiry which we are talking about. The Attorney-General sidestepped the issue at every possible opportunity, to the extent that no real answer was given. Therefore, there was no accountability. "Accountability" is a word that obviously slips off the tongue of the Attorney-General quite easily.

Mr J. H. Sullivan interjected.

Mr ROBERTSON: It should, particularly as the Attorney-General said, when he announced the inquiry, that the key word is "accountability". I could not agree more. He also said that the inquiry was not only about honesty and accountability, but was simply a case of good management and good Government. Be that as it may, one must bring those statements into serious question following the performance of the Government today. The Government has effectively trampled over two parliamentary committees and has applied the gag to an important debate which was calling for greater scrutiny of a piece of legislation. Nevertheless, the Attorney-General will try to tell the people of Queensland that this inquiry is all about accountability. Frankly, the evidence does not support his claim.

I am surprised that members opposite did not support the amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition earlier today. I would have thought that, as responsible members of this place, they would have understood the importance of the roles of the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee and the Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee. That appears not to be the case, in spite of some very pious statements made by the Premier and senior Ministers of his Government less than 12 months ago.

It is appropriate that we have a small history lesson to demonstrate not only the lack of accountability but also the hypocrisy of this Government. On 14 September 1995, when this House was debating a new Parliamentary Committees Bill, the Premier stated, at page 215 of *Hansard*—

> "It is fair to say that the people of Queensland would not support this move."

He was speaking about the move to amalgamate the EARC and PCJC committees. He continued—

> "This Government has effectively diminished the people's oversighting of this very powerful body. Quite rightly, the people of Queensland would not like this and would not approve of it."

The Premier went on to say—

> "I was making the point that the abolition of the Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee comes after some public rows between the PCJC and the CJC and criticism of the Criminal Justice Commission by the Government. It has been reported that the Government is considering reducing divisions of the CJC, such as its research and education functions. It is clear to all that the Goss Government wants a tame CJC and threats to cut its functions, coupled with the abolition of the Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee, are designed to curb its influence."

The Premier also said—

> "The House will recall that the Government did not like the Criminal Justice Commission's role in law reform, such as its reports into the decriminalisation of marijuana, brothels and prostitution. Ironically, the axing of the PCJC coincides with the Government's consideration of the parliamentary committee's report on the CJC, which contained some 30 recommendations. These included that the Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee should have the power to give directions to the CJC. It will be interesting to see whether the Government approves that particular recommendation."

The Premier further stated, at page 216—

> "The Opposition will oppose any reduction in the role and functions of the CJC."

I ask the House to remember that quote because further into that debate we find what the then Opposition Police spokesperson, the member for Crows Nest and now the Minister, had to say in regard to the CJC. He said, at page 246 of *Hansard*—

> "The CJC is absolutely essential to the reform and accountability process. All current and former Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee members would agree."

He went on to say that if the former Government—

> ". . . gets its way and abolishes the PCJC and, as a result, Parliament, and through it the people, lost their essential watchdog role. It would not surprise me if the Government then used that as a justification for gutting the CJC. The Government would, in this scenario, say that the CJC is too big and too powerful for an adequate oversight by this proposed new committee and should be restructured or, in other words, dismantled. In my opinion, this is the thin end of the wedge for the CJC."

It is certainly was the thin end of the wedge, because earlier this year the members that I have just quoted became the Premier and Minister for Police. Since then, we have seen a sustained attack on the role of the CJC. That is the hypocrisy behind the legislation we are debating today.

By setting up this inquiry, the Government has done two things. It has signalled that it is prepared to gut the CJC, and it has also demonstrated that it has no faith in the Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee, the very committee it said only 12 months ago had an essential role to play in this place. Yet the pious words of 12 months ago cannot be supported by the actions and statements of Ministers opposite over the past three or four months.

As a member of the PCJC, I am of the view that that committee is fast becoming irrelevant. Those who supported the motion to bring on this debate today and reject the amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition effectively put another nail in the coffin of the Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee. I take this opportunity—and only one Government member of the PCJC is in the Chamber at the moment—to challenge Government members of the Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee to stand up in this debate in defence of that committee, because that is what is necessary at this time.

I am pleased to see that the Chairman of the PCJC has returned to the Chamber, because he may want to take up my challenge of standing up in this place in defence of the committee of which he is the chair. As I said, what we need at present is strong representation in defence of the role of the committee. It has effectively been steamrolled today by the bringing on of the debate on this Bill.

Mr Fouras: I bet he is not even going to speak to this Bill.

Mr ROBERTSON: I am pleased that the member for Ashgrove alerted my attention to that. Where on the speaking list do we see members of the Government? Where do they appear on the speaking list? Not one of them is prepared to put his or her name on the list to debate this legislation. They are prepared to impose the gag. They are prepared to reject a very reasonable and sound amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition. They have allegedly promised that they will not impose the gag on this debate, but that is yet to be seen. They have said that this is the debate in which members should express their views in relation to this Bill. But where are they? Where are the Government members of the PCJC in this debate? They are nowhere to be seen.

The absence of Government members from the speaking list may also signify something else. Perhaps they have not had enough time to scrutinise the Bill which has been brought on so hurriedly by the Attorney-General. I wonder whether the Attorney-General's caucus committee actually got to see the Bill before it was introduced into this place and had the opportunity to scrutinise it. I doubt that that would be the case. The reason I doubt that that would be the case is that the PCJC met on Tuesday. We met to consider our response to this commission of inquiry. We decided on certain courses of action. I suggest that those courses of action would have been significantly different had we been aware of the provisions of this Bill, particularly those provisions, as the member for Yeronga so eloquently pointed out earlier, that could well require and empower this commission of inquiry to call for members of the parliamentary committee to attend before it.

During this debate, there has been some toing-and-froing about that issue. What that says to me is that clarification and closer scrutiny are required. Those two essential elements of parliamentary debate are being denied. I think the debate on this legislation would have benefited from a view expressed by the PCJC. The committee has been denied that right. I think the debate would have also benefited from a view expressed by the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee, because of the arguments put up by members in this place, such as the member for Yeronga, the

Opposition Leader, and the member for Waterford. But we have been denied that.

We have to ask the question: why is this Bill being rushed through? Is the Opposition being taken advantage of because it finds itself one number short at this time? One can only speculate. There was no need for this legislation to be rushed through today. It could have even waited another 24 hours. As we have seen today, because of the inappropriate actions by the Government, half of today's debating time was spent debating the motion to suspend the Standing Orders. The Government has achieved nothing by its peremptory actions which have denied two parliamentary committees the right to scrutinise this piece of legislation.

This has been an unfortunate day for the Parliament. I only wish that backbench members opposite, in particular the members of the PCJC, had enough intestinal fortitude to stand up to the Attorney-General and say, "This is not good enough. This Bill is too important to rush through, gag debate and deny proper scrutiny." Unfortunately, that has not been the case. In particular, I suggest that Government members of the PCJC have done that committee absolutely no favours by remaining silent today. I can only hope that out of this mess we retain a strong parliamentary committee system, in particular the PCJC. But if the Government continues to conduct itself in this fashion, I fear the worst.

Mr HOLLIS (Redcliffe) (5.48 p.m.): It is with sadness that I rise to speak against this Bill. I feel that what has happened in the House today is the start of the erosion and the usurping of the parliamentary committee system. That is bad for the State of Queensland and for the people of Queensland, and it is particularly bad for this House.

The Government is talking about holding a referendum on the reinstatement of an Upper House. It obviously believes there is a need for some review of Government practices. Yet today a commission of inquiry is being established in direct contrast to that which the Government claims is its policy. There is no excuse whatsoever for the role of the Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee being usurped in this manner. Every single piece of advice from outside Government—from the chairman of the commission, the media and everybody else—suggests that this is wrong; that the only body to review the Criminal Justice Commission, as established by the Criminal Justice Act, is the parliamentary committee.

What do we see now? Without a role, the parliamentary committee is now being thrust into the background. The terrible shame is that the Government members of that committee are condoning that. They had every opportunity to stand up and say, "We are not going to be controlled by the Executive." And neither should they be. The whole idea behind parliamentary committees is that they can put the brakes on Government, review what the Government is doing and do the job that the legislation sets out. In this case, the Government is now saying, "That is not good enough. We want our own inquiry." We moved to commence immediately the third-year review of the Criminal Justice Commission. That proposal was defeated. It was defeated only because the chair of that committee had riding instructions from the Premier.

We must take into account the cost of inquiries such as this. Cost estimates include $3,000 for the heads of the commission and $2,000 for the counsel assisting.

Mr D'Arcy: That's per day, isn't it?

Mr HOLLIS: Per day. Let us look at the full costs. We have two commissioners at $3,000 per day each. We have the counsel assisting the commission on at least $2,000 and probably $2,500 per day. We have the staff who support the commissioners and the counsel assisting. We have the premises in which the hearings are conducted. We have all the other associated costs of the people appearing before the commission. I confidently expect that the people of Queensland will be paying between $12,000 and $15,000 per day to do the Government's bidding—to facilitate this witch-hunt on the CJC. As the Leader of the Opposition said earlier, the people of Queensland expect the Government to deliver more police on the streets, more educational resources and more health services. I note that the Minister for Families is in the Chamber. What about the unmet needs of disabled people? What would $15,000 a day do for the unmet needs of those in my electorate? It would do a huge amount. Probably one-third of the people referred to in the document prepared by those advocating on behalf of those with unmet needs come from the Redcliffe electorate. I know what $15,000 per day would do a huge amount for those people.

Government members should be ashamed of themselves for not utilising the committee already established to review the activities of the commission. Instead, they are prepared to spend this sort of money on a judicial inquiry, further lining the pockets of the

wealthy, when the inquiry could be undertaken by the existing committee at a much lower cost. We moved a motion to commence immediately the three-year review and to undertake inquiries into all the other aspects, including the Davies affair and the Heiner affair—the whole lot. We were willing to look at all those matters. The committee could have done that for much less money. But the problem was that the Government members on that committee had their riding instructions. That is a terrible shame for the committee system of this Parliament.

One of the difficulties inherent in committees of inquiry is that people are very quick to denigrate the commission. It was interesting to hear earlier today about Mr Clair's comment to the Estimates committee on police corruption and drugs. There are several aspects to this matter. The Premier refuses to meet with the Chair of the CJC. The Premier does not even know what Mr Clair looks like, apart from seeing him on TV. We have this man who blatantly ignores some commonsense advice from a man who knows exactly what is going on. As Mr Clair briefed the parliamentary committee, he also briefed the Attorney-General. Mr Beanland walked out and Mr Clair walked in, and I think I remember what he said: "It was a very amiable discussion, very informative, and I believe that the Attorney-General now knows what it is all about." What happened? The Attorney-General came out and said that that was not so and that he still had problems with the matter of police corruption and drugs. I have to wonder why the Attorney-General made that comment.

Today we have heard about the corruption that existed prior to 1989 and about how the crooks are coming back. The terms of reference for the judicial inquiry are puzzling. It is going to look at the aspects of police corruption and drugs. I query the point in that. It is very easy for an inquiry of this type to identify the people who are engaged in the minor activities and to prefer charges against them. But who escapes? Which are the figures not identified by this type of inquiry? It is the people at the top. We are all aware of the corruption exposed in this State and in other States, and we have a fair idea of who is at the top. It is usually the white-shoe brigade—the people with money. That is where half of them get their money from. This is where the problem arises.

In taking the actions that it has, this Government has destroyed what could have been a good inquiry—one which may have unearthed the real source of corruption in the police force and in this State and which may have unearthed many of the suppliers of the types of drugs involved in the incident on the south coast just a few days ago. That is what we should be aiming to achieve. The Government should not be looking to exercise control over the CJC or parliamentary committees. It should be aiming to achieve the best outcomes for the people of Queensland. The best outcomes for the people of Queensland would be a drug-free society and a corruption-free society, just as Fitzgerald said in 1989. That is what we should be looking for as legislators. But what the Government seems to be looking for here is the power to control everything, including the crime-fighting bodies. I think that is a terrible shame for Queensland.

It is also a terrible shame that the Government is trying to control the committee system. Only one thing will flow from that: we will return to the past. Once again corruption will flourish. When those who are involved in corrupt activities see that they have the support of this Government, they are going to think, "Whoopee! We are in it again", and things will return to how they were pre-1989. That is a terrible shame for Queensland. I oppose this Bill. I believe that the Government will forever be condemned for its actions by not only the criminal justice people and the honest police but also every citizen in this State.

The Government may believe that the outcome of the Lytton by-election was merely the result of the natural drift back to Labor. However, when this Bill goes through and when people realise that corruption will once again be the hallmark of the Queensland Government, it will be out on its ear as quickly as the National Party Government was in 1989.

Debate, on motion of Mr Nuttall, adjourned.

SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICES (QUEENSLAND) AWARD

Mrs WOODGATE (Kurwongbah) (5.59 p.m.): I move—

> "That an allocation be made from the Treasurer's Advance to meet the costs of implementing the SACS Award in the non-government community sector in this financial year."

This Government has been aware for some years that the SACS Award was imminent. The Director-General of the Department of Families, Youth and

Community Care is on the public record as stating that the department cannot pay any of this money. In the *Courier-Mail* of 10 September, he said that his department would not pay the extra costs arising out of the new social and community services award. I quote—

> "For us to fund all the SACS costs, it would cost $13 million, and we just have not got that money—not unless Treasurer Joan Sheldon pulls a rabbit out of the hat in tomorrow's Budget."

I was absolutely dismayed to find that nowhere in the Budget papers was there any supplementation funding for the implementing of the SACS Award in relation to the many community organisations throughout this State. During the Estimates committee hearings, I questioned the Minister about the SACS Award and he admitted that there is no line within the present budget to cater for the award. He talked about rationalisation of groups, etc., but to his credit he did admit that the only way to help those hundreds of community organisations was through a special application to the Treasury.

If this notice of motion tonight is successful, the hundreds of services funded under the Family and Individual Support Program—FISP—through the Department of Families, Youth and Community Care, the neighbourhood centres, the domestic violence hotlines, the migrant resource centres—the list is endless—will be able to continue to function for the forthcoming year without fear of having to cut hours or staff or even close down because of the shortfall of funds to their organisation. Some have already had to cut hours. The member for Chermside will vouch for the fact that, a couple of weeks ago, the Nundah Neighbourhood Centre in his electorate cut hours.

Recently, I brought to the attention of this House that the domestic violence crisis hotline had advised me that it would be forced to reduce its 24-hour service to 9 to 5 hours due to shortfalls in the State Budget because, to use its words—

> "The Government failed to make funding adjustments to grant allocations for community based support services affected by the Social and Community Services award ratified by the Industrial Relations Commission in June of this year."

Surely there is not one honourable member on either side of this House who could not support this notice of motion. What I am asking members to support is not unreasonable. After all, the Treasurer does have an Advance Account—sometimes referred to as a slush fund—and what better reason could we find than for the members of this House to vote that these funds be allocated from that account to enable hundreds of community organisations and groups to carry on the excellent and very necessary work that they do Statewide.

We must never forget that Government services play a relatively small part, although an important part, in the support of disadvantaged Queenslanders, but by far the greatest support, both in terms of hours worked and services provided, comes from the non-Government community sector, whether we are talking about church groups providing homes for children who cannot live with their family, domestic violence services supporting women and their children escaping violence in the home, community organisations supporting people with disabilities to lead productive, dignified lives, emergency relief agencies, counselling services, youth workers, people working with the homeless, community centres, prisoner support groups, housing and tenancy associations, community legal services, migrant resource services and others. We are talking about programs delivered through the non-Government community sector by organisations run by dedicated community management committees.

The paid workers of those organisations, highly skilled and experienced though many of them are, have historically been paid a pittance. They have been expected to provide professional skill services with satisfaction for a job well done being their main reward. That is no longer good enough. With the introduction of the recent Social and Community Services Award, the professionalism of those workers has now been recognised along with their dedication and commitment. The award, which is the first in the community services sector in Queensland, did not come out of the blue. It has been more than six years in the making. There has been time enough to make plans and budget provisions for meeting the costs of the award, but this budget makes absolutely no provision for the extra funding needed for funded organisations to meet their award obligations.

As I said, the public comments by the director-general of the department have been to the effect that he has no intention of providing that extra money required. But what will be the result of this short-sighted, uncaring attitude? Let me tell the House what is happening in the non-Government community sector. There are currently 149 non-

Government respondents to the SACS Award. By the end of the year, the union expects to have added a further 900. Management committees are genuinely frightened. They know that the SACS Award is not optional; they know that it is a legal obligation which they must meet.

Most non-Government organisations have limited sources of funding—fund-raising is difficult—and even the big, well-organised groups are finding the donated dollar harder and harder to attract. Running fetes and street stalls takes energy and time which most management committees would rather give directly to the disadvantaged. Most non-Government organisations rely on Government funding, and the Government funds them because they provide effective and efficient services, yet without extra funding to meet the costs of the award, they have only one real choice, that is, reduce services to the most needy in our communities.

In many instances in the non-Government sector, the service is the worker, so a reduction in services will equate to a reduction from permanent to part-time work. The direct cost to Government-funded agencies may well be unchanged, but the level of services provided will be much reduced, and that means increased poverty, crime, homelessness and family abuse.

Management committees are telling me daily that their workloads are already so heavy that any reduction in funded hours will place an intolerable burden on the organisation and on the community which they serve. As shadow Minister for this portfolio, every day I receive letters and phone calls from community organisations asking me to plead their case with Minister Kev Lingard, to ask him to listen to their cries of help for them to at least maintain their current level of service. All are very concerned about the possible reduction in services they provide which are funded under the FISP program.

The solution is not difficult to find. The Government should desist from any mean-spirited, short-sighted attempt to punish the non-Government sector. That is what these people are saying is happening. The Government should provide the award increase. As I said earlier, the public comments made by the director-general of the department, Mr Male, were that to provide the full funding to cover the increase caused by the award would cost $13.5m, but a senior officer from the same department this week has said that it would cost $5m for the year. Frankly, I am not surprised that the director-general does not know what is going on in his own department. I spoke on that subject yesterday. Nevertheless, whatever the cost, the money is there in the Treasurer's Advance Account and that is from where it should come. It would be policy madness to try to save a few million dollars at the expense of the massive reduction in community services which will flow without the additional funds.

I will quote from some of the many letters I have received from community organisations right across the State—from the cape, Cairns, Leichhardt right down to the Lockyer. This is what they are saying—

> "If there is no increase in funding, we believe that we will experience
>
> Loss of quality service provision
>
> Loss of quality workers
>
> Loss of quality management committees
>
> Loss of service delivery hours to the community.
>
> We are concerned that this will mean increased demand on government services such as child protection, juvenile justice, police and corrective services, health, Department of Social Security, mental health, disability services and housing."

Another letter suggests ways of coping if no supplementation funding is received from the Government. That letter states—

> "Increase client fees. Not a good idea as many families are already facing financial hardship, additional cost would put respite services out of reach."

I ask members present to think about the effects of a defeat of this motion on their electorates. Every non-Government organisation in this State, large or small, will be affected, and when the services disappear they can tell their constituents, when they come knocking on their electorate office doors, as I will be, that Treasurer Sheldon was too mean and callous to find the money for the community sector, but she had plenty of money to remove the tolls in her own backyard.

This is the sort of decision making that we were elected to carry out. This is real caring. This is looking after fellow men and women politics. This is ensuring that all politicians, irrespective of their party allegiance, are putting money where their hearts are. This is bread and butter politics; it is not champagne and strawberry politics. This is not the airy-fairy stuff, it is the real bread and butter politics.

This is the sort of thing that we are elected to do. This is one area where everybody in this House can make a difference. For the sake of those Queenslanders who, for whatever reason, are not as fortunate as all of us in this House, those who need that helping hand along the way, I urge every honourable member in this House to support this motion.

Hon. D. J. HAMILL (Ipswich) (6.08 p.m.): I rise to support the honourable member for Kurwongbah and the motion she has moved this evening. The matter the member has raised is a very serious one for communities right around the State. I have received considerable correspondence from various community welfare groups that are genuinely concerned as to their viability if the Government fails to respond to their very reasonable request to have additional assistance made available to them under the Family and Individual Support Program to cover the cost of employees engaged under the new Social and Community Services Award.

I wish to quote from correspondence I have received from the Good Shepherd Sisters, a religious community who work in the Goodna area. In their letter, they write—

> "Through our work we are in regular contact with members of the community who struggle with issues such as unemployment, mental illness, imprisonment of a family member, domestic violence and the stresses of settling into a new country. We believe that the services provided by Neighbourhood Centres and other community service organizations prevent the escalation of social problems in our community and develop the self reliance of individuals."

Sisters Pamela Molony, Monica Wash and Anne Manning go on to write—

> "We are concerned that a lessening of the services currently provided under FISP programs will mean increased demand on government services such as child protection, juvenile justice, police and corrective services and mental health. The social costs would be impossible to calculate."

They go on to plead that, as shadow Treasurer, I do everything possible to encourage the Government to respond to the real community need that exists. The points that are made by the Good Shepherd Sisters in that letter should not be lost upon the Government. The Government is talking about maintaining a sound Budget. The Government does not seem to be receptive to the cry for help that is coming from the community sector for the provision of these services. I say to the Government: think of those words that were written by the Good Shepherd Sisters. If you do not respond to this, the costs will be horrendous. They will be horrendous in terms of striking at the very viability of many of these community groups. As the honourable member for Kurwongbah said, those people give freely and very generously of their time and their commitment, but they simply cannot and will not be able to continue to provide that range of services if the need is not addressed by the Government.

Similar sentiments to those expressed by the Good Shepherd Sisters have been expressed by the Leichhardt Community Group. That group provides sessions with the community in relation to self-esteem, parenting, stress management, adult literacy and health awareness. They say that, in the last 12 months, 3,750 hours were contributed by volunteers. Importantly, the group makes the comment that these services have helped in the prevention of increased dependency on existing social systems and allowed a greater self-reliance for the people with whom they have worked in the community. They are worthwhile and vital programs. These needs deserve to be addressed.

I have a wad of similar letters from community organisations in my electorate and throughout the State. I believe that it is very hollow for the Treasurer to have been so opposed to providing the assistance that those groups are seeking. After all, we have a Government which, almost day in and day out now, can establish commissions of inquiry and pay mates' rates to retired judges of $3,000 a day. It is able to budget for millions of dollars in inquiries, yet it has not one cent for those very worthwhile community groups that are out there actually doing something constructive and productive in the community.

The Treasurer's Advance has a record sum locked away in it—$259m. The Treasurer has been at great pains to say that some of that money is there for wage rises for the public sector. That money should also be there for the award rates that are enjoyed by community workers who rely upon Government funding to maintain those particular services. As the member for Kurwongbah said, the Treasurer can find $83m in the Budget to do away with the tolls in her own backyard, she can write off $52m of debt on the Sunshine Motorway, but she cannot find one cent for the community sector

whose services are in jeopardy as a result of this tightwad approach by this Government.

Time expired.

Hon. K. R. LINGARD (Beaudesert—Minister for Families, Youth and Community Care) (6.14 p.m.): I move—

> "That the words after the word 'that' be omitted and the words—
>
> > 'whilst recognising budgetary implications the Government assist in meeting the costs of implementing the SACS Award in the non-Government community sector in this financial year'
>
> be inserted."

The motion will now read completely—

> "That whilst recognising budgetary implications the Government assist in meeting the costs of implementing the SACS Award in the non-Government community sector in this financial year."

In moving this amendment, I recognise the intent of the shadow Minister in relation to the Government supporting some of the SACS Award applications.

Mr Fouras interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member is on the speaking list.

Mr LINGARD: However, as I have indicated in public, there are three sectors in which I believe we will be able to assist in the SACS Award. The first one is the disabilities sector. We are receiving $70m from the Commonwealth, and I believe that this will cover approximately 75 per cent of the SACS Award in relation to those people in the disabilities sector. The second one relates to areas in which I believe a rationalisation of some community services can occur. Through that rationalisation, many of those groups will be able to come up with their own savings in relation to the SACS Award.

Mrs Edmond interjected.

Mr LINGARD: I hear an Opposition member interjecting. Let me read a letter that I received from the Domestic Violence Telephone Service, which was referred to at length by the shadow Minister. The letter states—

> "I wish to assure you that neither the members of the Committee of Management nor the senior staff at this service have had any contact with Mrs Woodgate regarding this issue. The service is continuing to operate as agreed under our funding agreement with the Department of Families, Youth and Community Care."

Yet the Opposition has claimed that the service would be dropped from a 24-hour service for domestic violence counselling supposedly to a 9-to-5 service. That service states that it has had no contact with Mrs Woodgate. Yet Mrs Woodgate asked a question about this matter in Parliament and brought it up again today.

That service is an example of the community groups which, I believe, with some rationalisation of the services that they are providing, will be able themselves to cover the SACS Award. However, there is a third group that I have admitted continually may need assistance from the Government. I have said that my department will be giving them that assistance. However, the director-general is correct that no direct line was made in the budget for the SACS Award. The member for Kurwongbah made the comment that it has been in operation for 10 years. She knows as well as I do that she did not have one line covering any SACS Award when she was the relevant Minister. In this particular motion I am saying that we will assist—and I am giving a commitment that my department will assist—in those areas where I believe it is necessary to assist in the SACS Award.

Mr Fouras interjected.

Mr LINGARD: I say to the member for Ashgrove, who continues to interject: it would be silly for the Government to give a bucketful of money to all community groups and have those community groups tell me, "Yes, this is what we want to pay all of our people under the SACS Award." There can be rationalisation under some of the service agreements. There is no doubt that some of the groups can rationalise and have already made their own changes to cope with the SACS Award. However, I have given an agreement to the House that this department will certainly assist those groups where I believe it will be necessary. Maybe the Domestic Violence Telephone Service would be a typical example of how we cannot cut a service from 24 hours to anything else. Those are some of the groups that I and my department would have to assist. I have given a commitment that, in relation to the disabilities sector, I believe we will be able to cover 75 per cent of the SACS Award, certainly through the $70m grant from the Federal Government.

In the second sector are all of those groups that need to rationalise, look at their service agreements and look at the commitments they have given. I believe that

they will be able to cover the SACS Award. However, where they cannot cover them, and where they need assistance, this department is giving a commitment that it will assist those people. Therefore, I believe that the amendment as stated will allow us, as a Government, to assist all of those people for whom the shadow Minister has moved a motion.

Time expired.

Dr WATSON (Moggill) (6.19 p.m.): I rise to second the amendment moved by the Minister for Families, Youth and Community Care. This debate really is not about whether or not those community services deserve some assistance. As the Minister explained just a moment ago, he intends to do just that. But the issue does come down to whether or not Opposition members learnt anything when they were in Government about budgeting and running the affairs of the State. The problem that Opposition members have with not understanding what the Budget is is the problem that they had in running the State and letting it run down over the past couple of years. The Commission of Audit identified that. The problem is that the Treasurer's Advance Account is not some freely available set of resources for every idea that the Opposition would like to put forward. The Treasurer's Advance Account does have particular commitments. We do expect certain things to occur this year, and we have budgeted for them.

Mr McElligott: Like what?

Dr WATSON: I outlined those items in my speech in the Budget debate. If the member had been paying attention, he would remember. I will go through a few of the issues that have to be taken into account. The Government must deal with outstanding legal liability claims that it has been left. We must deal with the implementation of the competition policy, which I know was partly debated yesterday in this House. The previous Government agreed to involve Queensland in the competition policy. That must be implemented significantly this year, but we do not know what the cost of implementation will be. Estimates for that are in the Treasurer's Advance Account. The account contains funding for specialised heavy vehicles. We have heard the Minister for Economic Development and Trade talk about the issue of major project facilitation. Costs associated with that have already been met and the balance is shown as an Estimate in the Treasurer's Advance Account. The account contains provision for the cash equivalent of long service leave. The account will also be used for the traditional items of prudent contingency allocations, for example, drought assistance for the unfortunate circumstance of prolonged drought conditions. None of us wants the drought to continue, none of us wants farmers and people on the land and in small towns to suffer any more from drought conditions, but the reality is that we do not control weather, so that allocation is there. I cannot remember last year's exact allocation, but the final outcome was approximately $33m, which was significantly above the initial allocation included in the Labor Treasurer's Advance Account. Part of the reason we have increased the allocation this year is that drought conditions have continued.

Mr Hamill: But not by $155m?

Dr WATSON: I am going to get to that issue. Natural disaster relief and restoration costs for cyclones and other weather conditions also have to be covered. The Government does not know precisely what they will be.

Mr Hamill: What about wage increases?

Dr WATSON: I am going to get to that. The honourable member talks about wage increases and, yes, they have to be covered. When Labor brought down last year's Budget, wage increases had been determined substantially and could be included as line items in the budgets for various departments. This year, enterprise bargaining was not sufficiently advanced, so those increases could not be included in line items of departments. If they had been sufficiently advanced, they would have appeared as line items, and the Treasurer's Advance Account would have been lower. Those issues have to be taken into account.

It is one matter to include the legitimate bargaining that is continuing between the State Government and its Public Service employees on enterprise bargaining; it is a different matter to talk about organisations outside Government.

Time expired.

Mr T. B. SULLIVAN (Chermside) (6.24 p.m.): I rise to support the motion moved by the shadow Minister for Families, Youth and Community Care. Community workers have been undervalued and overworked members of our society who assist those in most need and those who are the most vulnerable in our society. The community workers whom I have met and with whom I have had dealings over a number of years—both in the 20 years I worked as a

teacher and in the five years that I have been in Parliament—have convinced me of their strong commitment to those whom they serve. The commitment matches or surpasses that of nurses to their patients and teachers to their students.

Unfortunately for people who work in community centres, there tends to be no major central organisation to push for their advancement as there has been in the nursing or teacher professions. For that reason, I believe, they have been neglected for far too long. The SACS Award at last came to grips with that problem in order to start to provide a more reasonable level of remuneration for those who carry out that essential work. The result of this State Budget from Treasurer Sheldon has been a cut in hours of the workers in community centres and community groups and/or a cut in the number of workers, both of which have led to a cut in services to those who are most vulnerable and most needy within our society.

The cost for the year is a bit uncertain. We do not know whether it is the $13.5m referred to by the director-general, Allan Male, or the less than $6m that the departmental officer informed the Estimates committee it would cost. Either is a small amount to pay for those who do such essential work. The Treasurer has already found more than $80m to remove the toll from the Sunshine Coast Motorway, which will help her own constituents and the constituents of her conservative colleagues, but she cannot find $13.5m to achieve basic wage justice for community workers. The Treasurer did have warning of the increase and could have budgeted for that award if she had been so inclined. That situation occurs on a regular basis in the education, health and Public Service sectors.

For 13 years I was heavily involved in QATIS, the Queensland Association of Teachers in Independent Schools, which is the union for non-Government schoolteachers. When work value cases or enterprise bargaining negotiations were being carried on for some time and the final result was not known, it was common for the Government to set aside money to account for the wage increases that would flow from that agreement. The Government could have planned ahead, but in this case it did not. This is another failure of Treasurer Sheldon that is there for everyone to see.

Even allowing for the Treasurer's failure to plan, she had a second option if she really cared for community and welfare organisations, that is, the Treasurer's Advance. Treasurer Sheldon increased the advance from Treasurer De Lacy's $104m to $259m. This motion asks that a maximum of $13.5m of that $259m of the Treasurer's slush fund be used to help those community workers. Money can be found for CJC inquiries, which will cost more than $15,000 a day, and millions of dollars will be spent on other inquiries, which are political witch-hunts; however, the Treasurer and the Government cannot find money for community workers.

The Nundah Community Centre is not in my electorate, but it was in the former electorate of Nundah. At its recent annual general meeting, workers indicated that the impact of the lack of funding was a reduction in the hours of their workers and a loss of services. I table a list of a variety of respondents from all over the State totalling three and a half pages of respondents who will be adversely affected by the failure of the Treasurer to provide proper funds. Groups such as the Nundah Community Centre look after infants and young mothers, people with mild disabilities, unemployed people and provide a free legal service.

The Minister for Families, Youth and Community Care has also failed to advocate effectively for his department. Other Ministers were able to find money for tollways, inquiries and wage increases in their departments, but the Minister has not found the money for people who work in the community sector. That is a failure by the Treasurer to care for those in the greatest need; it is a failure by this Government to care for people who are recipients of those services. The people of Queensland will recognise that failure, especially when they contrast it with money that has been provided for so many other areas.

Time expired.

Hon. M. J. HORAN (Toowoomba South—Minister for Health) (6.29 p.m.): I am pleased to join in this debate in support of the Minister and his amendment that the amended motion read—

> ". . . whilst recognising budgetary implications the Government assist in meeting the costs of implementing the SACS Award in the non-Government community sector in this financial year."

Within the Queensland Health Department, we provide approximately 1,200 individual grants per year costing approximately $170m per year. Some of those organisations are affected by the SACS Award, and some are not. Some organisations under our Home And

Community Care program come under various other awards.

We on the Government side are very much aware of the great service given to our community by these non-Government organisations. On many occasions, I have had the privilege to speak to organisations that deliver services, be it in drug and alcohol services, in various community mental health services and various women's health services, particularly in the area of sexual assault where this award is certainly going to have an impact. There are many other areas where there is the involvement of not only the Department of Families, Youth and Community Care but also of Queensland Health, particularly in some areas of disability where funds are provided by each department.

The history of this award is that negotiations in relation to it have been under way for some time. It was opposed by the previous Government on the basis that the Queensland Government had always resisted the imposition of overarching Federal awards and that the community sector, which was proposed to be covered by this award, is diverse and that the new award, when it was fixed into position, could limit employment flexibility. Be that as it may, we recognise the service provided by these people. Recently, I had a meeting with the Australian Services Union, and I have met with some of the organisations that will be affected by this SACS Award. I refer to organisations involving respite care, and they are the ones that are particularly affected. Those people who provide 24-hour-a-day care, weekend care or out-of-hours care are the ones who are going to be hit hardest by it.

One of the problems that we face in determining how much funding is going to be required is the uncertainty of this process because this is a new award; it is the first time it has applied. Some of the organisations that we have provided grants to have been moving towards this award for some time. They realised that it was going to come in and, in the funding that some receive through their grants, some are almost at that level and would require minor adjustments or minor increases in order to reach it. Other organisations have not done that. Therefore, it becomes quite a complicated formula to determine who needs what.

In addition, the grants that are provided allow for different levels of funding. For example, some of the grants for mental health are very close to the mark of what is required by some of those non-Government organisations; whereas I am informed that grants provided from other areas within my department are not up to the same level as those provided for mental health.

However, it is interesting to note that this Government has already made moves on this issue. It has formed the chief executive officers forum on social development. It has established a working party to coordinate a whole-of-Government response to the award. As I said, because it is a new award, the respondents to the award are required to determine and negotiate appropriate pay points for their employees. Their first obligation is to be able to meet the conditions that apply to leave—holiday leave, sick leave and so forth. As I understand it, they have to comply with that from the date of the implementation of the award. Then they have to comply with a 3 per cent rise on two separate occasions and then, finally, the full rise as of July next year when they would be in a position to determine the extent of the balance that they have to provide.

So it is pleasing to be able to tell the House that we have this chief executive officers forum and that we are coordinating through a working party a whole-of-Government response. It is only after this exercise is completed that we will be in a position to be able to identify accurately the management and financial implications that result from this particular award. So there is very genuine intent on behalf of this Government to negotiate and work through to find out how much is required, when it is required and to negotiate through this year with the Treasurer in regard to what is needed. However, we have to know what is needed. We have to be able to ascertain exactly what is required. It is a major process to get that done. We have made a commitment to do that. The other initiative that we are providing within the Queensland Health Department is to provide for our grants on a more regular and certain basis through our performance management branch.

Mr PEARCE (Fitzroy) (6.34 p.m.): I heard what the Minister said earlier, but I believe that the Government has a duty to accept this motion moved by the Opposition and to move immediately to amend the Budget so that it can fund appropriately those organisations that depend on these Government grants.

The impact of this award on community workers providing human service delivery throughout Queensland is both positive and negative. The positive outcome from the

SACS Award is that workers will get no less than what they deserve. From my knowledge of the service that community workers and care workers provide, they are underpaid and overworked and the Government has taken for granted the services that they provide.

The negative outcome of the Federal industrial award being put in place as of 26 July this year is that, without funding to make up the additional salary cost resulting from the introduction of this award, many skilled and talented workers will be lost and the community will suffer from a reduction in the delivery of services to those most in need.

In the coalfields area of my electorate, I am greatly concerned that there will be a reduction in support services for rural and isolated families. Once again, the National Party will have allowed Liberal Party Leader and Treasurer Joan Sheldon to disadvantage rural people simply because they choose to live in country Queensland. The hypocrisy of the National Party in this State would be laughable if it were not so serious. When in Opposition, the National Party attacked the Labor Government over issues such as courthouse closures, rail line closures and claims that services were being taken away from rural Queensland. Now, the Liberal Party, with its right-to-rule mentality, is pouring money into tollways and bank mergers while services in rural Queensland are being cut. The Treasurer is the boss, the Nationals are the weak link in the coalition and yet again the people of rural Queensland are the big losers.

Already, the Central Highlands area is insufficiently covered by workers delivering human services and any reduction in existing services will impact heavily on rural families still suffering from the effects of drought and industry downturn. Mrs Sheldon does not care that mining town families do not have the support of extended family networks and will often call on the resources of community service workers to help them through the tough times, both personally and financially. Those workers are important. They know the people, they know their needs and they have built a high degree of trust within their local community. They work their butts off to deliver a service that this stingy Government wants to take away.

I refer now to the efforts of another group of people who work damned hard to provide a service that the Government again takes for granted. In Rockhampton, Kalkiah Respite Care provides short-term relief accommodation for children and adults with varying disabilities.

Mr Schwarten: They do it marvellously well, too.

Mr PEARCE: Certainly they do. Mr Schwarten knows all about that. They provide respite care on a regular basis for people with a disability so that their families and carers can have a break away from the rigorous task of providing 24-hour constant care for the people they love. Kalkiah provides the opportunity for people with disabilities to experience a number of different social and recreational activities. Those activities are often beyond those which can be provided by their carers. As well as offering centre-based care, Kalkiah also offers emergency care, day care, in-home care, holiday programs and after-school care. I know the work that these workers do and the service they provide. I am sure of one thing, and that is that the average citizen would have no idea just how much this service is appreciated by those who need it. Unless one's life is built around caring for a person with a disability, other people really do not care very much. That is not to say that they are selfish or non-caring, it is just that they do not understand the demands.

Under the new SACS Award, additional funding of $16,500 would be required by Kalkiah for existing management and administrative positions. If care workers fall under the award, and it appears that they do, this could mean an increase in the annual wage bill of just under $113,000. Without Government support, Kalkiah has little hope of finding these additional funds. The Government cannot turn its back on the services provided to the less fortunate in society. Without supplementary funding from the State Government, Kalkiah and many other community groups will be forced to severely restrict the services that they provide to our local communities and to those in need, who will suffer the most.

The question is: does this Government have a heart, or is it simply a non-caring, anti-family, tax-grabbing Government which is prepared to walk away from the people issues in a display of arrogance never before matched in this State?

Mrs WILSON (Mulgrave) (6.39 p.m.): In this debate, I want to make one point in support of the Minister. Negotiations for SACS have actually been under way for some time—I believe since 1987. Certainly, it is not a new issue. We need to remember that there is no bottomless pit—every purse has a bottom, even a community purse. The honourable member for Moggill stated that Treasury has certain commitments. Despite that and despite

the wage increases, the Minister for Families, Youth and Community Care has identified three areas of support, namely, disabilities, rationalisation of some services, and assistance to areas that need SACS assistance.

Of course, there is going to be pain and, of course, there might be some people who might have to reduce their hours. However, that is a fact of life and, I am afraid, having been working in the area myself for a number of years, I know the pain that is going to happen. But negotiations have been under way since 1987; it is not new.

I would like to identify a few things about community services. For most people, personal support comes from families and friends and those who can be relied upon when things get difficult. Families and informal support networks are actually the foundations of strong communities, and that is not going to change despite SACS. At the same time, families need support as do friends, relations and other people who act as carers. Families and carers cannot do everything; they cannot meet every need all the time. That is why community services are also essential to strong communities, because they complement the role of parents, grandparents and other care providers. Through the assistance they provide, community services allow people the freedom to maintain full and productive lifestyles.

Community services are also important at times of crisis. Some problems are beyond the capacity of families to resolve. For some people, family life is unsupportive and even destructive, and support must continue for people in that situation. The work of quality community services is fundamental to allow people in these circumstances to deal with crisis and to move on to the appropriate level of self-reliance. On the road to self-reliance and independence, people must rely on community services, even if it is only for a short time.

This Government is committed to maintaining a collaborative approach with the church and community sectors to ensure that services are provided to people in need. I commend the supportive role that the church and community groups provide in terms of both paid and unpaid workers. The department provides financial assistance to more than 1,600 community-based services which deliver human services across Queensland. Hours of extra paid and unpaid work is given to the communities, and I think of the work of Lifeline, domestic violence workers, Centrecare, Anglican Family Care and all the other groups which provide help to sufferers of domestic violence, family support services, support accommodation, disability services, child-care, services for the older people and so on.

Of course, funds have not been cut by this department. In 1996-97, the Department of Families, Youth and Community Care is budgeting some $180m for this purpose. These funds are mainly provided as salary subsidies. Departmental funding is provided to subsidise the cost of employment of some 4,300 people across Queensland. It is estimated that, because of the high level of part-time work, nearly 10,000 people are employed with Government funds administered by the Department of Families, Youth and Community Care.

The vast majority of staff employed in the human sector are women. The Government's commitment to women in particular, and to families in general, is evidenced by the raft of new initiatives provided for families in the 1996-97 State Budget. For example, new family support services will receive an additional $1.23m per year. The department is increasing the level of the allowance by $9.1m over the next three years for care providers of children who are at risk or who have suffered abuse or neglect. We have not forgotten the people in the community. The department is providing over $10.7m for child-care services and is increasing funding for services for people experiencing domestic violence. These are but a few of the initiatives taken by the Government in its ongoing partnership with churches and non-Government organisations in the provision of services for Queensland. I reiterate what I said earlier: this negotiation has been going on since at least 1987. It is not a new one.

As can be seen, this Government has a significant investment in community services, which is based on a partnership which emphasises a collaborative approach to finding solutions to challenges such as those presented by the SACS Award. Of course, community groups are concerned at the increasing costs for staff, as the member for Kurwongbah said earlier. However, the Minister made it clear that this Government will continue to work with the community sector to ensure that vital services are maintained at an effective and efficient level. I support the motion of the Minister for Families, Youth and Community Care.

An Opposition member: You've forgotten the people out there.

Mrs WILSON: The Government does care and, as has been mentioned earlier, the "curtain of care" is our program.

Time expired.

Hon. J. FOURAS (Ashgrove) (6.44 p.m.): The Opposition will not support the Government's motion. Tonight, we have heard "Don't you worry about that"—shades of Joh—from Minister Lingard. The member for Mulgrave has said that there is no bottomless pit and the member for Moggill talked about Budget integrity. However, none of them has shown any heart. They are callous and indifferent to the plight of people in the community.

Mr Lingard said that he would cover about 75 per cent of the SACS Award for the disabilities area. That, of course, is being covered by the Federal Government. The Keating Government would have covered 100 per cent for that sector. However, the Minister is claiming to cover 75 per cent of the award, which will actually be covered by the Feds.

What are the implications for the non-Government community sector if it does not receive compensation? We have the first ever industrial award covering workers in social and community service areas. Those people do great and worthwhile work in the community. The Red Hill Paddington Community Centre, of which I am a member, employs two full-time staff and the SACS Award cost for it would be $13,000 per year. How does the centre meet these costs? Staff and community members will have to put more time and resources into fund raising instead of providing services. If the fund raising is not successful, the bottom line is that they could go broke or may have to rationalise. To those opposite, rationalising means cutting back services. Larger non-Government providers with five to 10 staff would have to find from $50,000 to $100,000.

With regard to the non-Government agencies currently funded by the Department of Families, Youth and Community Care, only the respondents to the award will receive the increase. It has been estimated that these agencies will require only about $1m to implement the cost of the SACS Award this year. However, in future years that cost could be as high as $5m. QCOSS has advised me that if the whole of the non-Government community sector was compensated, it would require about $3m to $4m this financial year and approximately $10m next year as a result of the SACS Award flow-on. Where did that $13m mentioned in the Estimates come from? I think this is an attempt to beat up the figure so that they do not have to do anything about it.

If there is no supplementation for the SACS Award, shelters, hostels and disability services will be hardest hit. The other day, I attended a rally for the Unmet Needs campaign at which serious concerns were expressed at the huge impact on non-Government disability services if there is no supplementary funding. In an area where there are huge unmet needs, large providers of disability services, such as church groups, would have to rationalise their programs.

However, in relation to community services, the bible of the mob opposite, the FitzGerald audit report, states—

> "Demands and spending have been growing, requiring better management of resources (including assets) and a larger role for . . . providers."

The report further states that Queensland has the lowest level of welfare services provision and that, over the last six years, the Goss Government did a lot to catch up. However, the report finds—

> "Scope exists to increase the use of the non-government sector to deliver services. Outsourcing would provide an effective means to reduce costs and gain flexibility . . ."

Of course that is the situation; of course community options are by far the best. They are cheaper, they are preventive, they are cost effective and they meet the needs of the community, not only in terms of resources but also in terms of relationships.

When the Treasurer told us of the $155m extra provided as part of $250m in the Budget for the Advance Account, she said that she was going to provide money for public servants to get award increases. They will be provided for, but why cannot the people in the community sector be given some degree of care? What is wrong with some of that money being used to help them? The only response we get from those opposite in answer to that question is their very pathetic amendment.

I challenge the member for Gladstone, who is present in the Chamber, to oppose this amendment. If she accepts this "Don't you worry about that" amendment from the Minister, she does not care for the people in the community. It is about time that we realised that, as the FitzGerald audit says, the non-Government sector is the key to meeting community needs. By not providing supplementary funding, the Government is kicking this sector in the back. A lot of these

organisations will be made desperate. They will be unable to progress, to grow and to provide services.

It is not good enough for the Minister to smile and say that he will give people with disabilities the money that he will receive from the Feds. He has made no promise to provide any State funding. Approximately $10m is needed in a full year, and it is about $4m this year because of non-respondents. That is a pittance in comparison to the funds that the Government can find for tollways, inquiries and the like.

Mr Hamill: $3,000 a day is much more than these people see in a month.

Mr FOURAS: Exactly. For the first time, we had an award that treated community workers as a professionals.

Mr CARROLL (Mansfield) (6.49 p.m.): As the Honourable the Minister for Families has said already, the Social and Community Services, or SACS, Award is quite a complex one. The award contains rates of pay which range from $20,839 up to $50,471. In addition, the award covers penalty rates for shift work and also overtime provisions which are generally not part of current employment conditions in the community sector.

In recognition of the complexity of the SACS Award, the Australian Industrial Relations Commission allowed a four-month negotiating period to enable employers and the Australian Services Union to negotiate specific rates of pay. This four-month period expires on 1 December 1996. Negotiated rates have to be back paid to 26 July 1996. However, initially only 3 per cent of any increase is payable from 26 July 1996, followed by a further 3 per cent effective from 1 December 1996. The full balance of that increase is to be paid from 1 July 1997.

The SACS Award is not the only award to affect workers in community services. There are three awards which are likely to impact eventually on the community sector. The SACS Award is only the first of those. The second is the CASH Award, or Crisis and Supported Housing Award. The CASH Award has in fact existed for many years, but without including rates of pay. The CASH Award impacts on supported accommodation services which are jointly funded by the State and Commonwealth Governments. The main funding program affected by this CASH Award is the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program, or SAAP.

On 23 April this year at the Gold Coast, I was pleased to represent the Honourable the Minister for Families at the annual conference of those involved in this particular program. The program is administered by the Department of Families, Youth and Community Care and is approximately 60 per cent Commonwealth funded and 40 per cent State funded. The indications are that the Australian Services Union may consider setting aside the CASH Award in favour of the SACS Award because the SACS Award has been set with rates of pay and because the ASU wants to ensure that this area is eligible for supplementation under the Commonwealth Government's movement to award wages, or MAW policy.

The Federal Government introduced the MAW policy in 1992, whereby it undertook to meet 75 per cent of the increased costs of any awards or enterprise agreements which impacted on areas receiving Commonwealth funding either directly or through State-administered programs. Honourable members should remember that the issue before us tonight has arisen only very recently and is substantially due to a change in Federal Government help. Two years ago, the Federal Labor Government came close to lopping off some of the tax concessions for the many not-for-profit organisations that provide the kind of help for which these awards are paid.

On 20 August this year, the Federal Treasurer announced in the Federal Budget that the Commonwealth will be ceasing its commitment to MAW from 20 February 1997 and will consider funding only those awards which were substantially in progress as at the date of the Federal Budget. Preliminary estimates in respect of the financial impact of the CASH Award on the community sector are of a State cost of approximately $1.585m and a Commonwealth cost of approximately $2.642m, or a total of some $4.227m.

The third award in this area, apart from the SACS and CASH Awards, is an award foreshadowed by the Australian Workers Union. The award would cover direct-care workers primarily in services for people with a disability. There is currently very little information about that award and it is too early to develop estimates of its possible cost impact on the State Budget.

As I have outlined, the whole area of awards for workers in the community sector is a rapidly evolving and complex one. This National/Liberal coalition Government assures hardworking people and bona fide community welfare organisations that they have our support. The amended motion being

considered tonight will involve much extra expenditure, and we shall do what we can.

From my work with the Royal Society for the Blind, the Queensland Foundation for Blind People and others working with disabled folk, I know how hard it is to meet the costs of the many necessary qualified staff. I understand that groups such as the Cathay Club and hundreds of other longer established church and charity groups carry out valuable welfare work through these qualified workers.

The State and Federal Governments recognise the good work done for not-for-profit organisations through exemptions from sales tax, income tax and other concessions. I have spoken previously about the value to our society of the work undertaken by these many organisations, such as Lions, Rotary, the Buddha Light International Association, scouts and guides and many others.

Time expired.

Question—That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the question—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, Palaszczuk, 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**.

Amendment agreed to.

Motion, as amended, agreed to.

GRIEVANCES

Joint Tourism Workshop

Hon. V. P. LESTER (Keppel) (7.01 p.m.): I wish to inform members of the House of a very successful joint tourism workshop held recently in Longreach. The Outback Queensland Tourist Authority and the Capricorn Tourist Development Organisation coordinated a cooperative workshop for tourist operators of both regions.

The workshop was designed to give operators an opportunity to discuss the problems, advantages and incentives associated with a closer working relationship between each other and the two distinct but compatible regions. A key concern raised at the workshop was the role of the individual operators, tourist associations, regional tourist authorities, local governments and the State Government in marketing and promoting their tourism product.

Marketing and promotion for the State Government is conducted by the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation, with Tourism Minister Bruce Davidson closely monitoring its activities. The State Government, through the QTTC, provides funding for the 14 regional tourist organisations, with the 1996-97 Budget providing an increase in funding of $65,000 to each of those regional authorities. Currently, regional marketing and promotion is controlled, in cooperation with private enterprise, by individual regional tourist authorities.

However, local government representatives at the workshop expressed concern at the lack of marketing skill within sections of the industry in their local shires. Another significant point raised was the perception by some operators that if they participate in cooperative activities they will be giving away information on their own operation.

Time expired.

Health Services, Hervey Bay

Mr NUNN (Hervey Bay) (7.03 p.m.): There are two health matters of concern to Hervey Bay residents. For all of the Health Minister's idle boasting about Surgery on Time, he has seen fit to cancel day-surgery procedures at the Hervey Bay Hospital. It is a simple matter to abolish waiting lists by denying patients access to services! The "no patients, therefore no waiting lists" theory fits very neatly with old "Blisters" Horan's philosophy of operating on waiting lists rather than on patients.

Hervey Bay's people are singularly unimpressed, especially with the bullying tactics now being employed by the Minister towards the dedicated health workers of Queensland. I want to quote from a memorandum to all district health service managers from the Director-General of Health on 29 July 1996. It states—

> "Until your budget is finally determined . . . you must conduct the strictest scrutiny when making commitments for both labour and non

> labour costs. I can not accept any excuse that budgets weren't known at 1 July as a reason for over-runs. Continued minimisation of staffing levels and rigorous scrutiny of staff approvals is absolutely essential."

This is an attack on staffing levels which, if it has not been designed to do so, will certainly have the effect of demoralising staff in all of Queensland's hospitals. It goes on to say—

> "To assist my assessment of your budget position throughout the . . . financial year, a monthly limit will be placed on your expenditure and you will be unable to draw cheques once this limit is reached."

Don't get sick at the end of the month; make sure it is at the beginning of the month. "Get sick on time"—forget Surgery on Time! To show that this direction came from the Minister down, he has threatened the director-general. The director-general says—

> "In summary, where a District continues to impede my accountability to Government to manage within available funds, I will have no alternative but to question the District Managers' . . . capacity in this regard and to do something about it."

Time expired.

Mrs R. Richards

Mrs WILSON (Mulgrave) (7.05 p.m.): 66-year-old Rose Richards of Mona Mona mission has raised three children and now is a grandmother to nine children. She is endearingly called "Aunty Rosie". On 9 September this year, Rose Richards was informed that she was being awarded a Premier's Award for Queensland Seniors. There were about 275 applicants for these awards. Over the years, Rose Richards has entertained many Ministers, community people and so on. She makes a really good damper and is very welcoming to visitors to her home. In fact, recently she entertained Marlon Brando when he was on location in Cairns. Rose Richards also has been a very good role model for her family, and her son, David, is an international entertainer. She will be receiving her award this month.

Rose Richards has been committed to her Aboriginal people the whole of her working life. She began working in the 1940s at the age of 10 in Mona Mona mission as a housemaid to the pastor. She started working in health with the Aboriginal Health Program in 1972 and retired 18 years later. She initiated two major projects in the north. First, she recognised that no suitable accommodation facilities were provided to cater for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their mothers from the remote communities. Second, she highlighted the important need for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander liaison-type persons to bridge the cultural gap that existed for the huge number of indigenous patients in the Cairns Base Hospital. Rose sought the assistance and support of medical staff from the Cairns Base Hospital to provide volunteer help on a feasibility study demonstrating these needs. As a result, Mookai Rosie-Bi-Bayan, a support centre for women from rural and outer areas, has been a very successful innovative program that Rose Richards has brought to the north. She has provided indispensable support to remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mothers, many of whom were having difficulty in coping effectively with their sick children. These women have brought their children to Cairns.

Time expired.

Mary River Bridge

Mr DOLLIN (Maryborough) (7.07 p.m.): I rise to once again bring to the attention of the Honourable Minister for Transport, Mr Johnson, the growing concerns of Maryborough citizens and businesses about the urgent need for a second bridge across the Mary River at Granville. The Minister would be aware that the further widening of the Granville bridge is under way and that this is the second such addition since its construction in 1926. The foreman in charge of the work has commented that the bridge is not in good shape. The Minister would also be aware that the bridge was designed and constructed 70 years ago to carry horse-drawn traffic with a maximum weight of a few tonnes. Today it is carrying hundreds of vehicles, some weighing up to 60 tonnes. This is a big ask considering the loads the bridge was designed for and its age—70 years.

I have been advised that the extra width and added weight to the top of the bridge puts it at a higher risk in times of floods. If we were to lose the bridge, it would be an absolute disaster for the economy of Maryborough as the Hyne timber mills, the Maryborough sugar mill and Walker's engineering works plus many other smaller businesses resource their materials and work force via the Granville bridge, and it is used by thousands of residents of Granville, Poona, Maroom and traffic from the Cooloola Coast road, which is

increasing rapidly. I advise the Minister that, in view of all of this, it would be prudent to start now to procure a corridor and site for a new bridge across the Mary River, since the period from planning to construction is usually about five years.

Will the Minister give an undertaking to Maryborough citizens that he will put into action the securing of a corridor and site for a new bridge across the Mary River as a matter of great urgency? The Honourable the Minister would recently have received a similar request from the Maryborough City Council and the Maryborough Chamber of Commerce. In answer to my question on notice, the Minister stated that during an inspection of the bridge it was noted that some areas were honeycombed and that areas of poor concrete compaction were evident in the piers. In view of the age of the bridge, I urge the Minister to procure a corridor as a matter of urgency and not wait two years, as he has stated, as this is not good enough in view of the risks involved.

Time expired.

Guidelines for Hazardous Facilities

Mr MITCHELL (Charters Towers) (7.09 p.m.): I wish to bring to the attention of the House one of the important steps being taken by the Government to reduce the risk of a major emergency incident occurring at a major hazardous facility. Under the guidance of the Honourable Mick Veivers, the Minister for Emergency Services and Minister for Sport, Australia's first comprehensive guidelines on emergency planning for major hazardous facilities have been prepared. This document was launched last week by the Minister.

The Government recognises the potential for emergency incidents at hazardous facilities such as oil refineries, gas storages and fertiliser works and has undertaken this pro-active measure to assist in the prevention of any possible emergency situation. These guidelines will shape the way emergency and industry workers respond to major incidents through providing assistance to the facility operator in the preparation of the latest form of emergency plan.

There is no doubt that the preparation of an emergency plan has the potential to save many lives. The emergency plan will provide advice on how to identify the parameters which will shape the emergency plan, define emergency situations and determine the scope and limitation of that plan. In accordance with the national standard for the control of major hazard facilities, operators are required to carry out and document a systematic risk assessment which identifies all hazards and the events which may lead to an incident. These guidelines will assist operators in preparing for emergencies and are a key step in the emergency prevention and preparedness process. The guidelines have been also structured so that they can be applied to any facility regardless of the nature of the facility. As part of the Government's commitment to the improvement of emergency service delivery throughout the State, pro-active——

Time expired.

Drug Use; Ambulance Services

Mr SCHWARTEN (Rockhampton) (7.11 p.m.): I rise to draw the attention of the House to a statement made by the Minister for Emergency Services, Mr Veivers, in the *Gold Coast Bulletin* today. Mr Veivers stated that drug users who need emergency services should pay their own bills. He went on to say—

> "If people use drugs illicitly and then have to use emergency vehicles, I'm looking at ways that they will have to pay for the use of them."

I have never heard such nonsense. If we want to discourage people from getting treatment for drugs addiction, this is the way to go about it. The Minister should remember that drugs find their way into communities and families right across the social spectrum. It is not only the down-and-outs who have trouble with drugs, drugs also touch well-to-do families.

As a result of the Minister's comments, the incentive will be to tell drug users in trouble to not call the ambulance, and that flies in the face of all other known medical evidence. Groups such as Drug Arm say that the first thing a person should do is to call the ambulance. Drug users are going to be discouraged from doing that if, in fact, as this article states, they have to face a bill of $30,000 or so.

The other point I make is that 95 per cent of the people who end up down the long-term drug addiction road are effectively destitute, so I do not know how the Minister thinks he is going to get any money out of them. He is saying to these people, "Do not take drugs because you will have to pay the bill for the ambulance." I do not believe that that will address the drug problem. This is a lot of bluff and bluster. It is a cheap headline and it is a cheap thrill for the Minister. It is dangerous in the extreme to suggest that this actually be carried out.

What happens in drink-driving cases? Day after day, drink-drivers are being pried out of cars by our Fire Service. Are we going to start charging those drivers? Are we going to start saying to people who drink and drive—the people who are breaking the law, who are using drugs, albeit that they are using drugs that have society's approval——

Time expired.

Calico Shopping Bags

Mr HEGARTY (Redlands) (7.13 p.m.): I bring to the attention of honourable members an environmental initiative successfully practised in New Zealand for several years to reduce the volume of plastic shopping bags handed out by retailers large and small. New Zealanders have been encouraged to purchase their own reusable shopping bags made out of calico. They are encouraged to purchase them as a once-only cost rather than be charged a fee for each plastic bag they require when shopping. Plastic bags are therefore still available, but not distributed free.

Obviously, New Zealanders are motivated to use the calico bags for the protection of the environment rather than just to save on recurrent costs. Plastic bags add a considerable cost to local authorities in the disposal of their refuse and contribute a significant amount by volume to landfills and the reduction of their life span. If this cost was evaluated, it might motivate local authorities to provide subsidies to ratepayers towards the purchase of calico bags.

Although experiments with biodegradable plastic bags have been trialled, the bags lacked strength and were largely unsuccessful. One should consider that, daily, around five and a half million plastic shopping bags are distributed in stores throughout Australia, many of which find their way into the environment and cause damage to native fauna, not forgetting the undesirable visual effect on our landscape.

In Australian coastal waters, plastic bags have not only caused the death of many marine species but they have also caused millions of dollars damage to marine craft by fouling propellers and the like. I suggest that most Australians would be agreeable to making a contribution for the purchase of calico shopping bags if they knew the funds would be spent on cleaning up the environment.

Supermarkets, too, can play their part in encouraging customers to provide their own shopping bags and they, too, should be recognised for their contribution to and interest in the environment. I will be encouraging the Minister for Environment to consider this initiative, together with other State Ministers, if possible, as a positive move in environmental responsibility.

Time expired.

Industrial Relations Reforms

Mr ROBERTS (Nudgee) (7.15 p.m.): The Minister for Industrial Relations will not give a guarantee to Queensland workers that they will not be worse off as a result of the coalition's proposed new industrial laws. In answering a question I asked in the Parliament, the Minister said—

> "Industrial relations reforms are not being introduced either Federally or at the State level in order to reduce wages or conditions of employees."

However, he avoided giving the same guarantee that John Howard gave about his new industrial laws, that is, that no worker would be worse off. I could understand the Minister being a little coy about giving this guarantee. As we have seen federally, John Howard cannot deliver on his promise. I guess that Mr Santoro does not want to place himself in the same position as he did on workers' compensation, where promises were made and not kept.

There is a lot of concern in the community about the coalition's proposals to further deregulate the labour market. There is plenty of evidence which shows that this approach will lead to a greater wage inequality for workers. In New Zealand, since the introduction of the new industrial laws, wage inequality has become prevalent. One study showed that, in the first year of operation, approximately 50 per cent of workers covered by the new contract system experienced either no increases at all or a wage decrease. Research shows that, during the 1980s, countries that pursued the economic fundamentalist policy approach and substantially deregulated their labour markets have had greater increases in wage inequality than countries that have more regulated labour markets. This evidence increases my concern that we are heading towards the Americanisation of our labour market. In America, wage inequality is so pronounced that there is now a new class of poor, that is, the working poor. Mr Santoro's failure to provide a guarantee that no-one will be worse off under the coalition's new industrial laws is bad news for Queensland workers.

While I am on my feet, I mention that the Government has withdrawn funding for the upgrade of the Banyo and Boondall North Railway Stations. These decisions represent a loss of $500,000 worth of station improvements earmarked for the Nudgee electorate. Once again, the people of Nudgee have suffered as a result of the mean-spirited decisions of the new Government.

Time expired.

Women in Sport Administration

Mr BAUMANN (Albert) (7.18 p.m.): I wish to inform the House of a most unacceptable situation in Queensland and of the steps this Government is taking to rapidly address the problem. Presently, women hold approximately 28 per cent of the decision-making positions in Queensland sport. I am sure all members would agree that this small number is not acceptable. I join with the Honourable Mick Veivers, Minister for Emergency Services and Sport, in his desire to achieve an increased number of women in top administrative positions in Queensland sporting organisations.

An honourable member interjected.

Mr BAUMANN: I most certainly do. Such a small percentage of female administrators is not good enough, given the large number of women playing sport and the current concerns over the number of young girls dropping out of sport.

Mrs Bird: Quality.

Mr BAUMANN: Quality, yes. There is no question that Queensland sportswomen more than hold their own on the national and international stage. In fact, Queensland's women have a record of achievement at Olympic level on a per head of population basis arguably unsurpassed by any other State or country. At the Atlanta Olympics, 53 of Australia's individual and team medal winners were women. Among the State's 26 medal winners, a total of 16 Queensland women, or around 64 per cent, took medals.

Under the guidance of the Honourable Minister, the Office of Sport and Recreation has introduced a professional development program specifically for women in sport which aims to give them the skills needed to get into the senior decision-making positions available. Seminars have been held for women working in sports administration, covering topics such as marketing and media skills, assertive communication, conflict resolution, negotiations skills and, of course, career development.

This program has been a success, with some very positive feedback from participants. It is expected the program will be extended to cater for the needs of women in rural and remote parts of the State. As this program has proved to be a success, it is hoped that it will be continued by private organisations such as the Australian Society of Sports Administrators. I commend the Honourable Minister for being a good sport with this promotion of such an initiative that will undoubtedly advance the position of women in sport.

Time expired.

Reef Tax

Mrs BIRD (Whitsunday) (7.20 p.m.): During question time on Friday, 13 September, the Minister for Tourism, Small Business and Industry made the statement that Senator Hill and John Moore had advised him that there had been no correspondence from me re the reef tax. I have no reason to believe that any of those Ministers is being untruthful. At a meeting on 29 August at Airlie Beach, letters were collected to be forwarded to both Federal Ministers by hand delivery at a meeting in Brisbane between my operators and the two Federal Ministers on 1 September. It would seem that the letters arrived—except mine.

At the invitation of the Mackay Tourism Association, of which I have been a board member and a member, I flew from Mackay to Brisbane as part of the Whitsunday/Mackay delegation. On board the plane I was told by a tourism representative that he had been advised that, because I had not received a personal invitation from the Federal member for Dawson, De-Anne Kelly, I was not welcome at the meeting. After a short discussion, I withdrew from the deputation so as not to jeopardise negotiations.

As soon as I arrived at the Annexe I endeavoured to telephone the Ministers or their staff at the Commonwealth building, but was unsuccessful. I then went down to the Commonwealth building, but was unable to see either the Ministers or their staff. It was a disappointing situation for the operators, who could not understand the actions of the Federal member for Dawson, De-Anne Kelly. They assumed that a cross-party approach, especially with the State shadow Minister for Tourism, would have been an added advantage.

The reef tax is an unfair and discriminatory tax. There was no consultation

and, worse, no research. If the Federal Government had done some research, it would have realised the impact on the operators—that operators simply cannot afford this tax.

Townsville Hospital; Kirwan Hospital for Women

Mr TANTI (Mundingburra) (7.22 p.m.): I am pleased to be able to inform the House and the people of Mundingburra that the Health Minister, Mike Horan, has successfully reduced waiting times at Townsville Hospital. Following Mr Horan's allocation of an additional $2.5m to Townsville Hospital to reduce waiting lists for elective surgery, 71 more procedures were able to be performed in the July-August period this year than in the same period last year. Mr Horan's Surgery on Time program has greatly benefited the Townsville Hospital, which has shared in the substantially increased 17,274 operations performed by these hospitals over the July-August period. One cannot argue with those facts.

As a result of Mr Horan's timely strategy, more procedures are being performed and people are waiting less time for their elective surgery—honouring the coalition's election promise to get the hospitals and services right. The electors of Mundingburra can be assured that waiting lists for elective surgery will continue to fall as the Health Minister's focus on people and not politics sees the ailing health system that was inherited turned into the best health system in Australia. I thank Mr Horan.

I turn now to the Kirwan Hospital for Women. One of the biggest contributions the Government has made to improving the hospital has been through a program of advertising and recruiting for another full-time obstetrician. Already a doctor from Adelaide has been appointed as the director of obstetrics, and a senior staff specialist has been appointed as his assistant. Additionally, the Government is working towards building a team of three VMOs conducting up to eight VMO sessions per week. This will provide the hospital with a strong staff unit with comprehensive abilities and great flexibility. The hospital will also benefit from a locum commencing duties in November, with the possibility of another coming on board at a later date. But the Government has not stopped there. It has also contributed $1.2m for extra neonatal cots. All this action not only makes the Kirwan——

Time expired.

Rural Producers

Mr PALASZCZUK (Inala) (7.24 p.m.): Rural discontent with the State Government is likely to continue following the reaction of the State Government to the Lytton by-election. Day after day we hear of crisis meetings in rural Queensland with decent people trying to make an honest living crying out for help to a party that is supposed to represent them. This is best exemplified by the remarks of the Murilla Shire Council Mayor, Councillor Roderick Gilmour, that the National Party Government is not meeting the expectations of National Party voters. This follows on many other crisis meetings that have been held in rural communities.

The reaction of the Liberal Treasurer to the Lytton results shows that she has no intention of reducing or changing the seven taxes and charges that she has raised in the Budget. The National Party is completely out of touch with what is going on in rural Queensland at the moment simply because it is dominated by the Liberal Party, especially the Liberal Treasurer.

Rural Queensland has no voice in the Federal Government's Rural Adjustment Scheme review. It has not been listened to on the new oil and tyre taxes and faces a huge slug with the port charges at Karumba. The only thing that National Party politicians seem to be doing for rural Queensland these days is making a good living out of them. The three Ministers whose responsibility it is to look after rural Queensland should take this advice: the Minister for Natural Resources should find a heart; the Minister for Primary Industries should get some fire in his belly; and the Minister for Transport should find a new set of ears. Only then will they be able to stand up for rural Queensland and give to rural producers what they deserve.

Robina Hospital

Mr GRICE (Broadwater) (7.25 p.m.): The failure of Labor's administration of Health in Queensland has taken a new, bizarre twist. Not content with the costly and miserable failure of their regional health authority fiasco, Labor spokespersons have maintained a constant whingeing opposition to the popular community-oriented reforms undertaken by Health Minister Mike Horan. Labor's latest bit of nonsense is its opposition to the building of a new hospital on the Gold Coast at Robina. The Health Minister's initiative to build a second public hospital on the coast is clearly the kind of far-sighted, back-to-basics health management that Gold Coasters will appreciate.

Having achieved a continuing decline in waiting lists for elective surgery and improvements in services, Mike Horan's Robina hospital is the next logical step to slash waiting lists further and provide hospital care for the growing Gold Coast population into the next century. The people of the Gold Coast will no doubt be delighted to hear that, having had imposed upon them long and needless waits for elective surgery. While in Government, the likes of the Labor members for Currumbin and Capalaba are now seeking to rob them of a second hospital facility.

Labor misinformation that the Robina hospital will be paid for out of recurrent funding for the Gold Coast Hospital has been categorically rejected by the Health Minister. Some clue to the mystery of why Labor would oppose a second Gold Coast hospital was given by the fact that the announcement of Labor's latest hospital scare stories was made by the honourable member for Capalaba. Capalaba is a long way from Robina.

Youth Suicide

Hon. D. M. WELLS (Murrumba) (7.27 p.m.): On Tuesday, the Honourable Minister for Families, Youth and Community Care took the opportunity of answering a question without notice in this House to invite honourable members to make to him any suggestions that they had that might be helpful to him in combating the epidemic of youth suicide. I am responding to that invitation in good faith. I will also respond by letter to the Honourable the Minister. Of course, I do not claim that what I am about to suggest now is a complete answer, but it at least answers the Minister's invitation.

A study in Western Australia showed that the probability of somebody who has already attempted to commit suicide actually going through and making a second, subsequently successful attempt was 30 times greater than that of the general population. This suggests that there might be some advantage in focusing on those who have attempted to commit suicide. To this end, I place a number of questions on notice to the Minister for Families, Youth and Community Care and the Minister for Health—four in number—and I ask the Minister if he would be kind enough to review those questions.

The burden of what I was suggesting was that it might be possible for those agencies of Government which became aware of attempts at suicide to provide that information to the Minister for Families, Youth and Community Care, who would then be in a position to offer counselling to those who had attempted to commit suicide or to the families of those who had attempted to commit suicide. It has been shown in the past that such counselling does have the effect of remediating a situation.

Those of us who have experienced in our electorate offices a constituent who has come in and said to us "I have been contemplating suicide" of course know where to send them. There are people available in the community—provided by this Government—who can provide that counselling service. Nevertheless, there are many who do not get this service and do not know that there is such a service.

Time expired.

The House adjourned at 7.30 p.m.