

**TUESDAY, 9 NOVEMBER 1999**

Mr SPEAKER (Hon. R. K. Hollis, Redcliffe) read prayers and took the chair at 9.30 a.m.

**ASSENT TO BILLS**

Assent to the following Bills reported by Mr Speaker—

Revenue and Other Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2)

South Bank Corporation Amendment Bill

Appropriation Bill

Appropriation (Parliament) Bill.

**ASSENT TO BILLS****Appropriation (Parliament) Bill  
Appropriation Bill**

**Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I have to report that on Thursday, 4 November 1999, I presented to His Excellency the Governor the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill and the Appropriation Bill for royal assent, and His Excellency was pleased in my presence to ascribe his assent thereto in the name and on behalf of Her Majesty.

**PETITIONS**

The Clerk announced the receipt of the following petitions—

**Armed Robbery, Sentencing Laws**

From **Mr Borbidge** (78 petitioners) requesting the House to introduce new laws making it mandatory for people convicted of armed robbery to receive a minimum sentence to actually be served in jail.

**Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander  
Housing**

From **Mr Bredhauer** (109 petitioners) requesting the House to (a) intervene; (b) investigate the income assessed formula used to calculate the rent for homes rented from the Division of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing, Department of Public Works and Housing; (c) take into consideration the high cost of living in this area; and (d) apply a different formula in assessing rent for the Thursday Island region which will ensure lower rent for houses rented by ATSI Housing.

Petitions received.

**PAPERS**

The Clerk informed the House of the tabling of the following documents—

**PAPERS TABLED DURING THE RECESS**

The Clerk informed the House that the following papers, received during the recess, were tabled on the dates indicated—

1 November 1999—

Board of Senior Secondary School Studies—Annual Report 1998-99

Queensland Treasury Corporation—Annual Report 1998-99

Valuers Registration Board of Queensland—Annual Report 1998-99

Austa Energy Corporation Limited—Annual Report 1998-99 and Statement of Corporate Intent 1998-99

Ergon Energy Pty Ltd—Annual Report 1998-99

Queensland Electricity Transmission Corporation (Powerlink Queensland)—Annual Report 1998-99

Queensland Electricity Transmission Corporation (Powerlink Queensland)—Statement of Corporate Intent 1998-99

Queensland Power Trading Corporation—Annual Report 1998-99

Queensland Transitional Power Trading Corporation—Statement of Corporate Intent 1998-99

Stanwell Corporation Limited—Annual Report 1998-99

Stanwell Corporation Limited—Statement of Corporate Intent 1998-99

Explanation from the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy and Minister for Women's Policy and Minister for Fair Trading (Ms Spence) regarding the granting of an extension of time for the tabling of the Island Industries Board Annual Report for the year ended 31 January 1999

2 November 1999—

Board of the Queensland Museum—Annual Report 1998-99

Director of Public Prosecutions—Annual Report 1998-99

Chiropractors and Osteopaths Board of Queensland—Annual Report and Financial Statements 1998-99

Dental Board of Queensland—Annual Report and Financial Statements 1998-99

Dental Technicians and Dental Prosthetists Board of Queensland—Annual Report and Financial Statements 1998-99

Health Rights Commission—Annual Report 1998-99

Ipswich Hospital Foundation—Annual Report 1998-99

Medical Board of Queensland—Annual Report and Financial Statements 1998-99

Occupational Therapists Board of Queensland—Annual Report and Financial Statements 1998-99

Optometrists Board of Queensland—Annual Report and Financial Statements 1998-99

Pharmacy Board of Queensland—Annual Report and Financial Statements 1998-99

Physiotherapists Board of Queensland—Annual Report and Financial Statements 1998-99

Podiatrists Board of Queensland—Annual Report and Financial Statements 1998-99

Princess Alexandra Hospital Research and Development Foundation—Annual Report 1998-99

Psychologists Board of Queensland—Annual Report and Financial Statements 1998-99

Royal Brisbane Hospital Research Foundation—Annual Report 1998-99

Royal Children's Hospital Foundation—Annual Report 1998-99

Speech Pathologists Board—Annual Report 1998-99

Sunshine Coast Health Services Foundation—Annual Report 1998-99

3 November 1999—

Board of Professional Engineers of Queensland—Annual Report 1998-99

Brisbane Market Authority—Annual Report 1998-99

Department of Primary Industries—Annual Report 1998-99

Queensland Abattoir Corporation—Annual Report

Queensland Commercial Fishermen's State Council—Annual Report 1998-99 and Strategic Plan 2000-05

Queensland Dairy Authority—Annual Report 1998-99

Queensland Fruit and Vegetable Growers—Annual Report 1998-99

Queensland Sugar Corporation—Annual Report 1998-99

Timber Research and Development Advisory Council of Queensland—Annual Report 1998-99

5 November 1999—

Legal Aid Queensland—Annual Report 1998-99

Legal Ombudsman—Annual Report 1998-99

Queensland Performing Arts Trust—Annual Report 1998-99

Library Board of Queensland—Annual Report 1998-99

Anti-Discrimination Commission Queensland—Annual Report 1998-99

Public Trustee of Queensland—Annual Report 1998-99

Queensland Gaming Commission—Annual Report 1998-99

8 November 1999—

State of the Environment Queensland 1999

State of the Environment Queensland 1999—Executive Summary

State of the Environment Queensland 1999—Implementing the Legislation

Darling Downs—Moreton Rabbit Board—Annual Report 1998-99

Island Coordinating Council—Annual Report 1998-99

Motor Accident Insurance Commission—Annual Report 1998-99

#### STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

The following statutory instruments were tabled by The Clerk—

Building and Construction Industry (Portable Long Service Leave) Act 1991—

Building and Construction Industry (Portable Long Service Leave) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1999, No. 255

Chiropractors and Osteopaths Act 1979—

Chiropractors and Osteopaths Amendment By-law (No. 1) 1999, No. 259

City of Brisbane Act 1924—

City of Brisbane Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1999, No. 239

Coal Mining Safety and Health Act 1999—

Proclamation—certain provisions of the Act commence 29 October 1999, No. 243

Consumer Credit (Queensland) Amendment Act 1998—

Consumer Credit (Queensland) Amendment (Postponement) Regulation 1999, No. 238

Court Funds Act 1973—

Court Funds Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1999, No. 256

Dairy Industry Act 1993—

Dairy Industry Amendment Standard (No. 1) 1999, No. 251

Dairy Industry (Market Milk Prices) Order 1999, No. 252

- Dental Act 1971—  
Dental Amendment By-law (No. 2) 1999, No. 253
- Dental Technicians and Dental Prosthetists Act 1991—  
Dental Technicians and Dental Prosthetists Amendment By-law (No. 1) 1999, No. 260
- Education (General Provisions) Act 1989—  
Education (General Provisions) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1999, No. 270
- Education (Teacher Registration) Act 1988—  
Education (Teacher Registration) By-law 1999, No. 247
- Financial Administration and Audit Act 1977—  
Financial Management Amendment Standard (No. 1) 1999, No. 273
- Fisheries Act 1994—  
Fisheries Amendment Regulation (No. 6) 1999, No. 249 and Explanatory Notes and Regulatory Impact Statement for No. 249  
Fisheries Amendment Regulation (No. 7) 1999, No. 272
- Forestry Act 1959—  
Forestry Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 3) 1999, No. 248
- Fuel Subsidy Act 1997, Pay-roll Tax Act 1971, Revenue Laws (Reciprocal Powers) Act 1988, Stamp Act 1894—  
Revenue and Other Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 1999, No. 241
- Gaming Machine and Other Legislation Amendment Act 1999—  
Proclamation—certain provisions of the Act commence 1 November 1999, No. 240
- Health Act 1937—  
Health Amendment Regulation (No. 4) 1999, No. 257  
Health (Drugs and Poisons) Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 1999, No. 258
- Keno Act 1996—  
Keno Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1999, No. 242
- Local Government Act 1993—  
Local Government Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1999, No. 254
- Mining and Quarrying Safety and Health Act 1999—  
Proclamation—certain provisions of the Act commence 29 October 1999, No. 244
- Nature Conservation Act 1992—  
Nature Conservation (Macropod Harvest Period) Notice 1999, No. 250
- Medical Act 1939—  
Medical Board of Queensland Amendment By-law (No. 1) 1999, No. 261
- Nature Conservation Act 1992—  
Nature Conservation (Protected Areas) Amendment Regulation (No. 5) 1999, No. 271
- Occupational Therapists Act 1979—  
Occupational Therapists Amendment By-law (No. 2) 1999, No. 262
- Optometrists Act 1974—  
Optometrists Amendment By-law (No. 2) 1999, No. 263
- Pharmacy Act 1976—  
Pharmacy Amendment By-law (No. 1) 1999, No. 264
- Physiotherapists Act 1964—  
Physiotherapists Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1999, No. 268
- Podiatrists Act 1969—  
Podiatrists Amendment By-law (No. 2) 1999, No. 265
- Psychologists Act 1977—  
Psychologists Amendment By-law (No. 1) 1999, No. 266
- Speech Pathologists Act 1979—  
Speech Pathologists Amendment By-law (No. 2) 1999, No. 267
- Transport Legislation Amendment Act (No. 2) 1998—  
Proclamation—certain provisions of the Act commence 29 October 1999, No. 245
- Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994—  
Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Amendment Regulation (No. 3) 1999, No. 269
- Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995—  
Transport Operations (Road Use Management—Road Rules) Regulation 1999, No. 246
- MINISTERIAL PAPERS  
The following papers were tabled—  
(a) Premier (Mr Beattie)—  
Annual Reports for 1998-99—  
Department of Premier and Cabinet  
Office of the Queensland  
Parliamentary Counsel  
South Bank Corporation  
Criminal Justice Commission  
Parliamentary Contributory  
Superannuation Fund  
Queensland Competition Authority  
Public Interest Monitor  
Ordered to be printed.

- (b) Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads (Mr Bredhauer)—  
Annual Reports for 1998-99—

Department of Transport  
Department of Main Roads  
Gateway Bridge Company Limited  
Logan Motorway Company Limited  
Queensland Motorways Limited and its Controlled Entities  
Sunshine Motorway Company Limited  
National Road Transport Commission.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Re-enactment of Duyfken Expedition

**Hon. P. D. BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier) (9.36 a.m.), by leave: I am happy to announce today that Queensland will be at the centre of an expedition designed to capture the imagination of tourists in the Olympic year and change the way in which Australians view the early modern history of this country. Today I can give members the first details of the re-enactment next year by a \$3.7m replica of the voyage to Australia in 1606 of the Dutch trading ship the Duyfken—the Little Dove.

The 2000 Duyfken expedition will focus on what is the first recorded European voyage to Australia nearly 400 years ago when Captain Willem Janszoon took the Duyfken to the Pennefather River in the Gulf of Carpentaria near Weipa. As the result of an agreement secured by the Queensland Government, the replica will then embark on a six month exhibition tour of Queensland ports. I am delighted that the State Government has secured a six month exhibition tour of Queensland ports.

Duyfken will arrive at the Pennefather River on Saturday, 15 July 2000. That will be experienced by millions of people all over Australia and the world through a documentary and through news coverage by Duyfken Foundation sponsors Network Seven and News Limited. The likely dates of her voyage along the Queensland coast are: Weipa from 18 to 24 July, Aurukun on 27 July, Mapoon on 30 July, Thursday Island on 2 and 3 August, Cooktown from 11 to 17 August, Cairns from 18 to 27 August, Townsville from 1 to 10 September, Mackay from 15 to 24 September, Hervey Bay from 13 to 22 October, Mooloolaba from 25 to 29 October, Redcliffe from 31 October to 9 November, Brisbane from 10 November to 1 December and the

Gold Coast from 3 to 10 December. All this will help persuade even more tourists to visit Queensland as well as Sydney in the Olympic year.

The Duyfken put Queensland on European maps for the first time and now the replica will put us on the tourist map for Europeans in the Olympic year. I am particularly pleased that schoolchildren from all over Queensland will be able to visit the ship on special school tours. All this has been made possible by the Queensland Government, which enabled the foundation to complete the vessel and begin planning for the expedition by investing \$500,000 to become a major partner in the Duyfken 1606 Replica Foundation. The Duyfken 1606 Replica Foundation will put the ship on exhibition at each port, and Queenslanders will be encouraged to come aboard and experience the ship for themselves.

The Duyfken is a three-masted ship, 24 metres long from stem to stern, which weighs about 100 tonnes. She has been described by Dutch historians as the most accurate replica of a Dutch "Age of Discovery" ship ever built. Captain Janszoon produced the first ever chart of the Australian coastline when he mapped a part of the Gulf of Carpentaria coastline near Weipa on Cape York Peninsula. Australians can forget about Botany Bay and the expeditions of Captain Cook and others; this was the first visit by a European to this country. Captain Janszoon's crew were the first Europeans to set foot on Australian soil and it was the first time in recorded history that Aboriginal Australians met European people from across the seas. In other words, Queensland was the first part of Australia to be discovered by Europeans; not New South Wales, but Queensland. We should do something about rewriting our history books to reflect this. I look forward to the ceremony next year when the Duyfken anchors at the Pennefather River and her crew row ashore to meet once again the local Aboriginal people in a gesture of reconciliation spanning almost 400 years.

Later today at the Queensland Museum theatre, I will be announcing publicly—in addition to this ministerial statement—the formal visit. Rinze Brandsma, the Chairman of the Duyfken Foundation, will be there. He will make a significant address. We will also have Mr Ron Ngalematta, the Chairman of the Napranum Community Council. He will speak on behalf of the Weipa people and the traditional people of the Western Cape. This is an exciting opportunity for this State to

promote Queensland tourism, particularly in Europe but also around the world.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Roma Street Parkland

**Hon. P. D. BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier) (9.41 a.m.), by leave: In a massive redevelopment of Brisbane's former Roma Street railway yards, my Government is turning wasteland into a winning attraction for all Queenslanders. The Roma Street Parkland will be a world-class park and gardens. This \$72m project—due to be completed by March 2001—will transform the wasteland into the lungs of the city. It will give Brisbane a green heart.

The redevelopment project will give more than 16 hectares of former railway land back to the people of Queensland. After more than 100 years, the Roma Street rail yards will be turned into a green and colourful place for all Queenslanders and, in particular, Queensland families. The concept plan also includes the Spectacle Gardens—spectacular and innovative displays of subtropical foliage and flowers, water and garden themes, boardwalks and the Origin Lookout. It will be horticultural excellence. There will be the Activity Precinct—a bustling area with a market plaza, restaurants and shops with open pedestrian traffic areas. There will be pedestrian bridges—a 250 metre covered bridge linking the parkland with the city and a second pedestrian bridge, the Western Access Bridge, connecting the parkland with Petrie Terrace and the City West Precinct. There will be a transit and rail zone—including the current Roma Street Transit Centre.

Albert Park will provide the mature, more tranquil park environment and will be integrated with the Roma Street Parkland. It will be easily accessible by bus, train, foot, bike and car. The Inner-Northern Busway and the Brisbane light rail will link directly to Countess Street and the Roma Street Transit Centre. The Brisbane Airport Rail Link will connect the site to Brisbane's domestic and international airports and the Gold Coast.

The parklands also form a key part of the State Government's plans for the City West Precinct, which encompasses the existing Albert and Victoria Parks, sports and entertainment facilities at Petrie Terrace and the proposed redevelopment of the former Army barracks at Kelvin Grove as well, of course, as linkage to Lang Park—the Suncorp-Metway Stadium.

In the longer term, there is provision for other facilities, including the possibility of a world-class museum designed with the assistance of the internationally renowned Smithsonian Institution based in Washington DC. We have a delegation from the Smithsonian visiting us currently. I will have something more to say about that later this week.

I am certain the parkland—just a short walk from the CBD and adjacent to major transport links and easily accessible by foot or bike—will be popular with local residents and tourists alike. It will quickly establish itself as yet another major recreation and tourism facility in Brisbane. What we need is a magnet. We need Brisbane to act as a magnet to attract tourists not just to Brisbane but also to all of Queensland. That is what this long-term strategy does. In that respect, it is an investment in the future of our State and its capital city, because more tourists mean more jobs for Queenslanders, not just in Brisbane but also the Gold Coast, Sunshine Coast, the Lockyer Valley—Mr Speaker, you name it. As I said, it will act as a magnet.

In addition to jobs generated in the long term by tourism, which is our second-biggest industry, the initial redevelopment project will generate an estimated 450 jobs during construction. Plans for the project have been endorsed by the Civic Cabinet of the Brisbane City Council, which could eventually assume management of the parkland.

The parkland will provide a new identity for the western end of the city, bringing together areas that have been separated for more than 100 years. That will help to build Brisbane's reputation as the most livable city in the world. The result will be a city ready to face the new millennium with efficient transport systems and a healthy mix of inner-city parkland, event facilities and commercial and residential development.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### APEC Technomart

**Hon. J. P. ELDER** (Capalaba—ALP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development and Minister for Trade) (9.45 a.m.), by leave: I rise to inform the House about the events surrounding the APEC Technomart, which was to have been held on the Gold Coast last week. The Queensland Government was first approached in the dying days of the Borbidge/Sheldon Government, which provided in-principle support for the technomart.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr ELDER:** They cannot help themselves.

As a new Government, we were approached by the principals of PacRim for confirmation of support.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! We will hear this statement. I warn all members.

**Mr ELDER:** At that time we identified that one risk was the potential failure of the event due to poor organisation and a correspondingly low number of acceptances. The organisers were, however, able to point to experience in organising large and relatively complex events such as the Masters Games. Notwithstanding this, funding was approved on the basis that sponsoring departments would need to closely monitor progress made in arranging the event over the period leading up to the event. Consequently, an interdepartmental working group was formed to monitor preparations, coordinate the Government's input and ensure that the organisers provided an appropriate profile for the State Government as a major sponsor.

**Mr Grice** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Broadwater will cease interjecting.

**Mr ELDER:** Accordingly, the sponsorship agreement was settled with PacRim on 2 November 1998 settling the arrangements for sponsorship, and the interdepartmental working group was subsequently formed. The management committee of PacRim include a significant number of creditably experienced and reputable business people. They included Lorraine Martin, Peter Fisher, Robin Rust, Paul Rodgers and Phil Curtis. It is also notable in this regard that Technology 99 had received the status of endorsement by APEC which involved 21 member economies in the Asia-Pacific region—a status that had been facilitated by the Commonwealth Government. The Commonwealth Government accordingly was the principal sponsor, providing direct support of some \$260,000 as well as substantial indirect support. The Commonwealth support included funding the conference and conducting a business matching program.

The Queensland Government shared sponsorship with the Commonwealth Department of Industry, Science and Resources, the Courier-Mail, Griffith University, Boeing, Gold Coast City Council, Metromedia Technologies, Bond University, the University of Queensland, Uniquest, Queensland University of Technology, AMCHAM Australia,

Fisher Adams Kelly, Wilson HTM, Qantas, Info Salons, On the Net and Auslink Technologies.

In view of the substantial commitment by the State and the importance of this event to the business development of Queensland, the Department of State Development placed management responsibility for the project and the conduct of the interdepartmental working group in the hands of a deputy director-general of the department, Mr John Carroll, who was considered to have the appropriate experience and status to make sure that this project was a success. Considerable human resources from the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, the Department of State Development and the Department of Communication, Information, Local Government and Planning were dedicated to supporting the organisation in the interest of ensuring maximum participation in the event and maximum benefit for Queenslanders. This support included monthly—or more frequent—meetings of State officials with the organisers to monitor progress. Often these included representatives of the Commonwealth and the Gold Coast City Council; the assistance of State-based and overseas offices—regional, head office and international—to the conference organisers to access the domestic and international business community; assistance in identifying world-class speakers; and assistance to the organisers and the Commonwealth in developing the business matching program.

The responsibility for staging the event and managing the registration of delegates lay, however, with PacRim and its contractors. By mid August, however, Queensland Government officials had begun to develop some concerns about the level of delegates that seemingly were registered. This concern arose as a result of inquiries about specific businesses which had registered with the conference for the purpose of achieving the business matching program.

Consequently, the department initiated the following actions. Firstly, Mr Carroll wrote directly to the event chairman of PacRim, Mr Peter Fisher, requiring advice on confirmed delegates and anticipated numbers. This correspondence was never answered. Secondly, the matter was immediately raised with the project director, Ms Judith Maestracchi, both informally and in the context of regular meetings, including officials from the Commonwealth and the Gold Coast City Council, who consistently dismissed concerns based on the view that the usual practice was for delegates not to register until the last two weeks prior to the conference.

Thirdly, the matter was raised directly with a senior official from the Department of Foreign Affairs, who did not advise of any concern on the part of the Commonwealth. Fourthly, the matter was raised with officers of the Commonwealth Department of Industry, Science and Resources, who corroborated Ms Maestracci's analysis that it was to be expected that delegates would not register until the last fortnight prior to the conference. They pointed to their experience of a similar event in South Australia to support this view.

Nevertheless, Queensland officials continued to pursue this issue regularly and often with the project director and at project working group meetings with PacRim representatives. To illustrate the nature of the response that was typically received, I will quote from the PacRim project office report of 28 September 1999 to the weekly meeting of Government officials. It states—

"With less than 5 weeks to go until the event, we are pleased to report there has been a major increase in bookings/confirmation of both exhibitors and delegates. Reports for both groups have been provided. We anticipate the major numbers of conference and seminar delegates will register 1-3 weeks prior to the event. Confirmation of exhibitors is being received at 3 or 5 each day.

We propose that we continue our weekly meetings—"

this was Tuesdays at 10 a.m.—

"with you, senior representatives of the three levels of government. Our consultation process has increased dramatically with all event commercial partners looking to maximise their involvement in the event.

The project office is working to capacity. This will no doubt be the case until the completion of the event. Our outside consultants, Global Events and Marketplace Communications, have employed additional staff to commit much resources to operational aspects of our event.

As an indicator of the current level of activity we are currently receiving over 100 e-mails each day and sending over 300 messages, and this is in addition to a large volume of faxes and letters. We anticipate this volume of communication will increase consistently up to the event."

Indeed, the continued pursuit of this matter with the project office by Queensland

officials was met by accusations that the Government was demonstrating a negative attitude towards the conference. As concerns heightened towards the latter part of October, Government pressure was increased on the project office for advice on registrations. This resulted in the following fax being sent to the Department of State Development on 25 October—

"Further to your phone call this morning for John Carroll—bottom line is over 3000 current registrations. Forecast of registrations based on written confirmation or estimates by associated events organiser. Please note this does not include our forecast for paid conference, seminar delegates and day visitors that are being received in increasing numbers on a daily basis."

Importantly, at no stage did the project office or the management committee of PacRim ever concede that there was any basis to any Government concerns. Indeed, they directly dismissed them and supplied what appears to be highly misleading advice on delegate numbers. Certainly until Thursday, 28 October they gave no indication whatsoever that there was any risk of the conference not proceeding or financially collapsing.

It was not until late on Thursday evening, 28 October that my office received advice from Mr Peter Fisher of PacRim that the conference was experiencing financial difficulties. Apparently the Commonwealth had received advice earlier that day. I was told on Friday, 29 October and immediately attempted—unsuccessfully—to contact Mr Fisher and subsequently—successfully—Ms Maestracci. Ms Maestracci assured me that the delegate numbers were continuing to flow in. The problem, she suggested, was at worst a cash flow problem and she indicated that she and the management committee of PacRim would be prepared to put forward their own personal funds to ensure that the conference proceeded. Following this conversation I told her that, in view of the Government sponsorship of the project and its significance to the State's reputation, the Department of State Development would be engaging a firm of accountants and special conference advisers for the purpose of investigating the issue with PacRim.

The management committee of PacRim for the first time cooperated with the Government and its representatives in establishing the registration numbers. Later that day—on Friday, 29 October—the Government was informed by Peter Fisher that

four members of the management committee of PacRim had resigned, leaving only himself as the sole remaining committee member, together with Ms Maestracci as project director.

Having sorted through the detail of much of the documentation by early Sunday morning, the organisers believed that the conference could be maintained through a rescue package that would involve \$200,000 being raised in equal shares by the ex-members of the management committee and the project director of PacRim and up to a maximum of \$300,000 in enhanced sponsorship to meet certain specific costs that were unavoidable if the conference was to continue. This support would be on the basis of back to back contracts and could involve no benefit being received by PacRim, its current or former management committee members or staff. It would only be used for contractors who were necessary to ensure that the event could proceed rather than abort on that day.

Formal documentation was prepared and settled between Government lawyers and PacRim lawyers, and it was our understanding that the agreement would be signed early on the morning of 1 November 1999, the day the conference was due to start. However, this document was never signed.

On the afternoon of 2 November we were advised by Paul Rogers that the management committee intended to apply to the court to appoint a provisional liquidator to PacRim's assets after a further accountant's report regarding its position revealed that its financial problems were worse than originally thought. It was confirmed on the same day—last Tuesday, the second day of the conference—that the current and former members of the management committee and the project officer did not intend to sign further sponsorship agreements.

The Government subsequently acted swiftly to attempt to salvage any parts of the remaining sessions of the conference where it was possible to do so. This involved running our own venture capital conference, which proceeded the following day after receipt of confirmation from PacRim that they had abandoned the conference and were happy for us to take it over. This turned out to be a highly successful event, with some 140 delegates attending to listen to world leaders in the field and considerable business being transacted as a result. The aviation industry forum and the Technology Park and Incubator Association meeting also went ahead.

Both the Premier and I have reacted quickly to meet and entertain as many of our

overseas visitors as possible, including the Russian and Chinese delegations, and Government officials have made contact with and accommodated the interests of countless others. All levels of Government have offered to continue facilitating business matching beyond the activities of this week. This has been welcomed by many of the exhibitors and delegates who have been included in the follow-up contact program.

In summary, we do not walk away from the fact that when the event was in trouble our instinct was to try to save it, not scuttle it. Had we taken no action at all, it is highly likely that the event would not have even opened. While the events of last week may have damaged us, it would have been significantly worse for the State's reputation if hundreds of exhibitors and delegates had arrived on the Gold Coast to find only locked doors at a venue where they were expecting a conference.

We worked hard to support this event, to manage the risks associated with it, to respond to the situation as it unfolded and to manage the implications on the people affected as they were identified. In this regard, I would also like to acknowledge the helpful role played by the Gold Coast City Council.

Only the Commonwealth failed to rise to the occasion—the primary sponsors who facilitated the status afforded by affiliation with APEC and who were as briefed as we were on this issue. The Federal politicians in particular ducked for cover. Despite the fact that both the Minister for Science, Industry and Resources and the Minister for Employment Services spoke at the conference—Tony Abbott actually opened it, while Nick Minchin spoke at the State Government organised conference on venture capital—and both these men were fully briefed on the events surrounding the collapse of the conference, the Commonwealth has taken no responsibility and seems to have been happy to abandon the people of the Gold Coast and international visitors.

I wish to conclude by stating that in no way have these events diminished the Government's commitment to the future of technology-based industry in this State, the importance of growing access to venture capital or the Gold Coast as a destination for conferences and conventions. Indeed, we will increase our efforts to do so and to do more. The business community on the Gold Coast knows full well that it was this Government which pitched in to help when things went wrong and it was members opposite who got in the way.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Bank of Queensland

**Hon. D. J. HAMILL** (Ipswich—ALP) (Treasurer) (10 a.m.), by leave: Yesterday, the Queensland Government honoured the previous coalition Government's undertaking given to the Reserve Bank in 1996 and announced the sell-down of the Government's stake in the Bank of Queensland. The sale has been welcomed by the bank's board and management as ending more than three years of uncertainty following the previous Government's Suncorp-Metway merger. That merger saw the Government assume ownership of the largest single shareholding bloc in the Bank of Queensland and promise the Reserve Bank that it would sell down its stake within three years.

The sale process we commenced yesterday preserves the bank's independence; it preserves 125 years of tradition for the Bank of Queensland as a strong, vibrant and independent Queensland financial institution. The Leader of the Opposition has suggested that we should have acted more quickly in relation to the Government's shareholding in the bank. We did take our time. We took our time making sure we got the right outcome at the right time.

**Mr Borbidge** interjected.

**Mr HAMILL:** We know that the Leader of the Opposition hates the Bank of Queensland, and the bank knows that, too. But we consulted the bank throughout the process. We sought the views of the board on how the sale of the Government's shareholding could best be completed within the long-term strategic framework the board had mapped out for the bank.

We could easily have disposed of our Bank of Queensland shareholding within weeks of coming to office. We could have done what the Leader of the Opposition would have liked to have done: sold out the bank to the highest bidder—no doubt a rival bank. Such a course of action may have even resulted in a higher sale price for the bank, but it would have also undoubtedly seen one of Queensland's proudest financial institutions disappear and, with it, hundreds of jobs and yet another Queensland head office.

The public offer of the Government's shareholding in the Bank of Queensland that I announced yesterday will see the ownership of the bank pass to where it belongs, that is, to thousands of private Queensland investors. Some 80% of the offer is earmarked for retail—or mum and dad investors. At the same

time, the relatively small institutional component of the offering has been structured so that only long-term portfolio investors will be offered stock. The offer also includes special entitlements for existing Bank of Queensland shareholders and an attractive package for Bank of Queensland employees. In the event that the offer is oversubscribed, preference will be given to Queensland applicants.

Ultimately, the sale proceeds will go to paying back the debt that the previous Government incurred when it bought the Bank of Queensland stake from Suncorp-Metway. But this sale process is not about maximising profits. It is not about rationalising the Queensland financial services sector. It is about preserving a viable and energetic Queensland institution with more than a century of tradition. It is about preserving and growing career opportunities in the financial services sector for future generations of Queenslanders. It is about consultation and making the right decision at the right time, and making that decision in the long-term interests of all Queenslanders.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Female Prisoners

**Hon. T. A. BARTON** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Police and Corrective Services) (10.03 a.m.), by leave: I would like to clear up any confusion caused by a Sunday Mail story on the treatment of female offenders published last Sunday. Anyone with a rudimentary understanding of the justice system would know that Corrective Services have no say on the length of sentences offenders have to serve. If a court decides that a custodial sentence is required for an offence, then Corrective Services simply implements the court's order. This applies equally for men and women, and all prisoners start their sentence at a high-security classification. Depending on the severity of their sentence, their behaviour and a number of other factors, all prisoners then progressively move down through the security classifications.

The decisions on security classifications and graduated release are made by sentence management and the community corrections boards. As Minister, I do not have a say on how quickly prisoners move through the system. I had to explain this to the member for Caloundra when she asked me to reclassify a prisoner from the Sunshine Coast. It would be quite inappropriate for a politician to interfere with the sentence of a prisoner. This is what makes it so frustrating and hypocritical on the coalition's part in this whole argument on

sentencing. We have, on the one hand, the member for Toowoomba South accusing us of trying to set up a different sentencing regime for female prisoners and, on the other hand, we have the member for Caloundra asking us to make an exception for a particular female prisoner.

Let me make it clear to the House what this particular Sunday Mail story was based on. And once members know the circumstances, they can get a full appreciation of the standard—or should I say lack of standard—of journalism that this story portrays. The story was not based on a typical interview with a journalist, nor was it particularly timely. This story was in fact based on comments I made during the Estimates hearings in reply to a question about the recently established Women's Policy Unit in my department—in fact, on 6 October 1999. The member for Toowoomba South was present and, I assume, paying attention when I made all the comments quoted in the paper. He did not raise any objections to my comments then, and that is understandable, because the comments were quite reasonable in the context of the whole answer I gave at the time. I seek leave to table, for the information of members, a transcript of my reply at the Estimates hearing.

Leave granted.

**Mr BARTON:** The transcript shows that I have established the Women's Policy Unit to research why the rate of imprisonment is three times higher for women in Queensland than it is for men. This is at a time when we already have record rates of imprisonment in Queensland. Another element of the unit's work is to develop rehabilitation programs for women, because the recidivism rate for women is higher. The review of corrections conducted last year showed that all of our rehabilitation programs have been developed for men and no modification has been made for female inmates. During the Estimates hearing, I also pointed out a well-documented fact: that when a family's principal care giver is imprisoned, it often leads to the disintegration of the family unit. In most cases, but not always, women are the principal care givers, and the effect of a prison sentence is often greater on these offenders.

I am sure all members would be concerned about the rapid growth in minor, non-violent and non-sexual offenders entering our prisons. The Beattie Government is implementing initiatives, such as drug courts, a State Penalties Enforcement Register for fine defaulters, improved supervision of community

service orders and drug diversion to keep minor offenders out of prison. These initiatives have been given the broad support of the Opposition, and we welcome that support.

Through the Government's task force on the growth in prisoner numbers, other initiatives are being developed to keep minor offenders out of jail. Part of their brief is to look at the problem on jail terms for the family's principal care giver, whether they are male or female, but this will only apply for minor offenders. If a person is a serious offender, they will be serving the court-awarded sentence regardless of their gender. The Sunday Mail story gave the totally incorrect impression that the Government intended to change how serious offenders would be sentenced or that there would be a different sentence regime for prisoners based on gender. I would like to make it absolutely clear that there is no proposal before the Government to lessen sentencing for serious offenders, nor is there any intention to change it. All prisoners will continue to be treated the same regardless of gender.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### State Emergency Service; SES Week

**Hon. M. ROSE** (Currumbin—ALP) (Minister for Emergency Services) (10.07 a.m.), by leave: This week is SES Week. Communities across Queensland owe their State Emergency Service volunteers a debt of gratitude. In any 24-hour period in Queensland, around 50 SES volunteers are activated in a range of roles. Queensland's SES volunteers are the best in Australia, because they are exposed to a wide range of natural disasters and incidents and, consequently, are better trained and better prepared to respond to any situation.

Activations for major incidents across the State have increased over the past 12 months. The last storm season was the worst for some time, with widespread flooding in the south-west, south-east, central and northern parts of the State and savage storms in other areas. In recent days, parts of the State have been lashed by early storms, with major crop damage on the Granite Belt. Indications are that we cannot expect the current storm season to be any less devastating than last summer, when Cyclone Rona and a string of storms caused crop and property damage estimated at hundreds of millions of dollars.

Later today, it will give me great pleasure to officially launch SES Week 1999 here at Parliament House. This year's theme is

Prevention Pays. It provides us with the opportunity to tackle community apathy and complacency about the risk of cyclones, storms and flooding. We want people to find out how to prepare for disasters to avoid becoming victims. There are simple measures that people can take now to protect themselves against floods and other natural disasters. The Department of Emergency Services and SES are already active in the north of the State. I have just returned from the far north and was impressed by the awareness campaign being conducted there. In the lead-up to the cyclone season, this simple poster that I am holding up says it all.

We cannot afford to be complacent. SES volunteers will again this summer be playing a vital role in preparation for storms and in the clean-up afterwards. All Queenslanders need to recognise the incredible service these men and women provide to their communities. SES Week is an opportunity for us to acknowledge the dedication, commitment and skill of SES volunteers. It is also appropriate that we thank employers around the State who allow the volunteers time off so they can work for others. Without this support, and without the support of local government across Queensland, the SES could not be the highly efficient and effective organisation that it is.

The SES was born in the wake of the devastating 1974 floods out of a need for a better coordinated response to natural disasters and major incidents. Today it boasts 33,000 volunteers. There are over 150 SES local units and more than 340 groups across the State. The value of the organisation is highlighted every time we face a natural disaster or emergency situation. Whether volunteers are responding to a natural disaster such as flood or cyclone—and we have had plenty of experience of that over the past 12 months—or involved in searches for missing persons or other activations, the SES is always there to help.

Never was the worth of the SES more clear than during the recent land search in the Kenilworth area. The search for missing Nambour schoolgirl Jessica Gaudie continued for almost a month, involving 400 individual SES volunteers for more than 15,000 person hours. It was the biggest single land search conducted in Queensland. It was conducted in conditions varying from searing heat to teeming rain. Volunteers slogged their way through heavy forest and rough terrain, dealing with ticks and leeches and heat exhaustion. The search was physically and emotionally draining. This commitment clearly

shows the dedication of our SES volunteers—dedication they exhibit every day.

Over the past year, our volunteers have answered an SOS to tarp roofs in Sydney, helped eradicate Newcastle disease in chickens on the NSW Central Coast, been involved in numerous major searches for missing people and provided disaster support. They support their local communities and other emergency services through traffic control, flood boat rescues, road accident rescues, land search operations and welfare management. They do not join for personal gain. Their only reward is satisfaction that they have been able to help their friends, their mates and their local communities. They deserve acknowledgment.

On behalf of the Government, I thank every SES volunteer and every SES cadet for the work they have done—or will do—for communities across the State.

## **SCRUTINY OF LEGISLATION COMMITTEE**

### **Report**

**Mrs LAVARCH** (Kurwongbah—ALP) (10.13 a.m.): I lay upon the table of the House the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee's Alert Digest No. 13 of 1999, and its report No. 14 on University Statutes, and I move that both reports be printed.

Ordered to be printed.

## **TRAVELSAFE COMMITTEE**

### **Report**

**Mrs NITA CUNNINGHAM** (Bundaberg—ALP) (10.13 a.m.): It is my pleasure to table the Travelsafe Committee's report No. 29, Drug Driving in Queensland, and the conclusions and recommendations from the report. I commend this report to the House and move that on Thursday the House notes the report.

## **NOTICE OF MOTION**

### **APEC Technomart**

**Hon. R. E. BORBIDGE** (Surfers Paradise—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition) (10.14 a.m.): I give notice that I shall move—

"That this House condemns the 'can't do' Beattie Labor Government for its continuing failure to deliver on major events and for the embarrassment that has resulted as a consequence of the high profile failures of ventures like APEC Technomart III which have

seriously undermined Queensland's reputation as a place to invest and do business."

### **TEMPORARY COASTAL DWELLING PROTECTION BILL**

**Mr KNUTH** (Burdekin—IND) (10.14 a.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

"That leave be granted to bring in a Bill for an Act to provide for the grant of permits to occupy land on which temporary coastal dwellings are situated."

Motion agreed to.

#### **First Reading**

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

#### **Second Reading**

**Mr KNUTH** (Burdekin—IND) (10.15 a.m.): I move—

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

I introduce the Temporary Coastal Dwellings Protection Bill 1999 in an effort to clear up the current state of confusion and perplexity that surrounds the future of coastal fishing huts. This Bill was not designed to be political; it was designed to give some form of security while easing the hearts and minds of the families who use these huts in rural and regional Queensland.

In my own electorate of Burdekin there are estimated to be around 1,000 fishing huts. Each hut is used by up to 30 different families in a year. It is a heritage of Queensland's way of life that some city folk will never understand. To the hut users, it is a chance to get away for the weekend with the family—for fathers to get to know their sons and for mothers to get to know their daughters, to catch fish and crabs, to enjoy the environment, or to sit back with a beer or a book and retreat from the pressures of life. Without these huts a host of people would probably not be able to afford a holiday elsewhere.

Families who use these huts are not wealthy; they are workers, be they blue collar workers or farmers. Rural and regional families have no Dreamworld, Movieworld or Seaworld. They do not have the wonderful facilities that city folk have at their disposal. All they have is these retreats—a retreat that has become a culture for so many.

Members of the Chamber, soften your hearts in order to understand the situation. What else do children and mums and dads have in rural electorates? Everything is being stripped. Services, banks and businesses are going to the wall. Is this going to happen to fishing huts also? For the sake of compassion, I plead that everyone will support this Bill.

The Bill is strict. It complies with the environment as well as legal and safety requirements. It caters for the few squatter's huts that remain. However, no illegal fishing hut which has been built in the last 10 years will be covered by this Bill. This Bill gives all complying fishing huts a 20-year non-renewable tenure. After 20 years, all PTO and squatter's huts are to be disassembled and removed from the site. The provisions of this Bill will comply with the thinking of all walks of politics, whilst at the same time addressing the fears of hut owners. This Bill gives current squatters and PTO's the assurance of legal tenure for a maximum of 20 years. This will put the minds of hut owners at rest.

The Minister for Natural Resources and Environment has stated that it is the long-term objective of his Government to remove all huts along the east coast of Queensland. This Bill complies with his wishes, whilst giving the hut owners a time period in which to abide by the provisions of the Bill. This is a fair Bill for both sides of the argument. It is a Bill of compassion. I present the Temporary Coastal Dwellings Protection Bill 1999 to the Chamber.

Debate, on motion of Mr Welford, adjourned.

## **PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS**

### **APEC Technomart**

**Hon. R. E. BORBIDGE** (Surfers Paradise—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition) (10.19 a.m.) This Government has done just about all it can to destroy Queensland's hard-won international reputation, particularly in the field of information technology. What we heard this morning is that this Government is a pack of collective techno duds. Those opposite are an embarrassment to the State of Queensland. We had an incredible 15-minute apology from the Deputy Premier over Technomart. He admitted to the House this morning that he first became aware of concerns in respect of the possible organisation of this convention, where Queensland's coat of arms, Queensland's Premier and Queensland's reputation were on the line, as early as mid August.

But what happened in mid October? On 8 October 1999—not 8 August—the Premier issued a press release which read—

"Premier to be super salesman for smart state and Technomart

Premier Peter Beattie will use his trade trip to Japan next week to act as a super salesman for Queensland's emerging high tech research and industry which will be on display at Australia's biggest ever technology conference and expo in November.

'APEC Technomart on the Gold Coast from November 1-6 will be an ideal showcase for Queensland's achievements and potential in high tech development,' said Mr Beattie."

However, this morning we had the revelation that the Premier's loyal deputy knew in mid August that there were problems, but that his loyal deputy was happy for the Premier to travel to Japan to promote this shonky event.

**Mr ELDER:** I rise to a point of order. I did not say that this morning. I ask that it be withdrawn. The statement clearly articulates that I was informed in October. I ask that it be withdrawn.

**Mr BORBIDGE:** What statement does the Minister find—

**Mr ELDER:** It is incorrect.

**Mr BORBIDGE:** The Deputy Premier said that he was made aware in mid August.

**Mr ELDER:** I find the comments made by the Leader of the Opposition untruthful and I ask them to be withdrawn.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The Leader of the Opposition will withdraw.

**Mr BORBIDGE:** Mr Speaker, if the Deputy Premier finds it offensive, I withdraw. His department knew about it and he did not know. That is a bigger indictment!

#### **Nestlé Write Around Australia**

**Mr REYNOLDS** (Townsville—ALP) (10.20 a.m.): Today, two Townsville students, Janelle Evans, a Year 7 pupil who attends the Hermit Park State School, and Year 6 student Brook Christensen of St Joseph's, Mundingburra, are both in Brisbane for the State finals of the Nestlé Write Around Australia creative writing competition. I congratulate both Townsville entrants—two of 20 students who competed for the State prize—on representing the region north of Mackay, west to Charters Towers and south of Cairns. To have reached finalist level is a

tremendous achievement and one of which the students themselves, their families and their schools will be very proud. Given that over 3,700 children entered the Queensland competition, it is a brilliant result for Townsville.

I am also doubly pleased because, as a former Hermit Park State School student, it is quite special to me to see one of north Queensland's writing success stories coming from that school. Earlier this year, Janelle's winning zone entry titled the Bees Knees also took out another State highly commended prize in another writing competition. Arthur the Giant was the title of Brook's winning Nestlé nomination.

The Nestlé Write Around Australia national competition, coordinated by the State Library of New South Wales and supported by the State Library of Queensland and local libraries right throughout Australia is the biggest creative writing program for primary school children in the country. In targeting Years 6 and 7 students, the program is designed to encourage children to take part in creative writing and to utilise the resources of our great public libraries.

All winning State and Territory stories will be published in a special Nestlé Write Around Australia collection, which will be distributed to all primary schools and public libraries in Australia. The stories are also to be published on the Internet on [www.writearound.com.au](http://www.writearound.com.au). I commend these two students from Townsville for the great recognition that they will receive today in the State capital.

#### **Prostitution Laws**

**Dr WATSON** (Moggill—LP) (Leader of the Liberal Party) (10.22 a.m.): Earlier this year, the Liberal Party offered bipartisan support for tough new prostitution laws to drive the sex industry out of our suburbs. To that end, we accepted the need to establish brothels in non-residential areas. However, the Premier has reneged on his commitment to enhance the quality of life in our local communities. He has become the Premier for suburban prostitutes and pimps.

The Beattie Government's proposed relaxation of prostitution laws has given the green light to red lights across the State. These changes do not make prostitution harder, they make it easier. They do not encourage prostitutes to leave our suburbs; they encourage them to proliferate. This is not law reform; it is social vandalism.

The Premier would have us believe that prostitution will be banned within 200 metres of

homes, schools and churches. However, that restriction will apply only to registered brothels. It will not apply to the sole operator mini brothels in the house next door. It will not apply to the bodyguards who will be employed by suburban prostitutes. Many of those bodyguards will double as pimps. Every time business gets quiet, they will head down to the local pub or club to tout for clients, otherwise they will not get paid. That is the commercial reality.

The Beattie model will inevitably undermine family relationships and community values. Pimps do not care about wrecking marriages and destroying homes; they are just after a few quick bucks to earn their keep. It will be open slather on husbands, boyfriends and anyone else who has more money than sense. This policy is a recipe for family breakdown and human misery. The Premier promised to fix the problem created by the former Goss Labor Government, but his cure is worse than the disease.

#### **Liberal Party Membership**

**Mr MUSGROVE** (Springwood—ALP) (10.24 a.m.): I rise to tell the House about a disturbing incident that has occurred and been reported to me by my local ethnic Indian community. Recently, that community was approached by a Mr Michael Johnson, who I understand purports to be in the Liberal Party and a candidate for the seat of Ryan. Mr Johnson approached the leaders of my local Indian community and asked them if they would like to join the Liberal Party. Not only did he ask them whether they would like to join the Liberal Party but also he told them that they would not have to pay. When the Indian community in my area said, "Mr Johnson, thank you very much for the invitation but we live in Springwood and Sunnybank; we do not live in Ryan", they were told, "That does not matter."

This morning we heard on 4QR a fellow from Darwin proudly touting his membership of a branch somewhere in Surrey Hills. This whole situation is a bit like what the Demtel man says—"Don't send any money"—the people do not have to pay for their membership and they do not have to live anywhere near the branch of which they are going to be a member to be part of the Santo stack.

It has been aired publicly that the stack is on. Where is the member for Moggill in all of this, because the membership in his own area has been stacked by the member for Clayfield? That is all we in this House need to know. However, my local Indian community

has told me that they found being used as pawns of the Liberal Party deeply offensive. The Liberal Party could well learn from experiences elsewhere in other jurisdictions that this sort of behaviour will come back to bite them.

Time expired.

#### **Challenges to Women in the New Millennium Conference**

**Mrs SHELDON** (Caloundra—LP) (10.26 a.m.): Last week, a conference titled Challenges to Women in the New Millennium was held at Parliament House. The conference was the result of an initiative of the Japanese Consul General in Queensland, Miss Mariko Bando. She organised a group of Brisbane businesswomen, women in politics and women in the media to help her organise this very successful conference. I was honoured to be asked to be one of the participants. Mr Speaker, I would like to thank you and your staff for the help that they gave me in organising the Speaker's Dining Room, the red Chamber and other function rooms. I also thank the catering staff for the competent way in which they organised lunches, morning and afternoon teas and a cocktail party on the Thursday night.

The Japanese women were most impressed. This conference enabled networking and an exchange of information between two cultures and set the foundations for a continuing dialogue between Queensland and Japanese women prominent in business, the media and politics. Indeed, we hope that a group of Brisbane businesswomen will be able to travel to Japan next year, and I would like to be part of that. The Japanese women were members of a group called One One One. This group networks, mentors and helps fund candidates of all political persuasions in Japan. They help women to positions of power in boardrooms and in Parliaments—positions which, traditionally in that culture, have been closed to them and in which women are now playing a greater part.

The women involved in this conference were very successful in their own corporations—one woman was the Minister for Education in Japan, other women ran big corporations and there were also women involved in the television and print media. The interchange was most beneficial both to the Japanese women and to us. Such conferences can only enable better relations between Queensland and Japan. It was a great initiative of Mariko Bando. I would like to

compliment her on that and say that we need more women consul generals here in Australia.

Time expired.

### Stadium Catering Services

**Mr REEVES** (Mansfield—ALP) (10.29 a.m.): As a person who has studied the economic impact of sporting events in particular areas for a number of years, I am a strong advocate for a major stadium in Brisbane. In particular, I believe that Lang Park is a venue where we can capitalise the most on the economic gains made through sporting events.

However, over the past few years I have become extremely concerned about one aspect of stadium management in the city, that is the catering component of such management. I am concerned about the emphasis on the amount of money that a catering company pays up front to the stadium to provide that service and not on the service or price that they are going to deliver to the customers. We must ensure that we are not pricing out the average mums and dads and their families who like to go to a particular sport.

Although sometimes ticket pricing is regarded as high, people have a choice as to whether or not they will pay that price to attend a particular event. However, once people go through the stadium gates, their freedom of choice virtually ceases because a catering company usually has exclusive rights to provide food. For example, at a sporting event, a pie costs \$2.40, and soft drinks cost between \$2.60 and \$3. Last weekend I attended the cricket test match. I went to order a Queensland product at the bar, a Bundaberg rum.

Time expired.

### DISTINGUISHED VISITOR

**Mr S. J. Balch, MLA**

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Before calling question time, I acknowledge in the public gallery the Government Whip and Chairman of the Parliament Subordinate Legislation and Publications Committee of the Northern Territory Parliament, Mr Balch, MLA.

### QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

#### APEC Technomart

**Mr BORBIDGE** (10.30 a.m.): I refer the Deputy Premier to the Government's botch up of a number of major events, including the

Queensland 500 motor race, the Garden expo, Baywatch, Expo 2002, the net bet debacle and now the APEC Technomart. I ask: as the Deputy Premier has advised the House that his department first had concerns in respect of the Technomart in mid August, when did department officers tell him? Did he advise the Premier of those concerns prior to the Premier appointing himself the supersalesman for the Technomart in Japan on 8 October 1999?

**Mr ELDER:** If there has been one botch up in this State, it was certainly the botch up of Expo 2002, which was a \$6m botch up on the part of the Leader of the Opposition. The coalition Government of the time botched that expo for this State. If blame should be placed at anyone's feet, it should be at the feet of the acting and temporary Leader of the Opposition. He botched up that expo and it had very little to do with us. He undermined it right from day one.

Let us return to the APEC Technomart. First and foremost, this was a private sector run exhibition.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr ELDER:** If it was not, who was it run by? It was run by the directors, as I outlined in the statement that I made today. The principal sponsor was the Federal Government. The Federal Government gave them the affiliation with APEC, which gave them the ability to run an APEC Technomart. If anyone's reputation was under scrutiny, it was Australia's reputation. It was an APEC Technomart. The State Government and the Gold Coast City Council were major sponsors, along with 12 private companies. This was a private sector run event of which we were a major sponsor.

In my statement today I outlined that in August we did become aware of concerns about the number of registrations. I was aware of the concerns about registration numbers. I was continually—

**Mr Borbidge:** You made me withdraw when I said that.

**Mr ELDER:** No. The Leader of the Opposition asked me whether I knew about the financial implications. I knew about the financial implications in October.

**Mr Schwarten:** Not August.

**Mr ELDER:** Not August. I knew about that in October. The fact of the matter is that I was reassured by the department, the Federal Government and the organisers that the numbers that had been articulated were correct and that the registrations would come late in the piece. I outlined that in my

statement this morning and I outlined it consistently.

**Mr BORBIDGE:** I rise to a point of order. The Deputy Premier has contradicted himself. The remark that he found offensive and that he made me withdraw was that he was aware of problems in August, which he has now confirmed.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The Leader of the Opposition is debating the issue. He will allow the Minister to answer the question. The Leader of the Opposition will resume his seat.

**Mr ELDER:** The accusation of the Leader of the Opposition was that I was aware of the financial implications. I was aware of those in October, as was the Federal Government, all the sponsors and the organisers—

**Mr Borbidge:** Stick to your story; you're contradicting yourself.

**Mr ELDER:** I will. We were continually making queries in relation to the numbers of registrations. As late as 25 October, we received a facsimile from APEC Technomart III, which stated—

"Further to your phone call this morning for John Carroll— bottom line is over 3,000 current registrations

forecast of registrations based on written confirmation or estimates by associated events organiser

Please note this does not include our forecast for paid conference, seminar delegates and day visitors that are being received in increasing numbers ..."

We were being told continually that the numbers were there. If anyone has been less than honest, it has been the organisers of the conference.

#### **APEC Technomart**

**Mr BORBIDGE:** I rise to a point of order. I direct a further question to the Deputy Premier.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Is this a point of order or a question?

**Mr BORBIDGE:** I am sorry. It is my second question. I am becoming so used to rising on points of order against the Deputy Premier, particularly when I am made to withdraw statements that he later confirms.

**Mr ELDER:** I rise to a point of order. I refer to what I stated in the House this morning. I said that it was not until late Thursday evening on 28 October that I received advice from Peter Fisher at the conference—

**Mr BORBIDGE:** I rise to a point of order. What the Minister found offensive was my comment relating to his first becoming aware of problems in August. He has confirmed that.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The Leader of the Opposition will resume his seat.

**Mr ELDER:** The point of order clearly states that I was aware of the financial implications in October. The accusation of the Leader of the Opposition was that I was aware of them in August.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Before the House recommences with question time, I remind the Leader of the Opposition and the Deputy Premier that we will debate this issue at 6 p.m. tonight. We will continue with question time.

**Mr BORBIDGE:** We look forward to exposing a few more of the inconsistencies of the Deputy Premier in respect of this matter.

My question to the Deputy Premier is: since his Government decided to commit public funds and the State's international credibility to the now-collapsed Technomart, can he advise the House how often he personally met with organisers of this event to ensure that Queensland's international reputation would not be sullied by an embarrassing failure?

**Mr ELDER:** I note that the Leader of the Opposition did not meet with the organisers when his Government gave them in-principle support for the conference. The Minister for Economic and Trade Development met with them and gave the Government's in-principle support. They did not talk to the Premier of the time to get that in-principle support.

**Mr BORBIDGE:** I rise to a point of order. We did not give them any money. We did not commit \$280,000.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! There is no point of order. The Leader of the Opposition will resume his seat.

**Mr ELDER:** If the Leader of the Opposition would like me to correct the record so that he does not mislead the Parliament, I can take him to a minute of the Director-General of Premier and Cabinet during his time as Premier. That minute outlined the Government's in-principle support of \$200,000 for this event. That was a Department of Premier and Cabinet memorandum dated 18 May, which outlined that this was an important conference to Queensland and that the coalition Government should give in-principle support for \$200,000. The Leader of the Opposition should not try to be too clever.

The fact of the matter is that, like all of these events, we were sponsors. We did not run the conference. Had we run the conference we would have run it in a similar manner to the way in which we ran the recent State development conference that was held in Brisbane. That conference attracted over 400 delegates and was successful. In fact, the bottom line was that it led to some \$30,000 in returns to the Government.

**Mr Mackenroth:** If we'd said no, he would have said that we'd broken our promise.

**Mr ELDER:** Of course he would have. As I have outlined in my statement, from day one our chief concerns have been the State's interests and the State's reputation.

**Mr Borbidge:** You've made us an international laughing stock.

**Mr ELDER:** No, we have not. I have plenty of correspondence to prove otherwise. The fact is that we looked after the State's reputation. Then whose reputation did we look after? That of the Gold Coast! The only person who has looked after his own reputation and interests above those of Queensland and the Gold Coast is the temporary Leader of the Opposition. He puts his own interests first, second and third. He has no interest in protecting the Gold Coast's reputation, unlike the Mayor of the Gold Coast and others who have been smart enough to stay out of it. They have not made comments. At least they have had the decency to understand and appreciate what was done by the Government and the Gold Coast City Council.

The Leader of the Opposition made a point about our reputation being sullied. The venture capital conference that we ran was highly successful. We took on that project at one in the morning and I had staff slipping invitations underneath hotel doors. One hundred and forty overseas, interstate and State delegates attended. We have received responses from them. If the member asks me another question, I will go through every one of those responses. A typical response was as follows—

"I want to take the time to express my congratulations to the Government and the Premier and to the Minister, Jim Elder, for their foresight and courage in rescuing the venture capital ..."

Time expired.

#### **Cape York Aboriginal Communities Conference, Wujal Wujal**

**Mr SULLIVAN:** I refer to the Premier's attendance at a recent meeting at Wujal Wujal

of the leaders of Cape York Aboriginal communities, and I ask: what was the outcome of the meeting?

**Mr BEATTIE:** I thank the honourable member for the question, because it was a very important meeting. On the weekend before last, along with the Transport Minister and the local member, Steve Bredhauer, I travelled to Wujal Wujal to attend the final days of a five-day conference of more than 300 indigenous elders and traditional owners. The purpose of the conference was to discuss the provision of services and infrastructure that most Queenslanders take for granted. The tone of the conference was heartening; the indigenous communities were saying that they wanted a hand up, not a handout. During the speeches, some of which were delivered in indigenous tongues, I received a declaration from the elders of their unequivocal support for a program of self-help in partnership with the Federal and State Governments and business. At our meeting in Cooktown the following day, the State Cabinet endorsed a strategy to use the so-called Pearson plan as a starting point. The strategy involves a top-level committee reporting directly to me. This committee will consider and develop programs presented by working groups for social issues and business development, as well as local organisations. One of the first major initiatives will be a business summit early next year. The date has not been finalised, but it could be around late February. Together with the indigenous community leaders, I will be asking Australia's corporate leaders to attend the summit and to present ideas on business opportunities for the Aboriginal communities. This is a positive step aimed at generating long-term sustainable jobs that will give these communities a strong, bright future.

As another demonstration of my Government's commitment, along with the local member and the Minister for Transport, Steve Bredhauer, I was able to announce two initiatives at Wujal Wujal. Firstly, I announced more than \$96,000 in funding for two Cape York Development Corporation initiatives. \$50,000 will go to the Cape York Regional Economic Development Strategy—Cape York REDS—and another \$45,660 will fund an implementation strategy for the Indigenous Business Institute. Cape York REDS is designed to help to develop economic self-sufficiency for the indigenous families and communities on the Cape York Peninsula through the development of an economic base. A key part of this will be the establishment of the Indigenous Business Institute. The institute proposal has been

progressed for two years by The Body Shop, the Balkanu Cape York Development Corporation and the Cape York Land Council. The Department of State Development, through the Regional Business Development Scheme, will help to assist Balkanu to develop the Cape York REDS. It will include an examination and identification of regional business opportunities, a micro business strategy, import substitution opportunities, export opportunities for goods and services, opportunities for rationalising the delivery of goods and services across the region, and opportunities for partnerships and sponsorships with the Government and the private sector. The second initiative was the State Government's purchase of 52 hectares of land adjoining Wujal Wujal for \$200,000. This land will be used for a long-awaited new sewerage system.

Time expired.

#### **APEC Technomart**

**Dr WATSON:** I refer the Minister for State Development to the APEC Technomart III conference and to the admission by the Premier and the Minister that the Government has exposed Queensland taxpayers to financial losses considerably greater than its initial public sponsorship of \$200,000, and I ask: what is the State's actual total financial exposure due to its desperate attempts to salvage the doomed Technomart III venture before it went belly up? In particular, how much of the \$300,000 mentioned in the Minister's ministerial statement was committed by his Government? How much was paid? What was the cost of the hastily arranged venture capital conference and what percentage of these extra funds, if any, will the Government recover?

**Mr ELDER:** I will come to the question, but what the Opposition is saying is simply this: the private sector should never be trusted to do anything; that Government should intervene on every and any private sector activity. It is saying that we should never believe the private sector; that when the private sector comes forward with a proposal, we should not believe it; that Governments must intervene with respect to every private sector company doing business with overseas interests. That is exactly what it is saying. This was a private sector conference that had the support of all levels of Government. All of those levels of Government were involved in the discussions that I outlined in my ministerial statement this morning.

The Opposition is saying that the private sector should never be allowed to run an event without interference from the Government. That is what the member is implying. These are the great parties for private enterprise, but what they are saying to me is: "Intervene and intervene continually." This Government and I make no apologies for trying to assist private sector companies with these events. In my ministerial statement this morning, I outlined all of the information in detail. The Opposition should read that ministerial statement.

**Dr WATSON:** I rise to a point of order. In his ministerial statement, the Deputy Premier outlined the fact that it was \$300,000. We asked him how much of that was committed by this Government.

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

**Mr ELDER:** All of the detail in relation to this is in the ministerial statement. We have nothing to hide in relation to this. In relation to the sponsorship agreement, those matters—

**Dr Watson:** You paid \$300,000.

**Mr ELDER:** The member does not understand due process. A receiver has been appointed. Legal opinion is being sought by everyone involved in this. I will not go into the details of the legal arrangements involved with a receivership. However, I have not hidden one skerrick of information in relation to this particular event, and I make no apologies—and neither does the Government—for endeavouring to salvage this State's reputation and for doing a good job of it, particularly with respect to the venture capital conference. We were not prepared to scuttle it. Had we scuttled it, the accusation of those opposite would have been, "You have scuttled the APEC Technomart. You did everything to scuttle it and you did not support it." That would have been their accusation, had we made a different decision. We made the decision to endeavour to support Queensland companies and our reputation overseas. The only ones who abrogated their responsibilities in relation to this were the Federal Government. They went missing in action pretty quickly. The Gold Coast City Council has been supportive. The detail is in my statement. We have not hidden anything.

#### **Christmas Appeals**

**Mr PURCELL:** I refer the Premier to the fact that many Queenslanders will be in need this Christmas, and I ask: is he aware of any public appeals being launched to assist them?

**Mr BEATTIE:** I thank the honourable member for the question. The honourable member for Bulimba is well known as a compassionate person who is concerned about families and people in need. I am pleased to inform the House that I will be launching the 1999 Smith Family Christmas Appeal today. As honourable members would know, the organisation began in 1922 in Sydney, when a small group of businessmen gave toys to an orphanage. That began a tradition of service to the community which has grown over the years. The Smith Family is celebrating its 77th birthday this year. I am sure I speak on behalf of all members on both sides of the House in wishing it a happy birthday. The Smith Family is always available to Queenslanders in trouble. It has more than 200,000 volunteers throughout Australia. The organisation generates \$65m a year, all of which goes to people in need in this country. It helps 250,000 Australian families each year. Too often in the hurly-burly of the modern world we forget about families in need. That is why this organisation deserves the support of all honourable members. The Queensland Government appreciates the work of all charitable organisations—not just the Smith Family but also the Salvos, St Vinnies and so on. I thank them on behalf of all Queenslanders.

**Mr Sullivan:** St Vinnies.

**Mr BEATTIE:** I mentioned St Vinnies.

The Smith Family delivers Christmas dinner and toys to needy families. This year their appeal target in Queensland is \$800,000 and I would urge all members in this House as well as all Queenslanders to give their support. In fact, last financial year they provided total funding of around \$214m, which gives some indication of their strength of commitment and the sort of excellent work they do.

As we approach Christmas, I do think it is time that all of us spend a little time pausing and thinking about those families in need. I know St Vincent de Paul, as I mentioned before, the Salvation Army and many organisations in addition to the Smith Family are out there, as they say, at the coalface—it is corny terminology, I guess—on a daily basis helping people in many ways to rebuild their lives and deal with the crises of day-to-day living. Things that we often take for granted many people find traumatic and difficult.

I remember when we had Ted Turner here visiting as part of the Goodwill Games. When we were leaving from the helipad down here I ran into a number of homeless youth who were, in fact, sleeping under the freeway.

It was actually quite distressing to see these young people. After Ted Turner had left, I spent some time talking to these young people. It was distressing talking to them about how they saw their lives—the pointlessness of it all. They were directionless. If honourable members had been there, their hearts would have gone out to them.

### **APEC Technomart**

**Mrs SHELDON:** I refer the Minister for State Development and Trade to his opening address to Challenges to Women in the New Millennium, a conference organised for a group of prominent Japanese businesswomen, at which he admitted and at some length that the collapse of Technomart III was a financial and public relations disaster for Queensland and its image abroad, and I ask: what is he doing to rectify the perception he created as a result of his inappropriate and intemperate words?

**Mr ELDER:** From one of the biggest misquoters in the business, the member for Caloundra! Rest assured, the member for Kurwongbah was there and understood exactly what I said. What I said quite clearly was that it had been a pretty trying day having to explain how a private sector company had gone down the tube, the point being that—

**Mrs SHELDON:** I rise to a point of order. I think the Minister is having a drastic non-recall of his actual words. A little bit of truth would help.

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

**An honourable member** interjected.

**Mr ELDER:** No, the member was not even there. The member would not know. The only member of the Opposition who was there was the member for Caloundra. Of course, fortunately for me, the member for Kurwongbah was also there.

The fact of the matter is that I had actually said that we had had a pretty trying day. I came up from the Gold Coast to open the event because I felt it was a very important event, that it was important to be in there supporting the business community, particularly women in business, and the relationships between the Japanese business community and the Queensland business community. It was particularly important to be supporting those businesswomen who had been endeavouring to break through the glass ceiling in their organisations. I was there supporting the conference because this Government and my department have been

principal sponsors and supporters of many events such as this and have actually increased the funding for programs such as this to make sure that those people—those women themselves—

**Mrs SHELDON:** I rise to a point of order. His department certainly did not help or fund this project.

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

**Mr ELDER:** But I did not say I did. The member should read the Hansard. What I did say is that, as a Government, we have been sponsoring similar events and, as a Government, we have been providing extra funding for programs such as this—programs, I might add, that were cut when she was the Treasurer in this State. When she was Treasurer in this State, the funding to women in business programs was cut. It was this Government that restored the funding and gave those programs the profile they needed to help businesswomen in this State, and I was very happy to be there to support that particular program and to support that particular event.

I did say that the APEC Technomart was more about style than substance. That was the comment I made in relation to it. They knew exactly what I meant and so did the Brisbane businesswomen in terms of the role of those people who were charged with organising this event which, of course, was the private sector. Again, I come back to the point: this was a private sector run event; it was certainly not a Government run event. We were sponsors. We were not the major sponsor—the Federal Government was the principal sponsor—but we did what we did in Queensland's interest. It is in stark contrast to a number of decisions that were made by the member opposite when she was in Government such as the decision that she made to fund the Starland project. If I had some more time, I might talk about the Starland project.

#### **Venture Capital Conference**

**Mr MUSGROVE:** I ask the Minister for State Development and Trade: can he advise the House of the outcomes of the venture capital conference sponsored and supported by the State Government and held on the Gold Coast last week?

**Mr ELDER:** The question is about something positive, and it was a positive for the Gold Coast. However, I will not let the member for Caloundra off on Starland; I will

come back to it. Those opposite were quick to jump on the bandwagon, particularly the acting Leader of the Opposition—and I give credit to those members on the coast who did not—to actually knock the event and to undermine the Gold Coast. The fact of the matter is that what they completely ignored was the success of the venture capital conference. That venture capital conference has helped provide an estimated \$87m worth of business transactions now under negotiation.

I will give honourable members some examples. A Brisbane company is negotiating a contract worth \$200,000 to build prototype fibre optic lighting systems. A Gold Coast business is seeking to link with a venture capitalist interested in early stage equity finance. That is around \$500,000 for an indoor, high tech recreation facility. As a result of this, an international construction company is negotiating equity capital worth \$300,000 for the construction of a related software project with a Brisbane company. A regional New South Wales project worth up to \$35m for the establishment of a technology park precinct for the development of manufacturing plant and medicine technology has also come out of this particular conference.

I want to turn now to those who attended the conference and to the support that we received from the venture capitalists themselves. I should thank the staff of the Departments of State Development and Premier for working into the early morning, as I said earlier, sliding the invitations under hotel doors on the Gold Coast to let people know that this conference was still on and that the venture capital conference would be supported by the Government. We intervened and ran that event, and it was a highly successful event. I will quote what some companies said. NBC Capital said—

"Your intervention ensured the forum was professionally run and we were able to keep face with our international visitors."

The Gartner Group said—

"... I was very pleased to see the intervention of the Government to ensure the success of this important gathering of investment leaders from within Australia and overseas."

The Corby Group said—

"It bodes well for the future of this State, that the Premier and Deputy Premier were willing to get totally involved with the industry and thought of the future of the State rather than pondering over the correct political position."

One company, Identikay, actually wrote to the Courier-Mail. It is a small company—an internationally established Internet company—and it applauded the State Government in keeping alive the venture capital forum. They said—

"... I was approached by two venture capitalists (one from Israel) and two venture catalysts, who wish to work with us to expand our network."

Then they commended the Government for its activity. I could go to Martin Lack. He said—

"Congratulations on the way you turned a potential negative situation into a big positive for Queensland."

I could go to Coates Myer—I have already mentioned the Gartner Group—or Frank Downes or a number of them who have written to both the Premier and me congratulating us on a very successful event. It brought together all the international experts and the Brisbane, Queensland and Australian community, and it has been seen by all as highly successful.

#### APEC Technomart

**Mr CONNOR:** I refer the Deputy Premier to those delegates and companies who outlaid many thousands of dollars believing his Government's salesmanship of the failed APEC Technomart conference, and I ask: in view of the huge international embarrassment to Queensland that has followed this fiasco, what action will his Government take to ensure compensation to companies and delegates who have lost hundreds of thousands of dollars?

**Mr ELDER:** Again, we have another misleading statement in the question. For all of those opposite let me just repeat what I have said. I would have thought that, with the member's great championship of the private sector, he would have understood what I have been saying in question time. This was a private sector enterprise; this was a private sector function. We were sponsors. I outlined the terms of our activity—that is, as a Government—in my statement to the House today and the actions that we took in relation to it. This was principally sponsored by the Federal Government. For the member's information, I might just—

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Let the Minister answer the question.

**Mr ELDER:**—quote Margaret May, MP, the Federal member for McPherson, who on 19 October—not too long before this particular

event—said that all levels of Government should be applauded in their efforts to support APEC Technomart III, a technological exposition to be staged on the Gold Coast. She said that Australia sees APEC as a primary vehicle for promoting open trade and practical cooperation between the 21 participating companies.

**Mr Beattie:** She wasn't being a salesman for it!

**Mr ELDER:** She was not being a salesman, was she? I would not have thought so. Could she be considered a salesman by saying that—of course she could! In common with all other members, that Federal member was supporting the APEC conference. We intervened; we did not scuttle that conference.

**Mr Connor:** So you're not taking any responsibility?

**Mr ELDER:** We did take responsibility. We intervened and set up a venture capital conference that was successful. That was the most successful venture capital conference that has been run in Queensland. If the member had listened to my ministerial statement this morning, he would have heard that it was the intervention of this Government, which was determined not to allow it to be scuttled, that resulted in a very successful venture capital conference. We were out to save that forum and our reputation.

I will continue telling the House what others have said. Frank Downes and Associates were there, and in a letter stated—

"I want to take the time to express my congratulations to the Government in general and to Premier Peter Beattie and Minister Jim Elder ..."

A letter from Coates Myer and Company stated—

"I would like to take this opportunity to thank you and the Premier for the turnaround you performed on the failed APEC Technomart Venture Capital conference. Your staff were fantastic pulling together a very useful one day conference from the ashes of the previous programme."

The letter goes on to say—

"I made some useful new contacts, which will benefit our Queensland biotechnology firms ..."

A letter from Corporation Builders stated—

"I would like to personally congratulate you and your Department on the successful salvage of the International Venture Capital Forum ..."

The day was managed extremely well considering the short notice ...

The level of time and support that Mr Beattie and yourself gave the event sent out a positive message to both the interstate and international investment community on your dedication to the development of a venture capital industry in Queensland."

It is a shame that I am out of time, but I am sure I will be asked another question on this subject.

Time expired.

### TAB Share Offer

**Mr REEVES:** I ask the Treasurer: what has been the response to the public offer of shares in the Queensland TAB?

**Mr HAMILL:** It was with great confidence that we entered into what has been a very important partnership with the racing industry by floating the Queensland TAB. We have been overwhelmed by the strong public support that has been forthcoming. As at the close of business on Thursday, which was a day before the closure of the retail offer, the joint managers had received 90,000 applications for shares in the Queensland TAB from the general pool. By close of business on Friday, a further 30,000 applications were received. In all, some 167 million shares have been sought through that general pool. The general pool has only 65.5 million shares available to it, although the brokers are also reporting that a significant demand is coming through the broker firm applications, which is a further extension of that retail market.

Tomorrow the book building process commences with the interest from institutional investors. Next weekend a lot of work will be done to make the allocation of shares to the applicants. We will be consistent with what we indicated at the outset: Queenslanders will be given preference. As we sort through and ensure that there is no doubling up of applications and so on, I believe there will be a reasonable allocation of shares to each of those applicants.

I think it is worth noting that, compared with the situation that prevailed in New South Wales, we are nowhere near—

**Mr Veivers** interjected.

**Mr HAMILL:** I think "Mogadon" is calling a race over there.

We are nowhere near the situation that prevailed in New South Wales where, in the

case of the TAB float in that State, there was such significant oversubscription that applicants had to have their applications scaled down. In fact, only 260 shares were allocated to those who had applied in New South Wales. Although the minimum application in Queensland was 700, I certainly do not anticipate any scaling down to an extent anything like that which occurred in New South Wales. One thing remains certain in all of this: the TAB has proved to be a very popular product in the marketplace and the people of Queensland have rallied in their thousands to have a stake in what will be a very significant Queensland company.

### APEC Technomart

**Mr QUINN:** I refer the Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development to his ministerial statement on the APEC Technomart in which he indicated that a rescue package should involve "up to a maximum of \$300,000 in enhanced sponsorship to meet certain specific costs that were unavoidable". I ask: how much of that \$300,000 has already been paid out by the Government?

**Mr ELDER:** The fact of the matter is: none. If the member listened to what I said and had read the particular statement, he would know that I said "up to a maximum". Those matters now are before Crown Law, our lawyers and those who are involved. We put a rescue package in place. The commitment made by the directors of that company was a commitment that they reneged on. Any other matter in relation to our support is a matter for legal opinion and legal advice.

I will deal with how this Government runs projects and how the former Government ran projects. I mentioned earlier the Starland project. In this case, we endeavoured to negotiate a contracted way through what was seeming to be and what eventually did become a failure in terms of that private sector enterprise. We were looking after the reputation of the State, the taxpayers' interests and the Gold Coast's interests. That was not the position of the Leader of the Opposition. Let us return to Starland. Honourable members will recall Starland: it was the Disneyland project. In January 1998 the Leader of the Opposition needed a project. He went looking for Starland; he went to Adventureland.

**Mr Gibbs:** Fantasyland.

**Mr ELDER:** I will come to Fantasyland. He certainly ended up in Fantasyland.

When the proponents came through his door and approached the coalition about the proposal—after unsuccessful proposals to the former Goss Government and the Kennett Government in 1996-97—they were looking for \$2.1m for a pre-feasibility study. They said, "We do not need to do the due diligence, because we have inside knowledge of the working and politics of the Disney organisation, especially through the history of contracts that we have had since 1991." It was with Mr Dick Nunis, the Chairman of the Theme Park Division of Walt Disney, that they had those contacts.

**Mr Hamill:** They thought they were dealing with Goofy.

**Mr ELDER:** By that stage, they were well away from Adventureland and on their way to Fantasyland. They committed the people of Queensland to a loan of \$1.4m, which was never paid. In a sense, it was moved off the books and was a cash grant of \$1.4m. On top of that, they paid over \$200,000 in consultancy fees. By this stage they were in Fantasyland. The Leader of the Opposition was looking at Tomorrowland: he needed a project.

**Mr Borbidge:** They've gone to Hong Kong.

**Mr ELDER:** They certainly have gone to Hong Kong. They went to Hong Kong with \$2m of our money.

**Mr BORBIDGE:** I rise to a point of order. The Deputy Premier is misleading the House. All the information obtained by that particular group remains the property of the Government of Queensland.

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

**Mr ELDER:** It is now out of the forums of the Parliament of Queensland. The Hong Kong taxpayers are paying \$4.5 billion for Hong Kong Disney. Disney is putting in \$500m. The former Government did not do any due diligence at all.

### Q-Build Apprenticeships

**Mr MULHERIN:** I refer the Minister for Public Works and Minister for Housing to the apprentice training programs operated by Q-Build within the Department of Public Works and Department of Housing. Can the Minister indicate whether an intake of Q-Build apprentices is planned for the year 2000?

**Mr SCHWARTEN:** It is pleasing to see that at least members on this side of the Chamber are interested in young people's

futures in this State instead of the nitpicking that we have heard here this morning. The short answer is: yes. Advertisements will go out this weekend for apprentices, inviting expressions of interest from people over the age of 15. We are advertising in the daily newspapers, including the Courier-Mail, to broaden the net. Last year some 3,500 people were interested in those apprenticeships. There is no reason to doubt that that will again be the popular sentiment in Queensland.

The target group is young women, as well as young men, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people with disabilities and people from non-English speaking backgrounds. To be eligible, people must have completed Year 10. There are apprenticeships in the areas of carpentry, painting, plumbing, upholstery, refrigeration mechanics, joinery and glazing. In the intake earlier this year we took in 140 apprentices. Next year there will be another 140 job opportunities offered to young Queenslanders.

Next year there will be those who stay on when they complete their apprenticeship. The trend over recent years has been to send apprentices out the gate once they have completed their time. However we found that, especially in the plumbing area, that means those people do not come out licensed and their employability is affected as a result. Next year, despite keeping on apprentices who have come out of their time, we will maintain 140 positions. That includes school-based apprenticeships.

We know that the Opposition does not support Q-Build. The record of this Parliament speaks for itself in that regard. I have to say: Q-Build is not a pachyderm. It is not a thick-skinned body out there. The people in Q-Build are very dedicated, hardworking people who have feelings like the rest of us. I reassure them that we on this side of the Parliament value the efforts they make and the opportunities they will provide for young people again next year.

### Electricity Charges

**Mr ROWELL:** I refer the Minister for Mines and Energy to power prices at 9 a.m. today as posted on the web and which I table. Per megawatt hour they are: \$21 in New South Wales, \$21 in Victoria, \$42 in South Australia and \$76.82 in Queensland. This morning the price in Queensland was more than three times the price of power in New South Wales and Victoria. I ask: will power prices for Queensland have to go up because the Minister has dumped the responsibility for

uniform tariffs on Energex and Ergon? The Minister was massively wrong last year. Will he be wrong again this year?

**Mr McGRADY:** I thank the honourable member for the question. There is such a thing as spot prices. The member referred to 9 o'clock this morning. I am sorry, but as yet I have not been advised what the spot price was at 9 o'clock.

**Mr Rowell** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The member has asked the question. He will allow it to be answered.

**Mr McGRADY:** As one of the two shareholding Ministers in the generating companies in this State, I think we should be rubbing our hands together if the prices are that high. The member opposite gave the price as at 9 o'clock this morning. The prices will not be going up, as members opposite should know.

The member for Hinchinbrook talked about tariff equalisation. During the last sittings I gave an answer in the Parliament to the effect that it is the fundamental policy of this Government that tariff equalisation will stay. What do we have? We have the member for Hinchinbrook and some of his colleagues running up and down the State claiming that prices will increase 300%. What do we have to do to get the message home to the member for Hinchinbrook and his colleagues that tariff equalisation is a fundamental part of the policy of the Beattie Labor Government?

**Mr Rowell** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Hinchinbrook will cease interjecting.

**Mr McGRADY:** I will say it again: tariff equalisation is a fundamental policy of the Beattie Labor Government. Does the member understand? Does the member understand what we are saying? He is sitting in his office, sending out press releases, trying to frighten the people of this State regarding power prices. I say to the Opposition: there have been no increases in the price of power since the Goss days—no increases at all. We as a Government want and intend to provide an efficient, reliable, inexpensive power service to the people of this State.

In the minute I have left, I will try to drive home to the member for Hinchinbrook and his colleagues what they did to the electricity industry in the few short years the coalition had control of the Treasury benches. The industry was in total chaos. Blackouts and brownouts were the order of the day. The power generating companies again were in turmoil. I

will never let those opposite forget what they did to the industry in this State.

**Mr Rowell** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Hinchinbrook! That is my final warning! I call the member for Nudgee.

### Energy Industry, Year 2000 Compliance

**Mr ROBERTS:** I direct a question to the Minister for Mines and Energy. I understand that Energex has been carrying out tests on its distribution system which are related to issues associated with the year 2000, and I ask: can the Minister inform the House of the status of these tests and whether any problems have been found?

**Mr McGRADY:** I thank the member for Nudgee for the question. It is quite pleasing to have some positive questions from this side of the House. This morning I am delighted to inform the House of the result of these tests. Energex's entire electricity network, right across the south-east part of this State, has now been successfully tested in live year 2000 conditions. The testing was completed without resulting in any disruption to electricity supply, and I am pleased to report that no millennium bugs that would threaten electricity supply on 1 January next year were identified.

The testing started on 29 October and ran for six days, during which time the equipment and systems critical to electricity supply were tested for year 2000 compliance. The testing was carefully controlled and monitored and was independently audited by specialists in this type of exercise.

In the initial stages, Energex isolated one small area of the network and rolled the clocks forward into the year 2000 to check how the equipment and systems responded to the date change. Once they were satisfied that the system was operating normally, they then moved the entire network forward into the 21st century. This level of testing demonstrates that Energex is making every effort to identify and fix any potential effects of the year 2000 date rollover. As I said, there were no disruptions caused by the testing and there were no bugs found. I have been assured that Energex will continue to test and retest to even further reduce the odds of anything untoward happening.

Energex is one of the few electricity distributors throughout Australia that has conducted such comprehensive tests across the entire distribution network. This level of testing is good news for electricity users as it provides a greater level of confidence for

homes and businesses right throughout the whole region. The tests acted as a dry run for the year 2000. I believe they indicate that it will be business as usual for the electricity supply industry when the clock strikes midnight on 31 December 1999.

### **Royal Queensland Bowls Association**

**Mr HEALY:** My question is directed to the Minister for Tourism, Sport and Racing. I refer to a letter sent to him on Friday, 29 October from Mr John English, General Manager of Royal Queensland Bowls Association—I have been given a copy of this letter—in which the association continues to inquire about a funding cutback, despite the Minister's assurances to the House on 27 October that they were wrong. The letter states—

"Last Friday, October 22, I received a phone call from ... an officer in your department—

he names that officer—

"during which she informed me our funding for the year 2000 would be \$87,000. She also stated that the department had suffered a \$20 million cut in funding from Treasury."

I ask: given the Minister's constant denial of any cutback, who is telling the truth—the Minister or his departmental officer?

**Mr GIBBS:** One thing is obvious from the member's question: he is well behind the eight ball. If there was a \$20m cut, the question has to be asked: why did he not pick it up during the Estimates debate?

**Mr HEALY:** I rise to a point of order.

**Mr GIBBS:** It is reminiscent of that song "What kind of fool am I?"

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr HEALY:** I rise to a point of order. The Minister is misleading the House. I did ask about it, and he answered it.

**Mr GIBBS:** Of course I answered it, and I thought that the member was well satisfied with the answer. The reality is that there were carryovers in the Sport and Recreation Fund budget for the last financial year of almost \$20m. Surely the member would appreciate that this has happened not only under this Government but under previous Governments. This is probably the most notorious portfolio for carryovers, the reason being—normally—inclement weather, which holds up building projects which are committed to and, secondly, in many cases—sadly—throughout this State, the lack of ability in some cases of local

governments or local authorities to be able to give approvals on time to get building projects under way. As I have indicated, there has been no cutback of \$20m in our budget whatsoever. The carryovers which exist will certainly top up. There will be no effect on the funding to any sport program this year. None of our sport and recreation funding programs will be affected in any way, and no sport or recreation organisation will be disadvantaged.

During the Estimates debate here in the Chamber, I gave what I believe was a perfectly reasonable explanation about the situation in relation to the Royal Queensland Bowls Association. It is no different from any other sporting organisation. Organisations make applications for funding and, very often, what comes in tends to be, in some cases, a bit of a wish list or a bit of an exaggeration of what they want. The member knows full well that not every sporting organisation throughout Queensland gets what it asks for. That would be impossible. We would never fund them all.

The RQBA certainly did receive a cutback to some degree—I think it was about \$20,000, if I recall correctly—in its funding application. But the Royal Queensland Bowls Association has done exceptionally well out of Governments—the member's Government and our Government—it will continue to do well, and it should have no concern about its funding in the future.

### **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Teachers**

**Dr CLARK:** I direct my question to the Honourable Minister for Education. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers and principals provide excellent role models for young indigenous students. It is also well recognised that their skills, knowledge and leadership contribute significantly to improving educational outcomes for indigenous students. I therefore ask the Minister: what is he doing to encourage more indigenous people to take up teaching as a profession?

**Mr WELLS:** The honourable member for Barron River has often spoken to me with a view to advancing the concerns of indigenous people in her own electorate, and her representations have come to fruition. The Beattie Labor Government has established 20 scholarships, valued at up to \$20,000, for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are interested in teaching as a career. The new scholarships are part of the Government's plan to create a teaching work force that is more reflective of the client base and to provide employment opportunities for

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This Government wants indigenous people to be trained to work as fully fledged teachers in their own communities so that they can provide important cross-cultural experiences for non-indigenous students, as well. Indigenous people in the teaching profession play an important role in the reconciliation process by helping to build respect among young Queenslanders, whatever their background.

These scholarships will provide financial assistance for students to complete a Bachelor of Education at a Queensland university. Scholarships for successful applicants entering a four-year Bachelor of Education course are valued at a maximum of \$20,000. For successful applicants commencing a postgraduate two-year Bachelor of Education course, the scholarships are valued at \$10,000. There are four categories, which honourable members might like to note and encourage their constituents to apply for in appropriate circumstances. There are three scholarships for Year 12 students, three for current Education Queensland employees, seven for non-school leavers and seven for students requiring only a postgraduate Bachelor of Education.

Scholarship holders are guaranteed employment with Education Queensland after the satisfactory completion of their course. Employment is conditional on the scholarship holder maintaining teacher registration and being willing to be employed in any geographical location in Queensland—which is the usual requirement. The scholarships are available for students currently in Year 12, current employees of Education Queensland, non-school leavers and postgraduate students.

If students want to get further information by means of contacting Education Queensland, they can ring Education Queensland, but I will be advising all honourable members so that they can provide that information directly to their constituents.

### Electricity Supply

**Mr FELDMAN:** I direct a question to the Minister for Mines and Energy. In light of his posturing a short time ago, a recent report in the Gympie Times on 6 November outlines numerous power outages in the Gympie and Mary Valleys, with some outages lasting between two and eight hours. Residents have even taken up a petition, and it has been the subject of much debate in the Cooloola Shire Council. I ask the Minister: is it to be a

continual reflection of his administration and his Government's inaction with respect to maintenance in the power industry that primary producers, small business and residents of the Mary Valley, which includes Gympie, have to buy and install their own generators to ensure adequate power supply? This recent report in the Gympie Times even outlines the concern that it may not be maintenance but may be deliberate load shedding. What can the Minister tell us that will allay the fears of those paying customers of Energex that there is no load shedding and that there will be no more outages?

**Mr McGRADY:** From day one, it has been the policy of this Government, and myself as the Minister, to do all we can to reduce power outages. I will take members' minds back to the days of the coalition. I mentioned this before. Blackouts and brownouts were the order of the day, whether one lived in Gympie or in Brisbane. We all know that.

**Mr FELDMAN:** I rise to a point of order. We are not going back to the days of the coalition. Mr Speaker, this is his Government. It is his administration. It is up to him to fix the problems that are occurring now.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! There is no point of order. The member will resume his seat.

**Mr McGRADY:** I have had regular discussions with Energex about some of the problems still in the system. They are not generating problems. They could be the result of a truck running down a pole. It could be a problem with a bird strike. There are numerous potential problems which are certainly beyond the capacity of the Minister to resolve.

If the member will supply me with the report that he has received in his office, I will give him this assurance now: I will have every single one of those complaints investigated, and I will get back to him. But in regard to the question he asked—was it a deliberate policy of Energex or, indeed, this Government to have this load shedding—that is certainly not the policy of this Government or this Minister. And if the member can supply me with any evidence that backs up his claim, I will certainly have it investigated. But as far as I am concerned, the role of this Government is to keep the lights on.

### Wolston Park Youth Detention Centre

**Mrs LAVARCH:** I ask the Minister for Families, Youth and Community Care: can she please outline the progress of the construction of the new youth detention centre in the Wolston Park precinct?

**Ms BLIGH:** I am very pleased to announce that the site works for the new centre have in fact started. They started on Friday and are now well on track. With the site works already occurring, the construction of the centre is now on track for completion, as we promised, by the end of the year 2000 and in operation by early 2001, when we will, as promised, be able to close the Sir Leslie Wilson Youth Detention Centre.

This stands in stark contrast to the performance of our predecessors. They inherited a good site. They inherited a budget. They gave away the site. They did nothing with the budget. They knew how bad our State's youth detention centres were, and they did nothing. Former Corrective Services Minister Russell Cooper told the Sunday Mail more than three years ago that those two centres needed to be fixed and that he would be moving as rapidly as he could. I would hate to see him move slowly!

**Mr Schwarten:** A pachyderm would move faster.

**Ms BLIGH:** A pachyderm would move faster than him. But members opposite failed to deliver on the promise. Mr Cooper even wrote to the local residents promising to close that facility, but nothing happened.

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

## MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

### APEC Technomart

**Hon. R. E. BORBIDGE** (Surfers Paradise—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition) (11.30 a.m.): This morning we heard more from the Deputy Premier in respect of the Government's involvement, or lack of involvement—hands-free driving—in respect of the Technomart disaster on the Gold Coast. I should apologise to the Deputy Premier because, after listening to him this morning, I believe that I may have misrepresented him. I have been saying that he knew back in August about the problems which have so tarnished Queensland's international reputation. I apologise. I was wrong because the Deputy Premier admitted to the Parliament this morning that he knew about potential problems from day one. Let me quote from what the Deputy Premier said—

"The Queensland Government was first approached in the dying days of the Borbidge/Sheldon Government, which provided in-principle support for the technomart. As a new Government, we were approached by the principals of

PacRim for confirmation of support. At that time we identified that one risk was the potential failure of the event due to poor organisation and correspondingly low numbers of acceptances."

They are the words of the Deputy Premier—the words of the techno dud in this Parliament today. He knew this from day one. This incompetent Minister knew about the potential problems and he never worked it out.

Let us have a look at the record. Let us look at the enlightenment with which the Parliament has been provided this morning. As I have indicated, this Government was aware of the potential failure of the event from the moment it considered it at an unspecified date, but it was a "new Government", to quote the Minister, with concerns about "poor organisation and correspondingly low numbers of acceptances."

Notwithstanding this, the Beattie Government formally endorsed it on 28 November last year and established an interdepartmental working group under Mr Elder's department on the understanding that the Government would closely monitor developments. Minister Elder says that considerable human resources from the Premier's Department, the Department of Local Government and his own department were at work. There were initially monthly and then weekly meetings. The Minister says that in mid August there was more concern, namely about the number of delegates. As a result, a letter was sent to PacRim seeking data on the number of participants. The correspondence was not answered!

Did that ring any alarm bells with the Minister for State Development, with the Premier or with the Government? Apparently not! They went back to sleep. They went back to promoting themselves, which is their idea of what governing Queensland is all about. Thereafter, this Minister continued to accept simple assurances that everything was okay. They told him that it was okay, so he said that it was okay. Never mind Queensland's international reputation! Never mind the fact that the job strategy of this Government has been built around the Smart State strategy that has been the cornerstone of Labor's economic development policy in this State! The Government says, "They are telling us it's okay, so it must be."

What do we have? We have a situation where the Government knew about the potential for failure of the event from day one of its involvement. Despite an interdepartmental working group, including

representatives from the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, from the Department of Local Government and from the Department of State Development, those opposite remained totally in the dark. They never found out what was going on. Presumably, they never asked or, if they did ask, they believed what was being told to them without having an independent assessment or an independent audit.

What a hopeless, shabby, disgraceful way to mortgage Queensland's international business reputation and make us the laughing stock of the information technology industry right around the world! Then, incredibly, despite the fact that these problems had been going on for some time, along came supersalesman Pete—supersalesman Beattie. He gave himself that tag in a ministerial media statement on 8 October 1999. Let us read it in to the record—

"Premier to be super salesman for smart state and Technomart.

Premier Peter Beattie will use his trade trip to Japan next week to act as a super salesman for Queensland's emerging high tech research and industry which will be on display at Australia's biggest ever technology conference and expo in November.

'APEC Technomart on the Gold Coast from November 1-6 will be an ideal showcase for Queensland's achievements and potential in high tech development,' said Mr Beattie."

This Premier has become an international embarrassment to Queensland. His Government has become an international embarrassment to our State.

I can remember a previous occasion when a Minister in my Government launched a particular exercise which fell on difficult financial times. Those opposite demanded his head. They said that the Minister should be sacked. Well, let us see Premier Beattie and let us see the born-again former Deputy Opposition Leader, Minister Elder, apply to themselves the same standards of public accountability that they demanded when they were sitting on the Opposition benches.

But it is always someone else's fault! It is the fault of the Federal Government. It is the fault of the previous Government. It is the fault of Joh Bjelke-Petersen. It is always someone else's fault. That is the Beattie doctrine: it is always someone else's fault.

The Premier of the day is the custodian of Queensland's international reputation. Over the years, in the field of IT, Governments on both sides of this House have worked hard to nurture and to protect that international reputation. But what do we have now? In the IT area—the area that is absolutely crucial in terms of the next millennium for the State of Queensland—we have a Government presided over by a leader who is now viewed by experts in that industry not only as a State joke, not only as a national joke, but as an international joke.

Let us look at the consequences. On being offered Expo when the Philippines withdrew—when everyone knew that the Philippines were going to withdraw—the Premier did not want it. Because the Premier reneged on the support that he gave for that particular event when he was Opposition Leader, no other Australian State can make application for a World Expo because people will say, "What about that funny Peter Beattie in Queensland? We offered him Expo in 1999, something which he said he supported when he was Opposition Leader, but he said, 'It is all too hard; we don't want it any more.'"

The same applies now to major IT conferences. What chance now Queensland, or Australia for that matter, ever hosting another Technomart? What chance is there of this great State of ours redeeming our lost reputation as a result of the actions of the master of the press release and the infidel of substance in Government?

What has happened in respect of this particular venture demonstrates incompetence on the part of the Deputy Premier, it demonstrates incompetence on the part of the Premier and it represents incompetence on the part of the Government. One simply would not put one's coat of arms and the whole imprimatur of the State of Queensland on a particular venture when one knew as long ago as August that there were problems. If we believe what the Deputy Premier has told the Parliament today, he effectively knew from day one that there was potential for failure of the event due to "poor organisation and correspondingly low numbers of acceptances".

If the Deputy Premier knew that shortly after he became the Minister, why did he not make sure that that did not happen? The fact is that this Government has traded in Queensland's hard-won international reputation. It has done immense damage. It deserves and it warrants the censure of the people of Queensland.

### Goods and Services Tax

**Mr NUTTALL** (Sandgate—ALP) (11.40 a.m.): Last Saturday, Australians voted for no change to our Constitution. However, come 1 July next year, we as a nation will probably undergo one of the greatest changes that we have experienced this century, and that is the change to our income tax system. My contribution today will be on the GST and in particular the variances between the PAYE tax rates and the company tax rates that will eventuate as a result of the GST.

We have been told by the Federal Government that, under the GST, we will receive massive cuts to personal income tax and increases in family payments. We have also been told that self-funded retirees and pensioners with savings and investments will benefit from one-off untaxed bonuses to help maintain the value of their savings and retirement income. However, I put to the citizens of this State that we are being conned.

I refer to today's PAYE tax rate and the tax rates that are to come in. Basically, under the new arrangements to come in next year, there will be four tax scales. At the moment, the tax scale ranges from nothing for an income of up to \$5,400 to 47c in the dollar for earnings over \$50,000. Under the new tax scales, there will be nothing up to \$6,000—so that is a lousy extra \$600 people are being allowed to earn—and there will still be a 47c in the dollar tax rate for people earning in excess of \$60,000. The average income for PAYE workers is between \$20,000 and \$50,000. Under the current scheme, those workers pay income tax at the rate of 43c in the dollar. Under the new scheme, we are told that their income tax rate will be 30c in the dollar. However, the difficulty is these tax scales are not indexed in any way. Within three years, the average PAYE worker will be earning somewhere in the vicinity of from \$40,000 to in excess of \$50,000 a year.

At this point the average PAYE worker receives a pay rise of approximately 4% per annum. I understand that, currently, both unions and employers are trying to stitch up a three-year enterprise bargaining package of around 4% a year. On that basis, a teacher, for example, will receive a 12% pay rise over three years. The average teacher earns somewhere between \$40,000 and \$45,000. Under that enterprise bargaining package, those earnings will creep over the \$50,000 mark. Therefore, because this new tax scale is not indexed, within three to five years not only teachers but also people in other professions will end up paying income tax of up to 42c in

the dollar. Once workers get over the \$60,000 a year mark, they will pay income tax at the rate of 47c in the dollar. I believe that the Democrats have a lot to answer for in their negotiations with the Federal Government because, under this new tax rate, the PAYE worker will be stung fairly severely.

I turn now to company tax rates. The Federal Treasurer has indicated that in the 2000-01 financial year the company tax rate will be 34c in the dollar. In the 2001-02 financial year, the company tax rate will then drop to 30c in the dollar. Therefore, companies will not have to worry about a tax scale; they will just have a flat tax rate of 30c in the dollar. So we will have companies paying income tax at the rate of 30c in the dollar and PAYE workers paying income tax at the rate of between 42c and 47c in the dollar. That will lead to what we experienced back in the 1970s and the early 1980s—the flourishing of bottom of the harbour schemes. Because of the tax scale, PAYE workers will be forced to try to find other avenues through which they can minimise their tax. We have already had national inquiries into bottom of the harbour schemes.

There is no incentive in the new tax system for PAYE workers to be rewarded in any way for working harder simply because, if they do, their extra earnings will push their income into the top income tax rate. Yet companies will pay a flat rate of income tax of 30c in the dollar. I do not believe that is fair. For example, a joiner, a carpenter or a builder who employs one or two people will, as a company, pay income tax at the flat rate of 30c in the dollar. That is grossly unfair, particularly as the new tax scales for PAYE workers will not be indexed. I believe that was a gross error of judgment on the part of the Democrats in their negotiations with the coalition in relation to this matter.

I do not believe that the tax reforms have gone far enough. I do not necessarily support a flat tax system. However, if companies pay income tax at the flat rate of 30c in the dollar, why do PAYE workers have to pay income tax at the rate of anything between 42c and 47c in the dollar? That is unfair. It means that PAYE workers will bear the burden of paying most of the tax.

**Mr Reynolds:** It's a Tory tax.

**Mr NUTTALL:** I take the interjection from the honourable member for Townsville, because that is exactly what it is. Under this new tax rate, employees will suffer the most. As I said at the start of my speech, in my view it is important that companies are encouraged

and are given incentives to build their business so that they can create more jobs. I would be the first person to support that. However, I do not support that encouragement at the expense of the PAYE worker. Why in heaven's name do we have to have such a huge tax rate for PAYE workers of between 42c and 47c in the dollar?

I honestly believe that the Federal Government will receive a great windfall from the GST. I believe that people have grossly underestimated the implications of the GST. It is a consumption-based tax and, of course, the people who will suffer the most from it are those who have large families and who have to buy the basic necessities for their children. So those people are whacked at the purchasing end and then they are whacked at the tax rate end. In my view, a tax rate of up to 47c in the dollar is no incentive to help reduce unemployment. People will simply opt out of the system. Once workers' earnings go over the \$50,000 mark, they will fall into the higher tax bracket. The GST is an unfair tax on PAYE workers. To say the least, the tax scales need to be indexed and the maximum tax rate that should be applied to PAYE workers should be the same as that applied to companies, and that is 30c in the dollar. Otherwise we will see a proliferation of bottom of the harbour schemes.

Time expired.

### Public Sector Cronyism

**Mr SANTORO** (Clayfield—LP) (11.50 a.m.): I acknowledge in the public gallery the presence of the hardworking, well-behaved and conscientious students from the Eagle Junction State School. That school is within my electorate of Clayfield and is one of the finest in Queensland.

I have an admission to make to the House. When I last spoke on Labor Party cronyism, I inadvertently gave misleading information to the Parliament and for that I wish to apologise. I informed the House that there were seven chief executives appointed by this Government without their positions being advertised and without a selection panel being convened. I suggested that there were seven appointments to top jobs in the Queensland Public Service that did not go through a merit and equity selection process, and with remuneration packages ranging from \$198,392 to \$227,391. I was wrong, and I wish to thank the Premier for correcting me. There have not been seven such CEO appointments. In fact, to this point in time

there have been 11 such appointments. That is right: 11.

In an answer to a question on notice in the Estimates hearings, the Premier disclosed that 11 CEOs have been directly appointed without a merit and equity selection process. The appointees as disclosed by the Premier are Marg O'Donnell, Terry Moran, Bob Marshman, Barry Carbon, Ken Smith, Jane Macdonnell, Glyn Davis, Ross Rolfe, David Williams, Gerard Bradley and Brian Head. I will save for another time the information that I have on some of those individuals. I intend to focus my comments on the man in the top job in the Public Service, Glyn Davis.

Today I do not intend to make any comments about Jane Macdonnell, the chief executive officer of the Department of Justice, despite the revelations during the Estimates hearings of her obtaining a \$2,000 plus cash-in-hand advantage from private air travel arrangements or that the taxpayers have paid more than \$4,000 to hire furniture for her home. I will not even deal with her blatant misuse of departmental email facilities to attempt to solicit staff to assist in her planned private litigation against the media for fairly reporting the Estimates proceedings. All I say is that the standard of conduct engaged in by Ms Macdonnell speaks for itself, and I will let others judge her. I do not want to unduly provoke the thin-skinned, second-rate thespian member for Yeronga into yet another reading to the House from his well-used paperback book of Shakespearian quotations. One ham performance per session is about all most of us can take.

I think that the public needs to know a little about how Dr Glyn Davis, the prime meritless appointment of the Beattie Government, is operating in the Premier's Department. Davis is a well-known Griffith University academic who first arrived on the Queensland political stage with the Goss Government as the Commissioner for Equity in the inequitable Public Sector Management Commission. He ended up as the Director-General of the Office of Cabinet in the dying days of the Goss Government and then retreated to academia, awaiting the return of his Labor mates so he could again pontificate in the Executive Building at taxpayers' expense. He is back again and I must say that he is a prime example of how the Beattie Government is operating.

Dr Davis has achieved next to nothing, he has wasted significant amounts of public money and he has been hell bent on looking after his mates. If his record under Wayne

Goss makes the Invisible Man look like a Ken Done painting, the same cannot be said for his present performance. Firstly, I will deal with his extravagant use of taxpayers' funds, and I remind honourable members that this is the same department that our so-called frugal Premier is responsible for. I also point out that under our frugal Premier this Government was supposed to be setting new standards of accountability. He and his accountable officers could be establishing new benchmarks. Let us examine the benchmarks set by Dr Glyn Davis.

First, what did this person spend on travel in his first year in the job? Figures disclosed during the Estimates hearings highlighted that in the first financial year of the Beattie Government he spent \$46,345.09 on travel and a further \$10,034.51 on accommodation. In short, Dr Davis has been spending more than \$1,000 per week on travel and accommodation costs alone. Unlike Ms Macdonnell, I do not think that Dr Davis has travelled economy class for some time.

Then we come to the money that Dr Davis has spent on alcohol for his own office on the 15th floor of the Executive Building. He has spent another \$1,019.50 during year one of the new Beattie administration. And what about in-house entertainment for public servants? That is not entertainment for community groups, business lunches or official entertainment. It is entertainment that Dr Davis shouts for fellow public servants. The kind-hearted Dr Davis has again excelled himself. He shouted public servants on 53 occasions alone in his first year in the job. That is more than one occasion a week, although obviously the figure does not include the numerous times he has been interstate and overseas. In the first year of the Beattie Government, he shouted his fellow chief executives a meal on 21 occasions. Then he hosted three so-called senior management forums, costing around \$650. It must have been tough business. There were seven occasions on which he shouted departmental staff. Let us not forget working lunches. One could not expect Dr Davis to buy his own lunch too often. There were 16 of those.

Finally, I come to what are called "departmentally hosted functions". I wonder what those were. I am sure that they must have been good because, although he shouted only four of them, the taxpayers forked out \$300 for the first, \$180 for the second, \$453 for the third and \$762.50 for the last. No lucky public servant who has received an invite to a Dr Davis function could disagree with the fact that he appears to be a generous host with taxpayers' funds.

It is a pity that obviously Dr Davis has not read or has blatantly ignored the guidelines issued for personal expenses by chief executives. If he had read them, he would have seen that the guidelines require that chief executives are not generally allowed to entertain other public servants at the expense of the taxpayers and are required "to be careful to ensure that such occurrences are exceptional". Perhaps under the new frugal Beattie administration, shouting 53 times is exceptional. If so, there must be a new meaning for the word.

One could not disagree with the proposition that Dr Davis is a good mate. As an example, I refer to his own writing companion, Peter Bridgman. This is the same Peter Bridgman who co-wrote a book with Dr Davis entitled *Australian Policy Handbook*, published by Allen and Unwin last year. This is the same Peter Bridgman who, on the election of the Beattie Government and at the request of Glyn Davis, was transferred from the Department of Primary Industries to the Premier's Department. This is the same Peter Bridgman who was subsequently appointed as head of the Legal Policy Directorate in the revamped Office of Cabinet in the Premier's Department. This is the same Peter Bridgman who was appointed by a selection panel even though there was only one applicant for the job. How very convenient! I wonder if anyone on that panel pondered whether merit and equity might have been better served by actually looking for a wider applicant selection pool.

When this Parliament last sat, my friend the Leader of the Opposition highlighted the highly irregular way that the Deputy Director-General of the Premier's Department was being paid. Instead of dealing with this issue, the Premier brought up the Bridgman appointment. This was despite the fact that the matter had not even been raised except in a one-off question that was asked weeks earlier during the Estimates hearings. Talk about a guilty conscience!

When one looks at the list of people acknowledged in the learned publication by our mates Davis and Bridgman, on the whole we see a veritable Who's Who of Labor identities. Our friends acknowledge Jacki Byrne, Margaret Gardiner—no doubt with a special vote of thanks from Davis—Michael Keating, Cynthia Newbown, Philip Selth and Ken Smith. It is almost a Labor factional get-together. By the way, that is the same Jacki Byrne who Dr Davis had appointed to his department on a \$90,000-plus per annum contract to advise on correctional services

matters. No doubt, she is on hand to provide comment on further drafts of publications that he must be writing on how to improve public sector morale by spending taxpayers' funds on in-house entertainment.

The amazing thing is that when questioned during the Estimates hearings, the Premier justified all of these matters. On the issue of entertaining public servants, the Premier said that the 53 shouts only averaged about \$42 a pop. Something Mr and Mrs Average in Inala, Bulimba, Ipswich, Woodridge or Logan may like to ponder is this statement by our frugal Premier—

"He is hardly living the life of Riley. In fact, it seems to me like he cannot even find a decent place to eat. When you scan the list of expenditure, it is obvious that most items are in the vicinity of \$40 or \$50".

This makes one wonder where our frugal Premier is eating if he is so out of touch with reality. For the record, he seems to have forgotten the functions that cost in excess of \$100, of which there were a few, or the function, which was held two weeks before Christmas last year for fellow chief executives, that cost in excess of \$1,000. In fact, the Premier attempted to justify this extravagance by referring to private enterprise and to functions hosted by the coalition Premier's director-general in the Queensland Room. The number and cost of functions hosted by Dr Davis in the Queensland Room or in any other locality for non-public servants was never asked about and is not relevant to the issue of breaching the guidelines for public servants entertaining other public servants at taxpayers' expense.

This Government was supposed to set new and better standards. This was supposed to be a new-age reform Government headed by "Mr Frugality". Instead, we see hypocrisy and snouts in the trough, made even more nauseous by the humbug, hypocrisy and ham acting that is fast becoming the hallmark of this third-rate Government. I will let history judge if Glyn Davis leaves any prints in the sand while he heads the Premier's Department other than those that point to his fast-growing reputation as "Mr Entertainment". I suspect that no decent Queenslanders who look at the public record will think that he is making a decent contribution.

Time expired.

### **Manoora Skills Audit and Training Needs Analysis**

**Ms BOYLE** (Cairns—ALP) (12 p.m.): Today I wish to speak generally about the

Manoora community renewal program and in particular about the Manoora skills audit and training needs analysis, which was conducted recently under the Manoora community renewal program by the Tropical North Queensland Institute of TAFE. Some honourable members might question why this skills audit deserves the attention of this House. However, the results of this well-conducted program are of such interest that they warrant examination by all honourable members, and certainly those concerned about community renewal programs and areas with concentrations of unemployed people and those with limited skills and, therefore, limited career prospects.

The skills audit has significance in five respects. Firstly, it has led the way in that it went beyond the standard format for conducting surveys. Normally, surveys are conducted through the mail, by telephone or by other means, and the results are then accepted, for example, as the basis for the provision of future training programs. Instead, the wise people involved in this audit considered the cultural variations amongst the population in the Manoora area and how the questions that needed to be asked could be adjusted to suit those cultural differences so that information of the highest quality could be obtained through the audit. In that way, the audit was innovative. Because the audit was so well received by those surveyed, ancillary information was also derived about other aspects of the community's needs.

Secondly, the results of the audit challenged the perception—and I fear this is a perception that is widely held around Queensland—that poor people and people who are benefits dependent are unmotivated and uninterested in receiving training, developing skills and joining the mainstream job market. The audit demonstrated that, although there is a lack of confidence and dreadfully low self-esteem in areas of low skilling, the people of Manoora are hungry to develop skills and to have the same prospects as every other Queenslanders when it comes to obtaining a job and the benefits that flow from that.

A third important outcome of the audit is that it highlighted a new dimension with respect to community renewal programs. I am proud that the Beattie Government and the Minister, Robert Swarten, have widened the definition of "community renewal" to take account of community needs well beyond simply the needs of housing. The audit showed that that is a proper direction; that it is essential to skill and educate the community

for community renewal programs to be effective and for employment to be generated.

The fourth point that I wish to make is that this audit leads the way for other areas with concentrations of unemployed people and those who lack skills. Following the example set by this audit, other communities would be able to review their position, highlight areas where training would be of most benefit to them and the means for delivering that training in the most effective manner.

Fifthly, the audit also highlights directions for all of us in Government and across portfolios to consider in both the medium and long terms. The audit in itself is important. However, it now also points the way in terms of the training that must be conducted. Therefore, we need to monitor the effectiveness of the training provided in meeting the needs identified. In the longer term we need to follow through with that monitoring of the true effectiveness of the audit and the ensuing training programs in generating employment for Manoora residents.

I have no doubt that there are already other beneficial flow-ons that are harder to measure, such as the tremendous interest in the Manoora community in participating in this audit. Those who were not surveyed have expressed their disappointment and have requested that they be able to participate in a second stage. The audit has prompted amongst the people of Manoora a call for more innovative training delivery within the community and it has also led to an increased motivation to seek the means to employment. I predict that, as time passes, the audit and the training that flows from it will contribute to a growing confidence in the community that will produce benefits for the Manoora community.

I turn to the details of the project itself. We recognised that no information was available in respect of a number of important areas, including the skills already in existence within the community, the actual numbers of people requiring skills development, the types of training programs that would best meet the community's needs, the most appropriate location for the delivery of training programs and identifying skilled local residents who may be employed in the delivery of such programs. At the outset, it was recognised that it was essential to conduct the audit in a culturally appropriate way and that this would involve not a single approach but a diverse number of approaches, because the community has a diverse cultural make-up. For example, of those surveyed 31% were of Torres Strait

Islander background, 23% were from an Aboriginal background, 13% were Papua New Guinean, 12% were Cook Islanders, another 15% were other Australians and there were small percentages from other migrant groups. Therefore, it was imperative to adjust the survey techniques to take account of these diverse cultural backgrounds.

I turn now to the results of the project. Firstly, I wish to highlight the existing skills of members of the community—skills that they have not recognised or perhaps promoted even among their own groups. These include skills in cultural arts and activities, child care, budgeting, working with people, communication, craft, cooking, and sports and recreation. These were the most commonly identified skill areas. However, it is important to note also that there were many other people with skills in areas such as engineering, automotive, carpentry and plumbing, although in fewer numbers. Having identified these skills, we are now able to look for leadership amongst the locals who already have these skills and perhaps provide ways for local community members to be part of conducting the training.

It is significant that the skills identified as being most needed—at the very top of the list—related to computers. There is a clear recognition by the people of the Manoora community that they, too, need to join the information technology revolution. Operating computer programs is their top priority. That is followed by first aid, child care, hospitality, sport and recreation, office administration and working with people. Some ancillary findings are of relevance. For example, many single mothers expressed a desire for further training, but they have no child-care facilities. They expressed that this would be most effective if they were able to have their children babysat where they studied. People considered it best to deliver training into the community on weekday mornings at a local community centre.

I congratulate all of those involved with this, in particular those from the Tropical North Queensland of TAFE who conducted the audit—Leanne Kruger and Denise Wellington. I congratulate also the Manoora community renewal development program team—Terry Callaghan, John Adams, Walter Benedito and Mareja Bin Juda—on their participation. I congratulate all of the people of the Manoora community, who will not let their public housing status hold them back from joining the full mainstream Australian community with respect to their aspirations for careers, employment and healthy family lives.

### Rural Summit

**Mr HOBBS** (Warrego—NPA) (12.10 p.m.):

I want to brief the House on the rural summit that was held in Canberra recently. Many people are aware that rural Australia has been hurting for a long time both economically and socially for a number of reasons that have been well documented and debated in this House over a number of years. The combination of these events has led to a lack of confidence, a mistrust of Government, anger and frustration.

I believe very strongly that the summit was a turning point. The representatives at the summit were from all over rural and regional Australia. They had a very, very positive attitude. The issue was that we know the problems of the past; we are now looking for solutions for the problems of the future. We heard various speakers talk about the OECD countries, which are facing similar circumstances to those that we are experiencing in Australia. Australia may even be in a slightly better position than some other countries. In Europe in the mid eighties direct assistance did little more than delay the adjustment that was going to inevitably have to be made.

We heard of individual successes, particularly of the township of Mitchell, which is located here in Queensland. In 1991, as a result of the Goss Government closing down courthouses, railway lines and other services in the area, the people of Mitchell formed the Booringa Action Group. That group was the catalyst for the progress that was made by that town. When the local sawmill burnt down recently, they were able to obtain a new one. They were able to put some tourist attractions in place. They were able to obtain a dredge in order to dredge sand out of the local weir. All of these achievements have led to the creation of jobs and a win for that community. It shows just what small communities can do.

Another success story was a community that had been left \$200,000 by a beneficiary. That \$200,000 was lent out three or four times to businesses within that community to assist them to get established or to expand. The money has all been paid back and now that community has extra businesses that were generated and supported from within their own community.

The outcomes to emerge from the summit, which are common to a number of themes, include that there are no easy solutions to the problems facing regional Australia. These problems are shared by many countries. Community development will not

happen without Government, business and community stakeholders each making their various contributions towards locally developed plans within a regional context. Communities want to share responsibility with Government for the development of their regions. Communities do not want solutions imposed upon them. One size does not fit all. Government, industries and communities must invest significant ongoing resources in skilling, learning, education and training and leadership to develop the human capacity of regional Australia. Distribution of these resources needs to be inclusive of all sectors of regional society.

Governments must accept responsibility for facilitating adequate provision and maintenance of basic infrastructure. People in all sectors of regional Australia need equitable standards and access to essential services, including telecommunications, power and energy, water, transport, health and education. Creative ways of providing infrastructure that is widely accessible need to be explored without imposing unreasonable costs on regional industries or communities. The three tiers of Government must remove unnecessary regulatory impediments which increase the cost of doing business and stifle innovation and action in regional Australia. Governments must create a climate, including tax incentives, which encourages investment for rural enterprises and philanthropy.

Participants in the summit welcomed the announcement of a new rural foundation which demonstrates the commitment to a partnership between Government, industry and regional Australia. Delegates look forward to details of the implementation plan before Christmas with regular reports on progress.

The rural foundation that was set up is basically an umbrella foundation with the option of setting up smaller foundations in those regions. It offers everyone in the nation—Government, corporations, small business, urban centres, regions and small communities—the opportunity to share responsibility for and ownership of the future of Australia, particularly of regional and rural Australia. The Federal Government started off the foundation with a \$10.7m grant, with a further \$3.8m to be provided up until the 2008-09 financial year. The Sidney Myer Foundation will also put in \$1m over the next three or four years. The foundation will have tax deductibility status for contributors. That means corporations, businesses and all those other people who wish to contribute will be able to use that as a facility to assist those in regional Queensland.

Australia's economy is going well, but we are only as strong as our weakest link. We need to recognise that if we are to go forward as a nation with much strength we need to be able to do so as a totally united front. The foundation was set up with an emphasis on economic development and job creation and training in economic and business skills. In particular, it benefits the younger generation by offering exchange student arrangements and scholarships that will skill young people up. They can be educated in the modern ways of doing business and coping with the changes in this information age. The foundation will provide mentoring, research and seed funding for suitable projects in the regions. Local branches of the foundation will be set up and local representatives will manage them. Basically, they will be a locally oriented group who will have some knowledge of the particular region.

We cannot hold back the tide of change in this new information age. Our challenge is to provide the environment for local communities to grow from within, enhance social capital, improve the institutional framework for the creation of enterprises and the facilitation of local networks.

I find it extraordinary that the Labor State Government was not officially represented at the summit. No-one from the Department of State Development and no-one from Regional Communities or Rural Communities was there. The only representative of the Parliament was me—a member of the National Party. I understand that the Premier issued an instruction that these departments were not to attend owing to the fact that he had the grumps over Minister McGrady being required to attend Parliament so that he could answer serious questions on the unauthorised salary hikes in his department. He could have authorised another Minister to go or sent some departmental staff. In many instances, the departmental staff have a lot of information and a lot to offer, and they have done a great deal of work in relation to rural and regional Australia. It was only the National Party which demonstrated its commitment by having a presence there. It was only the National Party which was prepared to play a professional and sympathetic role at that summit to help rural and regional Australia.

The urban media needs to take a good look at the way in which it reports events around Australia. Rural industry is not getting a reasonable go from the urban media. Every time some environmental issue comes up, the general consensus is that it is caused by tree clearing or something. We need to be able to

make sure that we go forward as a nation. We need to be able to tell the younger generation that milk comes from cows, that houses come from forests, that bread comes from wheat grown on land that has been cleared, and that the dams that have been built enable irrigators to grow cotton for clothing. That has to be publicised, as were the opposing cases by the media during the referendum campaign. The rural areas voted 77% against what the urban media was pushing for very strongly. That shows how out of touch the media is with the needs and aspirations of rural and regional Australia and Queensland in particular.

Last Saturday, referendum day, the headline of the Australian displayed a big "Yes". The result from rural Australia was a big "No". Other measures such as the regional forest agreement, regulations relating to the development of water resources and tree-clearing guidelines which this Government is trying to impose on rural industry will stifle development. Those measures will have the opposite effect to that which is intended. We are trying to put together a plan for the future. This Government is stifling moves in that direction.

Time expired.

### Jubilee 2000 Campaign

**Mr SULLIVAN** (Chermside—ALP) (12.20 p.m.): I rise to support the international campaign known as Jubilee 2000, which addresses the unjust burden of debt being carried by many of the least empowered people on this earth. Jubilee 2000 is a practical, achievable act of social justice that can remove the unfair debt burden from those societies that are benefiting least from this world's bounty. Presently, the 92 poorest nations in the world are indebted to the amount of approximately \$2,239.7 billion. In 1997, these countries had a combined GDP of \$6,481.1 billion and comprised more than two-thirds of the world's population. About half is owed directly to individual Governments—mainly Japan, the US, Britain, Canada, France, Germany and Italy. Most of the rest is "multilateral" debt—owed to the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, which are effectively run by the G7 governments. About 10% is owed to private banks.

The history of recent burgeoning Third World debt begins in the 1960s when the United States Government was spending more money than it earned. To make up for this, the US President decided to print more dollars, impacting heavily on the major oil-producing countries, whose oil was priced in dollars. In

1973 the OPEC nations increased the price of oil. Their resultant massive profits were deposited in Western banks. As interest rates plummeted, the banks were faced with an international financial crisis. They lent out the money fast, to stop the slide, and turned to Third World nations whose economies were doing well but who wanted money to maintain development.

Banks lent lavishly and without much thought about how the money would be used or whether the recipients had the capacity to repay it. For their part, Third World Governments were pleased to take advantage of loans at very low interest rates—below the rate of inflation. Some countries, like Mexico and Venezuela, took out loans to repay previous debts. Many had intended to use the money to improve standards of living in their countries. Unfortunately for the poorest citizens of these countries, in the end, little of the money borrowed benefited the poor. Across the range of borrowing nations, about one-fifth of it went on arms, often to shore up oppressive regimes. Many Governments started large-scale development projects, some of which proved of little value. All too often the money found its way into private bank accounts.

One of the worst examples of this occurred in the Philippines when, in 1975, the corrupt President Ferdinand Marcos borrowed \$2.3 billion to build the Bataan power station. It was completed in the mid 1980s, but was condemned by a team of international inspectors who declared it to be unsafe because it was built on an earthquake fault. It has not produced one watt of electricity. It is estimated that Marcos received more than \$80m in commissions. His crony who organised the commissions now lives in a castle near Vienna. Meanwhile, the US company that built the power station, Westinghouse, continued to make the profits as succeeding Philippine Governments have paid \$100,000 a day to repay the debt. Throughout the years, the barefooted kids who live on the rubbish tips of Manilla have paid for that debt through lives of poverty, receiving no education or health care, which has resulted in their greatly shortened life span.

Even as Third World countries were signing up for billions of dollars in loans, interest rates began to rise, pushed further by an increase in US interest rates. Oil prices rose again. Third World countries were earning less than ever for their exports and paying more than ever on their loans and on what they needed to import. They had to borrow more money just to pay off the interest.

What is the practical, achievable, just solution that is proposed? It is called "Jubilee 2000". Jubilee 2000 is a global campaign to cancel the so-called "unpayable" debts of the world's poorest countries by the end of 2000. The Jubilee 2000 campaign considers debts to be unpayable if their repayment would cause widespread hardship and suffering. The present situation in Mozambique is cited as an example of unpayable debt, where the Government spends 3% of its money on health, 8% on education, and 33% on paying debts.

A great deal of support for the Jubilee 2000 campaign has come from a cross-section of religious groups. The impetus for this arises from interpretations of passages in the Old Testament that espouse the Jubilee principle of restoring justice and fairness to societies that had fallen short of God's ideal. It called on the people to celebrate every 50—or, in Deuteronomy, every seven—years with the cancellation of debts, the return of land to its original owners and the freeing of slaves. The aim of the Old Testament Jubilee was to provide a new start with better economic systems and fairer ways of living, so that next time around injustice would not creep in so readily. As a politician, I would certainly take notice of a petition with a thousand signatures. Leaders of developed nations, therefore, should note that the Jubilee 2000 petition has over 17 million signatures from 120 countries. As well, full Jubilee 2000 campaigns are in place in over 50 countries.

I will now consider briefly the Left and Right of politics to determine who needs to be convinced that this type of change is needed to be carried out. Most Left Wing political movements affirm positive support for those in greatest need. In fact, most Left Wing political parties have their origins in the struggle of the poor and the oppressed to gain some measure of social justice. Most Left Wing politicians support a stronger role for the intervention of Governments in the economic and fiscal processes in order to redistribute wealth more evenly among their citizens. Where do Right Wing Governments and politicians from countries like mine stand? Unfortunately, in the last decade, we tended to follow the lead of British and American leaders who vigorously promoted the cause of economic rationalism. Western nations have tended to let the market decide. We must realise that it is not an inanimate thing called "the market" that decides, but well educated, well fed, well-paid individuals who make decisions that control the financial markets around the world. We talk about "free

enterprise"—even though we know it is not free. We know there are winners who make the profit and losers who gain very little from the global economic processes. I submit, therefore, that it is Right Wing Governments and politicians who need to be convinced of the need for a change and need to be convinced that debt relief or debt forgiveness should be implemented. If debt relief or debt forgiveness is to become a reality, it will have to be introduced by the very industrialised nations that are the greatest lenders to poorer, indebted nations.

Because of my background as a member of this developed Christian nation, I will direct my next comments to the role of Western, Christian nations such as Australia. Traditionally, western democracies have claimed a separation of Church and State. The reality is that there has always been a link between the dominant religious force in a society and politics. Political parties naming themselves "Christian Democrats", for example, could hardly claim to be separating Church and State. Nevertheless, Governments are fond of claiming that separation.

In recent years, the deliberate, overt involvement of churches in matters of State within Western democracies has become obvious. The most glaring example is in the United States where fundamentalist, Right Wing Christian groups have taken control of the political agenda. The Christian Coalition movement has been the dominating influence in the American Republican Party over this past decade. They have determined who would be candidates and what political policies would be promoted in the US election campaigns. Many State legislatures are captive of that political, Right Wing Christian movement. To a lesser extent, the influence is growing in the creditor nations, other than the US, to which I have referred. So I want to appeal to Right Wing religious activists to consider their position, to follow their religious teachings closely and, in so doing, forgive the debt to poorer nations. My criticism of those church-based movements is that they are very selective in what religious principles they choose to follow. They claim to be Christian. They claim to follow the Bible as it is printed—following a fundamentalist interpretation of the Scriptures. But they do not do what they claim they do. They focus only on certain limited aspects of what the Bible says—in particular, what are called the "sexual sins".

I have spent some time detailing that movement, because it is gaining influence in the very western nations that need to forgive

the debt of poorer nations. We must challenge them and ask why they do not focus on other aspects of the Bible. Why do they not give the same emphasis to practising what is proclaimed, for example, in Leviticus 25, Numbers 4, Ezekiel 46, Deuteronomy 15, Isaiah 61, or Luke's Gospel chapter 4? Why do they not blow the "jebel", the ram's horn, and proclaim a Biblical year of Jubilee when forgiveness of debt is practised?

The Jubilee 2000 campaign call for debt forgiveness for poorer nations has its rationale firmly rooted in the Old Testament Scriptures. As well, the New Testament is full of references that proclaim help for the poor, the special place in God's plan for the underprivileged, punishment of those who afflict the poor, the poor being rewarded and the obligation to share with the poor. Those Christian nations that are the greatest creditors should, if they follow the Christian principles espoused by many of their voters, be leading the way in debt forgiveness.

Throughout the last few centuries, we have seen the United States, Great Britain and Germany either default on debt or be the beneficiaries of debt forgiveness from other nations. It is now time for those nations to take a leading role, to show the same compassion for Third World countries today. There are many other aspects to this topic that could be added to this speech. Further reference could be made to those nations that have benefited from debt relief or that have simply defaulted on their loans, but time will not permit.

When we ask ourselves whether debt relief would be effective in addressing world poverty, we realise that the answer is: a resounding yes. I say that not just because a defined amount of financial indebtedness would have been retired from those nations. The very act of debt forgiveness would indicate that we developed nations have had a change of heart. It would mean that nations such as Australia have turned from worshipping the almighty dollar and have started to look at each person on this planet—especially those who are in need—as our universal brother and sister. The debate on debt relief is not really about economic theories or monetary policies; it is not an academic debate. The debate is about what is in our hearts as human beings. We are only truly human when we are whole people, and we are only whole people when we consider people's feelings, emotions and aspirations as well as their rational thoughts. We human beings are not just a brain on two legs—a mobile intellect developing ideas; we are people with feelings, with emotions of love

and anger, jubilation and despair. We laugh, we cry, we fight and we make love.

This debate is about the type of human being each one of us is to become. Jubilee 2000 challenges us to be not just thinking, rational, logical human beings but also compassionate, loving, forgiving, generous people who share what we have with our universal brothers and sisters. Let us forgive debt. Let us work to eradicate poverty. Let us support the Jubilee 2000 campaign.

## SUGAR INDUSTRY BILL

### Resumption of Committee

Hon. H. PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP)  
(Minister for Primary Industries) in charge of the Bill.

Resumed from 29 October (see p. 4651).

Clauses 82 to 89, as read, agreed to.

Clause 90—

**Mr COOPER** (12.31 p.m.): As the Minister has restored the nexus between cane and the sugar price, we will not be proceeding with this amendment.

**Mr KNUTH:** I move the following amendment—

"At page 69, after line 9—

insert—

'(7) The conference, and any redirection arrangements, must be directed towards achieving the following—

- (a) initially, only burnt cane should be redirected to the second mill;
- (b) burning and harvesting of cane due for supply to the first mill must stop immediately;
- (c) mill supplied to the second mill under supply agreements with the owner of the second mill must have priority in crushing over cane redirected to the second mill.

'(8) It is declared that each mill owner must, to the extent reasonably necessary, maintain insurance against the risk of loss to growers from a mishap affecting the mill's operations.

'(9) A mill owner who fails to comply with subsection (8) is liable to growers for losses not covered by insurance.'

In a perfect world, all sugarmills would run smoothly and breakdowns and natural disasters would not happen. However, we do not live in a perfect world, and this Bill makes provisions for mills that experience setbacks in

the crushing system. The Bill quite rightly contains provisions to allow that in exceptional circumstances a mill can accept cane from another mill that experiences an unforeseen stoppage. In clause 90, these arrangements are referred to in the context of the "first mill" cane being directed to a "second mill".

This clause must be altered to allow for four vital provisions to ensure that growers attached to the second mill are not disadvantaged by any charity their mill or mill suppliers committee afford to first mill growers. The four provisions I propose are as follows. Firstly, initially only burnt cane from the first mill area should be harvested and transported to the second mill until an alternative agreement is reached. Secondly, burning and harvesting in the first mill area must cease immediately after the mill mishap is communicated to relevant parties. This communication must be made promptly to lessen the amount of cane to be shunted to the second mill. Thirdly, first mill cane must only be crushed after all of the second mill cane is crushed. Fourthly, mill owners must have sufficient insurance cover to compensate growers for any losses in the event of a mishap.

It stands to reason that growers attached to the second mill should not be penalised for the possible faults or poor maintenance record of the first mill. In cases of natural disasters and so on, insurance provisions should exist to avoid any attempt to push first mill cane through the second mill before the cane of second mill growers has been dealt with.

My reference to communication of mishaps is imperative to ensure that first mill growers do not continue burning and harvesting cane from the time the mishap is communicated to the time a cane redirection agreement is brokered between relevant parties. It is very likely that a redirection agreement could take days or weeks to reach and the problem will only be exacerbated if first mill growers continue to burn and harvest cane in this period. It is for this reason that the clause must be reworded as I have suggested in my amendment.

Amendment negatived.

**Mr COOPER:** I will make some comments in relation to clause 90 before the Minister moves his amendment. As I said on the last occasion the clauses were being discussed, we in the Opposition intend to work our way through the Bill so that at the end of the day, when the Bill is finally complete, we as an Opposition will have done our job. I say to those people who are getting a little impatient that that is too bad. The sugar industry is far

too important for the legislation to be dealt with in any other way, as most of the people on this side of the Chamber would agree.

Clause 90 deals with the situation where a mill cannot crush cane because of a mishap and there is an adjacent mill which is able to crush the cane. The object of this clause is to enable the Sugar Industry Commissioner to require the relevant mill owners and mill suppliers committees to attend a compulsory conference to see whether they can agree on the redirection of cane to the second mill. As I read this clause and Part 7, which sets out the general provisions relating to the office of the commissioner, there is no capacity for the commissioner to actually make a ruling. It would appear that the commissioner's power is limited to mediation alone.

I draw the Minister's attention to sections 177 to 183 of the current legislation. At the moment, pursuant to section 177—

"... the corporation, upon an application made to it under this division, may order that in relation to a particular period sugarcane specified by it grown on land assigned to a mill is to be delivered to, and accepted for crushing by, another mill".

In addition, to draw the Minister's attention to section 181, which provides that the corporation may not make such an order unless it is reasonable and the directions given and the conditions imposed by the corporation will provide sufficient protection to individual assignment holders from economic detriment arising as a result of the order. It seems that the legislation currently enables the corporation to intervene when it receives an application, provided that the order it gives does not result in an unreasonable or harsh result. To the Opposition, that sort of power is sensible and appropriate.

I would like the Minister to explain why this clause has been drafted in such a way as to prevent the commissioner having any power to make an order. It would seem that the commissioner can convene a meeting but cannot make any orders. The commissioner's powers are limited to mediation only. It does not seem sensible to have a commissioner with no effective powers to sort out problems of this nature, and it maintains the predicament faced by both the sugarcane farmers involved and the mill which has stopped production. I would like the Minister to spell out the commissioner's powers. I would like to know whether the Minister has considered that problem and, if so, the Government's solution to it.

**Mr PALASZCZUK:** The purpose of clause 90 is to provide for the redirection of cane if a mill is not able to crush due to a mishap such as the breakdown of a boiler or a natural disaster. The clause provides that the commissioner may require the relevant mill owners and mill suppliers committees to attend a compulsory conference to decide whether the parties can agree on redirection of cane to another mill. The details of any decisions made about redirection of cane are appropriately left for determination at this conference. It is not appropriate for the legislation to be prescriptive regarding what the conference must determine. At the end of the day, it is far more commercial to leave the issues to be negotiated at a local level, rather than being too prescriptive.

**Mr COOPER:** I do not think we have quite got there. The Minister has recognised that the commissioner does not have the power to make a ruling. Who do we in fact have making that ruling? Could the Minister give us that information?

**Mr Palaszczuk:** We are leaving it all to mediation. It is all going to be done through mediation.

**Mr COOPER:** What happens if they do not agree? Eventually there has to be someone to make a decision. There is none?

**Mr Palaszczuk:** At the end of day, it has to be a negotiated outcome. We can't impose outcomes on the mediation. It has to be negotiated.

**Mr COOPER:** What I worry about is that if the season continues, and time goes by—and at the risk of detriment to the cane—this could go on ad infinitum. Is there not somewhere along the line when the matter has to be brought to a conclusion and someone has to make a decision if the negotiations do not reach a conclusion?

**Mr Palaszczuk:** It is in the interests of all parties to get negotiations through as quickly as possible.

**Mr COOPER:** That is why I am asking these questions.

**Mr ROWELL:** The whole point about this is that there is a difference within the industry between burnt cane and green cane harvesting. I do not think this situation is going to arise with green cane harvesting, although I suppose that it could arise at the end of the season or something of that nature. But it is quite critical that, within four to five days at the absolute maximum, a decision is made if there is a particular problem in a mill area with burnt cane.

Not many mills in Queensland have to process burnt cane. The industry has become very environmentally sensitive, and the bulk of growers are actually harvesting the cane green. That is quite a contrast to what we have seen in previous years. The technology that harvesters have allows them to harvest the cane green. However, there are areas, such as the Burdekin, where it is quite critical that, at this point, they still burn the cane, because of the difficulties they face with getting through quite substantial crops. As a result, a situation may develop whereby, at very short notice, a decision has to be made.

We can go on negotiating with people for days on end, but if there is burnt cane out there, there is a major problem with removing that cane within a reasonable period because of the quality issues relating to the harvesting of that cane. If it is not harvested within five days, it is probably not suitable for milling. And of course, the reputation of our sugar suppliers will be impaired on the international markets. So it is really critical that, within less than five days and as quickly as possible, there is a regime within the milling system that determines that cane should be burnt daily.

During the hotter periods of the year in particular, this is quite a critical issue. So where heat is a factor—and we are into November with harvesting—if there are problems with one mill, and it cannot crush the cane that is being burnt, and if rain intervenes—and that is another critical issue, too—the Minister just cannot keep stalling on these issues and say, "We are going to negotiate." That is not the way the system works, and that is not the way the cane-growing industry works as far as harvesting is concerned.

At the end of the day, as the Minister was saying, there is a need for some determination. They can continue to negotiate for days on end; but while that negotiation is taking place, the actual quality of that cane is being impaired. So there is a requirement for some determination to be made if negotiations are going to be carried out for any period. And I am talking about a day, because that is about as long as we can really determine the actual period in which there could be a problem as far as harvesting that cane is concerned.

We must seriously consider something definite being done about this. Of course, what has been suggested by the Opposition is that the commissioner could be the person to make that determination after a day—say, even 40 hours, if there is a dispute. Dispute resolutions can go on forever, but we cannot

afford that. If there is a group of growers' cane that is in jeopardy as far as harvesting within a reasonable time is concerned, somebody has to step in and make a determination as to what happens.

The industry is an industry as a whole. It is not a group of individuals. We all send the sugar in shipments to various countries around the world. It all goes into the terminals. And at the end of the day, we cannot determine one grower's cane from another's. It is an industry issue, and I believe that it really should be treated as such.

**Mr PALASZCZUK:** Not all growers burn cane. About 70% of all cane is not burnt. Those growers who green cut their cane would be discriminated against by the honourable member's proposal, because their cane would be dealt with secondary to burnt cane. We all understand that burnt cane loses c.c.s. more rapidly than green cut cane. However, I believe that it is simply discriminatory to place one type of cane above the other. Clearly, I have confidence in the good sense of the local growers and millers to work it out. Obviously, the member does not. What does the member for Hinchinbrook really want? Does he want central determination? Does he want court action? As in debate on other parts of the Bill, the member has complained about just these processes. I would like him to make up his mind.

**Mr ROWELL:** I have no problem with that. Quite clearly, if there is a resolution that cannot be resolved quickly, it should be somebody like the commissioner who makes a determination in that particular instance.

**Mr Palaszczuk:** What has happened through the years? How have these issues been resolved previously? By negotiation—never by any directions.

**Mr ROWELL:** This is an important issue that the Minister has introduced into the Bill. There is every reason why members should be speaking on it—to try to resolve it and to make sure that, somewhere down the track, problems are not occurring.

**Mr KNUTH:** I have to reiterate what the member for Hinchinbrook has been saying. There is absolutely no allowance for burnt cane production areas, and the Burdekin is the largest production area in Queensland. And for the Minister to say that it is discriminatory against other cane areas—there has to be provision within this Bill to allow for cane burning areas. This has been the problem throughout the whole Bill. Areas throughout Queensland are different in cane production

from other areas, and this is not being allowed for.

**Mr Palaszczuk:** That's why the local areas made the decision.

**Mr KNUTH:** The Minister has brought up a point. He says that they will eventually make a decision. But it does not always happen that way. A dispute could go on for weeks and months. That is what happened at the beginning of this crushing season in the Burdekin. There was a dispute straightaway that went on for a couple of weeks. That farmer would have lost his crop in the field by then. We cannot speculate that the whole decision is going to be over and done with within a couple of hours, because it will not be. The Minister owes it to the growers in the Burdekin and other areas in this State to include within the Bill a provision allowing for burnt cane areas.

**Mr MALONE:** There is another issue, of course, in all of this. Only certain mill areas can actually distribute cane between one mill area and another. Mackay is not too badly off, as well as the Burdekin and Ingham. But in areas such as Mossman, Proserpine or Nambour, there is no mill close by that would be able to accept cane on an economic basis.

The other issue is that, under clause 90, there is a provision for natural disaster. In the case of frost, large areas could be frosted. In the past, under special circumstances, that has been taken off more quickly within a mill area. But particularly on the Atherton Tableland, there could be extensive frosting, and the cane might have to be taken to Mossman in those circumstances.

I believe that it is important to realise that commercial considerations are involved in all of this, and certainly issues involving the union. For example, if cane goes from one mill area to another, it will certainly lessen the work time for unions in that mill area. So there are many issues that have to be considered. I believe that the commissioner should have more power to direct, rather than just sitting back and letting it all happen.

**Mr COOPER:** When I addressed the Minister earlier, he remained seated and Hansard could not pick up what he said. I would like to reiterate the main point that has been made from this side of the Chamber. I am not talking about the discrimination between burnt cane and green cane. The current legislation appears to give the corporation the power to intervene, provided that the judgment it makes is not harsh or detrimental. We agree that that is sensible and appropriate. However, why is it that this clause

has been drafted in such a way that it concerns only mediation. As Opposition speakers have pointed out, one day it is going to be necessary for someone to make a decision if an agreement cannot be reached. That is the point we are making and that is what we want the Minister to address.

Clause 90, as read, agreed to.

Insertion of new clause—

**Mr PALASZCZUK** (12.51 p.m.): I move the following amendment—

"15A. After clause 90—

At page 69, after line 9—

insert—

'Division 7—Payments to be made for growers

'Mill owner must make payment for grower

'90A.(1) This section applies if—

- (a) the cane production board established for a mill approves the making of any category of payment by the mill owner, for a grower, to a third person from out of the grower's payments; and
- (b) the grower has authorised the mill owner to make payments of the category to the third person.

'(2) The mill owner must make each payment to the third person as authorised by the grower.

Maximum penalty—2 penalty units.

'(3) In this section—

"grower's payments" means any amount due by the mill owner to the grower.

"payment" means the payment of an amount.

"third person" means an entity other than the mill owner or grower.'."

This amendment has been requested by Canegrowers as a service for growers and agreed to by the Australian Sugar Milling Council. The clause is designed to provide a simple and efficient means of payment of costs of growers in relation to their activities associated with the growing of cane. Under the new clause, a grower may authorise a mill owner to pay a third person for costs. The costs must be within a category approved by the cane production board. The mill owner will be required to make the payment to the third person under this clause.

**Mr COOPER:** I seek some clarification with regard to this amendment. The amendment has been circulated only in the

last 20 minutes and I need some further explanation. We are addressing the question of the third person. May I have more information as far as the third person is concerned? Clause 90A(1) reads as follows—

- "(a) the cane production board established for a mill approves the making of any category of payment by the mill owner, for a grower, to a third person from out of the grower's payments; and
- (b) the grower has authorised the mill owner to make payments of the category to the third person."

Other honourable members and I may need a more detailed explanation on that. Could the Minister give us a further explanation?

**Mr PALASZCZUK:** All it means is that it could relate to crop insurance or it could relate to cane harvesters—entities such as that.

Amendment agreed to.

New clause 90A, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 91 and 92, as read, agreed to.

Clause 93—

**Mr ROWELL** (12.53 p.m.): It is interesting to note that clause 93 mentions payment for early sugar to cater for this period of production. No doubt this has been influenced by the milling sector, which wants to maximise the capital investment. Most agricultural crops have limited periods where the harvesting of a crop is restricted to the maturity of that crop. The window for the removal of many crops can be restricted to a very narrow time frame. In some instances it is only a matter of weeks.

The prospects of processing these types of crops make it difficult to justify the necessary capital investment to provide consumers with a product that can be purchased the year round. Sugar cane is not as sensitive. The optimum period of harvesting the crop, with a range of varieties, would be about 12 to 14 weeks. This would substantially increase the tonnes of sugar per hectare and increase the level of profitability to growers. This coincides with the best period to ratoon the crop for the next year's production. But to enable a balanced return to both the growing and milling operation, the season length has been extended to 22 weeks and, at times, up to 26 weeks.

The cane harvested in the first month of a season is of much lower sugar content than that harvested in August, September and October. Sugar content of cane harvested in November and December can result in low sugar levels if storm activity occurs. Also, the

impact on ratoons damaged when harvesting on wet ground, and the early flooding of young ratoons, can seriously reduce productivity levels for the following year's crop.

The milling industry has sought every opportunity to maximise the capital investment involved by going to continuous crushing and extending the season length. I can understand why the mills are doing that. They have a very big investment. It would appear from the example of early payment options for the corporation that starting the season early has been canvassed for inclusion in this legislation. While not all the Queensland industry encounters the same seasonal conditions, the area from Mackay north generally experiences a tapering off of the wet season in April/May with limited ground preparation occurring towards the end of May. Mills commence operation about the mid to later part of June when the crop starts maturing and ground conditions for machinery are more favourable. In some areas, such as the Wet Tropics, in recent times harvesting has started in July. No doubt the limitation of when a season starts and finishes will be determined by the mill area negotiation team of two growers and two millers.

One of the main pitfalls in commencing early, through either an individual or collective agreement, is in finding a mechanism to deal with wet conditions that does not allow harvesting to commence for the early seasonal harvest time allotted. Mills are now geared to running at full capacity seven days a week with time out for maintenance. Should time be allocated for an early start but, as happens on many occasions, weather conditions do not allow for this to take place, there is only one option and that is to crush the cane allotted for the early start at the end of the conventional period of harvest.

Some northern sugar mills experienced three seasons because of an increase in productivity and expansion with insufficient capacity to match the cane available for crushing, finishing only days before Christmas in the 1995, 1996 and 1997 seasons. Had any additional time been allocated for an early start to the crushing season and wet weather prevented this taking place, sugar milling would have carried on into the new year, weather permitting.

**Mr Reeves:** Have you taken over from Russell?

**Mr ROWELL:** I am pleased to see that the honourable is listening because it is an important matter.

The major risk with this lies with the cane farming side of the industry. Can the Minister indicate what was the intention of including this proposal as an example in the legislation for the early season payment of sugar?

**Mr PALASZCZUK:** The matters raised by the honourable member for Hinchinbrook relating to season length payment, early crops, unseasonal rainfall and so on are all matters for local negotiation. This has been recommended by the Sugar Industry Review Working Party. This Bill reflects the recommendations made by the working party. It is as simple as that. It is all going to relate back to local negotiations.

**Mr ROWELL:** That may be the case, but I can see some things in this legislation that were not recommended by the Sugar Industry Review Working Party at all. I hope that this one is not something that has just been thrown in by the Government. The problems associated with early harvesting are quite considerable. The point I want to make is that it may be achieved in some areas but, if the negotiating teams talked about early harvest, it must be remembered that it does not fit every situation within the industry throughout Queensland.

I am raising this issue because I want to put on record that horrendous problems can occur. If we cannot start early we find that we are locked into a period of time for harvesting. The mills now work on a seven day basis with continuous crushing. The mills do not have the ability to crush that extra cane. A lot of pressure could be exerted if we go ahead with the early harvesting period only to find that we cannot achieve it. We then have to fit it in somewhere during the season. However, that will not be possible because most mills are crushing seven days a week.

At this stage, all the mills are crushing continuously. So that really does not allow the mills to crush cane in any other period other than early in the season or at the end of the season. The whole problem is that that will put pressure on the system. If there is a determination to go ahead with this early arrangement and the growers find that they cannot achieve it because of seasonal conditions, ground conditions and all the rest of it and they have to do it later, in the past what has tended to happen is that those types of things become the norm and somehow or other one has to try to accommodate them. I believe for the most part—

**Mr Purcell:** Do you want to work through lunch?

**Mr ROWELL:** I am happy to. We will continue on through lunch.

**Mr Purcell** interjected.

**Mr ROWELL:** No, we have to get the Bill passed. It is important. I want to make this point because it is so critical.

Sitting suspended from 1.01 p.m. to 2.30 p.m.

**Mr ROWELL:** I do not want to go on too much more; I think I have made the point. There are some problems associated with early sugar production. I want to be absolutely sure that it is on the record that I believe that if we go down this track, there will be some difficulties—particularly in the wet, tropical areas of Queensland—with producing sugar before the season usually starts. If that occurs and it cannot be crushed in the earlier stages, the only opportunity to crush that crop will be after the season finishes. That could be quite detrimental to the people who are growing the crop. It is a decision that they have to make. At the end of the day, we do not want to see the industry locked into that position.

Clause 93, as read, agreed to.

Clause 94—

**Mr COOPER** (2.31 p.m.): I move the following amendment—

"At page 71, after line 25—

insert—

'(3A) Before giving a direction under subsection (3), the corporation must have regard to the direction's impact on growers' costs, including, for example, because the length of the mill's crushing season may be increased.'

One of the big bugbears of the sugar industry is that, if the crushing season is lengthened, there are going to be lower c.c.s. levels and lower returns to the canefarmer. The Opposition believes that clause 94 enables the corporation to give a direction to a mill owner to produce a particular brand of raw sugar in a particular period or amount. Subclause (1) of this clause provides that its object is to facilitate the marketing of sugar vested in the corporation, and it is an object that deserves bipartisan support.

At the moment, a similar power is found in section 110 of the Sugar Industry Act 1991, and the coalition is supportive of the corporation having this type of power vested in it. Nevertheless, the Opposition has circulated an amendment that is aimed at providing some safeguards. I recognise that the Minister has also circulated an amendment. However, we believe that our amendment is superior.

We are proposing that a new subsection be inserted that requires the corporation, before giving a direction, to have regard to the impact that any such direction may have on growers' costs, including, for example, an increase in the length of a mill's crushing season.

This amendment has been requested by the industry. It has been requested in the knowledge that the Queensland Sugar Corporation is increasingly required to make a very high pol sugar in competition with that produced in Brazil. The impact of a direction by the corporation on a mill to make such a brand of sugar may be to slow down the back end of a sugar mill's production, depending on the capacity of the mill and the level of sugar content in the cane. The impact of the direction may also disadvantage growers because of increased season length.

In comparison with the disadvantage potentially faced by growers, this clause has been drafted with the aim of assisting mill owners who may suffer as a consequence. Subclause 4(b) provides that the corporation must pay to the mill owner the part of the amount of the owner's costs in complying with the direction that is more than the amount of the costs that the owner would otherwise incur in producing this industry standard brand of raw sugar. When one peruses section 11 of the current legislation, one sees no protection in place.

I want to make it clear that the Opposition strongly supports the insertion in the Bill of this type of protection for mills. However, the point we make is that, although the Government has quite rightly seen fit to draft this Bill with the commercial implications of a direction for mill owners in mind, absolutely nothing has been done for the growers. This amendment simply requires the corporation to have regard to the flow-on impacts of such a direction on the profitability of cane growing. It is a very modest proposal and one that the Government should support as it is desirable that both mill owners and growers be given some sort of protection.

At the outset, I mentioned that this amendment is superior to the one that the Minister has moved. It has some teeth in it. The Opposition believes in it. We believe that it is fairer. I sincerely hope that the Minister will see the wisdom of this amendment and accept it.

**Mr PALASZCZUK:** I think that the honourable member hit the nail right on the head when he mentioned the commerciality of the Queensland Sugar Corporation. In that regard, I believe that the Opposition's

proposed amendment is commercially impractical. The QSC must often make decisions regarding brand production in order to satisfy customer needs. If a decision cannot be made in a timely manner in an extremely competitive market, the customer may opt to source its sugar from elsewhere.

The Government's proposed amendment to clause 94 ensures that the mill suppliers committee is kept informed of all directions and arrangements regarding brand production. This awareness will enable the mill suppliers committee to raise issues of concern at any stage with the corporation or the mill owner. It is simply inappropriate to limit the corporation's capacity to make directions to or arrangements with the mill owner regarding brand production. The consequences of limiting its capacity in the manner proposed by the Opposition may result in a loss of customers, which would have significant and far-reaching consequences for the Queensland sugar industry. Therefore, the Government is not supporting the Opposition's amendment.

**Mr ROWELL:** This clause refers to the time that may be necessary to produce a certain brand of sugar. As has been indicated by the shadow Minister, the member for Crows Nest, that may involve additional time. Of course, as I said when speaking to previous clauses in relation to the period in which the crushing has to occur, time is a major problem. It is in the growers' interests as much as anybody else's to get through the crushing period as quickly as possible and to do it at the optimum time. If there is a requirement for a certain brand of sugar and it is going to take additional time for the mill to produce that brand of sugar, that means that to some degree the duration of the crushing season will be extended. It is difficult to measure how long that will be, because we do not know what the corporation is going to dictate.

It is not a matter of negotiating with the negotiating team; it is an external factor that can cause additional time and reduce the likelihood of getting the crop off in a reasonable time. Very often, at the end of the crushing season that is quite critical. This year, on several occasions, we had very heavy rain in a 24-hour period. Had we continued with the crushing of the crop during that rain, that would have meant that the growers would have had difficulty getting some of that crop off. Recently, we have had rainfall in the order of 250 millimetres and 300 millimetres. It would have made it very difficult had we had to go into the fields, and we experienced that last year.

In essence, the growers are going to be disadvantaged because of the additional length of time. I think it has to be acknowledged that, for the reasons I have mentioned, the only sector of the industry that is going to wear the consequences of this is the growing side of the industry. As we get to the latter part of the year, the cane is going to lose sugar content, particularly if there is rain. If we are going to have a longer season, we will have poorer ratoons, which is going to be a problem. So it is quite critical that it is acknowledged by the corporation, through this amendment that we have put forward, that the growing side of the industry has a particular difficulty with producing these brands of sugar.

They have to be produced. I am not saying that they do not have to be produced. If that is what our customers want, that is what is going to happen; there is no question about that. The problem is the time constraints that are placed on the milling operations. For example, high sugar levels—and it could be because of high sugar levels—can tie up the back end of a mill. What tends to happen is that millers design the mills so that they have some equilibrium in terms of the crushing capacity and the processing capacity of the mill. That can get out of kilter if one side is held up because a certain brand of sugar has to be produced or if they get extremely high sugar levels. It can happen that, towards the mid to latter part of the season, they actually have to slow down their crushing capacity because of high sugar levels. The back end of the mill is not designed to cope with the capacity at the front end. Having to produce a certain brand of sugar puts another constraint on the back end of a mill. I think it is fair and reasonable that acknowledgment be given to what growers could lose because of the extra time that is required during the crushing season.

**Mr MALONE:** My colleague the member for Hinchinbrook has explained it quite well. When special brand sugar is made, quite often the milling capacity has to be restricted quite severely. I do not see anything in the clause that states that the growers have to be advised that that is happening. The mill is compensated for the extra time involved in producing the sugar, but nowhere does the legislation state that the growers have to be advised, and certainly they are not compensated. I ask the Minister to accept our amendment, which does not impose extra constraints on anybody. It merely states that the growers should be advised of what is happening and then they can make their own adjustments.

**Question—**That Mr Cooper's amendment be agreed to—put; and the Committee divided—

**AYES, 41—**Beanland, Black, Borbidge, Connor, Cooper, E. Cunningham, Dalgleish, Davidson, Elliott, Feldman, Gamin, Grice, Healy, Hobbs, Johnson, Kingston, Knuth, Laming, Lester, Lingard, Littleproud, Malone, Nelson, Paff, Pratt, Prenzler, Quinn, Rowell, Santoro, Seeney, Sheldon, Simpson, Slack, Springborg, Stephan, Turner, Veivers, Watson, Wellington. Tellers: Baumann, Hegarty

**NOES, 41—**Barton, Beattie, Bligh, Boyle, Braddy, Bredhauer, Briskey, Clark, J. Cunningham, Edmond, Elder, Fenlon, Foley, Fouras, Hamill, Hayward, Hollis, Lavarch, Lucas, Mackenroth, McGrady, Mickel, Mulherin, Musgrove, Nelson-Carr, Nuttall, Palaszczuk, Pearce, Pitt, Reeves, Reynolds, Roberts, Robertson, Rose, Schwarten, Spence, Welford, Wells, Wilson. Tellers: Sullivan, Purcell

The numbers being equal, the Chairman cast his vote with the Noes.

Resolved in the **negative**.

**Mr KNUTH:** I move the following amendment—

"At page 72, lines 3 and 4—  
omit, insert—

'(d) the corporation must pay to the mill owner or a grower the amount of any loss or damage suffered by the owner or grower because of a slowdown in the mill crushing rate because of the direction.

'(5) An amount payable under subsection (4)(b), (c) or (d) may be recovered as a debt.'

This Bill, quite thoughtfully, has allowed for the fact that the Queensland Sugar Corporation will deal with customers who may want to buy a type of raw sugar that is different to the mill stock standard output. Under this Bill, the Queensland Sugar Corporation can force a mill to produce a particular brand of sugar in a given period or amount. Here is the sweetener: clause 94(4)(b) states that the Queensland Sugar Corporation must compensate the sugarmill owner for the cost of making the new brand of sugar. That sounds fair and I do not propose that we remove that provision. What alarms me is that there is no mention of compensation for canegrowers should the corporation's direction slow a mill's crushing rate and sugar production is lost. We cannot allow this Bill to remain unchanged when it promotes compensating mills in the event of a slowdown and not the growers.

The Primary Industries Minister has put forward an amendment to make the Queensland Sugar Corporation notify the local

mill suppliers' committees when it directs the mill to produce a certain brand of sugar, and I applaud this change. However, the amendment stops far short of compensating growers for any income lost from the Sugar Corporation's direction.

For this reason I move that a new subsection (d) be added to clause 94(4) on page 72. In the interests of fairness, the section will now read—

"(d) the corporation must pay to the mill owner or a grower the amount of any loss or damage suffered by the owner or grower because of a slowdown in the mill crushing rate because of the direction."

To accommodate the change, clause 94(5) must also be changed to read—

"(5) an amount payable under subsection 4(b), (c) or (d) may be recovered as a debt."

These changes would protect both millers and growers from the possible adverse effects of Queensland Sugar Corporation sugar brand directions.

Amendment negated.

**Mr PALASZCZUK:** I move the following amendment—

"At page 72, after line 7—

insert—

'(6A) The corporation must inform the mill suppliers' committee of an arrangement made under subsection (2) or a direction given under subsection (3) as soon as practicable after it is made or given.

'(6B) However, a failure to comply with subsection (6A) has no effect on the arrangement or direction.'

The Government moves an amendment for the insertion of subclauses (6)(a) and (6)(b) into the Bill. Under these subclauses, the Queensland Sugar Corporation must, as soon as is practicable, inform the relevant mill suppliers' committee of an arrangement with a mill owner under clause 94 or of a direction given to a mill owner under clause 94 to produce a particular brand of raw sugar. This amendment moves towards recognising that growers should be made aware of decisions regarding brand production. I believe that I have given a pretty full response to the shadow Minister during the debate on his proposed amendment.

**Mr COOPER:** Obviously this is the third amendment that has been moved to this particular clause: one has come from the Opposition, one from the Country Party and

now we have the Minister's amendment. People are starting to get a bit confused and one could not blame them. I wish to comment, as two of the amendments have now been negated. It is clear that the potential problems and injustices that can flow from a direction of the Queensland Sugar Corporation to a mill owner to produce a particular brand of sugar have motivated the amendment circulated by the coalition and that circulated by the Government, as well as the amendment circulated by the Country Party.

Having read the amendment circulated by the Minister, I am of the opinion that it offers less protection to growers than the coalition's amendment and does not go far enough. Under the amendment circulated by the Opposition, before the Queensland Sugar Corporation can give a direction to a mill to produce a particular brand of raw sugar in a particular period or amount, it must have regard to the impact that this will have on the growers' costs. That is our point. In comparison, this amendment requires only that the corporation inform the mill suppliers committee of an arrangement or direction after it has been made or given. On top of that, proposed subclause (6)(b) makes it clear that, even if the corporation fails to notify growers, that "has no effect on the arrangement or direction". In short, there is no legislative sanction for the corporation giving notice. It is more in the nature of a legislative pious hope. In addition, there is no requirement for the corporation to take into account the impact of a directive on growers' costs before it is made—none whatsoever! The only benefit of this amendment is the possibility of an ex post facto notification of a decision that has already been made, and possibly it would be a bad decision because it could have been made without regard to the impact on growers. As the Minister knows, a directive under this clause could result in lengthening a mill's crushing season. I would have thought that when the corporation issues a directive it should have regard to matters such as this.

To some people this amendment could be viewed as simply window-dressing. It could be viewed as allowing a binding directive to be made when the detrimental impact it will have on growers can be ignored. In his reply to the second-reading debate, the Minister stated that this amendment would assist growers in evaluating the impact on change, and this is partially true. But it would be better and fairer to impose a positive obligation on the corporation to evaluate the impact of a proposed directive on local economies before it is made. It is surely a matter of good practice

to mandate that the corporation must factor into its decision-making process on directives of this kind the grower impacts. That is why we on this side of the Chamber are disappointed with this amendment. We do not believe that it goes far enough. We believe that it offers no extra protections. In our opinion, it would be appropriate to improve the decision-making process rather than to impose a non-binding obligation to inform growers of decisions that may be made on an unfair basis. That sums up the difference between the coalition's amendment and the amendment moved by the Minister.

**Mr MALONE:** The Minister is moving in the right direction with this amendment, which addresses some of the concerns that I expressed earlier. However, subclause (6)(b) virtually cancels out any clear direction the Minister has given in subclause (6)(a). If no direction or advice is given to the mill suppliers committee, there is no ill effect at a subsequent time. When the mill suppliers committee considers the ramifications of a decision to produce superior quality sugar in terms of length of crushing and the effect that has on the return on the crop, if no advice is given there is no compensating factor at all. One negates the other. The real problem that we as an Opposition have is that the combination of subclauses (6)(a) and (6)(b) produces a nil effect.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 94, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 95 to 100, as read, agreed to.

Clause 101—

**Mr COOPER** (2.56 p.m.): This clause allows the Minister to give directions to the Queensland Sugar Corporation, the Sugar Industry Commissioner, the BSES, cane production boards and cane protection and productivity boards to bring them into line with what are referred to as "major Government policies". Other Opposition speakers will deal with this clause so I will keep my comments brief.

We believe this clause allows each and every one of these bodies to be politicised by arming the Minister of the day with the power to intervene in their daily operations in an open ended fashion and one which is blatantly party political. The power granted to the Minister under this clause is enormous and just the existence of this, even if it is not exercised, ensures that the capacity of these bodies to operate independently and fearlessly irrespective of the political complexion of the State Government of the day will be

compromised. A power of this type is extremely rare, yet this Bill actually extends the scope for a Minister to intervene in an openly partisan way. Apart from this quite unsatisfactory situation, I challenge the Minister or anybody else to explain what a so-called "major Government policy" is and who determines that? Are these bodies supposed to arm themselves with the latest ALP policy document or perhaps even have Bill Ludwig's phone number close at hand when they make a major decision. If it were not so serious, it would be laughable. As the ACFA stated in the Australian Sugar Digest of 4 August—

"If reduced controls by Government or Government regulation is what is meant by deregulation, it is difficult to substantiate the claim the industry is more deregulated under the new legislation.

With the exception of the negotiating team, all the industry institutions, both old and new, are now subject to the direction of the Minister."

This type of direction that the Minister is armed with is an unlimited power to override and a power that can be exercised on vague and openly political grounds. In these circumstances, the coalition believes that this clause is unnecessary and that it gives broad and totally inappropriate powers to the Executive. As such, we will be opposing it.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** The coalition has serious concerns about clause 101, which enables a Minister to give written directions to the Queensland Sugar Corporation, the Sugar Industry Commissioner, the Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations, a cane production board and a cane protection and productivity board about the discharge of the functions of any of these entities. Subclause (3) requires an entity receiving a written direction to comply with it. Subclause (6) makes it clear that this power is in addition to any other power the Minister may have under this Bill.

What really sends the alarm bells ringing is subclause (4), which provides under subparagraph (a) that a direction can only be given if the Minister "is satisfied the direction is necessary to ensure the discharge by the entity of its functions does not conflict with major government policies."

Anyone reading this clause should be concerned that any of the above entities can be subject to a binding directive of a Minister, not because it is breaching the Act or in any other way not adopting any of the objectives of the legislation, but simply because it is not doing what the Government of the day wants. This clause opens up each and every one of

these entities to systematic political interference.

What precedents are there for such an inappropriate and potentially dangerous power? By using the Office of Parliamentary Counsel web site engine, I discovered that the only other statute ever passed by this Parliament which contains such a discretion is located in section 25 of the Sugar Industry Act of 1991. Yet when one peruses section 25, one sees that this ability of a Minister to politically interfere is limited to the Queensland Sugar Corporation. It does not go any further. Currently, for example, the Minister does not have the power to politically interfere in the operations of the Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations. The Minister does not have the power to politically interfere in the operations of cane protection and productivity boards. However, this Bill substantially extends the range of bodies subject to political direction.

To be fair, I also checked what Commonwealth statutes have allowed this form of political interference and I discovered that there are currently eight such statutes. However, it is interesting to observe that the Commonwealth Government has not sought to introduce such a provision into the Federal Parliament since 1995 and, before that, the last time was 1991. It is a very rare event and, when one reads some of the Commonwealth provisions, one finds that it is specifically limited to exceptional circumstances. In fact, at least three of the eight Federal statutes make that very clear.

I also checked if any New South Wales legislation contained a provision such as this and found none. In fact, the only other Australian jurisdiction with any provision allowing a Minister to intervene on the basis of major Government policies is South Australia, with a grand total of one statute. So in the whole of Australia, apart from this Bill, there are only 10 pieces of legislation that adopt this quite extraordinary and, on its face, unacceptable approach.

However when one looks at this Bill, one sees that it is not limited to exceptional circumstances. In fact, it represents a deliberate extension of the current unsatisfactory situation that exists in section 25. I ask the Minister: what are "major Government policies"? Who could ever challenge any ministerial intervention on the basis that the alleged basis for the intervention was or was not a major Government policy? It is vague, it is potentially meaningless and it allows almost unlimited scope for a Minister to step in and interfere with almost any decision

of any of these entities. It makes any suggestion that these bodies are independent or can operate independently look pretty shallow.

As I read this clause, I think that it gives the Minister power to intervene despite anything else that the Bill provides. As I said, it entrenches blatant political interference and undermines the capacity of any of these entities to operate professionally and independently of the Government of the day. I ask the Minister when he sums up this clause to answer these questions: why do he and his Government want this power? Why does this Government want to override the operations of any or all of the entities established by this Bill simply because they are not adopting a so-called major Government policy? As I mentioned, this type of power is quite extraordinary. It is very rare. It is almost unknown in any other Australian State and there is only one precedent for such a power ever being inserted in any Queensland statute. The operation of these entities is critical for the long-term prosperity of the sugar industry and any sort of provision which facilitates and perhaps even encourages these entities to be politicised is to be deplored and avoided. The Opposition is very disappointed that the Government has seen fit to insert a provision such as this and will be opposing it unless the Minister can give some sort of explanation which allays the very deep concerns that we have.

I conclude by drawing the Minister's attention to a decision of the Federal Court in 1992 called *Re Unilan Holdings Pty Ltd*. It involved litigation launched against the then Federal Primary Industries Minister, John Kerin, a person whom the Minister holds in high regard. It related to the Wool Marketing Act. Under that Act a reserve price scheme for the sale of wool in Australia was established, but the Minister had certain reserve powers to direct the Australian Wool Corporation regarding the reserve price of wool. This power could only be exercised in "exceptional circumstances" and where the direction was necessary to ensure that the corporation's performance was not in conflict with "major Government policies". Without going into the particular facts, I can say that a dispute arose and John Kerin was sued. I will now quote from Mr Justice Hill's decision where he gets to the defence raised by the Keating Government in the context of defending this type of political interference. He said—

"For Mr Kerin, it was submitted that a Minister of the Crown owes no duty of care in making a statement predicting

government policy. Hence, it was said no action lay against Mr Kerin in the circumstances here pleaded. The submission, taken to its logical conclusion, was that a Minister could, free from the constraints of a civil suit, lie with impunity, notwithstanding that he was aware that in so doing listeners would rely on the truth of what he was saying, that he intended that they so do and as a result they suffered loss. Indeed, the submission would have it, a Minister might very well have an obligation to lie, as for example, when a decision had been made by the government that the currency be devalued and the Treasurer was asked what government policy was on such a matter.

The Minister's submission, if stated as a universal proposition, at the one time renders politicians immune from the civil liability that would attach to others in similar positions and renders them even more likely to be regarded with distrust by a community already cynical towards the conduct of its electoral leaders. If that be the law, I must apply it, but it augurs badly for the future of moral and political life in the community."

That is the view of a justice of the Federal Court. This is exactly the sort of problem that will arise if we start legislating to allow a Minister to ignore the requirements of a statute, the statutory obligations and independence of office holders and allow a Minister to come in over the top and interfere and direct on the basis of so-called major Government policies. The above quotation highlights where this leads and, in the context of this Bill, it is even more troubling because it is not a power limited to this or that clause or this or that entity or restricted to exceptional circumstances; it is a broad, unlimited power which could be activated at any time for almost any reason. As I said at the beginning of my contribution, we are very concerned about it and I am sure that many other people will be once its implications are fully understood.

In conclusion, I would ask the Minister again to explain the following: what is his definition of "major Government policies" and why do he and his Government want this power? Why is it that "exceptional" is used in statutes around Australia but it is not exceptionally limited in the legislation we are talking about here today? Why does the Government want to override the operations of any or all of the entities established by this Bill simply because they are not adopting a so-called major Government policy? Unless the

Minister is able to answer those concerns and allay the fears of honourable members on this side of the House, we will not be able to support clause 101.

**Mr SANTORO:** I join the debate at this stage, although I really wanted to participate at the Committee stage much earlier, but health reasons—

**Mr Palaszczuk:** This is the first time you have been in the Chamber to debate the clauses in the last two weeks.

**Mr SANTORO:** Obviously the Honourable Minister has been stung by the exceptionally good contribution by the honourable member for Warwick. All that I can say is that there is obviously a clear sense of guilt.

I also rise to express my concerns about this clause, which is a blatant over-the-top example of how Labor in Government wishes to exercise maximum political control over all entities created by statute, even if they are not funded directly by the taxpayers. The Honourable Minister may say that this is the first time that I have come into this debate at the Committee stage, but I say to the Minister—

**Mr Sullivan** interjected.

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN** (Ms Nelson-Carr): Order! There is too much audible conversation.

**Mr SANTORO:** Madam Acting Chair, thank you for your protection. However, with all due respect to you, I point out that when it comes to the member for Chermside, your protection is not needed.

I have listened to the debate. I have read it. The Minister has not answered satisfactorily the concerns that I expressed in my contribution to the second-reading debate. I listened to his comments in response to the concerns that I raised. I listened to his response in relation to the concerns raised by other honourable members on this side of the Chamber. Unfortunately, as the honourable member for Warwick has just said, we are not at all satisfied with those replies.

This clause allows the Minister of the day to intervene politically in the operations of the Queensland Sugar Corporation, the Sugar Industry Commissioner, the BSES, a cane production board and a cane protection and productivity board. Currently the only example of a statute that allows a Minister of the Crown to intervene in the operation of a body on the basis that it is not doing what the Government of the day wants is section 25 of the Sugar Industry Act 1991 involving the Queensland Sugar Corporation. I would have thought that

that was a bad precedent and one set almost a decade ago.

I would have thought that, over the past decade, we have learnt a little bit about misusing Executive powers to intervene in the operation of the independent bodies. In the context of the sugar industry, I would have thought that it was very obvious that any Government should not start interfering in bodies as professional and presumably independent as the BSES and the Sugar Industry Commissioner. However, the Beattie Labor Government—and obviously this Minister—despite all of its rhetoric and smart public relations represents a throwback to the bad old days of Labor of the Gair and Hanlon years. We know how corrupt they were. I hear honourable members laugh. How many times do members opposite quote Joh Bjelke-Petersen and other examples that stretch back into history? This example is certainly as dishonest as the examples that I have quoted, those of Labor in the Gair and Hanlon years, when they made institutionalised corruption an absolute art form.

As the honourable member for Warwick has said, in his reply the Minister has an absolute obligation to this Assembly to answer the following questions. Certainly, in his reply to the second-reading debate, he did not answer questions to the satisfaction of members. Why is he seeking the power to interfere politically in the discharge of the functions of either the BSES or the Sugar Industry Commissioner? Why is the power to interfere politically being extended from the Queensland Sugar Corporation to other bodies outlined in this clause?

Let us consider the functions of the Sugar Industry Commissioner under clause 188. The commissioner is required—

- "(a) to grant access rights and to keep the access rights register;
- (b) to keep a central register of cane production areas;
- (c) if asked by a cane production board, to help the board in the administration of its objectives;
- (d) to facilitate the existence of an effective cane analysis system;
- (e) to approve cane analysis programs;
- (e) to mediate in negotiations within the sugar industry ..."

Is the Minister and the Government actually suggesting, for example, that in mediating negotiations the commissioner should be subject to direct political interference

from the Minister? If the answer to that question is no, then I point out that there is absolutely nothing to prevent this occurring. The power to interfere politically is absolutely open ended. No-one in the Opposition would ever seek to deny a Minister the reasonable right to make his or her point clear to various persons mentioned in this clause. It is incumbent upon the Government of the day to do that if it believes that there is a necessity to do so. However, I would respectfully suggest to the Minister that, when people are appointed to do a job—especially people such as the commissioner who is charged with quasi-judicial functions, who is supposed to be qualified, expert and independent—it is absolutely wrong, inappropriate and dangerous to arm the Minister to intervene on blatant political grounds. The power to intervene is absolutely open ended under this Bill. It is totally political. The right to intervene is at the absolute discretion of what perhaps could be a very political Government and a very politically motivated Minister.

A Minister can intervene whenever something is alleged to conflict with major governmental policies. I repeat the question asked by the honourable member for Warwick: what on earth are major governmental policies? If they were defined—even inadequately—within this clause or anywhere else within the Bill, Opposition members might be tempted—and I want the Minister to understand that we might be only tempted—to give to Executive Government the powers that he wants to acquire for himself and his Government under this clause. Are major governmental policies those, for example, in the Labor Party platform, or the ones that led to a Government being elected, or are they simply the ones announced from time to time in press releases when it suits the Minister? I would suggest that it is the last example that the Minister has in mind. In reality, "major governmental policies" is a term that means absolutely nothing and leads nowhere other than to open-ended discretion for a politician to stick his or her nose in at any time, for any reason, irrespective of the consequence.

I again repeat what I have said and what other members on this side have said: this clause is dangerous.

**Mr Fouras:** You don't trust politicians.

**Mr SANTORO:** I can see the honourable member for Ashgrove, who opened his heart during the republic debate and made all sorts of statements. They certainly did not trash his message. He copped it right between the eyes and he is now embarrassed. Where are the

"Yes" badges today? They are nowhere to be seen. I want to leave a few minutes for the Minister to reply, but the member seems to want me to go the full 10 minutes.

This clause is dangerous, over the top and quite inappropriate. As the honourable member for Warwick said and as I demonstrated in this brief contribution, there are very, very few precedents in this regard. In fact, I could find only one. If they do exist, they exist for very good reasons. We have not been provided with very good reasons in this place during this particular debate.

I conclude by imploring the Minister, as other honourable members before me have done, to fulfil his obligation to this Assembly, the sugar industry and the community and provide very good reasons for seeking to arm himself with such wide powers. Personal abuse and personal vilification as to what members do when they come to participate in a debate such as this will not stop me from speaking. If the Minister gets into personal vilification, I will speak to every damn clause between now and the end of this debate. This particular clause does him no credit whatsoever. We on this side would like to think that the Minister is a very reasonable person. I have been telling people that, of all the members on that side of the Chamber, the Minister is one of the more reasonable people. Given his attitude about this particular clause—

**Mr Sullivan** interjected.

**Mr SANTORO:** If I told anybody that the honourable member for Chermanside was a reasonable person, it would not do his reputation any good, because nobody would believe it.

I conclude by again saying to the Minister that he has an obligation to all members of this place and the communities that this Bill seeks to serve to provide some explanations, otherwise I will join with members on this side of the Chamber in opposing this clause wholeheartedly.

**Mr ROWELL:** I rise to voice my opposition to clause 101. Of particular concern are lines 16, 17, 18 and 19, effectively subclause 4(a). There is a great deal of concern on this side of the Chamber about the consequence of what the Minister is referring to in the legislation. Under the Minister's direction will be the corporation, the commissioner, the BSES, a cane production board and a cane protection and productivity board. They have to accede to the direction of Government policy and the direction the Government wants to take at the time. In other words, a productivity board may not be able to pursue the construction of a

dam if it does not conform with the policy of the Government of the day.

I can see the Minister for Environment and Heritage and Minister for Natural Resources on the other side of the Chamber. There is a very contentious issue in relation to the Nathan dam. He is not a great dam builder. There is no question of that.

**Mr Santoro:** He is a dam buster.

**Mr ROWELL:** Yes, he is a dam buster. He is not taking much notice of what is going on, either. If a dam were to be of some significance to the sugar industry and open up other areas and there was a prospect of producing more cane and more dollars for Queensland but the Minister decided that it was against Government policy to build that dam, certainly he could use this clause. I think it is of great concern to people on this side of the Chamber and to the industry in general that the Government has the power to do that.

Should it be to the advantage of the industry to expand into an area that policy dictates the Government does not want development to occur in, because of green philosophies for example, then nothing will take place. There may be no sound basis for objection; it may be purely the whim of a warm inner feeling. If the Government is trying to pursue a political philosophy and get the green movement on side or if there are things the Government believes it can do to win the next election but which stops development in the sugar industry, it might be appropriate to use this clause. People on this side of the Chamber and people in the industry are very concerned that the Government will have that capability.

There may be need for drainage in the wet tropics to improve the productivity of sugarcane that is being inundated as a result of prolonged wet weather. If the Minister of the day writes to the BSES or productivity boards to the effect that they not be involved, then those organisations will be forced to withdraw their expertise. That is of great concern, because we depend very heavily on the BSES and productivity boards to give us advice. I do not want to go into the ramifications of going into mangroves and so on. We covered that in recent months in relation to another piece of legislation.

Drainage in the wet tropical areas of Queensland is quite important. We need the expertise of groups such as the BSES and productivity boards to go along and do an assessment. If the Government says, "We do not like what you are doing", then the Minister will forward them a letter and tell them to

withdraw. I think that is very detrimental. It is really not giving a clear opportunity to undertake the necessary work, the expansion and the planning that is so vital.

In relation to planning, I refer to SIIP packages. We have seen years and years of planning and nothing come out of it. I know that when the member for Warwick was Minister for Natural Resources—he spoke very eloquently in relation to this matter—he was well aware of the issue of drainage in the wet tropical areas.

The last thing we want to see is a Government dictating to industry and to growers. We could conduct environmental impact studies and address all of the environmental concerns—there could be no problem whatsoever—but as a result of this legislation the Government will have a mandate to simply say to the people with the expertise, to the people who come under the jurisdiction of the legislation, "Withdraw. Get out of it. You are not allowed to be involved because this is not Government policy." That raises a great deal of concern. Members of the Opposition have addressed a number of issues. The members for Warwick, Crows Nest and Clayfield have expressed a lot of concern.

There need not be any relation to legislative requirements. These organisations are directly under the patronage of the Minister and Government policy. The only scrutiny of a direction is that it will be tabled in Parliament within 14 sitting days of being given. There is a right in legislation. The legislation does address the situation of a notification being made and a concern being raised about it. But why do we need to get to the point of bringing matters before Parliament if we are not satisfied with a ministerial direction?

These organisations have to toe the political line. I do not think that is fair and reasonable. It gets away from their jurisdiction. They have a mandate to improve the industry in general. I do not think there needs to be political interference to do that. There is no problem with that type of direction if they are not doing the right thing. Certainly organisations such as mill suppliers committees and millers would have some impact on the direction in which they are heading.

I do not want to see political activity interfere with the essence of the industry. I am very concerned that the Minister has included this section, which is absolutely not warranted and does absolutely nothing for the future productivity of the industry.

**Mr Santoro:** He's a wolf in sheep's clothing, is he?

**Mr ROWELL:** I am not going that far.

**Mr Santoro** interjected.

**Mr ROWELL:** I know what the member for Clayfield is saying, but I am not going that far. It may not be this Minister. It could be the next Minister or the Minister after that.

**Mr Palaszczuk:** It could be you in 10 years' time.

**Mr ROWELL:** Well, I will pull it out of the legislation. I have given a commitment to get rid of this rubbish. If I ever again become Minister for Primary Industries, I will pull this rubbish out of the legislation because it goes against what the industry is really all about. This provision is not needed and it will do nothing whatsoever for the future development of the sugar industry. I think it can be used as a political ploy.

I am pleased that we have the attention of the Minister for Environment and Heritage and Minister for Natural Resources, because he may have some involvement in what the industry does. He may go to the Minister for Primary Industries and say, "I do not like that dam they are building. I do not like some drainage work they are doing." Then I suppose the Minister for Primary Industries will be forced to say, "I have to heed some of the concerns you are raising because it is Labor Party Government policy."

**Mr Santoro** interjected.

**Mr ROWELL:** The whims of the green movement. The whims of the "Far-out Right"—

**Mr Santoro:** Any of the Labor Party's factional mates.

**Mr ROWELL:** All those types of groups. We could go on ad infinitum about what could happen as a result of political insecurity. Members of the Opposition agree with a lot of the legislation, but we cannot agree with this. We have to debate this at some length, because it is very concerning to the industry at large.

**Mr MALONE:** My colleagues have made some very good points in respect of this matter. There are just a couple of things I want to make clear. Section 25 of the Sugar Industry Act 1991 gave the Minister certain powers. At the time there was some concern about that. Of course, that legislation led to the creation of the Queensland Sugar Corporation. I think in retrospect those powers were well suited.

I refer to the Sugar Industry Review Working Party. That review indicated that the

Minister should have this power. I take that on board. I ask the Minister to address that. Right through this Bill we seem to have certain conflicts in respect of the Sugar Industry Review Working Party. I know that the Minister is committed to that. However, every now and again we make a deviation and turn to the right and come to a roundabout. Suddenly we find situations such as will exist as a result of this clause.

Clause 101(3) indicates that the entity—that is, the corporation, the commissioner, the BSES, a cane production board and a cane protection and productivity board—must comply with the Minister's direction. When we are at the stage of asking the industry to virtually deregulate and run its own show, it is very concerning that over and above all of that the Minister has the ability to come in and make a decision or give a direction. It was in relation to a couple of clauses that we considered only a little while ago that the Minister was saying he did not really want to do that.

This really conflicts with a lot of the information that the Minister has been proffering. The member for Warwick indicated the conflict that the Minister could get into in terms of advising and directing the industry. I believe that this is a rather dangerous concept which could leave the Minister open to litigation. I know that the power of the Crown still rests in the Minister after Saturday, so we will probably be pretty safe in that respect. However, I would like to hear the Minister's answers to my questions.

**Mr PALASZCZUK:** Honourable members opposite have certainly raised a number of issues that they believe are quite important. Okay, it is true that the Minister has certain powers in relation to calling for reports and making directions to the entities established under the Bill. These powers have largely been carried through from the Sugar Industry Act 1991. It is important that the powers that the Minister has relevant to the various statutory bodies established under the Bill are maintained. Those bodies must be accountable to Parliament through me as Minister. The powers attributed to the Minister under the Bill are appropriate and not excessive and, most probably, not significantly different from the powers that the honourable member for Hinchinbrook held when he was the Minister for Primary Industries, and to which the honourable member for Mirani alluded.

I was also asked by the Opposition to give an indication of what the Minister would do in

issuing a ministerial direction. I will give honourable members a couple of examples. The first example is the ministerial direction that I issued to the Queensland Sugar Corporation relative to export parity pricing.

Another issue that could arise—and I am being very positive and not negative, as the honourable member for Hinchinbrook was—is the issue of smut disease. Let us say that the disease flares up and the Government needs to address it urgently. In that regard, I believe that I would be within my rights to issue a written direction to the BSES to get work done on the disease ASAP. There are two examples there that I believe explain the intent of this clause.

**Mr Malone:** What would you regard as "major Government policies" then?

**Mr PALASZCZUK:** I would classify export parity pricing as a major Government policy. The member experienced that when he was in Government.

**Mr Malone** interjected.

**Mr PALASZCZUK:** Honestly, I think the member is reading too much into this clause and the meaning of "major Government policies". I believe that the intent of this clause is there in black and white. Basically, it is issues related to the sugar industry. That is what we are talking about there.

The honourable member for Warwick mentioned a court case involving John Kerin. I believe that the member for Warwick has perhaps misled the Committee, because this clause basically refers to the policy of the Government of the day, whereas the case to which the member for Warwick referred dealt with what the Government policy should be. And that is where the problem occurred with John Kerin, as related by the member for Warwick.

The Scrutiny of Legislation Committee did not comment on this clause at all. Secondly, people in the industry have not commented on this clause at all. They are not hot and sweaty about it, so I cannot really see why Opposition members should be—although, after listening to their arguments, I can understand where they are coming from. Thirdly, we all have to remember that the legislation was drawn up in cooperation with industry; industry was part and parcel of the preparation of this legislation. So on those points, I believe that honourable members opposite—although I believe that they have expressed their opinions pretty well—have misunderstood the intent of the clause. I believe that by referring them to the

issues that I have raised, that should allay their fears.

**Mr COOPER:** I am not going to speak at length, because I believe that we have covered the major points very thoroughly. We wanted to make sure that they are on the record. The research that we put into clause 101 has been quite extensive. I believe that this legislation has gone too far. The Minister could end up in court, as could any other Minister in the future. I do not believe that would sit well with any Minister.

Quite frankly, the issue of major Government policies, which has been spelled out in the legislation, is of major concern. Whatever party is in power and whatever the party policies happen to be, they might not suit the sugar industry—in this instance—the wool industry or whatever industry it happens to be. That is the worry. The Minister knows as well as I do that sometimes the party organisation can have policies, and someone will make the Minister implement them, but that might not be in the best interests of—in this case—the sugar industry. That is why we do not think that should be there.

**Mr Palaszczuk:** It has not happened before.

**Mr COOPER:** There are precedents. We do not see many precedents in legislation throughout Australia. That is why we cannot understand why that needs to be included.

The Minister mentioned the Alert Digest of the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee. The committee picks up most things of a technical nature, and we recognise the good work that the members of that committee do. But as far as major Government policies are concerned, that is something for us to draw to the Minister's attention. We believe that it is a serious flaw in the legislation and, as such, we cannot support it.

**Mr ROWELL:** I just want to respond to some of the things that the Minister said. There will be a need from time to time for ministerial direction; there is no question about that. But I am concerned about Government policy. I notice that there is a differentiation between the two. If the Minister, because of factors involved in the Act, has to do certain things, I believe that it is appropriate that he has the power to do that. But where it comes into the political arena, and where policies of the Government that he represents can be reflected into the industry, then I have concerns about that. That is the differentiation that I was trying to express. It has nothing to do with the power of the Minister.

The Minister should be supreme in many sectors; there is no question of that. If there are things to be sorted out, and if there is no recourse but for the Minister to do that, then he must do it. I have no problem with that. However, where Government policy gets involved, and where a Government has certain directions that it wants to take—and they will be pushing the Minister, too; he might not necessarily agree—when the Minister gets to Cabinet from time to time he will have no option on a range of issues other than to go down the track of Government policy because it is in this legislation. That is what I am concerned about.

Members have talked about export parity pricing and import parity pricing. I recall, soon after getting into Opposition, asking a question about import parity pricing. I have to say that I got a half-smart answer saying, "You were there. Why didn't you do something about it? Why didn't you look at it?"

**Mr Palaszczuk** interjected.

**Mr ROWELL:** Does the Minister recall that? That is great. All I was trying to do was use the resources of the Minister for Primary Industries to establish what advantages there were as far as import parity pricing was concerned. When we were in Government, that was not fully canvassed. However, it became important when people became aware that there were problems with price. Of course, the minute that those sorts of issues raise their head, people are looking for every cent they can save. And if it is a direction as far as import parity pricing is concerned, I simply wanted some mechanism to establish exactly what the difference was, because a lot of wild statements were being made within the industry about the difference. Some were saying that it was dollars per tonne and some were saying that it was cents per tonne, and all I wanted to do was use the Minister's officers, their expertise and their resources to establish what that differential might have been. However, I have to say that I was disappointed with the half-smart answer that I received. I am genuinely concerned that clause 101(4) is not going to reflect advantageously on the industry. I think it would be appropriate if the clause was withdrawn.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** After listening to what the Minister has said this afternoon, I must say that he has in no way allayed any of the concerns which I hold personally. The Minister has not convinced members on this side of the Chamber about his motivation and his intentions with regard to the capacity, or lack of capacity, of a Minister in being able to abuse

very broad and very exceptional powers. These powers allow a Minister to politically interfere in the operation of various bodies covered under this legislation.

I note what was said earlier with regard to the Queensland Sugar Corporation. The power has existed since 1991. However, we are talking about extending that power to no fewer than five other bodies, including the Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations, the cane production boards, the cane protection and productivity boards and others.

Earlier today we asked the Minister what he may or may not do. He talked about the issue of parity pricing. He also talked about the issue of disease control. I find that a funny argument. One has simply to look at other legislation in this State under which Ministers operate every day of the week. Why do we not have such a broad head of power in the workers' compensation legislation? Why do we not have it in the Mental Health Act? Why do we not have it in the Health Act? Why do we not have it in the Bail Act? Why do we not have it in the hundreds of other Acts in this State? Why do we not have such a provision in other statutes in Queensland?

We find this provision to be generally repugnant. It is a provision that allows a Minister to be able to dictate to the bodies which are covered by statute. It allows the Minister to dictate major Government policy of the day. The Minister mentioned the issue of disease control, particularly smut.

**Mr Palaszczuk** interjected.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** The Minister will have an opportunity to sum up shortly. His time is unlimited. The Minister mentioned that he would be able to give a direction with regard to smut to the Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations. I would have thought that that particular body would have been cracking on the issue of a smut outbreak before the Minister had even received the brief. It is a major disease problem and it affects our ability to be able to compete on the world market. It is similar to Newcastle disease. It is not necessary to have such a direction. It is something that is simply done. It is done in such industries as the chicken industry.

I take no solace whatsoever from what the Minister has said with regard to his ability to direct the BSES in relation to an outbreak of smut. The real problem we have here is extending this matter beyond the Queensland Sugar Corporation. I take heart from what the honourable member for Hinchinbrook said a moment ago about doing away with such repugnant clauses.

The Minister implied that I was wrong with regard to the case of Re Unilan Holdings Pty Ltd in the Federal Court. I used the words which Mr Justice Hill used with regard to predicting Government policy. There is very little difference in predicting what is Government policy today and what will be Government policy tomorrow. The issue is that the head of power is very similar. The only difference is that it is constrained to exceptional circumstances.

**Mr Santoro:** There is no such qualification in this Bill.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** There is no such qualification, as the honourable member for Clayfield quite appropriately points out. We are dealing with no fewer than five bodies which are going to be controlled by this broad head of power which the Minister has in relation to issuing directions in line with major Government policy.

We have to start looking around the world. It must be a problem when we are dealing with the Department of Primary Industries. It is exceptional here. It is something which is also an issue in the Federal Parliament. Let us look at other places in the world such as collectivised Russia and other places that have a collectivised system. This was a system which was overridden by the Government dogma of the day. Food production ground to a halt because of political interference.

The real issue here concerns political interference in the BSES, the cane production boards and the cane protection and productivity boards. I can understand that it is not so important with respect to the Sugar Corporation. What is to be gained by the provision of such political interference? Those institutions do their job efficiently. If we start directing with regard to Government policy—nebulous creature that it is—we will start to have the same sorts of problems that people had in collectivised Russia.

Time expired.

**Question**—That Clause 101, as read, stand part of the Bill—put; and the Committee divided—

**AYES, 41**—Barton, Beattie, Bligh, Boyle, Braddy, Bredhauer, Briskey, Clark, J. Cunningham, D'Arcy, Edmond, Elder, Fenlon, Foley, Fouras, Hamill, Hayward, Hollis, Lavarch, Lucas, Mackenroth, McGrady, Mickel, Mulherin, Musgrove, Nuttall, Palaszczuk, Pearce, Pitt, Reeves, Reynolds, Roberts, Robertson, Rose, Schwarten, Spence, Welford, Wells, Wilson. Tellers: Sullivan, Purcell

**NOES, 41**—Beanland, Black, Borbidge, Connor, Cooper, E. Cunningham, Dalgleish, Davidson, Elliott, Feldman, Gamin, Grice, Healy, Hobbs, Johnson, Kingston, Knuth, Laming, Lester, Lingard, Littleproud, Malone, Nelson, Paff, Pratt, Prenzler, Quinn, Rowell, Santoro, Seeney, Sheldon, Simpson, Slack, Springborg, Stephan, Turner, Veivers, Watson, Wellington. Tellers: Baumann, Hegarty

The numbers being equal, the Temporary Chairman cast her vote with the Ayes.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Clauses 102 to 105, as read, agreed to.

Clause 106—

**Mr KNUTH** (3.51 p.m.): I move the following amendment—

"At page 78, lines 8 to 11—

omit, insert—

'(a) to act commercially in the marketing of raw sugar for the domestic and export market, and in the discharge of its functions generally; and'."

In the interests of competitive pricing, I now address a subclause relating to the objectives of the Queensland Sugar Corporation that must be deleted. Clause 106(6) states that an objective of the corporation is—

"to act competitively in the pricing of sugar or its raw equivalent sold to Australian customers."

Why should we compel the QSC to sell sugar cheaply to its Australian customers? The QSC should be able to sell the sugar to the highest bidder in both the domestic and the export markets in the prevailing market conditions. This clause suggests that the QSC has some sort of obligation to the domestic market even if the corporation can sell that same sugar at a higher price on a long-term overseas contract. Why obligate the QSC to give domestic refiners and sugar users a rock-bottom sugar price? To do so will make a further mockery of the National Competition Policy and the fiction that is the level playing field.

When various political camps tried to sell us the NCP, they told us that consumers would benefit. Despite the plummeting world sugar price, I have not seen a price drop on the supermarket shelf for soft drinks and confectionaries. The end consumer is not benefiting from so-called trade reform. In essence, refiners and industrial sugar consumers have gained from the losses of our sugar farmers and the man in the street is no better off in his weekly grocery bill. This is another example of the joke that is National Competition Policy.

This clause may as well be renamed the price fixing clause. I am sure that the domestic soft drink and confectionary manufacturers will delight in the existence of such a clause because they are the same groups who have failed to pass the savings resulting from low sugar prices on to the consumer. These manufacturers have absorbed the savings to further swell their profit margins. Guaranteeing them cheap domestic sugar will be akin to pouring salt into the wounds of our struggling farmers.

For this reason, clause 106 should be amended by scrapping lines 8 to 11 and replacing them with the following—

"(a) to act commercially in the marketing of raw sugar for the domestic and export market, and in the discharge of its functions generally; and"

In the interests of commercially realistic pricing, this amendment must be agreed to.

**Question**—That Mr Knuth's amendment be agreed to—put; and the Committee divided—

**AYES, 41**—Beanland, Black, Borbidge, Connor, Cooper, E. Cunningham, Dalgleish, Davidson, Elliott, Feldman, Gamin, Grice, Healy, Hobbs, Johnson, Kingston, Knuth, Laming, Lester, Lingard, Littleproud, Malone, Nelson, Paff, Pratt, Prenzler, Quinn, Rowell, Santoro, Seeney, Sheldon, Simpson, Slack, Springborg, Stephan, Turner, Veivers, Watson, Wellington. Tellers: Baumann, Hegarty

**NOES, 41**—Barton, Beattie, Bligh, Boyle, Braddy, Bredhauer, Briskey, J. Cunningham, D'Arcy, Edmond, Elder, Fenlon, Foley, Fouras, Hamill, Hayward, Hollis, Lavarch, Lucas, Mackenroth, McGrady, Mickel, Mulherin, Musgrove, Nelson-Carr, Nuttall, Palaszczuk, Pearce, Pitt, Reeves, Reynolds, Roberts, Robertson, Rose, Schwarten, Spence, Welford, Wells, Wilson. Tellers: Sullivan, Purcell

The numbers being equal, the Temporary Chairman cast her vote with the Noes.

Resolved in the **negative**.

Clause 106, as read, agreed to.

Clause 107—

**Mr KNUTH** (4 p.m.): I move amendment No. 29 circulated in my name—I apologise. It should be amendment No. 30.

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN** (Dr Clark): I believe that we are up to amendment No. 29.

**Mr KNUTH**: It is amendment No. 30.

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN**: What happened to amendment No. 29?

**Mr KNUTH**: I withdraw that amendment.

Leave granted.

Clause 107, as read, agreed to.

Clause 108—

**Mr KNUTH** (4.02 p.m.): I move the following amendment—

"At page 79, lines 8 to 10—

omit, insert—

- '(b) 4 directors are to be appointed on being nominated by organisations representative of cane growers with input from mill suppliers' committees, of whom 2 are to be representatives from cooperative mill areas and 2 are to be representatives from proprietary mill areas; and
- (c) 4 directors are to be appointed on being nominated by mill owners, of whom no more than 2 are to be representative of mill owners; and
- (d) 2 of the 8 directors mentioned in paragraph (b) and (c) must have wide commercial experience, but must not have conflicting interests in growing, milling or refining cane.'

Further to the operation of the Queensland Sugar Corporation, clause 108 must be amended. Subclause (b), at line 8, must be altered in accordance with my recommendations. These changes are essential to ensure that the make-up of the Queensland Sugar Corporation board is fair and just. The key here is the balance of miller, grower and refiner interests. It must be understood that some millers are also refiners, so losses that may be incurred in the milling area are likely to be picked up as refining benefits, and vice versa. Groups that are made up solely of millers, growers or refiners are not afforded such benefits and must have balanced representation on such an important board.

It is no secret that refiners have gained the most benefits from changes such as the loss of the tariff on imported sugar. With the raw sugar price at a 13-year low, the price of soft drinks and confectionaries at the supermarket shelf has not dropped. Refiners stand to gain even further from a weakening of Queensland's industry price position. Therefore, there is no room for a dominance of miller/refiners on the board of the Queensland Sugar Corporation.

The fundamental aim of the Queensland Sugar Corporation must be to secure the best possible price for Queensland sugar. If it is discovered that a director with wide commercial experience is in some way served by or can benefit from lower sugar prices, then his or her membership on the board should be

terminated immediately. There should be no scope for conflicts of interest.

**Mr PALASZCZUK:** Currently, the Queensland Sugar Corporation is an expertise-based board. I do not consider that there is any reason to change from the current structure. The role of the board is dependent upon expertise and not upon representation.

The member suggests that it is appropriate to have four directors appointed by the grower representatives and four directors appointed by mill owner representatives. However, of those four mill owners, only two are to be representative of mill owners. This would result in an imbalance on the board. As regards the conflicts of interest issue, that is appropriately dealt with in clauses 113 and 114.

Unfortunately, the numbers do not add up now. The honourable member has withdrawn his amendment to clause 107, which would have reduced the number of members from nine to eight. The amendment to clause 108 still assumes that there will be eight members and not nine, as is the case. Therefore, I suggest that because the honourable member's amendment is one member short, he should withdraw his amendment.

**Mr KNUTH:** I withdraw my amendment.

Leave granted.

Clause 108, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 109 and 110, as read, agreed to.

Clause 111—

**Mr PALASZCZUK** (4.06 p.m.): I move the following amendment—

"At page 80, line 14, '110'—

omit, insert—

'116'."

Basically, the Government proposes an amendment to clause 111(1)(e) to delete the reference to section 110 and replace it with a reference to section 116. This amendment was suggested by the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee in order to maintain the consistency of the vacation of office provisions in the Bill.

**Mr COOPER:** The Opposition accepts the amendment. It is virtually a typographical error and I accept the Minister's reference to the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee's Alert Digest No. 12. These things can be picked up by the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee and that is a good thing. This is a minor point, but in other legislation the committee has picked up major problems that have required

amendment. I commend the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 111, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 112 to 114, as read, agreed to.

Clause 115—

**Mr COOPER** (4.08 p.m.): I move the following amendment—

"At page 83, lines 13 to 20—  
omit."

This is a major amendment as far as the Opposition is concerned. We will move consequential amendments Nos 19, 21 and 23 later in the proceedings.

The coalition will oppose clause 115 as read and similar clauses that are located elsewhere in the Bill. Our opposition to this particular clause is twofold. Firstly, like clause 101, this provision actually empowers the Government with a broad and vaguely drafted provision to intervene, sack, and stack the various statutory bodies that are the cornerstone of the sugar industry. The Beattie Government comes into this Parliament with provisions that enable it to sack people because the body that they are serving on has used funds in connection with the politics of any political party or become affiliated with an entity that has, as one of its objects, the support of the politics, program or aims of any political party.

The Minister should stop and ask: just what are the politics of "any political party"? The Minister may care to explain what this is supposed to mean. On the face of it, it is meaningless. Subclause (b) states that, if funds are given to an entity which is not a political party but which happens to support the aims or program of a political party, this can operate as a trigger for a sacking. What would happen if, say, a body were to give funds to the RSPCA, which might support a ban on vivisection, and it just so happened that that was a policy of the Greens? By this route, the Minister could sack people. The provision is silly, unclear, unfair and allows the Minister to sack people almost on a whim.

The second reason we oppose it is that it is most likely unconstitutional. More will be said about that later. However, we would expect that, before the Minister brings legislation of this type into the Parliament, he would have Crown Law advice to back it up. In his reply, the Minister might like to give us some assurances in relation to Crown Law advice. As I mentioned, other Opposition members will be expanding on these concerns. Suffice it to say

that we are very disappointed that the Minister has incorporated this into this provision of the Bill, which is as vaguely drafted and unfair as its companion clauses, with which I will deal as they arise.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** The Opposition has a number of concerns with this clause and clauses 134, 169 and 196, which are identical to this provision but which are aimed at the BSES, cane protection and productivity boards and the Sugar Industry Commissioner. This provision prohibits the board of directors of the Queensland Sugar Corporation from using funds for any purpose in connection with the politics of any political party or any candidate for political office or becoming affiliated in any way with any body, association or organisation that has as its major object or any of its objects the support of the politics, program or aims of any political party.

The Opposition is aware that there is an identical provision currently in place by virtue of section 104 of the Act, and that the prohibition currently applies to the corporation, a local board, a negotiating team and the BSES. The type of prohibition contained in both the Act and Bill is, in this day and age, quite unacceptable. However, of more concern to us is that it may well be unconstitutional and illegal.

When we read the debates at the Committee stage of the Sugar Industry Bill 1991, we see a very short exchange between the then Minister and the then member for Auburn about the rationale for this prohibition. The then Minister's explanation sheds no light on why this sort of a blanket prohibition is needed and is proportionate to the problems that would otherwise occur. The current prohibition is unique in Queensland legislation, and in fact I have been able to track down only one other piece of legislation that goes anywhere near this provision, and that is in the Primary Producers' Organisation and Marketing Act. Likewise, in the statutes of all the other States I have been able to find only five examples—four in New South Wales and one in Victoria—and none of those was enacted after 1991. I have been unable to find one example of such a broad prohibition at the Federal level.

Firstly, I will outline to the Parliament why the Opposition has legal concerns about this provision. I hope that the Attorney-General is listening to this, because if he were doing his job properly he would have been giving some advice to the Minister on this point. Since 1994 the High Court has ruled in a series of cases that there is an implied right in the

Commonwealth Constitution that each member of the Australian community has an interest in disseminating and receiving information, opinions and arguments concerning government and political matters. In *Stephens v. West Australian Newspapers Limited* the court held that the constitutional implication of freedom of political communication protects political discussion at all levels of Government, including the State and local levels. It involves communications about, from and between not just politicians and the executive branch but also statutory authorities. In *Lange v. the ABC*, the High Court stated—

"The conduct of the executive branch is not confined to Ministers and the public service. It includes the affairs of statutory authorities and public utilities which are obliged to report to the legislature or to a Minister who is responsible to the legislature."

The right implied by the Commonwealth Constitution is not limited to discussion about Federal politics or politicians. It is a protection that applies more broadly to political discourse right throughout society. The full extent of this right became clear when the High Court ruled in 1997 in *Levy v. Victoria* on whether the Victorian Wildlife (Game) (Hunting Season) Regulations 1994, particularly in their application to duck shooting, infringed the constitutional protection of freedom of communication. The fact that the High Court ruled on a matter such as that should send alarm bells ringing whenever a State Government begins to limit the rights of people to engage in some form of political action.

**Mr Veivers** interjected.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** I note that the honourable member for Southport is learning a lot from this.

The Court outlined in *Lange's* case the test that is to be used in determining whether a law is constitutionally bad. It stated—

"When a law of a State or Federal Parliament or a Territory legislature is alleged to infringe the requirement of freedom of communication, two questions must be answered before the validity of the law can be determined. First, does the law effectively burden freedom of communication about government or political matters either in its terms, operation or effect?"

I will interpose here and point out that the various clauses I alluded to in this Bill clearly

have this effect and are, on their face, unconstitutional. The High Court continued—

"Second, if the law effectively burdens that freedom, the law is reasonably appropriate and adapted to serve a legitimate end the fulfilment of which is compatible with the maintenance of the constitutionally prescribed system of representative and responsible government."

It is the second test that is important in the context of this Bill. The Minister needs to explain just why these prohibitions are necessary. In doing so, he needs to address the rationale for the State stepping in and placing these limitations on bodies that are not even funded by the taxpayer. For example, clause 141 sets out that the funding for the BSES will be from mill owners and growers. The same principle is enshrined in clause 175 for cane protection and productivity boards. So it cannot be argued that these bodies are either paid for by State or even represent the State. So far as the corporation is concerned, this is set out clearly in clause 105.

The other matter which the Minister has to address is the scope of the prohibition. For whatever reason, I think that a sensible argument could be mounted for preventing, by legislation, bodies which have a deliberative function donating money to or affiliating with a political party. These bodies are, in a general sense, not established to be industry advocates but to perform various critical statutory functions. Unfortunately, this Bill goes much further than that.

I would like the Minister to explain what "politics of any political party" is supposed to mean. The prohibition in the first subclause applies to using funds for any purpose in connection with the politics of any political party. I could understand a blanket ban on political donations to a party, a candidate of a party or a body affiliated with a party, but the wording of this subclause seems to go much further. For example, the situation might arise where a Buy Australian campaign is being pushed by various groups in the community, and it becomes an issue of partisan debate. In these circumstances, is it sensible or just to prevent these bodies from assisting in a Buy Australian campaign merely because it may have a political overtone?

Likewise, there may be campaigns against the importation of certain disease-ridden crops or the like from overseas. Should we punish these bodies for attempting to defend the sugar industry? Likewise, the ban on affiliations is not just a ban on affiliating with

a political party or a body affiliated with a political party; it is a ban on affiliating with any body which has in its objects the support of the program or aims of any political party. Let us say that a body has as part of its aims decentralisation, stricter customs controls or the like, and it so happens that every single major political party also has these aims. Should these bodies be prohibited from affiliating simply because of that fact? It is clear from Levy's case, which was delivered by the High Court in July 1997, that the States are well and truly bound by the various rulings on the implied right of political communication. What was appropriate from a legal point of view so far as political communication is concerned prior to that time may no longer be so. Governments that wish to legislate to limit the right of political communication must be prepared to justify such action.

The legislation must have a worthwhile object and the limitation proportionate to the worthwhile social object. It is hard to see how this vague and widely worded provision and its copies elsewhere are either for a worthwhile social object or are proportionate. I therefore ask the Minister—and I think they are very important points—whether he has obtained any legal advice on the constitutional validity of these clauses, given what has happened in various High Court precedents and also considering that, as far as I can find out, no Australian Parliament, State or Federal, has passed such clauses in any of its legislation since 1991. Why have they been inserted in this particular Bill and why have they been worded in such a broad and vague manner?

**Mr SANTORO:** It is with great reluctance that I rise to speak to clause 115, and I say "reluctance" purely because, in common with the honourable members who have just spoken, I find this particular clause thoroughly repugnant. Just as clause 101 was an example of an aggressive provision which gave over the top powers to the Minister to politically interfere in the sugar industry, this clause, together with similar ones scattered throughout the Bill, represents the flip side. On the one hand, we have a Government that wants unlimited scope to politically interfere with the sugar industry, and on the other hand it wants the various arms of industry to be neutered and placed in a totally unsatisfactory and a totally untenable position. This clause prevents the Sugar Corporation from using any of its funds for any purpose in connection with the policies of any political party or any candidate for political office.

Before turning to the second limb of the clause, I again join with my colleagues and ask

the Minister: will he please explain what "the politics of any political party" is supposed to mean? If the clause said that the corporation was prohibited from making political donations or making political endorsements or using its funds to directly assist a political party, then I and everybody on this side would have absolutely no problem with it. However, simply saying "the politics of any political party" is so vague, in my opinion, as to be almost meaningless. Surely if a clause such as this was considered necessary, there could have been smarter and more precise ways of drafting it.

**Mr Rowell** interjected.

**Mr SANTORO:** That is right. As the honourable member for Hinchinbrook says, it is simply an innuendo. As it is, the first limb of this clause is so vague that it is potentially very, very dangerous. I will discuss the danger posed by the clause in a moment.

The second limb of this clause is potentially even worse. It prohibits the corporation and other bodies mentioned in later clauses from being affiliated in any way with any body, association or organisation that has as its object or any of its objects the support of the politics, program or aims of any political party. Honourable members should note that—"affiliated with any body or association". Then draw the bow a little bit longer and add to that, "the support of any political party by that affiliated body". Then add not only that but also the words, "the politics, programs or aims of any party", and consider precisely how wide it is. "How wide is that?" is the question that needs to be asked, and the answer is: as wide as any Minister or any Government wants it to be.

What if various organisations, including many in the sugar industry, support a proactive export incentive program, a Buy Australian campaign, tax deductions to assist primary production or any other manner of things? Let us say that the corporation or some other bodies inflicted with clauses similar to the one in this Bill become affiliated with a broad-based organisation with those objectives. Then let us say that every political party in Australia also supports these things or at least most of them. There would be the strange situation whereby the provisions of this clause would be activated by a process of elimination. They are activated automatically. There is no discretion; they are just activated automatically. That means that, if the Minister finds out, he can go to Cabinet and from there to Executive Council and sack, in this instance, the board of the corporation.

The reality is that what we have here is a vaguely drafted provision that is intended to provide any Minister with the excuse to sack people. It is as simple as that. I see the Minister shaking his head, but I am afraid he has not convinced us. I will await—

**Mr Fouras** interjected.

**Mr SANTORO:** The honourable member for Ashgrove has entered the Chamber. Every time I speak, he wanders in, totally ignorant of what is being debated. He never puts his name on the speaking list so that he can rebut what I have been saying.

**Mr Fouras** interjected.

**Mr SANTORO:** Now what?

**Mr Fouras:** Hey?

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN** (Dr Clark): Order! The member will continue.

**Mr SANTORO:** I thought there was a glimmer of hope that I would hear the honourable member for Ashgrove say something sensible. I am disappointed again.

**Mr Fouras:** You've got six minutes to go. Give it up.

**Mr SANTORO:** I wish the member would give it up; he would make a lot of people happy.

I reiterate that what we have here is a vaguely drafted provision that is intended to provide any Minister with the excuse to sack people. It is a vague, open-ended and quite disturbing provision that means both nothing and everything—nothing because it is almost impossible to say just how wide it is and everything because it allows open-ended political interference. On the one hand, this is a wide and vaguely drafted provision designed to further politicise the various bodies on which it is imposed and, on the other hand, as has been pointed out already by my colleagues, it is most probably unconstitutional. It is important that the Minister provide the assurance sought by the member for Warwick that what he is proposing before this Parliament is in fact constitutional so that it is not left open to countless possibilities for litigation.

I heard the honourable member for Kurwongbah ask the honourable member for Warwick the basis of his opinion. Listening to the opinion that has been proffered by the honourable member for Warwick, it certainly seems to me to be far more authoritative than any opinion that has been tendered in this place by the Minister and the Government. In fact, we have not heard any opinion from the Minister. The honourable members opposite

should cease making their inane interjections and trying to belittle the contributions being made by honourable members on this side, including the very worthwhile contribution from the member for Warwick. The shadow Attorney-General is making Labor's Attorney-General look like a bit of an amateur when it comes to administering the law in this State. When the shadow Attorney-General proffers an opinion, he does so after diligently researching the subject. I suspect that the Minister has not undertaken any research; God knows under whose orders he is acting.

**Mr Fouras:** We have to pay for every word you say in this place.

**Mr SANTORO:** We hear the honourable member for Ashgrove again. In the words of the Premier: there he is, disrupting the proceedings again, bringing the Parliament into disrepute.

**Mr Fouras** interjected.

**Mr SANTORO:** There he goes again, bringing the Parliament into disrepute.

As I said with respect to clause 101, these are throwback provisions—

**Mr Fouras:** You finally get to the clause.

**Mr SANTORO:** There he goes again. He is doing it again.

**Mr Seeney:** He's got no shame.

**Mr SANTORO:** He has no shame whatsoever and no respect for this institution. Every time I speak the member for Ashgrove comes in here and interjects, but he is never prepared to make a worthwhile contribution.

Both this clause and clause 101 highlight the real nature of the Beattie Labor Government. It is a Government of smoke and mirrors, deception and political interference. If there is anything that honourable members would realise about me it is that I have respect for this institution. What this institution clearly deserves is an explanation from the Minister as to why he has introduced this clause and other similar clauses in this Bill. The Minister has an obligation to indicate whether he or his department have obtained legal advice on this point.

We have been discussing and reflecting on the advice tendered by the very honourable member for Warwick and shadow Attorney-General. I would be very interested to know whether that great civil libertarian and self-styled legal expert, the Attorney-General, has bothered to consider the implications of this provision. As it is, this provision is not needed and is very dangerous. It is too broadly drafted and will create an unhealthy climate of political

interference in this industry. For all those reasons, it should be deleted forthwith. If it is not, together with my colleagues, it will give me great pleasure but with a very sad heart to divide and oppose this to the end.

**Mr PALASZCZUK:** I suggest that all honourable members open the Bill to clause 115 so we can consider what that clause says. It states—

"The board of directors"

or the body—

"must not—

(a) use any of ..."

its—

"funds for any purpose in connection with the politics of any political party or any candidate for political office; or

(b) become affiliated in any way with any body, association or organisation that has as its object or any of its objects the support of the politics, program or aims of any political party."

That is clause 115. I have just read out clause 104 of the 1991 Act. If it is such a problem to members now, why was it not a problem when members opposite were in Government for two years and four months? It was no problem to them then, and all of a sudden it is a problem to them now. I do not understand from where they are coming. I have just read out to them clause 104 from the 1991 Act.

The Government believes that the amendment moved by the Opposition is clearly outrageous. By this amendment, the Opposition seems to suggest that the board of directors of the Queensland Sugar Corporation should be free to use the corporation's funds for political purposes or to become affiliated with political bodies. The corporation markets raw sugar. It is clearly incompatible with its functions for it to have political associations of any form.

I should point out that this provision is not unique to the sugar industry nor is it to the new provisions of this Bill. I have mentioned section 104 of the Sugar Industry Act 1991. By way of other examples, I cite the Meat Industry Act 1993, the Primary Producers' Organisation and Marketing Act 1926, the Fisheries Act 1994 and the City of Brisbane Market Act 1960, which also make provision for members to be removed from various statutory offices if they use the office for party political purposes or if they cause funds to be used for party political purposes.

**Mr Santoro:** What about all those examples I gave you?

**Mr PALASZCZUK:** I should point out that, in the case of the Primary Producers' Organisation and Marketing Act 1926, such a provision has been in place in the Act since 1926.

**Mr Santoro:** Answer the examples. We got very specific.

**Mr PALASZCZUK:** I understand that the Opposition has obtained legal advice indicating that this clause and three other similar clauses—134, 169 and 196—are superfluous. Irrespective of that advice, the Government considers it appropriate that the clauses remain in the Bill. The clauses make what I will call the "political issue" crystal clear. They remove any doubt as to the position. Clauses 115, 134, 169 and 196 serve as a useful flag to make clear that those statutory bodies should not be politically affiliated. They also make clear the apolitical nature of the sugar industry. It would not be appropriate that the independence of statutory bodies under this Bill be undermined by the removal of these clauses.

The Opposition's desire to remove this and three similar clauses from the Bill creates a measure of suspicion. Why is it that the Opposition considers that these bodies should be free to use their funds for political causes or become affiliated with political parties? What does the Opposition hope to gain for the industry by removing these clauses from the Bill, bearing in mind that this clause is no different from the clause in the 1991 Act that has been in force for the past eight years?

The honourable member for Warwick raised the issue of free speech. I do not mind free speech so long as people do not use other people's money or use a statutory office to exercise that right. This provision does not relate to comments; it relates to spending. I repeat: it does not relate to comments or free speech; it relates to spending of the grower/miller money or affiliating with a political party. They are quite different. I think members opposite and their advisers misunderstand the law in general and this provision in particular.

The other issue that was raised related to legal advice. I assure the Committee that the Office of the Parliamentary Counsel has certified this section as lawful. That office has an obligation to advise the Government of any potential illegality, constitutional or otherwise, in a proposed law. That office is satisfied and so am I.

In conclusion, I believe that honourable members opposite have not even had a look at the 1991 Act. The words in the 1991 Act are exactly the same as the provisions of this Bill.

They had two years and four months to delete clause 104 from the 1991 Act. They did not. It has been in force for the past eight years. Their motives are a little too suspicious for me to comprehend why they are trying to delete these provisions from the Bill.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** As with clause 101, to which we spoke earlier, I take very little comfort from the assurance given to the Assembly by the Minister. I indicate to the Minister that there have been a number of High Court cases over the past four or five years that do not necessarily relate to the matter before the Parliament today but nevertheless have an implication about things that we believed were right at the time we passed them through this place—

**Mr Palaszczuk:** They don't relate to this at all.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** I am coming to that particular point. Because of what comes to pass in the future, these sorts of issues can become a problem. The native title issue is a classic example. In 1993 we gave warnings in relation to the implications for pastoral leases and we were pooh-poohed in this place. All the best legal brains in the world said that that could not be the case, yet the Wik case showed that there were implications for pastoral leases. What happened to the brilliant cross-vesting arrangements that were put in place by the State, Territory and Commonwealth Governments on the best of legal advice? Some time later—only a few months ago—the High Court knocked those over.

These provisions raise some issues in relation to implied freedoms of speech, association and ability to be involved in a political process or campaign that are restricted by what the Minister is seeking to do, particularly in subclause (b) of clause 115. That is the real problem. Earlier I mentioned *Levy v. the Victorian Government* and also *Lange v. the ABC*, which show that that implied right applies not only to individuals but also to statutory organisations. That was shown particularly in the case of *Lange*. That is our concern here today.

The policies and politics of any political party are subjective. There is probably a lot in the Labor Party platform with which I do not have a problem. There is probably a lot in the platform of other political parties with which I do not have a problem. However, there are certainly some issues in the platforms of the Labor Party and other political parties with which I do have a problem. That is where it becomes a subjective test. What I believe to

be right and just may be something that the Minister may not believe to be right and just.

I do not—and I assume the ordinary person would not—have a problem with what the Minister is doing under subclause (a) in relation to the corporation's funds being connected with the politics of any political party. It does not worry the Minister for Industrial Relations. We know all about affiliation. There is never any problem with affiliation with the unions that have been bankrolling his organisation for 100 years in this State. Primary producers run a million miles from the National Party because of the vilification and vindictiveness of Government members opposite. I am not aware of any direct affiliation between primary producer organisations and the National Party. That is for sure. We know what those opposite are all about.

On the face of it, provisions relating to affiliations with political parties sound okay, but paragraph (b) is where it becomes much more subjective. Paragraph (b) refers to "the support of the politics, program or aims of any political party". The base aims of most political parties are fairly good. They are basically trying to do the right thing by the community in a whole range of areas, whether it be something to do with import restriction—as I said earlier, "buy Australian"—or a range of other things. In paragraph (b), which relates to prohibition on any political activity, the Government is saying that the likes of the BSES and all of those other organisations are unable to be involved in that and that if they are they will be removed. That is the real issue. The Government's aim may very well be a very decent objective which most people in the community would think was for the advancement of the general community. That is what it is all about.

I still have some concerns about the legal precedent as well. That is something that may or may not be tested in a court. Paragraph (b) is repugnant and should be viewed in light of what has happened at the High Court. Most base aims or objectives of any political party are good and I think some of them should be supported.

Time expired.

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN** (Mr Mickel): Order! Before proceeding any further, I point out to the Chamber that amendment No. 18 of the honourable member for Crows Nest seeks to delete clause 115 entirely. The appropriate procedure for enabling that to happen is for him to oppose the clause. I say that for the record.

**Mr ROWELL:** This clause has ramifications. I am well aware that it was in the previous Act, but the industry has moved on. Statutory bodies will virtually finish up in five years' time. That is dealt with in other legislation that is before the Parliament. I cannot speak about that—

**Mr Palaszczuk:** No, I know you can't.

**Mr ROWELL:** It is very good of the Minister to remind me that I cannot speak about it, but it does have ramifications for what we are talking about here. Those organisations will be virtually voluntary organisations. The Government knew full well that that was going to be the case when this legislation was put together. The Government was working on that. I know that industry people spent a lot of time with the Minister, looking at how they would go about transforming from their current situation and how they would deal with the assets of each organisation.

Once again, this provision has been inserted in a different manner from how it was prescribed in the previous Act. It is not substantially different except that each time the Minister has talked about the BSES, the corporation or productivity boards he has set it out even more clearly. I am not saying that there is any major difference between what was in the previous legislation and this, but the Minister has done it even more definitely and even more indelibly in this legislation.

I am a grower. I contribute to these organisations. I have never had any indication that they were prepared to support any political campaign that I was involved in. I never saw that. Never has it been in question.

**Mr Braddy** interjected.

**Mr ROWELL:** I would like to hear what the Minister for Employment had to say. What he is saying is pretty superfluous, so we will not worry about it too much. The point is that I have never seen any indication that these organisations were prepared to contribute to any campaign. They are professional people. They have a job to do. I do not know what their politics are. I have never questioned them and I am not very interested.

**Mr Palaszczuk:** What's your worry?

**Mr ROWELL:** There is an innuendo in this legislation that these people are going to support a political party, and this Government wants to stop it. This legislation says that they are not to be a member of a political party and they are not to make any contribution to a party. Why was it necessary? Why is there not a whole range of other legislation in which this type of provision appears?

**Mr Palaszczuk:** It's the body.

**Mr ROWELL:** It is the body of the legislation. The Government knew full well that within a short period of time the statutory requirements would go from these bodies so that to a large extent they will be volunteer organisations. Currently they do not contribute to political parties and I think this is a reflection on them—an innuendo almost—that they could in some way or other contribute to a political party.

People do not have to be too bright to put two and two together and come up with which political party this clause relates to. The Minister for Transport is laughing, but Labor does not mind getting money from the unions to bolster its campaign. It does not mind getting—

**Mr Springborg:** They'll be in a privileged position and just suck up the money.

**Mr ROWELL:** That is right. I think it is a reflection on those organisations that this has to be put into legislation when other legislation being brought in by the Government will make this provision virtually redundant in five years' time. It is not going to have any impact anyway.

These organisations are made up of people who are dedicated to the work they perform. They are professionals. They are not just groups of people who have been put there for growers and millers to give money to. Whether it is the BSES, a production board or whatever, I think this provision is a reflection on them, that they could be giving money to a political party. I do not think it is fair and reasonable to enshrine that in legislation—

**Mr Braddy:** Even though you did in your legislation?

**Mr ROWELL:** Which legislation is the Minister talking about?

**Mr Braddy:** You had the same clause in your legislation.

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN:** Order! Would the member address the Chair and the Minister keep quiet.

**Mr ROWELL:** That is a good idea. Mr Temporary Chairman, I am pleased that you have told the Minister to keep quiet, because what he is saying is a load of rubbish. I do not know what legislation the Minister for Employment is referring to.

In relation to the Sugar Industry Review Working Party, the Minister said, "Why didn't you do it when you were in Government?" I will answer the Minister. That working party was in place when the now Opposition was in

Government and we did not have the opportunity to put this Bill before the Parliament. I am absolutely certain that, had we been able to, we would have got this sort of rubbish out of the legislation. It reflects poorly on those organisations.

It took a long time for this legislation to come before the Parliament. It was to come in at the end of last year. We are now nearly at the end of 1999. It certainly is not reflective of the groups of people who do a heck of a lot of work for the industry and who make it so productive. We then have to turn around and say, "You people can't contribute. You cannot put money into a political organisation." As I said, one would not have to be too bright to see the imprimatur the Government has put into this legislation. When we read between the lines it is quite clear. It is damned unfortunate that the Government has had to do this again in legislation eight years later.

**Mr COOPER:** Earlier the Minister said that he was becoming very suspicious of why we were taking such a detailed interest in this particular clause. We became very suspicious of the motives of the Minister and the Government when we delved into this clause and looked at the ramifications of paragraph (b). That was the opportunity for the Government to get it right, to get it out of the Act. That provision came in in 1991.

From looking at the contributions that were made by the Opposition in 1991, we recognised that we could have been a little more comprehensive. We have been particularly comprehensive this time around. Not only have we taken advice from the canegrowers, the ACFA and the millers but also we have obtained legal advice. That is why with all of these clauses we have been particularly meticulous and we have been able to see the ramifications. From these clauses could easily come legal challenges.

The Minister mentioned the Parliamentary Counsel. I am not going to take him to task for a second, but I must say that Crown Law advice would have been handy, because I am sure that the Parliamentary Counsel and Crown Law would certainly be interested in the legal arguments that we have put forward today on this particular clause. I would be very interested to hear their comments on the debate so far.

It is interesting to note that those Government members who represent sugar-growing districts have taken no part whatsoever in the detailed discussion on these clauses. That is the sort of thing that they should be doing, and which we are doing, that

is, standing up for the rights of canegrowers and the sugar industry. That is exactly what we are doing, and that is why we are taking the time to do this. And if I do prick someone's conscience for not having taken part in this debate, especially at the Committee stage, then that is too bad.

**Mr Nuttall:** The industry supports the Bill.

**Mr COOPER:** A few lug heads like the honourable member would not know where sugar comes from. They reckon sugar comes straight out of a packet—just go down to the shop and buy a packet of sugar.

**Mr Nuttall** interjected.

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN** (Mr Mickel): Order! The honourable member for Sandgate will cease interjecting.

**Mr COOPER:** The Opposition opposes clause 115, lines 13 to 20, particularly subclause (b), which states—

"... become affiliated in any way with any body, association or organisation that has as its object or any of its objects the support of the politics, program or aims of any political party."

There are very few organisations that exist in this world, and certainly in this State, that do not have something to do with some political party. The boards of directors would not be doing their job if they were not talking to people who have political affiliations with some particular party, including the unions. So how on earth can they do business? How on earth can they deal with the issues that are affecting the industry? This will preclude them. So who on earth is going to be able to do business with the sugar industry? And the moment that any of them do, there could be a Supreme Court challenge. If members opposite did not know that before, they certainly know it now.

We believe that our arguments are right. This legislation has been thoroughly and meticulously researched. The information that we have been able to obtain might have caught the Minister by surprise. We are saying that the Minister has an opportunity right now, having listened to the argument—and the argument has been pretty clear, based on fact and advice from all those organisations, as well as legal advice—to agree with our opposition to clause 115 and delete the lot: lines 13 to 20. We make that recommendation to the Minister.

**Mr SANTORO:** I am rising to respond to the Minister's question about similar provisions existing within the Primary Producers' Organisation and Marketing Act. The Minister said, "Why didn't you change it then?" I

reiterate one of the basic tenets of my two contributions today, that is, that what we have in the Minister and in the Government, in prosecuting this particular Bill, are a Minister and a Government of smoke and mirrors.

The Minister very well knows that there has been a series of High Court cases relating to the constitutionality or otherwise of clauses which contain the provisions that members are debating. I have been reliably informed by my honourable colleagues that a working party was looking into the legislation that governed the sugar industry. Part of the brief of that working party was to review the impact of those High Court decisions on the constitutionality or otherwise of the provisions that existed in various Acts.

Members on this side of the Chamber have very, very clear consciences in terms of this particular clause. So that is our answer to the Minister: that that particular clause was under active review, and we were doing the responsible thing. We were asking for constitutional advice in relation to the impact of High Court decisions on various pieces of legislation. It is the sort of advice that we were seeking and which the Minister, it seems to me, with respect—unless he can convince me otherwise—has not sought himself. And in the absence of his being able to convince us that the passing of this particular clause is not going to lead this whole piece of legislation into a morass of legal litigation and discussion, then we are not prepared to support it.

Just to clarify it for the Minister, the additional reason is that when we combine clause 101 with clause 115, their cumulative impact in terms of the potential for political interference is enormous. The power and the discretion that the Minister has under clauses 101 and 115 combined is enormous, irrespective of whether some of the provisions in clause 115 that we are considering at this moment were contained in any other legislation that was overseen by the coalition.

That is our answer to the Minister. Unlike the Minister, when asked a question we actually answer it. It was answered in a very lucid and very specific way by the shadow Attorney-General, the honourable member for Warwick. It has been answered by the honourable member for Crows Nest and the honourable member for Hinchinbrook. I am now trying to add my two bob's worth in terms of the Minister's query. The Minister asks us questions, and we answer them for him. But that is not the way that this place works. We are actually asking the Minister to provide the answers that will give us some assurance. With

respect, the Minister may choose not to answer, but by doing that all he does is exacerbate our concerns and our uncertainties. For that reason, we are not supporting the parts of this clause that were just read by the honourable member for Crows Nest.

It is unfortunate that we have come to that conclusion, because we really would like to help the Minister. Members on this side of the Chamber—and I am not going to include myself in this broad sweep of affiliation—and particularly the honourable members who belong to the National Party and who represent, very effectively, sugar-growing regions of this State, speak not just from the heart but from a very sound base of practical knowledge and, in some cases, very personal experience in terms of the sugar industry. So when we on this side make our contributions, we do so with great sincerity. I believe that we deserve a similar response and approach by members opposite.

**Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM:** I seek some clarification from the Minister. I understand clause 115(a) and the fact that the directors are not to apply any of their funds to political parties or political candidates. As to subclause (b)—"become affiliated in any way"—given the intention under subclause (a), is affiliation only going to be defined as affiliated by way of paying a fee, or could it be interpreted that the sugar industry boards would not even be able to use lobbying power, particularly during election time, to lobby for their aims, objectives and concerns with whichever political party they wished to approach?

I would also be interested in the Minister's comment about the comparison between this preclusion in the Sugar Industry Bill and the power given to the union movement in, say, the IR Bill, where the union movement is directly politically affiliated, but they were given significant powers and inroads in the IR Bill. How do those compare?

**Mr PALASZCZUK:** The term "affiliated" means formal affiliation. Like the Canegrowers is affiliated with the Queensland Farmers Federation, basically, if you pay your money you get a seat on the board. It is as simple as that.

**Question—**That clause 115, as read, stand part of the Bill—put; and the Committee divided—

**AYES, 41—**Barton, Beattie, Bligh, Boyle, Braddy, Bredhauer, Briskey, Clark, E. Cunningham, J. Cunningham, D'Arcy, Edmond, Elder, Fenlon, Foley, Fouras, Hamill, Hayward, Hollis, Lavarch, Lucas,

Mackenroth, McGrady, Mulherin, Musgrove, Nelson-Carr, Nuttall, Palaszczuk, Pearce, Pitt, Reeves, Reynolds, Roberts, Robertson, Rose, Schwarten, Spence, Welford, Wells. Tellers: Sullivan, Purcell

**NOES, 39**—Beanland, Black, Borbidge, Connor, Cooper, Dalgleish, Davidson, Elliott, Gamin, Grice, Healy, Hobbs, Johnson, Kingston, Knuth, Laming, Lester, Lingard, Littleproud, Malone, Nelson, Paff, Pratt, Prenzler, Quinn, Rowell, Santoro, Seeney, Sheldon, Simpson, Slack, Springborg, Stephan, Turner, Veivers, Watson, Wellington. Tellers: Baumann, Hegarty

Resolved in the **affirmative**.

Clause 116—

**Mr COOPER** (5 p.m.): Clause 116 is contingent upon clause 115. The Opposition has just opposed clause 115 using some pretty extensive arguments. Our views have not changed as far as clause 116 is concerned because this is the next step, namely the removal of a director or directors if they contravene clause 115(b) and become involved in any way, shape or form with lobby groups or whatever. In that event, directors are subject to removal.

Without revisiting the arguments we have already raised, I would like to know what powers the Minister and the Government intend to utilise under this clause. I want the Minister to tell me what protocols will be put in place in order to ensure that there is fair play. I also want to know what administrative protections will be instituted to ensure that this power is not used without procedural fairness being accorded to the director. The Government is making the job of the director so difficult—almost impossible to comply with—and the next step is to remove the director. I want to know if a policy of fair play is going to be utilised. I want to know how the Minister will use the clause. I would like some indication of what safeguards will be put in place to ensure that the provision is not used too hastily, too unfairly or without natural justice being given to directors. I will take particular note of the Minister's answer because it will be contingent on whether or not we divide on this clause.

**Mr PALASZCZUK:** I will give one example to inform the Chamber as to the circumstances under which clause 116 will come into force. Let us say that the Herbert River Cane Production Board gave a sizeable donation to the campaign of the member for Hinchinbrook. That would be in direct contravention of clause 115 and it would then activate clause 116. That will give honourable members an example of what this clause is all about.

**Mr ROWELL:** I think that is absolutely ridiculous. I do not believe that any—

**Ms Bligh:** Any donation to your campaign would be ridiculous.

**Mr ROWELL:** These are the sorts of smart yuppies that we have on the other side of the Chamber—the bright people who just laugh about the sugar industry. They could not care less what it means to this State. They are just over there making glib comments about a very important issue. They could not care less what happens to the sugar industry. All they are concerned with is their yuppie ideas. They bring them into Parliament and, okay, people might—

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN** (Mr Mickel): Order! The honourable member for Hinchinbrook will address his comments through the Chair. Will Government Ministers please be quiet?

**Mr ROWELL:** Thank you very much for your protection; I need it because I am having difficulty putting a point across. I can assure the Minister that the example he has given is absolutely ludicrous.

**Mr Palaszczuk:** It is not ludicrous.

**Mr ROWELL:** It is not ludicrous? In other words, what the Minister is saying is that it could happen? The Minister is putting forward a ridiculous situation where a statutory board in the Herbert River district would contribute to my political campaign. That is absolutely ludicrous. I wish the Minister would withdraw that comment because I do not believe it does this Parliament or the Minister—

**Mr Palaszczuk:** I was asked for an example and I used that one.

**Mr ROWELL:** That reinforces what I said earlier. One does not have to be too smart to put two and two together and arrive at a clear understanding of what this is all about. This is a political move and that is all. It has nothing to do with the sugar industry and the important work done by the boards; it is just a political gesture. I have grave concerns about a Minister coming up with such an example.

**Mr Malone:** It is a disgrace.

**Mr ROWELL:** I really think that it is a disgrace. I do not think that anybody who is a Minister of the Crown should come up with the ridiculous and ludicrous suggestion that the Herbert River District Cane Production Board, the BSES or even the corporation would contribute to my campaign. In the past, they have never made any such approach. I have never asked them. On a political basis, and certainly on a professional basis—because

very often I deal with these people day by day—there has never been any such suggestion. I am going to take these comments back to them and show them this Government's thinking. We will spread this right across Queensland, because I think that the people in the sugar industry want a clear understanding of what this Government is all about.

This issue is not about the industry; it is about politics. It is about the way in which the Government conducts its affairs. I am very, very concerned about the Minister's innuendo in relation to these boards. I think that it is a slight on them. They have never had any such intention. I never ask any members of the board whether they belong to one political party or another. It is not important to me, because they are professional people. They are people who work for the betterment of the industry. It is a shame that, when we are dealing with legislation such as this Bill, such innuendo is involved. I do not think that it reflects well on what those people are really all about.

**Mr COOPER:** I will once more ask the question, because I think that, in his heart of hearts, the Minister knows that he gave a wrong and misleading example. Although it was a very simple question, it was a very, very fundamental and important question.

The clause titled "Removal of director" states—

- "(1) This section applies if the Governor in Council is satisfied that the board has contravened section 115;
- (2) The Governor in Council may remove a director of the board from office by notice given to the director."

I ask again: how is that done? Do they just waltz in and say, "You are gone", or do they have some protocols in place, some safeguards, or some reference to natural justice?

If the Minister for Transport were a member of the board, he would like to see a bit of natural justice or some protocols in place so that he knew that there were some safeguards in place and he knew where he stood. That is what I am asking the Minister. I do not want to go on and on about it. It is a very sensible, reasonable request. What protocols will be put in place to protect those people's rights so that they can defend themselves? What safeguards will the Minister put in place? Quite obviously at this stage there are none and I think that is extremely serious.

**Mr PALASZCZUK:** I think perhaps we are going a bit overboard with clause 116. The example that I used was an extreme example.

**An Opposition member** interjected.

**Mr PALASZCZUK:** The members opposite asked me for an example, so I gave them an extreme example. I refer to a CPP board making a donation to any political party. That would constitute a breach of clause 115—any political party. I refer to the Queensland Sugar Corporation giving a donation to a candidate's advertising campaign. At the end of the day, in relation to the people who are concerned, natural justice will always prevail.

**Question—**That clause 116, as read, stand part of the Bill—put; and the Committee divided—

**AYES, 41—**Barton, Beattie, Bligh, Boyle, Braddy, Bredhauer, Briskey, Clark, E. Cunningham, J. Cunningham, D'Arcy, Edmond, Elder, Fenlon, Foley, Fouras, Hamill, Hayward, Hollis, Lavarch, Lucas, Mackenroth, McGrady, Mulherin, Musgrove, Nelson-Carr, Nuttall, Palaszczuk, Pearce, Pitt, Reeves, Reynolds, Roberts, Robertson, Rose, Schwartz, Spence, Welford, Wells. Tellers: Sullivan, Purcell

**NOES, 39—**Beanland, Black, Borbidge, Connor, Cooper, Dalglish, Davidson, Elliott, Gamin, Grice, Healy, Hobbs, Johnson, Kingston, Knuth, Laming, Lester, Lingard, Littleproud, Malone, Nelson, Paff, Pratt, Prenzler, Quinn, Rowell, Santoro, Seeney, Sheldon, Simpson, Slack, Springborg, Stephan, Turner, Veivers, Watson, Wellington. Tellers: Baumann, Hegarty

Resolved in the **affirmative**.

Clause 117, as read, agreed to.

Clause 118—

**Mr PALASZCZUK** (5.20 p.m.): I move the following amendment—

"At page 85, after line 13—

insert—

'(da)fund research, development and extension relating to the Queensland sugar industry; and'."

Following consultation with the Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations, the Australian Sugar Milling Council, Canegrowers and the Queensland Sugar Corporation, the Government proposes an amendment to subclause (5). New paragraph (da) will now provide that the Queensland Sugar Corporation may fund research, development and extension relating to the Queensland sugar industry. The amendment has been necessitated following the proposed deletion of clause 141 and its replacement with a new clause 141. I will discuss this amendment at a later stage.

**Mr COOPER:** The Opposition has some problems with this amendment and, indeed, with clause 118. The clause raises the issue of funding—the distribution of funding and the breakup of funding—which is of extreme concern to the industry, that is, Canegrowers and the ACFA. As the Minister has just mentioned, this issue also relates to clause 141, and we will deal with that when the time comes. The Opposition's concerns relate to the funding of research and development in the sugar industry, specifically the funding of the Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations. While we have opposed a number of clauses, this clause probably represents one of the major concerns that we have with the Bill.

Section 20 of the Sugar Industry Act 1991 is the equivalent provision to clause 118. Subsection 2(d) allows the corporation currently to undertake or fund research into the quality of and markets for the products of the Queensland sugar industry or any other matter connected with the industry. The Bill proposes a departure from that provision based on the outcomes of the report of the Sugar Industry Review Working Party as it currently stands.

Clause 118 focuses the Queensland Sugar Corporation on the marketing of sugar and market-related issues. The corporation's funding was intended to be limited to research into the marketing of the products of the industry, but this amendment allows the corporation to fund research not only into marketing issues but also into research and development generally. In effect, that maintains the status quo of the 1991 Act.

Until now, the BSES has been funded through a combination of sources, but predominantly by industry on a fifty-fifty basis between growers and millers. That industry contribution relies on the statutory levy applied to the sugar industry under the Primary Industries Organisation and Marketing Act. The Queensland Government, through the DPI, also makes an annual contribution of some \$3.5m.

Recent and planned changes to the QSC, including other provisions contained in the Bill and the future privatisation of the QSC, have been directed at pursuing the market focus that I just alluded to. This amendment represents the retention of the status quo. In simple terms, this amendment makes the QSC responsible for collecting the levy currently collected under the statutory levy-making provisions of the Primary Producers' Organisation and Marketing Act, in line with the Minister's intention to abolish those statutory provisions.

By virtue of that, the Government will also abolish the existing funding mechanism for the BSES, which has obviously prompted this amendment. Instead of the BSES receiving funding through the soon to be defunct statutory levy, the funding will now come from the QSC sugar sales pool.

**Mr Palaszczuk** interjected.

**Mr COOPER:** We will come to that, but that is where it comes from. This proposal contains a number of flaws that I will now outline. My consultations with industry organisations have revealed that they have not been consulted regarding this proposal. That comes from them, and not from the Opposition.

This proposal was not included in the draft Bill circulated among growers throughout Queensland during the consultation process, nor has the Minister made any announcement subsequent to that round of consultation to inform growers of his intentions. It is really a question of: why not? It appears as if the Minister has tried to slip this significant change through. It appears as if this is a sneaky attempt to dupe the growers, and that is the way that they feel about it. This is a marked departure from the current funding mechanism for the BSES, with significant ramifications that I will certainly outline.

In simple terms, as the single-desk seller the QSC receives payment for all sugar sales, which is broadly divided on the basis of two-thirds to the growers and one third to the millers. Under this amendment, the BSES budget is proposed to be allocated from the QSC pool. Therefore, this amendment effectively shifts the funding platform for BSES from a fifty-fifty basis between the growers and millers to that of 66% funded by the growers and only 33% funded by the millers. The millers' funding responsibilities for BSES will be reduced from 50% to 33%, while the growers' contribution will be increased from 50% to 66%. They are getting a bit upset about that and no-one can blame them. That has not been agreed between the growers and the millers. The growers have not signed off on this shift in funding responsibilities. This was not a part of the report of the Sugar Industry Review Working Party. It has been hatched up as a quick fix of the funding problem that was created in the haste to remove statutory levies without full and open consultation with industry. Again I ask the Minister: why has he chosen to reallocate the funding mix for BSES?

The other flaw with these proposed amendments—which is just as significant, if

not more so—is that the QSC, with the support of industry, is to be transferred to a private company owned by growers and millers next year, possibly as early as March. When that happens, how will the Government possibly direct a private company to undertake certain research and pay levies to a research provider such as the BSES? The short answer is that it cannot. How then will the BSES be funded? What mechanisms will there be to secure an agreement on the BSES budget between millers and growers, and the proportions paid by each?

Unless the Minister can actually satisfy our concerns on this issue, we cannot believe that the amendments are a valid way of funding the BSES. The conclusion that could be drawn is that the Government appears to be walking away from its current role of ensuring the funding of the BSES, one of the sugar industry's most prominent research providers. Does this mean that the Minister will be walking away from funding the Queensland Government's share of the BSES budget also? Will the Minister confirm that one way or the other?

The only other comment I will make—and I will do so in a constructive fashion—is that the Minister will need to keep the coordination of research and similar matters under close scrutiny to ensure that overlaps do not occur and that this issue remains focused. Also, how does the Minister intend to ensure this coordination? Will he be pursuing the establishment of the Sugar Industry Research Coordinating Committee, as recommended in the Sugar Industry Working Party report? I reiterate that the Opposition is deeply concerned about this amendment, its apparent intent and the dearth of industry consultation on this proposal. Accordingly, the Opposition reserves judgment until it hears back from the Minister.

**Mr PALASZCZUK:** This amendment to clause 118 is basically inserted to allow for the deletion of clause 141 and the reinsertion of a new clause 141 to basically establish a new method of funding for the BSES. The honourable member for Crows Nest has raised issues related to clause 118 and 141 together. If I respond to all of his questions in relation to clause 141 and clause 118 now, that would probably prevent a lot of the debate that would ensue with respect to clause 141.

As to the reasons why the Government has gone about doing this, we are looking at a mechanism by which some of the funding for the Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations may be provided. The provision has been

developed in close consultation with the BSES. Clause 141 originally provided that a regulation may levy a charge payable to the BSES on all growers and mill owners in relation to cane growing, harvesting, supply and processing. The new clause headed "BSES budget" provides that the BSES must each year propose its operating budget from the start of the crushing season until the start of the crushing season in the following year. Before proposing the budget, it must consult with industry and with the Queensland Sugar Corporation. The budget may specify a corporation portion, that is, the portion of the budget, if any, to be paid by the Queensland Sugar Corporation, and the Minister is to approve the budget. Any proposal for variation of the budget, including the corporation portion, must only be made to the Minister following appropriate consultation. It should be remembered that this new clause provides but one mechanism—and I will repeat this: one mechanism—for funding and the Bill does not exclude addressing research and development funding through other areas.

Opposition members, especially the member for Crows Nest, have suggested that the mechanism proposed by the Government in its amendment places an unnecessary impost on growers. Let me make it clear that it is not the intention to provide all of the funding to the BSES by this mechanism. The current levy contribution to the BSES is funded 50% by growers and 50% by millers, as the member for Crows Nest has said. However, the returns to growers and millers for sugar paid for by the QSC are distributed approximately two-thirds to growers and one third to millers. Indeed, if all BSES funding currently raised by levies were to be replaced by funding from the Queensland Sugar Corporation, this would increase the contribution by growers to the BSES funding above that paid by millers. I have already begun discussions with Canegrowers, the Australian Sugar Milling Council and the BSES with a view to ensuring continuing funding at its current level and with the same relative contribution by growers and millers.

The proposed alternative plan has three elements, only one of which requires State legislation, that is, clause 141. The three elements of the proposed alternative plan are as follows: the industry—growers and millers in all three States—could contribute additionally to the Federal levy system. A similar process exists and works well for the grain industry. As recently as two weeks ago, officers of the department and one of my staff members went to Canberra to canvass this issue with the

Federal Minister concerned. I understand that they received a favourable hearing. Secondly, funds could be sourced from the Queensland Sugar Corporation as provided by the amendment. Thirdly, State and local R and D requirements could be funded through local agreements.

The Sugar Industry Review Working Party proposed that a Sugar Industry Research Coordinating Committee be established to set strategic priorities and to ensure accountability for industry funds. The report of the Sugar Industry Review Working Party recommended that SIRCC be established to facilitate the prioritisation and coordination of raw sugar industry R, D and E activities at a strategic level in Queensland. Also, it recommended that SIRCC be responsible for recommending to the Queensland Government the institutions which should receive, and the relative shares of, raw sugar industry R, D and E funding provided by the industry and the Queensland Government. A further recommendation was for SIRCC to consider greater contestability in the provisions of R, D and E services.

Basically, what I am saying is that the proposal in clause 141 is only one part of three in raising the necessary funds required to fund the BSES. As I said in my contribution in response to the honourable member for Crows Nest, we believe that, at the end of the day, the contribution ratio, if we take those three components together, will be basically the same as it is now between the growers and millers.

**Mr ROWELL:** When the corporation becomes a private entity, how will the Minister legislate for it to pay out funds on behalf of the people involved in that corporation, that is, the growers and millers? I would like the Minister to respond to that question first, because I am not clear how that could take place. The Minister stated that we will have a corporate body that will be independent and that will have no statutory requirements. Yet when I was speaking previously about political contributions, the Minister sidestepped that issue to some degree. Although the Minister is intending to corporatise these bodies and make them private entities, they will not be Government owned entities; they will be entities of the industry itself, which consists of the growers and the millers. When they become private organisations in three or five years' time, how can the Minister dictate to them that they will pay a contribution to the research institute?

**Mr PALASZCZUK:** In relation to the exercise of a statutory power such as vesting,

a private company can be directed by the State. That is basically what happens with respect to Grainco. That is the example we will be using. We are consulting with all sections of the industry. I believe that by employing these three provisions we will get there in the end. I understand that the funding for the BSES will be maintained and the split between growers and millers will be the same as it is now.

**Mr ROWELL:** I hear what the Minister is trying to do. It is very admirable. But, at the end of the day, this is legislation. How we go about ensuring that the funds that are so essential to the BSES are provided is not really clearly spelt out in this legislation. I have some concern—and I think members on this side have some concern—about that. Its funding must be absolutely certain. Once again the State will be dictating to a private company how to conduct its affairs and how to ensure its funding that is so essential for research organisations.

We have the growers and the millers. Of course, we talk about the two-thirds/one third ratio. There are a lot of ifs, buts and maybes as to how the Government is going to get away from that fifty-fifty ratio that we have talked about, which is so critical. The Minister says, "We are going to do this and that" and, "We are going down to Canberra and we are going to discuss this", but in the end it is not really spelt out in this legislation how the funding is to be provided. We know full well that there is every intention for these statutory organisations to become private organisations within a three to five-year period.

I am just a little concerned that we do not know what the results will be of what the Minister is going to do. While he has a lot of intentions, their results are not spelt out in the legislation. This could just drag on or it could go away. There is no commitment in this legislation to make good exactly what he is talking about, and that is what really concerns me. I would like the Minister to respond to that.

**Mr PALASZCZUK:** Let me just reassure the Chamber in the first instance that, out of the three methods that are going to be employed to raise the necessary R and D funds, only one of those can be done through legislation, and that will be coordinated by SIRCC.

**Mr Rowell:** Is SIRCC going to exist?

**Mr PALASZCZUK:** Yes. It will be coordinated by SIRCC. Let us just consider our industry at present. The industry will want R and D to continue. It is in its interests to have it continued, and industry will use various methods to fund it. Legislation will not always

be needed because, let us face it, at the end of the day our sugar industry is growing up.

**Mr Rowell:** Thanks for that.

**Mr PALASZCZUK:** It is growing up. It is maturing really well. There are three mechanisms that we are going to employ—one through legislation and the other two through the Commonwealth arena and through our local areas. I reiterate that it is my belief that we will be able to coordinate those three methods of raising funds to ensure that we will be able to get the necessary R and D funding for our sugar industry.

**Mr ROWELL:** I am sure that the Minister is committed to what he is saying. Could he possibly give us a commitment as to when this is going to occur? I think that is quite important because in Government things have a tendency to slip by. Time goes by and we do not get the sort of responses that we really need. I have no doubt that he has a commitment to do it personally. I am not questioning that whatsoever. However, in the mechanism of Government, unless the Minister can get the legislation put together, get agreement by Cabinet and so on, it will not happen. Frankly, I believe that he has a commitment to do something about it. Could he please give us an indication as to when he intends to attend to this?

**Mr PALASZCZUK:** I would be glad to respond to the honourable member. Next week I have a meeting of my Sugar Industry Development Advisory Council—SIDAC—and this is one of the main topics on the agenda for that advisory council. We will be working through this issue so that we can come up with a resolution and put a time frame in place. I will be in there with industry considering this issue of BSES funding at length. Finally, the member for Hinchinbrook was a bit concerned about whether I will get Cabinet approval. The Bill has gone through Cabinet. Clause 141 that is being inserted has been agreed to. So I do not think there are any problems there whatsoever.

**Mr MALONE:** I have just a couple of concerns. Integral to the BSES research funding is the Government's \$3.8m grant. I personally have some concerns in respect to SIRCC, and that is another step further down the track. I would just like to hear the Minister's comments in respect of the integrity of the grant money. Hopefully, that will be increased over time to actually show the Government's commitment to the industry.

**Mr PALASZCZUK:** I would like to give this Chamber an unequivocal commitment that the Government's \$3.8m contribution to BSES

funding is guaranteed. What was the second point the member raised?

**Mr Malone** interjected.

**Mr PALASZCZUK:** We will not talk about that now. What was the other point you raised?

**Mr Malone** interjected.

**Mr PALASZCZUK:** As I said previously, SIRCC will be established, but it will take a little while.

**Mr COOPER:** I guess the other unequivocal guarantee that we would ask from the Minister is in relation to the fifty-fifty basis of funding. We have been through all the different proposals—66 to 33—and the Minister is still going through the consultation process with the sugar industry. The industry claims it has not been consulted but, nevertheless, if the consultations are going to proceed along the lines that it will be a fifty-fifty split between millers and growers—

**Mr PALASZCZUK:** I do not know where the honourable member is getting the notion that industry has not been consulted. We have spoken to the milling council, Canegrowers and, of course, BSES on this issue and the ACFA. So everyone has been consulted on this issue. They all believe that there is a need for this to be done, bearing in mind what the Government is doing with the Primary Industry Bodies Reform Bill. It is all predicated on that.

As far as the unequivocal guarantee that the honourable member wants, I just cannot give it because the Government can only legislate for one method of gaining funds; we have two other methods. However, I can say quite confidently that I do believe that, at the end of the day, we will get a relative split, which is around fifty-fifty as we have had previously.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 118, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 119—

**Mr COOPER** (5.48 p.m.): This clause sets out that the corporation must consult industry and it requires the Queensland Sugar Corporation to consult with growers and millers about matters affecting the industry. Under subclause (2), the consultation must occur on a regular basis, and I draw the Minister's attention to section 24 of the current Act. Currently the corporation has a statutory obligation to consult at least once every three months. I ask the Minister why the Bill has moved away from an obligation to consult at least on a quarterly basis to the far less precise "regular basis"? Does this change indicate that

the corporation will be consulting with industry less regularly? If this is not to be the case, what action will the Minister be taking to ensure that appropriate lines of communication are kept open? Can the Minister give an assurance to the Chamber that the corporation will consult with the industry at least as much in the future as it is currently required to do?

**Mr PALASZCZUK:** In relation to the issue raised by the member for Crows Nest, the corporation does consult on a regular basis—more so than the previous Act stipulated. I can give the honourable member an assurance that the consultation will occur regularly and at much more frequent intervals than under the previous Act.

Clause 119, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 120 to 133, as read, agreed to.

Clause 134—

**Mr COOPER** (5.50 p.m.): In relation—

**Mr Palaszczuk:** Just call "divide".

**Mr COOPER:** We have been through the arguments very meticulously and I believe we have made our point. We have grave concerns about the so-called political activity prohibition. I do not believe there is any need to reiterate all of that. We have made our point. We have done our dividing on the issue. We remain opposed to clause 134.

Clause 134, as read, agreed to.

Clause 135, as read, agreed to.

Clause 136—

**Mr KNUTH** (5.51 p.m.): I move the following amendment—

"At page 94, line 29, after 'activities'—

insert—

', other than in a way that would commercially exploit anyone on whom a charge is levied under section 141'."

I would like to address the topic of cane research—research that is ever important with the industry battling such foes as cane grubs, low c.c.s levels and salinity concerns. I in no way wish to impede the research activities of the BSES, but I note with alarm a particular reference to the role of the Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations within this Bill.

Under the provisions of clause 136(k), the BSES can "commercially exploit the products of its research development and extension activities". Members may ask what is wrong with making money from the findings and breakthroughs of BSES. Generally I do not

have a problem with this concept, especially if it means lucrative sales to overseas concerns. What I must ask this Committee to remember, however, is who actually funds the BSES.

Australian canefarmers fund the BSES through the levy system. For this reason I believe the Bill must be amended to ensure that domestic sugar industry members—levy payers—are not exploited in any BSES quest for commercial gain. It is akin to buying a coffee shop and then being expected to pay every time you want a coffee there. I believe this omission is an insult to growers and must be rectified at the earliest opportunity.

**Mr PALASZCZUK:** I understand where the honourable member for Burdekin is coming from. However, this amendment assumes that the BSES board will exploit its functions for commercial gain. That is not the case. The BSES already has the function referred to in clause 136(k) under the Sugar Industry Act 1991. The wording of this function may have changed for the drafting into new legislation, but this does not mean a change to the way services are provided by BSES.

Not all programs available to the sugar industry are directly funded by BSES. For example, BSES has formed an alliance with Resource Consulting Services, RCS. This alliance enables RCS to contribute a wealth of experience in financial benchmarking and BSES to contribute the technical skills relevant to the sugar industry. The member will appreciate that, as an agribusiness consulting firm, RCS must be paid for its services. The appropriate mechanism for payment is through clause 136(k).

The amendment also assumes that the current State BSES levy funds the full cost of services provided by BSES. That is not true. It funds only around one-third of all its costs. It should also be noted that the Government's proposed amendment to clause 141 means that there will be a different mechanism made available to industry to fund part of the BSES. I would like the honourable member for Burdekin to keep that in mind, as well as the debate that took place in relation to clause 118, which really related to clause 141.

Amendment negatived.

Clause 136, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 137 to 139, as read, agreed to.

Clause 140—

**Mr COOPER** (5.55 p.m.): This clause is to do with the chief executive officer and staff of the BSES. I draw to the attention of the Minister a query relating to section 70 of the current Act, which provides that the bureau's

employees are to be employed under the Sugar Industry Act 1991 and not the Public Service Act 1996. An equivalent provision is not contained in this clause, which sets out the basis of employment of BSES staff. Could the Minister indicate whether BSES staff will in the future be employed under the Public Service Act or under this legislation?

**Mr PALASZCZUK:** My understanding is that those provisions in the previous Act are unnecessary because the members of the BSES are members of the Public Service.

**Mr Cooper:** So they will be under the Public Service Act?

**Mr PALASZCZUK:** No. They are employed under this Act.

**Mr ROWELL:** I am absolutely confused. Could the Minister give us a clear understanding of exactly what their position is?

**Mr COOPER:** I ask the question again. We just need to know. The officers advising the Minister should know whether the employees are to be employed under the Sugar Industry Act 1991 or the Public Service Act 1996. Could the Minister indicate whether BSES staff will in future be employed under the Public Service Act or under this legislation?

**Mr PALASZCZUK:** As I said previously, they are employed under this Act. They would only be employed under the Public Service Act if they were declared to be so. They are employed under this Act.

Clause 140, as read, agreed to.

Progress reported.

#### APEC TECHNOMART

**Hon. R. E. BORBIDGE** (Surfers Paradise—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition) (6 p.m.): I move—

"That this House condemns the 'can't do' Beattie Labor Government for its continuing failure to deliver on major events and for the embarrassment that has resulted as a consequence of the high profile failures of ventures like APEC Technomart III which have seriously undermined Queensland's reputation as a place to invest and do business."

I do not think that there could possibly have been a clearer, a more stark, a more honest admission of the wellspring of the serial incompetence of this Government when it comes to major events and project development than we had in this Chamber this morning from the member for Capalaba in his

confessional on the Technomart farce. What he literally told the members of this House this morning was that we can lead this Government to water, but we cannot stop it falling in.

What the member for Capalaba very clearly enunciated this morning was that even when this Government's eyes are collectively wide open, even when the monumental processes and the legions of highly paid advisers are in place, even when all the reasonable precautions have superficially been taken, and when we have three senior Ministers engaged—including the Premier and the Deputy Premier—this Government can unerringly find a way of walking into a shut door every time and making Queensland look silly, and then, of course, follow through with the Beattie doctrine—that is, blame somebody else.

The pattern is well established. We have seen it now any number of times in under 18 months. We have seen it snatch defeat from the jaws of victory in relation to Baywatch. We have seen it self-destruct in relation to net bet. We have seen it drop the ball in relation to Expo 2002. We have seen it fail to achieve the Garden Expo. We have seen it lose control in relation to the Queensland raceway. It is an absolute litany of dropped balls, of missed opportunities. And wherever possible, the failures have been spiced with acrimonious recriminations. Even relatively junior staffers have been able to join in the spite—and I refer in particular to the Indy.

I do not think any Government in the history of this State has missed so much so quickly. And now we have had a detailed dissection of this Government's ability to fail—so complete that, if it was not a contradiction in terms, one would think that the member for Capalaba was on truth serum. The admission of the total gullibility of this administration, of its absolute inability to walk and chew gum at the same time, was complete. It was shameless. It was refreshing—up to a point.

What the Deputy Premier admitted so candidly, so innocently—almost proudly—this morning was that, at an undesignated date but when the Government was new and it was first approached for confirmation of Government support for the Technomart conference, it identified a risk in relation to the event. And it was clearly a major risk. The Minister told us that the Government, from day one, was aware of the potential for the failure of the event—with all that would mean in relation to the credibility of our State, not just

nationally but internationally. He told us that the Government was concerned from day one about poor organisation and that it was consequently concerned from day one about low numbers of acceptances.

So there is no excuse, and there can be no excuse. The Government lent its name—the name of the State of Queensland—to this event with its eyes wide open. A condition of Government support, the Minister said, was an ability to closely monitor the development of the event to protect the State's interests. In other words, the Government was concerned about the potential for failure, so it wanted to make sure that that could not happen by being on the case. So far so good; 10 out of 10!

To achieve this close monitoring, we were told that an interdepartmental working group was established last November, almost a year ago. A good idea! It was headed by a deputy director-general, and I endorse that. That was an appropriately senior appointment. The departments of Premier's, State Development and Local Government lent significant human resources, and so they should have. With so much to gain and so much to lose, it was important to make sure the event progressed to success.

The Minister then told us that this group held monthly, and then weekly, meetings with the private sector organisers and some of the other participants. Again, that was good—commonsensical with what was at stake. But what the Deputy Premier, the Minister for State Development for the State of Queensland, then admitted this morning was this: the very best this Government could do was absolutely useless in protecting the reputation of our State. He literally may as well not have bothered with all the process and with the application of all those resources. What he told us was that the lights were on in the Government but nobody was home. Because even with that elaborate mechanism in place, it still was claiming—is claiming—ignorance in relation to what actually happened. With a virtual task force on the job, it could not find out. The Government was in the dark. The Minister was in the dark. The Government could not work out what was really happening—what was really going down. It knew that there were risks. It set up elaborate machinery to counter them. It walked right into a shut door and, of course, it blames the organisers. The Beattie doctrine is that it is always someone else's fault. But all they had to do to put this great due diligence structure—this great phalanx of Queensland troops—off its stroke was to deliver a couple of

"Don't you worry about that", and the Government of Queensland rolled over. It is no wonder the Labor mates got through the net bet system. It is no wonder Baywatch was lost. It is no wonder the Government could not get its act together in Paris for Expo 2002. It is no wonder the Garden Expo was lost. It is no wonder we ended up with financial egg all over our face in relation to the Queensland 500 motor race.

The alarm bells did not even ring in relation to Technomart when the interdepartmental group sought detail, in writing in August, about the number of acceptances and did not get a response and could not get hard information between then and the disaster last weekend. Even when the Government was ignored, the Government did not react. That is not good enough. This Government has a massive central control mechanism at its disposal—not least in the Premier's Department, with a Policy Coordination Division, with 135 souls who, we are told, are dedicated to making sure the Premier gets it right.

On top of that, as another arm of the central agency, we have a Ministry of State Development, which last year grew like topsy and was the only agency in Government to receive a budget increase that was larger, in percentage terms, than the increase for the Premier's Department. Health got around 3%. Education got 3%. Police got 0.1%. The Premier got 41%. The Minister for State Development got a 60% plus increase in his budget. And all we are getting for our money are monumental stuff-ups. The Premier should immediately review the personnel and the structures engaged in major events and major project development, with special reference to the lack of performance from his Office of the Cabinet—under another name—and from his Minister for State Development. They are letting him and this State down. Queensland cannot afford the levels of incompetence that we have consistently seen to date continue. He has to sort it out.

I just make this observation. The Deputy Premier took exception when I said in this place this morning that he was aware of problems in August. In this place this morning, the Deputy Premier, the responsible Minister, admitted that there were concerns about numbers and concerns about organisational matters from day one—from when the Government was new. And we had this extraordinary situation where the Premier, as the self-proclaimed supersalesman of this event, made pilgrimages to North America and to Japan to sell it.

The simple fact is that if you put your name and your signature and the crest or the coat of arms of the State of Queensland on a particular proposal, you have a responsibility to follow it through in those key marketplaces. And the reality is that this Government did not. I know people in the IT industry who have told me that it will take Queensland years to recover as a result of this bumbling, stumbling incompetence.

Time expired.

**Dr WATSON** (Moggill—LP) (Leader of the Liberal Party) (6.10 p.m.): I rise to second the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition. The burning issue tonight is how much will this Government's gross incompetence cost the taxpayers of Queensland. This morning this Government finally conceded its ill-conceived plan to flush another \$300,000 down the toilet in the Technomart fiasco. However, the Government still will not reveal the State's total financial exposure.

Based on the Deputy Premier's admission early today, the total bill for Queensland taxpayers could well top \$500,000. The Deputy Premier has repeatedly tried to duck the issue by hiding behind Crown Law. What did the Premier say—"So!"?

**Mr Beattie:** I was talking to the Deputy Premier about something that is totally unrelated.

**Dr WATSON:** I thought the Premier said, "So!" The Deputy Premier and the Premier have repeatedly tried to duck the issue by hiding behind Crown Law. The Deputy Premier admits that the lawyers are involved but he will not disclose how much is at stake; nor will the Premier admit the figure, even though he is constantly telling us about his open and accountable Government. Taxpayers have a right to know what the total bill will be if Crown Law fails to salvage the wreck. The fact is that the Government's track record does not inspire confidence.

One does not resort to lawyers or the courts unless one is playing for very high stakes. It does not really matter whether the Government paid the money and is trying to get it back, or whether it has committed the money and is trying to withhold it. What is the State's financial exposure if the Government fails to mitigate its total disaster? That is the question.

It is a nonsense to suggest that the bottom line cannot be disclosed for legal reasons. What is the Government trying to hide? The taxpayers are entitled to know the

full picture. They have the right to know about every last dollar that is flushed down the toilet. It is their money and it is their right. The Premier and the Deputy Premier are treating Queensland taxpayers with absolute contempt.

**Mr Beattie:** Not true.

**Dr WATSON:** Of course it is true. This morning we had a 15-minute statement which was pure obfuscation. The Deputy Premier did not come clean on what precisely was at stake for Queensland taxpayers. He said, "Don't worry about that." The taxpayers are entitled to worry about their own money. The Government has a moral obligation to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. All we have so far heard from the Premier and the Deputy Premier is a pack of half truths and legal mumbo jumbo. Getting information out of this mob is like extracting teeth. The Premier is constantly proclaiming his commitment to open and accountable Government, but when it comes to the crunch he folds every time.

What a difference a month makes. Four weeks ago the Premier was running around Asia and the United States trying to steal the glory for "Australia's biggest ever technology conference and expo". They are the Premier's words, not ours. Only four weeks ago he pulled on the emperor's robes and anointed himself as Queensland's superstar in relation to the Technomart. Where are those robes today?

The Premier has been exposed. The only way he can hide his embarrassment is to hide behind a lawyer's shingle. It is not even his own shingle; it belongs to someone else. He will not tell us how much his venture capital conference cost because he has not disclosed the figures. He has not disclosed any of the other potential costs with respect to audio equipment and such things. We want to know precisely what is the situation.

The Premier will not tell us how many Government exhibitors and delegates were roped in to fill the empty seats. He will not tell us how many public servants and union officials were press-ganged into service. He will not come clean on the bottom line.

As the Leader of the Opposition said, the warning bells were ringing three months ago but the supersalesman did not hear them because he was too busy blowing his own trumpet. The Government should have known six months ago that the conference was in trouble. It knew that the conference was in trouble three months ago but it did not lift a finger.

Today, the Deputy Premier had the gall to brag about the letters of thanks which he received for burying the Technomart corpse last Wednesday. He should have been on the World Wide Web and looking at what was being said there. He should have been looking at Computer World, which said—

"Professional conference organisers said they could not remember a disaster of this magnitude and expressed astonishment that moves weren't taken to avert it."

That completely contradicts the Government's assertions.

Time expired.

**Hon. P. D. BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier) (6.15 p.m.) I move—

"All words after 'That this House' be deleted and the following be inserted—

'applauds the way in which the Beattie Government has restored Queensland's reputation, integrity and image after two and a quarter years of damage by the lacklustre and bumbling Borbidge Government; and

congratulates the Beattie Government for its immediate action in organising a successful venture capital conference to protect the reputation of Queensland and the Gold Coast in the wake of the failure of a company organising the APEC Technomart III conference and expo.'"

We moved very quickly and precisely to protect the reputation of Queensland and the Gold Coast. All we have had today in question time and again tonight is this attempt by the Opposition to undermine this State's reputation and to undermine the reputation of the Gold Coast as a venue for holding conferences.

What do those opposite think happens with this attack on the Government? All it does is keep the media going—the international reporting and the national reporting. The people who are damaging this State's reputation are those opposite who continue this nonsense debate about the APEC Technomart.

The Leader of the Liberal Party said that we should have got on to the net. We did put a clear message on the Internet in terms of the Government's position in order to protect the reputation of this State. In addition to that, I table for incorporation in Hansard a copy of a letter that I will be sending to all delegates.

Leave granted.

Queensland Government  
Premier of Queensland

Dear

I am writing to you to advise of my disappointment regarding the collapse of a company running APEC Technomart III on the Gold Coast.

My Government is determined to support the development of high tech industries so that we create thousands of long-term, new-age jobs in the Smart State, especially in areas such as biotechnology and IT&T. We joined the Federal Government in sponsoring Technomart because it had the potential to be the biggest such conference ever staged in the Southern Hemisphere and had the backing of the Asia-Pacific Economic Community.

Although the Federal and State Governments were not the organisers of the conference and expo, I share with you a profound disappointment resulting from the failure of the conference and expo.

I would ask that you do not let this one particular incident cast a cloud over the excellent reputation and work being carried out elsewhere in Queensland.

We were able, at very short notice, to organise the Government's own very successful venture capital conference to ensure that all those people who had travelled from all over the world for the conference associated with Technomart did have a worthwhile and valuable conference to attend.

A range of other events and business matching opportunities were also salvaged. I am pleased to say there were a range of benefits that emerged from these. I thank particularly all of those who supported those initiatives.

I have great faith in the future of Queensland's knowledge-intensive industries. As a Government we remain committed to a long-term future based on the full development of those industries.

We are very much open for business and looking for partners both in research and in the commercialisation of the results of that research.

Some useful contact points are the Department of State Development at [www.statedevelopment.qld.gov.au](http://www.statedevelopment.qld.gov.au); and the Department of Communication and Information at [www.ci.qld.gov.au](http://www.ci.qld.gov.au).

Yours sincerely

(sgd) P Beattie

Peter Beattie, MLA,  
Premier of Queensland

**Mr BEATTIE:** What we have sought to do is protect the State's reputation, and we will continue to do that. Even though we have the knockers and the whingers who want to

undermine the State, we will move to protect this State's reputation.

Let us look at the record of the previous Government. Today, the Deputy Premier mentioned the Starland project. If we look at the scenario in Hong Kong where this matter has ended up coming to fruition, we find that in November 1999—that is this month—Disney announced an AUD\$5 billion theme park in Hong Kong, with the Hong Kong Government contributing about AUD\$4.5 billion and acquiring a 57% stake in the project, with Disney initially investing about AUD\$500m.

What that means is that had the proposal gone ahead which the former Premier, Mr Borbidge, had advocated, this State would have been up for a bill of \$4.5 billion. That would have meant that our AAA rating would have become a ZZZ or a 000 rating. It would have destroyed the financial basis of this State and would have destroyed the underlying financial security of this State. That is the sort of economic incompetence that we inherited from the previous Government.

The list goes on. The coalition had a secret MOU to cripple the CJC. The coalition wasted \$14.5m on the biased Connolly/Ryan inquiry. We had a capital works freeze and power blackouts. Then we come to Indy with Sunbelt Developments who defaulted on the payments for the naming rights. We had the Great South Pacific cruise ship disaster where unemployed people were promised training which never eventuated. We had the rhinos fiasco.

The entire Cabinet revolted on the super stadium issue and voted 16-2 against the Premier and Treasurer of the day—an unprecedented vote of no confidence in Mr Borbidge and Mrs Sheldon so close to an election. Four Ministers had to be sacked. By 1998, the coalition's policies had resulted in 10,000 more Queenslanders being unemployed than when it took over Government in February 1996. Under the Borbidge Government, 10,000 people lost their jobs. Unemployment continued to rise. In its last Budget, the coalition predicted that unemployment would continue to rise.

What has my Government done? We have provided 45,500 jobs in our first year. We have the Smart State. We have had vision. We have sorted out native title. Let us talk about what we did. When we moved to protect the Gold Coast's reputation, look at what happened with the successful Gold Coast venture capital conference. Giles Stapleton of the Australian Stock Exchange Enterprise Market congratulated the Government for the

leadership and commitment displayed. James Paulsen, the executive director of Corporation Builders, said the support we had given sent a positive message interstate and internationally. The list goes on. I table that list.

We showed leadership. While the previous Government almost destroyed the financial base of this State, we showed leadership. Yes, I am happy to go anywhere and be a supersalesman for Queensland, the Smart State, because I believe in this State and I will do anything that I can to advance its interests.

**Hon. J. P. ELDER** (Capalaba—ALP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development and Minister for Trade) (6.20 p.m.): I rise to second the amendment. I want to clarify something that I said this morning amid the silly attempts by the Leader of the Opposition to rise to points of order. When I said that I first became aware of the financial problems on the night of 28 October, it was my ministerial office that was contacted on that night in October. As I said in my ministerial statement, I first became aware of the financial problems on the morning of 29 October, as per my statement. I would hate to see my words misconstrued and the untruths that would have been garnered from it by the Leader of the Opposition.

Today, a lot has been said about how much the Government has or will pay out as a result of our efforts to save APEC Technomart III. As I have said already this morning, last weekend we stepped into the breach, with limited additional sponsorship, to ensure that APEC Technomart III actually got under way. As part of that exercise, we provided undertakings involving targeted sponsorship to certain essential creditors and suppliers to ensure that their services were provided. Without those assurances the conference would never have commenced.

Let me make this clear: to date, none of that money has been paid out. It is not possible to say exactly how much will ultimately be required to satisfy any obligations. A number of important factors will decide the exact quantum of any payment we make. We need to determine with various entities just what services were provided in relation to the undertakings that we gave and ensure that expenses were properly incurred and verified. We would also like to know what part, if any, of their obligations PacRim Technomart or their provisional liquidator will meet. It could be one cent in the dollar, it could be 99c in the dollar. At the moment, we have our legal advisers examining these and other issues. Again, at

this time there are legal proceedings in place, but we are among 17 other sponsors. We will be taking a very keen interest, as they will, in the outcomes of the liquidator.

However, I am having a bit of trouble following the arguments of the member for Surfers Paradise. I cannot work out whether he thinks that we have spent too much money or we have not spent enough money. Last week on radio he said that we had a moral obligation to pay those businesses on the Gold Coast that suffered from the collapse of APEC Technomart. Just why one sponsor out of 18 should be responsible the member for Surfers Paradise did not say. However, in his questioning in this place he has asked why we tried to save the conference. On the one hand, the Government should pay the money out to his constituents; on the other hand, it is monstrous that the Government even considered paying out any money. As usual with the Opposition, it just seems to be an argument of convenience.

As I said this morning, members opposite are saying that, in future, we should not trust the private sector because they cannot run a function. Let me tell members opposite that I will be taking those remarks back to the business community. At the moment, the business community on the Gold Coast has seen through the actions of the member for Surfers Paradise. I have to tell the member that, down there, the contempt for his actions is vivid and real. I have been to numerous business functions, the last one being on Friday afternoon with property developers on the coast. The contempt for the member opposite is vivid and is real because, in their eyes, all the member has attempted to do on the Gold Coast is undermine the Gold Coast and undermine Queensland.

**Mr Borbidge:** Who said that?

**Mr ELDER:** I will not give their names to the House, but if the member would like a quiet brief from me, I am prepared to give him the names of the 18 people I met on Friday afternoon. I will name every one of them for the member.

**A Government member** interjected.

**Mr ELDER:** The reason why one would never give the member the names is that he would go out and victimise them tomorrow morning. He would ring them and victimise them and victimise their businesses, because that is exactly his form.

**Mr BORBIDGE:** I rise to a point of order. Unlike the Deputy Premier, I do not make abusive phone calls to my critics.

**Mr ELDER:** That is hardly the case. It is something that the member does with monotony. It is part of his form. If the member is referring to something that I have done, I challenge him to do the same and announce it. That is just typical of the member's performance—knock and whinge and whine. In relation to this event, the member has done just done that.

Typical of the member's underhanded, sneaky and slimy attempt to undermine Queensland, today the National Party's media adviser to the Leader of the Opposition pulled the Computer World fax off the web. It was him who was slipping around the gallery, in a really sleazy way to undermine Queensland, giving a copy to everyone in the gallery. The Premier is right: the member does everything he can to run down this State and to run a hypocritical argument. His argument was whether we should pay any money, or whether we paid too much. The member never gets it right. That is why he is sitting opposite.

Time expired.

**Mr CONNOR** (Nerang—LP) (6.25 p.m.): It is quite obvious that the Government has not realised just how much damage this Technomart fiasco has caused Queensland. There is a giant wave of technology and investment emanating from the United States. Last week, that wave went past Queensland, and we missed it. The number of jobs that were potentially able to be created as a result of the type of investment that went with that wave is too numerous to count.

However, I will give members some idea of just how many jobs might have been created. I refer to a very recent document released by the United States Department of Labor titled Futurework. It states that, in the US—

"The twenty-first century workplace is already here.

e are living in a new economy—powered by technology, fuelled by information, and driven by knowledge.

...

The American economy is the strongest in a generation—perhaps in history. Unemployment is at a 30-year low"—

and that is 4%. That would be good for Queensland. The article states further—

"We have created more than 19 million jobs"—

and that has occurred in the past five years or so. That figure is more than the population of Australia.

It should be put on record that I was at the Technomart conference on the Monday and the Tuesday. On the Tuesday night, there was a reception held by the mayor, which was attended by dignitaries from all over the world—so much so that whenever the mayor spoke, he had to stop at the end of each sentence to allow for translations to occur. I can tell members that at that reception, which occurred just after the fiasco was revealed, the comments of those people were "it was absolute disaster"—a direct quote—and "heads should roll".

Could members imagine anyone stupid enough to try to run another one of these technology conferences in Queensland in the next few years? There is no way in the world that we would get people to attend another one. People paid \$1,295 to attend that conference. That amount did not include their accommodation or air fare. Where is the compensation going to come from to pay the costs of all of those hundreds of delegates from all over the world? Not only that, those people are going to go back to their home countries and what do members think they are going to tell other people in the industry? The vice-president of Microsoft was there. What do members think he is going to say about Queensland when he gets home and he tells other people in the industry at Silicon Valley and the like what happened? If he was asked whether he would invest in Queensland he would answer, "No, they can't even put on a conference."

Could members imagine what the Government would have done to Expo? Thank God they did not get that! What an absolute disaster that would be! The Government cannot run a one-week conference; how could it run Expo 2002?

**Mr ELDER:** I rise to a point of order. Again, the member is misleading the House. This was a private sector conference, not a Government conference.

**Mr CONNOR:** In dollar terms, the Government was the major sponsor. Their crest was in the senior position—

**Mr ELDER:** I rise to a point of order. The member is again misleading the Parliament. The Federal Government was the principal sponsor. John Howard's photo and the Australian crest were well above ours.

**Mr BEANLAND:** I rise to a point of order. That was a frivolous interjection.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I am controlling the Chair.

**Mr ELDER:** It was not a frivolous point of order at all. The accusation was that it was the State Government, when it was the Federal Government.

**Mr BEANLAND:** I rise to a point of order. This is a frivolous member making a frivolous point of order.

**Mr CONNOR:** In the last four years, the IT section of the US economy, which represents just 8% of the US economy, has created 35% of the growth. That is what is driving the US economy and the US stock market. That is the wave of investment that just bypassed Queensland. A University of Texas study of the same period, 1995 to 1998, found that the net economy in the US grew by 174.5% each year. That is the sort of growth that Australia had the potential of achieving, but we cannot even grow by 4%.

Time expired.

**Mr ROBERTSON** (Sunnybank—ALP) (6.30 p.m.): It is my great pleasure to follow the member for Nerang. I recall that this morning he rose to his feet and asked the insightful question, "Where is the compensation going to come from?" As the Deputy Premier was answering the question, he leaned across to his mate from Southport and said, "This is the only way I'm going to be able to get my money back."

**Mr CONNOR:** I rise to a point of order. That is absolutely untrue. I find it offensive and I ask for it to be withdrawn. It is an absolute lie.

**Mr SPEAKER:** The member asks for the comment to be withdrawn.

**Mr ROBERTSON:** I withdraw. Clearly the position taken by the member for Nerang is that, in order to get his money back, he expects the Government to pay.

**Mr CONNOR:** I rise to a point of order. I am not seeking compensation in any way, shape or form. I did not ask for any compensation for myself. I find that remark offensive and I ask for it to be withdrawn.

**Mr SPEAKER:** The member will withdraw.

**Mr ROBERTSON:** I am pleased to have it on the record that the member for Nerang is not going to dip into taxpayers' money. What a confused Opposition this is. We have Huey down there who says, "We should never have been involved." Dewey over there says, "How much is this going to cost the Government?" Then we have Louie over here who says, "The Government should compensate." At what stage is the Opposition going to speak with one voice about this matter? The reality is this—

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I am finding it very difficult to hear the member.

**Mr BEANLAND:** The member for Sunnybank has referred to a member of this Chamber in an unparliamentary manner.

**Mr ROBERTSON:** I withdraw.

**Mr SPEAKER:** I do not know that it was unparliamentary.

**Mr ROBERTSON:** I have withdrawn.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The member has withdrawn several times.

**Mr ROBERTSON:** As has been pointed out continually, the State Government's role in this private sector conference was that of a sponsor. If one uses the logic, such as it is, of the Opposition, if the Broncos fell over tomorrow—God forbid—would the 131 Shop have to bail them out? If the Wallabies did not win the World Cup, would we be blaming Fourex? Of course not! If the Australian netball team did not win the world championship, would we be pulling our accounts from the Commonwealth Bank? Of course not!

This Government went beyond the call of duty. As the member for Nerang quite rightly points out—he did get one thing right—there was the potential for significant embarrassment for Queensland. We did not do what the Federal Government did, which was to walk away. We went in, boots and all, to save the conference and save the reputation of Queensland.

Clearly, we have learnt one lesson from this whole fiasco, which is that we cannot trust the Federal Government to protect the interests of Queensland, because it walked away. The Gold Coast City Council stuck with it and we stuck with it. Letters that are pouring in show how many delegates appreciated that. I spent a fair bit of time down there. I spoke at the aviation industry forum and at the regional development forum. I was at the opening of APEC Technomart. That is what it is all about. It is about sticking with Queensland and making the best out of a bad deal, which is exactly what we did.

Finally, I place on the record my gratitude to the public servants in the Department of State Development. The Leader of the Opposition or the Deputy Leader of the Opposition suggested that they were press-ganged into doing things during the week after APEC Technomart failed. What I witnessed was a commitment by those public servants to making what was left of the conference work. I

place on the record my appreciation for the work that they did. That was no thanks to the Opposition that sat back and took the most irresponsible position possible, which was to throw rocks in the hour of need.

**Mr SLACK** (Burnett—NPA) (6.35 p.m.): It comes as no surprise to me, as shadow Minister for State Development and Trade, that Minister Elder was unaware of the major problems with the APEC Technomart until two days before it collapsed, because it is just one of several areas of portfolio responsibility that he has taken his eye off. One can be quite sure that the Minister and the self-proclaimed supersalesman Premier Beattie would have boldly claimed all credit had they managed to realise just a little of the immense potential that this conference had to offer the Queensland economy. To distance themselves entirely from blame in the wash-up would be all too comical, if it were not so serious.

There is no question that the Queensland Government of the day retains ultimate responsibility for such major events and that this public debacle has undermined Queensland's reputation as a place to invest and do business. While in Government, the coalition worked tirelessly to promote Queensland's progressive business environment. Many of the projects coming to fruition now are thanks to the good stewardship of our term in office. However, in a dynamic market environment, international reputations are constantly under threat from the competition and perceptions have a major ongoing impact on our business success.

It is vitally important that Governments maintain a reputation for getting major projects up and running. In the area of infrastructure development, there appears to be a distinct lack of priority. As I mentioned in my reservation statement during the Estimates debate, the Surat/Dawson Valley project is now 12 months behind schedule, the Tarong project seems to be a victim of private market confusion over the Government's real position on the gas versus coal power generation debate, and the Nathan dam appears to be going nowhere. I am also concerned about this Government's failure to support a worthy high-technology support network known as Techquad.

**Mr Elder:** Do you know who they are?

**Mr SLACK:** Yes, and I am about to tell the House. It was the success of overseas high-technology growth centres such as Silicon Valley, San Diego and Austin in Texas that prompted three leading Queensland

universities and Queensland Innovation Development Limited to join forces and found this partnership. The technology quadrangle of south-east Queensland is a regional initiative that fosters partnerships between private sector high-tech enterprises, research and development institutions, service industries and Government. Its founding sponsors included the University of Queensland, Griffith University and the QUT. Based in Brisbane and on the Gold Coast, Techquad, in plain English, is set up to identify IT opportunities and position south-east Queensland as Australia's answer to Silicon Valley.

Techquad has already succeeded with several major projects that have helped drive the economy of this region. During my time as Minister—and this will answer the Minister's question—the Department of Economic Development and Trade worked with this network to encourage DASCOM to relocate its software research and production headquarters from California's Silicon Valley to the Bond Research Park at the Gold Coast. This was a coup for Queensland and is expected to deliver 250 jobs. By the way, DASCOM was only one of a string of multinational companies that chose to relocate their regional headquarters to Queensland.

The Pacific Innovation Corridor—a plan to link all universities, technology parks and major technology enterprises in south-east Queensland with high-speed communications in a super corridor—is also the brainchild of Techquad. It is vital that this technical infrastructure providing bandwidth for super-speed computers is established to give this State a leading edge in IT and other fields of research. It will also have immense ramifications industry wide.

Recognising the need to foster collaborative links between IT research and universities and to drive economic development, the former coalition Government supported Techquad financially and provided \$50,000 in funding. What has the Government provided? Sweet nothing! The Beattie Labor Government has backed away from providing tangible support for this well established network. I can only wonder why. The Minister for State Development and Minister for Trade failed to include a financial allocation in the 1999-2000 Budget and has declined to be a member of Techquad. It concerns me that this sends the wrong message to the national and international sponsors of this project and could lead to a lack of confidence in this group. It concerns me that the role that this group is playing could fragment between the players and, as a result, Queensland could lose a lot

of impetus in the international marketplace, when we already have problems in gaining recognition. Techquad may be the last chance the Government has to ensure collaborative research between the universities.

Time expired.

**Dr CLARK** (Barron River—ALP) (6.40 p.m.): The community continues to express its lack of faith in the political process. The community is cynical and is disillusioned by the behaviour of politicians. The conduct of the Opposition, particularly the Leader of the Opposition, today in regard to the failure of the Technomart III technology conference on the Gold Coast has added significantly to that cynicism and disillusion. The coalition has shown yet again that it is more interested in political point-scoring and slick one-liners than it is in solving problems and working in the interests of Queensland. The difference between the Government and the coalition is surely becoming increasingly apparent to the community. We are a positive Government with positive policies to address real issues. When problems arise—and, yes, they do—we do not look to blame somebody for it, we do our best to fix it.

Nobody doubts that the failure of Technomart, which happened through no fault of our own, has the potential to damage Queensland's reputation, but here lies the difference. What did we do? We organised a venture capital conference. We got on with maximising business matching opportunities. We did not do what members opposite would do, which is to go out and cause mayhem. If the coalition had the best interests of Queensland truly at heart—and this happened in one of its own electorates—what would it have done? It would have joined us to minimise the impact that this was having. It would have done something positive about it instead of standing up in this place and jeopardising the reputation of Queensland further. It simply could not resist what it saw as an opportunity to lay blame and damage the Government. Once again, short-term political gain is demonstrated as being more important to it than the economic prosperity of this State. That is demonstrated time and time again. The community and I are sick and tired of these spoiling tactics. Last week the coalition tried these tactics in respect of the RFA and they did not work. It is now trying them again. The coalition should heed the message that Queenslanders want more from their politicians; they want constructive policies and action that puts the community first and political point-scoring last. That is what it is all about. The Opposition does not seem to get it.

It has been so busy looking for an opportunity to attack the Government over Technomart that it has completely overlooked the value of a one-day conference, which I attended, on the Gold Coast organised by the Australian Association of Science and Technology Parks titled "Growing Global Enterprises: Developing an Australian Model for Technology Incubation".

That conference was opened by the Deputy Premier and was attended by some 80 delegates from Government, university, business and industry, with experts both from within Australia and overseas. The keynote speaker was Ms Laura Kilcrease, a partner in Triton Venture Management from Austin, Texas. Her presence helped to further strengthen the growing relationship between Queensland and Texas that was begun as a result of the Premier's recent visit.

The conference heard very clearly the value of incubators and of commercialising technology. In North America incubators have been responsible for the creation of some 19,000 companies and some 245,000 jobs. The Austin technology incubator, known as IC<sup>2</sup>, has been at the leading edge of creating the right environment for enterprise and wealth generation from technological innovation. No wonder the Premier came back convinced that we could replicate the Texas example.

For the benefit of honourable members, I wish to put on the record what I was doing at that conference. I was there because in my electorate we are working on developing a technology park in association with the James Cook University. I attended because I want to ensure that we capitalise on the knowledge that has been generated about how incubators can best deliver results for our local community. I learnt a lot at that conference. I did not waste my time, as are members opposite, on generating criticism for the sake of criticism. I believe in doing constructive things that have positive results. That is the lesson for the coalition. It is about time it learnt it, because that is what the community wants to see from it.

**Mr QUINN** (Merrimac—LP) (Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party) (6.45 p.m.): Tonight the Premier entered this debate claiming that he moved to protect the reputation of the State by putting in place a venture capital seminar in the dying days of Technomart. To our side of the House, that is too little, too late. The Government should have known months ago that Technomart was in trouble. If we look at the Deputy Premier's ministerial statement from this morning, we

see that the Government knew months ago that it was in trouble. The Deputy Premier stated—

"By mid August, however, Queensland Government officials had begun to develop some concerns about the level of delegates that seemingly were registered."

He went on to state—

"Mr Carroll wrote directly to the Event Chairman of PacRim ... requiring advice on confirmed delegates and anticipated numbers."

The correspondence was never answered. Apparently, that is where it ended. They got no answer and they did not bother to follow it up. It should have come as no surprise to this Government that very few delegates were registered by August. The reason was that the registration forms were not sent out until the end of September. On 23 September I received a registration form at my office. I suspect that every other member of Parliament got one as well. That was confirmed by a Computer World release which states—

"The registration brochures were only distributed overseas six weeks ago which is lunacy, they should have been sent six months ago..."

If honourable members look for the reason why there were only a handful of registrations in August when these problems became apparent, they will see that it is because the registration forms were not sent out until six weeks before Technomart was due to start. An international conference cannot be run on the basis of six weeks' notice. How do international delegates arrange their timetable? How do they arrange their air travel over here and book their accommodation within six weeks? That cannot be done. By August the Government had had plenty of opportunity to get this thing right, before the registrations went out. It knew they were in trouble, but it ploughed on. The Computer World release goes on to state—

"According to an experienced conference organizer, it should have been obvious at least a month ago that delegate numbers would not meet expectations and the event should have been scaled back at that stage."

This Government could have done any number of things to avoid the international embarrassment that not only the State but also the other major sponsors have had to suffer. For example, I cite the University of Queensland, the Queensland University of

Technology, Griffith University and Bond University. All of them put their names to this event. The damage done to them overseas has been incalculable. Those universities were depending on Technomart to enhance their reputation overseas. How do they look? We just heard the member for Burnett say that over the past 12 months international student numbers at our universities have fallen off. So they have. As a result of this, we should not be surprised if they again fall off. This has been a shambles. Around the world our universities have had their names tagged to this event. Attracting overseas students is a \$500m industry.

**Mr Veivers:** They don't like it.

**Mr QUINN:** They do not like it.

Not only are the international reputations of the universities being affected, but what about all our children who are in universities now taking IT related courses? They were depending upon this sort of future growth in our economy to provide jobs for them. Where will they go in the future? Because of this debacle, there is no chance for increased jobs in the IT sector. Members should look at the program; not only did it go into the IT sector, it went into every other discipline. It refers to medical, health and biotechnology; agriculture and food processing; advanced manufacturing; aerospace; aviation; defence; earth science; environment and marine; computer science; IT communication; and multimedia, TV and film. Just about every industry has been influenced by this debacle. This was an international disgrace.

Time expired.

**Hon. M. ROSE** (Currumbin—ALP) (Minister for Emergency Services) (6.50 p.m.): I rise to support the Premier's amendment. In seven years in this House, I have seen many examples of rank hypocrisy from the other side of the Chamber, but tonight's debate on Technomart is one of the most outrageous cases of all. Members opposite have no credibility on this issue—no credibility at all.

In two years of coalition Government, I waited in vain for some recognition of the needs of the Gold Coast, the seventh largest city in this nation, and some action. I waited in vain for action on jobs. What did the Gold Coast get? Virtually nothing! I waited in vain for additional funding for the Gold Coast Hospital. What did the Gold Coast get? Almost nothing! What did Gold Coasters get? The big snub! The cold shoulder! They got representatives who virtually ignored them. Members opposite took them for granted. They thought they had them in their pocket.

This Government has done more for the Gold Coast in 16 months than the coalition did in three years, when they had a Premier and three Ministers representing Gold Coast electorates. Just ask the Deputy Mayor of the Gold Coast City Council, that well-known National Party member, Councillor Col Kleinschmidt. After the Government's extremely successful Community Cabinet meeting on the southern Gold Coast, Councillor Kleinschmidt put petty politicking aside and gave credit where credit was due. He recognised our efforts in delivering for the Gold Coast in contrast to the coalition's abysmal record. But we obviously cannot expect the same honourable behaviour from those opposite. What do we get? Bagging, bagging and more bagging from a bunch of people who obviously do not have the best interests of the people of the Gold Coast and Queensland in mind. Their pathetic efforts over Technomart demonstrate their negativity.

After Technomart collapsed, the State Government stepped in to salvage the Gold Coast's and Queensland's reputation. We stepped in and we kept it going. That includes the Regional Economic Development Conference; the Australian Association of Science and Technology Parks, a seminar on growing global enterprises, with 130 attendees; and the Australian Interactive Multimedia Association Conference, with over 400 attendees at the conference dinner. Then to cap it off, this Government's efforts in turning Queensland into the Smart State were recognised at the Gold Coast Business Excellence Awards attended by over 600 people. We were applauded for our efforts to salvage Technomart. This is what the Gold Coast Bulletin said on the Technomart issue in the editorial last Thursday—

"APEC Technomart 3 had the potential to put the Gold Coast on the high technology map ... It was to showcase the Coast and its cutting edge industries to the world.

Yesterday the Coast went into damage control ... and the State Government stepped in to pick up the pieces."

That is a quote from the editorial in the Gold Coast Bulletin. It also said—

"It was this last action that probably said more than any of the thousands of words yesterday.

When the collapse of the conference became obvious on Tuesday night, the Government began the task of putting together a rescue package.

It was their strategy that yesterday saw the Government putting in money to keep at least one section of the expo alive, the venture capital conference."

We salvaged what we could because we believe in the Gold Coast. This is in stark contrast to the coalition's abysmal record. We are delivering projects and jobs for the Gold Coast.

Austar is expanding from 400 jobs to 1,400 jobs. That is another 1,000 jobs in high technology areas such as Internet support—jobs for the graduates of our universities on the Gold Coast who under the Government of members opposite would have had to leave the Gold Coast to get jobs. Under our Government this brain drain has been reversed. Stellar Communications has set up a 300 person call centre on the Gold Coast. Again, that is more jobs in high technology. Gold Coasters are finally going to get the convention centre that has been talked about for years—something that members opposite did absolutely nothing about—and they are going to get a world-class facility because of this Government. In my own electorate, the association of surfing professionals has been enticed to move its world headquarters from California to Coolangatta.

This means that the world surfing tour will be run out of Coolangatta, and that will mean more jobs. We have secured Indy for the next four years. Where was the Leader of the Opposition when the Indy was picked? Did he go to the Indy? It generates tens of millions of dollars for the Gold Coast economy and hundreds of additional jobs.

Time expired.

**Question**—That the amendment be agreed to—put; and the House divided—

**AYES, 41**—Barton, Beattie, Bligh, Boyle, Braddy, Bredhauer, Briskey, Clark, J. Cunningham, D'Arcy, Edmond, Elder, Fenlon, Foley, Fouras, Hamill, Hayward, Lavarch, Lucas, Mackenroth, McGrady, Mickel, Mulherin, Musgrove, Nelson-Carr, Nuttall, Palaszczuk, Pearce, Pitt, Reeves, Reynolds, Roberts, Robertson, Rose, Schwarten, Spence, Welford, Wellington, Wells. Tellers: Sullivan, Purcell

**NOES, 39**—Beanland, Black, Borbidge, Connor, Cooper, E. Cunningham, Dalgleish, Davidson, Elliott, Gamin, Grice, Healy, Hobbs, Johnson, Kingston, Knuth, Laming, Lester, Lingard, Littleproud, Malone, Nelson, Paff, Pratt, Prenzler, Quinn, Rowell, Santoro, Seeney, Sheldon, Simpson, Slack, Springborg, Stephan, Turner, Veivers, Watson. Tellers: Baumann, Hegarty

Resolved in the **affirmative**.

**Question**—That the motion, as amended, be agreed to—put; and the House divided—

**AYES, 41**—Barton, Beattie, Bligh, Boyle, Braddy, Bredhauer, Briskey, Clark, J. Cunningham, D'Arcy, Edmond, Elder, Fenlon, Foley, Fouras, Hamill, Hayward, Lavarch, Lucas, Mackenroth, McGrady, Mickel, Mulherin, Musgrove, Nelson-Carr, Nuttall, Palaszczuk, Pearce, Pitt, Reeves, Reynolds, Roberts, Robertson, Rose, Schwarten, Spence, Welford, Wellington, Wells. Tellers: Sullivan, Purcell

**NOES, 39**—Beanland, Black, Borbidge, Connor, Cooper, E. Cunningham, Dalgleish, Davidson, Elliott, Gamin, Grice, Healy, Hobbs, Johnson, Kingston, Knuth, Laming, Lester, Lingard, Littleproud, Malone, Nelson, Paff, Pratt, Prenzler, Quinn, Rowell, Santoro, Seeney, Sheldon, Simpson, Slack, Springborg, Stephan, Turner, Veivers, Watson. Tellers: Baumann, Hegarty

Resolved in the **affirmative**.

## ADJOURNMENT

**Hon. T. M. MACKENROTH** (Chatsworth—ALP) (Leader of the House) (7.04 p.m.): I move—

"That the House do now adjourn."

## Gaming Machines

**Mr BEANLAND** (Indooroopilly—LP) (7.04 p.m.): The Australian Bureau of Statistics' retail trade figures include net takings from gaming machines. It is little wonder that retail trade figures in this nation continue to grow when they include net takings from gaming machines. I refer to the Australian Bureau of Statistics Retail Trade document. The section headed "Definition of Turnover" in the explanatory notes states—

"Turnover includes retail sales; wholesale sales; takings from repairs, meals and hiring of goods (except for rent, leasing and hiring of land and buildings); and commissions from agency activity (e.g. commissions received from collecting dry cleaning, selling lottery tickets, etc.) and net takings from gaming machines etc."

I raise this matter because I think it is important for people to be aware that retail trade figures include net takings from gaming machines. I have heard it raised on a number of occasions and it is not generally well known within the community that the ABS figures do include those gaming machine figures.

The review of gaming machines in this State has ground to a halt. We have heard some mention of it in the past few days from the Treasurer. The report on gaming machines is now some five months overdue. While families are being destroyed, this Beattie Labor Government sleeps.

In September I raised this fundamental issue in this House. Still the Government does nothing. Through its failure over the past 12 months to stop a flood of applications and approvals to allow poker machines in shopping centres, this Government is acquiescing to this disease which is destroying Queensland families. By allowing poker machines into shopping centres, we are allowing this gambling addiction disease to spread throughout the community.

Applications for poker machines to be located in shopping centres are currently being opposed by a number of local governments. The Redland and Logan Shire Councils are two that come to mind. Having said that, they cannot stop them, because the power actually resides with the State Government. It is all very well for the Treasurer to say, "In the review of gaming machines we are going to change the situation so that people can object", but no indication has been given as to whether the current review process, which ends with the Treasurer, will result in change. It will mean little if the review is to the Minister and not through some other process.

To simply say that it will be similar to the current town planning application is of little value, because we all know that under the town plan people object to the local authority and if the local authority approves the application they then go to the Planning and Environment Court—an independent court of this State. An equivalent to a District Court judge presides over that court.

Objections in relation to gaming machines go through a process to the Queensland Gaming Commission. If it approves an application, it then goes on to the Minister. The Minister simply allowing for input for people to object will mean little unless we see some real proof that the Minister is going to uphold a swag of those objections and knock back applications for poker machines. Simply saying that we will have a similar process is of little value.

We have seen that applications are now flooding in for poker machines in taverns and restaurants that are located next to child-care centres. In the last few days an application for poker machines has been made in relation to a shopping centre in the heart of a middle income family area. The area around this shopping centre is designated a high density residential area. The shopping centre, at which there is already a child-care centre, is the subject of this application for poker machines as well as an application for a general liquor licence. This shopping centre is about one

kilometre from one school and two kilometres from another school.

I am sure that the applicants are aware that this will be good for business, but it will not be good for families and individuals living in that area. There are already a large number of general liquor licences located in that area. Obviously there will be poker machines within those facilities. There is no need for another facility to be established right next door to a child-care centre. It is not up the street somewhere or a kilometre away, but right next door.

It is little wonder that this is the cause of distress and anger within the community. There is no point Ministers or parliamentarians saying that we cannot do anything. We as a Parliament can certainly do something. In particular, this Government can do something. It can take heed and cease further approvals until this matter has been resolved.

Time expired.

#### **Queensland Academy of Sport, North Queensland**

**Mr REYNOLDS** (Townsville—ALP) (7.09 p.m.): The Townsville-based Queensland Academy of Sport, north Queensland branch, performs a vital role in tapping into the rich pool of sporting talent in the vast region from Mackay to Cairns and out to Mount Isa. It also performs a vital role in servicing the athletes and coaches who live in these major centres outside Brisbane.

In focusing on the elite and emerging elite athletes in the north Queensland region, the academy offers an opportunity which would otherwise be denied to the majority of these very talented sportspeople, many of whom are capable of competing on a national basis.

The academy pilot program, established in March 1998, is entering the third year of its trial period, but I strongly believe that the sterling performances of the athletes it caters to and the coaching staff it supports have proved beyond doubt that the operation should be retained on a permanent basis.

Success stories from the region include: Townsville athlete Robert Hammond, who is vice-captain of the Australian youth squad; Chris Novak, also from Townsville, who is a contracted player in the NBL with the Townsville Crocodiles; netballer Deanna Turner from Mackay, who is the first All Australian junior from north Queensland; and Cairns athlete Ben Eales, who is a member of the Australian open breast stroke squad.

While these achievements are impressive, the quality of other young athletes coming up through the ranks promises many more. From these results it can be seen that in its short existence the northern academy has more than delivered national benchmark sporting services to the north Queensland region. The smooth operation is supported strongly by a team of dedicated coaches and by educational and scientific backup, all of which are effective in reaching the defined goal of bringing athletes to a standard whereby they can compete at a national or international level.

The northern academy focuses mainly on the sporting career and education of 15 to 20 year olds in the transition period between secondary school and tertiary level. In the process, the academy works closely with the parents of these potential champions in helping them establish their sporting careers. While the Queensland Academy of Sport North Queensland manager Warwick Cann and his support team have worked hard in achieving high sporting standards, with the emphasis on elite athletes, the academy also focuses on providing sporting services and benchmarks for the wider community. Sports administrators and coaches from all sports and all sporting organisations share in the activities of the northern academy. Through this involvement, the academy team has highlighted and fostered an abundance of north Queensland sporting talent and, at the same time, provided regional athletes with access to the same standard of program available to their city or internationally based counterparts.

The northern academy covers six areas of sport: basketball, hockey, netball, soccer, women's softball and swimming. Overall, some 98 athletes from all over the northern region take part in the program, and the operation extends to a network of coaches, sports scientists and sports medicine providers from throughout the greater north Queensland region.

Quality training facilities are essential for peak performances, and while north Queensland is generally well equipped as far as these are concerned, Townsville's swimming and track venues do need urgent upgrading. Fortunately, the State Government has also recognised this dilemma and contributed generously towards rectifying these problems. A recent \$77,262 grant to heat the 50-metre Long Tan Memorial Pool—this is essential for winter training—also covers the installation of overflow gutters and the

construction of international standard competition blocks at the deep end.

Another much-needed and much-appreciated boost for Townsville and the northern academy has been a \$1m grant from the Minister for Tourism, Sport and Racing towards the redevelopment of the Townsville Sports Reserve. This will provide athletes with a much-needed new track, amenities, lighting and a sports oval. Redevelopment will also allow the reserve to operate as a national standard athletics facility for competitions and an international standard training venue.

During its short existence, the Queensland Academy of Sport North Queensland has provided numerous north Queensland athletes with the opportunity to develop their full sporting potential. In having access to state-of-the-art coaching, scientific and educational backup and equally important appropriate training facilities, each athlete has the opportunity to finetune those talents to become a national or international champion. For these reasons, I believe that it is vital to retain the Townsville-based academy for the benefit of north Queensland and to continue to build on the excellent results that the dedicated team has achieved in such a short time.

I commend the Beattie Labor Government for the work it has done in the last 18 months towards the academy. It has followed on with the work that the coalition Government did. It has been excellent for north Queensland, and I believe that the Queensland Academy of Sport North Queensland has much to offer north Queensland in the future decades.

#### **Mr M. Johnson; Comments by Member for Springwood**

**Mr SANTORO** (Clayfield—LP) (7.14 p.m.): This morning, the member for Springwood made a disgraceful contribution. He made a series of totally unsubstantiated allegations about Mr Michael Johnson, an energetic and very hardworking Liberal, claiming that he was seeking to sign up members of the Indian community for the purposes of branch stacking. The member for Springwood misused parliamentary privilege. He did not name names. He did not give details to back up vague and imprecise allegations. It was a very cheap attempt at character assassination. It was a total fabrication. Not one scintilla of evidence was produced.

Whenever a member stands in this Parliament and makes statements like "Mr

Johnson approached the leaders of my local Indian community and asked them if they would like to join the Liberal Party", without saying whom he approached, when he approached them and what exactly was said, one has to view such a statement with suspicion. But I will inform the House that I welcome the efforts of fellow Liberals to reach out to our ethnic communities and bring them into the political process. Unlike the Labor Party, we do not take the ethnic communities for granted. The Liberal Party is an inclusive organisation, and it has been very successful during recent months in attracting many members of various ethnic communities both to join the party and to make a very successful and welcome contribution. It will not be long before we see some of those members elected to this Chamber.

I suspect that much of the member for Springwood's comments are motivated by sour grapes and jealousy, because it is clear that, as time goes on, our ethnic communities have woken up to the Labor Party. They are realising more and more that it is the Liberal Party which is closest to their ideals—supportive of the family unit, encouraging private enterprise and strong law and order policies. We actually practise multiculturalism. But of course, the Labor Party has a fixation with branch stacking, nepotism and corruption.

The member for Springwood would know only too well that he should be the very last one to try to character assassinate others. The Musgrove gang are well known. If the member for Springwood wants to have a debate about lack of ethics, I will be happy to refer to his time and activities in the Premier's Department while he was paid by the taxpayers to be a non-political public servant. Then we have Ross Musgrove and Ashley Musgrove, the honourable member's older and younger brothers, who are employed by the Police Minister as police and correctional services advisers. It must be good when three members of one family are all being paid out of the public coffers due to their membership of the ALP.

The Musgrove gang are only outdone by the Budd bunch, four of whom are employed—mum, dad and, of course, both sons—in the offices of the Primary Industries Minister, the Deputy Premier and the Minister for Education. I now appreciate how the Labor Party is aiming to achieve its 5% jobs target—give employment to every single member of various card-carrying Labor members' families. As Peter Morley said in the Sunday Mail of 26 September, each of these

members of the ALP extended political family must be incredibly talented.

So I view with contempt the member for Springwood's half-baked political hatchet job on Michael Johnson and the Liberal Party and their most worthwhile activities within the ethnic communities of Brisbane and this State. He could not even substantiate any aspect of his story. It was akin to classroom gossip and a total waste of this Parliament's time. I suggest to the member for Springwood that, if wishes to use this place to defame the good name and reputation of people who are actually out there in the real world doing something for society, and not part of a clan that sponges off the public purse, he provide some facts—some substance—to his allegations or keep his innuendoes to himself.

People may wonder why I speak about cronyism and nepotism. I remember sitting in this place from mid 1989 and hearing members of the Labor Party constantly denigrating members of the National Party and the Liberal Party and members of the non-Labor communities for being cronies of the Government. When I came into this place, I decided from a very early stage that I would very simply seek to expose members of the Labor Party as being hypocrites for talking about nepotism and cronyism when they were in Opposition and then practising it—and, in fact, making it an absolute art—when they came to Government. We saw them practise cronyism under the Goss Labor Government.

When I was a Minister, when the coalition was in Government from 1996 to 1998, again those members attacked public servants, such as my director-general, and members of the Liberal Party who were winning contracts on merit. They attacked members of the National Party and members of the non-Labor community of this State. They now expect people like myself to come in here and not deliver a speech such as the one that I delivered this morning about cronyism and nepotism. They are absolutely wrong.

Unlike what the honourable member for Townsville said before, I named the names, I quoted the Premier and I quoted the instances in Hansard and in the Estimates committee transcripts. And members can bet their bottom dollar that as long as they keep having a go at myself and the Liberal Party, and as long as they continue practising cronyism, I will be there to expose them and to prove the hypocrites that they are. In Opposition they say one thing, but in Government they practise another—cronyism to an ultimate art form.

### Launch of Sir Bob

**Dr CLARK** (Barron River—ALP) (7.20 p.m.) Last weekend, it was my pleasant duty to represent the Minister for Emergency Services, Merri Rose, at the commissioning and launch of Sir Bob, the new vessel of the Cairns Volunteer Coastguard, at the Yorkey's Knob marina. I take this opportunity to put on the record my congratulations and appreciation to all those members of the Cairns flotilla, currently under the command of Lucille Jackley, who worked so hard over so many years to raise the \$750,000 necessary to build this magnificent vessel. Thanks too, Lucille, for the beautiful framed photographs of the Sir Bob presented to me and Minister Rose. Mine will be hanging in my new electorate office. Today, the Minister was just delighted with her photograph and will be displaying it in her ministerial office.

Although the Government contributed some \$100,000 towards the cost of Sir Bob, the launch on Sunday was the culmination of a genuine community venture. The Cairns City Council contributed \$75,000. In fact, Mayor Tom Pyne also contributed by another means, namely funds from the previous coastguard vessel, named the Tom Pyne, which was sold and is now cruising the waters of the Whitsundays. Tom may even find himself relaxing on the same vessel when he retires next March.

Businesses and individuals in Cairns have also given unstintingly, but in particular I would like to acknowledge the generosity of Sir Robert Norman and his wife Betty, who donated \$50,000. Bob and Betty have been magnificent benefactors to the Cairns community, contributing hundreds of thousands of dollars over many years towards a range of projects and organisations. Their generosity in particular towards the Cairns campus of the James Cook University and the Cairns Regional Art Gallery have been magnificent and are just two examples of their contributions to the Cairns community.

The launch of the Sir Bob was Lady Norman's last official function. Sadly, she is no longer well enough to continue her high level of involvement in public affairs. Bob and Betty are a devoted couple, and Bob will now be dedicating himself to caring for his wife in the Woodwood Retirement Village where they now live. On behalf of the Cairns community: thank you, Betty, your portrait in the Cairns Regional Gallery is a permanent reminder of your contributions to our community.

Let me return to the Coastguard and all those volunteers who underpin its operation.

Volunteerism is something that many people take for granted, which is easy to do because our volunteers are always ready, willing and able to help. Sometimes circumstances require volunteers to put their own lives on the line to save others. For Coastguard volunteers the job may be as simple as helping a boatie who has run out of fuel on a fishing trip or suffered mechanical failure. It might be as difficult and as dangerous as putting to sea in atrocious conditions to effect a rescue or to assist in searching for missing vessels. I pay tribute to all those fantastic volunteers for their countless hours of work and sacrifice.

Cairns is unique in so far as we have a particular collaboration between the Coastguard and the Cairns Marine Radio Club. This particular collaboration is the result of the establishment many years ago of the Cairns Marine Radio Club to provide for the safety of those at sea. It has continued as an organisation that in the night hours is ready and able to receive distress signals from boats at sea. It has been instrumental in effecting many rescues in the Cairns area.

It was pleasing that Merri Rose came to Cairns two weeks ago to present a plaque in recognition and appreciation of the work of the Cairns Marine Radio Club. I would like to acknowledge the contribution made by that club. I congratulate particularly Brian Swinton, its president, and Dottie, the person who puts in all those night-watch hours in her small caravan at the club's headquarters. It is the dedication of people such as Brian and Dottie in that club that has ensured for so many years that people on the water at night around Cairns know that they are safe. They will be able to play their role in alerting the Coastguard who will be able to set to sea in the magnificent Sir Bob to ensure that people on the reef waters who are taking part in tourism and recreational fishing know that they have another vessel which is ready at hand to ensure their safety.

### Education Facilities, Barambah Electorate

**Mrs PRATT** (Barambah—IND) (7.25 p.m.) Concerns regarding the education facilities and educational working conditions in the Barambah electorate are providing many opportunities for teachers, parents and students to speak out. At a recent enterprise bargaining meeting of teachers of the South Burnett area, several motions were moved and carried by the large number of teachers at the meeting. The first motion, and perhaps the greatest indicator of the mood of those gathered there, was—

"That this meeting condemns the Department and the Government for their persistent failure to establish an enterprise bargaining position and negotiate with the union."

As I said, that motion was carried.

The meeting also carried motions that the Queensland Teachers Union be urged to reject the Government offer on the basis that it is inadequate in terms of salary outcomes and does not address any of the fundamental working/learning issues contained in the QTU claim.

The teachers have demands placed upon them every day. These are demands which were unheard of a few years ago. Most teachers are proud of their work and endeavour to be professional and maintain professional standards, but they are finding the Government's lack of ability to address the issues frustrating and they are fast losing their patience.

Staffing levels and facilities are being stretched to the point where performance will be jeopardised by lack of Government funding. The concerns of teachers involve not just wages but working conditions, staffing levels, behavioural management and others.

The behavioural management concerns are—

**Mr Sullivan:** This is the first time you've stood up for the unions. Have you had a conversion?

**Mrs PRATT:** I always stand up for what is right. Behavioural management concerns are rated as a high priority by parents whose children attend schools in the communities. They have sons and daughters who are the recipients of abuse. They often have to suffer repeated incidences of aggressive student behaviour towards themselves and other students. The offending children have often been involved in behavioural management programs such as the Responsible Thinking program or have been rated as a "mainstream" student, which necessitates constant supervision of the child. Even with this intense supervision the children sometimes still manage to reoffend. It is not the teachers' obligation to babysit these repeat offenders.

Parents of the students attacked by these young offenders have reported the necessity to have their child assessed for trauma by a

psychologist. There have been reported instances of having to have the children treated at local hospitals for bruising and checked for possible broken bones. I have received reports that parents have asked about, and obtained, home schooling for their children because they no longer feel that the school system can protect their child whilst that child is in the school's care. There have also been reports of not only the child or children being physically abused, but the parents, when taking their concerns to the school, have been verbally abused by the offending child as well. I would like to quote from a letter presented to me by one very concerned parent—

"I now have to stay with my child at school to ensure her safety as the principal has told me he cannot guarantee this will not happen again."

She then goes on to ask—and rightly so—

"What happened to his duty of care for my child?"

I have received copies of letters sent to principals by parents. I have been told verbally of reports to principals. I have seen the bruising on children who are afraid to go back to school. I have also seen the frustration of the parents who feel that nothing is being done to protect their child.

I have spoken to psychologists who, commenting on some abusive children's behaviour, state that there must come a time when the abusive child's welfare must not outweigh that of the many that he or she abuses.

This abusive behavioural problem is not a new one. It is not an easy one to resolve, but it is one that cannot be swept under the carpet. The Responsible Thinking program will work for some students, but it does not work for all. There are, unfortunately, some students who do not belong in the school environment. Students who want to learn and who want to enjoy their school years without enduring the unwanted attention of a child with a behavioural problem are being forced to change schools or undertake home schooling, whilst the child with the behavioural problem remains and chooses another victim. There comes a time when that child has to be removed from the school environment.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 7.28 p.m.