

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**THURSDAY, 19 FEBRUARY 1987**

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## THURSDAY, 19 FEBRUARY 1987

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Mr SPEAKER (Hon. K. R. Lingard, Fassifern) read prayers and took the chair at 11 a.m.

### COMMISSION TO ADMINISTER OATH

Mr SPEAKER: I have to inform the House that His Excellency the Governor has been pleased to issue a Commission under the public seal of the State empowering me to administer the oath or affirmation of allegiance to such members as may hereafter present themselves to be sworn. I now ask the Clerk to read the Commission to the House.

Commission thereupon read by the Clerk.

### ELECTIONS TRIBUNAL

#### Judge for 1987

Mr SPEAKER: I have to inform the House that I have received a letter dated 5 February 1987 from the Honourable the Chief Justice notifying that the Honourable Mr Justice James Burrows Thomas will be the Judge to preside at sittings of the Elections Tribunal for 1987.

### AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORT

#### Brisbane City Council Accounts

Mr SPEAKER: I have to report that I have received from the Auditor-General his report on the books and accounts of the Brisbane City Council for the year ended 30 June 1986.

Ordered to be printed.

### PANEL OF TEMPORARY CHAIRMEN

Mr SPEAKER: Notwithstanding the requirements of Standing Order No. 13, I nominate the following members to form the panel of Temporary Chairmen for the present Parliament—

Gilbert Alison, Esquire, member for the electoral district of Maryborough;  
 Denver Edward Beanland, Esquire, member for the electoral district of Toowong;  
 Desmond James Booth, Esquire, member for the electoral district of Warwick;  
 Clement Bernard Campbell, Esquire, member for the electoral district of Bundaberg;  
 Mrs Leisha Teresa Harvey, member for the electoral district of Greenslopes;  
 William George Prest, Esquire, member for the electoral district of Port Curtis.

### MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

#### Appointment of Ministry

Hon. Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN (Barambah—Premier and Treasurer) (11.05 a.m.), by leave: I desire to inform the House that on 1 December 1986 His Excellency the Governor—

(a) Accepted the resignations tendered by the Honourable Neil John Turner as a member of the Executive Council and as Minister for Primary Industries of Queensland, effective from midnight on 30 November 1986;

**(b) Appointed—**

the Honourable Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen, KCMG,  
the Honourable William Angus Manson Gunn,  
the Honourable Russell James Hinze,  
the Honourable Ivan James Gibbs,  
the Honourable Michael John Ahern, BAgrSc.,  
the Honourable Donald Frederick Lane,  
the Honourable William Hamline Glasson,  
the Honourable Brian Douglas Austin, DipCE, MIEAust,  
the Honourable Lionel William Powell,  
the Honourable Vincent Patrick Lester,  
the Honourable Martin James Tenni,  
the Honourable Neville John Harper,  
the Honourable Geoffrey Hugh Muntz, AAIV,  
the Honourable Peter Richard McKechnie,  
the Honourable Robert Carl Katter,  
the Honourable Yvonne Ann Chapman,  
Donald McConnell Neal, Esquire,  
Paul John Clauson, Solicitor, Esquire

to be members of the Executive Council of Queensland;

**(c) Appointed—**

the Honourable Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen, KCMG, to be Premier and Treasurer of Queensland;

the Honourable William Angus Manson Gunn, to be Deputy Premier, Minister Assisting the Treasurer and Minister for Police of Queensland;

the Honourable Russell James Hinze, to be Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing of Queensland;

the Honourable Ivan James Gibbs, to be Minister for Works and Housing of Queensland;

the Honourable Michael John Ahern, BAgrSc., to be Minister for Health and Environment of Queensland;

the Honourable Donald Frederick Lane, to be Minister for Transport of Queensland;

the Honourable William Hamline Glasson, to be Minister for Lands, Forestry, Mapping and Surveying of Queensland;

the Honourable Brian Douglas Austin, DipCE, MIEAust, to be Minister for Mines and Energy and Minister for the Arts of Queensland;

the Honourable Lionel William Powell, to be Minister for Education of Queensland;

the Honourable Vincent Patrick Lester, to be Minister for Employment, Small Business and Industrial Affairs of Queensland;

the Honourable Martin James Tenni, to be Minister for Water Resources and Maritime Services of Queensland;

the Honourable Neville John Harper, to be Minister for Primary Industries of Queensland;

the Honourable Geoffrey Hugh Muntz, AAIV, to be Minister for Tourism, National Parks and Sport of Queensland;

the Honourable Peter Richard McKechnie, to be Minister for Industry and Technology of Queensland;

the Honourable Robert Carl Katter, to be Minister for Northern Development and Community Services of Queensland;

the Honourable Yvonne Ann Chapman, to be Minister for Family Services, Youth and Ethnic Affairs of Queensland;

the Honourable Donald McConnell Neal, to be Minister for Corrective Services, Administrative Services and Valuation of Queensland;

the Honourable Paul John Clauson, Solicitor, to be Minister for Justice and Attorney-General of Queensland.

I lay upon the table of the House a copy of the *Queensland Government Gazette Extraordinary* of 1 December 1986, containing the relevant notifications.

*Whereupon the honourable member laid the document on the table.*

### LEADER OF THE HOUSE

**Hon. Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN** (Barambah—Premier and Treasurer) (11.08 a.m.): I desire to inform the House that arrangements have been made, and the Honourable the Speaker notified accordingly, for the Honourable Lionel William Powell, Minister for Education, to be Leader of the House.

### OPPOSITION APPOINTMENTS

**Mr WARBURTON** (Sandgate—Leader of the Opposition) (11.09 a.m.): I desire to inform the House of the following Opposition appointments—

Leader of the Opposition—Neville George Warburton, MLA, member for Sandgate;

Deputy Leader of the Opposition—Thomas James Burns, MLA, member for Lytton;

Opposition Whip—Brian John Davis, MLA, member for Brisbane Central;

Opposition Secretary—Leslie John Yewdale, MLA, member for Rockhampton North;

Leader of Opposition Business in the House—William George Prest, MLA, member for Port Curtis.

### LIBERAL PARTY APPOINTMENTS

**Hon. Sir WILLIAM KNOX** (Nundah—Leader of the Liberal Party) (11.10 a.m.): I desire to inform the House that the officers of the parliamentary Liberal Party are as follows—

Leader of the Liberal Party—Sir William Knox, MLA, member for Nundah;

Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party—Mr Innes, MLA, member for Sherwood;

Liberal Party Whip—Mr Gygar, MLA, member for Stafford;

Liberal Party Secretary—Mr Sherlock, OBE, MLA, member for Ashgrove.

### PAPERS

The following papers were laid on the table, and ordered to be printed—

Reports—

Tenth report of the Local Government Grants Commission, Queensland on Financial Assistance for Local Government

Golden Casket Art Union Office for the year ended 30 June 1986

Suncorp Insurance and Finance for the year ended 30 June 1986

Queensland Police Department for the year ended 30 June 1986

Queensland Police Superannuation Board for the year ended 30 June 1986

State Emergency Service for the year ended 30 June 1986

Brisbane and Area Water Board for the year ended 30 June 1986  
Gladstone Area Water Board for the year ended 30 June 1986  
Department of Works for the year ended 30 June 1986  
Queensland Housing Commission for the year ended 30 June 1986  
Builders' Registration Board of Queensland for the year ended 30 June 1986  
Noise Abatement Authority of Queensland for the year ended 30 June 1986  
Operations of the Sub-Departments of the Department of Health. Director-General of Health and Medical Services for the year ended 30 June 1986  
Land Administration Commission including Reports of the Rabbit Control Authority and the Brisbane Forest Park Advisory Planning Board for the year ended 30 June 1986  
On the Operations of Stock Routes and Rural Lands Protection Act 1944-1984 and the Barrier Fences Act 1954-1984 for the year ended 30 June 1986  
Department of Forestry for the year ended 30 June 1986  
Department of Mapping and Surveying for the year ended 31 December 1986  
Electricity Supply Industry in Queensland for the year ended 30 June 1986  
Board of Trustees of Newstead House for the year ended 30 June 1986  
Queensland Performing Arts Trust for the year ended 30 June 1986  
Advanced Education System in Queensland for the year ended 31 December 1985  
University of Queensland for the year ended 31 December 1985  
James Cook University of North Queensland for the year ended 31 December 1985  
Department of Industry Development for the year ended 30 June 1986.

Proclamations under—

Health Act Amendment Act 1984  
Forestry Act 1959-1984.

The following papers were laid on the table—

Orders in Council—

State Development and Public Works Organization Act 1971-1981  
Financial Administration and Audit Act 1977-1985  
Local Government Act 1936-1985  
Racing and Betting Act 1980-1985  
City of Brisbane Act 1924-1986  
City of Brisbane Act 1924-1986 and the Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act 1982-1984  
State Housing Act 1945-1986 and the Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act 1982-1984  
State Housing Act 1945-1986  
Urban Public Passenger Transport Act 1984 and the Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act 1982  
Forestry Act 1959-1984  
Explosives Act 1952-1981  
Mines Regulation Act 1964-1983  
Mining (Fossicking) Act 1985  
Mount Isa Mines Limited Agreement Act 1985

Petroleum Act 1923-1986

Grammar Schools Act 1975-1984 and the Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act 1982-1984

Rural Training Schools Act 1965-1984 and the Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act 1982-1984

Retail Shop Leases Act 1984-1985

Industrial Development Act 1963-1981.

**Regulations under—**

Public Service Act 1922-1978

Casino Control Act 1982

Golden Casket Art Union Act 1978-1984

Pay-roll Tax Act 1971-1986

Stamp Act 1894-1986

Drugs Misuse Act 1986

Hide, Skin, and Wool Dealers Act of 1958

Second-hand Dealers and Collectors Act 1984-1985

Hawkers Act 1984-1985

Pawnbrokers Act 1984-1985

Firearms and Offensive Weapons Act 1979-1986

Local Government Act 1936-1985

Local Government (Chinatown Mall) Act 1984

State Housing Act 1945-1986

Ambulance Services Act 1967-1986

Food Act 1981-1984

Health Act 1937-1984

Health Act 1937-1986

Hospitals Act 1936-1984

Traffic Act 1949-1985

State Transport Act 1960-1985

Coal and Oil Shale Mine Workers (Pensions) Act 1941-1985

Explosives Act 1952-1981

Mining Act 1968-1986

Electricity Act 1976-1986

Education Act 1964-1984.

**By-laws under—**

Expo '88 Act 1984

Dental Act 1971-1984

Railways Act 1914-1985

Brisbane Forest Park 1977-1981

Queensland Museum Act 1970-1985

Education Act 1964-1984.

**Statutes under—**

University of Queensland Act 1965-1984

Griffith University Act 1971-1984.

**Rules under—**

Casino Control Act 1982  
Police Act 1937-1985  
Hospitals Foundations Act 1982  
Coal Mining Act 1925-1981.

**Ordinances—**

City of Brisbane Act 1924-1986.

**Reports—**

Greyhound Racing Control Board of Queensland for the year ended 30 June 1986  
North Queensland Racing Association for the year ended 30 June 1986  
Rockhampton Jockey Club for the year ended 30 June 1986  
Totalisator Administration Board of Queensland for the year ended 30 June 1986  
National Trust of Queensland incorporating the Financial Statements of the Currumbin Bird Sanctuary for the year ended 30 June 1986  
Timber Research and Development Advisory Council of North Queensland for the year ended 30 June 1986  
Timber Research and Development Advisory Council of South and Central Queensland for the year ended 30 June 1986.

**MOTION OF CONDOLENCE****Gillies Highway Bus Accident**

**Hon. Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN** (Barambah—Premier and Treasurer) (11.22 a.m.), by leave, without notice: Having in mind the tragedy and sorrow that have entered the hearts and lives of many parents in the Cairns district as a result of the tragic bus accident, I move—

“That this House desires to express its deepest sympathy to the relatives and friends of the Cairns High School students who lost their lives in the tragic bus accident on the Gillies Highway on 4 February 1987.”

As honourable members may recall, on 5 August last year in this House, I moved a motion of condolence expressing the sympathy of the House to the relatives and friends of the men who lost their lives in the Moura mine disaster.

At that time I remarked that whenever an accident happens, whether it is a road, air or shipping disaster, and many people lose their lives, it makes people realise how uncertain life is, and the tragedy of it all.

A road accident has now occurred, which has taken from us eight Cairns High School students who were all in their final year of secondary school. They were outstanding young people who were about to step forward into society to meet the challenges of life. We think of all they could have been.

The State, and particularly the north, has suffered a grievous loss. Our sympathy goes out to their loved ones at this tragic time. We, in this Parliament, share their grief. They are in our thoughts. I know personally something of their suffering, because on two occasions I have almost lost my own son, John. In times such as these we must draw strength from our faith to understand God's purpose.

Florence and I were privileged, together with a number of my Cabinet colleagues, to attend a memorial service that was held at St Monica's Cathedral in Cairns on Wednesday, 11 February. We joined the families, friends, staff and student body of the Cairns High School, the Mayor of Cairns and the Chairman of the Mulgrave Shire

Council, together with several thousand citizens of the city, to pay our respects to those young people. None of us who were present at that memorial service will forget what was described as one of the saddest occasions the city has ever seen and experienced.

On behalf of the Government and all honourable members, I extend sincere sympathy to the families of those young Queenslanders who died in that tragedy.

**Hon. L. W. POWELL** (Isis—Minister for Education) (11.25 a.m.): I second the motion moved by the Premier.

The news that a life has been lost as a result of an accident is always saddening. The tragic death of eight senior secondary school students returning from a school camp is particularly hard to accept, because it seems to be an appalling waste of young lives.

On 4 February, a bus with 45 students as passengers returning home after a four-day leadership camp at Tinaroo Dam on the Atherton Tableland was involved in a crash that resulted in the death of eight of them, with 20 others being injured. Their bus, travelling along a winding section of the Gillies Highway in wet weather, had plunged over a cliff in mountainous country.

The accident was Queensland's worst bus tragedy. The scene of the accident was like a battlefield; it was horrific. Tribute must be paid to the police, the fire brigade, the ambulance and State Emergency Service officers, together with other volunteers, who rescued the surviving students under extremely difficult conditions. In particular, tribute must be paid to those students who, although injured and in many instances in pain, remained calm as they bravely offered every possible assistance to their more seriously injured classmates. Tales of their controlled, unselfish and courageous behaviour abound. Adults at the scene testify to the level of maturity displayed by those students in such horrific circumstances.

It is a sad fact of life that it takes an accident such as this to remind us that young people can behave responsibly, indeed magnificently, under such pressure. Adversity clearly brought out the best in those young Queenslanders.

The accident was a catastrophe for the people of Cairns in general and for the Cairns State High School community in particular. Every Queenslanders feels deeply for the families and friends of the teenagers killed or seriously injured on that day.

I take this opportunity to thank sincerely the principal of the Cairns State High School, Mr Bernie MacKenzie, and his staff for the assistance, support and sympathy that they provided to both students and parents alike. I take the opportunity also to thank the principals of the neighbouring Cairns high schools who assisted. Their deep concern for the welfare of their students was most touching and very much appreciated by all.

My wife and I extend the deepest sympathy and understanding to the families and friends of the students killed, and wish those who were injured a full and speedy recovery.

**Mr WARBURTON** (Sandgate—Leader of the Opposition) (11.28 a.m.): The Opposition is very pleased indeed to support the motion moved by the Premier and seconded by the Minister for Education, Mr Powell.

Queensland has been subjected to a number of major tragedies involving heavy loss of life. Honourable members well remember the lives lost in the Moura mine tragedy in July last year, for example. That event certainly tore at the hearts of that local community, in particular, and Queensland at large. However, any tragedy in which the lives of Queensland's youth are lost causes the feelings of sorrow to run very deep indeed.

The people of the Cairns district showed by their actions that they form a very close-knit community and have a great deal of feeling for one another. That message was made very loud and clear during the period that the Premier, the Ministers and I were in Cairns.

The civic memorial service that was held in St Monica's Cathedral provided an incredibly moving experience. It is certainly one that I will never forget. Honourable members should thank the Cairns City Council and the Mulgrave Shire Council for the opportunity given to all to share their grief with the parents, relatives and friends of the eight young people who were killed in such very tragic circumstances.

The students who participated in the civic memorial service, who were referred to by Mr Powell, were nothing less than, as he described them, magnificent. I agree with Mr Powell that it is a great shame that those in our society who are constantly denigrating our young people were not there to see the very fine example set by the hundreds of students from the many schools in the Cairns district.

Sincere gratitude should be extended to the many people for their assistance during that trying period following the accident. I am sure that they would prefer to remain unsung heroes, as the saying goes. All members of the parliamentary Labor Party, and the many thousands of Australians they represent, join with me in extending sincere sympathy to the families and friends of the eight young people who lost their lives in such tragic circumstances.

**Hon. Sir WILLIAM KNOX** (Nundah—Leader of the Liberal Party) (11.31 a.m.): The Liberal Party wishes to be associated with and give support to the motion moved by the Premier and Treasurer, Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen, and seconded by the Minister for Education, Mr Powell. The grief associated with the tragedy was widespread, not only throughout the Cairns district but also for many of the friends of the families involved.

It is a tragedy of this nature that probably brings home to everybody the difficulties associated with living in certain areas of Queensland and the hazards involved in going about normal activities. The real tragedy, as has already been mentioned, is that young people have been cut off in the prime of their lives.

The grief is difficult to describe and is experienced only when tragedy occurs to somebody one is close to. This tragedy has affected the whole community. It is possible that all of those who shared the class room with those young people will remember the circumstances of their death for the rest of their lives.

To the families and close friends of those involved in the accident, members of the Liberal Party extend their condolences and sympathy, and we wish to support the motion.

**Mr De LACY** (Cairns) (11.32 a.m.): As the member for Cairns, I would like to be associated with this condolence motion, and place on record my personal sense of loss and that of my wife, and the residents of Cairns and the Cairns electorate, following the tragic cutting-short of those eight young lives more than two weeks ago in that horrific accident on the Gillies Highway.

At the memorial service already alluded to by other honourable members, Bishop John Bathersby, the Catholic bishop at Cairns, summed up the feeling of the Cairns community when he said—

“The city felt numb and bewildered. Any tragedy can affect us in that way, but when it involves young life, it is immensely more disturbing. We spontaneously value life and grieve at its loss—particularly young life, not only because of its unfulfilled promise and potential but because of the inspiration and comfort it brings to us, especially if we are old.”

As the member for Cairns, I would like to thank the honourable members of this Chamber and all those people throughout Queensland who have sent their condolences and sympathies to the people of Cairns, to the people involved in the accident, to the staff and students of the Cairns High School, and to the parents of those who were killed and injured.

The ripples of this accident have spread to the very extremities of the Cairns community. Few people have not been affected directly in one way or another, particularly

inasmuch as they knew someone or they knew the parents of someone who was involved in the accident. No-one in Cairns, in Queensland or throughout other parts of Australia could help but be affected by the profoundness and the magnitude of the tragedy. So many of the people in Cairns have said to me, "There, but for the grace of God, go I." I am one of those people to whom that saying could apply. I come from the suburb of Freshwater in Cairns. Two of my daughters have attended the Cairns High School. I have another daughter in Grade 12, who, when she was ready to go to high school, had the option of going to Smithfield High School, a newly established school, or to the Cairns High School. I wished her to go the Cairns High School because her older sister went there at that time. As is usual in my household, I lost the battle. She went with some of her friends to the Smithfield High School.

Many of the boys and girls from Freshwater attended the Cairns High School. As many children want to or like to do, most of them stuck together. It was certainly the kids from Freshwater who suffered greatly in the accident; three were killed, and a number of others were injured.

Quite apart from the reason I have already mentioned, I am one who can say, "There, but for the grace of God, go I." The honourable member for Nudgee, Ken Vaughan, the honourable member for Mourilyan, Bill Eaton, and I were in Irvinebank on that fateful day. We left there to return to Cairns via the Gillies Highway. Bill left about a half an hour or so before us and he was actually on the scene of the accident. Ken Vaughan and myself were stopped at the top of the Gillies Highway. We were told that a bad accident had occurred and that one child had been killed.

On our way home we were diverted along the Kuranda Highway. We were also listening to the radio reports about the disaster which indicated that the toll was progressively increasing. Finally, by the time we arrived in Cairns we had learnt that eight children had died.

I am pleased to say that the school is getting back to normal. It is almost business as usual. Earlier this week the school captains were elected. As far as I am aware, four children are still in hospital—three girls in the Cairns Base Hospital and one in the Townsville Hospital. One teacher is also in the Cairns Base Hospital.

In a curious but probably a not unexpected way the school has derived many positives as a result of this accident. Out of this great sense of loss, not only the school but also the community of Cairns has found a new strength. There is a much greater sense of unity. Students are much more aware of each other. They also have a lot more concern and affection for each other. It is regrettable that in our society affection is something which is not usually evident. However, I could not help but be impressed by the affection that those children showed for each other, particularly at the memorial service. The children see a need to help each other, and the strength of one student becomes the strength of other students. In the Cairns community, but most noticeably at the school, many positive feelings have emerged as a result of this tragedy.

Tonight in Cairns a meeting will take place at which it is hoped that a memorial fund will be established. I do not know exactly where that will end but I know that many people in Cairns are determined to ensure that somehow the accident is remembered in a positive and worthwhile way.

The Minister for Education has already mentioned the school principal, Bernie MacKenzie, and I, too, would like to mention a few people. Bernie MacKenzie has come through this ordeal with immense credit. He has been the principal at the Cairns High School for eight years. He has always been well regarded. He has run a good school. Because of the way in which he has responded to this tragedy—his leadership, his good sense, his emotion when it was necessary, the support that he has given to all the children and parents, and the manner in which he has performed in public—I think it is fair to say that everybody in the community has an immense amount of respect for him. I guess that everybody responds to tragedies and challenges in different ways. Tragedies can make some people or they can even destroy others. The old saying that some people are born great and others have greatness thrust upon them comes to mind.

Perhaps "greatness" is not the correct word. However, I think it is fair to say that Bernie MacKenzie has responded to this tragedy in a way which has earned him the admiration and respect of the whole of the Cairns, Queensland and Australian communities.

I would also like honourable members to spare a thought for the driver of the bus, Guy Morgan. He is a person whom I knew well, and a nicer person one could never wish to meet. One can imagine the tremendous burden which he will have to carry for the rest of his life.

Inevitably, questions will be asked about safety regulations, buses themselves, the manner of driving, the roads and so forth. However, Guy Morgan has his own cross to bear. I am sure all honourable members will join with me in wishing him strength to bear that cross.

The Leader of the Opposition, Mr Warburton, referred to the memorial service held at St Monica's Cathedral. It was one of the most moving and profound experiences that I have ever witnessed or in which I have taken part. The measure of the profound impact that this accident had on the people of Cairns was demonstrated by the fact that 2½ thousand people attended the memorial service. Approximately half a dozen members of this House also attended, and for that I thank them.

No doubt most honourable members saw the memorial service on television or read about it in the newspapers. But, in all fairness to the media, they could not do justice to the emotion, the powerful sense of occasion and the overwhelming grief which were evident at that service. I cannot even begin to comprehend the agony of the parents and close friends of the children who were killed, but I hope that the fact that their grief was shared by so many others may have lightened their burden.

The high points of the memorial service were the singing by the members of the school choir of *Love me Tender*; the students' eulogies to their dead comrades; Bernie MacKenzie, the school principal, singing the *Lord's Prayer*; and the very well-chosen words of Bishop Bathersby. I feel that the tragedy puts into perspective what are at times the very petty problems that have to be faced in life. As a politician, I thought about the pettiness of much of the debate that goes on in this and other Chambers, the obsession in politics with material things and greed in all its manifestations and how unimportant they are when compared with a tragedy like this.

I wish to conclude my speech with the final message from Bishop John Bathersby, which sums up those things. He said—

"Finally let this grief for life cut short be also a ringing affirmation of its supreme value and an incentive for the continuing struggle against its enemies, particularly against all violence, deliberate or indeliberate, that would seek to destroy it or diminish it in any way at all. If the tragedy teaches us only that lesson then the death and suffering of these young people will not have been in vain."

Mr MENZEL (Mulgrave) (11.43 a.m.): I, too, wish to speak to the motion of condolence moved by the Premier and Treasurer and supported by others. Immediately after the tragedy the whole of north Queensland was in a state of shock and most of the people in the north still have not got over it. On the afternoon of the tragedy I was in Cairns. As soon as people in the community heard about it, they felt grieved, shocked and stunned at the fact that such a tragic accident could occur and take so many young lives. The first information I gained was that five children had been killed, but later in the evening the number rose to eight.

Many of those who were involved in the rescue efforts had not previously realised that they had the necessary qualities to do what they did. There were stories of students holding the hands of those who were pinned down to comfort them in their last minutes. The members of the State Emergency Service, the police and the ambulance did tremendous work. I have seen the accident site and to me it is a wonder that anyone survived.

Even people who were not related to the victims wept openly upon hearing of the tragedy. When I discussed it with my mother she said, "As soon as I heard it on TV, I wept." I believe that just about everyone felt the same way. People wept openly.

As the member for Cairns and others have said, the memorial service was very, very moving. It made us all think that that could have happened to our sons or daughters. Everyone felt moved and sad for the parents and brothers and sisters of the victims.

I wish to pay a special tribute to the principal of the Cairns State High School, Bernie MacKenzie, who showed leadership and strength at a time when it was needed. It was certainly a black week for north Queensland, as it was for the whole of Australia. People from all over Australia were deeply moved and were sorry for what had happened. They rang to express their condolences at the loss of those young lives. In circumstances such as these, people often ask, "Why?"

I am sure that every member of this Chamber feels the same sadness that the parents and brothers and sisters of the victims do.

Margaret and I wish to express our sympathy to the relatives and friends of the victims.

**Hon. M. J. TENNI** (Barron River—Minister for Water Resources and Maritime Services) (11.46 a.m.): In speaking to the condolence motion, I convey my sincere personal sympathy and that of my constituents to the families and loved ones of the eight young students who lost their lives on the Gillies Highway on Wednesday, 4 February. Five of the students who lost their lives were from the electorate of Barron River.

A great debt of gratitude is owed to the police, the ambulance bearers, the firemen, the State Emergency Service personnel, and particularly the State Emergency Service helicopter pilot who attended the accident scene. All those people worked miracles to free the trapped and injured students and move them to hospital quickly and efficiently. Medical staff at the Cairns Base Hospital worked long into the night to help the injured. The members of that staff deserve a great deal of recognition.

I thank publicly the school principal, Mr Bernie MacKenzie, who showed immense personal courage in comforting the parents, loved ones and school friends of the victims of this terrible accident. It was a great tragedy for the families of the victims, for the Cairns High School and for everyone who lives in far-north Queensland.

However, what stood out after the horrible accident was the great courage and coolness shown by the students, many of whom were themselves injured, who comforted their fellow-schoolmates at the crash scene. Their courage and compassion were an inspiration to every other person at the scene.

Although this is a very sad time in the history of the Cairns State High School, all parents of the students at that school should be immensely proud of the actions of those students who went to the aid of the injured and the dying.

**Hon. R. C. KATTER** (Flinders—Minister for Northern Development and Community Services) (11.48 a.m.): Along with many other honourable members, especially those whose electorates are in north Queensland, I have connections with the Cairns State High School. One of the children who were killed attended school with my daughter for a number of years, and, of course, Bernie MacKenzie was the headmaster in Charters Towers for many years.

As the member for Barron River could not be located, I represented the Acting Premier, Mr Bill Gunn, on the evening of the disaster. I think it was the first time that I have been involved as a worker in a disaster in north Queensland when no problems have arisen in providing relief.

Along with other honourable members, I pay a very sincere tribute to the hospital staff in particular, to Bernie and the school, to the police, the QATB and the State Emergency Service. As I have said, it is the first time that I can remember being involved

in a disaster during which no problems have arisen in providing relief. I think that that is a very great tribute to everybody who was involved.

Disasters are fairly regular occurrences in north Queensland. It seems not so very long ago that Martin and I were running out of Cooktown away from cyclone Winifred, only to be struck by it again in Innisfail and Ingham. As the members for Cairns and Mulgrave mentioned earlier, the people of Cairns and far-north Queensland are tremendously loyal to one another because it seems that disasters are always so close to them.

I pay tribute to the Cairns community, which pulled together and gave support to the people who suffered such a great and tragic loss. I pay tribute also to all of the churches, which pulled together.

One of the speakers at the memorial service mentioned the loss of his own brother. He made reference to the gravestone that his brother asked be put above his tomb. The gravestone depicted a hand pointing towards heaven, with its door open. I thought that that said the only thing that could really be said about such a terrible tragedy.

**Mr EATON (Mourilyan) (11.50 a.m.):** I endorse the remarks of other honourable members and express my own sympathy and sorrow to those who suffered the tragedy of losing their children in the fatal accident, and to the young people who survived it.

I was at the scene, and I witnessed great courage, devotion, loyalty and friendship shown by the injured students towards one another and to the deceased. The member for Cairns, Mr De Lacy, mentioned how the rescuers worked together. I saw people who were on the verge of collapse because they were working under very trying conditions.

I arrived at the scene of the accident shortly after the bus had gone over the embankment and the rescuers had just started to bring the injured up to the road. It was a very steep incline. The police, the ambulance bearers, and the State Emergency Service personnel who attended the accident scene came from all over north Queensland.

The organisation of the rescue augurs well for the future. The rescue took more than 3½ hours only because of the way in which the students were trapped and the position of the bus.

This demonstrated the success of modern technology and training for the State Emergency Services, the police force, ambulance and medical staff. It demonstrated how easy it is to accomplish when all these services work together. Not a harsh word was spoken.

The bus crash was the first time that I have been to the scene of a major accident when no problems arose and when the police or some other organisation did not have to use its authority to create a semblance of order. The helicopter pilot put the helicopter down on the road close to the scene to bring in nurses and doctors, who went about their business so efficiently. Ministers of religion also were at the scene. Those at the scene worked together, yet without interfering with one another.

Most of the people who were at the scene were amazed at how the young students coped. Their parents and the school must be very proud of them. All that the students who were trapped for a long time underneath the vehicle asked for when they were brought to the top was a drink of water. I saw their injuries and was there with them. No-one asked any names. All present, including the schoolteachers, just got in and did what they could, where it was needed. They held up pieces of canvas to keep the rain off the injured, or moved the canvas to keep the sun off. The conditions were very trying, particularly for those working at the bus down in the steep gully.

Those who left Cairns State High School as students on a leadership course returned as young adults. Their parents, school, relatives and friends can all be proud of the students, and also the teachers, involved in the accident. The teachers were organising people at the scene, such as me, who were willing to do what we could but who were not qualified or whose help was not needed at that time. All we could do was to sit and comfort those who were waiting for the ambulance while the doctors decided which patients should go in the helicopter and which hospitals they should go to. It was a

revealing experience for me to witness just how well those people operated under such trying conditions. All those involved should be complimented, and I am in the throes of writing to the organisations to express my appreciation.

In conclusion, I add my sympathy and sorrow to those who lost children in the accident and to those who were injured. I congratulate people from the school, as well as others involved, on the way in which they handled a very difficult situation. Although we do not want such accidents to happen, they will happen in the future—it is part of life for accidents to occur from time to time—but far-north Queensland has people who can handle the difficulties that they present.

**Hon. Y. A. CHAPMAN** (Pine Rivers—Minister for Family Services, Youth and Ethnic Affairs) (11.54 a.m.): As Minister for Family Services, I support the previous speakers and offer my sympathy to all the families affected by the deaths of the eight young schoolchildren in Cairns. After travelling up the Gillies Highway the day after the accident, we must be thankful, through the glory of God, that other children did not lose their lives. To those who provided support for the families during the time of the tragic accident, I say, “Thank you very much.” My husband and I express our deepest sympathy towards the families affected by the deaths of the children.

Motion agreed to, honourable members standing in silence.

## STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE

### Appointment of Members

**Hon. L. W. POWELL** (Isis—Leader of the House) (11.55 a.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

“That, notwithstanding the provisions of Standing Order No. 22, the Standing Orders Committee for the present Parliament consist of the following members—

Mr Speaker, Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen, Mr Gunn, Mr Powell, Mr FitzGerald, Mr Warburton, Mr Burns and Sir William Knox.”

Motion agreed to.

## CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES

### Appointment

**Hon. Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN** (Barambah—Premier and Treasurer) (12.08 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

“That Edward Charles Row be appointed Chairman of Committees of the Whole House.”

As honourable members know, the member for Hinchinbrook was appointed Chairman of Committees in November 1983. He has performed his duties as Chairman, and at times as Deputy Speaker, very competently.

I feel sure that I speak on behalf of all members when I say that Mr Row has been a worthy holder of this very important office and has commanded respect during the whole of the period of his tenure of office.

It gives me a great deal of pleasure to nominate Edward Charles Row as Chairman of Committees of this House.

**Hon. W. A. M. GUNN** (Somerset—Deputy Premier, Minister Assisting the Treasurer and Minister for Police) (12.09 p.m.): I have great pleasure in seconding the Premier's nomination of Edward Charles Row, the member for Hinchinbrook, as Chairman of Committees.

The role of Chairman of Committees is second only to that of Mr Speaker in the House. Mr Row has already shown his experience and ability in this position. He has had extensive parliamentary experience gained over 14 years in the House.

I commend the nomination of Edward Charles Row to honourable members and trust that all will give him their whole-hearted support and co-operation.

**Hon. Sir WILLIAM KNOX** (Nundah—Leader of the Liberal Party) (12.10 p.m.): I move the following amendment—

“Omit—

‘Edward Charles Row’

and substitute—

‘Terence Joseph Gygar’.”

I do not intend any disrespect to Mr Row, but the Liberal Party has a member who is capable of becoming Chairman of Committees of the House. One would have thought that the Labor Party would have a nominee for the position of Chairman of Committees, but apparently that is not so. It must have thought that even its candidate for Speaker, who was disappointed, was not fit to be put forward as the Australian Labor Party’s nominee for appointment as Chairman of Committees. The Liberal Party is carrying out its duty. If the Australian Labor Party wishes to abrogate its responsibility, that is a problem for members of that party.

Terence Joseph Gygar is a respected member of this House. Apart from a sojourn outside the House, he has been a member since December 1974. He saw service in Vietnam and resigned from the Citizens Military Forces with the rank of captain. The honourable member was awarded the Reserve Forces Decoration for his services, and has been a conscientious member of this House. As well as taking care of his electorate, he has applied himself to the duties associated with Parliament. Members of the Liberal Party believe that the honourable member for Stafford has the qualifications and ability to carry out, with dignity, the duties of Chairman of Committees. I present him to the House for consideration.

**Mr INNES** (Sherwood—Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party) (12.12 p.m.): I have pleasure in seconding the nomination of Terence Joseph Gygar. I support the comments made by the honourable member for Nundah, Sir William Knox.

All honourable members would know very well that Mr Gygar has brought to such important committees as the Subordinate Legislation Committee a great penchant for detail, application, coping and coming to grips with intricacies such as Standing Orders. The honourable member is clear and decisive, and would undoubtedly be fair and impartial. I have pleasure in seconding the nomination.

**Mr WARBURTON** (Sandgate—Leader of the Opposition) (12.13 p.m.): The Opposition made a very deliberate decision about this matter. It decided not to put forward a nomination. It is impertinent for the Leader of the Liberal Party, Sir William Knox, to make the statements he did about the honourable member for Port Curtis, Mr Prest, who was put forward by the parliamentary members of the Australian Labor Party for the position of Speaker.

The outcome of selecting the person for the position of Speaker was finally determined by a secret ballot. In view of what the honourable member for Nundah had to say about the Labor Party, I point out that the Liberal Party has not seen fit to put forward as its nominee for Chairman of Committees, the honourable member for Moggill, Mr Lickiss, whom it nominated for the position of Speaker. It is quite impertinent for the Leader of the Liberal Party to make a comment of the type to which I have referred. The position is clear-cut.

I believe that it was unfortunate that the honourable member for Hinchinbrook, Mr Row, was overlooked when the Government’s nomination for the position of Speaker was decided. I say that with due respect to you, Mr Speaker, and I acknowledge that determination of that position has been finalised. Although the honourable member for Fassifern was selected as Speaker, the honourable member for Hinchinbrook, Mr Row, is one of whom I spoke when I referred to those members who had gained long experience

in this House. He has graced both chairs in this Chamber. The Opposition believes that he has done a reasonably good job in his capacity as Chairman of Committees and, I believe, on occasions, as Acting Speaker.

I have nothing against the honourable member for Stafford personally. He spent some time in the House, was defeated in the electorate and is now again a member. I have no idea—I cannot recall—whether he has had experience as a Temporary Chairman of Committees. Perhaps he has.

The Australian Labor Party does not hold in any disrespect the nomination put forward by the Liberal Party. However, in the circumstances, it would be hypocritical for the Opposition to put forward its own nomination.

Having said that, I point out that it was the right of the Australian Labor Party to nominate one of its members for the position of Speaker. It is also its right to put forward a nomination for the position of Chairman of Committees; but, on this occasion, it is not the Opposition's intention to pursue that right. The Opposition is prepared to accept that the National Party Government has a right, to a certain extent—perhaps not an absolute right—to nominate its choice. The Opposition supports the nomination of the honourable member for Hinchinbrook, Mr Row, as Chairman of Committees.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I suggest that all new members read very quickly through the special provisions of Standing Orders that relate to amendments proposed in the House. They make very interesting reading.

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

AYES, 77

Ahern	Lane
Alison	Lester
Ardill	McCauley
Austin	McElligott
Berghofer	McKechnie
Bjelke-Petersen	Mackenroth
Booth	McLean
Borbidge	McPhie
Braddy	Menzel
Burns	Milliner
Burreket	Muntz
Campbell	Neal
Casey	Nelson
Chapman	Newton
Clauson	Palaszczuk
Comben	Powell
Cooper	Prest
D'Arcy	Randell
Davis	Row
De Lacy	Scott
Eaton	Shaw
Elliott	Sherrin
Fraser	Simpson
Gately	Slack
Gibbs, R. J.	Smith
Gilmore	Smyth
Glasson	Stephan
Goss	Stoneman
Gunn	Tenni
Hamill	Underwood
Harper	Vaughan
Harvey	Warburton
Hayward	Warner
Henderson	Wells
Hinton	Yewdale
Hinze	
Hobbs	
Hynd	<i>Tellers:</i>
Jennings	Littleproud
Katter	FitzGerald

NOES, 10

Beanland
Beard
Innes
Knox
Lee
Schuntner
Sherlock
White

*Tellers:*  
Lickiss  
Gygar

Resolved in the affirmative.  
Motion agreed to.

## QUESTION-TIME

**Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, a change is envisaged in the conduct of question-time. At lunch-time a Standing Orders Committee meeting will be held. Because of that, I intend to discuss the change with the members of the Standing Orders Committee so that I can ensure that party leaders and whips are aware of the changes that are envisaged. In the meantime, for the next hour the House will follow the previous procedure during question-time.

## QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

### Use of Government Aircraft

**Mr WARBURTON:** As the Deputy Premier and Minister Assisting the Treasurer will be the Minister primarily responsible for the accountability of public funds in this State while the Premier is otherwise preoccupied with matters leading up to the next Federal election, I direct my question to him. I ask one simple question: do written guide-lines or guide-lines in any form exist to cover the use of State Government aircraft, particularly the Queensland Government jet? I repeat: do any guide-lines in any form at all exist?

**Mr GUNN:** The Queensland Government has certain requirements that are definitely taken into consideration when anybody applies for the use of the Government jet. When a Minister or anyone else applies for the use of that aircraft, of course consideration is given to the application, having regard to the priorities as they then exist.

### Taxation Policy of Queensland Premier

**Mr WARBURTON:** In directing a question to the Premier and Treasurer, I point out that yesterday Mr Ian Cameron, the Federal National Party member for the Queensland electorate of Maranoa, who is one of his most ardent supporters and part of the anti-Sinclair camp, was interviewed by a media representative. I have a transcript of that interview, which was about the Premier's taxation policies for the Australian people.

No doubt the Premier would be aware that, in response to a question as to whether it is proposed to reintroduce tertiary fees, the means-testing of family allowances and measures of that kind, Mr Cameron said, "Yes. I believe we have to make those decisions." The Premier may also be aware that, in response to a question about pensions, Mr Cameron indicated that pensioners may have to stand still; in other words, no pension increases.

In view of these revelations from a prominent Federal member of the National Party, in the Premier's camp, I ask: when will the people of Australia be told about other aspects of the Premier's rather infamous tax package?

**Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN:** In reply to the Leader of the Opposition—yes, Ian Cameron is one of those wise fellows who have got behind me and he is supporting me very strongly. Mr Ian Cameron has expressed his own personal view.

I have indicated on several occasions that all these details will be revealed at the right time when the election is in full swing. In the meantime, the needy people, those who fall within that category of needing support, will be maintained at least at the level at which they are maintained at the moment.

Many people say things about what we ought to do and what we ought not to do, and how it might be and might not be. The policies that I am referring to are policies that generally the Australian people support. That is quite clear. These policies are to provide lower taxes, to spend less, to stop wastage, to control the unions, to stop

superannuation tax and to do many other things that will help to make this nation click. They are commonsense policies that the majority of Australians want. I repeat that the needy people, those needing pensions and support, will always get the support they require and are entitled to, and they will get it to at least the level at which they are given it today.

### Queensland Industry Development Corporation Loans

**Mr FITZGERALD:** I have two questions without notice. The first question is directed to the Deputy Premier, Minister Assisting the Treasurer and Minister for Police. I refer to loans made by the Queensland Industry Development Corporation to primary producers, and I ask: what percentage of these loans are at concessional rates of interest? How many loans at concessional rates of interest have been made and how does this figure compare with the number of previous loans made under the administration of the Agricultural Bank?

**Mr GUNN:** I thank the honourable member for the question. It is necessary to give this Chamber an indication——

**Mr BURNS:** I rise to a point of order. This is a question without notice and the Deputy Premier gets up with paper in his hand to read the answer. If there is to be a reform of question-time in this Parliament and if the Parliament is going to be fair, that kind of practice should be finished.

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

**Mr GUNN:** The honourable member for Lytton must realise that it is necessary to be in possession of correct briefing notes in regard to this particular question. He would be the first one to complain if my figures were half a percentage point out. This is a good story and it is worth telling, and I would like the Chamber to listen.

This nation has had high interest rates thrust upon it by the socialist Government in Canberra. I am providing this House with an indication of what the Queensland Government is doing in order to attempt to correct the situation in Queensland and particularly in the rural areas.

The concessional rate of interest on loans of \$100,000 and under is 13.5 per cent. On loans over \$100,000, the rate of interest is 17.5 per cent, which is a 1 to 1.25 per cent reduction on the rate previously set by the Primary Industry Bank of Australia or the Commonwealth Government. The Queensland Government is trying to help people in that area.

The honourable member for Lockyer is interested in knowing the number of loans approved during that time. These are interesting figures. Up to 1 January 1986, through the old Agricultural Bank, there were 988 loan applications and the amount lent totalled \$42.2m. During the last seven months of the operation of the Queensland Industry Development Corporation, 1 789 loan applications have been received, and the total amount lent was \$106.9m. That is an increase of 154 per cent.

During the last seven months of the old Agricultural Bank days under the concessional schemes, there were 561 applications and lending totalled \$20.6m. In the seven months of the QIDC's operation there have been 1 478 applications and a total of \$47.7m has been lent. This is an increase of 132 per cent. For the seven months ended 31 January 1987, the total loans amounted to \$54.4m at 13.5 per cent.

**Mr SMITH:** I rise to a point of order. This is not an answer to a question; this is a ministerial statement, and it is only half-way through. I believe that the time of the House is being wasted.

**Mr GUNN:** The honourable member for Townsville East has been asleep all morning.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! There is no point of order, but I do ask the Deputy Premier to finish quickly.

**Mr GUNN:** I will, Mr Speaker. This matter is very important. The honourable member for Townsville East has been asleep all morning. He has just woken up and realised that he is in the House.

Loans at 13.5 per cent for the last seven months amounted to \$54.4m, which is greater than the total Agricultural Bank lending over the same period last year. That gives some indication of what the Queensland Government is doing with the QIDC to assist rural areas.

I have further figures on other areas. To complete my answer, I seek leave to table the document.

Leave granted.

*Whereupon the honourable member laid the document on the table.*

### **Use of Trade Practices Act to Resolve Electricity Industry Strike**

**Mr FITZGERALD:** In directing a question to the Minister for Employment, Small Business and Industrial Affairs, I refer to the recent report in the media that the Federal Trade Practices Act was used to resolve the SEQEB strike. I point out that I was not of that opinion. I ask: was that report correct? If it was not, could the Minister advise honourable members of the true position?

**Mr LESTER:** I noticed the comments attributed to Mr Howard and Mr Sinclair. The fact is, of course, that they were wrong. The legislation used was the Commercial and Industrial Practices Act. It was introduced into this Parliament by the National Party Government to provide some teeth to solve disputes. It is very clear that that Queensland Government Act has been used to solve disputes in many other areas, including disputes with the meat-workers union, the seamen's union and the coal-mining union. Part of that Act was used in the resolution of the dispute involving the collection of garbage in the city of Brisbane.

Had Mr Sinclair and Mr Howard acted tenaciously in the industrial relations field when they were in power, they would still be in power and we would not have the present atrocities being committed by the Hawke Government.

### **Taxation in Queensland**

**Mr BURNS:** In directing a question to the Deputy Premier and Minister Assisting the Treasurer, I refer briefly to the Premier's statement earlier that he believes in low taxes—especially when he was trying to dodge that question from the Leader of the Opposition in relation to—

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The honourable member will ask his question directly.

**Mr BURNS:** I have to lead up to it.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! There is no need to make a comment. The honourable member will ask his question.

**Mr BURNS:** As State Treasury figures show that total taxation in Queensland has risen from \$364.5m to \$438m in the last two years, which is an increase of 20.2 per cent, whilst over the same period the Consumer Price Index rose in Brisbane by only 15.7 per cent, and in the light of the Premier's statement this morning, when he was dodging another issue, that he believes in low taxes, I ask: why has the National Party Government forced on Queenslanders taxation increases of more than the CPI increase, indicating a real growth in taxation in that period of 4.5 per cent?

**Mr GUNN:** I am sure that the honourable member realises that at the last election, because Queensland's rate of taxation is much lower than that of any other State, his party received the biggest hiding that has ever been meted out to it. The honourable member should not make any mistake about that. Queensland does not have a petrol tax, a tobacco tax or financial institutions duty. That is one reason why Queensland's population growth is 25 per cent more than that in the other States. People are coming to Queensland.

**Mr BURNS:** I rise to a point of order. Mr Speaker, you directed me to be relevant in my question. If there is going to be a fair question-time, why cannot the Minister's answer be relevant?

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

**Mr GUNN:** The honourable member likes not only to ask questions but also to answer them. I can assure him that he is not permitted to do that.

I repeat that it is accepted by all Queenslanders and by all Australians that Queensland is a low-tax State. That is one of the reasons why at the last election the Labor Party received the biggest belting it has ever received. What a motley crew Opposition members are!

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Fair is fair.

**Mr GUNN:** Many people would agree with my comment.

The Queensland Government's record speaks for itself. The Premier, of course, has referred to Queensland's being a low-tax State. That statement is correct in every detail. Queensland will remain a low-tax State. Opposition members will see what will happen to the Labor Party at the next Federal election.

### Queensland Public Service

**Mr BURNS:** In directing a further question to the Deputy Premier and Minister Assisting the Treasurer, I refer to the National Party's claim that public spending should be cut and that, to stop big government, public service growth should be frozen.

I ask: why, then, do the latest figures published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics show that, between the election of a sole National Party Government in December 1983 and September 1986, Queensland had the highest increase in public service growth, of up to 11.1 per cent, in comparison with 4.5 per cent in New South Wales and 5.2 per cent in the Commonwealth? Why has the National Party failed to keep its promise of restricting public service growth? At the present time the Premier is claiming that he believes in small government.

I also ask the Premier: why, under the Nationals, is Queensland's public service growth more than twice that of the New South Wales and Commonwealth Governments?

**Mr GUNN:** The Opposition has incorrectly claimed that Queensland's public service has grown at a greater rate than that of the Commonwealth. The Opposition parties base their calculations on the low December figure and compare it with the high September figure of the following year. In December, the casual workers, such as teacher aides, janitors and cleaners, come off the pay-roll. Therefore, the base figure is low. Has the honourable member never worked that out?

**Mr Burns:** And you take credit for cancelling their pay over the holidays.

**Mr GUNN:** If the honourable member is patient, I will give him some examples of what I am referring to.

As at September of the following year, those casuals are back on the pay-roll. Therefore, the base figure is inflated. For example, in December 1983, there were 164 600 public servants in Queensland and in September 1986 the figure was 182 900, or an increase of 11.2 per cent, according to the Opposition. However, when one compares

September 1983 with September 1986, the Queensland figures show that the public service increased from 172 500 to 182 900, which is an increase of 10 400, or 6.02 per cent.

Over that same period, the Commonwealth public service increased by 6.9 per cent, whereas the Commonwealth service in Queensland increased by 8.5 per cent. During that same period, Queensland's population growth increased by 4.5 per cent, compared with the national growth of 3.6 per cent. In other words, Queensland's population growth was 25 per cent faster than the national growth. I have already given the honourable member those figures, but he seems unable to understand them.

Opposition members are the greatest hypocrites of all time. They claim that Queensland has insufficient public servants.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I trust that no more Dorothy Dix questions will be asked.

### Australian Foreign Debt

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** In directing a question to the Premier and Treasurer, I draw attention to the headline in today's *Courier-Mail* which states "Australia owes \$100 billion". It must be remembered that, in 1983, when Mr Hawke came to power, Australia's foreign debt was approximately \$20 billion. That figure has now ballooned to \$100 billion. Mr Hawke claims that factors beyond his control have caused the tremendous explosion in our foreign debt. I ask: can Mr Hawke's explanation be accepted as accurate and responsible?

**Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN:** None of the actions of the Hawke Government are responsible. They are all irresponsible. The consequences of those actions can be seen in a hundred and one different ways. They can be seen in relation to Australia's foreign debt. It has reached the absolutely frightening level at which it represents a deficit of \$100 billion. I would be greatly concerned if honourable members did not regard that state of affairs as frightening, alarming, and a sign that Australia is going down the chute. Australia's economy is going down the drain at the rate of \$4.6 m every hour. An amount of 40c out of every dollar received from export earnings pays the interest on Australia's foreign debt, which is increasing at the rate of \$77,000 every minute or, as I mentioned previously, \$4.6 m every hour. In the period between this morning and tomorrow morning, under the Hawke Government, the Australian economy will have gone down the chute another \$111 m. The economy will go down at the rate of \$3.4 billion every month this year.

The people in the Labor Government in Canberra were elected under false pretences by promising lower taxes, lower petrol prices, full employment and everything else, yet today they cannot run anything and do not know where they are going. They are completely bewildered and confused. They seem to be sitting there doing nothing and letting Australia's economy go down.

Is it not about time that somebody did something about that state of affairs? Is it not about time that the Labor Party supported the people of the nation who are suffering under the tremendous depression that the Labor Party has created?

It is time that something was done. The Labor Party will get short shrift at the next Federal election.

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX:** I have two questions on notice, which I table. One is for the Deputy Premier and the other is for the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I ask the Leader of the Liberal Party to read the questions.

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX** proceeding to give notice of two questions—

**Mr BURNS:** I rise to a point of order. Standing Orders provide that a member can table a question without reading it. A change might be made today to Standing

Orders, but I believe that at present the Speaker cannot rule that a member has to read a question if he does not wish to.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The reason that I have made that request is to make sure that two questions asked on the same day are not similar. I ask the Leader of the Liberal Party to continue to read the two questions.

*Whereupon the honourable member gave notice of his questions.*

### **O'Phee Industries, Pittsworth**

**Mr ELLIOTT:** I ask the Minister for Industry and Technology: is he aware of the financial problems facing O'Phee Industries of Pittsworth? If so, in view of important contracts that it recently received, what is the Government doing to assist that company? I speak, obviously, in connection with the bicentennial trailers and the company's work in China.

**Mr McKECHNIE:** In reply, I compliment the honourable member for Cunningham on the support that he has given to O'Phee Industries and the people of Pittsworth. O'Phee Industries is a very important industry in Pittsworth. It is a very important industry to Queensland and Australia.

The Cabinet and I are aware of the problems and we have provided a tremendous amount of support to that company.

Recently, an officer of my department travelled to China to reassure the Chinese on what was happening in Queensland in regard to the placing of that company in receivership. The Government has offered a \$200,000 guarantee. The receivers are aware of that.

The problems faced by O'Phee Industries are similar to those faced by many companies in Australia. They have been caused by the high interest rate policies of the Federal Government. A major difference exists in the way in which the Queensland Government and the Federal Government handle the problems of industry. The Federal Government causes problems; the Queensland Government fixes them.

The Queensland Government, through the Department of Industry Development, the Treasury Department, the Premier's Department and other departments, lends as much assistance as possible, both morally and financially, to companies that are in distress. I have received reliable information that the receivers are fairly happy with the way in which the problem faced by the company is being handled at the moment.

Almost every day, people visit my office and tell me about the problems of Australian industry. Many companies, particularly from New South Wales, have inquired about relocating in Queensland.

**Mr Davis:** Not true.

**Mr McKECHNIE:** The honourable member for Brisbane Central has interjected and said, "Not true". I inform the House that the other southern States are offering all kinds of incentives to take advantage of the situation that exists in New South Wales. When I talked to business representatives about the long term prospects and current stability offered in Queensland by the Queensland Government, regardless of the incentives offered by southern States, I met with a good deal of success. Business is relocating and establishing in Queensland.

I am aware of the problems that beset O'Phee Industries and industry generally. I assure the honourable member for Cunningham, Mr Elliott, that cognisance has been taken of his representations, and that every possible assistance will be given to O'Phee Industries.

### Taxation

**Mr SIMPSON:** I ask the Premier and Treasurer: is he aware of the duplication by the Federal Government of State Government responsibilities that is causing ordinary Australians to pay unnecessary taxes and to be taxed at a higher rate than is necessary? Is it true that if Governments impose excessive taxes on hard work and endeavour, less hard work and endeavour will be the result? Is it possible to create greater productivity, new jobs and new industries if the level of taxation is lowered?

**Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN:** It is true to say that some of the things that must be done to actuate industry and win the confidence of industry are the reduction of taxes, the control of unions and the provision of greater incentive and encouragement. Massive taxation, caused by the duplication of everything done by the State Governments, will result in a handicap to industry and will place enormous obstacles in the path of industries that will have to meet obligations imposed by higher taxes.

Irrespective of the nature of the service provided by Government, such as control of the environment, lands or Aboriginal affairs, the Federal Government duplicates the role played by the States. In spite of the fact that the Federal Government is not involved directly in teaching students, thousands and thousands of Federal Government officers are involved in education. All they do is shove paper around, and try to regulate the activities of the States. That is what happens. That is where very dramatic changes in methods and procedures are needed. All of it has to be returned to the States, which originally held that power and from which the powers have been taken bit by bit.

I will tell the honourable member who is smiling and happy, and who will probably get his writ tomorrow, exactly what Whitlam did take from the State. He took control of legislation relating to the environment and many other things, and that control was retained by the Fraser Government. However, the honourable member is not interested in that. He might be interested in what he gets tomorrow.

### Premier and Treasurer's Conversation with Quentin Kenihan

**Mr McELLIGOTT:** In directing a question to the Premier and Treasurer, I refer to his much-publicised telephone conversation with the young disabled boy, Quentin Kenihan, of Adelaide. I ask: in the light of Quentin's genuine concern about funding of services to the disabled, did the Premier inform him that the Queensland Government spends the least of any State Government on such services? Further, did the Premier tell him that the Queensland Government is the only State Government that refuses to fund organisations such as the Australian Council for Rehabilitation of the Disabled and the Australian Better Hearing Association and that the State Government had rejected recommendations in the Ahern committee report of 1978 dealing with the educational rights of disabled children?

**Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN:** Recently, in his electorate, the honourable member for Thuringowa said many completely untrue things about me. I have press cuttings here to prove that. I wonder how you get as misguided as you are. Obviously you are confused. If you would like me to answer them, I can answer them and that will show you how untruthful you are—one whose word cannot be accepted.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I ask the Premier to address the Chair.

**Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN:** Yes, Mr Speaker.

I do not have the exact figures here with me, but in general terms the honourable member's allegations are not correct. He would be very much aware of what the Government does in many directions across the board.

Yesterday, when I spoke to the young lad I told him about that and I support him when he talks about the Federal Government's reducing funds to organisations for the disabled. I told that lad that I personally was responsible for initiating the Keystone centre at Woodridge and that that helped 50 people. The honourable member for

Woodridge can confirm this. In an endeavour to establish the centre I personally guaranteed \$85,000. That is an example of the sort of thing that I do and the Government does. That is how the Keystone centre came into operation—because a guy named Joh Bjelke-Petersen was sympathetic. My son-in-law and my daughter wanted it commenced, and they are training 50 young people with disabilities similar to Quentin's. The Government financially supports the handicapped children of this State. The honourable member knows that, but he is trying to play the same trick as he played recently in Townsville when he did not tell the truth.

#### **Newspaper Advertisement by Minister for Health and Environment**

**Mr McELLIGOTT:** In directing a question to the Minister for Health and Environment, I refer to an advertisement in the *Daily Sun* of 8 January 1987 headed, "Mike Ahern invites Queenslanders to visit Caloundra, the health capital of Queensland". I ask—

- (1) Who paid for the advertisement?
- (2) Why was it not authorised as a political advertisement?
- (3) What special benefits have been provided by the tax-payers of Queensland, through his department, that make Caloundra the health capital of Queensland?
- (4) What is the approximate time-table for the extension of those benefits to other regions to achieve a uniform standard of health care right across Queensland?

**Mr AHERN:** The criterion that was used to describe Caloundra in that advertisement was my own and it was associated with the fact that Caloundra has delivered the Minister for Health to the Queensland Parliament. That is not an unreasonable thing to say. All that I can say in that respect is that Townsville will not be in that category—certainly, Thuringowa will not be in that category—while the honourable member represents it.

As for who paid for it—the tax-payers of Queensland did not pay for it; it was paid for out of campaign funds for the Landsborough electorate council of the National Party.

**Mr McElligott:** There is no authorisation on it.

**Mr AHERN:** There is no need for an authorisation for an advertisement for that purpose.

The Department of Health in Queensland has provided to Caloundra health services to a degree similar to those which are provided in other areas of Queensland—no more, no less. That is how it is and how it should be, and that is how it will continue in the future. If the honourable member is trying to make some political capital out of it, he has failed miserably. Caloundra is a very healthy place to visit. I suggest that he visit it to see for himself.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The Standing Orders Committee will meet in the Premier's reception room at 1 o'clock.

Sitting suspended from 1 to 2.15 p.m.

#### **Proposed Travel Industry Regulations**

**Mr MACKENROTH:** In directing a question to the Minister for Tourism, I refer to the proposed scheme for uniform regulations throughout the travel industry in Australia and, in particular, to that scheme's proposal to protect travellers from the financial collapse of travel agents. I ask: why has the Queensland Government refused to participate in that scheme?

**Mr MUNTZ:** At present the matter is under consideration. However, the Queensland Government does not adopt the same policies as those followed by the Federal Government. The Queensland Government has every right to protect, through its own means, the interests of this State's travel agents.

### Taxation

**Mr INNES:** I ask the Premier and Treasurer: what does he consider to be the basic virtues of a flat or single-rate tax as opposed to a progressive tax?

**Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN:** Surely the honourable member knows that lower taxation rates, and particularly a single-rate tax, as is suggested by me and my supporters, would act as a tremendous incentive to people. Those people who are currently paying tax at a higher rate would have their tax reduced; those who are currently paying a lower rate would continue paying tax at that rate.

A flat rate of tax means that people will either have their tax raised to that level or have it lowered to that level. That is the difference between the two systems that are referred to as a flat rate of tax and a single rate of tax.

A single rate of tax provides a simplified form of taxation. It gives people a greater incentive to work. Under that system, people can earn as many dollars as they like and they will still pay the same rate of tax. I do not know what other aspect of the tax the honourable member wants to know about.

It is quite obvious to me that people and industry must be activated, and the best way to do that is to abolish the present taxation system. The present form of taxation is confusing, complicated, costly and ruinous. It encourages people to get involved in bottom-of-the-harbour tax schemes and so on. Naturally, that is not desirable and must be overcome by making the taxation system attractive and getting the nation moving. The nation will never get moving while there is heavy taxation or any form of taxation other than a simple, low rate of taxation.

### Taxation Rates in Queensland

**Mr INNES:** In directing a further question to the Premier and Treasurer, let me say that I do not intend to disagree with some of the comments that he has made. However, as Treasurer for four years, the Premier has presided over a number of major taxes in this State that are progressive, not flat. I instance conveyancing duty, stamp duty, land tax and pay-roll tax as taxes that are progressive and that vary by up to 375 per cent in their application. Does the fact that the Premier has been unable to change that situation indicate that there are problems in regard to changing quickly from progressive rates of tax to flat rates of tax?

**Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN:** Whichever area of tax is referred to—for example, pay-roll tax, which is very important—Queensland has a lower rate of tax across the board compared with other States. Queensland maintains its position. By and large the Queensland Government has been very receptive towards the requirements of industry and the people by imposing taxes that are of such a nature that they can be met in order to make a contribution towards the growth and development of Queensland's economy.

The Queensland Government has gone far beyond that approach because it has borrowed considerable sums of money, such as \$1 billion for electrification and \$600 million for the works program. Why do people prefer to come to Queensland than go to the other States? Last year Queensland produced by far the greatest number of new jobs of any State in Australia. One could go on and on about Queensland's accomplishments.

The Queensland Government is creating new opportunities through the establishment of new mines and the space launch facilities. All this adds up to a situation in which Queensland is growing rapidly, but certain taxes have to be collected because of the way that the Federal Government has treated Queensland. Last year the Federal Government took \$250 million off Queensland through Medibank payments and a few weeks ago it took \$32 million from the Minister for Main Roads. The Queensland Government has to have revenue if it is to continue to exist. It has a balanced Budget and to a very remarkable degree it lives within its means. Queensland is a progressive State. That is illustrated by the number of investments and building activity in the State.

That fact is quite evident in spite of what the honourable member for Sherwood might imply.

#### **Aspartame**

**Mr RANDELL:** I ask the Minister for Northern Development: is he aware that the artificial sweetener aspartame has been launched on the Queensland market? What is aspartame, what significance will it have on the Queensland sugar industry and, more importantly, what significance will it have on the dietary life-style of Queenslanders?

**Mr KATTER:** I am pleased to hear the honourable member's concern for the sugar industry. Aspartame has the potential to take about 33 per cent of the natural sugar market in Queensland and, for that matter, throughout Australia. That is a most extraordinary event when one considers that the tax-payers' resources have been utilised to conduct experiments and produce a product which threatens one of Australia's greatest industries.

The head of the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation is that renowned scientist Mr Wran, so one can understand the kind of imbecility behind moves of this nature. The effect of aspartame on people's health is far from definite and there are some very large question marks hanging over it. It will be a very sad day for our children and the people of Australia if it is discovered further down the track that this product should never have been used in the same way that other artificial sweeteners, which turned out to be carcinogenic, are used. The utilisation of the limited research resources of the Australian Government for this product can only be described as part of the day-dreaming of the present head of the CSIRO. Instead of Mr Wran using the CSIRO for his own political objectives as he did in Cairns recently, he would be far better off looking at the misuse of funds by that once-great organisation.

#### **Unemployment in Provincial Cities**

**Mrs HARVEY:** I ask the Minister for Northern Development and Community Services: has he taken steps to determine the unemployment rates in various provincial cities throughout Queensland? Do the figures reflect development problems, or are other factors involved?

**Mr KATTER:** Criticism has been levelled at the rate of unemployment in north Queensland. A very quick glance at the statistics for Queensland indicates that the highest levels of unemployment in Queensland are centred at the Gold Coast, the Sunshine Coast, Hervey Bay and the Cairns/Mossman regions. The large number of people out of work think that it is a good idea to cross the border and reside in Queensland while they are receiving unemployment benefits.

My portfolio of Community Services is being short-changed by \$60m a year. The Health portfolio is being short-changed by \$260m a year. If those two amounts are considered in conjunction with the amount of subsidy assistance granted to the car and steel industries, they show that Queensland probably has an effective unemployment rate of about 6.5 per cent. If Queensland received a fair deal from the Federal Government, it would have by far the lowest rate of unemployment in Australia.

#### **National Debt**

**Mr HENDERSON:** I ask the Premier and Treasurer: is he aware that the Prime Minister has implied that, notwithstanding Australia's \$100 billion debt, Australians really have nothing to worry about and that the ship of State is, in fact, quite sound? Is he also aware that, when the Titanic hit an iceberg, the captain assured the crew and the passengers that they had nothing to worry about; that the ship was quite sound; that it was, in fact, unsinkable? Where is the Titanic today, and where is Australia likely to be in the future unless the captain and the crew of Australia are changed?

**Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN:** By his comparison, the honourable member has outlined very clearly just where Australia is heading today. All honourable members

know that the Titanic sank to the bottom of the sea. All honourable members know that Australia is heading in the same direction as Argentina, which is struggling at the bottom of the ladder with abject poverty, hardship and uncertainty, and which is in a crisis that is second to none in the world. As a result of the policies of honourable members opposite, Australia is very rapidly following what has happened to that country.

The Labor Party in Canberra has caused irreparable harm to this nation, which has left scars in the hearts and lives of people around Australia that could not be overcome in a life-time. Tremendous anxiety and poverty have been caused. If ever there were creators of poverty, they are the members of the ALP in Canberra, as well as the Democrats, who aid, abet and support them so often. Like the iceberg that hit the Titanic, those people are hitting this nation and causing a great big hole in its economy. Opposition members, to their eternal shame, support, aid and abet those people. It is no wonder that they never make any political headway.

#### **Liberal Party's Proposed Consumer-added Tax**

**Mr HENDERSON:** I ask the Premier and Treasurer: what benefits does he see flowing to the Australian people from the proposed 8 per cent consumer-added tax presently being promoted enthusiastically by the Liberal Party?

**Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN:** I have been saying throughout the Australian States and Territories that it would be easier to sell ice-creams at the South Pole than to sell the Liberal Party's proposed consumer-added tax or any of the other taxes that are presently imposed by the socialist Labor Party. Mr Keating says that there is absolutely no room for a reduction in taxation. He should not have such a mental outlook when all Australians are on their knees, when interest rates are what they are and when our foreign debt is what it is. The Treasurer of this nation claims that there is no opportunity to either lower taxes or to motivate people into overcoming those problems. Why does the Federal Government continue to tax people even further?

As honourable members would be aware, as part of my campaign I recently visited the Northern Territory. In fact, Opposition members actually assisted my campaign by making certain remarks to the media.

Costs are very high in all sectors within the Northern Territory. Why are those costs so high? The simple answer is that the Federal Government has withdrawn all subsidies on freight and fuel—in fact, all consumer goods. The cost of a bag of chook-feed is \$20, three times the cost of an equivalent bag in Queensland—or what the primary producer receives for it.

The Labor Party talks about adding a further 8 per cent value added tax on freight and commodities.

**Mr Warburton interjected.**

**Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN:** I am referring to the Labor Party. The taxes that it supports are even worse, particularly the fringe benefits tax and the capital gains tax.

**Opposition members interjected.**

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I ask the Premier to address the Chair.

**Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN:** I was distracted by Opposition members. The policies of the Labor Party are disastrous. The taxes to which I am referring are different from those referred to by the Opposition. I have never mentioned those taxes. Opposition members can refer to a "Joh tax" system, or whatever they might like to call it. However, I am speaking about the policies which Australians want.

#### **Queensland Electricity Commission**

**Mr MILLINER:** In directing a question to the Minister for Mines and Energy, I point out that, according to the latest Auditor-General's report, as at 30 June 1986 the foreign debt of the Queensland Electricity Commission was the Australian dollar equivalent

of more than \$1,073m. That figure represents one of the biggest single contributions by any public sector borrower to Australia's overall foreign debt.

In view of the fact that power bills in Queensland rose again last Saturday, I ask: can the Minister tell Queensland electricity-consumers, who are paying off this debt, the present level of foreign debt of the Queensland Electricity Commission?

**Mr AUSTIN:** I was wondering who had been peddling that story to the media during the parliamentary recess. Obviously, it was the honourable member for Everton who spoke about the foreign debt of the Queensland Electricity Commission. All honourable members are aware that the commission is in debt. The figures are available for all to see. That debt relates to the construction of capital facilities.

I have here a report headed *The Electricity Supply Industry in Australia 1984-1985*. If the honourable member had taken the opportunity of perusing this report, he would not be as critical of the Queensland Electricity Commission as his Labor colleagues in the southern States have been.

I turn now to some figures—shown in millions of dollars—relating to the fixed capital costs in other States, most of which is debt. The report states—

“New South Wales \$10,093m”—

**Mr Vaughan:** Is that overseas debt?

**Mr AUSTIN:** Yes, some of it is overseas debt. Not all of Queensland's debt is an overseas debt. Opposition members cannot face the truth.

Returning to the report, it states further—

“Victoria	\$7,108m
Queensland	\$5,112m
South Australia	\$1,514m.”

It is obvious from those figures that the ALP is seeking to exaggerate the current state of affairs by claiming that the Queensland Electricity Commission is the only commission in Australia that has an overseas debt, or any debt at all, when every electricity commission throughout this country has a considerable debt.

The supply of electricity to consumers all over Australia, not only in Queensland, is an extremely expensive exercise. The cost of the Tarong Power Station was over a billion dollars.

The supply of electricity is not simply a matter of walking into a house and turning a switch on, as honourable members opposite, with their mentality, think it is. The supply and generation of electricity is an extremely expensive business not only in Queensland but also in every State of Australia.

It has been suggested that the debt of the Queensland Electricity Commission has contributed to the cost of electricity. I noticed that the honourable member said “the high cost of electricity”. He did not mention the high cost of electricity in Western Australia and South Australia, which happen to be Labor States. He did not mention the high cost of electricity in the Northern Territory, which happens to be a conservative State.

Honourable members can throw around all the figures that they like. However, if they compare the cost of electricity in all States, which is difficult to do because of the different systems in each State, they will find that Queensland is managing very well and that it will have the lowest cost of electricity in mainland Australia by the year 1990.

Honourable members on the other side of the House very conveniently cite figures for New South Wales. The figures they cite are for Sydney, not the whole of New South Wales. Honourable members should note how much the country areas of New South Wales pay for electricity. New South Wales has a typically centralist socialist Government that does not care a damn for anyone who lives outside the metropolitan area.

Many years ago, the Queensland Government made a decision to try to equalise electricity tariffs throughout the State. That was a correct and proper decision. Why should country people pay higher tariffs than people who live in Brisbane? Equalisation of tariffs for people who live in country areas is right and proper.

From time to time, honourable members very conveniently cite Sydney figures for electricity tariffs. They should ask the people in northern New South Wales what they think about electricity tariffs. Honourable members opposite have nothing to complain about.

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

## SITTING DAYS

### Sessional Order

**Hon. L. W. POWELL** (Isis—Leader of the House) (2.43 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

“That for this session, unless otherwise ordered, and notwithstanding anything contained in the Standing Orders—

- (1) The House shall sit on Tuesday at 10 o'clock a.m., Wednesday at 2.30 o'clock p.m., and Thursday at 10 o'clock a.m. and Government business shall take precedence of all other business except for that period set aside for a discussion of Matters of Public Interest on Tuesday.
- (2) A discussion of Matters of Public Interest shall take place on each sitting Tuesday between 11 o'clock a.m. and 12 noon.
- (3) On days allotted for Address in Reply one allotted day shall comprise the period from one hour after the commencement of the sitting day until four hours of debate have elapsed. At the discretion of the Leader of the House, double days may apply to the debate on the Address in Reply, in which case each allotted day shall comprise four hours debate. A double day shall also commence one hour after the sitting day has begun.
- (4) All other provisions of the Standing Orders shall, *mutatis mutandis*, continue to apply.”

**Mr WARBURTON** (Sandgate—Leader of the Opposition) (2.45 p.m.): The Opposition accepts that the new times put forward in the Sessional Order moved by the Leader of the House are certainly worth a trial.

I make the point that the commencement time for Thursday should put paid to the unfortunate practice that has developed in this place of Ministers leaving the Chamber during question-time to attend Executive Council meetings. In the debate on the election of Speaker, I brought that matter to the attention of the House. I have mentioned previously that that practice is regarded by Governments in other States of Australia as unthinkable. I am grateful that a practice that has obtained for quite some time will be changed.

Another matter that I draw to the attention of the House is that, in addition to what has been indicated by the Leader of the House, agreement has been reached in respect of times for the suspension of sittings. I note also that Matters of Public Interest will be heard on Tuesdays between 11 a.m. and noon and that the provisions of Standing Orders allow for the Adjournment debate to be held at the conclusion of proceedings on Tuesdays.

Having said that, I make it clear to all honourable members that the Opposition supports the proposal on the basis that it will be for a trial period. At some time in the future, the Opposition will review the trial for the purpose of deciding whether the new proposal needs to be improved.

**Hon. Sir WILLIAM KNOX** (Nundah—Leader of the Liberal Party) (2.47 p.m.): Members of the Liberal Party support the motion and hope that the trial period will be successful. The proposed change will provide longer sitting hours. People sometimes criticise Parliament because the hours of the sittings are too few.

This proposal will provide a greater degree of certainty for honourable members. It is certainly worth a trial, and members of the Liberal Party hope that it will be successful. I assure all honourable members that members of the Liberal Party will do their share to ensure that the proposal succeeds.

Motion agreed to.

## TIME-LIMIT OF SPEECHES

### Sessional Order

**Hon. L. W. POWELL** (Isis—Leader of the House) (2.47 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

“That for this session, unless otherwise ordered, the following amendments to the times for certain speeches shall apply—

Under Standing Order No. 109

(1) Paragraph one—substitute ‘thirty minutes’ for ‘forty minutes’ in line one and omit all words following the word ‘House’ in line two to the end of the paragraph.

(2) Paragraph three—omit the word ‘thirty’ and substitute the word ‘fifteen’.

(3) Paragraph seven—omit the words ‘one hour’ in the third line and substitute the words ‘thirty minutes’.”

Motion agreed to.

## GOVERNOR'S OPENING SPEECH

**Mr SPEAKER:** I have to report that His Excellency the Governor, on 18 February 1987, delivered a Speech to Parliament of which, for greater accuracy, I have obtained a copy. I presume honourable members will take the Speech as read?

**Honourable members:** Hear, hear!

## ADDRESS IN REPLY

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I call the honourable member for Mansfield. As this is the honourable member's maiden speech, I call upon all honourable members to hear the honourable member without interjection or interruption.

**Mr SHERRIN** (Mansfield) (2.48 p.m.), who was received with Government “Hear, hears!”, said: I move—

“That the following address be presented to the Governor in reply to the Speech delivered by His Excellency in opening this, the first, session of the Forty-fifth Parliament of Queensland—

‘May it please Your Excellency:—

We, Her Majesty's loyal and dutiful subjects, the members of the Legislature of Queensland, in Parliament assembled, desire to assure Your Excellency of our continued loyalty and affection towards the Throne and Person of our Most Gracious Sovereign, and to tender our thanks to Your Excellency for the Speech with which you have been pleased to open the present session.

The various measures to which Your Excellency has referred, and all other matters that may be brought before us, will receive our most careful consideration, and it shall be our earnest endeavour so to deal with them that our labours may tend to the advancement and prosperity of the State.’ ”

I acknowledge with great pride and pleasure the honour afforded me by this House to move the Address in Reply to His Excellency the Governor's Speech, on the occasion of the opening of the First Session of the Forty-fifth Parliament of Queensland.

In this, my maiden speech to this House, may I declare my personal allegiance and loyalty to our Sovereign, Her Majesty the Queen, and her representative, His Excellency the Governor of Queensland. I also affirm my loyalty to you, Mr Speaker, and subject myself to your authority in this place. I acknowledge the heavy responsibility and trust that honourable members have placed in you, to act as the representative of this House in its relations with the Crown and her representatives and other authorities outside this Parliament.

On behalf of the people of Mansfield, I also extend to you sincere congratulations upon your assumption of the high office of Speaker. Looking back on our personal association over the past 10 years, Mr Speaker, I know that you will bring great authority and impartiality to this demanding office. Your record in representative sport and as a sporting commentator, in academic achievement and as an educational administrator, have shown that you can bring energy, zeal and vision to any task that confronts you. I know that you will bring great dignity to the traditional office of Speaker and I extend my personal best wishes to you, Alison and your children at this time.

I am confident that all honourable members will share the sense of tradition and history associated with this Assembly. We are all conscious that the form and proceedings of this House are based on traditions which can be traced through the modern British Parliament to the early English Parliament and church councils of the twelfth century.

It is important that we never lose sight of this heritage. Understanding the history of Parliament is essential if we are to appreciate its modern forms and proceedings, because, in almost every instance, existing laws and customs are rooted deep in the traditions of early, and sometimes ancient, Parliaments.

The principle of parliamentary sovereignty, reinforced over the centuries, makes Parliament a unique institution, consisting of Her Majesty the Queen and the Legislative Assembly. This Parliament, subject to the Constitution, has the sole right to make and repeal any law. No person or body is recognised by the law to override or set aside the will of Parliament as expressed by legislation. This principle, more than any other, establishes the important and heavy responsibility that is entrusted to each of us gathered in this House.

The First Queensland Parliament was summoned by the Governor on 22 May 1860, and consisted of 26 elected members of the Legislative Assembly and 11 nominated members of the Legislative Council. That First Queensland Parliament governed a population of 25 000. At that time Brisbane had 7 000 inhabitants, 14 churches, 13 public houses and 12 policemen—a far cry from the dynamic city and State that we see today.

The Queensland Constitution Act clearly establishes the responsibilities of this Parliament to legislate for the "Peace, welfare and good government" of the State. These responsibilities will provide a convenient yardstick to gauge whether our deliberations in this Parliament measure up to the high ideals encouraged by those pioneer legislators over a century ago.

Mr Speaker, the thoughts that come to mind when I consider my role in this Parliament are service and responsibility. All honourable members are aware of the heavy responsibility that we have to those people we represent, and I trust that as member for Mansfield my time will be spent making worthwhile contributions not only to Mansfield but also to Queensland.

The electorate of Mansfield was created in the 1971 redistribution, principally from the former seat of Mount Gravatt. The seat is located in the outer eastern metropolitan area of Brisbane and includes the suburbs of Mansfield, Wishart, Eight Mile Plains, Mackenzie, and parts of Belmont, Mount Gravatt East, Upper Mount Gravatt and Rochedale.

The electorate covers an area of some 70 square kilometres and has a population of approximately 32 000, with 20 500 registered electors living in 8 500 residences. Almost 70 per cent of working people in the electorate are married, 30 to 50 years of age with children living at home. More than 85 per cent of people in the electorate own their own home, with 80 per cent of the residents being Australian born. More than 80 per cent belong to the Christian faith.

The industrious people of this electorate are engaged in almost every conceivable type of occupation. Almost one-half of the labour-force work in the professional and administrative occupations, while one-quarter work in the trades occupations. The remaining people work in areas such as small business, primary production and the retail industry, to name but a few.

The electorate is characterised by its large number of schools and churches. The people of Mansfield are indeed fortunate to be served by many Government and non-Government schools. These schools, without exception, have an excellent reputation throughout the electorate. In fact, in many instances, children travel considerable distances from outside the area for the privilege of attending these schools. The Minister for Education and his department, school staffs and especially the parents and citizens associations and parents and friends associations are to be congratulated upon their efforts over the years to achieve this impressive reputation.

The Mansfield area is also served by a relatively large number of churches, many of which are among the largest in the State. My own Christian and church background causes me to value highly the ministry of these churches and their pastors as they work to improve the quality of life for the people of my area.

During the recent State election campaign, my wife and I called on more than 8 000 homes in the electorate. No doubt honourable members will agree that one tends to face this task with some degree of trepidation. Surprisingly, we found door-knocking to be one of the most enjoyable parts of our campaign. I can confidently say that Mansfield people are some of the most hospitable people in Queensland. Not only did we meet many old friends from our long association with the area, but also over numerous cups of tea we made many new acquaintances.

This impression has certainly been reinforced during my first months in office. In virtually all my dealings with hundreds of people from all walks of life across the electorate, I have been received in a warm and friendly manner.

In many ways, the groundwork for the excellent facilities that are present in Mansfield was laid in place on the 27 May 1972. It was on this date that the newly created electorate of Mansfield elected as its representative Bill Kaus. Bill had been the member for Hawthorne for the previous six years. I tell honourable members that, along with my family and friends, Bill is present in the public gallery today, and I thank them for their presence.

Mansfield has developed greatly during the past 14 years. New schools, school libraries, health facilities, major main roads developments and the location of numerous Government services, such as the regional Main Roads office, bear witness to the effective representation that this electorate has enjoyed.

Bill has frequently been described as a "quiet achiever"—a man who does not achieve things with a great deal of fanfare. In addition to the services that I have already mentioned, he gained the trust and respect of the people of Mansfield over these past 14 years.

Bill's personal record speaks for itself and gives an insight into this man, who has given 20 years of his life diligently serving the people of Queensland. Born in Brisbane in 1923, Bill showed an early aptitude for sport. This potential was later realised as he went on to represent the State in cricket. Bill was also a principal of the well-known bedding manufacturing firm Kaus Brothers. He saw service as a flying officer with the Royal Australian Air Force overseas in Europe from 1940 to 1945 and, for his outstanding service and courage, was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross.

Bill is indeed fortunate to have had his wife, Neth, at his side. Together, they served the people of Mansfield with distinction. They are both very approachable and friendly, and over the years have assisted countless people within and without the electorate who came to them with problems. My wife, Lyndelle, and I were indeed fortunate to have known Bill and Neth for a number of years prior to my election.

I feel proud to follow in Bill's footsteps and I wish to express in this place my heartfelt thanks for the personal assistance and support he and Neth contributed to my campaign. I believe that the outstanding result achieved in Mansfield is a reflection not only of a very well run campaign but also of an expression of thanks to Bill by the people of Mansfield for a job well done.

I believe that all honourable members will agree that a successful election campaign is the result of many hours of hard work by a large group of dedicated friends and supporters. This was certainly the case in Mansfield. In addition to the valuable support and advice provided by the retiring member, Bill Kaus, I must make mention of my family, National Party supporters and personal friends who worked long hours to achieve the outstanding result and make Mansfield the safest metropolitan seat for the National Party.

Undoubtedly my No. 1 supporter throughout the campaign was my wife, Lyndelle. Lyndelle walked the streets of Mansfield with me as we door-knocked in excess of 8 000 homes. She also played a leading role in the organisation of many of the campaign functions. Her support and enthusiasm, and her cheerful and relaxed way with people, were invaluable to me during the campaign. I believe that all honourable members would agree that our spouses are often the backbone and hidden strength behind our successful campaigns. In a similar manner, my own family—my mother, Joan; sister, Deborah; and brother, Scott—and parents-in-law, Stanley and Thelma Rawlings, were a tremendous support during the campaign, not only working side by side with my wife and myself, often late into the night, but also caring for our two young children on those occasions when both of us were away from home. Their devotion to us and our children is very much appreciated.

The Mansfield branch of the National Party also provided strong support throughout the campaign. Not only did it provide financial support, but also it greatly assisted in the manning of election booths on polling-day. There are far too many branch supporters to name individually, but I wish to place on record my deep appreciation for the confidence that they placed in me by selecting me as the candidate, and then the total support that branch members gave me during the campaign.

Finally, I acknowledge the support of my friends, especially church friends, many of whom do not identify with any political party, but who devoted considerable time and energy to supporting me throughout the campaign.

One of my deep regrets is that my father is not alive to be with me today. He and my mother made great personal sacrifices so that I might pursue my education. They raised me in a loving and caring family which respected a hard day's work for an honest day's pay. Without their numerous sacrifices, I would not be standing in this Parliament today.

My father did not have the benefit of a secondary education, as he had to leave school at an early age to go to work. He practised his trade as a heavy equipment mechanic without any formal qualifications, and yet all who knew him agreed that he was outstanding in this work. I was fortunate that his work took him to many of the major development projects in Queensland during the 1960s and 1970s—projects such as the Beef Road Development Program, the Gladstone alumina refinery, Perserverance Dam, the Riverside Expressway, and many of the State's coal projects. All this afforded me the opportunity to work alongside him during my school vacations, and that experience brought us very close together, making us the best of mates. To my mother fell the responsibility of raising a family while Dad was away from home, often for periods of many long months.

It is obvious that my early and long association with a number of the State's major development projects has led me to support strongly the further development of the resources of this great State. My views on major development projects have been influenced strongly by my first-hand experience of the many benefits that come to Queenslanders from these enterprises, especially employment.

My family has a long and close association with the electorate of Mansfield. That association dates back to my early childhood when my family lived in and operated a small business within the Rochedale area. Managing a service station brought my family into close contact with many people in the area. Throughout that period I worked on many small farms in the area after school and during the school holidays.

Eleven years ago, my wife and I maintained that contact by building our home in Mansfield. My elder son currently attends a State school within the electorate. In addition, in the past 10 years, my wife, in her former vocation as a primary school teacher in various schools in the area, has been associated closely with the electorate.

Through our church and community work, my wife and I have been fortunate to form close relationships with many families living in the area. My responsibilities as a deacon and secretary of a local church, and youth group and Sunday school leader, have brought me into close contact with many people in the community. Mr Speaker, my close association with the church and my Christian background will clearly influence the views and attitudes that I will express on issues discussed in this House. My community involvement has focused on the schools within the electorate. As vice-president of a local parents and citizens association, I strongly support the work of these associations to further improve the quality of education provided to our children.

I am sure that all honourable members will agree that our families are central to our success and happiness as people as well as politicians, and that at all stages we must make time for them. My own family, Lyndelle and my two young sons, Brendan and Cameron, are the key to my happiness and future success, and I trust that there will be some time in my busy days ahead for quiet moments with them.

Mr Speaker, I place a high value on individual initiative and free enterprise. These values and my own deep commitment to the protection of family life and Christian beliefs have led me to identify strongly with the philosophy and objectives of the National Party. I believe that there is a strong need within society for a return to conservative values. The disintegration of the family unit, the apparent emphasis on the material side of life, the increase in violence and crime, and the prevalence of drug abuse, I believe, clearly indicate the dangers of rejecting many of the conservative values that have served us so well in the past. This is not to argue against change—but change must occur in a society which values the individual for his or her own worth, which rewards personal initiative and hard work, and which fosters the family and the love and support provided within the family.

As we called on many thousands of people throughout the electorate, I was heartened to hear the strong support expressed by many for these conservative values. Of particular note was the strong commitment to these values by young people. This apparent return to conservative values by our youth, I believe, augurs well for the future of this great State.

Mr Speaker, I also commit myself to and affirm my support for the Australian federal system of Government. The Commonwealth of Australia is a federation of six States. Under our federal system of government, our citizens are subject to two key Governments—Commonwealth and the State, neither of which is the subordinate of the other. This separation of powers extends to our courts and the laws under which we live. The Australian federal system of government is unique, in particular with respect to the strong emphasis placed on decentralisation and the extensive powers conferred on the States by the Constitution. This system of government was shaped as a result of Australia's early settlement patterns, where self-contained colonies around the coast linked by sea transport produced isolated and independent States. It is also interesting

to note that at the time of Federation, most of the pressure for Australian unity originated in Whitehall rather than in the colonies themselves.

The Australian Constitution granted to the Federal Government a limited range of powers that, at the end of the nineteenth century, appeared to be essential for its role in the Federation. Honourable members familiar with the history of the Federation will be aware of the progressive expansion and encroachment of Commonwealth powers and the corresponding decreasing influence of the States in the balance of power evident in our Federation.

It is evident that two factors have contributed to the altering of the balance of power.

Firstly, changing judicial interpretation of the Constitution by the High Court has tended to increase the powers of the Federal Government at the expense of the State Governments. Secondly, the growth of Commonwealth funds relative to the States has increased enormously since 1901. The immense taxation resources of the Commonwealth have led to a wide range of specific purpose grants from the Commonwealth in a range of areas outside of their constitutional authority, whereby the Commonwealth attempts to dictate matters of policy to the States.

It is interesting to note that since Federation the Australian people have shown by referendums no desire to alter the balance of Federal powers. On 18 separate occasions between 1901 and 1977, 36 proposed amendments were put to the Australian people and of those 36, only 8 relatively minor amendments were passed. Yet the balance has indeed shifted.

This shift in the balance of power, in favour of the Commonwealth, was never envisaged by our forefathers who drafted the Australian Constitution. It is cause for grave concern, not only for this State but for the well-being of the Commonwealth as a whole. The all-prevailing influence of the Commonwealth Government is in direct contravention to the spirit, the intent and, indeed, the very foundation of the Australian Constitution.

Our forefathers wisely placed such basic services as education, health, justice and law enforcement as the responsibilities of the State. These services relate to the care and protection of the people and should rightly be administered by that level of Government closest to the people—the State Governments. This division of powers ensured that laws and regulations in these areas were responsive and designed to meet the needs of the local people.

Unfortunately today, with the ever-increasing encroachment by the Commonwealth in areas of State responsibility, we can witness many policies in these basic service areas formulated in the distant, heady hothouse of Canberra. Our constitutional forefathers, in their wildest dreams, could not have envisaged a place more distant from the realities of the real world. I believe that it is imperative for the well-being of our nation that this gross intrusion into State affairs by the Commonwealth Government be eliminated as a matter of urgency.

Eighty-seven years ago, it was obvious to the authors of our Constitution that the States were the power houses of the fledgling Federation. Consequently, they invested the States with a large degree of autonomy and power to manage their own affairs. This formula has proved successful down through the years, and the extensive national development of Australia bears witness to the energy and leadership of the States.

Recent domination of many areas of State responsibility by the Commonwealth has also been accompanied by a down-turn in our national fortunes. While not suggesting that Commonwealth domination of the States is the sole cause of our unfortunate national outlook, I firmly hold the view that any dramatic improvement in our national economy is inextricably linked with the restoration to the States of independence in financial and decision-making areas.

The elimination of Commonwealth intervention and duplication in many areas of constitutional State responsibility would also result in significant savings of public funds.

For example, it has been estimated that administrative costs associated with the Commonwealth department and commissions relating to education alone exceed \$75m.

We are told in scripture that without a vision the people will perish. As members of this Parliament, if we are to provide leadership to the people of Queensland, we must be men and women of vision.

I acknowledge the leadership and vision of the Honourable the Premier over the past 18 years. His personal vision for this great State, boundless enthusiasm and energy are the main reasons why this State has prospered greatly during this time.

Queensland is indeed a land with unlimited potential. Our vast mineral and natural resources, together with a hard-working and independent people, and leaders with vision, will continue to make Queensland the leading State in this nation. Because of the promise of a better way of life for their families, people from across Australia continue to move in their thousands to our exciting State.

My personal vision for this State centres on continued economic development led by private enterprise and a reduction in the size and extent of Government control over the lives of individuals and business. I am pleased to say that these initiatives rate highly on the Government's list of priorities.

In the field of education—I strongly support the work of the Minister for Education. The reforms associated with the Radford report and ROSBA have tended to emphasise the role of summative assessment within our schools. I would hope that, during this term of government, an even greater emphasis would be placed on improving and supporting the learning process between teachers and students in the class room. If our students are to continue to excel, this is the key to a quality education system and must continue to be the focus of our resources over the coming years.

I also advocate greater support for our gifted and talented students. These students will one day be the State's leaders in industry, commerce, technology and the arts. If they are to develop to their full potential, for the ultimate benefit of Queensland and, indeed, Australia, they must be given special support.

I fully support the current policy of the Government to foster the development of a range of high technology industries in Queensland. My time as Assistant Director—Technology Services within the Queensland Education Department convinced me that the long-term economic well-being of Queensland is very much dependent on the incorporation of modern technology into our existing industries and commerce, and the establishment of various high technology industries appropriate for our State.

Queensland is a magnificent State in which to live and raise a family. While still holding fast to those conservative values based upon a belief in God, loyalty to the Queen, and family values that have served us so well over the years, I am committed to ensuring that Queensland continues to grow and prosper.

In conclusion, I quote from a speech once made by American President Abraham Lincoln. I believe that his comments contain advice to all honourable members concerning our deliberations in this Parliament. He said—

“You cannot bring about prosperity by discouraging thrift.

You cannot strengthen the weak by weakening the strong.

You cannot help the wage earner by pulling down the wage payer.

You cannot help the poor by destroying the rich.

You cannot establish sound security on borrowed money.

You cannot keep out of trouble by spending more than you earn.

You cannot build character and courage by taking away man's initiative and independence.

You cannot help men permanently by doing for them what they could, and should, do for themselves.”

Mr Speaker, I extend my best wishes to all honourable members in this Parliament as we strive to improve further the quality of life of Queenslanders.

Mr SPEAKER: I call the honourable member for Townsville. This is the honourable member's maiden speech.

Mr BURREKET (Townsville) (3.17 p.m.): I am honoured to second the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply so capably moved by the honourable member for Mansfield.

I express my personal loyalty to the throne in the person of our sovereign, Her Most Gracious Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II, and I include the people of the Townsville electorate in that expression of loyalty.

To the Premier, Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen, I offer heartfelt congratulations for once again leading the people of Queensland into another era of good government, clear policies and strong, sound, good sense leadership. As the statesman of Australian politicians, he stands alone. As the disciple of the family unit being the soundest base of Australian society, he leads by example. As Treasurer of Queensland, his sound economic management and economic policies have again put Queensland ahead of the other States. In fact, I believe that the so-called mythical J-curve that the Federal Treasurer has been frantically searching for over the past years is really the "Joh curve", which our Premier so ably applies and which, I believe, the Federal Treasurer will never find, or ever understand.

I turn now to the city of Townsville and, more particularly, to the heart of the city, which I am now honoured to represent. Townsville, the third largest city in Queensland, with a population of approximately 87 000 people, is the capital of north Queensland. It contains an international airport with direct links to Auckland in New Zealand, and to Singapore, with further links to Europe and America. It is the centre for such facilities as the James Cook University, the Australian Institute of Marine Science, the Queensland nickel refinery, a copper refinery, a large army base, a large component of the air force which operates out of the Garbutt airport, a beautiful civic theatre, a well-constructed port area, and has also the State's second casino—the Sheraton Breakwater casino and convention centre.

Within a few months, the city will see the opening of the magnificent \$20m Reef Wonderland, which will house the largest live coral reef aquarium in the world, the first Omnimax theatre in the southern hemisphere, with reputedly the best visual display system in the world, and the first general branch of the Queensland museum outside Brisbane. In addition to being a spectacular means for visitors to experience the wonders of the Great Barrier Reef, the aquarium will create enormous scientific interest. Visits to the reef can be inhibited by the distance to be travelled off shore, occasional weather restrictions, and the costs involved in making such a trip. The Great Barrier Reef Wonderland will make the reef come alive for many more people.

The aquarium will consist of a large main tank containing the live coral reef, a smaller tank containing predators, an extensive interpretive area and a theatre for audio-visual displays. Dividing the main tank and the predator tank will be a transparent acrylic tunnel approximately three metres wide through which visitors will walk and be subjected to a genuine underwater viewing experience.

This magnificent Great Barrier Reef Wonderland will, I believe, become one of the major tourist attractions of Australia, rivalling the Sydney Opera House.

The people of Townsville appreciate the importance that this development will have on the city's future. On their behalf, I express warm and sincere thanks to Mr Max Hooper, former State Minister for Tourism, and former Mayor of Townsville, who has been the driving force behind the project.

To complement that project, this year Townsville will also see the opening of one of the world's most imaginative and exciting projects. I refer to the magnificent \$35m Four Seasons Floating Hotel to be moored on the John Brewer Reef just 72 kilometres

from the city. This seven-storey 200-room international floating hotel presently being built at the Bethlehem ship yards in Singapore will be shipped into the Great Barrier Reef by one of the only two heavy-lift vessels in the world. It will then be floated into position and moored to a single million dollar anchor. The planning and logistics of bringing a seven-storey hotel from Singapore to Townsville will be in itself an international event that will focus world attention on developments in and around Townsville. Besides having a 200-seat convention centre, the floating hotel will have a semisubmersible with huge viewing windows, so that guests can be taken below the surface amongst the abundant living reef and beautiful fish which make up this unique world wonder.

In Doug Tarca—dreamer, adventurer, pragmatist, and then realist—the people of Townsville are proud to have in their midst one of the great Townsvilleans of our time. He is the Four Seasons Hotel. He dreamt the dream, he planned the creation, he developed the Reef Link floating platform and the yellow submarine, which is such a vital part of Townsville's tourist industry, and then he went on to create the marvellous floating hotel concept that will, in conjunction with the Great Barrier Reef Wonderland, make Townsville a tourist mecca and help this State in its drive to be "The Tourist State of Australia". Let there be no doubt that the north Queensland coast will one day be the most exciting tourist destination in Australia. I look to this Government to do all in its capacity to fulfill that prophecy.

However, the tourist industry in Townsville is not without its problems. I refer specifically to the international carrier, Qantas. Several years ago, Townsville had the only north Queensland international airport and it was serviced four times weekly by Qantas from Singapore, New Zealand and the United States. Now it is reduced to just one weekly flight from Singapore and one weekly flight from Auckland, New Zealand. Qantas recently announced the transfer of another flight from Townsville-Singapore to Cairns-Singapore and also announced another flight direct from Auckland to Cairns. In effect, Cairns will have six Qantas flights weekly compared to just two for Townsville.

For years, it has been said that Townsville should get its tourist act together to justify its north Queensland flights; yet, with two of the world's best tourist attractions coming on stream—I refer to the Four Seasons Floating Hotel and the Great Barrier Reef Wonderland—I am dismayed that Qantas should switch its flight from Singapore-Townsville to Singapore-Cairns and introduce a new service from Auckland to Cairns. Moreover, Australian Airlines have introduced a Sydney-Cairns direct flight that by-passes Townsville. Air Queensland has changed its Townsville-Hamilton Island flight to go direct to Cairns. East-West Airlines now flies from Brisbane to Cairns direct, and also by-passes Townsville.

Townsville has a Labor senator, Margaret Reynolds, plus a Labor member of the House of Representatives, Eamon Lindsay. It had three State Labor members, which has been reduced now to two, and a Labor-controlled city council; yet the total impact of those 13 ALP members was that they allowed Townsville to be down-graded to an international backwater. The silence from Senator Reynolds and Mr Lindsay has been deafening. They and their other colleagues must bear the blame for the demise of Townsville as an international tourist destination.

As the only non-Labor politician in the area and the elected representative for the seat of Townsville, I must draw this Parliament's attention to the problems that exist. I will also urge this Parliament to use its offices and influence to put Townsville back on the map as a destination for Qantas and other international carriers.

The other tourist problem which Townsville has faced over the past several years had been the almost paranoid anti-tourist development attitude of the ALP-controlled Townsville City Council. Compared with Cairns, the last 11 years in Townsville city has been a tourism-development disaster. Any State member of this Parliament would know that Cairns city is racing ahead in tourist development while Townsville city has fallen into a big slump. The only salvation for Townsville has been the State Government's initiative in using harbour board land to approve the Sheraton Breakwater Casino; the Federal and State Government funding of the Great Barrier Reef Wonderland, also

situated on harbour board land; plus the previously mentioned initiative of Doug Tarca's Reef Link cruise to the Barrier Reef; and the forthcoming Four Seasons Floating Hotel. Even the proposed Magnetic Keys development on Magnetic Island is on Crown land. The root of the problem goes back to the time of the proposal put by the then State Tourism Minister, Mr Max Hooper, to develop a \$100m tourist resort at Florence Bay, on Magnetic Island.

The ALP council under the present Mayor orchestrated strong public objection to the proposal, and coincidentally, it was State election-time. Without even seeing the plans, without considering the benefits to Townsville city, without appreciating the damage that it would do to the city, the ALP council played its menial politics. The ALP won the seat, and Townsville has suffered ever since. I cry with frustration when I see how the loss of that tourist development has affected Townsville.

**Mr SMITH:** I rise to a point of order. Although it is not usual to interrupt a member's maiden speech, the honourable member is being provocative, and he cannot expect to proceed uninterrupted if he continues in that vein.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row):** Order! There is no point of order. I would adhere to the tradition of this Parliament and allow the honourable member to make his maiden speech without interruption.

**Mr SMITH:** But without reflection, Mr Deputy Speaker.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! An opportunity will present itself later for the honourable member for Townsville East to reply. I call the honourable member for Townsville.

**Mr BURREKET:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. Had that \$100m Florence Bay proposal, which incorporated proper planning with the environment, proceeded, there is no doubt how Townsville would be today, as a tourist city. It would have more international flights and would be a booming tourist city, instead of running a poor second to Cairns.

General tourist development has proceeded at a snail's pace and will continue whilst this anti-development attitude of the city council remains. Let me cite the example of the Seaview Hotel, which sits on the Strand and faces the Townsville harbour, which incidentally is one of the nicest harbours in Australia. The Seaview developers wanted to put up an 11-storey tourist hotel/motel on land zoned Tourist Facility but the Mayor and the ALP council again raised their ugly anti-development stick and crucified that proposal too, despite three public surveys showing that the people were in favour of the development. It was Florence Bay all over again. Only last week, a Townsville ALP alderman publicly criticised the scouting movement for a proposal to put camping facilities on their own leased land at Florence Bay.

I would now like to address the financial problems which beset the Townsville people. The city debt is \$110m, that is \$4,000 for every rate-payer or \$1,300 for every citizen of Townsville. That is a dreadful financial burden which the ALP council has imposed on the city. The annual interest account is \$18m or half the rates and charges revenue, and is 25.12 per cent of all revenue, including Government subsidies, Government grants, a large loan program and other revenue. It is an economic nightmare which I have attempted to highlight during the two years that I have been an Independent alderman of the city council. Fortunately, the people of Townsville are becoming aware of the financial mess that the council has put them into and, as a result, I expect to see further changes in the political scene in the forthcoming Federal and local government elections in Townsville.

To add to the financial mismanagement, I would point out that not only does the Townsville City Council grant an 85 per cent general rate rebate to pensioners but it has opened the concession to a whole range of other persons on benefits. In some cases, it gives an 85 per cent rate concession to people who do not even own the property.

I quote one example where a person on a supporting parent's benefit asked for a rate concession on the grounds that a relative had offered her a rent-free home if she paid the rates. The council granted the rate concession over my objections, and it was just some weeks later that the same lady gave evidence in court that she was paying her relative \$70 per week rent for the same house. That is just one illustration of how a large majority of genuine rate-payers are subsidising rate concessions in Townsville.

Since coming into office, the ALP council has undertaken a huge program of selling off the council's inner-city land assets. The sale moneys have simply disappeared into the running costs of the council.

I now turn to the water supply problems facing Townsville. Townsville has the best winter climate in Australia, mainly because it gets very little rainfall. Most of its rainfall is generally received during the summer monsoon season. Although northern neighbours such as Cairns and Innisfail get their rain more evenly distributed all year round and understandably are much greener, Townsville needs lots of water for its homes, parks, city approaches, street-greening and, of course, for its present and future industrial demands. In 1985, the Townsville City Council had two options to solve its water crisis—either build Stage 2 of the Ross River Dam or proceed to the Haughton just 28 kilometres away and tap into the Burdekin water coming down the Haughton channel. It elected for the Stage 2 Ross River Dam option and is now well into spending \$35m to complete the project this year.

I have fought for two years against that proposal, for two reasons. One is that the heavens may not open up; so the \$35m would be wasted capital outlay. The same money spent on building a pipeline to the Haughton would give the city of Townsville a guaranteed 100-year water supply and put water into the dam. Let there be no doubt that, if the heavens do not open, the future of Townsville is very bleak indeed. The second reason why I objected is the fear of many people in the lower areas of Townsville that, should the dam fill, natural forces acting on its earth-fill wall could have a devastating effect on Townsville and Thuringowa. Had the council proceeded with the Haughton proposal the two grave concerns I have expressed would not have been necessary and the bonus of a permanent, 100-year water supply would have assured Townsville's water supply future.

It is appropriate at this time to make mention of the maiden speech in 1983 of the former Deputy Mayor of Townsville—now he is just the member for Thuringowa—who quoted the cost of Stage 2 of the Ross River Dam as being \$14.4m, as against a cost presently approaching \$35m. From these cost differences alone, one can understand the ability of the Townsville City Council to manage its finances.

Eight months ago, the Townsville City Council rejected a proposal by consulting engineers to plan the route of the pipeline. My sincere thanks go to the Premier, Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen, and the Minister for Water Resources, the Honourable Martin Tenni, for their pre-election commitment to plan the route of the Haughton pipeline at no cost to the Townsville people. This positive move by the State Government will allow future town-planning proposals to proceed properly and to remove from Townsville, Thuringowa and other councils the costly need to resume expensive land in the future. In summary, Mr Speaker, I lay the blame on the ALP council for retarding the progress of Townsville and say that the last 11 years of ALP rule have been an economic disaster.

Now is an appropriate time to talk about the union movement and its effect on Queensland's prosperity. I have no disagreement with trade unions, provided they limit their concerns to wages and conditions for workers and provided that they work within the framework of the industrial/legal system under which the State operates. I object very strongly, however, to political manipulation by union officials who indiscriminately use strike action to promote disharmony and confrontation in our community.

Governments are elected by the people, for the people. That is democracy at work. There is no place for the strong-arm stand-over tactics used by unions to try to bring down Governments. The ETU strike two years ago was an example of how a militant

union was prepared to make all Queenslanders suffer dreadful power restrictions because \$38,000 per year was not enough for some power workers. The sorry tale in Australia goes on, with strikes every day in the southern States, all in the name of union political control. If the unions want political power, let them contest all elections as an ACTU party. They would not do that, as they would lose their election deposits in every electorate. They hide behind the skirts of the ALP, donate funds for campaigns and then use their political muscle to dictate policy to Governments, as has been seen under the present ALP Federal Government. The worst problems facing Australia's economic recovery and ability to compete on international markets lie in the frequency and abuse of union strike action.

Further, I object to the stupid and destructive practice whereby unions get involved in senseless, inane demarcation disputes that result in strike action and disruption of production, and put good workers out of jobs or cause them unnecessary hardship. Is it true that all demarcation disputes are for the welfare of the workers and have nothing to do with union greed or power? I would strongly support any retributive legislation that allowed management to recover losses incurred from senseless demarcation disputes and strikes.

I wish to draw attention to what I consider to be a despicable abuse of young people as perpetrated by some unions. I refer to certain major supermarkets in this State that employ very young people and pay \$40 per week in salary for part-time work. Those young people are forced to join the AWU and pay \$60 for a year's membership. They have no choice.

Let me cite two instances that illustrate that abuse. In the first instance, just two weeks after paying the \$60 fee, a young person was put off and no refund was obtainable from the union. In the second instance, when a person objected strongly to joining the union, the company took \$20 per week from his pay packet, against his wishes. On 7 October 1986 he received a receipt from the union. On 26 January 1987, just 3½ months later, that young person resigned from the job. He wrote asking the union for a refund. The union's reply was as follows—

“As you were employed under our callings for almost six months, we cannot therefore give you a full refund, and there is no allowance under the Constitution of the Union for pro-rata refunds.”

I consider that to be an immoral use of a practice that is taking advantage of the innocence of young people, who are being forced into joining a union and who, after they are put off by the company or resign, have no recourse to pro-rata refunds.

I would like to see some action taken to remove compulsory unionism, especially for young people up to the age of 18 doing part-time work. I would like to see them given the right to elect to join a union and pay their dues, or not to join a union if they so wish. I have no respect for the arbitration and industrial practices that lead a major Australian company to be party to such low behaviour, which is a parasitic practice growing fat on the innocence of our youth.

I thank the Deputy Premier, Mr Bill Gunn, and the Minister for Main Roads, Mr Hinze, for their recent announcement regarding the long-awaited four-lane Main Roads reconstruction of Nathan Street from Ross River Road to Dalrymple Road. The residents of the suburbs of Vincent, Cranbrook, Heatley and Aitkenvale are most grateful for that, and this commitment by the Government fulfills another of my election promises to the people.

I congratulate the State Government on its continuous support for the schools and educational institutions of Townsville, its ongoing commitment to provide all the services that are daily part and parcel of a capital city, its commitment to Townsville as exemplified by the new State Government building, the new Department of Transport building and the new building at the prison farm, and its support for the Great Barrier Reef Wonderland. There are many areas in Townsville that need attention, and I will look

to this Parliament to provide the necessary and continuous support that the city of Townsville needs.

Finally, my wife and I extend our sincere thanks to the Ministers who gave support in the lead-up to the election, for helping me pluck the Crown jewel of Townsville off the ALP. I promise to this Parliament and to the people of Townsville who elected me that I will conscientiously and to the best of my ability act in the best interests of the people of my electorate, and that I will work to support the policies and philosophies of the Premier of Queensland and the National Party, which have continued to show the way to sound economic management, to free enterprise principles, to strengthening the importance of the family unit as the basis of our society and to providing the building block on which future generations of Australians will develop good morals and attitudes.

Debate, on motion of Mr Warburton, adjourned.

### **MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES ACT AMENDMENT BILL**

**Hon. M. J. AHERN** (Landsborough—Minister for Health and Environment) (3.45 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

“That leave be granted to bring in a Bill to amend the Mental Health Services Act 1974-1984 in certain particulars.”

Motion agreed to.

#### **First Reading**

Bill presented and, on motion of Mr Ahern, read a first time.

#### **Second Reading**

**Hon. M. J. AHERN** (Landsborough—Minister for Health and Environment) (3.46 p.m.): I move—

“That the Bill be now read a second time.”

The Mental Health Services Act Amendment Bill was introduced to Parliament in September last year. The adjourned debate was not resumed prior to the prorogation of the Forty-fourth Parliament. Accordingly, the Bill is now required to be reintroduced to this Parliament.

Mental health legislation should be continuously monitored and subject to frequent comprehensive review. The achievements of the State Government in widely amending and developing these important statutes on two previous occasions within 10 years shows commitment to this principle.

The Mental Health Services Act 1974-1984 commenced on 1 July 1985, and has now been in operation for some 19 months. Its operations have validated the assurance of the Government that its provisions would ensure that mentally ill people receive the care and treatment they need while safeguarding their basic rights and protecting the legitimate interests of the community.

In order to maintain the smooth and effective operations of this progressive legislation, a small number of housekeeping amendments are now required. This is not unexpected, given the comprehensive nature of the previous review and amendments of 1984, the new concepts underlying a number of the principles embodied in those amendments and the general spirit of the Act.

The amendments, as presented in the Bill before this House, namely the Mental Health Services Act Amendment Bill, are concerned with Part IV of the Act, which deals with patients concerned in criminal and like proceedings, and with Part VI—Miscellaneous and General. They do not involve any significant changes in principle or policy and are consistent with the other provisions of the Act. With the exception of the amendments to section 46A and section 29A, the amendments relate to the operations

of the Mental Health Tribunal and the patient review tribunals. The amended section 29A simply expands the definition of a simple offence to include a regulatory offence.

The Mental Health Tribunal, as expected, has proved highly successful in determining matters of criminal responsibility, fitness for trial and as an appeal body from the patient review tribunals. The operations of the Mental Health Tribunal have not in any way impeded or prejudiced a person's right to trial.

As at 17 February 1987, the Mental Health Tribunal had received 119 references and heard 94 cases. The references were made by the director of psychiatric services, the Director of Prosecutions, a judge of the District Court, the Public Defender, legal representatives, patients, and appeals from the patient review tribunals.

The findings of the Mental Health Tribunal have been as follows:—

Unsoundness of mind . . . . .	53
Diminished responsibility and fit for trial . . . . .	4
Not of unsound mind and fit for trial . . . . .	12
Facts in dispute and fit for trial . . . . .	10
Struck out for want of jurisdiction . . . . .	5
Appeals from patient review tribunals . . . . .	5
Leave granted to withdraw reference . . . . .	1
Other . . . . .	4

The good range of sources of referral and the multiplicity of findings of the Mental Health Tribunal clearly indicate its acceptance by the legal and medical professions and the wider community.

The proposed amendments to section 33 and section 69A deal with the procedures of the Mental Health Tribunal and the nature of proceedings before the Mental Health Tribunal respectively. The amendment of section 33 is necessary to define the facts more clearly. It was always intended, as indicated by the general tenor of the legislation and other provisions of the Act, that "the facts", as referred to in this section, should mean the facts of, or connected with, the alleged offence or of the involvement therein of the person in question. The Mental Health Tribunal will not proceed if there is reasonable doubt as to whether the person charged actually committed the offence. To date the Mental Health Tribunal has found that the facts were in dispute in 10 cases. Of course, these were the facts of the alleged offence.

The major purpose of the Mental Health Tribunal is to proceed, if the facts of the alleged offence are not in dispute, to determine the mental state of the person at the time of the alleged offence and at the time of hearing. This is the central task in assessing criminal responsibility. It can do so without denying a person's right to trial. As a judicial tribunal with the powers of a commission of inquiry, it can conduct wide and deep inquiry, thereby ensuring that all of the required available evidence can be considered in determining a person's mental state. If the person, who is always entitled to proper legal representation, is dissatisfied with this process or the outcome, he or she can elect to go to trial. The matter of his or her mental state can then be considered during the trial.

In the recent decision by the Court of Criminal Appeal in the case of House, which was appealed from the Mental Health Tribunal, the need for a more clear definition of the facts was indicated. This amendment to section 33 will achieve the necessary clarification.

The amendment to section 69A also involves a clarification of definition. This ensures that, unless otherwise determined by the Mental Health Tribunal, the oral evidence of witnesses shall be sworn. The amendment does not limit its powers as a commission of inquiry. Again, in the House case, the decision by the Court of Criminal

Appeal pointed to the need for clarification of this matter, and this is achieved by the amendment.

It must be further emphasised that the amended provisions of the Mental Health Services Act 1974-1984 will not impede or prejudice the right of a person appearing before the Mental Health Tribunal, or the Court of Criminal Appeal, to proceed to trial. Similarly, the right of appeal to the Court of Criminal Appeal from the Mental Health Tribunal is well preserved. There can be no denial of justice.

During the period 1 July 1985 to 31 January 1987, the five patient review tribunals heard 595 applications and referrals throughout Queensland. In accordance with the provisions of the Mental Health Services Act 1974-1984, these tribunals, which are chaired by a judge of the District Court, have memberships drawn from the health professions and the wider community. The operations of these tribunals constitute a strong safeguard of the rights of patients subject to the provisions of the Act.

The minor amendment to section 36 deals with the review of a patient detained as a restricted patient under Part IV of the Act. To avoid any possible confusion, the amendment replaces the term "detained" with the words "liable to be detained". The use of "liable to be detained" covers the situations of actual detention and formal leave from hospital. A patient who is liable to be detained is detained unless he or she has been formally granted leave in the prescribed manner.

Therefore, this amendment to section 36 guarantees that there can be no doubt as to the authority and responsibility of the patient review tribunals with regard to those patients who are liable to detention as restricted patients under Part IV of the Mental Health Services Act 1974-1984.

The amendment to the Mental Health Services Act 1974-1984, which inserts the new section 46A, is designed to improve the management and treatment options of those sex offenders detained in custody under section 18 of the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1945, and to strengthen the safeguards afforded to the community in the Act. These persons have been found, by a Supreme Court judge, to be incapable of exercising proper control over their sexual instincts. At present, on the advice of two medical practitioners, such persons can be released from their places of detention by the Governor in Council. There is no provision for an intermediate stage.

The amendment, by the insertion of the new section 46A, allows the Governor in Council to order for these persons a trial of closely monitored and supervised leave in the community prior to final release or discharge. This can be done only on the recommendation of two medical specialists in psychiatry, who are nominated by the director of psychiatric services. The amended provision will permit the Governor in Council to determine that, if there is any hint of problem behaviour, the police can return the person to hospital or gaol immediately. This is a significant safeguard for the community. It will not result in the untimely early release on leave of these sex offenders.

Although the proposed new section 46A is similar to the former section 39 of the Mental Health Act 1974, it differs from it in that it requires the recommendation of two psychiatrists rather than two medical practitioners. Obviously, it is better to have the opinions of the more appropriately qualified medical specialists in psychiatry.

During the last 12 months, officers of the division of psychiatric services have examined possible legislative alternatives to this amendment, but, to date, none have been found to be practicable.

It is considered that the amendments outlined in this Bill will advantage the provision of mental health services on a Statewide basis and will be of benefit to patients and the community generally.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr McElligott, adjourned.

**MEDICAL AND PARAMEDICAL (AMENDMENT OF INSPECTORIAL AND  
AUDIT PROVISIONS) BILL**

**Hon. M. J. AHERN** (Landsborough—Minister for Health and Environment) (3.55 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

“That leave be granted to bring in a Bill to amend the Medical Act and Other Acts (Administration) Act 1966-1980, the Chiropodists Act 1969-1984, the Chiropractic Manipulative Therapists Act 1979-1984, the Dental Act 1971-1984, the Medical Act 1939-1984, the Nursing Act 1976-1984, the Occupational Therapists Act 1979-1984, the Optometrists Act 1974-1984, the Pharmacy Act 1976-1984, the Psychologists Act 1977-1984 and the Speech Therapists Act 1979-1984 each in certain particulars.”

Motion agreed to.

**First Reading**

Bill presented and, on motion of Mr Ahern, read a first time.

**Second Reading**

**Hon. M. J. AHERN** (Landsborough—Minister for Health and Environment) (3.57 p.m.): I move—

“That the Bill be now read a second time.”

This Bill has been introduced for the purpose of amending the following Acts in certain particulars—

- Medical Act and Other Acts (Administration) Act
- Chiropodists Act
- Chiropractic Manipulative Therapists Act
- Dental Act
- Medical Act
- Nursing Act
- Occupational Therapists Act
- Optometrists Act
- Pharmacy Act
- Psychologists Act
- Speech Therapists Act.

The Auditor-General has advised that certain audit, accounting and annual report provisions contained in the foregoing Acts are not in line with current day audit requirements and are in need of review.

In order to comply with the Auditor-General's requirements, it will be necessary to amend the foregoing Acts in certain particulars. Firstly, it is proposed to amend the Medical Act and Other Acts (Administration) Act to incorporate revised audit, accounting and annual report provisions. The existing section 11 of the Act will be repealed and a new section included which provides for the Auditor-General to audit the accounts of each professional board set out in section 4 of the Act and to exercise all the powers and authorities conferred on him by the Financial Administration and Audit Act 1977-1985. It will be evident that certain other statutory requirements have also been provided for in this section in order to comply with present-day audit requirements.

Clause 6 of the Bill includes two new sections in the Act relative to annual statements of account and annual report. These new sections will require the various boards to prepare annual statements of account and annual reports in accordance with the requirements set out in this Bill.

A number of amendments to the various individual registration board Acts will also be required to ensure that the provisions contained in the Medical Act and Other Acts (Administration) Act in relation to audit, annual statements of account and annual report apply to these Acts. In this regard, it will be noted that clauses 12 to 31 inclusive make provision for these amendments.

In addition to the foregoing proposals, it has been necessary to review the provisions regarding the powers of inspectors included in the Medical Act and Other Acts (Administration) Act, particularly in the light of the outcome of recent court proceedings.

The present provisions contained in the Medical Act and Other Acts (Administration) Act authorise inspectors to enter premises to inspect and examine any equipment or appliance, but no power is given to inspect books and records and to remove such items to be used in evidence in proceedings for the contravention of a relevant Act. Legal advice has indicated that this is a deficiency in the Act which should be amended to enable inspectors to obtain important evidence relating to the commission of an offence.

In an effort to rectify this deficiency, an amendment has been included in clause 8 of the Bill to enable an inspector to examine, seize, remove and detain any equipment, appliance, books, letters, accounts, records, cards or other writings that he believes will assist in the prosecution of an offender for contravention of the Act. Provision has also been made which will require a person to produce to an inspector such documentation on request.

Honourable members will note that in clause 9 suitable provision has been made for the detention and disposal of things seized by an inspector in the course of his duty. The section provides for the normal custodian of the records to receive a copy of anything seized and describes in clear terms the appropriate action to be taken when an item has been detained or, on the other hand, is ready for disposal.

Proposed new section 14B includes provision in relation to the preservation of confidentiality by members of the board and any other person associated with the administration of the relevant Act. Contravention of this section will result in a fine not exceeding \$500.

A number of minor machinery amendments have also been included in the Bill.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr McElligott, adjourned.

### CLEAN AIR ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. M. J. AHERN (Landsborough—Minister for Health and Environment) (4.01 p.m.), by leave, without notice, I move—

“That leave be granted to bring in a Bill to amend the Clean Air Act 1963-1984 in certain particulars.”

Motion agreed to.

#### First Reading

Bill presented and, on motion of Mr Ahern, read a first time.

#### Second Reading

Hon. M. J. AHERN (Landsborough—Minister for Health and Environment) (4.02 p.m.): I move—

“That the Bill be now read a second time.”

In introducing this Bill, I refer the House, in particular, firstly to two changes that are proposed to the Clean Air Act.

The licence year, which currently ends on 30 June, is proposed, in accordance with the first amendment, to be changed to end on 31 March. This change in expiry date is

intended to overcome an existing problem where many licence fees are not received until early July. The amendment, whilst ensuring that all fees are collected within the current financial year, will ease administrative problems considerably. A pro rata adjustment will be made in the licence fees falling due after the new expiry date initially becomes effective.

The second change in the Bill that I draw to the notice of the House is an amendment that decreases the number of Air Pollution Council members required for a quorum from five to four. As a consequence of the existing Council's having a total of seven members, instances have occurred when it has been difficult to find a suitable time to convene a meeting attended by a sufficient number of members. The reduction of one in the required number will ease that difficulty.

However, I should like to take this opportunity to speak on a serious air pollution matter and to advise the House of the progress being made in attempting to resolve the problem. For a considerable time my department has received complaints of odours caused by the operations of a company at Murarrie, A. J. Bush and Sons, which operates a contract rendering operation wherein various animal residues—bones, fat, scrap meat, chicken feathers, blood and offal—are rendered to produce tallow and meal. The processing of those residues also renders an essential service because the offal, feathers and other animal by-products could not simply be dumped. To do so would create a huge health hazard, together with a smell that would extend over a great distance.

The plant commenced its operations in 1971, when the area was essentially a Noxious and Hazardous Industry zone. At first, the company operated in a comparatively small way, with only a few houses situated nearby. Later, however, the operation increased significantly in volume, as did the number of residences located close to the plant.

Because of the substantial increase in the intake from abattoirs over relatively recent periods of time, the plant, which originally was not designed to handle such volumes—now upwards of 300 tonnes a day—is virtually processing material from the entire south-east corner of the State.

Undoubtedly, the Brisbane City Council made planning errors in the siting of that plant and in allowing the development of housing nearby. With an industrial works of this type, not only should the best possible means of odour control be employed but also a permanent buffer of substantial proportions should be maintained between the works and residential developments. The buffer zone provided by the Brisbane City Council around the rendering plant is totally inadequate.

Therefore, the people of Brisbane have inherited a very serious problem. On the one hand, they have an industry fulfilling an essential community function; on the other, a very serious odour problem troubles the community. In recent times there has been a flood of protests against the smell, not only from residents of Murarrie and Tingalpa but also from suburbs much further away. There is no doubt in my mind that those complaints were valid. Conditions at the factory are definitely unacceptable, and immediate steps have had to be taken to overcome the problem.

In taking appropriate action towards solving the problem, I have had several meetings with the company management, together with senior Health Department and air pollution control officers. I have recently made a personal inspection of the plant.

Presently, the company is in the course of completing repairs and modifications to the plant, the requirements for which I have laid down. The company has given an assurance that other action will be undertaken to reduce the odours emanating from the plant. The company has stated that a reduction of 90 to 95 per cent in the present odour levels would be achieved by a firm deadline date, which I have set for the end of April this year. If that deadline is not met, I will have no hesitation in initiating prosecution proceedings.

In considering the longer term, I intend making a personal call on the Sydney-based senior management of A. J. Bush as soon as practicable to discuss the company's long-term plans in this regard.

The company has been requested to consider relocating the plant in an area away from residential suburbs. Discussions would encompass a proposal that, with assistance from this Government, a new high-technology plant be established on an alternative site. Such relocation would service the offal and other waste-rendering needs of A. J. Bush and similar companies, thus largely negating the problems facing noxious industries and the community generally.

In conclusion, I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Comben, adjourned.

### UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES (HIGHER EDUCATION ADMINISTRATION CHARGES) BILL

**Hon. L. W. POWELL** (Isis—Minister for Education) (4.06 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

“That leave be granted to bring in a Bill to amend the University of Queensland Act 1965-1984 and the Griffith University Act 1971-1984 each in a certain particular and to amend the James Cook University of North Queensland Act 1970-1984 and the Education Act 1964-1984 each in certain particulars and for other purposes.”

Motion agreed to.

#### First Reading

Bill presented and, on motion of Mr Powell, read a first time.

#### Second Reading

**Hon. L. W. POWELL** (Isis—Minister for Education) (4.07 p.m.): I move—

“That the Bill be now read a second time.”

Honourable members, particularly those opposite, will be aware that the Federal Labor Government has imposed upon tertiary students in Australia a fee, which, in a pathetic attempt at window-dressing, it has called the “higher education administration charge”. By doing so, the Commonwealth has contravened the spirit, if not the letter, of the 1973 agreement with the States that tertiary students should not be subject to fees, other than certain basic charges such as student association charges.

All honourable members will be aware of the furore in Canberra a few years ago when the Government's so-called financial experts, Messrs Keating and Walsh, sought to reintroduce tertiary fees. The response at that time caused them to withdraw from the battle, not so much to lick their wounds but, as is now known, to plan another angle of attack. They were determined that tertiary students were going to be hit in their meagre pockets somehow and they had to contrive a means of hitting them.

A new Federal tax—a tax on learning—euphemistically entitled the higher education administration charge—has now emerged. By using the term “charge” instead of the word “fee”, Mr Hawke and his fellow tax-collectors seek to avoid any suggestion that they are contravening the 1973 agreement. Technically they may be correct, hence the need for this Bill. Morally, they and the honourable members opposite well know that, whatever term is used, this is a tertiary education fee. It is the thin end of the wedge. Having established it in legislation, and having forced us to establish it in ours, the Federal Government can begin to increase it as it pleases. It is \$250 now. Who knows what it will be after the next Federal Budget?

The term “administration charge” is designed to mislead the people of Queensland by suggesting that it covers the administration costs associated with enrolling in higher education courses. This is not the case. The Federal Government has discounted the

per capita grant paid to each university and college of advanced education to ensure that either their tax is collected or the higher education institutions will suffer a severe financial burden.

Furthermore, the burden of this tax falls heaviest on the shoulders of the very students who by far often have to make the greatest sacrifices to obtain a higher education—part-time and, in particular, external students. These students, who often study only one subject per year, will pay \$250 per subject. This will remove any remaining incentive to many of these students to overcome the numerous hardships associated with studying while trying to raise a family; while establishing a career; and while attempting to overcome the disadvantages of being remote from a higher education institution.

I hope that honourable members opposite have received but a fraction of the calls my office has received from worried and angry students. I hope that Mr Hawke, Mr Keating, Senator Walsh and Senator Ryan have been besieged with calls and mail. I hope that the reaction to their betrayal of tertiary students causes them to reflect and to be big enough to admit that they have made a mistake and that they should withdraw this tax. Mr Hawke talks of governing by consensus but uses consensus only when it suits him.

Because of the technicalities flowing from the Federal Government's use of the term "Higher Education Administration Charge" in its amendment of the States Grants (Tertiary Education Assistance) Act 1984, it is necessary for the Queensland Government to amend its legislation covering the universities, colleges of advanced education and colleges of TAFE to enable those institutions to seek subordinate legislation to enable them to collect the charge.

Honourable members should know that the Queensland Government sought to mount a High Court challenge to the Commonwealth legislation but reluctantly had to accept legal advice from senior counsel that such a challenge was unlikely to succeed. Furthermore, the Federal Government advised that any attempt to prevent the collection of this fee would result in Queensland's higher education institutions being deprived of an amount equivalent to that which would have been collected as an administration charge. That would have resulted in a significant reduction in the number of students offered places in Queensland higher education institutions this year—at a time when Queenslanders receive 6 000 fewer places, on a per capita basis, than the national average.

It is usually with much pleasure that I introduce legislation into this Parliament, as such legislation invariably is of great benefit to the people of Queensland. Neither I, nor the higher education students of Queensland, will gain any pleasure from this legislation.

Reluctantly, but accepting the reality of the situation, I introduce this legislation to enable the charge to be collected. However, I look forward to the day when I am proposing to this House that this legislation be repealed, it being no longer necessary.

Because the James Cook University of North Queensland Act is being amended, the opportunity is being taken to insert additional amendments to enable the university to frame a statute covering patents and inventions and to correct a minor defect in the Act.

Clauses 1 and 2 cite the short title of the Bill and provide for commencement of the various provisions by proclamation. This provision has been inserted to give the State a certain reserve power in the light of the apparent reluctance of at least one tertiary institution to comply with the State Government's requirements. Proclamation of a provision applying to a particular institution or class of institution could be withheld if necessary. The present indications are that this will not be necessary and the Act can probably be proclaimed as a whole immediately after assent.

Clause 3 sets out the various sections of the Acts to be amended to provide for the change.

Clauses 4 and 5 provide for a statute-making power relating to the charge to be inserted in the relevant section of the University of Queensland Act.

Clauses 6 and 7 provide for a statute-making power relating to the charge to be inserted in the relevant section of the Griffith University Act.

Clause 8 covers a citation of the James Cook University of North Queensland Act.

Clause 9 provides for a machinery amendment to section 8 of the James Cook University of North Queensland Act. The Act was amended in 1981 and 1983 to provide for two new categories of representation on the Council. A further machinery amendment to the Act in the 1983 legislation should have referred to the relevant paragraphs “(ea)” and “(fa)” but the reference was omitted. No action has been taken or has been necessary under these paragraphs, but the defect should be repaired.

Clause 10 provides for a statute heading in the James Cook University of North Queensland Act to cover the charge and, at the request of the university, also provides for a statute heading to cover inventions and patents.

Clauses 11, 12 and 13 provide for headings for rules, in respect of colleges of TAFE—clause 12—and for by-laws, in respect of colleges of advanced education—clause 13—to enable the charge to be collected by those institutions.

Clauses 14 and 15 are intended to ensure that a student does not have to pay the charge twice in an academic year. The intention is to cover those students who nominate for a number of different courses at different institutions each year and may commence a course of lower preference and then receive admission to a course of higher preference at another institution. The Government does not believe a student should have to pay the higher education administration charge twice in these circumstances. The Government is confident that the universities and colleges can make adequate arrangements to ensure that each is fairly treated as far as apportionment of the charge is concerned.

It is with great reluctance that I commend the Bill.

Debate, on motion of Mr Underwood, adjourned.

The House adjourned at 4.16 p.m.