

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**WEDNESDAY, 2 DECEMBER 1987**

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QUEENSLAND



# Parliamentary Debates

[HANSARD]

## Legislative Assembly

FIRST SESSION OF THE FORTY-FIFTH PARLIAMENT—continued

(Third Period)

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WEDNESDAY, 2 DECEMBER 1987

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Under the provisions of the motion for special adjournment agreed to by the House on 20 November 1987, the House met at 10 a.m.

THE CLERK OF THE PARLIAMENT (Mr A. R. Woodward) took the chair.

### VACANCY IN OFFICE OF SPEAKER

The CLERK: Honourable members, I have to inform the House that I have received the following letter from the Honourable K. R. Lingard, MLA—

“Speaker’s Room  
24th Nov. 1987.

Clerk of Parliament,  
Parliament House,  
Brisbane.

Dear Sir,

I hereby tender my resignation as Speaker of the Queensland Legislative Assembly as from midnight 24th Nov. 1987.

Yours sincerely,  
Kev Lingard”

In accordance with the provisions of Standing Order No. 9, I have to report that by reason of such resignation a vacancy exists in the office of Speaker. I might remind members that all nominations to this will have to be seconded. I now call for nominations.

### ELECTION OF SPEAKER

**Hon. M. J. AHERN** (Landsborough—Premier) (10.01 a.m.): I move—

“That Mr Lionel William Powell do take the chair of the House as Speaker.”

The job of Speaker is onerous. He is in effect the true guardian of the parliamentary system. He must be all things to all people—the arbitrator, the mediator, the conciliator. It is not possible to hold such a position in a Parliament now dedicated to the Westminster system and remain a friend to all. He must place principle above personality. He must place convention above the whim or fantasies of any individual member. He must place the time-honoured rules of the parliamentary institution above all else. He must be fair yet firm. He must be honest, not only to himself but also to the very privileged position he holds.

Mr Powell has been a member of Parliament since December 1974, representing the electorate of Isis, and since 1982 has been Minister for Education. Earlier this year he was also appointed Leader of the House in this Parliament, a position that will hold him in good stead as Speaker. I have no doubt that, as a former schoolteacher, he will bring the necessary discipline to this place.

I can think of no better candidate to respect this position than Lionel William Powell, and therefore I urge all members to support his nomination.

**Hon. W. A. M. GUNN** (Somerset—Deputy Premier) (10.02 a.m.): It gives me the greatest of pleasure to second the Premier's nomination of Mr Lin Powell as Speaker.

The Speaker's role is an important though very difficult one. We should all ensure that the proceedings here are conducted in the best parliamentary traditions. The Speaker has to ensure that this is so. The standing of Parliament as assessed by the community at large is based largely on the Speaker's performance. Queensland was well served in this role by the former Speaker, Mr Kev Lingard, and I am sure that Mr Powell, as a former Leader of the House, will be a success in the position. He certainly was the best Leader of the House that I have ever known in my 16 years in Parliament.

As the Premier has outlined, the Speaker's role is a demanding one. He must be fair to all and bring decorum to the House while doing so. Mr Powell has been a member since December 1974. I believe he is well equipped with knowledge and experience to fulfil the requirements of Speaker. I commend Mr Powell's nomination to this House.

**Mr WARBURTON** (Sandgate—Leader of the Opposition) (10.03 a.m.): We have just heard from the National Party Ministry—Mr Ahern and Mr Gunn. It is the Opposition's intention to nominate one of our number for the position of Speaker of this House. However, it is important initially that a number of very important things be said and that we make some comment about the events of recent times.

On 10 November, 22 days ago, I moved a want of confidence motion in the then Premier of this State, Sir Johannes Bjelke-Petersen. In the debate that ensued I outlined the reason why Sir Joh should go. At that time I said the things that today—only 22 days later—the National Party hypocrites on that side of the House are now themselves saying. In 22 days this National Party's world has turned completely upside down.

In the want of confidence debate only 22 days ago, this House heard the recycled Deputy Premier of this State and Mr Hinze heap praise upon Bjelke-Petersen. Today those two gentlemen are out publicly denigrating the very man whom they praised only 22 days ago. Mr Hinze appealed to National Party members to rally round Bjelke-Petersen and give him support.

The Government Whip, Mr FitzGerald, followed in the debate. Let us hear what he had to say only 22 days ago. He said that the Premier—of course, that is Mr Bjelke-Petersen—was launching Queensland towards the twenty-first century. As I said yesterday, he has certainly had us in orbit for quite some weeks. Mr FitzGerald said that the then Premier was launching us towards the twenty-first century. He also said about Bjelke-Petersen that he was the leader of a vibrant party.

Then there was the very emotional appeal from Mr Powell, who said in his concluding remarks—

“No decent member of this Parliament will not vote on this motion and no decent member of this Parliament will vote for this motion tonight.”

In saying that, he was saying that no decent member would support the want of confidence motion in the then Premier. Mr Powell continued—

“In the interests of decency, I ask the Parliament of Queensland to stand firm behind the Premier, who stands firm for Queensland, and vote firmly against this motion.”

So all of the decent National Party members in the Queensland Parliament responded to Mr Powell's very valiant call on that day. When the vote was taken only 22 short days ago, in bulk the National Party members on that side of the House gave their unequivocal, their devoted and their decent support for Bjelke-Petersen.

On that particular occasion, naturally the Labor Opposition voted for the want of confidence motion. Mr Powell's not so decent Liberal colleagues in the House stood outside the bar of the House, for reasons that only Liberals can explain, or attempt to explain. However, today Mr Powell, who carried the day for Bjelke-Petersen only 22 days ago and who fought tooth and nail against the Ahern regime and its sabotage of Bjelke-Petersen, evidently is prepared to accept nomination as Speaker of the Parliament with an Ahern Government at the helm. They are extraordinary circumstances.

Only 12 days ago, on Friday, 20 November, the then Premier sang the praises of the then Speaker, Mr Lingard, who was described on that occasion as a Speaker who carried out his duties with great credit and great distinction. That was all said to the “Hear, hears” of the National Party members. But suddenly what happened? Mr Lingard became a Minister in the Bjelke-Petersen Government. Now he is not a Minister; he is certainly not the Speaker; and he has no damned chance of becoming Speaker again while the Ahern camp is in control of the National Party.

Is it any wonder that the National Party Government in Queensland, which sits opposite unchanged except for one notable absentee, has brought complete discredit upon our State? Is it any wonder that Queenslanders have now given the thumbs down to this National Party?

At this stage not even 20 per cent of the voters in our State think that the National Party is worth while worrying about. Let me say to all honourable members very, very clearly: no new broom, irrespective of the thickness of the gloss—

**Mr Ahern:** You admit to that.

**Mr WARBURTON:** Before the member for Landsborough became the Premier, he used to sit in the House in a docile fashion. Today, he is interjecting. I do not know if this is the new, tough image. The Premier used to sit there quietly and complacently.

As I was saying, irrespective of the thickness of that gloss, or that veneer that he is painted with at the moment, the trust of the people of this State in his Government has gone.

This is a very strange yet historic special sitting of what I can only describe as a highly unusual Parliament. This morning, we as members must elect our second Speaker of a Parliament that is just into the second year of its present three-year term. Since Parliament last sat on 18 November, our previous Speaker, who still sits in this Chamber

today as a member, has, I am afraid, perished politically, swimming ambitiously towards that sunken flagship of the National Party in this State.

I repeat that this sitting today is historic. It is the first sitting in 40 years without the previous Premier and National Party member for Barambah, who, as everyone knows, was politically decapitated yesterday evening. It is the first sitting in 40 years without this reactionary old conservative hero whom the National Party wanted only months ago to make its Prime Minister of Australia but whom it has now dumped and savaged like a pack of hungry dogs. The words that I am uttering today reflect the perception out in the community. This is the first sitting at which the member for Landsborough is recognised as the new Premier of this State, even though until Tuesday, I understand, he has no Cabinet beyond Mr Gunn, his deputy.

I presume that honourable members are to be asked to give their blind blessing to this incomplete Government, even though this Parliament will adjourn again before it is known who holds the portfolios. This sitting was called reluctantly on Monday—

**Mr Ahern:** We brought it forward.

**Mr WARBURTON:** For Heaven's sake, Mr Premier, do not sit there and tell deliberate lies.

The Premier made a mess of the timing. He raced out to grandstand. It was up to the Acting Speaker, Mr Row, to rebuff the Premier and put him in his place and tell him quite frankly that he could not handle the simplest of tasks. So honourable members met today, at 10 o'clock, quite properly in accordance with the resolution on the last sitting day of Parliament. The Premier messed it up, because the decision that Cabinet made, which was endorsed by him and which he pursued, was that the Parliament should meet at 2.30 this afternoon. The Premier messed up the simplest of tasks. So his score has gone down slightly even at this particular stage.

There is a real story to be told here today. What we have is a weak, devious and disloyal National Party that still demands Government as its divine right on a minority 39 per cent vote, and a National Party that wanted first the Governor and then this Parliament to finish off its very clumsy political dirty work.

The ex-Premier, Bjelke-Petersen, said on television last night that he is glad to be free of these disloyal Nationals, adding that they do not have the mandate that he won 12 months ago—

**Mr Ahern:** Are you defending him now?

**Mr WARBURTON:** The Premier amazes me. He sits there and denigrates the ex-Premier. He has cast him aside. I repeat that 22 days ago the present Premier was in this Chamber giving the ex-Premier his unequivocal, loyal support. The members of the National Party are a mob of traitors—

**Mr Ahern:** Quote me in debate.

**Mr WARBURTON:** The Premier is a traitor to Petersen. He undermined him. It was the Premier who undermined the ex-Premier of this State. That is why 14 or 15 of the Premier's own National Party members in Landsborough have deserted the ship and have resigned from the Landsborough branch.

Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen was a leader who wrecked, without sympathy, the lives of too many decent Queenslanders for short-term political ends, and he relied for this power on a rigged electoral system that is grossly offensive to fundamental democratic rights. There is silence from Mr Ahern on this matter. Few tears will be shed for the end of a career that strayed on far too long; but it must be said in fairness that Sir Joh alone is not to blame for all of those sins over the past 19 years that the National Party embraced but now pretends to disown and forget.

The new Premier, the honourable member for Landsborough, was there with him in this Parliament from the start of his reign, and so was the Minister for Racing, Mr

Hinze. Sir Joh's sins are the sins of his whole ex-Cabinet, the members of which are now cringing before their new god to hold on to their ministerial perks, or, should I say, their expense accounts. Mr Ahern was there with Sir Joh as he tried, as far back as 1969, to drill the Great Barrier Reef, and he was there again with him when he attempted to sand-mine the beautiful coloured sands of Cooloola. I did not hear the voice of Ahern speaking up against that decision. I can never forgive him for the fact that he was there with that old tyrant when he sacked 1 000 SEQEB families without worrying——

**Government members interjected.**

**Mr WARBURTON:** That is typical. The laughter and guffaws are indicative of the members of the National Party, and Ahern laughs along with them. He does not give a damn about the 1 000 families, and at that time he did not worry for a second about what would happen to those families. He did not worry for a second about their superannuation and entitlements which were denied to them. He is prepared to go out and dangle a bunch of carrots in front of Bjelke-Petersen and, only a couple of nights ago, he and his crew were prepared to stoop to the lowest possible depths in order to buy Sir Joh out. They are the Aherns of today.

Sometimes time tends to dim our memories of such political alliances that were mutually convenient before last week. I repeat—alliances that were mutually convenient only a week ago. The new Premier of Queensland, the honourable member for Landsborough, was once again at Sir Joh's side through the 1971 state of emergency to protect South African apartheid. I have never heard Mr Ahern complain once about the string of Bjelke-Petersen gerrymanders from 1971 onwards. In fact, Mr Ahern now claims this crooked electoral philosophy of his predecessor as his very own new-look policy for Queensland's future political democracy.

**Government members interjected.**

**Mr WARBURTON:** I know it hurts the members of the National Party to remind them of this, but Mr Ahern was there the whole time——

**Mr Ahern:** Never mind about that. Tell me about Goss.

**Mr WARBURTON:** Mr Ahern should listen to this one. He and many of the people beside him were there the whole time as crime and corruption, now exposed by the Fitzgerald inquiry, grew and profited under the police management of all his predecessor's National Party Governments.

This morning I ask in this Chamber: did Mr Ahern ever question or complain as evidence that was provided publicly of such frightening illegalities piled up conclusively in mountainous proportions to the satisfaction of everyone except his own Government?

The Opposition welcomes this Parliament back, but I repeat that the next step should be an early election so that Queenslanders themselves can judge the ghastly record of the National Party.

The new Premier, as a partner so schooled in the Sir Joh mould, is no longer "Young Mike"; he is not an overnight conservative dry, as he wants Queensland to believe. Nothing has really changed in the last 24 hours from "Old Joh" to "Middle-aged Mike".

The new Premier was there with the ancient Sir Joh through the Lindeman Island scandal. Honourable members can recall that well, but the people should be reminded of it. The new Premier was there through the Swiss loan affair; he was there in the Patrick Field Senate fiasco; he was there for the hydrogen car and the Milan Brych farces; and he was there standing beside Sir Joh leading the fight for the Lytton chlorine plant. I can well remember Mr Ahern standing up in this House, in response to a question asked by me, saying that the Lytton chlorine plant would be zero risk. I heard him say that. That was his conviction, but he was wrong. He went against public opinion

and he went against the public interest. Some months ago he stood in this House and he supported openly and publicly the public funding of Ministers' defamation actions. The Opposition wants to know what he is going to do about it.

This year, the new Premier was there backing Sir Joh as our next Prime Minister of Australia; there again in June welcoming Sir Joh back to Queensland after that national humiliation; there once more in this Parliament on 10 November to pledge him his total confidence; and he was, I add, there again with Sir Joh and Sparkes, I have no doubt, supporting them on the John Stone flat-tax proposals.

As I said earlier, I hold no brief for an ex-Premier who has promoted such dreadful inequalities and horrific injustices in our State as Sir Joh has done. It is absolutely sickening to see these spineless creatures opposite, who have crawled into his shadow from the day that they were first nominated for this Parliament, now sitting there trying to feed off his bones. That is what they are doing. These people are clawing each other aside to join in Sir Joh's political mutilation by a National Party that still names its Spring Hill bunker, and its infamous slush fund that was developed some years ago, after Sir Johannes Bjelke-Petersen.

The Opposition is very conscious of the significance of this rare occasion as a long, often unhappy chapter closes in Queensland and a new uncertain one begins. Members of the Opposition are very conscious that throughout the State this morning Queenslanders are looking to this very special sitting of Parliament for a sign that they are really free from the past and that genuine hope exists for a brighter and a fairer future.

On behalf of the Opposition, I can say clearly that there is a wonderful opportunity before us all for a much better Queensland, provided that our people as a whole have that courage and that determination to reach for it together. This morning, as we debate the election of a new Speaker, it is most important that we address ourselves more broadly to the reform of this Parliament itself—the reform of this Parliament, which, in the eyes of so many, has become restrictive and completely irrelevant. The Opposition says that proper reform of the parliamentary system means far more than simply greater accountability and upgraded procedures in the Legislative Assembly. Important as these matters are, true reform, if it is to meet the demands and prayers of the Queensland majority, must—I repeat “must”—start from the time Parliament is actually elected.

I want to make clear and reiterate that there is no doubt what a Labor Government's first priority would be. For the information of Mr Ahern, I point out that, amongst its first priorities, a Labor Government would introduce a fair and equal voting system in Queensland that would be based firmly on the concept of one vote, one value. That fair and equal electoral system would be administered—and must be administered—by an electoral commission that would be seen to be scrupulously impartial and scrupulously independent.

The system of electing Parliaments and, through them, Governments in Queensland must be rescued from the politicians—from the personal secrecy of the Premier and the Cabinet. It remains to be seen what Mr Ahern will do. We in the Labor Party certainly would be appointing as soon as possible an effective all-party public accounts committee.

**Mr Gunn:** Ha, ha!

**Mr WARBURTON:** Mr Gunn laughs. I wonder what Mr Ahern's attitude will be.

On approximately four or five occasions during the last four or five years, Mr Ahern voted against the establishment of a public accounts committee. In view of Mr Gunn's outrageous interjections, Mr Ahern will have some problems convincing him of the accountability that Mr Ahern is flushing forward with at this particular time.

I conclude my remarks on this point: it is worth mentioning that this day, 2 December, which brings an end to the last Bjelke-Petersen Government, is also—as some honourable members would be aware—the 15th anniversary of the first Whitlam Australian Government, which past Premier Bjelke-Petersen did so much—often insanely—to destroy. Coincidentally, under circumstances different from those that exist here today,

initially that Government had a two-Minister Cabinet. That situation was scorned, ridiculed and denigrated——

**Government members:** Four weeks.

**Mr WARBURTON:** I repeat: that situation was scorned, ridiculed and denigrated at the time by the very same people who bring a two-man Ministry to this House today.

Mr Clerk, it is my pleasure to nominate one of our number for the position of Speaker. The person whom I am about to nominate is one of the Temporary Chairmen of Committees.

**Mr Austin:** Has he got good credentials?

**Mr WARBURTON:** Yes. In fact, he has better credentials than the person whom the Government has nominated.

The person whom I am about to nominate has been elected to the Printing Committee and the Refreshment Rooms Committee by the Parliament as a whole. He is a member of the Labor Party's public accounts committee. He entered this Parliament in 1983, and has extensive experience in the role of Temporary Chairman of Committees. He also has extensive knowledge of the Rules and Standing Orders that are adopted by this Legislative Assembly.

It is my delight to nominate Mr Clement Bernard Campbell.

**Government members interjected.**

**Mr R. J. GIBBS (Wolston) (10.30 a.m.):** Well may the National Party make light of the nomination of my colleague Mr Campbell, because today obviously is a day of some joviality. It is certainly a day of great relief to the members of the Opposition—the day that Johannes Bjelke-Petersen has departed this Parliament. One can understand their relief and light-heartedness at losing such an abhorrent person from the scene of Queensland politics. However, I assure them that in the months ahead, under the person whom they have elected as their Premier, honourable members will see the further disintegration of the National Party. Contrary to the opinion expressed publicly by some National Party members that it will bring that party together, I state that it will have the exact opposite effect on them.

I wish to make a comment today about the departed Premier. I for one—and I know that I can speak on behalf of all my colleagues—wish to place on record that, if that man had come on to the floor of the Parliament today, no vile, rotten deal that he may have attempted to contrive through that gangrenous, rotten person Sir Edward Lyons putting out enticements to my party would have made any person on this side of the House join in a motion of support for that departed gentleman.

Although Mr Bjelke-Petersen is away from the scene, I still see on the Government benches the same group of people who were there some weeks ago. I look at the front bench of the National Party and comment that, if those members joined hands and concentrated hard, they could make contact with the living.

When I look opposite, I see the same rotteness and corruption. I make the first challenge to the new Premier today to prove his words when he speaks of his vision of excellence for Queensland. Today, let us start off the vision of excellence for Queensland with a challenge from me to him to relieve the person who has just been appointed as the new Commissioner of Housing in Queensland, Mr Ferris, who is a National Party appointee, a National Party financial member and a former clerk in the Mines Department who was seconded as the personal secretary of Ivan Gibbs as the Minister for Works and Housing. At the first opportunity, that obscure, non-qualified person was suddenly appointed as the new Commissioner of Housing in Queensland. My challenge to the new Premier is that his credentials are on the line. His first job is to prove this wonderful vision of excellence for Queensland that he has by stopping this rotteness, vileness and corruption—this jobs-for-the-boys syndrome—and rid the public service, firstly, of this appointment.

I take the Premier up on the words that he used when speaking of his vision of excellence. He appeared on television and spread his arms almost in a holy way and spoke about his vision. Of course, none of us yet knows what the vision is. Queenslanders do not know what the vision is. The media do not know what the vision is. The vision has not been spelt out. Is the vision to be the continuation of the "Cooroora cringe" as a Cabinet Minister in the State of Queensland—a man whose only qualification in this Parliament for appointment to the Ministry has been his incredible ability to nose out reds under the beds? Are we to see a continuation in office of the likes of the member for Pine Rivers, Mrs Chapman, who stands disgraced before this Parliament and before the people of Queensland over her involvement earlier this year in the Builders Registration Board, when she drove 12 families in this State virtually to a state of bankruptcy? Are we to see a continuation of her disgusting public attitude to single mothers in our community? Are we to see a retention of the most failed Minister in this Parliament to have ever administered the Queensland prison system, Mr Neal? Are we to see a continuation in the Ahern Cabinet and in the Ahern Government of the wrecker, the destroyer of the environment, Mr Tenni? Are those people to continue to be part of the Ahern vision of excellence for Queensland?

What is the Ahern vision of excellence for Queensland? I saw Mr Ahern on television when he spoke about this vision and when he made some very flippant remarks about the involvement of trade unions. Certainly, that would be welcome, if it is done on a properly consultative basis. He made an off-the-cuff comment about establishment of an advisory economics committee—made up, I assume, of the high-flying business people, perhaps some of the white-shoe brigade with which the National Party has become so well acquainted. Does the Ahern vision of excellence extend so far that the Premier will have the internal courage and the political fortitude to attack the problem of the 130 000 unemployed people in this State today—a problem that the National Party Government has done absolutely nothing about?

I take up the point made by the Leader of the Opposition earlier. At the week-end, I saw Mr Ahern on television. It was good to see him celebrating his daughter's birthday party, though I could not help but wonder whether his vision of excellence extended to the thousands of families that have been broken up by divorce and separation; to the misery that has been suffered by the kids of those thousand people who were sacked during the SEQEB dispute. Has Mr Ahern the internal fortitude to legitimately restore the superannuation benefits of those people?

**Mrs Chapman:** How can you stand there and lie in your teeth?

**Mr R. J. GIBBS:** The member for Pine Rivers should not interject on me because, if ever there is a vulnerable person on the Government side of the House, it has to be her. The sooner she is put on the back bench, the better off this Parliament will be.

Does the Ahern vision of excellence really go to the issue of Aboriginal health and housing? Has Mr Ahern a vision of excellence to tackle that problem? Does his vision of excellence in the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless extend to the 35 000 people who live in abject poverty in this State?

**Mrs Chapman:** It's been Hawke that's done it all the way along the line.

**Mr R. J. GIBBS:** As usual, the member sounds like a screaming harpy.

Has Mr Ahern got the vision to attack the problem of the 35 000 people who are homeless in this State and the poverty and health problems associated with homelessness? Does the Ahern vision of excellence extend to the degree of addressing problems caused by the massive cuts in education that recently occurred throughout the State, which are causing absolute heartache and heart-break among thousands of people in this State? Has Mr Ahern got the internal fortitude to properly administer the disbursement of education funds in this State and to stop the political interference that this Government and his party have introduced into Queensland's education system, with the result that

schools in Labor electorates have been discriminated against compared with schools in National Party electorates?

I pose a challenge to the new Premier. He well remembers, as I do, that, during the education survey undertaken some years ago by his Select Committee on Education, he came into my electorate and saw the disgusting state that two of the schools in my electorate were in, and are still in, in spite of constant representations made by me.

In the past couple of days, already the media have started to probe Mr Ahern's performances. I have noticed them wanting to know what his vision of excellence means. They have asked him whether his vision of excellence includes the introduction of a public accounts committee. Queensland has the only State Parliament in Australia that does not have a public accounts committee. Mr Ahern refuses to give an adequate answer. He has evaded the issue on every occasion so far.

Will his vision of excellence include the establishment of a proper economic strategy for Queensland? Does the vision of excellence include all-party committees of this Parliament sitting down to look at the administration of this State in the proper, mature way in which it should happen? He has not given those undertakings. Will he give the undertaking, as part of his vision of excellence, to introduce a parliamentary public works committee to stop some of the rorts and the loadings by those firms that support the National Party and the Bjelke-Petersen Foundation to ensure that they receive handsome and lucrative Government contracts?

My second challenge today is a most important one. I have here a Bill which I drafted in 1983 relating to pecuniary interests of members of this House. If ever there were a Government that would obviously shy away from revealing the pecuniary interests of its members, relative to issues that we debate in this House and to legislation that is passed through this Parliament, it is this Government. Today I challenge Mr Ahern, as a man of vision and a man who speaks about excellence, to take up my challenge and introduce this piece of legislation—a register of pecuniary interests—so that we can have exposed the corruption that we all know is operative on that side of the House.

I do not believe that today we are seeing anything new at all in the State of Queensland. We are seeing a new Premier, but we are seeing the same tired old regime in office. We are still seeing the master puppeteer pulling the strings from the National Party bunker up at Spring Hill—Sir Robert Sparkes. While he remains, there will be no new vision, no excellence expressed or shown by the National Party in Queensland. I make the prediction now, as I have done in this House before, that whenever the members on that side of the House go to an election they are doomed to failure.

**Hon. Sir WILLIAM KNOX** (Nundah—Leader of the Liberal Party) (10.42 a.m.):  
I move—

“That William Daniel Lickiss do take the chair of the House as Speaker.”

Mr Lickiss is the second-longest-serving member of this House. He served as Chairman of Committees from 1972 to 1974 and as Deputy Speaker, and on several occasions he has acted as Speaker. Over a period of some years he was a Minister of the Crown in the portfolios of Justice and Attorney-General, and also Survey, Valuation, Urban and Regional Affairs. He has been a member of the Select Committee of Privileges of this House. He was awarded the Queen's Gallantry Medal for his work in the 1974 floods. He is eminently suited for this office. He has considerable experience and he is one who, if he occupied the chair as Speaker in this House, would add considerably to its dignity and purpose.

Because this is the first public opportunity that I have had, I also take the opportunity of congratulating the Premier on his elevation to office. I congratulate also the Deputy Premier. I think that should be done at the first opportunity. I hope that their office will result in the things that they have already promised, although we in the Liberal Party have some worries about it.

I now intend to voice some of those worries. We have to know—and this is why I understand Parliament will be assembled later in the day—exactly who is governing Queensland. For the last few days—in fact, since last Tuesday morning—this State has not had effective government. On Tuesday morning the then Government of Queensland went into deep crisis, and it has been in that position ever since.

One hoped that by today the situation would have been resolved sufficiently to be able to present to the Parliament the Government of Queensland so that it could be examined in the proper way. However, the status of this debate is somewhat different from the assembling of Parliament. The notice that was sent to all honourable members called them for a meeting of the Parliament, not for a meeting to elect a Speaker.

The reason why we are called to the meeting of Parliament, as the notice signed by Mr Row states, is that there was a resolution passed in the House more than a week ago that the Parliament could be reassembled on agreement between the Government and the Speaker. However, it so happens that the Speaker of that day subsequently resigned and, by virtue of the Standing Orders and the law, it is necessary that the first item of business be the election of a Speaker. So at this moment honourable members are meeting to elect a Speaker, but I hope that the Government does not interpret that as the meeting of Parliament, because the meeting of Parliament is yet to occur. I trust that there will be no attempt to gag the meeting of Parliament that follows this meeting, in order to prevent discussion on the sort of business that ought to be discussed at that time. It is imperative that the Parliament meet to establish who is governing Queensland.

**Mr McPhie:** We know.

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX:** The honourable member may think he knows. He may get a shock next Tuesday when he hears of the appointments.

The Premier has indicated that he is not prepared to announce his Cabinet until next Tuesday. In this House at the moment there are only two members of Cabinet: the Premier and the Deputy Premier, who have divvied up the responsibilities between them. It is rather interesting how members have assumed their positions in this House in the seats that they have taken. I invite honourable members to have a look around and see where other members are sitting. Barring the Premier and the Deputy Premier, not one of the members occupying the Government front benches holds a commission at this moment—not a single one of them. That is pretty obvious to everybody. When I look for Mr Simpson and Mr Lingard, who until yesterday held commissions, where do I find them? One is just in front of me, but where is the other? He is somewhere other than on the front bench.

**Mr Gately:** Where would you have them sit?

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX:** I ask the honourable member to rest easy.

**Mr Gately:** Do you want them to sit outside the bar, where you fellows are when there is a vote to be taken?

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX:** I do not intend to have a private conversation with the member for Currumbin for very long.

One of the members now sitting on the alleged front bench was summoned from the back bench a moment ago to come and sit on the front bench. Mr Lingard and Mr Simpson were not summoned to take up places there. One Government member has just been reprimanded by a senior person in the Government in an endeavour to try to keep him quiet. No doubt he was told that, if he does not keep quiet, he will not get a mention next Tuesday.

**Mr Gately:** You can't even run the team you've got, so how about leaving us alone?

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX:** The Liberal Party is doing very well, actually. The member for Currumbin, who is a recent import into this State, has been trying desperately to organise the numbers.

In relation to the status of this meeting—yesterday honourable members received a letter from the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General. As I am interested to know, could I ask if every honourable member received one of those letters?

**Mr Stephan:** We all got one of those.

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX:** Let me refer to this letter. Obviously it was not written by the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General as the holder of that position; it was written by a politician to other politicians in this House. It is dated 1 December. I understand every member of this House has received an identical letter; is that correct?

**An honourable member:** Yes.

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX:** It is one of the most shameful pieces of literature that I have ever seen. It is not only not competent for a Minister or any other member of this Parliament, regardless of rank, to write such a letter to all honourable members but also the letter is full of inaccuracies—such as the inaccuracies that prompted the meeting of this Parliament today and the fumble that occurred twice in trying to get this meeting together because the National Party did not want the Parliament to meet. Last week it was decided that the Parliament would meet on Thursday of this week. A minute was passed. A minute was intended to be in the hands of the Acting Speaker—

**Mr Gunn:** It wasn't passed.

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX:** The Deputy Premier is correcting me—

**Mr Gunn:** Yes, you're wrong—again! It was not passed.

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX:** All right. That is fine, because it is well rumoured in this House that the Deputy Premier has been carrying the document around in his port since the first meeting of Cabinet last week. He has been carrying it around in his port and it was not received by the Acting Speaker of this Parliament. Repeated requests to the Acting Speaker about whether the document had been received were met with the reply that it had not been received.

Another Cabinet meeting was held and another attempt was made to try to fudge the meeting of this Parliament, and another minute was passed—or was it the first minute? Honourable members are not too sure. However, the Deputy Premier can correct me. Another minute was passed, and this Cabinet summoned a meeting of Parliament for Wednesday at 2.30 p.m., knowing, one would have thought, that the decision of this Parliament was that it had to resume at 10 o'clock on a date to be fixed, not at any other time. So there was that bungle.

I return now to Mr Clauson's letter, the fourth paragraph of which says—

“In the event of a contested election, debate is uncontrolled because the Clerk lacks the necessary powers to restrict it to matters that would otherwise be permissible under the Standing Orders and Practices of Parliament.”

What a lot of nonsense! That is the greatest load of nonsense!

Firstly, Mr Clauson is wrong. There is debate on this matter in the House, even if it is not contested. Even if it is not contested, there is provision for debate on who should be the Speaker of this Parliament. So it is not correct, to begin with. Secondly, members of this Parliament do not need to be reminded by anybody, regardless of status, of the oath of office. Not one member of this Parliament needs to be reminded of the promise—the declaration—that he made in front of his colleagues when he became a member of Parliament.

Frankly, I have had some investigations carried out into this letter, and it borders on gross breach of privilege. It is a political document under the hand of the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General which should be discounted. I can assure Mr Clauson that I will not be responding to that letter, and I hope that no other member responds to that letter. It is an insult to the Parliament and it is an insult to the members of this Parliament.

Early last week, as Leader of the Liberal Party, I made it quite clear that, whatever the circumstances in which the Parliament assembled, members of the Liberal Party would abide by the sub judice convention, which every member of this Parliament has supported by resolution of this Parliament. It is not some document that is lying around outside the Parliament. Every honourable member, at the time when the convention was put before the Parliament, voted in favour of that convention. Regardless of the status of the meeting of this Parliament, every member should still abide by it and, I believe, will abide by it.

The gratuitous advice from the Minister is an absolute insult to the members of this Parliament, and he should have thought again. I do not know what pressure was applied to him to write this letter, but it is certainly not the kind of letter that a Minister for Justice and Attorney-General would put his name to. As from yesterday, he is an ex-Minister. Today the Premier has not announced whether the Parliament will continue to sit at a later hour on this day. I ask him that question now and, even though the Premier has already spoken, perhaps one of his colleagues may be able to indicate to this Parliament whether the House will sit at a later hour today in order to get on with the business of Parliament and not pretend that the Parliament is assembled simply to elect a Speaker.

**Mr Ahern:** It will be.

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX:** I am grateful for that indication from Mr Ahern that the Parliament will sit later today, although it has not been announced.

One can now look around the Government benches and see that, during the course of last week, certain members on the Government side of the House were given a clear understanding that they will be named in the list of Ministers that is to be announced next Tuesday. Some of those members are Mr Clauson, Mrs Chapman, Mr McKechnie, Mr Muntz—who a few moments ago was summoned to sit up there—Mr Lester and Mr Katter. It was clearly indicated to them that they will be included in the list that is to be published next Tuesday. The people whose names will not be on the list have also been advised. Mr Simpson and Mr Lingard have been told that they cannot expect to be on the list. That is the only information that is formally available. Who is it who is determining the Government of this State? Who is making these decisions? Who is in the group?

**An honourable member:** Sir Robert Sparkes.

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX:** Is it Sir Robert Sparkes? Is everyone to assume that these people are now the puppets of Sir Robert Sparkes? Is it a reasonable assumption in view of meetings that have occurred and the lines of communication that have been opened? In view of the statement made by the Premier today, will he have frequent consultation with Sir Robert Sparkes? The Premier does not have to have any consultation with Sir Robert Sparkes at all. Not only are these people called Sparkes' puppets, but also I have heard them described as Sparkes' sparklets. We will see more and more of them.

**Mr Stoneman** interjected.

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX:** The most luminary member of the sparklets would be our friend here, Mr Stoneman. He has been running backwards and forwards between Parliament House and Spring Hill so rapidly that he is becoming giddy. He is not too sure which is north, south, east or west. He is always a messenger, rushing here and there with bits of paper and lists in his hand. He would like everyone to believe that he is one of the power-brokers within the system. He has been seen in close consultation with the National Party's parliamentary legal adviser, who is also rushing backwards and forwards between here and Spring Hill with large bundles of papers under his arm. He is a highly regarded professional man in the city and I would not like to embarrass him by naming him in this House, but no doubt it will be revealed in due course. Perhaps he is lurking around here in Mr Stoneman's room watching television and listening to the noise.

**Mr FitzGerald:** That is what it is. A good description.

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX:** I know I am accurate and that I have not been misled.

Today this is a hotchpotch of an Assembly. The people who constitute the Government of Queensland should have been presented to this House today. The reason for calling Parliament together was that a report could be presented from the Government of this State indicating its capacity and ability to control the Treasury benches of this House and govern Queensland.

**Mr Stoneman** interjected.

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX:** Why is the National Party squibbing it if it is not a problem?

**Mr Stoneman:** The Speaker first.

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX:** No, it is not the Speaker first. Standing Orders provide that, should the Parliament be called together and there be a vacancy for Speaker, that matter must be attended to first. So is the Premier going to pretend that the Parliament is assembled simply because we have to sort out the Speakership problem?

Let us have a look at some of the questions we might ask the incoming Government—the new Government of Queensland—and what it will do about them. We have already had answered the role that it is going to play with Sir Robert Sparkes, the president of the National Party. As the Premier has indicated, there will be close consultation with Sir Robert Sparkes. Sir Robert Sparkes is not elected by the people of this State. He occupies a position of some responsibility in the National Party organisation, but, as far as members of Parliament are concerned, it is about time that the members of the National Party started to be their own people—it is time that they stood up in this House and were what they are—elected members of Parliament, not the acolytes and messenger boys of Sir Robert Sparkes.

Last week, we had a most incredible situation in which Ministers refused to resign. Ministers criticised the Premier, the leader of their Government, and refused to resign. If they could not stand the Premier, they should have resigned. It has only been the action of the Governor that has forced them to resign. They should have resigned days ago. The matter would have been resolved days ago, the minute that they handed in their resignations. The former Premier would not have had a feather to fly with if the Ministers had resigned en bloc, which is what they should have done and which they knew they had to do but were trying to avoid. They simply tried to avoid facing resignation. The Governor moved in and sacked all the Ministers, except the Premier and Deputy Premier, who are the only two Ministers in the House at this moment. Where will the cronies go? Where will all the cronies go now?

**An honourable member:** Into the Liberal Party.

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX:** I hardly think so. There is a realignment of cronies. A new lot of cronies has suddenly appeared on the scene, and we will see them. Of course, nothing has happened in this State. No decisions have been made; no appointments have been made; and people have not appeared at functions. There have been empty seats at functions around the city and, no doubt, in other parts of Queensland. Ministers have not turned up at functions. Ministers have not apologised for not attending various functions. Back-benchers have not turned up at those functions and the hosts have been embarrassed. Functions have had to be cancelled. Of course, the question arises: who has been running this State?

So we have this catalogue of errors and blunders. Where does the present Government stand in regard to a public accounts committee? We have already seen evidence that Government members do not want one, yet we have heard talk about open government and accountable government. The establishment of a foreign land-ownership register is a policy of the National Party which the Cabinet of the day has rejected. We do not see that in the list of things that the new Premier is going to implement straight away. That could be done very quickly and without delay. There would be no problem about that.

As to the repeal of the recent Education Act—the Government has got rid of the Minister, conveniently. Is the Government going to repeal the Education Act, which is causing great distress in the education community? What about the entrenchment of local authorities free from undue interference? A statement was not made by either Minister about that. How about proper parliamentary reform, such as a public works committee, a statutory bodies review committee and adequate time for legislation and debate? On most of the occasions when this Parliament has been gagged, it has been gagged when the former Premier has not even been in the building; yet the Ministers blamed the former Premier, Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen, for gagging the Parliament. Quite frequently, the debate in this House has been curtailed by members of the National Party when Joh Bjelke-Petersen has been nowhere in sight. Many times the curtailing of the debate was moved by Mr Powell.

Members have refused to table documents. Are we going to see any changes in the practice for the tabling of documents? Debate on private members' business has never been allowed. Are changes going to be made to that practice? Question-time has been abused grossly. Members have been refused permission to complain to the Committee of Privileges. Members have been gagged when they have tried to make personal explanations. Are any changes going to be made to that practice? Those decisions were made by National Party members in this House. *Hansard* reveals that they voted—

**Mr Casey:** You voted against allowing a personal explanation yourself, once.

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX:** I may have had a good reason for that.

I refer also to reform of the Government's tendering processes and so on. These are the sorts of questions that must be asked and these are the sorts of problems that we face.

Honourable members have witnessed what was probably the ultimate insult that has ever been given to a distinguished Premier of this State—

“Joh given ultimatum

‘Quit today or retirement deal is off’, says Ahern.”

That was probably the ultimate form of cronyism and bribery.

**Mr Ahern:** I didn't say it.

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX:** That headline appeared in a newspaper on Monday of this week, and that statement was never denied.

That statement represented a gross insult to a distinguished member of the National Party and its Premier. Quite frankly, it was one of the most shameful things that I witnessed in the first days of this Government.

**Mr INNES (Sherwood—Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party) (11.06 a.m.):** Above the closing of police stations in Queensland, above the employees working in the schools of this State who are about to be sacked and above the frustrated ambitions of those students in Year 12 who wish to go on to tertiary and other forms of post-secondary education, we have raised a vision of excellence. It is the first page in a primer for political parties—a vision of excellence must be projected. Of course, the reality is something different.

After a week of leadership of the parliamentary National Party by Mr Ahern, he has had to step back into the mire to get a better view of his vision of excellence. The machinations of the last week have been characterised by the old style of the National Party and the Country Party. There has been toe-cutting and head-lobbing. Threats, lies and disinformation have been orchestrated from the bunker. The strategy committee has emerged. Let me consider that strategy committee.

Apparently, it is presided over by the ex-Minister for Justice and Attorney-General, whose outstanding parliamentary contribution was the letter that was referred to and who is still a junior member of this Parliament but well under the control of those

people in the management committee of the National Party who wish to manipulate things in this State. At least I will give him credit for this: he is assisted by the two persons who know more about political treachery than anybody else in this State, namely, Messrs Lane and Austin.

Mr Lane has emerged as Mr Ahern's chief numbers man. Following the election that was held last night in the party room, was it not Mr Lane who went across to Mr Powell and upbraided him for standing and winning? Mr Lane is a weather-vane. All fence-jumpers have to be. They have to be as closely attached as they can possibly be to the new source of power from which comes their protection and advancement. Mr Austin attached himself to Sir Robert. That was a fairly safe bet. Mr Lane has a little more to fear, so he has to be more closely in contact and in touch with the people at the top of the political process.

It was all the way with Joh until the winds of change; until that disastrous slump in the Gallup poll; until the shock and horror went through the parliamentary National Party and until the organisation of the National Party went "whoompah!" over towards the new regime.

Mr Ahern will find that his vision of excellence and political morality of his regime will totally founder if he attaches himself to anything involving the closeness of those two gentlemen. I say "political morality", because it is only a matter of the future before that term becomes unlimited.

The vision of excellence obviously requires a massive change in style on the part of the parliamentary National Party. In fact, every word Mr Ahern uttered last week before he declared his vision of excellence—the change, the new look, the new broom National Party and every statement that there would be openness, reinforced by Sir Robert Sparkes—was a condemnation of the administration of which he has been part for many years. It indicated quite clearly that it was not committed to openness. The commitment to accountability was a clear indication that the previous administration had not been committed to accountability. It was, in fact, an indictment. The commitment to the removal of cronies was an indictment that the last administration was riddled with cronyism.

Of course, we have a new wrapper on an old box. There has been no personnel change. Two personnel in the 49-man team—which is now a 48-man team—have changed. If there is to be this magnificent moral renewal, clearly it will require totally different people from those who have so far presided over the National Party Government. The irony of it is that the wonderman or superman who will do it will have to be an addition to Parliament. He will have to be the new member for Barambah, otherwise we are dealing with a tired old team who did not have the guts to stand up to the former Premier or who were intellectually diverted occasionally by thinking of reform and could not co-ordinate their stomachs with their tongues so that they could say, "Joh, you can't do it. Joh, it should not happen. Joh, you should have thought of doing this."

All members of this House know that I have had my tangles with Joh Bjelke-Petersen. Nevertheless, I have said to him that if there is one piece of injustice in the whole exercise of the last 10 days, it is the way in which Sir Robert Sparkes and the parliamentary National Party shelved and diverted all responsibility onto Joh Bjelke-Petersen. Who were the people who clawed the T-shirts onto their backs? Honourable members would remember the pictures.

**Mr Beard:** Only a few months ago.

**Mr INNES:** Just a few short months ago. It was not a question of a reluctant team of people doing his bidding; it was the demented enthusiasm with which they put on the "Joh for PM" campaign, in which they endlessly got up in this House and canted away against all those things that now are implicit as the things being embraced by the alleged new vision. It is one thing to talk about a vision; however, some visions are illusions. It is quite something else to turn visions into realities. That is the challenge for Mr Ahern.

Is the Queensland Parliament the illegitimate child of the mother of Parliaments? Or are we to make something of it? Is the Westminster system, over which we allegedly preside in this Parliament, really the "axe-minster" system—a system of Executive decree and legislative guillotine? Those are the questions that we can reasonably address in this debate at this time. Whoever is the new Speaker must hear something about it. In the end, it was the flaws and defects that are implicit in the failure of Parliament and in the "axe-minster", as opposed to the Westminster, system that have brought the downfall of Joh Bjelke-Petersen and that massive slump in the polls. It was not any moral renewal or enormous philosophical debate within the National Party that led to the change of Government and led to this crisis; it was the shattering reality of a political poll that showed that the National Party has slumped from a little over one-third of the vote to one-quarter of the vote. Even the Queensland gerrymander will not cope with that.

I congratulate Mr Ahern on his appointment as Premier. Indeed, I congratulate the Deputy Premier upon his re-election as Deputy Premier. It is obvious that members of other political parties believe that the leaders of their parties would be better in order to ensure the future of the State. Looking at the alternatives and looking at the interests of the State for a start, we in the Liberal Party wish both gentlemen well. As to alternatives in other parties, they can rest assured that members of the Liberal Party find some alternatives preferable to others. We find some of Mr Ahern's views more appealing than the views of other people.

**Mr Sherrin:** Is this a campaign speech?

**Mr INNES:** If I were the honourable member for Mansfield, who is so closely associated with and yapping constantly in attendance on the man who is about to be sacked as Minister for Education and had been plucked from the obscurity of teaching somewhere in the Ingham area, and because of the level of flattery and support which the honourable member was prepared to give the former Minister, I would not interject. The honourable member is another example of the green ticket, rocket ride of promotion in the Department of Education.

The Queensland public service has a word for it: the green ticket track. It is the track that knows no bounds and no promotional limitations whatsoever or time limitations. I understand that one could go from principal of a school to assistant director of education in about two years; but, of course, one would probably need to be the son of the former chairman of a campaign committee to do that.

There is a great deal for Mr Ahern to do when a Cabinet is formed. He will find that some of his attitudes will have support in this House. One would be the setting-up of a public accounts committee, which has been mentioned by a number of members. In 1975, Mr Ahern chaired a joint committee of members of the Liberal Party and National Party that looked into the question of parliamentary committees. At that time his words were that the increasing complexity and sophistication of government led to the specialisation which removed the Ministry from other members of Parliament. I can say this: the National Party has certainly found a very informal way of restoring the relationship between the back bench and the Ministry.

Every darned decision was left to the cronies and the public service and the time was spent in buying cups of tea and beers for members of Parliament who were looking into the promotional situation. However, taking Mr Ahern's words at face value—and I have no doubt that at the time he meant them—they offer some prospect.

As one who was part of some stirring, shall I say, in the joint party room, I find it sad to say that I do not recall the present Premier's voice ever being raised in support of those issues when they were being put to the test. No doubt it was not politic within the National Party under Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen to do so; but I sound a note of warning to the National Party. It is the failure to show some intestinal fortitude for what one believes in that caused——

**Mr Ahern:** Read *Hansard*.

**Mr INNES:** I recall the crucial votes about the issue when it was raised in the party room—those that could have led to the decision to establish it rather than not establish it. Mr Ahern's vote was not for the proposal. In fact, it was not only he; there was no support by his party for the proposition generally. Twelve years later, there is still no public accounts committee or public works committee, which was another proposal that had been embraced. That can be fixed.

I would hope and assume—and I would challenge—that the Premier has not recalled Parliament today for an immediate adjournment. I hope that next week or at some other time in the near future Parliament will reconvene so that the Premier can introduce his new Cabinet to this House and commence the urgent business—I repeat “urgent business”—of running this State again. I hope that the Premier, if he is sincere in wishing to set up a new course of action, will include legislative and administrative reforms that are vital.

A public accounts committee can be created as soon as the Premier makes the decision, because constantly during the last five years adequate motions have been moved by members of the Liberal Party and the Labor Party proposing the establishment of such a committee in precisely the words that were used in the Commonwealth Parliament to serve as authority to set up such a committee.

As this is the debate leading to the election of a new Speaker, it is proper to make some comments.

**Mr Veivers:** Oh, good.

**Mr INNES:** I will be making a few more, so the honourable member ought not worry about that.

**Mrs Nelson:** How can we stay awake?

**Mr INNES:** That other political weather-vane, the honourable member for Aspley, has just spoken. She finds boring any conversation in which she cannot participate or in which someone else speaks for more than 25 seconds. In fact, we have amused ourselves by watching Mrs Nelson scurrying between contender and contender and dropping her own name in media circles as a likely prospect for Cabinet promotion. I would invite all the long-term members of the National Party to consider that those fence-hoppers can only do so much.

**Mr Wells:** Would she be better than Yvonne?

**Mr INNES:** I am not even sure about Yvonne. I think that she has been in the National Party longer than Mrs Nelson has.

The Government has nominated Mr Powell as Speaker. Quite frankly, we could all go on with platitudes, but we have to work under whomever is chosen as Speaker. However, I say that the person nominated by the Government is not the person who would have been preferred by the majority of this House. That is looking at things without a political bias.

Mr Lingard made an obvious and disastrous political career mistake, but he ran a good Parliament and we all recognise that. If this House is to have dignity, a person who runs a good Parliament is needed. Mr Lingard did that with fairness and dignity.

Mr Booth was another contender. In fact, I understand that he was Mr Ahern's preferred candidate. After his promotion, Mr Ahern lost his first major battle. Mr Booth has the respect of the members of this House as a down-to-earth, independent and fair man.

I now turn to Mr Powell. His nomination is an indication that the politics of compromise have once again prevailed in the face of a demand for excellence. We have seen in action the quality of all three gentlemen. Mr Powell has been the Leader of the House and he has been the Minister for Education. If the style that he adopted as Leader of the House is any indication, this Parliament will not be served well by the election

of Mr Powell. As Sir William Knox rightly said, the day-to-day running of the House was left in the hands of the Leader of the House. I can recall the frankly expressed embarrassment by members of the National Party in this House—and the media will well know that what I say is true—at the way in which Mr Powell, solo, propelled the Education Act debate from its obscurity of having continued for six or nine months, which was almost too boring to report, into page one prominence by applying the guillotine to his own legislation. Nobody else told him to do it. On the same sitting day as the Education Act was passed, unlimited debate was allowed on such Queensland-shattering Bills as the Chinatown Mall legislation. However, on a Bill which had probably involved the greatest number of persons in active consultation, discussion and consideration that this State has seen for a long while, the guillotine was applied. That was Mr Powell's decision. An earlier decision of Mr Powell was the gagging of the Drugs Misuse Bill. That is a very, very bad precedent and record for anybody who aspires to the position of Speaker of the House.

In Mr Ahern's party room, whether it was the nostalgia of the Joh backlash that was applied—those who felt it somehow paid some regard for the person who stuck with Joh the longest—I do not know. I do not know what position Mr Powell himself took when he was appearing to support Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen and clearly acting himself as an emissary and intermediary attempting to influence Sir Joh's resignation when all else failed.

If Mr Powell is elected Speaker, I hope that he will defy the prediction that I have made and defy the record that he has in this House. When Mr Powell answered questions in this House, we used to have bets about how long he would take. No other Minister filibustered and otherwise occupied the time of the House more pointlessly and for longer than did Mr Powell.

**An Opposition member:** Katter went close.

**Mr INNES:** Yes, I agree. However, Mr Katter did not go so close so often; that is the crucial difference.

Last week has seen the greatest subversion of the independence of this Parliament since Mr Bukowski's political machine interfered in ALP affairs in 1957. The cloth-cap bovver boys of Trades Hall have been replaced by the high rollers and the Rolls Royce drivers who park behind Bjelke-Petersen House, which I presume is about to be renamed. Queensland has a new breed of political carpet-bagger. I am not quite sure whether it is called the Jandowae junta from the heartland of the League of Rights or whether it is the Triple-H brand—Hinze, Holm and Hollindale—of the Gold Coast milk Mafia, but the power structure is completely in place and my absolute prediction is that that power structure will not be disturbed one little bit by the Ahern elevation.

In fact, the Ahern elevation has been orchestrated and organised from Bjelke-Petersen House. When things appeared to flag, all the phone calls and the emissaries came from Bjelke-Petersen House. The Premier, Mr Ahern, is beholden to Sir Robert Sparkes and the unelected power moguls of the National Party.

**Sir William Knox:** Sir Robert Sparkes and his thugs.

**Mr INNES:** That is right. In fact, one week ago the members of the parliamentary National Party were summoned from their place—from Parliament House—to the organisational place so that they could be stood over and dictated to.

**Government members interjected.**

**Mr INNES:** And the first person who laughed was this generation's Neville Harper, Mark Stoneman. The toe-cutter has been replaced by the knee-shooter.

The reality is that the entire National Party machine depends upon cronyism. It depends upon a view of life that says that 100 per cent of the tax-payers' money and 100 per cent of legislative power is applied to those electors whom the National Party represents. If those electors happened to number more than half of Queensland, it could

be called democracy. However, because of the gerrymander, that is taking the money of 100 per cent and applying it to between 25 per cent and one third. What the member for Wolston, Mr Gibbs, said a few moments ago is absolutely correct. If an inventory was taken of the school and police buildings and other public facilities in National Party electorates and the number was compared with the number in other electorates, that would prove what I am saying. I ask honourable members to consider this year's Budget papers. If members of the press gallery are interested, I ask them to count the works projects mentioned in the Budget papers and look at which electorates they are in.

**Mr FitzGerald:** How many schools do you have in your electorate?

**Mr INNES:** What I am saying is that the ones I have are not as well maintained.

That is the National Party's view of things. That comes out of that old pork-barrel philosophy: politics is about the business of getting a dam, a road and a school in the electorate. In the end, the trouble is that everybody's nephew, niece, grand-daughter or grandson lives in an electorate held by a member from another party; so in the end it brings its own disillusionment. That will happen. That is the way the National Party operates and has always operated. That is what will bring about its undoing. Cronyism is the greatest hurdle that Mr Ahern faces; cronyism is the article of faith and the modus operandi of his party. It is alive and well.

I say to the Premier that we in the Liberal Party want Parliament to be called together because there is urgent business for it to transact. In challenging him to call Parliament together again, I put to him that one of the challenges is for the Attorney-General to introduce as soon as possible the legislation that is necessary to implement those parts of the Sturgess report that are found acceptable and that will ensure the protection of young Queenslanders from exploitation by prostitution and pornography. That is occurring day after day and month after month. The National Party Government has had that report for two years now. Ten days ago—the day after Parliament adjourned—the excuse was that the Parliament had been closed down early—but it was closed early by members of the National Party themselves.

The Government now has warning. The new broom can start. Legislation could at least be brought in so that honourable members could have six weeks or two months to discuss it and debate it before it is passed immediately Parliament resumes in the new year. Only yesterday, more evidence was heard about someone who became involved in prostitution at the age of 13. Many proposals are not controversial and could be dispatched quickly.

There is the matter of addressing the urgent business of the Government of the State. I mention in particular the Turkish power deal. Today on national radio it was revealed that the Government of this State has been drastically impeded. It has been found that there have been complaints or suggestions by the Turkish Prime Minister that negotiations are being impeded. In any event, there are two parts of the Turkish coal deal. The first is whether the Turkish coal deal will be a good deal for Queensland. There is a need for a bit of this openness—this open Government. How much money is being put up by the Queensland Government, and at what terms? How much coal at what price, in what currency denomination and with what security? Who else is in on the deal? These are vital questions that need to be answered if an appraisal is to be made of whether going into the deal is a good thing. Who is putting the money in? Is it the QEC? Who is getting the benefit of the money? Is it private coal-mining companies? Honourable members want to know where the relationship is. They have never heard that in the last year and a half of negotiations.

There are other matters that need to be addressed, but I will refer to only one more. The member for Currumbin, Mr Gately, is not yet the most famous member of this Parliament, but he plugs away and constantly raises issues that arise south of the border. Honourable members will recall that south of the border is New South Wales, and that is outside the terms of reference of the Fitzgerald inquiry. I will talk about a favourite place of the member for Currumbin. The honourable member has participated

in perhaps a dozen debates and on 11 occasions he has spoken about the Seagulls leagues club.

I understand that the New South Wales police gaming squad has in its possession a statement, interestingly, made by the officer in charge of the Gold Coast police district, Detective Inspector Meskell, who apparently was a vice-chairman of the Seagulls leagues club until he and Mr Meekin were deposed in the power play of last year about which Mr Gately spoke so often at that time and, I understand, with some justifiable sense of feeling.

I understand that in a statement given to the New South Wales police only three or four months ago, it was said that Mr Meskell, who, as I said, is a detective inspector of the Queensland police force, observed regularly the then secretary of that committee operating and paying SP bets. It is well known that there have been border-hopping activities between New South Wales and Queensland. It was suggested that the Parliament of New South Wales has something to attend to in regard to the matter of corruption. Queensland has something to attend to—I understand that the Fitzgerald inquiry will attend to it—in regard to the relationship of a Queensland police officer with an organisation in which, to his knowledge, SP book-making—in other words illegality and corruption—was taking place.

A whole range of important issues need to be addressed. The challenge to the Premier is to recall Parliament this year so that honourable members can get down to real business.

I second the nomination of Mr Lickiss.

**Mr TENNI (Barron River) (11.34 a.m.):** I rise to support the nomination of the honourable member for Isis for the office of Speaker of this Parliament. The honourable member for Isis, when elected, will bring to the high office of Speaker the qualities of leadership, integrity and, may I say, common sense that are so necessary in the member chosen for this position.

The honourable member for Isis, when a member of the panel of Temporary Chairmen of Committees, served an apprenticeship for this position. I am sure that all honourable members would agree that he has passed his apprenticeship exams with honours. The honourable member for Isis will bring to the office of Speaker all the dignity that is required of the position. Over the years he has shown that he neither fears nor favours anyone—qualities that will serve us all well in the future.

This occasion marks a milestone in the history of the Parliament and the State of Queensland. It is the first time in a generation or more—in fact, 40 years—that Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen has not participated in the vote to elect a Speaker. It is the first time in 20 years that a Speaker is being elected with someone other than the former member for Barambah as Premier. I wish to use this occasion to record in the annals of this Parliament my appreciation to Sir Johannes Bjelke-Petersen for his contribution to the development of Queensland over the 19 or more years that he served as Premier of this great State.

I believe in my heart that history will judge Sir Joh very generously indeed. His record of achievements for Queensland will never be erased. The people of the far north join with me in placing on record sincere appreciation for the contribution that Sir Joh has made to the development of the far north and the State as a whole. When Sir Joh became Premier, my electorate was a real backwater. Today it leads the State in development and will continue to do so under the leadership of the honourable member for Landsborough.

The new Premier, the Honourable Mike Ahern, brings to the leadership of this State an excellent blend of experience. He has been in this Parliament for almost 20 years. He has vision, enthusiasm and a commitment to the future development of Queensland. As a member of the Government, I look forward to serving under his leadership and guidance in whatever capacity is determined. It is worth recording in the records of this House that the Honourable the Premier assumes his high office after a

long and useful apprenticeship both inside and outside this House. His father has pointed out to the media that his own involvement in politics goes back to the campaigns of the then Premier and member for Landsborough, the late Sir Francis Nicklin.

**Mr Austin:** The Premier's father is in the gallery.

**Mr TENNI:** It has been pointed out to me that the Premier's wife and father are both in the gallery today. That is marvellous.

I cannot think of better training for the Premiership than that. The late Sir Frank Nicklin held the office of Premier for what was then a record term. Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen held the office for a period that almost doubled the previous record. I know that my colleagues in the National Party join with me in expressing the hope that the honourable member for Landsborough will create the hat trick—a new record of service as Premier of Queensland.

I am delighted to support the nomination of the honourable member for Isis for the high office of Speaker. He will serve this Parliament and all its members well.

**Mr De LACY (Cairns) (11.38 a.m.):** I was very disappointed in the contribution from the honourable member for Barron River. I thought that the House might have heard something original. If the House had, that in itself would be original, because the honourable member was never capable of writing anything for himself.

I rise to support the nomination of my colleague Mr Campbell for the position of Speaker. I am sure that he would distinguish himself in that position. There is no way that I could support the nomination of the member for Isis. As has been pointed out by the honourable member for Sherwood, it is obvious that Mr Powell is not the preferred nomination of the new Premier and was not the person he wanted in that position. In fact, the new Premier wanted him out altogether. The reason why the Opposition cannot support his nomination is that, if he brings to the position of Speaker the same ability and achievements as he brought to his former position, Minister for Education, this House will be in chaos. If the honourable member had one achievement as Minister for Education, it was his ability to unite the parents, teachers, students, public and ultimately the National Party in opposition to him. It was a disgraceful performance and he must go down in history as the worst Minister for Education that Queensland has ever had.

**Mr Hamill:** Since Bill Gunn, anyway.

**Mr De LACY:** No. I think that he may have even done a greater job than Bill Gunn. At least Bill just let things happen; he did not try to interfere with what was occurring; he did not try to interfere with what the heavyweights in the department were doing. The member for Isis added a new dimension to that sort of clumsy intervention.

Yesterday was a great day for Queensland, with the departure of the Premier. I would like to congratulate Mr Ahern. I must say that I do not know whether he will do a better job, but he certainly cannot do a worse job than the former Premier of Queensland. On the week-end I attended a seminar with Deane Wells, who said that Mr Ahern has promised to drag the National Party kicking and screaming into the twentieth century. However, he pointed out that we are almost to go into the twenty-first century, so the National Party is still 100 years behind.

To a certain extent, it is great to be able to stand in this Chamber and to say to all members of the Government, "I told you so." Joh has not really changed; the fellows opposite are only just waking up to what members of the Opposition have known all the time. All of a sudden Government members can see that the king has no clothes, and they are prepared to say that he has no clothes. He has been, right to the end, small-minded, capricious, vindictive and greedy. If ever there were but two traits which characterised him right throughout his career, they were his vindictiveness—his desire for revenge; to get even with people who had crossed him and who criticised him—and his desire to get as much out of the system as he could.

The sordid negotiation of a retirement package is, as the Honourable Leader of the Liberal Party said, the ultimate act of cronyism. The former Premier opted out of the superannuation system, presumably because of some principle, but really it is because he did not want to pay the money. Even at that time he expected that, if he was the Premier, he would be able to negotiate some sort of de facto superannuation without having contributed in the first place.

**Mr Hayward:** He negotiated the Bond payment pretty well.

**Mr De LACY:** That is right. He received his superannuation in a variety of other ways without having to put his hand in his pocket.

**Mr Burns:** I thought Bond was going to ask for it back the other day.

**Mr De LACY:** The honourable member for Lytton said that Mr Bond was seen at the Executive Building demanding that \$400,000 back. He has not received his full value; it cut out sooner than he expected.

One thing about the former Premier, Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen, was that he never cared about the National Party. That is what Government members are starting to find out. He never cared about Queensland and he certainly never cared about democracy, the Westminster system or any of the honourable conventions. What he has been trying to do in the last week is bring down the National Party, bring down Mr Ahern and inflict as much damage as he possibly could. He did everything in his power to do that. His final act of self-aggrandisement and delusion was not sad; it was pathetic.

A little snippet in yesterday's *Courier-Mail* amused me. It stated—

“Sir Joh, who has said he can make much more money by sitting in boardrooms”—

that is all he would be doing; sitting there—

“is understood to have been made a lucrative offer contingent upon his making a dignified departure from the office he has held for more than 19 years.”

How could his departure be less dignified? He must have blown that offer. He really was taken out kicking and screaming. As Lawrie Kavanagh said, he was a crowing, ungracious winner or a bitter, whinging loser.

**Mr Burns:** Do you know that he went out like Marcos? He's only left the wallpaper on the walls up there. There's not a skerrick left.

**Mr De LACY:** I saw them taking it out from there this morning by the truckload.

**Mr Burns:** Even Flo took her shoes.

**Mr De LACY:** Even Flo took her shoes!

Sir Joh really has been a poor role model for the young people of Queensland. On Friday in Cairns, I attended a sportsmen's dinner. Bill Lawry, a distinguished former Australian cricketer, was there.

**An Opposition member:** A good Labor man.

**Mr De LACY:** As the honourable member says, he is a good Labor man.

One of the questions asked of Mr Lawry was, “If Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen was a cricketer, do you think he'd walk?” Obviously, if he was bowled, stumped, run out and given LBW all at once, he would not leave.

**Mr Hamill:** He thought he could walk on water.

**Mr De LACY:** As the honourable member for Ipswich says, he thought he could walk on water.

The trouble is that Sir Joh was not only making a fool of himself but he was also making fools of Queenslanders and, to a certain extent, Australians. He did that often

enough when he went overseas. The whole world jeered at his attempt to pull down the temple that he believed that he himself had built.

This is the last occasion on which I am going to say these sorts of things about the ex-Premier because, as far as I am concerned, he can pass into history—and the sooner, the better. I have to say this, however: he was an evil man. He did a grave disservice to the Christian religion. The only remotely Christian trait that he manifested was his Victorian wowsery and the fact that he attended church on Sundays. There was nothing Christian about his vindictiveness, his desire for revenge, his lack of compassion, his vanity, his lust for power, his greed, his deviousness and his sophistry. I have always associated sophistry with him, which means accusing other people of doing what you are doing yourself.

When one considers the traits associated with Sir Joh, he was a lot closer to Lucifer than he ever was to the Lord. Honourable members will recall that the Lord was the man who turned the other cheek and turned the money-lenders out of the temple. However, Sir Joh invited the money-lenders into the temple, and they have taken over this State and the National Party.

**Mr Hamill:** What are his bad traits?

**Mr De LACY:** One may well ask what are his bad traits.

Is it not amazing how the members of the National Party have deserted Sir Joh at this time of need? The king is dead. Long live the king.

**Mr Muntz:** Why don't you say that to his face outside the House?

**Mr De LACY:** I would say it anywhere.

The word of Caesar would have stood against the world. Today there is none so poor as those who would do him reverence.

**Mr Muntz:** You don't have the guts to say it outside. You are a snake.

**Mr De LACY:** I can say what I like about Sir Joh outside this House. He cannot sue me, because he no longer has the protection of the public purse to initiate the proceedings.

Members of the Government cannot wash their hands of what the ex-Premier is and how he finished up. They have created a monster, and now they want to wash their hands of him. The fact is that, if Government members had not been subservient to Sir Joh, had not given in to him, stoked up his ego, massaged him and sought positions on the front bench, together with a variety of other things, that monster would not have been created. There is no way that Government members can absolve themselves of the responsibility for what has happened in this State.

**Mr Katter:** How did you get Ray Jones' place?

**Mr De LACY:** If Ray Jones were here, he would be saying exactly the same things as I am saying.

A few entertaining events have occurred during the last week. The one that will occupy the attention of the media and other people is why Gordon Simpson and Kevin Lingard joined the outgoing Premier. I can understand why Gordon Simpson did. So intoxicated was he with the pungent odour of ministerial leather that he would have moved any stone to get there. Even just for a short time, it was all worth it. As Mr Hamill said the other day, Mr Simpson's epitaph will read, "A brilliant political career cut short by his elevation to the Ministry". There is no doubt that Mr Simpson was a brilliant performer in this Parliament. In terms of oratorical ability, Mr Simpson ranked 89th in this House—that is, if the attendants were not included. The great joke about him was that he arrived at Government House very early by taxi to receive the gong, but they chased him away and said that he should come back later. I suppose that, if a

person is going to be a Minister for such a short time, he does not want to waste any of it.

The greatest mystery surrounds Kevin Lingard. Three years ago, when he entered this Parliament, he was the great white hope.

**Mr Mackenroth:** The man to be Premier.

**Mr De LACY:** That is right, the man to be Premier. He distinguished himself in the Speaker's chair by ensuring that members did not wear sportscoats and could not read the *Telegraph* in the Chamber. In terms of any far-reaching reforms to this Chamber, he achieved nothing. I would go so far as to say that, during the time of his incumbency, question-time was reduced to a bigger farce than it was when I entered Parliament. In terms of the long-winded answers from Ministers, the irrelevance of the answers and the fact that Opposition members could not ask questions, it was a farce. If anything, he was a little more intellectually dexterous than his predecessor, John Warner; but that is no great claim to fame.

However, everyone is still asking why he should cut short this brilliant political career. Why would he sip from the chalice when he knew that it was already poisoned? All I can say is that it was the first time in recorded history that the rat was found swimming towards the sinking ship.

When the Premier was asking everybody to commit hara-kiri, of course they started to see that there was no long-term advantage to be gained in being elevated to the Ministry. He asked Max Menzel and Gilbert Alison, and even they knocked him back. What an exercise in unrequited love that was! Towards the end, Peter MacDonald was the adviser. I believe that his career as an adviser has come to a quick end. He suggested Billy Newton. Even Joh said, "You've got to draw the line somewhere." Therefore, we ended up with two Ministers and not three.

I make some comments now about the Governor. The Governor of Queensland receives \$70,000 or \$80,000 tax free, all expenses paid. The only duties that he has are to read the Governor's Speech once a year, sign the Bills and make a decision every now and again—about once a decade. However, when he got his chance to make a decision, he did not make it. Some people say in his defence that he should not become involved in party politics. The Premier advised the Governor that 22 days ago in this House he had received a vote of confidence. Mr Ahern said that he had a vote of confidence from 48 members of the National Party and that he had a majority in the House. I would have thought that, by convention, that was all that the Governor needed to make a decision. Could it be that the Governor did not trust the National Party? Could it be that he did not believe that those 48 people really would vote for Mr Ahern when he came into the House. I understand that the 48 members did sign the document. I am also advised, as Mr Prest would probably say, that they all signed their own signatures and they were not signed by Denis Hinton. I cannot understand why the Governor would not accept Mr Ahern's advice that 48 members supported him, sack Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen and commission Mike Ahern as the new Premier.

I wish to talk about the defamation proceedings which were initiated by the former Premier against a number of Labor Party members both within and outside the House and which have been part of the sordid negotiations about a retirement package to get rid of the outgoing Premier. One of the reasons I want to talk about this is that I am a recipient of one of those writs, which is common knowledge. Nothing focuses the mind—

**A honourable member:** There will be more later on behalf of Denis Hinton.

**Mr De LACY:** I will take the issue a bit further.

The issue of writs by the former Premier is an issue that has not received the exposure to which it was entitled. In my view, it constitutes a very grave threat to democracy and the practice of liberal democratic traditions. It is simply outrageous. I put this to the House today: I believe one of the first tests of Mr Ahern as Premier will

be how he responds to the requests made by the outgoing Premier for continued public funding for defamation writs that have been raised against members of the Labor Party.

**Mr Alison:** Are you worried?

**Mr De LACY:** I am not worried at all because I have to, and I am prepared to, defend the writ in court. However, there are some aspects of the way in which the action was taken that I wish to raise today.

Mr Ahern's response to this issue will prove whether or not he is a fraud or whether he is the old package with a new coat of paint. What I find grossly outrageous about the whole situation is that I am financing both sides of the litigation—my own as defendant and the former Premier's because his side is being funded publicly. As a taxpayer, I am contributing to the action that he is taking against me, which I find most offensive.

Anyone has the right to take out defamation proceedings, but he ought to do it off his own bat and finance it himself. It can be easily worked out that I am on a hiding to nothing. No matter which side wins, I will get done. Of course, the way the former Premier had things set up, it does not matter which side wins or loses, because he will win. He cannot lose, because the public is picking up the tab.

The whole action is costing tens of thousands of dollars. The comments I made were very moderate comments and were the kind of comments that all honourable members make about each other from time to time. They were nowhere near as bad as comments made by the former Premier on a hundred occasions about trade-union leaders, Aborigines, conservationists and a variety of other people. The former Premier made those comments both inside and outside the House. One might ask why people do not take action against him. It is because of the cost factor involved.

The cost factor did not prevent the former Premier from doing it, because the public picks up the tab. All honourable members would know that virtually any derogatory comment made by one member about another is actionable. The question is: to what extent is it defensible?

I had the impertinence, may I say, to compare the regime of the former Premier to the dying days of the Marcos regime in the Philippines. Honourable members will remember the way in which Marcos left the scene. He refused to accept the verdict of the people and he went out kicking and screaming.

**Mr Davis:** There it is in the newspaper.

**Mr De LACY:** He blamed everybody for what went wrong except himself. Honourable members can see the newspaper cartoon that the member for Brisbane Central is holding. Marcos rejected the people—the people did not reject him—and all that sort of thing. I think that the parallels are very valid.

I do not want to canvass any further the actual subject of the litigation; it is the process of the litigation that I wish to raise today. Honourable members ought to look to the political climate in which those defamation writs were raised, because it is very relevant. At that time—March 1986—the political agenda was full of the Callaghan affair, the Lindeman Island affair, the economic mess that Queensland was in, and the Government's intransigence on the sugar industry compromise. The former Premier's stakes were way down during an important pre-election run-up. The February polls were very favourable to the ALP and showed a continuing decline in Petersen's personal popularity. Furthermore, what was not known at the time was that Petersen had recently renegotiated with the Bond Corporation a settlement amount for the discontinuance of his defamation action against Channel 9. That amount was \$400,000 and was negotiated in the final days of February 1986. The very next week, half a dozen more writs were issued through the use of public funds. Petersen later used the publicity about his \$400,000 settlement to further intimidate the defendants in those actions.

In the *Telegraph* of 27 August 1986 he stated that he intended to pursue "to the outermost end of the earth" his defendants in these matters. Clearly the intent and result of such threats was to hamstring anyone who would normally publish any criticism which may bring the Government into disrepute. As it is the function of the press and the parliamentary Opposition to question and criticise, the implications for the democratic institutions are clear. The former Premier's motives are also clear.

There are grave implications in the public funding of defamation actions by politicians. Remember that, despite what has been said by the Attorney-General and others, including Mr Ahern on 13 March 1986, there is no provision or precedent in any other Government in Australia, State or Federal, for public funding of Ministers to initiate defamation proceedings. To defend, yes, but within strict guide-lines; to initiate, no. In fact, within the guide-lines that apply in the rest of Australia, I would have more chance of getting public funding to defend my position than the Premier would have to launch it.

In respect of legal aid, which of course is means tested, there is no legal aid at all for litigation in respect of defamation, either to initiate or to defend. In Queensland non-means-tested *carte blanche* legal aid is given to Government Ministers to intimidate and silence the Opposition. It is absolutely outrageous. I ask Mr Ahern: what is he going to do about it? Is he going to continue giving it, or is he going to do something about it?

Unfortunately, in our system of justice, cost considerations loom large as determinants of a variety of factors. It is the cost which decides first of all whether people will commence litigation, and then how hard the litigants will run the action, how much evidence to gather, how many witnesses to interview and how many complex legal arguments will be investigated. It is the costs that will decide whether interlocutory applications to the court to strictly enforce the court rules are worth while. They also decide which level of counsel, in terms of seniority, ought to be engaged for advice, trial preparation, preliminary applications and the trial itself.

While a defendant is, to some considerable extent, at the mercy of the plaintiff in these matters, a plaintiff can virtually set the pace and the scale of the litigation if costs are of no concern. Clearly then, a plaintiff who is indemnified by the unlimited funds of the State coffers is not only in a position to bully his opponent but is also able, by the making of strategic decisions such as those just outlined, to effect the legal outcome of the proceedings. Unfunded defendants will simply not contest every demand made by a funded plaintiff, even if such demands are unreasonable and could be withstood if expense were not a consideration. That leads directly—unfortunately, it is all too common today—to the financial oppression of opponents. The British system of justice is supposed to be like the Ritz Hotel—open to the rich and poor alike. It just happens to be that the poor cannot get in. While theoretically it is true that the courts dispense justice to all, it costs a great deal of money to obtain that justice through litigation.

The plain truth is that no-one but wealthy or legally aided people can afford to be before the courts either as plaintiffs or defendants. Defending defamation proceedings is particularly onerous, as all the plaintiff needs to prove is that the words were published of him and that they were capable of bringing him into disrepute. On the other hand, the defendant must establish that the words were published in circumstances that fall within one of the defences. The defendant's workload in defamation proceedings is therefore much more voluminous and difficult than it is in any other type of proceeding.

It is in those circumstances that this Government has ruthlessly chosen from among its many critics certain defendants whom it is, to quote the former Premier, "pursuing to the hilt". In doing this, Petersen is not jeopardising any of his millions and can, therefore, safely adopt a gung-ho approach to the litigation, as he knows that it is only the defendants' money or the tax-payers' money that is at risk. This amounts to financial terrorism of a select group of political opponents.

In 1982 John Sinclair was ordered to pay the former Premier's costs of defending a defamation action brought by Sinclair. At that time those costs amounted to more than \$30,000 and were to be paid by way of the garnishee of Sinclair's wages. That is one of the most disgraceful and despicable actions ever perpetrated in this State. How the former Premier could pretend that he had the respect of the people of Queensland after that escapes me. If it cost Sinclair \$30,000 four or five years ago, what would it cost today?

Cost orders are the traditional and usual means by which courts control the conduct of litigants to ensure that any use of legal process is carefully considered. In the proceedings I am talking about, it is obvious that there are no cost constraints. These actions initiated by the former Premier have been characterised by extravagance, an unusual predominance of Queen's Counsel, even in minor matters, and a variety of other unreasonably incurred expenses.

If Petersen were not publicly funded, it is much less likely that such extravagance would occur. Of course, the other effect of the extravagant use of applications and senior counsel is to force defendants to incur similar costs in their defence. As it stands, Petersen makes these decisions and the public pays for the consequential orders for costs. Petersen and the Government escape the disciplinary jurisdiction of the court. I ask the Premier, Mr Ahern: what guide-lines has he placed on the continued public funding of the former Premier's litigation? Are they the same guide-lines espoused in this House by the former Attorney-General, guide-lines that are gravely deficient in a variety of ways in that they fail to specify from whom the legal advice is to be obtained; they fail to provide for publication of that written advice to justify the funding decision to tax-payers, who must pay for it; they fail to provide for the assessment of costs that have been properly incurred, a failure which amounts to a blank cheque to Ministers and their private lawyers; and, as indicated by Mr Clauson in an answer to the Leader of the Opposition on 2 April this year, they have already been extended to the personal staff of Ministers, the absurdity of which is demonstrated by noting that unlimited funds are now apparently available to some 150 personal ministerial staff?

The guide-lines are particularly wanting with respect to defamation actions for the following reasons: they refer to statements that are actionable—I have already touched on this—and almost any derogatory comment about another person is actionable. The real question in initiating a defamation action is whether there is a likely defence available to the defendant. So, by considering only whether a particular comment is actionable, the guide-lines ignore the possibility or probability that the defendant will succeed on a viable defence. The guide-lines should, therefore, also consider whether there are likely defences available to the defendant before public funding is granted.

**A Government member:** You are boring us to death.

**Mr De LACY:** This needs to be said. It is something that has not previously been said and it is being said today.

One of the many other problems with the guide-lines is that they tend to remove from the province of the particular plaintiff the control of the action. For instance, it is a reasonably fair bet that Mr McKechnie, the former Minister, who is a plaintiff in two actions, has simply no idea at all of what stage his actions are at, of what defences have been raised against him, of what costs have been incurred so far or of what his likely prospects of success are. Can he answer those questions? Of course he cannot. As he is not picking up the bill, it is immaterial to him. In other words, because of public funding, the actions take on more of the character of the Government against a particular defendant than they do of a private action between private plaintiffs and defendants. Of course, it is the latter with which defamation law is concerned.

Another shortcoming of the guide-lines is that they take no account of the public interest as to whether public funds ought to be used in a manner that intimidates ordinary citizens against criticising the Government of the day. Ordinary people making criticisms of the Government in any respect that brings it into any disrepute can be

subjected to the financial terrorism that these actions involve. Simply, the legal costs of defending such actions would force ordinary people to sell their homes and perhaps incur life-long debts.

There are a number of other long-term effects of these defamation actions. The first and most direct consequence of the initiation of these actions has been a constant stream of threats from Petersen that he would sue his opponents into the ground. He said—

“I have told my legal people to keep on going whether it costs \$100,000 or \$200,000.”

Big deal! The Government is picking up the tab. On another occasion he threatened to take the Leader of the Opposition “right through the cleaners”.

On 7 October 1986, during the Bond \$400,000 defamation scandal, while standing on the steps of the Executive Building, Petersen said—

“I didn’t get what I wanted but there’s another few coming up, as I indicated.”

It appears that Petersen really believes that he is going to get \$400,000 in damages from each defendant in these actions and he has had no hesitation in threatening them with that prospect, even on the floor of the Parliament.

The Opposition also has information that the former Premier issued a general direction to his solicitors, Morris, Fletcher and Cross, to sue anyone making a comparison of his regime with the Marcos regime. Such general directions are never made in privately funded litigation, for obvious cost reasons. Such carte blanche leads to sloppy handling by solicitors, for instance the issuing of two writs against one ALP member on the same subject-matter, which led to one having to be discontinued at tax-payers’ expense.

In summary, the issue of public funding of defamation litigation has the following implications—

- (1) funding affects the outcome of the litigation;
- (2) funding enables plaintiffs to escape the disciplinary jurisdiction of the court, such discipline having traditionally taken the form of costs;
- (3) funding allows the Government to financially terrorise its citizens and critics;
- (4) funding is a gross misuse of public funds in that it enables sloppy directions, sloppy conduct or actions, overuse of court applications and overuse of litigation itself; and
- (5) similar funding does not occur in any other State or federally.

I have taken the time to spell out these viewpoints in some detail. I ask the Premier to put an end to this travesty of justice and to implement guide-lines—published guide-lines—in regard to the future public funding of ministerial litigation so that this travesty of justice can never again occur in Queensland.

**Mr HINZE (South Coast) (12.13 p.m.):** I rise to support the Government’s nomination of Lin Powell as Speaker of this Parliament.

I claim to be one of the senior members of this Parliament, along with Sir William Knox and Bill Lickiss, and under those circumstances I believe that I am justified in making a contribution to the debate on this very important occasion.

My contribution will be constructive. I congratulate publicly the newly elected Premier. He is a young man. It is a young man’s world. I am pleased that Mike Ahern has been elected to lead the National Party in this great State. Who knows, perhaps in 20 years’ time honourable members will be singing his praises for breaking records in relation to the length of term of office in this State.

I congratulate Bill Gunn on being elected the deputy leader to assist Mike in the days ahead. The Queensland Government has a major job ahead of it. I think that it behoves this Parliament to do everything that it can for the benefit of the State in general.

I was a member of this Parliament in the days of Sir David Nicholson, Bill Lonergan, Jim Houghton, Sel Muller, John Warner, Kev Lingard and now, of course, the Government's latest nominee, Mr Lin Powell. I am sure that all honourable members will find him to be an excellent Speaker. He has a trained brain and is a young man with plenty of ability. He will be tough and he will give no quarter. That is the way it should be. The members in this Parliament want a fair go and I believe that he will give them a fair go.

**Mr Yewdale:** You're all right at abusing the Chair; you're at it all the time.

**Mr HINZE:** The honourable member has never heard me abuse the Chair during my long period in this Parliament. He knows that I have never disregarded the Chair.

**Mr Yewdale:** Of course you have.

**Mr HINZE:** No, that has never happened.

I am giving this House an indication of my opinion of the Government's nominee, Mr Powell. I believe that he will wear the cloak of Speaker with dignity and decorum in this Parliament and I am positive that in the days ahead the debates will benefit from his Speakership.

I have been a member of this Parliament under such leaders as the late Sir Frank Nicklin, Jack Pizzey, Gordon Chalk and Queensland's recent Premier, Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen. I do not wish to engage in a long dialogue in this Chamber concerning Queensland's Premier who resigned yesterday. History has recorded the work that the man has done in this State and, irrespective of what I might say, all I can do is congratulate him. As he said on television last night, he had a one-track mind; it was Queensland. Nothing can be taken away from him. During all of the days that he represented this Government in Queensland everything he did was designed for the benefit of this State. Of course he had major arguments and they were all designed in an attempt to improve the living standards of Queenslanders.

He had a valid argument concerning funding to Queensland from the Labor Government in Canberra. When compared to State Labor Governments, it could easily be argued that Queensland is not treated reasonably and fairly. When the federation of the States was implemented, one of the primary considerations of the people who put this nation together was that all the States should be treated fairly, squarely and equally. Everyone knows that at present this is not happening. Every Minister in this Parliament can claim—as I can claim in relation to road funding—that Queensland is not receiving its fair share of funding. That argument can be used quite effectively by every other Minister in this Parliament. Nothing can be done except to argue it out around the table with the Labor Government in Canberra. That has to be done in order to ensure that Queensland will receive the funds that it is entitled to.

I refer to the concern expressed by other members this morning regarding the defamation cases. As a Minister I would like to see these cases withdrawn. I do not want to see the position continue whereby the Government and the Ministers benefit. I for one will make it quite clear to my leader that, so far as I am concerned, I wish to see fair play. This idea that publicly funded actions can be taken against members opposite or any other member in this place must cease. It will be to the great credit of our new leader if he accepts a little bit of advice from an older head. I do not know how this will be brought about.

**Mr Austin:** A back-bencher.

**Mr HINZE:** A back-bencher for the time being.

The step should be taken to try to put some of the palings back on the fence. I wish to see good government in this State and a strong Government in this Parliament. I do not wish to have an advantage over anyone concerning this matter. I do not know how the legal boys can work this out but, from where I sit, I wish to see a cessation of the idea that action can be taken against other members. I have already begun to indicate

how sincere I am about this matter. A member of the Opposition and I were involved in a legal action in court. I said to him, "You pay your expenses and I will pay mine." He said, "You have got more money than I have." I said, "I doubt that." He said, "Can we settle it somehow?" I said, "I will pay double the amount and you pay half." He said, "Okay." We made a deal and the matter is finished. I would like to see that kind of thing happen more often. In relation to cronyism——

**Mr Burns:** In relation to cronyism—can you dig up the road to your pub?

**Mr HINZE:** That rotten road to which the honourable member refers, and which he thinks that I had built, cost me \$100,000. What makes me dirty is that I find that some other people are getting roads for nothing. Sometimes when the takings are not so hot I have to put up a detour sign into the famous pub to make sure that people go through the drive-in. I pick them up on the way back from the Gold Coast. The reason for that is that I paid over \$100,000 to build the rotten road, but everybody thinks that I got it for nothing.

Let me get back to cronyism. I want to take the member for Sherwood to task in relation to the supposed cronyism. Opposition members know what happened at the last election—they used cronyism as much as they could. They got inside everybody they could, including some of the supposed friends of the National Party. Great advertisements were placed in newspapers indicating to the electorate at large in Queensland the cronyism that existed in the National Party. What happened? The National Party was re-elected with its best majority ever! We were able to say, "The electorate does not believe you."

As far as I am concerned, I would like to see things thrashed out on the floor of this Parliament. Opposition members refer to my position as the Minister for Local Government and to the fact that some people who are supposed to be friends of the Government receive advantages. As far as I am concerned, the subject of the approval of applications made to local authorities can be thrashed out on the floor of this Parliament; then there will be no argument. The member for Sherwood can forget about this cronyism business. Mr Clerk, you can take for granted that there will be no cronyism.

The Opposition challenges our young leader. Rome was not built in a day. I tell Opposition members that he will be making the alterations to which they have referred. They will see a parliamentary public accounts committee and, perhaps, an all-parliamentary committee. I believe in that. I watched in my place here last week——

**Opposition members interjected.**

**Mr HINZE:** Opposition members can laugh their heads off; it makes no difference.

I sat in my chair here and I watched a colleague Mr Katter accept nine amendments from the Opposition side of the Chamber. Is that not something like an all-parliamentary committee, when such a large number of amendments to a Bill are accepted? What I am saying is that we made a mistake in that Bill. We should not have brought it into the Chamber and had to accept nine amendments. From now on the Opposition will find it totally different. If a Bill has to be amended, it will have to be much more tightly——

**Mr Burns:** Are you saying that Joh was responsible for all this? Why didn't you change it before?

**Mr HINZE:** I am not saying that Joh was responsible. What I am saying is this——

**Mr Burns:** Why didn't you change it before? You're blaming Joh for everything. You did it yourself before and now you're blaming Joh for it.

**Mr HINZE:** I am not blaming Joh. What I am saying——

**Mr Burns interjected.**

**Mr HINZE:** Squibbing out, my foot! All I am saying to the honourable member is that if he expects better government in this Parliament——

**Mr Burns** interjected.

**Mr HINZE:** If he expects respect in this place, he will have to give some, too. If he expects it from this side of the House—he should not worry because he will get a fair go, a fair shake—he will have to give his share of it, too.

**Mr Burns:** It will be the first time we have ever got any in your day.

**Mr HINZE:** How would the honourable member like to go fishing?

If the honourable member provides the tug tellum, I will go with him. The honourable member knows what tug tellum is, doesn't he? Mullet gut! Yes; if the honourable member gets the mullet gut, I will go with him.

All that I wanted to do was to indicate quite clearly to the Parliament that I think that we are in for better days. We have a young leader. I am prepared to give him every assistance to which he is entitled. A new Speaker will be elected. I can assure honourable members that as sure as they are sitting in this Chamber he will be as tough as any Speaker we have ever had. I conclude by saying that I have very grave doubts that the Opposition will see in Brisbane the tallest building in Queensland.

**Mr GYGAR (Stafford) (12.25 p.m.):** If this is the first hour of the first day in a new era, things are not going to change very much. One of the greatest sources of shame in Queensland has been its Parliament. It is a standing joke, and things do not seem to be any different.

I ask honourable members to look at what has happened in this House this morning and to look at what is happening right now. Things have not changed; the old dog squad is at it again. That juvenile rabble that sits on the back benches of the Government—that bunch of caterwauling snivellers—thinks that it can grovel and shout its way into Cabinet by abusing anybody who dares to speak out against the National Party.

Honourable members and anybody who was in the public gallery at that time will recall that, two weeks ago, anyone who said a word against the Honourable Sir Johannes Bjelke-Petersen was screamed at, shouted at, abused and vilified.

Do honourable members recall what was said during the vote of confidence motion? Somewhere along the line a bit of overseas travelling must have occurred during the short recess of this Parliament. Members of the National Party found themselves on the road to Damascus. The scales fell from their eyes, and they are back here again. Anybody who now wishes to say anything in favour of Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen gets the dog squad treatment. I doubt if anything is really going to change. I hope that it will.

I am sure that Mr Ahern is a man of goodwill and great vision. However, he carries with him the baggage of history. How long will it be before the first gag is applied in this House? I predict that we will see it before 5 p.m. today. Are we really going to see a new era, or will it be more of the same old dog food in a brand new tin with a flash new label?

**Mr Innes:** Mr Austin nodded his head.

**Mr GYGAR:** Mr Austin will agree with anything if he thinks that it is appropriate at the time and is good for his advancement.

Much depends upon the Speaker in this House. We are here to elect our new Speaker. What are honourable members after? Hopefully, they will elect a man who has experience and a knowledge of Standing Orders. Hopefully he will be a person with a fierce spirit of independence from Government pressure. For openers, that precludes one of the nominees. Above all, the Speaker must have a clear understanding of the fact that this House is a members' House. It is not a Ministers' House. It is not a rubber stamp for everything that the Government wants to do. It is not a place in which any

outrage can be committed so long as the Government has the numbers to crash it through against any principle of the Westminster system of democracy.

I support Mr Lickiss, who is a former Chairman of Committees and a man of experience who has shown that he has those qualities. I regret to say that the first decision of the Ahern administration has failed to produce a candidate who has those qualities.

I hope that Mr Powell will be a good Speaker. Obviously, a bit of numbers-crunching will occur. None of those members who have a forlorn wish for democracy to live in this State believes other than that Government members will line up one behind the other and gratefully tick the space next to Mr Powell's name when they are asked to cast their votes. I hope that Mr Powell does well. I hope that he finds it within himself to acknowledge what is going to happen. If he is elected as Speaker, I hope that he will recognise the office that he holds and will do something about it. Regretfully, I doubt it.

This new session of Parliament is critical for Queensland and for what now passes as the National Party. It would well behove all honourable members to remember that they are not here just to elect a Speaker; they are here for a session of the Parliament. I hope that they are going to get one, but I doubt it. Honourable members will find out this afternoon if Parliament will be thrown onto the scrap-heap while the National Party goes about its internal machinations.

What a performance honourable members are witnessing. Members of what is still known as the National Party are furiously discarding all of the policies on which the Government was elected, which even formed the basis of the recent State Budget. They are discarding the ballast of the sinking National Party ship and, because of what has been going on so far in this House, they are making Pontius Pilate look like a rank amateur.

I hope that this Government will change things. For the sake of Queensland, I hope that we will see a new era in Government. God knows that we deserve it. We have put up with the old one for long enough. However, if the Ahern Government is to change the dictatorial, archaic system that the Government and all the members of the Government have happily acquiesced in for years, and if it wishes to drag us into the twentieth century, I suggest that it could start at no better place than the Savage report—a report whose recommendations and whose author were well and truly savaged by the now discredited and rejected Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen.

It is worth remembering that what was said by that Premier was supported and endorsed by all members of the Government—or both members of the Government, one should perhaps say, because there are only two of them at the moment. It is worth looking at what the proponents of the new era have already thrown out and to ask them if anything will be done about it. They stand up and say, “Big changes. We will start to have accountable government.”

Recommendations 7, 19 and 21 of the Savage report wanted Ministers to start taking responsibility again. They wanted the National Party to act like a free-enterprise Government by abolishing quangos. What was the response by those people who now say they are the new era? “Minister for Justice and Attorney-General will provide a further report.” That one has been shoved to one side on the back burner.

Recommendation 44 of the Savage report was that a Cabinet Budget committee be set up. That Cabinet committee was to look at the Budget so that there was not just a one-man band in charge and one dictator, but a true Westminster system. That recommendation was also thrown out. No action was to be taken. If Mr Ahern is serious, will we see a change in that policy and something done about the Savage committee recommendations?

Perhaps recommendation 79 is the rock on which Mr Ahern will sink or swim. That recommendation dealt with efficiency auditing. One thing that the previous administration—the one that Government members cheered about and said was so good

in Queensland that it would also run Australia, the one which they now want to get away from—could not stand and did not want was efficiency auditing. If it had efficiency auditing, the incompetent Ministers, their cronystic tactics and their ability to manipulate and fandangle contracts would have been exposed. Let us see if Mr Ahern is serious about that and see if efficiency auditing of the public service will be part of this grand new vision of excellence for Queensland, or whether it is just the same old dog food in a new tin.

What about recommendation 86 concerning an economic strategy unit? It was proposed by Savage that our Budget should be constructed by people who took into account the future economic viability of this State and that it be taken out of the hands of the Leo Hielschers of this world, who are basically bean-counters looking around to see how much money they can get in and then how they can divvy it up to put it out. Savage recommended that something should be done about the impact of policies on the economy of this State. There is no better example of that than in the mining industry, which is being driven broke by a rapacious Treasury which is anxious to extract every cent it can out of profits on rail freights. Will we see an economic strategy unit, or will we see the same old day-by-day ad hockery that has been an outstanding feature—

**Mr Hinton:** You've never been in a mine.

**Mr GYGAR:** Mr Hinton should not interject. He has no chance of getting into Cabinet. Honourable members have already witnessed that today. Poor Mr Hinton had the lectern in front of him and was ready to speak. However, the controllers—the minders; the puppeteers—trotted down, took away his lectern, put it over to the side and said, "You're out." I do not think that things have changed very much.

I would like to hear from Mr Hinton. We share a hobby. We are both amateur calligraphers. However, I must say that I write on vellum sheets and give them away to people; but Mr Hinton, unfortunately, has a practice that is not quite as well regarded in the community.

The Government really needs to do something about the parlous state of education and law and order in this State. I will not canvass all of the law and order issues that the Bjelke-Petersen administration rejected out of hand, but I will mention some: one homicide every 36 hours; 3.6 breaking and entering offences every hour and 22 other crimes an hour. Government members stand and say, "We will give the police \$70m for a new police headquarters, but there is no way we will give the police the proper resources to operate." They cut the budget for police so that there are fewer patrol cars and fewer police in the community. Government members cannot live with that.

I have been a member of Parliament for 12 years and I have heard many people stand up in this place and talk about principles. I am yet to see any members of the Government really start to drive themselves towards fulfilling those principles when pragmatism begins to overcome them. If Government members are fair dinkum about a grand new era, law and order and education had better be high on the agenda. The real linchpin of the sincerity of Government members in the economics and policies of this State will be whether or not a mini-Budget is produced in February to address the abuses of the previous Budget and the incompetence and imposts placed on Queensland by abandonment of education and law and order. If Queensland is to have a new era, the people who acquiesced happily in the previous Budget will have to take a slight overseas trip via Damascus and come back to Queensland to bring in their new vision that is contemplated for the people of Queensland.

**Mr Veivers:** I just wanted to announce that Tom Burns is putting on free beer. Why don't you go and have one?

**Mr GYGAR:** The member for Southport wants to have a go. He is on the short list and this is his big chance. Mick is going to have a go. He knows that already five Cabinet Ministers are going to get the boot, so he is in there for the main chance.

It is good to see that the sense of priority of Government back-benchers has not changed. If there is a free beer from Tom Burns, or a Minister on the twenty-third floor, they will be in it and they will nod their way all along the line if they get it. I do not think anything has changed, if that sort of nonsense passes for mature debate in this Assembly where the laws and rules for Queensland are being made.

Mr Veivers interjected.

Mr GYGAR: I was happy to take the interjection made by the honourable member for Southport. It will appear in *Hansard*, and he will have to live with it, not me. If that is the harbinger of the grand new era, I hope a "business as usual" sign has been put up at the front of Parliament House, because that is about all that is happening.

I turn now to examine national parks and the environment, which are the issues that earned Bjelke-Petersen and his mates their greatest odium as far as the people of Queensland are concerned. The Government will be faced with a test over those issues, too, and it is called Penrith Island. All honourable members would remember Lindeman Island. Government members certainly do! Government members remember the trouble they got into, but not because they wanted to do the wrong thing. They worked out that the real cause of the trouble with Lindeman Island was the fact that they had to bring a motion before the house to rescind gazettal of a national park. They have learned their lesson and they will not fall for that one again. It is not that they will not subdivide any more national parks and it is not that they will not hand them over to their mates; they simply will not bring any more motions to rescind gazettal notices about national parks. That is what they are up to in relation to Penrith Island.

At the moment, no revocation at all has been proposed in respect of Penrith Island. Government members have what is called a magnificent legal fiction, which is called a development under the National Parks and Wildlife Act. What do Government members want for this tiny island, this national park where turtles and birds nest, this unspoilt place? They want an airfield and a camping ground. By the way, the airfield will occupy approximately two-thirds of the length of the island, which is not exactly huge. Coincidentally, the airfield will also run across the top of the turtle rookery, but those sorts of things are not worried about when economic development is at stake. Government members did not even call for expressions of interest. Instead, they laid down, "This is what we want on there", and they decided that they would do it through the National Parks and Wildlife Act. Why? They did it to avoid having to come to Parliament and again face the scandal that occurred over Lindeman Island.

Who was consulted about this matter? Was the National Parks and Wildlife Service asked whether it was a good idea to build a runway across a turtle rookery in a national park? Of course it was not. If the professionals were not asked, who was? Already disturbing rumours are circulating about who will get the development rights. It would seem that the people concerned have close ties to certain individuals in the Government.

Mr Ahern has said that Queenslanders can look forward to a stop being put to cronyism and a stop to all of the nonsense of the past. I have to say that the would-be rapists of Lindeman Island have not changed their clothes. They are still here—still sitting on the Government's front benches. One would hope that Mr Ahern, at least, will do something about it. They have not changed their clothes. They are still wearing their white shoes. Penrith Island will be a litmus test for this new vision of excellence for Queensland to see whether the Government is fair dinkum or whether the sign is still out the front saying "business as usual".

I do not intend to tie up the House except to say that there is a great challenge in this for Mr Ahern. He is a man whom I can say honestly I have admired over the years. In this place all things are relative. To be first amongst the National Party is regrettably not a great deal of recommendation for him. However, he is a man who has shown that at least he has some backbone; that at least he has spine. At the moment he is telling a pretty good story. I have to say that it does not look as though the story will be delivered.

Will his performance match the promise? Frankly, I doubt it. However, with two years to go in the life of this Parliament, for the sake of the people of this State I hope that things will get better in Queensland. I can say that reasonably confidently, because things could hardly get worse. With the same bunch still in charge, there still remains a distinct possibility that things will not change in Queensland. I really do not think that the old dairy cow that has been running this State for so long will throw its brand in 24 hours and suddenly revive itself, particularly when the herd mooing behind contains the same tired faces.

Mr NEWTON (Glass House) (12.41 p.m.): It is with much pleasure that I contribute to this somewhat unusual debate prior to the election of a member to the high and honourable office of Speaker. I take objection to the statements made by the member for Cairns. At present he is not in the Chamber. He made the statement that a writ has been issued against him. I hold my office as a member of this House in high esteem and I will carry it out.

The office of Speaker is an office which leaves the reluctant member exposed—and I mean that—and in a very lonely position in the House. For a Parliament to run smoothly, the Speaker has to be respected by all members. An ideal situation would be one in which a Speaker, once elected by a ballot of the whole House, retained the confidence of the House, was not opposed at elections by the Opposition and did not attend party meetings. In other words, not only could he behave independently in the House but he also could be seen to be independent. Unfortunately, that is not a system which applies in any State or Federal Government of Australia. It is part of the true Westminster system as applies in the House of Commons in Great Britain.

My main purpose in speaking is to support Mr Lin Powell, who has been chosen by the National Party Government to contest the election of Speaker. Other members of the Party could have equally filled this high office with distinction. However, at the meeting held for the purpose of selecting a candidate, those members did not have the numbers. To them I offer my commiserations.

The honourable member for Isis, Mr Lin Powell, will bring to this House a wealth of experience. He has had a long and distinguished career, first as a back-bench member for many years—in which time he served his apprenticeship—and then as a Minister of the Crown in the difficult portfolio of Education. It is a portfolio in which every Mum and Dad, social reformer and critic is an expert, giving advice after superficial thought to a problem which no doubt Mr Powell burnt the midnight oil attempting to solve. He handled that portfolio well and will do equally well as Speaker of this House.

Whilst I am on my feet, I also wish to congratulate our new Premier, the honourable member for Landsborough, on achieving what must be the pinnacle of his career. Most members would dearly love to hold the reins of office and have a great say in the control of the purse-strings of this State. Any leader worth his salt puts his own imprint on any high office he holds. The honourable member for Landsborough will not be an exception. It is inevitable that he will not be able to please everyone, as has been stated in the House today. No human can do that. Irrespective of the merit of whatever is proposed, there are always others with contrary views. In being elevated to the position of Premier, he has not been elected as a dictator, benign or otherwise.

He has stated that he will listen to his colleagues in Cabinet and the public at large. However, no Government can govern by consensus. The public at large wants a decisive Government that does not vacillate and knows where it is going. Mike Ahern will lead such a Government with distinction.

I wish to pay tribute to the former Premier, the Honourable Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen, who dedicated his life to politics at great cost to his family and for the great benefit of this great State of Queensland.

Mr D'ARCY (Woodridge) (12.46 p.m.): I rise very briefly to support the nomination of the member for Bundaberg, Mr Campbell, for the position of Speaker of the House. In doing so, I take on board the remarks that have been made about the Premier, Mr

Ahern, democracy and the vision of excellence that he promises the State of Queensland. As other members have done, I wish to point out that he has a very difficult job ahead of him.

Surely one of the first planks of democracy is the enshrining of the principle of one vote, one value. This National Party Government has not given that to this State. Mr Ahern has already ducked the major question of the gerrymander.

**Mr Austin:** What about Peter Beattie up behind the cowshed trying to deliver?

**Mr D'ARCY:** No, I am speaking about one vote, one value.

The current position in Queensland is similar to the rotten boroughs and pocket boroughs in the England of old. One vote, one value should be enshrined in the democracy of the State. That should be the starting point for Mr Ahern's vision of excellence; it should be the first plank. If a new Government was to start from there, there might be some hope.

Let me point out that there is no hope. Obviously I do not want to embarrass the Clerk, but he would know that in 1982 the Standing Orders Committee of this House met under the then Speaker, Mr Sel Muller. All parties were represented. Mr Casey and I represented the Labor Party and the former Premier and Dr Edwards represented the coalition. That Standing Orders Committee conducted a review and prepared for the Parliament a package that was agreed to by the former Premier, Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen. He voted for the changes. The recommendations were to change the format of question-time significantly to provide for the tabling of questions and to give the Opposition an opportunity to debate ministerial statements. They also provided for the establishment of committees. All honourable members know where those recommendations were defeated. Although they were agreed to by Bjelke-Petersen and Dr Edwards at that time, they were rolled by the back bench of the National Party, the very same people who have now assumed power in this State after Bjelke-Petersen.

I wish to consider the reports that have gathered dust—the Savage report, the Sturgess report and the Lucas report. How much dust will be gathered by the report of the Fitzgerald inquiry? The recommendations contained in those reports have simply gathered dust.

When Queenslanders reflect on the Premiership of Joh Bjelke-Petersen, they will have a lot to ask of Mr Ahern. The social concepts invoked by Bjelke-Petersen have to be changed. They were outdated and outmoded for today's society. That is one of the reasons why the National Party dumped him.

I am glad to see that Mr Lester is in the Chamber. The vindictiveness of his legislation towards the working people of this State is legendary. It has been a tragedy for Queenslanders that that vindictiveness led to the SEQEB strike and to the sackings that occurred as a result. It has already been mentioned by the Leader of the Opposition and I think one other honourable member that the tragedy for family life in Queensland that occurred because of that particular episode is a disaster in our history. It was done with a vindictiveness that nobody was happy to be a part of.

This Government, under the leadership of the previous Premier, did operate by fear and favour. The street march legislation was nothing more than an attempt at gaining political popularity. It was an attempt to take away democratic rights.

Another matter that this Government has a lot to answer for—and I hope some changes will be made—is its treatment of our Aboriginal people. The disaster of the last three or four decades in Queensland has led to the situation in which the Government is still no closer to solving the overall problem. The paternalistic and patronising attitudes of this Government's policies have done nothing to help the Aboriginal people of this State, which has the largest population of Aborigines in Australia.

The Premier, Mr Ahern, promises a great deal in regard to the economy. That is where the Bjelke-Petersen Government failed most decisively. Honourable members are always hearing about the great building of Queensland. When one looks at what has

really happened over the past three or four decades and analyses it on an economic basis, one realises that it is absolutely essential that any Government in Queensland have an economic strategy committee that is able to oversee the development, manufacturing, commercialisation and overall business of Queensland. That has not occurred.

There was the disaster of the mineral boom. This State experienced a massive mineral boom which, given world conditions, was probably the best thing that ever happened to Queensland. This Government totally and utterly failed to capitalise on it. It ripped the minerals out of the ground and wrote contracts as though they were going out of fashion, contracts that after the boom were not worth the paper on which they were written. The Japanese rejected them. What was the Government left with? Nothing! Queensland did not get the tertiary treatment of minerals; it did not get the industry that should have flowed from the development of those minerals. It was a disaster. All Queenslanders were left with were holes in the ground and empty pieces of paper in the form of contracts.

The mineral boom came and went. It will come again and prices will rise again. At that time it is up to a Government of Queensland—a sensible Government—to ensure that proper manufacturing policies are introduced and tertiary treatment of minerals occurs in Queensland and Australia.

There is also the matter of the manufacturing base. The Bjelke-Petersen Government steadfastly avoided a manufacturing base in Queensland. Industry was forced out of this State because it was not wanted. That takes me back to the closure of the Cairncross dock, which was the last vestige of heavy industry in Queensland.

Queensland has no white goods industry; it has no base industries. When the other States recently picked up in the economic field, for that very reason Queensland was left lagging behind. The Queensland Government has been far too slow to meet technological change and the technological age. The disgrace of our education budgets proves that.

Probably the most important reason for having an economic strategy committee is that we are experiencing a boom in tourism; it is the age of the tourist. The dollar is down and tourism is booming. This Government was very slow to grasp the tourist dollar. I can remember the days when the Gold Coast was virtually Australia's tourist capital. This Government would not even supply the Gold Coast with basic services.

Today, the Queensland coast, its islands and the Barrier Reef have been opened up, and the situation has arisen in which the first developer in with the biggest dollar is able to ruin a beauty spot. There is no planning. It is the man who is in first with the biggest dollar who has, in many instances, been able to wreck a beauty spot that would have attracted tourists. The point that I am making is that in the future, simply to obtain an economic advantage, the beauty of Queensland that the tourists come to see will be destroyed for the sake of a quick quid. Queensland desperately needs legislation to ensure that those developments are planned through an economic strategy committee that has immediate access to the Premier. This will ensure the involvement of all departments such as the Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Service, the Harbours and Marine Department, the Local Government Department, the departments involved with tourism and the various other departments and will result in the beauty spots being kept, development taking place in an orderly fashion and the protection of foreshores and harbours. Queensland will then achieve real progress.

I turn now to the letter from Mr Clauson. He was in the House a moment ago. Two speakers have already commented on his letter. One of the problems is that letters of that kind do nothing for the dignity of this Parliament. I wish to refer to the Fitzgerald inquiry in this vein: too many reports, such as the Lucas report, the Sturgess report and the Savage report have been allowed to gather dust. Queensland is in the middle of an inquiry that will obviously result in legislative changes. The inquiry might continue for another six months. That is all very well, but surely, as those points of law which require changes to legislation and regulations are made, this Government will do something and

not merely say, "Tut, tut. We are not going to talk about the Fitzgerald inquiry." That would be ridiculous. From reading the reports, the chairman of the TAB—who is a QC appearing at the Fitzgerald inquiry on behalf of the Government—gave his blessing and was instrumental in the general manager of the TAB appearing before the inquiry. He gave certain evidence involving TAB accounts and the way they were opened and operated. It is obvious that, contrary to Commonwealth Government regulations, these accounts were used to launder money and, from what has been said, it is also obvious that the accounts were used by illegal SP book-makers themselves.

Surely the responsible Minister will not wait another six months for a report and then shove it under the desk? Surely this Government will ensure that the regulations of the Commonwealth Government, which insist on the banking of deposits, will be enforced, and that the implementation of the regulations involving the taxation of those accounts through which money is being laundered will take precedence at the present time. The Minister has a responsibility to the Parliament and to the people of Queensland to state what action he is taking about these matters now and not in six or 12 months. These matters are now being raised in the public arena. The Government knows that there are loopholes. The Government's quangos have been operating in a sloppy manner and, now that this matter has come to light, surely the Government will do something about them.

I wish Mr Ahern all the best, but I do not believe that there is any chance of him producing anything other than a new face.

**Mr SCHUNTNER** (Mount Coot-tha) (12.59 p.m.): I rise to speak in support of the nomination of the honourable member for Moggill for the position of Speaker. No other member who has been nominated for this position has the experience, knowledge, integrity and familiarity with the Standing Orders appropriate for a person who is to occupy the position of Speaker as the honourable member for Moggill.

**Mr McPhie:** How would you know that? You are never in here.

**Mr SCHUNTNER:** I hope the honourable member for Toowoomba North is never afflicted by a pinched nerve in the back.

I shall spend most of my time criticising the nomination of Mr Powell by the Premier, Mr Ahern. I have had contact with Mr Powell and Mr Ahern over quite a long period, and I make no bones about the fact that I have had in the past considerable respect for both those people. Mr Ahern and I had a great deal of contact during the sittings of the select committee of inquiry into education. Some people may remember that the Queensland Teachers Union had placed an order on all members of the union to have nothing to do with that inquiry. That constituted contempt of Parliament. It was actually suggested that, because of that action by the Queensland Teachers Union, I might be brought before the bar of Parliament on a charge of contempt.

Mr Ahern and I spent many hours in conversation sorting out a number of very difficult issues concerning the establishment of that select committee of inquiry. I acknowledge the integrity with which that task was done. Mr Powell and I knew each other first through our joint membership of the council of the Queensland Teachers Union. We had more dealings, of course, in my role as president of the Queensland Teachers Union and his role as Minister. However, it is the dealings of the last couple of weeks that have absolutely horrified me and have led me to make the statements that I am about to make in this speech. What we are seeing here is the greatest confidence trick one could imagine being perpetrated on Queensland when Mr Powell is nominated by Mr Ahern, who talks about a new direction for Queensland and visions of excellence.

In talking about those visions of excellence, I want to make some significant reference to the select committee of inquiry which Mr Ahern chaired, and of which Mr Powell was a member. That select committee of inquiry produced six interim reports and a final report. It received 2 750 written submissions. The inquiry had 303 separate appearances before it. Mr Ahern and Mr Powell had the opportunity, as very few others had—and there were three other members of that select committee—to know the wishes

of the people of Queensland with respect to education. But what they have done since the publication of the report of the select committee on education is quite at odds with the wishes of the people. Yet these days we are hearing noises about visions of excellence and respecting the wishes of people. Since then, the Bassett committee of inquiry was established. I was a member of that committee of inquiry. A total of 987 submissions were received, again indicating very clearly the wishes of the people with respect to education.

The dynamic duo of Mr Ahern and Mr Powell, plus Mr Gunn—a former Minister for Education—had an enormous amount to answer for because of their failure to make the satisfactory progress that should have been made in education in recent years in Queensland.

Previously I have referred to the pathetic lack of political leadership in education in this State, and I repeat it now. It is no good for Mr Ahern or Mr Gunn to say, “That was Mr Powell’s fault. He was the Minister for Education. He has made these mistakes about school holidays, about this, that and the next thing.” These are Cabinet decisions. There is such a thing as the collective responsibility of Cabinet, and all three members stand equally to blame for those failures to which I have referred.

Let us consider now some of the recommendations of the select committee of inquiry. In the interim report that deals with secondary education, recommendation 10.1 states—

“That the size of the Board of Secondary School Studies should remain at a membership of twenty-three.”

Recommendation 10.2 (viii) states—

“. . . three persons nominated by the Minister”—

should be added to that board; there should be a change in the composition—

“who are representative of community interests, two of whom are to be concerned with commerce and industry, and one of whom is to be a parent appointed as such;”.

Why is it that those people who signed that report a few years ago voted only three weeks ago to get rid of that particular board? One of the reasons that were given to this House was that more representation from industry and parents was supposed to exist. That recommendation was made more than five years ago, but has not been implemented. This talk about visions of excellence is a lot of rubbish. There is plenty of evidence to support that in the documents that were produced by Mr Ahern and Mr Powell.

The select committee went on to say—

“We do not believe that the establishment of boards charged with the task of planning and co-ordination has been an unqualified success and we do not recommend that this approach be followed in this State.”

Yet, two or three weeks ago, those gentlemen brought before this House that very type of Bill for which the Government voted.

Section 6.1 of the select committee of inquiry recommended—and this is worth listening to closely—

“That a Ministry for Post-Secondary Education be established separate from the present Ministry for Education.”

The next recommendation was—

“That the Ministry for Post-Secondary Education be created by a reorganization of portfolios without increasing the size, and therefore the cost, of the Executive.”

How can anybody explain the conflict between those recommendations, which were signed by Mr Powell and Mr Ahern a few years ago, and recent decisions? It was recommended that the break should be at the end of secondary education and that a post-secondary education Ministry be created with the concoction that has been dreamed

up during the last four or five years for Education 2000, the P-10 curriculum and a host of other hoaxes that have been perpetrated upon the Queensland public.

Honourable members have heard the statements about visions of excellence. The record makes it very clear that that is merely a lot of rhetoric that will lead to nothing.

Another aspect of the performance of this Government that should be examined further is the unmet demand for tertiary places. For years there has been a problem in relation to the shortage of tertiary places for the large number of students who are eligible to enter tertiary institutions. I am not talking about the thousands of students who would like to enter tertiary institutions but who do not meet the qualifying criteria.

This Government talks about visions of excellence and how, with the absence of one member only, it is going to create a new direction. However, it has done exactly the opposite in terms of alleviating the problem of the shortage of tertiary places.

In 1986 the unmet demand for tertiary places, which I define as a percentage of people who were eligible for entry to those institutions but who could not gain a place because no places were available, was 16.6 per cent. At the beginning of 1987 that figure was 33.4 per cent, which represents a dramatic increase in anyone's language.

**Mr Sherrin:** Who funds tertiary education in this State?

**Mr SCHUNTNER:** Tertiary education throughout Australia is funded by a mixture of State and Federal funds. Victoria has done quite a lot towards overcoming its problems of the shortage of tertiary places. The honourable member for Mansfield should listen to what I am saying, and perhaps he will learn a little more and will not make such foolish interjections.

The Victorian Government, in conjunction with the Commonwealth, has decided to do something about the shortage of tertiary places. As a result, 1 500 tertiary places have been funded through that Government's activities. Therefore, Victoria is experiencing nothing like the problems that Queensland is. The interjection that was made by the honourable member for Mansfield indicates how little he knows about this subject.

The majority of people who are greatly concerned about gaining entrance to tertiary institutions are school-leavers. Of course, there are also those mature-age students who are seeking entry to tertiary institutions. According to the documentation that is produced, in statistical terms the cut-off is made at age 20. Students under the age of 20 who are eligible for entry into Queensland's tertiary institutions are in an even worse position, because 37.2 per cent of them will not receive the opportunity to enter those institutions. What State, nation or part of the world can afford the situation existing in Queensland in which 11 000 schoolchildren are qualified for entrance to tertiary institutions but are unable to get there? How will we compete on the world market if we have no vision of excellence that will generate a satisfactory outcome to that problem? We have heard about a vision of excellence, but the facts show the reality of the position.

In TAFE, the situation is no better. Queensland has 16.3 per cent of Australia's population. Queensland's TAFE enrolments are 12.1 per cent. When converted to numbers of people, we find that thousands of places are needed to accommodate the qualified people who are looking for entry to those TAFE courses.

Another aspect of the select committee that I must comment on is the hypocrisy about the aims of education. The problem arose this year when Mr Powell introduced into this House on April Fool's Day—perhaps there is some significance in that—an education Bill that proposed many changes in the control of education. Because of the public response, indicating enormous anger with it, it was shuffled off to a so-called consultative committee—a committee with very narrow guide-lines. The committee said, "How do we know what we are trying to do in education if we do not know the rationale for it?" It spent more than half its time developing a rationale.

Some years ago, in a select committee report, Mr Ahern and Mr Powell said—

“We think it is essential to the maintenance of public confidence, that the Parliament set out in the Education Act a general statement of its expectations with respect to the school system.”

They are fine sentiments. However, what happened? Not very much. Within the report they produced a set of aims. Unfortunately, they did not acknowledge where the aims came from. They plagiarised those aims from a British Green Paper on education, with one or two minor amendments to take into account the particular foibles of Queensland politics.

In 1982, the Queensland Teachers Union responded to a document that was put out by the Education Department that suggested that perhaps we should take some serious notice of this question of aims of education. At the time when the Queensland Teachers Union document was put out, I thought perhaps the document was a bit tough. However, the passage of time has really illustrated the truth of the statements that appear in that document. It was said by the Queensland Teachers Union document in response to the departmental document—

“... it appears that the Department has merely used the statement of aims as a public relations ploy.”

That is exactly what it has done. The statement of aims that was put out as a draft statement has been buried and has never seen the light of day since.

I turn now to the education budget. If we are to have a vision of excellence, we need a mini-Budget. I support the earlier comments by the member for Stafford. The effect of the Budget on education has been catastrophic. Many public meetings that I have attended and many other meetings have severely criticised many aspects of the Budget. Some aspects are the slashing of the teacher aide provisions and the unemployment of teachers that will follow. It will be interesting to see if a young graduating teacher of the surname Powell receives a job at the end of the year.

Another aspect is the increase of class sizes that will occur as enrolments increase and teacher numbers do not increase. I remind the member for Mansfield that the Budget provides nothing to improve the situation regarding the shortage of places in TAFE and tertiary institutions. The Government has done nothing to tackle the discipline problem in schools. If I were asked as a teacher what was one of the most difficult problems in large high schools that was militating against quality education, I would say that it was the difficulty in enforcing discipline in the schools. Government politicians in this State do not stand behind principals and enforce discipline.

I will move on quickly to the topic of distance education. As chairman of a committee of inquiry, Mr Ahern had a great interest and involvement in distance education, which I applaud. He was interested in the education of children in isolated areas and in the operation of isolated schools. Let me look into the recommendations of the committee and see how they match up with events that have transpired during the last couple of years. I am sure that the member for Mount Isa will be interested in this recommendation, which states—

“That the provision, at reasonable cost, of quality accommodation which in the hotter and dustier regions of the State should include air-conditioning, should be given a high priority.”

That recommendation was made seven years ago. The Kalkadoon High School at Mount Isa is in an isolated area. What priority and what vision of excellence has been evident in the past from Mr Ahern and his Cabinet colleagues?

Another recommendation states as follows—

“That an incentive scheme should be developed which will encourage teachers serving in isolated schools to extend their service in such schools beyond the minimum periods required by regulations.”

Everybody knows that one of the problems associated with education in far-distant areas is the problem of attracting and retaining experienced teachers in those particular schools.

I ask all honourable members in the Chamber to listen to the next recommendation, which I believe is of great significance when one considers the report on distant education that was produced a couple of years ago. In a select committee of inquiry recommendation, Mr Ahern and Mr Powell called for a controller of distance education to be appointed who would report directly to the assistant director-general of education. That recommendation runs counter to the division of schooling into a P-10 structure and a post-Year 10 structure, which the previous Cabinet and the Government, through its latest legislation and previous activity arising from the ministerial committee's report on distance education, have been proposing. A great deal of recent education policy conflicts with these words that indicate a new direction. The public rhetoric of a new direction and a vision of excellence conflict with the reality of what Mr Ahern and Mr Powell have demonstrated by their leadership in recent years.

Three or four years ago, an advisory committee on distance education was established. I was a late addition to that committee. No provision had been made for a Queensland Teachers Union representative to be a member of the committee. Following representations, I was invited to join that committee as president of the union. I have never seen such a farce in all my life. The whole exercise was a stunt from go to whoa. The committee travelled round Queensland and chartered light planes to go to all the little places at the back of beyond and take evidence from people in those areas. That evidence was valuable and important. Submissions were invited, and approximately 60 were received. Would honourable members believe that not one submission recommended that distance education be divided into two areas, one just happening to be P-10 education and the other happening to be for post-compulsory education? Not one submission suggested such a course; yet that was the finding of the committee of inquiry.

I was put under a great deal of pressure. I had many visits to the Department of Education, where officials told me about the wisdom of the report and why I should not write a minority report. I say with pride that I stood apart from that report and I wrote a minority report. I had nothing to do with the report that was finally adopted. Although I realise that some fine institutions were developed as a result of that report, it has not solved the problem of dealing with distance education in the longer term. The credibility of both Mr Ahern and Mr Powell is at rock bottom because they signed that select committee report and then went ahead with separate plans on distance education.

The next matter that I want to touch on is SEMP, which stands for the Social Education Materials Project. A great song and dance was made about that document, which really contained resource materials that were available in schools in 1978.

**Mr Austin:** Table the rest of your speech.

**Mr SCHUNTNER:** I think that the honourable member in particular should hear it.

The SEMP materials were designed in Australia and there was input from every Australian State, including Queensland. The Queensland Government banned that set of resource materials from Queensland schools. Subsequently, a review of that material was made by Mr Ahern's Select Committee on Education. Following a review by an expert committee which had looked at all of the documents, the recommendation was made that the findings of the report of the review committee of SEMP materials be accepted as an appropriate basis for selection of materials by the class room teacher. Again, that recommendation has been ignored totally and indicates the lack of credibility that both Mr Ahern and Mr Powell are now demonstrating.

I now refer specifically to the nomination of Mr Powell as the Speaker of this House. There are certain qualities that I believe—and surely every other member believes—the Speaker of the House should have. Integrity and honesty are amongst those. I will now make a few references which I believe cast extreme doubt on those

qualities as they relate to Mr Powell. Yesterday I heard a radio broadcast in which Mr Powell was asked by the interviewer whether Mr Ahern would make a good Premier. Mr Powell's answer was, "Well, I don't know. That is really a pretty hard question." I thought that was a pretty interesting answer from somebody who has pledged loyalty to the new Premier, who has the support, supposedly, of every person in the National Party. Mr Powell then went on to say, "Well, it really depends on the quality of the team working with him." It is the same tired old team. How can visions of excellence be translated into reality when the same tired old team is working?

I want to refer to the tertiary entrance review report.

**Mr Gately:** What has that got to do with Mr Powell's integrity and honesty?

**Mr SCHUNTNER:** I think it has quite a lot to do with it.

The select committee of inquiry, to which I have made some significant reference, recommended that the Board of Secondary School Studies should continue to carry out research and to liaise with other educational bodies with a view to further refining and improving the system of tertiary education in Queensland. Some difficulties have occurred with the system of tertiary selection. I know that those sorts of difficulties occur in every State and in every nation.

The Board of Secondary School Studies, which has been so heavily vilified by the former Minister for Education, in fact set about that task and it produced its tertiary entrance review report. I happened to receive a copy of that several days before 27 August, which is when I asked the Minister for Education whether he had received a copy of that document. His answer to that question was, "No."

A couple of weeks later, the member for Ipswich West asked a similar question. I thought that he did not ask the question very intelligently; that he should have referred to the delivery of the report rather than to its receipt. To that question he received a non-answer. Not only did I have a copy of the document, but I also knew that a letter of transmittal went with it and that it was dated 4 August. I have read the letter. I know that the letter and the document were hand delivered to the Minister's office. So, on 27 August when the Minister answered that he had not received a copy of the document, I knew that that was wrong. He then tried to play around with the words "between receiving the document" and "delivery of the document to his office".

Subsequently, on 27 October, I asked him whether the document had been delivered to his office early in August. His answer to that question was, in typical style, insulting. He directed me to the answer that he gave to the honourable member for Ipswich West a month previously. I did that. Of course, it did not answer the question. That night I spoke in the Adjournment debate, when I said—

"I state that despite the Minister's statement that he had not received the tertiary review report on 27 August, it had been delivered to his office weeks before—in fact, early in August—along with the letter of transmittal. The only conclusion that can be drawn is that the Minister deliberately or unwittingly misled this House, and I shall regard the absence of any further statement which answers explicitly and precisely this morning's question as proof of the correctness of that conclusion."

There has been no statement from Mr Powell further to that challenge that I put to him on that occasion. I say now without any doubt that the consequences of that are that Mr Powell deliberately misled this House when, on 27 August, he said he had not received the report and when he failed to answer my question of 27 October, in which I asked about the delivery of the report. Why did Mr Powell not want that to surface? I believe it was because that report has a whole range of recommendations that, if they could be put into operation quickly, would benefit the youngsters of Queensland.

**Mr Davis:** If he misled the House, he should resign.

**Mr SCHUNTNER:** I looked into that question a little bit further. I have obtained the background information document briefing No. 13 from the Parliamentary Library,

regarding the resignation of people for misinforming the House. It States that there need to be instances of gross ministerial incompetence or impropriety and that such an instance would be the intentional misleading of Parliament. I believe that that has occurred.

I have made the statement that in the Queensland education service a lot of people were saying that, for promotion, things other than merit were needed. On 19 August the former Minister for Education issued a media release, in which he said—

“Education Minister Lin Powell has suggested that his senior officers seek legal advice in regard to comments by Liberal Lyle Schuntner on radio (4QR) yesterday.

It is extremely irresponsible—it is disgusting—for Mr Schuntner to make such comments and bring disrepute to his party and parliamentarians generally.

My only concern in regard to senior officers, and all departmental personnel, is their efficiency. His remarks are an insult to the dedication, loyalty and efficiency of thousands of employees.”

I want to inform the House that I did not have one response that was critical of what I had to say. I received dozens of phone calls and comments from people who supported what I said and I have received a letter from a very senior official similarly supporting exactly what I said.

**Mr Sherrin:** Table the letter.

**Mr SCHUNTNER:** The honourable member had better learn a few more things about Standing Orders.

**Mr Sherrin:** There are no Standing Orders.

**Mr SCHUNTNER:** That is exactly the point.

The failure of able and capable people to gain promotions is well known. The attempt to appoint Dr Peter Botsman to a position before it was even created by Parliament is well known. It is known that I had some public comments to make about it and that the Executive Council did not proceed with that appointment, no doubt because of my statements.

Another point that I want to make is that in a ministerial statement in the House about three or four weeks ago Mr Powell stated that he had had a meeting with a coalition of education people and that everyone except Mr Peter O'Brien was satisfied with his response. Honourable members will recall the former Minister's statement to that effect. In fact, I was quite amused because the statement alleged that it was a gathering under the control of the Liberal Party and that Mr Peter O'Brien, who is a member of the Socialist Left of the Labor Party, was included in that gathering. I thought that to get together such a group of people under the control of the Liberal Party was a remarkable achievement.

I want to inform honourable members of the response that was made to Mr Powell's fallacious statement to this House. I will quote from the letter in brief. It states—

“A number of assertions made by you”—

the letter is to Mr Powell—

“were not an accurate representation of our position and we would like to correct them for the record.

The Education Act Coalition is not a political organisation in any other than the broad sense that it seeks changes to particular government legislation. It is not, as we believe you said, a political ploy, nor was it conceived by the Liberal Party. We cannot understand how you came to this conclusion given the broad non-political membership of the coalition.

The coalition was formed to co-ordinate the actions of groups opposed to the first Education Act Amendment Bill and first met on 26th May, 1987, at Q.T.U. Headquarters. Originally the membership consisted of:—

Queensland Teacher's Union

Association of Independent Schools in Queensland  
 Independent Parents and Friends' Council  
 Queensland Council of Parents and Citizens' Associations  
 Queensland Association of Teachers in Independent Schools

to which was added:—

Queensland Catholic Education Office  
 Catholic Parents and Friends  
 Queensland Association of Academic Staff in Colleges of Advanced Education  
 Professional Officer's Association  
 Association of Heads of Independent Schools in Australia

There have been no withdrawals from the coalition.”

Honourable members will remember what Mr Powell told the House. He was completely wrong. The letter continues—

“Our meeting with you on Wednesday, 28th October, was not satisfactory to any of us, including the representative of the Independent Parents and Friends' Council whom you mentioned in Parliament.

At the meeting we asked you to refrain from putting the revised Bill into Parliament in this session . . .

In the light of this letter we would appreciate a correction in Parliament of your account of the coalition and our meeting with you. . . . Now that the situation has been clarified, we look forward to your correcting the public record.”

Of course, Mr Powell did not correct the public record, and that is one of the reasons why I am so critical of his nomination as Speaker.

**Mr Beard:** Do you think he can be trusted?

**Mr SCHUNTNER:** I think that I should conclude with a quote from a senior official who has retired from the Education Department after 40 years or so of service as a loyal servant to Governments of many different kinds. This person has written these words—

**Mr Sherrin:** What is his name?

**Mr SCHUNTNER:** I will guarantee the authenticity of it.

His words are as follows—

“Now that I am no longer in a public service role where loyalty to the government of the day is so important, I can declare my hand and say to you that my last six months in office were in many ways the least rewarding of my 40-odd years of service to education.

The arrogance of the Cabinet and, in particular, Lin P., was hard for me to stomach. I felt I was besieged by senior officers who were more interested in their career paths than where the future of education was leading.”

**Mr SHERRIN (Mansfield) (1.33 p.m.):** I find it fascinating that the member who spends so much of his time discussing credibility and making accusations of lack of credibility is the member who is recognised on both sides of the House as being the one member out of the 89 members of this Parliament who has the least credibility. He is the man who during his term as president of the Queensland Teachers Union attacked consistently the non-Government schools in this State and who, in his elevation to the not-so-high office as a back-bencher in the Opposition rump party, the Liberal Party, suddenly had a change of side—as members on the other side of the House have said, a Damascus road experience—and now he is all for them. Honourable members can see very clearly where the issue of credibility lies in this debate. Credibility is certainly found wanting in the member for Mount Coot-tha.

Honourable members have witnessed today the reasons why the Opposition has been in continuous Opposition in this State for the past 30 years. Its totally negative outlook on life and its incredible factionalism are the worst of any ALP party in any State in Australia——

**Sir William Knox:** You were told to vote for Des Booth and you didn't do it.

**Mr SHERRIN:** Come on, boys!

The Opposition has been consigned to the Opposition benches for the past three decades and, based on its performance today in this House, it will be consigned there for another three decades to come.

I take this opportunity to analyse the significant contribution of the Liberal Party to this debate and the proceedings over the last few days. Its most outstanding contribution to date has been to decide to stay in the Chamber for today's proceedings. That is its whole contribution. The members of the Liberal Party have decided not to go to the toilet, but have decided to stay in the debate. The House does not know how the Liberal Party will vote, but I commend the Liberal Leader for bringing his nine factions to heel for such a short time.

I rise to speak in support of the Premier's nomination for Speaker, the honourable member for Isis. Unlike the previous speaker, I will keep my remarks pertinent to the issue of the nomination of Speaker. I felt embarrassed for the Liberal Party's nominee that the previous speaker could only devote two minutes out of a 30-minute speech to praising the Liberal Party's candidate and spent the other 28 minutes trying to find other things to say.

**Mr Mackenroth:** He had to pad out those two minutes.

**Mr SHERRIN:** He really had to pad out the two minutes. It was very light on the ground and I felt embarrassed for the man.

The Speaker of the Legislative Assembly is the representative of this House in its powers, proceedings and dignity. I commend to all honourable members the relevant sections in *Erskine May's Parliamentary Practice*. As this House considers the selection of one of its members to hold the high office of Speaker, they bear reading at this time. As laid down in *Erskine May*, the functions of Speaker fall under two main categories. Honourable members must consider whether the candidates can serve under those two main categories and whether they have the capabilities. Firstly, the Speaker is a representative of this House in its relationship with the Crown and other authorities or persons outside this Parliament. Secondly, he presides over the proceedings of the Legislative Assembly and enforces the observance of all rules, preserving order and the proceedings of the House.

The high office of Speaker is most certainly the highest office that members can attain in this Chamber outside the executive arm of Government. Mr Speaker speaks on behalf of the House in its relations with the Crown and other Parliaments and is frequently called upon to represent the House with interstate and overseas deputations and delegations. I have total confidence in our nominee being able to represent all 89 members of this House with complete dignity.

One of the most important aspects of the Speaker is that he is the link between this House and the Crown. It is important that the candidates selected for the position of Speaker should observe the traditions of the past through his rulings. He has an onerous responsibility in that the rulings that he will make in this House will establish precedents for future parliamentary practice in this place.

One important aspect of the role of Speaker is that he is there to protect the rights of all members and to ensure that their deliberations in this place are free from coercion. Honourable members will be able to turn their minds back in history to a time many centuries ago when Speakers actually put themselves between representatives of the Crown and members and stood in their place. Today there are no overt situations such

as that, but it is very important that all of the rights of the members of this place are protected and that they are able to speak their minds in this Chamber.

**Mr Davis:** May I suggest that you wind up?

**Mr SHERRIN:** I thank the honourable member.

Most importantly, Mr Speaker ensures the orderly conduct of business of this House and he oversees the smooth running and efficient operation of a large organisation employing a staff of over 100 people. It is important that the Speaker has a sense of the traditions and role of Parliament in a democratic society. He must be impartial. Confidence in the impartiality of the Speaker is an indispensable condition of the successful working of procedure and the many conventions which have as their object not only to ensure the impartiality of the Speaker, but also to ensure that his impartiality is recognised by all members of this House.

The Speaker must have a deep respect for the Crown and a strong commitment towards the Parliament and its individual members as such. He must be highly conversant with the Standing Orders and procedures relating to the Parliament and its business.

Mr Clerk, the honourable member for Isis is eminently suited to the high office of Speaker. I have much pleasure in supporting the nomination of Mr Powell.

**Mr SMITH (Townsville East) (1.40 p.m.):** The new Premier has followed the path of his predecessors by doing the unacceptable. The public would not have expected the new Premier, a person supposedly offering a new approach to the operation of Government and Parliament, to put forth as his nominee a person so closely identified with the previous discredited regime and a person who has failed to adopt an enlightened approach to the social problems of our times. Yet this Parliament is being asked to endorse a person who is identified as a flat-earther. That really states the situation.

In contrast, the nomination by the Opposition of the member for Bundaberg demonstrates that the ALP has an intention to go into Government with a new and vigorous team of young, qualified and dedicated people. Mr Campbell's elevation to the office of Speaker will herald in that new enlightened era of government in Queensland. History will record that the Ahern Government was a short-lived one that differed from the Government it replaced only in superficial areas.

The new Premier, to have the credibility which he may have hoped to achieve, would have had to distance himself from the Bjelke-Petersen regime. Now he must share the discredit that has accrued to this Government. I am entitled to ask: why did Mike Ahern not resign when the Cabinet overruled him on such vital issues as the installation of condom vending machines, when he well realised that it was not the dubious question of moral standards that was at issue but rather the possible question of life or death of some of the young people of Queensland—who, incidentally, are the very people likely to provide the future leadership and intellectual horsepower of our State?

Where was Mike Ahern when the decision was taken to open the "Black hole" detention unit at Boggo Road? I am told that at this very moment that gaol is on fire and that rioting is taking place. I have not had an opportunity to visit the gaol, but I am reliably told that that is the situation. Mr McKechnie will be very interested in that. Mr Ahern indicated that that detention unit would not be reopened. However, he has obviously backed off. He has succumbed to pressures, and the detention unit has been reopened. The very predictable result of the overcrowding and the poor conditions at the gaol have been achieved. Until this Government takes note of the fact that at present the percentage of people in Queensland gaols is higher than that in any other place in Australia and adopts a more enlightened view that will result in a lower percentage of prisoners in detention—in fact, an overall lower prison population by using such devices as home detention, which could be radically expanded, and by going further into service orders—that problem will not be overcome.

I find it absolutely sickening, and I am sure that most members of this House regardless of the party to which they belong would find it sickening, that this situation

in gaols has degenerated to the extent that prisoners, particularly young prisoners, are subjected to sexual assault and that it has become the norm and part of the system. It is absolutely abhorrent that any Government in the Western World could let such a situation develop. However, that situation has not developed overnight. The Government has had all the signals and all the warnings. Nobody can say that the present problems were not predictable. Mr Ahern's new Government must collectively bear responsibility for the present problems at the gaol.

I ask Mr Ahern why he was not prepared recently to receive the Commissioner of Human Rights. His refusal gave some indication that Mr Ahern is following very closely the lines of the old regime.

I think that the people also want to know the new Premier's record with respect to the accommodation of the infamous white-shoe brigade. Where was he when Cabinet gave its approval for the world's tallest building project? I want to know whether the Premier will remove the facility that has allowed Queensland to become the sanctuary of the shonky operators, the con men and undoubtedly the home of \$2 companies in Australia, which have brought ruin to so many honest and hard-working Queenslanders, reputable firms and small organisations. The \$2 shonky companies have been the ruination of small business. Queensland has been their home. The Cabinet, of which Mr Ahern is an unprotesting member, has overturned the rights of ordinary Queenslanders, and, with disastrous results, it has overturned the decisions of local government.

Mr Ahern has had an undeniable hand in many of the events of previous years which a now-alerted electorate finds unacceptable and unpalatable. Mr Ahern's name has also been included in legal actions against members of this House. He has been part of actions by members of this Government that are unprecedented anywhere else in the world.

In any other country in which the Westminster system operates, the matters for which Mr Ahern and others seek determination by the courts would have been settled on the floor of the Parliament, which is the only place where they should be determined. That is the reason why members are elected to Parliament. If Mr Ahern is to have any credibility whatsoever, he will have to withdraw his action and the actions of his Government colleagues. He should immediately end the present system by which a Minister of the Crown can initiate an action against a member of Parliament or a member of the public without the possibility that, win or lose, the action will result in personal financial burden to that Minister. That is an intolerable situation. A Minister with improper motives could ruin financially a political opponent without any risk whatsoever to himself. Such a system must come to an end. The ex-Minister for Main Roads, Russ Hinze, gave an insight into that problem this morning. That was in line with the respect that most honourable members have for at least the common sense of Russ Hinze. I hope that the new Premier will take note of the comments that Mr Hinze made.

Mr Ahern has been part of a Government that has supported development for the sake of development, particularly in relation to real estate. That policy has meant that no determination has been made as to whether particular developments really meant progress or whether they meant the loss of amenities to ordinary Queenslanders.

The Premier—whether it be Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen or Mike Ahern—will be recorded in the annals of history as being a Premier who held office only by the vehicle of a rigged and dishonest electoral system. No Premier or Government in Queensland can expect to receive any respect from the people of Australia or even Queensland while they cling to office by the dishonest means of a rigged electorate. It has gone on and on. If the Government feels confident it should give us a fair distribution of electoral boundaries and see how it fares. Let us see how it would stand up to a one vote, one value system. We all know that, for years, the Government has not had the guts to do that, and it will not have any credibility until such time as a system of that nature is introduced. The new Leader of the House—even if it is for only one day—would be the first to go in his own electorate.

**Mr Austin:** What about you in your old electorate?

**Mr SMITH:** I would have done well. I would have been returned comfortably.

Government members have been part of a system of Government by cronyism, which started and continues in the Executive Building and which has extended to the furthest and most far-flung reaches of Queensland. That cronyism has extended to the offices of Government that have been established in foreign countries. Some of the appointments that have been made to those offices both in and out of this State cannot be justified on the grounds of qualifications, ability or experience. To date, the system has used the vehicle of cronyism to appoint people to high legal offices—and I place great emphasis upon “high legal offices”—and to jobs such as Agent-General and positions on many quangos, electricity boards, harbour boards and hospital boards. Every board that one would like to name has a National Party zombie or two to complete its complement.

**Mr Austin:** Don't be unkind.

**Mr SMITH:** They have.

The sad result of all this is that the people of Queensland are led to believe that the only way to gain Government support is to do a political deal with a Minister or even the local chairman of the National Party. Unless the new Premier is prepared to fearlessly and quickly end that system and turf out the existing dead wood, he will be seen as being no better than his predecessor.

I am sorry that the new Premier is not in the Chamber at the moment. However, I ask him to indicate if he is prepared to withdraw legislation that has been passed recently in this House and which the community that I represent finds abhorrent. There are many items of the legislation that would fit into the abhorrent category, but I wish to focus on two pieces of legislation that fit into that category and affect the area that I represent.

The first is the recent amendment to the Harbours Act wherein local government has been robbed of its right to have representation on harbour boards. That applies along the entire coastline of Queensland, and it certainly affects the big ports that make a major contribution to the community. The second is a piece of local government legislation—which will bring shame down on the Minister for Local Government—that provided for the dismissal of the democratically elected chairman of the Townsville/Thuringowa Water Supply Board and the replacement by a Government nominee—in fact, a flunkey. Both pieces of legislation are outrageous and have been enacted purely for political purposes. There are no substantial reasons for either piece of legislation. They cannot be justified on moral grounds nor on the grounds of efficiency. The Premier's actions on those pieces of legislation will be watched with great interest by people of all political persuasions. I might say that the Premier does not have any support in his own party for the passage of that legislation.

For a period, Mr Ahern was the Minister for Industry and Technology. He was the first Minister to make any serious attempt to do anything with that portfolio. He knows the importance of industry and the need for the support of local industry by both Government and the industrial commercial community. It is entirely unpalatable that, although the Prime Minister and all members of the Federal Government use Australian-built vehicles for official conveyance—an example which is followed by the other four mainland States—the Queensland Government has indulged itself with vehicles such as \$200,000 Mercedes, Jaguars, Volvos and other exotic vehicles. I put it to the new Premier: will he put an end to this total indulgence and lack of support for Australian industry and workers? Only if the example comes from the top can we expect to see any follow-up from the community. While the Government indulges in that fashion, how can it condemn other people in the community for driving Porsches and Mercedes and draining Australia of valuable foreign exchange? It cannot. It can only lead from the top. It is up to the Government to set an example.

The other thing that dragged on and on is the fire levy. My colleague the member for Port Curtis will never let me forget that the fire levy has been badly handled. After two years, the problem still has not been resolved. The Government does not seem to have the guts to do anything about it. It has been a rort.

**Mr Yewdale:** It is worse than it was.

**Mr SMITH:** As the member for Rockhampton North said, it has gone from bad to worse. That cannot be sheeted home to the former Premier. It has been around for so long that it has to be seen as a Cabinet decision. Has the new Premier got the courage to take the bit between his teeth and do something about it? If he does not, it will be the first indication to the community that he does not have the capacity to lead the Government in Queensland.

The Minister for Mines and Energy, who is acting as the Leader of the House for one day—I am sure that he does not want the job for long——

**Mr Austin:** I am not the Minister for Mines and Energy.

**Mr Prest:** Ex-Minister.

**Mr SMITH:** Yes, the ex-Minister. Even if he is an ex-Minister, he might care to answer my question.

The other day, we had a discussion on his Estimates.

**Mr Austin:** As a humble back-bencher, I would not presume to do that.

**Mr SMITH:** All right. I will let the honourable member off the hook.

It was interesting that the former Minister failed to respond to the points that I made on the Tully/Millstream scheme. The new Premier has said that he will give up the idea of firing badly aimed broadsides at Canberra and will seek to co-operate with the Federal Government. I wonder whether that is true. If he does, the Government will immediately stop this charade of talking about the Tully/Millstream scheme. Mike Ahern and all other honourable members know that it is only a political vehicle that is being used to embarrass the Federal Government. No justification in economic terms exists for that project at present. The Government is being hypocritical. Months ago, it canned the project. The Government revived the project only after the World Heritage scheme went into place. The Government is attempting to use the issue as a vehicle to embarrass the Federal Government. It has no economic credibility whatsoever. I will be very interested to see any informed comment on that subject.

Finally, I question the mentality or morality of the new Government. The member for Aspley is indicating to me that I should wind up. For a moment, I thought she was trying to beat up an egg, but she is indicating I should wind up. I do not think she has much to say and it would not take her very long to say it. What I have to say is much more important.

**Mr Yewdale:** She is in her place at the back.

**Mr SMITH:** That is right.

I want to call into the question the morality of this Government with respect to the exit package that has been worked out for the deposed Premier. He is nothing more than a deposed Premier; he is a sacked Premier.

I ask how this Government can justify working out a package that will be paid for by the people of Queensland, which apparently includes unlimited flights in commercial jets, a chauffeur, a secretary, an office and other things—the list goes on. The package will probably cost the community of Queensland a couple of hundred thousand dollars a year for one man who, in my opinion, has not contributed to the community and has been a major reason for holding this State back for many years.

I compare the treatment of the former Premier with the treatment meted out by this Government to the 1 000 SEQEB workers whose heads were cut off. No consideration was given to those people who had given 30 or 40 years' service. Many of them had only a minimal association with industrial action and many were due to retire in two or three years' time. They were people who, after all those years, did not really have the capacity to take up any other kind of work and they were depending on their superannuation package to retire. This heartless Government kicked them out. It gave them a boot in the backside and said, "Well, that's all we're going to give you. We're not going to give you any help whatsoever." This Government has the hide and the hypocrisy to do that to the working people of Queensland, and at the same time it will outrageously waste public funds on a sacked and discredited Premier.

Mr HINTON (Broadsound) (1.58 p.m.): Today my name was raised in this House by the member for Cairns, so I wish to set the record straight on a particular matter.

On 23 November, I was fined for allegedly committing a breach of the Commonwealth Electoral Act in that it was accepted by a magistrate that I had falsified the signature of a person unknown to me on a Commonwealth electoral application form. I reject this finding.

I wish to point out to this House and to the Queensland public some relevant facts in relation to this matter.

Fact 1—I did not attend the hearing because the charge was of a minor nature, because I was busy on electorate affairs, and because I have no clear recollection of the visit to the butcher shop where the offence was alleged to have been committed. It must be borne in mind that I door-knocked solidly in my election campaign for five months, and visited hundreds of such premises. I have no recollection of anything irregular in the visit, nor could I imagine myself taking actions of the nature narrated to the court. I believe the fact that I did not attend the court subsequently went against me.

Fact 2—I further accept that I took the matter too lightly. My legal advisers informed me that in almost every case of disputed handwriting, the question is finally settled by handwriting experts. In this case, the prosecution was unable to—I repeat "was unable to"—produce any handwriting evidence whatsoever.

Fact 3—There was no suggestion in the evidence that there was any attempt on my part to enrol any fictitious person or create any electoral advantage. Indeed, at worst, it could be deemed to be a misguided attempt to do someone a good turn.

Fact 4—It is alleged that I was told the person was coming to the electorate shortly and would require enrolment. It was never alleged that I sought to ascertain the political views of this unknown person, a person about whom I have no knowledge—then or now. In fact, the evidence was that there was no conversation about politics whatsoever. The witnesses gave evidence that they were not asked their political views.

Fact 5—The evidence of the key witness, Mr Peter Allen, who told the court that he filled in the electoral application with the exception of the signature, must be queried. Get this: Mr Allen told the court that I had introduced myself to at least three people in the shop as the member for Capricorn when in fact I was the candidate for Broadsound. Keith Wright is the very last person whom I would wish to impersonate. I submit to the House that the impersonation of an ALP member is an incredible assertion. The situation is humorous, but I am bound to accept that the humour is now lost on me. That situation would have to be described as bizarre.

Fact 6—The Federal police informed me that the lady in question is in fact Canadian and not an Australian citizen, but that Allen had knowingly falsified the form by stating that she was an Australian citizen. I am advised that this offence is now being investigated by State police.

Fact 7—I would now like to refer to certain other matters in relation to the timing of such events. The date of the visit by me to that Middlemount butcher's shop is accepted as being 14 July 1986—during the State election campaign—yet the matter was

not drawn to my attention by Federal police until 27 June 1987—nearly a year later—at a time when I was campaigning hard for the National Party in the Federal election. In fact, it was just some 14 days before the Federal election. That is very strange timing indeed. In fact, given the significance of the offence, one would wonder whether there would have been a charge laid at all had I not been a National Party member of Parliament campaigning in that election.

Fact 8—On 26 August 1987 I was politically attacked through major newspapers by the Commonwealth electoral office. The Australian Electoral Officer for Queensland stated that he approached the Federal police on three occasions to pursue the prosecution but that the Federal police had replied that they had to give precedence to more serious offences. I put it to this House: who was pressuring the Commonwealth electoral office for action, particularly at the time of the Federal election? In whose interest was it that I be politically assassinated? Was it because I had already established myself as a very effective political campaigner? Lastly, and most importantly, why did the Commonwealth electoral office engage in a patently political press release obviously hostile to the National Party? It is also ironic that the summons was issued—wait for this—on the Tuesday following the Federal election, which was the very last day under the 12-month statute of limitations for such offences. I submit that those blatantly political circumstances are utterly disgusting as I appear to have been opposed by the full resources of the Federal ALP Government.

Fact 9—On 21 August 1987, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation erroneously declared me guilty of the charges and fined \$500. That story was run over two lunch-time national news services. Retractions and apologies for the mistake were run during later afternoon bulletins, but retractions and apologies on prime listening time equivalent to the timing of the initial guilty verdict broadcasts were refused. I am prepared to accept that these very damaging ABC broadcasts are a genuine error, and I have initiated no legal action against the ABC.

To summarise—I have been convicted of a very minor charge of which the worst possible connotation could be that I misguidedly acted to do a good turn for some unknown person. The conviction was without handwriting evidence and on the assertions of a person whose recollections are so clear that he thought I introduced myself as the member for Capricorn.

I also put it to the House that the timing of events and the obvious political pressure applied to the Australian Electoral Commission, and subsequently by that commission, must lead one to question seriously the independence and the neutrality of that organisation. I submit to this House that I have been duded.

**Mr ARDILL (Salisbury) (2.06 p.m.):** I rise to support the nomination of the member for Bundaberg to the high office of Speaker of this House. I believe there is no-one in this Chamber more fitted to play that role.

**Mr Beard:** Mr Prest left when you said that. You have hurt him.

**Mr ARDILL:** I do not believe so. The three members who spend the most time in this House are the member for Port Curtis, the member for Bundaberg and me. I do so because I am a new boy learning his trade.

I believe I am in a position to gauge the performance of Clem Campbell in the role that he has played as one of the panel of Temporary Chairmen in this Chamber. I particularly deprecate the obvious cynical hypocrisy witnessed in this House when Clem Campbell was nominated by the Leader of the Opposition. It would not matter who from this side of the House had been nominated. In fact, if it had been announced that no-one was to be nominated, there still would have been that orchestrated laugh from the other side of the House. That is exactly what it was. It is a further indication of the cynical hypocrisy that comes from National Party members of this House. It is a further indication that the new deal that has been promised by the new Premier is all purely hot air. The people of Queensland are crying out for honesty in Government in this

State. It is quite clear that the same hypocrisy to which they have been subjected for the past 30 years is alive and kicking on the Government side of the House.

In the 12 months that I have been in this place, a number of people have taken charge of the Chamber and acquitted themselves very well. Clem Campbell is one of them. Another is the member for Warwick, who has shown a clear indication that he is in firm command of the Chamber when he sits either at the desk that the Clerk occupies or in the Speaker's chair.

**Mr Scott:** He is too honest. They don't want him.

**Mr ARDILL:** He would make an excellent Speaker, as would the Opposition's nominee, the member for Bundaberg.

Another member who brought great dignity to the Chamber, at least in the 10 months of his office, is the former Speaker, Mr Lingard. After all I had heard about the ridiculous performances in this Chamber, I was pleasantly surprised to see the dignity that Mr Lingard brought to this House. Until the time that Ministers and cronies of the Government commenced to receive mentions up at the other end of George Street, Mr Lingard occupied that chair with great dignity and in the time-honoured traditions of the Westminster system. At that time I believe that he received his riding orders and that, subsequent to that, some of his decisions were slightly astray. However, he still brought great dignity to the position. I, for one, am disappointed to see him leave it.

The alternative promoted by the National Party would be the least fit person in this Chamber to occupy the high office of Speaker with dignity. Mr Powell has shown a pettiness and quirky sense of humour which has led to all sorts of problems in this Chamber over the past 12 months. My most treasured memory of Mr Powell is the day that he walked into the Chamber, bowed perfunctorily to the Chair and sang out something about "recreational fornication" to the Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party, who promptly put him down and forced him to leave the Chamber. That is something that I will not forget for a long time. He got his just deserts on that day.

On a number of occasions Mr Powell has played silly tricks in the House. He has come into this Chamber and moved the gag on Bills that were of great importance after allowing debate on such legislation as the hen quotas legislation to go on and on for ever. On numerous occasions Mr Powell has shown his contempt for the Parliament, its traditions and its members. On a number of occasions I have seen him call on the Leader of the Liberal Party to speak and then cut him off the moment he commenced speaking. I well remember his smart alec attitude to the member for Mount Coot-tha, the former president of the Queensland Teachers Union, when he called upon him to speak, knowing that he was outside the Chamber preparing his speech. That is the type of man that members of the Government want to elect to run this Parliament. He will bring nothing but disgrace on the Parliament, the same as most of the previous Speakers who have been thrown up—and I mean "thrown up"—by members of the Government.

Despite the problems that honourable members will suffer as a result of having the former Minister for Education in the Speaker's chair if he is elected, yesterday will go down in the history of Queensland as a day of great joy for two reasons. The first reason is that the worst Education Minister who has ever been seen in this Chamber has been removed from office—the man who has welded together everybody involved in the education field against him because of his incompetence and his intransigence and because he has no idea of what an education system should be in the modern age. He has welded those people together in one opposition.

If Mr Powell goes out and speaks at public meetings, he will find out just what damage he has done not only to education in this State but also to himself because of his attitude. He has put education back by 20 years at the very least. That is not just my estimation; it is the estimation of the people of Queensland whose children should be receiving a modern education and who are not, because of the attitudes of the former Minister and of this Government.

The former Minister and the Government have been a totally disastrous failure in what they have done to education in this State. It cannot be allowed to go on. Therefore I say that yesterday was a great day in the history of Queensland, at least on the ground that honourable members have seen the removal of the most disastrous Minister who has ever been in charge of education, the Minister who has politicised the department, the Minister who has done the utmost damage to a system which should ensure the future of this State and the citizens who dwell within it.

The second reason that yesterday will go down in Queensland's history as a day of great joy was the removal of the terrible incubus of the Premier of this State for the past 19 years——

**Mr Hayward:** An evil old man.

**Mr ARDILL:** "An evil old man" is a great description of him. He was the most disastrous thing ever for the State of Queensland.

**Mr Elliott:** Did you get that tie from Norman Gunston?

**Mr ARDILL:** The honourable member for Cunningham knows very well what happened to anyone who opposed that evil old man whilst he was in that position.

He was the Premier of this State for 20 years and presided over corruption of a magnitude that has never been seen before in this State. All of the Ministers who served under him for any length of time must be tainted by that corruption and stench which goes across the State and is well known throughout Australia. The Ministers who served with him for any length of time must have been either blind or lazy or fools—or else they were tarred with the same brush and were also corrupt.

**Mr Davis:** Every Minister had some taint or corruption on him or her.

**Mr ARDILL:** Some of them may have been blind or too lazy to do anything about it. Others were utter fools.

**Mr Comben:** The best Government that money could buy.

**Mr ARDILL:** That is right, but it did not buy anything for the State of Queensland. It was certainly the best Government that the white-shoe brigade and all sorts of proselytes that came into this State could buy.

This State has seen 19 years of economic mismanagement. At the time of the mining boom, when every other State and country with the kind of mining potential that Queensland has were going ahead and treating their own minerals, Queensland saw nothing but a shrinking of its economic position.

The former Premier was known for his uncaring attitude and viciousness, for serving writs on opponents and for his prosecution to the ends of the earth of ordinary people such as John Sinclair who only sought to do good for the country. The former Premier was known for his cronyism by promoting all the people to whom nobody else would give more than a few moments. He was also known for his foreign service, which was the place to send old, worn-out members of the National Party, and for the quangos, which also consisted of old, worn-out members of the National Party—those who went fishing when they should not have done so. He spent many millions of dollars on the Queensland air force—money which should have gone into education in this State.

**Mr Comben** interjected.

**Mr ARDILL:** The honourable member for Aspley wants to speak on the Hen Quotas Act Amendment Bill again.

For the 20 years that the former Premier was in office, Queensland has seen economic mismanagement of a magnitude which no other democracy would have tolerated, and all of the Ministers on the other side of the House have been a part of that.

**Mr Austin:** We were not here.

**Mr ARDILL:** No, the honourable member has not been here for 20 years, but during the time that he has been here, he supported the former Premier to the hilt, because he did not have the guts to do anything else.

**Mr Borbidge:** Do you support your leader?

**Mr ARDILL:** Yes, of course I support my leader.

**Mr Borbidge:** Which one?

**Mr ARDILL:** I support my leader. I would not support him if he had been indulging in cronyism and corruption of the type through which the honourable member has supported the former Premier.

I have mentioned education and the disastrous state that it is in. Look what the National Party Government has done to the police force of this State! The people in my electorate are not game to go out of their homes at night and will stay in their homes only if there are bars on the windows. They are like prisoners in their own homes. This Government has failed miserably in the provision of an adequate or efficient police force to protect these people. People in my electorate cannot walk into a bank without the fear that they may be shot—and that has actually happened. Firearms have been discharged in banks in the Sunnybank area and customers have been struck by pellets. What has the Government done about firearms? It has done nothing about them. Young people are stabbed in major shopping centres in the Sunnybank area. Women are being raped because the Government has done nothing about providing an adequate police force. It has failed miserably in every area of government.

Look at the Government's attitude to welfare and what it has done to welfare in this State. The welfare services in this State are in total disarray. Inexperienced young kids are going round representing themselves as welfare agencies.

Look at what the Government has done to housing. How many houses has the Government built in the city of Brisbane in the past decade? How many thousands of people are waiting for Housing Commission homes in the city of Brisbane because of the Government's failure to deal with the problem of lack of housing?

I turn now to the Works Department. Look at the corruption that goes on with Works Department contracts. To return to housing—the Government has failed to avail itself of Federal funding that was available to it in the past decade not only from the Labor Government in Canberra but also from the Liberal/National Party Government. The members of the Queensland Government failed to avail themselves of that funding because of their inefficiency and because of their intention to make a name and a fortune for themselves.

Look at what the Government has done for industrial relations in Queensland. It has ground down the workers of this State so that they have the lowest standard of living of workers in any mainland State in Australia. Look at the Government's mismanagement of the mining industry. The efforts of the mining industry should have been channelled into processing instead of ripping all the minerals out of the ground and sending them overseas.

Look at what the Government has done to the environment. It has raped the environment of this State for 19 years. Members of the Government have been a total failure in everything they have touched. In the environmental area, the Government has again welded the people of Queensland into an adequate fighting force to make the Government at long last pay attention to what they are saying.

What has the Government done with noise and air pollution? When I was a member of the Air Pollution Council, the Minister overrode every decision made by that body. Over many years there were only two prosecutions for air pollution, because the Minister would not allow that body to operate efficiently even though it had the best officers of any State.

Look at what the Government has done to health services and hospitals in this State. It has hospital wards with no-one in them. It has built great monuments but it has failed to staff them. At long last we have seen some enlightened approach from the present Premier, and I give him all the credit that is due to him. How on earth is he ever going to have an efficient Government with the type of people he has on his front benches?

Look at what the Government has done to the public service. It has totally politicised the public service. It has all but destroyed the public service and prevented it from serving the people of Queensland. The Government has destroyed the morale of the public servants in this State.

As to transport—the Government has almost demolished public transport in this State. It has almost eliminated public transport outside Brisbane. It has supplied a handful of air-conditioned trains but no back-up services. Cities and towns throughout Queensland have no public transport whatsoever, and many of them have no public transport at week-ends.

This Government has done nothing in relation to road safety. It failed to introduce adequate testing for drink drivers in this State.

**Mr I. J. Gibbs:** They haven't caught you lately.

**Mr ARDILL:** They are not likely to catch me, because I do not drink.

In relation to electricity—because of the wildcat claims that were made by the ex-Premier about the phantom projects that he intended to establish throughout the State, this Government has the greatest overcapacity for electricity generation of any State in Australia. What happened to all of those projects? No projects, but plenty of smokestacks everywhere. The Government has also doubled the electricity charges to the ordinary public consumers in this State. The Government is still talking about wildcat schemes.

In relation to technology—the Government failed miserably in the era of sunrise industries. It has established a couple of so-called technology parks and has invited overseas firms to establish themselves in them. What has this Government done for the people who are developing new technology in this State? It has done absolutely nothing and has failed miserably in that regard.

In relation to tourism—the Government has proposed several glamour projects around the State, yet it has done nothing for family tourism in this State.

In view of what has occurred at Boggo Road, fire services and prison services should be linked. The Government has severely cut back fire services in this State, particularly in Brisbane, to the extent that our fire services would not be capable of handling two major emergencies at once. Once again, the Government has failed miserably. It has destroyed the morale of fire brigades and the people who work for them.

It is a waste of time my talking about the other former Ministers. The less that is said about them, the better.

**Mr Hayward:** They want you to talk about them.

**Mr ARDILL:** Perhaps Mr Littleproud would want me to talk about them, because he may be a future Minister. He might introduce some efficiency to the Government benches. I hope that he does. Mr Littleproud would probably make a much better Minister for Education than anyone who has occupied that position for quite some time.

Mr Littleproud's friendly member from the Darling Downs, namely, Mr Elliott, has no chance of obtaining a Ministry. He has been tried and was found wanting.

**An honourable member:** What about Leisha Harvey?

**Mr ARDILL:** Because of the way in which Mrs Harvey dealt with the debates in this House that related to Newstead House and other important subjects, and her

performance as temporary chairperson, I would not predict any future for her. Her performance as temporary chairperson in this Chamber would give no confidence in her appointment.

**Mr White:** How many massage parlours are in your electorate?

**Mr ARDILL:** On a couple of occasions I have had a few removed. On a couple of occasions when I was in a position to do something about it, I have spoken to the police and they were closed down. Obviously, they were not providing any funds for the local police force.

All the departments have been a disaster. However, I want to refer to the three departments in which the greatest disasters have occurred. I refer firstly to education. The ex-Education Minister is being promoted to the chair by the Government. He is not there yet. If he does obtain the position, I fear for the House—although he would certainly be better there than he would be as Education Minister.

**An honourable member:** You will regret those words.

**Mr ARDILL:** No, I will not regret those words. I would rather see Mr Powell in any position other than Education Minister. As Education Minister, he can do the utmost damage to the future of this State. It is better to have him in any position other than Education Minister. I would even recommend him as a manager of a chocolate shop in Tweed Heads. That would be an excellent position for him.

The three sectors that have seen the greatest damage done are education, police and welfare. If the Premier is genuine in indicating that he wants improvements in this State, he will remove the Ministers responsible for the debacles in those three areas. He has indicated that he will remove the Education Minister.

**Mr Austin:** If he agrees, will you sit down?

**Mr ARDILL:** Certainly, if he does.

I suggest that the Deputy Premier does not have the capacity, the ability or the time to be an efficient Police Minister. It is a full-time job that should be given to the most efficient member available. I do not know who that would be.

**Mr Gately:** When you win Government, you can change that portfolio.

**Mr ARDILL:** I am not distributing portfolios. I am saying that it should be given to the most efficient Minister.

**Mr White:** With the exception of Mr Lane.

**Mr ARDILL:** With the exception of Mr Lane, I would give it to any Minister who can prove to be the most efficient. My choice would be either the former Minister for Local Government or the former Minister for Mines and Energy.

The other Minister who must be changed for the benefit of the young people of this State is the former Minister for Family Services. She has been a dismal failure in that role and stands equally condemned with the former Minister for Education.

I have great pleasure in supporting our nominee—any nominee—for the position of Speaker of this House over Mr Powell.

**Mrs NELSON (Aspley) (2.34 p.m.):** Mr Clerk, praise the Lord and hallelujah!

In rising to join in this debate, I am saddened to have to comment on the shabby and pitiful performances today of the members of the two opposition parties in this Parliament. Their speeches have been shallow and superficial, full of rhetoric, and their meaningless assertions have been unable to be substantiated except in the fervour of their own imaginations.

Let us cast our minds back over the past 80 years of Parliament in this State and in other places to examine the performance of those opposition parties. Firstly, let us

look at the Labor Party's history in this State. In the 1920s, the Theodore Government abolished the Upper House and abandoned questions without notice. Queensland was the only State in Australia without a House of review and it was the only State in Australia without a session of questions without notice. They were not reinstated until the 1970s by a coalition Government of which Sir William Knox was a member. I give credit to him because he was one of the instigators of that return to questions without notice. That Labor Government substantially curtailed debate. Prior to the 1970s, it was very difficult for back-bench members to make grievance speeches or public interest speeches, which were simply unknown. The Labor Party restructured the voting system and procedures in a way that defied imagination.

Let me move forward to 1984 and examine the period of the Hawke Labor Government. In this House earlier today, somebody spoke about the guillotine and the gag. Let me inform honourable members that the Hawke Labor Government guillotines whole packages of Bills in the House of Representatives. Members of the Federal Government can put through five bills in 30 minutes, giving people six minutes' debate. In a number of cases, they have guillotined whole packages of legislation through in one afternoon. Labor members frequently gag debate in Parliaments in all of the other States and in the Commonwealth Parliament. Opposition members in the Queensland Parliament have more opportunities to speak than any other Opposition member in any other State in Australia. Let me give honourable members one example: I refer to the Wran administration in New South Wales. "Nifty Nev" had a clever trick. If he did not like question-time, he would adjourn it, which frequently happens in the Hawke administration as well. Question-time can be abandoned after 15 minutes and the questions are placed on notice. If members of that Government have a difficulty, they simply close question-time down. Neville Wran's favourite trick was to speak for a long time in answer to a question. His longest answer went for 57 minutes to answer one question in the New South Wales Parliament.

Earlier, someone was foolish enough to mention the word "gerrymander". I think it was the member for Cairns. The Federal ALP has the best gerrymander that this country has ever seen. In the last Federal election, the Hawke Labor Government obtained 60 per cent of the seats with 46 per cent of the two-party preferred vote. The Australian Electoral Office—which I sincerely believe has become politicised—is unable to provide up-to-date copies of the rolls until 1989 or 1990, despite the fact that in a number of States, serious allegations have been made about people being enrolled in a number of key marginal seats which were won by the ALP against the national trend—I repeat, Mr Clerk, "against the national trend".

What about the Queensland ALP's poor embattled leader, Nev Warburton? What a pitiful performance was given by him this morning—Queensland's "Not-so-nifty Nev". I am told that Friday is the day for his execution and departure from the political scene. Who will replace the poor embattled man? A man who has regularly used—or should I say abused—the privilege of this House to vilify and accuse individual Queenslanders who are totally unable to defend themselves against his viciousness. The ALP's many faction fights in recent months in Queensland will inevitably lead to an eruption of volcanic proportions. The actions of its State secretary in recent days will certainly bring forward that fateful day.

I turn now to the Liberal Party. Members of that opposition party attacked the Government in this House this morning—speaker after speaker—forgetting the fact that for 26 years members of that party sat in this House as part of the Government of Queensland. They shared the portfolios and the back-bench committees; they took part in all the decision-making of this Government, except for the last four years. It does them no good whatsoever to come into this Parliament and try to defend their position as a present opposition party. They are desperately clinging to the coat-tails of the ALP in Queensland and venting their spleen on their former colleagues in Government. They are frantically looking for a permanent home in the Queensland body politic.

In the debate today their comments of a personal nature have degraded and debased the dignity of this House and the position of Speaker. They do their party and the

people who elected them no service at all with such patronising and offensive attacks. Perhaps for a few of them, frustrated ambition has soured their souls.

What of their Federal leader, the also embattled and besieged Mr Howard? He is both a tragic and a comic figure who will be remembered for only two things: firstly, as the architect of the repressive retrospective taxation laws and, secondly, as the man who offered the Australian people an economic package in which the figures did not add up.

**Mr White:** That isn't what you said three years ago.

**Mrs NELSON:** No, and three years ago somebody spoke in this House about organisational party wings having an influence. I can tell this House who instructed the then leader of the parliamentary wing to tear up the coalition agreement. It was not a member of Parliament; it was Gary Neat, the State director of the Liberal Party.

I will now return to the debate. In contrast, the positive initiatives of the Queensland National Party over the last 20 years in this State have seen that party develop from a rural-based organisation with about 10 000 members and 20 per cent of the State vote to a Statewide party with nearly 60 000 members from all parts of the State, 40 per cent of the primary vote and 57 per cent of the two-party preferred vote. This band of loyal, hard-working Queenslanders forms the basis for the party's ongoing political successes. The new Government under the Honourable Mike Ahern will continue to provide strong and stable Government for the people of Queensland. Something that nobody on the Opposition benches is able to deny is the fact that this State, for 30 years, has had strong and stable Government, which will continue.

The election of an able and experienced member to the position of Speaker will further enhance this House as a members' forum. I have great pleasure in supporting the nomination of Lin Powell for the position of Speaker.

**Mr PREST (Port Curtis) (2.42 p.m.):** It gives me pleasure this afternoon to join in the debate and to support the election of Mr Clem Campbell, the member for Bundaberg, to the high office of Speaker. Of course, everyone knows what a fine contribution he has made in this House since his arrival to it. It is well known that the experience that Clem has gained from his position as a Temporary Chairman will stand him in good stead. I am quite certain that Clem Campbell, as Speaker in this House, will make his mark and will be received very highly by all parties in the House, that is, the Government, the Opposition and the Liberals.

It is pleasing that Clem has made the sacrifice in offering himself for the position of Speaker. No doubt with the number of members in this House, namely, 49 in the National Party and 10 in the Liberal Party——

**An Opposition member:** Forty-eight.

**Mr PREST:** It is 48 in the National Party now that the old rogue has gone. The Liberal Party has 10 and the Labor Opposition has 30. With those numbers, Mr Campbell will have a difficult job becoming Speaker. However, I am quite certain that sanity will prevail. It is quite well known that there is a lot of disunity among National Party members and it is known already that there will be defections.

Some 12 months ago I stood for the position of Speaker in this House and I obtained the full 30 votes of the Labor Opposition. Unfortunately, on that occasion the National Party had two or three defections.

**Mr Davis:** You would have got more if it had been a secret ballot.

**Mr PREST:** There is no doubt about that.

This time I was offered the position of Speaker by the Government before the deal was made with the member for Isis, Mr Powell. I was approached and the position was offered to me. However, I knew what a horrible mistake had been made by the ex-Speaker of the House, Mr Lingard, who thought that he was on a certainty by accepting

the offer made to him by Joh Bjelke-Petersen. Unfortunately for him, the move backfired. He backed a loser. If Kev Lingard was in the gambling game, a punter would say to him that he had been conned and that he was a mug punter.

**Mr Davis:** What about Mr Simpson? Have you got a comment on Mr Simpson?

**Mr PREST:** He was on a loser right from the word go. I will not say any more about him because I want to keep any further comments for a later stage.

I expect that Clem Campbell will win the ballot here today because of the discontent within the Liberal Party over the candidate that it has chosen, Mr Lickiss, and with the assistance of the defectors from the National Party. The election of the member for Bundaberg to the office of Speaker will ensure decorum in the House and it will ensure that it will be run very democratically.

Today honourable members heard a confession from the member for Broadsound, Mr Hinton. Although I did not hear him start with the words "Dear Father", it was a real confession. In that confession he said that the charge of fraud against him was of only a minor nature. I do not believe that fraud can be of a minor nature. It is a criminal offence to be determined in a court. Therefore, all possible evidence must have been presented. The member for Broadsound, Mr Hinton, must have had the opportunity of presenting his evidence and would have done so with the assistance of his legal advisers. However, the court's decision went against him. In the past, the former Premier and others on that side of the House have said that the judge's decision must always be accepted as final.

Mr Hinton ignored the processes of the court, preferring to use the privileges of this House today to plead his innocence. However, in doing so he used the very good name of the member for Capricornia, Mr Keith Wright. The member for Broadsound said that, during the course of his court action, it had been stated that he had represented himself as the member for Capricornia when he was dudding that person over in Middlemount, Moranbah or wherever it was. The member for Broadsound said that the member for Capricornia would be the last person whom he would choose to impersonate.

Knowing Keith Wright as I do, I am quite certain that he would hate to have had a person using his good name, particularly a person who has been convicted of a criminal offence of a fraudulent nature. If Mr Hinton had to choose the name of another person to use in signing a document, it is quite reasonable to believe that he would not give a second thought to using the good name of the member for Capricornia, Mr Keith Wright. I have said that the member for Broadsound has a right to appeal to a court and to accept the decision of that court. Instead of going through the proper processes of the law, he chose to abuse the privilege of this House.

Today I wish to extend my sympathy to the former Speaker, Mr Kev Lingard, on the decision that he took to accept the offer of the former Premier. A very juicy carrot must have been dangled in front of him. If he acted on the best advice he could get, he must very much be considered to be a mug punter.

I also extend my sympathy to the member for Warwick, Des Booth, who only last Monday night was proclaimed on television as being the heir apparent to the Speakership. I agree that Des was entitled to be elected Speaker of this Parliament. All honourable members are aware of the slight controversy in Des' early days in relation to the introduction of retrospective legislation. That was not his fault. It was just an oversight. I am sure that everything that Des has done since then has been fair and above board and that he would have been very successful as Speaker.

Undoubtedly, many other members of the National Party also thought that they had a just right to be nominated by the Premier, Mr Ahern, for the high office of Speaker. The member for Mulgrave, Mr Menzel, is probably a very disillusioned and disappointed man, as is the member for Maryborough, Mr Gil Alison. He was another member who was suggested yesterday as being one of the favourites for the high office of Speaker.

**Mr Davis:** What about Teddy Row?

**Mr PREST:** Ted has been a member of this Parliament for a long time. Of course, Ted has been on his long furlough and has travelled extensively over the past 12 months to broaden his knowledge. One only has to look at Ted to know that he is now a much more knowledgeable man than he was a little while ago.

**Mr De Lacy:** He's doubled it.

**Mr PREST:** As the member for Cairns says, he has doubled his knowledge.

Despite all that experience that Ted has gained at great expense to the tax-payers of Queensland, his party has now dumped him. It has now been found that there was a nigger in the woodpile. Although the Premier, Mr Ahern, had made his decision, a nigger popped up in the woodpile. I refer to Mr Powell.

As a result of Mr Powell's actions, one could see that there was no unity within the new-image, new-look National Party Government of today. He held out and said, "If I am not nominated by the Government for the position of Speaker, I will get an independent nomination and I will divide the vote. I will split the vote within the party." So, bingo, another vote was taken. Of course, it is an old saying in the National Party Government, "If you disclose what I know about you, I will disclose what you know about me, and the one who knows the most wins the day." On this occasion, Mr Powell, being around as long as he has, knew too much and he got the vote.

**Mr Casey:** He even tried to send people to see if we would vote for him. What a hide he has.

**Mr PREST:** Before the vote was taken in Parliament, I was pressured by some sections of the National Party to stand and I was assured of their vote. That is how it was going to be split. I was not interested this year in the position of Speaker because I know that, as Mr Warburton said, in the very near future there will be a State election, following which the Labor Party will be in Government and I will hold a very high office in it under the leadership of Nev Warburton, as Premier.

That is one of the reasons why today I had to reject the offer that was made to me by members of the National Party last night. I do not believe in underhand deals. I become very upset when I hear and read about underhand deals and the package deal that was being offered to the ex-Premier of this State so that he would resign.

I have been a member of this House for only 11½ years. I have been through five elections. However, I always say, "If you cannot speak the truth, do not speak at all, and if you cannot say nice things about a person, say nothing at all."

**Mr Casey:** Do you think Ms Young resigned or was pushed because they thought she would do a kamikaze on them?

**Mr PREST:** I have a great deal more to say. I want to get back on the track. Honourable members must be very concerned about what happens within the Government.

Although honourable members have kicked me right off course, I will return to the subject-matter. On the 10 o'clock news last night it was stated that Mr Powell had won the endorsement of the National Party for the position of Speaker. From that time onwards there was no more sleep for most members of the Labor Party. My phone hardly stopped ringing. A great number of phone calls came from parents and citizens associations, school groups, teachers, unions and teacher aides asking me, "For Heaven's sake, will you support Powell for the position of Speaker?" I asked them why they would want him to be the Speaker and they said, "Give him anything, but for God's sake don't give him the opportunity to be a Minister within the Government. There is always the possibility that Mr Ahern might bow to the wishes of some of his cronies and allow Powell to remain a Minister." That is the last thing that parents and citizens groups, teachers and pupils within this State want to have thrust upon them for even another week, let alone another year or another term of this Government. Today I am speaking

not on behalf of myself, but on behalf of the citizens, students, teachers and unions of this State. My words are those that they have said to me for some time.

Mr De Lacy, the honourable member for Cairns, referred earlier to the problems that the ex-Premier had in filling the vacancies after he had sacked a number of Ministers. In the first instance, the ex-Premier decided to sack five members of his Cabinet. After a round-up of prospective Cabinet Ministers, he found he could only get four. Unlike Mr De Lacy, who only named Mr Newton, the honourable member for Glass House, I do not intend to mention names. I do not like speaking badly about another person. I do not do that; I never have and I never will. The ex-Premier, after he found he could only muster up four members to fill the vacancies, decided to reduce the number to three. He said, "I might be desperate, but I am not that desperate." He reduced the number to three and decided to fill two of the positions with Mr Lingard and Mr Simpson—that is bad enough—and said that he could not use the other two. I will not mention the name of the member who is referred to in this House as "Laxettes", because I do not wish to be unkind. I am quite certain that that is the reason why the ex-Premier reduced his Cabinet from 18 to 17.

I ask the members of this Chamber to consider their vote very carefully this afternoon when they are electing the Speaker of this House. It is a very important position and I am quite certain that the talents of the honourable member for Bundaberg are recognised not only by members of the parliamentary Labor Party but also in Bundaberg and throughout the rest of the State.

**Mr Austin** interjected.

**Mr PREST:** No, not really. People will realise that Clem Campbell is the right man for the job.

**Mr Casey:** You must give us another clue on "Mr Laxettes". After all, there are about 18 of them over there.

**Mr PREST:** He is following me, and I will not tell the honourable member any more. He has to have the last bite of the cherry and today I was very kind to him. I hope he is kind, too.

When I talk about the Premier, I am speaking on behalf of not only myself and the people of Queensland but also the unions and the unionists. In the past week we have read that we should be very concerned and have great sympathy for the former Premier, Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen, because of the way he had been treated by members of the National Party. Last night the former Premier said that he had been treated rather rudely by some members of his party, that there were three or four of them who were trying to get into his shoes over the past few months and that he did not like it.

I am quite certain that today the unions and the unionists would be gleeful when they see that we now have in this State a Government that is led by a person other than Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen. When one considers what he had done to unions and unionists over a number of years, they would be in the same frame of mind as I am, that Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen has been allowed to escape his full penalty. I am certain that, like other members in this Chamber, the unions and unionists would be praying that his day will come and that he will receive his just deserts. Of course, that is something that everyone must face at some time in his life.

Within Queensland there are people who are very pleased with what the Premier has been able to do for them during his reign as Premier of this State for the past 19, almost 20, years. I want to read into *Hansard* some telegrams that I believe Sir Joh has received. It will show the people of Queensland that some persons are very pleased with what they have received. I just want to take a moment to thank the former Premier for his long and selfless service to Queensland and, indeed, to some non-Queenslanders. As many of those indebted to Sir Joh are not in a position to be here today to publicly bestow their thanks upon him, they have sent telegrams, copies of which have come into my possession. I will read them for the edification of the House.

From Mr Iwasaki—

“Sayonara. Thanks for central Queensland, but what about the park?”

From Les Thiess—

“So long and thanks for everything. Pity about Parkinson prison, but Borallon looks like coming off. If not, just send back the cheque.”

From Keith Williams—

“Tough luck old mate. We’ve both come a long way since our breakfast of ’81. Drop into Hamilton—I can let you have the ex-celebrity suite for only 25 grand. A week’s better value than a breakfast. Cheers.”

From “Top-level Ted”—

“Dear Mr Premier, of all we’ve been through together, I liked the retirement age amendment the best. Remember how we laughed? They’ll never get rid of us we said. That was before Hinzy bought that truck which kept dropping documents off the back and I got sacked. After that the T.A.B., Rothmans, Channel 9, East West Airlines, Lindeman Island, the Gold Coast Hospital—they all rolled on like dominoes. And now you. I’ve even had to close our joint accounts. If I can help you with a reference old mate, just let me know.”

That was signed “Your friend Ted”.

From Alan Bond—

“Please arrange transfer of \$375,000, being remaining balance in account, calculated on basis of \$25,000 per decision. Bond University doing fine, thank you.”

From Justin Hickey—

“Whatever everyone else is saying, you can keep my donation—a deal’s a deal and I got value for my money.”

Here is a personal one from Beryl—

“After all our years of flying high together, what a way to end. The butterfly’s legs are broken. Night night snookums, sleep tight. P.S. Thanks for the tip.”

Allen Callaghan’s telegram read—

“Ha ha ha ha ha stop”.

Those are the telegrams that have been received to date. I do not know whether they are all right.

Honourable members will recall that the Auditor-General compiled a report on the Allen Callaghan affair. The former Premier said that he would table that report in this House, but he failed to do so. Part of that report could have shown that certain events took place either with or without the Premier’s approval while Allen Callaghan was under his control. Those events could have embarrassed the former Premier, and perhaps that is the reason why that report was never tabled.

Now that Queensland is to have a fair and open Government, perhaps that report may come to light. It may well fall off the back of a truck, as did some of the documents on “Top-level Ted”. If that occurs, we may find out why that report was not tabled.

The former Minister Mr Hinze said that he intends to ask this Government and the new Premier to reconsider some of the things that have been occurring in this State, one of which is the issue of writs. Does the Premier intend to continue in the same vein as the former Premier did, by issuing writs against Opposition members who dare to speak out against the Government or one of its Ministers? I was pleased to note that Mr Hinze intends to ensure that, if a Minister gets into trouble, he cannot expect to have his costs paid by the department.

A few years ago Mr Hinze said that both Keith Wright and I were using our electorate offices for purposes other than electoral business. That claim was made in defence of himself, because Mr Hinze was using his office at Burleigh Heads for more

than one reason. In fact, he was using it as a real estate office and what have you. Mr Hinze claimed that I was using my Port Curtis electorate office at 129 Goondoon Street for another purpose, specifically as the office of the *Express* newspaper, which was registered in the name of Mr Keith Wright, the member for Rockhampton. Mr Hinze's informants failed to tell him that the *Express* newspaper was situated at 120 Goondoon Street, as were another 30 shops, because that address is an arcade. I had no business at all with that newspaper, and I had no control over where it rented its offices.

Mr Hinze then went to water and asked me to withdraw my court action relating to his refusal to retract that statement. Mr Hinze said, "Look, if you withdraw the action, I will pay the costs." I said, "Righto. I do not like the people of this State paying my legal costs. I want you to personally guarantee that you will pay your own legal costs yourself." Mr Hinze did so. Because I take everyone at face value and never believe that I am dealing with anybody who may swindle me, I agreed to Mr Hinze's suggestion and I issued instructions to my solicitor, Mr Mullins, who then put in train measures to have Mr Hinze pay the costs personally. When Mr Hinze paid the costs, I received a copy of the cheque that had been paid to Mr Mullins. It was a departmental cheque. Now that he has no writs outstanding against anyone, Mr Hinze has had a change of heart. Since his way has been paid, he is now going to play the conciliatory part and ask the Premier to stop paying legal expenses for Ministers. I agree with that. I hope that in the future that is the case.

I will now turn to the Ministry, the elevation of Mr Mike Ahern to the position of Premier of this State and his new-look Government. For many years, Queensland has been looking for a change. Who is going to be in this new-look Government? On Sunday, 29 November, Quentin Dempster wrote an article headed "Mike's big worry: Ministerial talent thin on the ground". There is no doubt about that. The former Premier had a tremendous problem in trying to fill the ministerial positions that he created when he sacked a number of Ministers only a week ago. That is one of the first problems that Mr Ahern has. The former Ministry contained people whose records were not very good. I will not mention Ministers' names. When I speak about them, honourable members will realise to whom I am alluding.

There is no need for Mr Muntz to leave the Chamber. I guarantee that I will not mention Darren Osborne today. Mr Muntz is leaving. He thought that I was going to mention Darren Osborne, but I was not. Darren Osborne was the person who was paroled from gaol early and then attacked a young lady by the name of Sharon Davies, who was left for dead. While the police were searching for that ex-parolee, a certain Minister, whom I shall not mention, appeared on TV and through the media told that criminal to buzz off because the authorities were looking for him. He said, "You're the one we are going to get." The criminal took the advice of the Minister, left the State, murdered a tourist from London at the South Australian/Western Australian border and was sentenced to approximately 28 years' imprisonment. That criminal activity was brought about by the tip-off that was made by a Minister of the Crown. Mr Ahern has some weaknesses in that area.

The confusion over the fire levy has been a political nightmare. How long has that been going on? About three years now. I am not mentioning Mr Tenni or Mr Neal, although they were part of it.

**Mr Tenni:** Four years.

**Mr PREST:** If the cap fits, one has to wear it.

We were assured that the fire levy would pay for itself and the average person would pay less than ever before. However, this year the fire levy is being increased 50 per cent. The deficit has risen from \$17m to \$30m, and it is approximately \$43m, at present. Of course, the Minister will not inform us what action is being taken. The new Premier with his new-look Government and ideas should immediately—not next year—do something to improve the situation within the fire services and reverse the financial problems that have been caused. The situation is inequitable in that the ordinary

householder is paying his way and the large industrial and commercial organisations are riding on the backs of the ordinary people. That is another matter that is very important.

During the last week or so of Parliament, Mr Tenni was involved in legislation that was debated in this Chamber. People do not call him the wrecker for nothing. The Harbours Act and Other Acts Amendment Bill was introduced into the House and virtually went through all stages without debate. Although that legislation has been assented to and gazetted, it should come back for amendment. A responsible member or a responsible Minister—someone who knows something about harbour boards—should talk to the Harbour Board Association and the port authorities about the composition of boards and also the levies that have been imposed on harbour boards. The previous Minister said frequently, “If you don’t cop it sweetly and you squeal, we will take you off the board immediately.” They are the kinds of stand-over tactics that were employed. I suppose that the Government intends to continue to select these cronies for harbour board positions; in any event, the representatives will be people who have some connection with the National Party Government. The question of whether they have a connection with the new-look Government remains to be resolved.

Two very important pieces of legislation were the Harbours Act and Other Acts Amendment Bill and the fire services legislation. Those pieces of legislation should be renegotiated and brought back into the House immediately. Before bringing in legislation the new-look Government should give sufficient time for discussions to be held with the relevant authorities and should then allow members of this House an acceptable period to study the legislation. If Mr Ahern does that, I am quite certain that he will be doing something useful for the people of Queensland.

When members of the Government suggest that people should say “Thank you” to the Premier, I ask: “Thank you” for what? In that regard, I will talk about an area that is closer to home.

**Mr I. J. Gibbs:** \$50m was spent in Gladstone.

**Mr PREST:** Members of the Government speak only in figures. Do Government members ever talk about lives or living and working conditions?

Let me talk about the period from 1960 to 1980 when the greatest disasters ever to have occurred in Queensland occurred in the Gladstone area, brought about by the boom in development and progress, which resulted in millions of dollars being made by this Government. The National Party Government did not spend any money in the provision of amenities for the people of Gladstone. During those years between 1960 and 1980, children in the Gladstone area were taught under crowded conditions and in demountable class rooms. The same children never lived in a house. They had to live in caravans for the whole of their school lives. No sporting amenities were provided for them. It was not until 1973 that Queensland Alumina Limited decided to spend some money on recreation facilities. Over a long period, I was involved in negotiations with Queensland Alumina Limited. I was a member of the committee responsible for spending \$3.4m on the provision of some of the best sporting amenities in this State—with no thanks at all to the former Premier of Queensland.

**Mr I. J. Gibbs:** What about the \$50m?

**Mr PREST:** The member for Albert says that his Government gave \$50m as a special grant to the city of Gladstone and that it was never spent. I point out that the money has been spent. Approximately \$30m has been spent on hospitals, schools and housing—not \$50m. The money that the member for Albert is talking about was in part repaid by the local authority. Part of that amount was a loan that was repayable by the people who live in the Gladstone area, and they are still paying for it today. The \$50m referred to by the member for Albert comes down to \$25m that would have been spent in ordinary circumstances on public amenities provided during an ordinary budgetary period. The National Party Government has done nothing for the region I have referred to. The people of Gladstone will never accept that the ex-Premier of Queensland or the

National Party has ever done anything for them. The development has been brought about by the natural assets in the region and by the very good administration of the port authority of Gladstone, and by nothing else.

In those days, people who went into a hospital could not get a bed. They were left in the passageway for four to eight hours waiting for accommodation to become available. It was not until the 1980s, when Mr Austin was the Minister for Health, that the hospital received some relief.

**Honourable members interjected.**

**Mr PREST:** That is true. I speak only the truth. I have never told a lie in my life. Being almost 62, I do not intend to start today.

What I am saying is that for Heaven's sake, for the goodness of a democratic Parliament, this afternoon honourable members should vote for Clem Campbell, the member for Bundaberg.

**Mr GATELY (Currumbin) (3.21 p.m.):** I do not wish to take up much of the time of the House. This debate is one of very great and grave importance.

Firstly, I congratulate the new Premier of the State. I wish also to clearly indicate that the party has put forward a very good candidate for the job of Speaker of the House. However, earlier in the day I heard a dill make a statement about an evil old man and I heard a statement by one "Nifty Nev", who needs to sharpen up his footwork somewhat, that no tears will be shed for the passing of Bjelke-Petersen. Shame on both of them! Mr De Lacy need not sit down there looking so smug. If I had more time available to me, I would give them all a very good pay. However, I will save that for another day.

I merely say that the voters of this State are not prepared to put up with the nonsense that is being peddled by the Fabian Society and its friends who control the Labor Party. If honourable members opposite do not believe me, I will give them a copy of the speech made by none other than the Prime Minister on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the Fabian Society, which is a socialist society founded in 1883-84 by a small group in London who aimed at the restructuring of society. The restructuring of society indeed! The rules of the society state that it consist of socialists. A lot of nonsense has been peddled around this nation.

It is important that the people of Queensland today share a thought and a prayer for the Bjelke-Petersen family. Members of both sides of the House should take cognisance of the fact that they have a far greater responsibility than coming into the House on a day such as this and denigrating every person in the place. It is important that we look towards a better Government, and that is what we will have.

At 3.24 p.m.,

In accordance with the provisions of Standing Orders Nos 6 and 7, a ballot was taken by the Clerk, with the following result—

Mr Powell . . . . .	48
Mr Campbell . . . . .	30
Mr Lickiss . . . . .	10

Mr Powell expressed his sense of the honour proposed to be conferred upon him, submitted himself to the pleasure of the House and, on being called, was conducted to the chair by the mover and the seconder. Speaking from the dais, he said: Honourable members, I thank you for the high honour that you have conferred upon me.

**Honourable members: Hear, hear!**

**Hon. M. J. AHERN (Landsborough—Premier) (3.51 p.m.):** Mr Speaker, I want to be the first to congratulate you on achieving your high office of Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Queensland. We on this side of the House are pleased to offer you warm

congratulations on this achievement and best wishes. It is my hope that you enjoy your term of office, that yours is an innovative Speakership and that you will follow the fine traditions of your predecessor in office.

As you said in another place recently, you and I have known each other in politics for about 25 years, and we have not always agreed. However, I do want to offer to you a personal word of goodwill, congratulations and best wishes on your achievement.

**Honourable members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr WARBURTON** (Sandgate—Leader of the Opposition) (3.52 p.m.): Mr Speaker, on behalf of the Opposition, I sincerely congratulate you on your elevation. Certainly, as most people have indicated previously, you have taken office in somewhat extraordinary circumstances. However, as we have indicated on numerous occasions to a number of Speakers, members of the Opposition will give you the——

**Mr Burns** interjected.

**Mr WARBURTON:** Tom Burns made a suggestion, but members of the Opposition will certainly co-operate to the best of their ability, and they wish you every success in your new job.

**Hon. Sir WILLIAM KNOX** (Nundah—Leader of the Liberal Party) (3.53 p.m.): Mr Speaker, the Liberal Party wishes to add its support to those congratulations and to wish you every success in your new position as Speaker of this House. You can be assured of our support and assistance in carrying out your onerous duties on our behalf. We look forward to working with you over the years.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I thank you for the kind remarks that have been expressed upon my election to this office. I would like to assure each and every one of you that I have a real sense of the history of the position of Speaker. The Speaker is in fact the spokesman on behalf of the members of the Parliament and the protector of the rights of all members of Parliament. I will do everything that I possibly can in this position to make sure that I carry out the duties of the Chair in an impartial, conscientious and honourable manner.

#### **PRESENTATION OF MR SPEAKER**

**Hon. M. J. AHERN** (Landsborough—Premier) (3.54 p.m.): I desire to inform honourable members that His Excellency the Governor will receive the House for the purpose of presenting Mr Speaker to His Excellency at Government House this afternoon at approximately 4.15 o'clock.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I advise honourable members that cars will leave for Government House from the main entrance of this Parliament House within the next 10 minutes.

The chair will be resumed on the ringing of the bells.

Sitting suspended from 3.55 to 5.06 p.m.

#### **PRESENTATION OF MR SPEAKER**

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Honourable members, I have to report that this day I presented myself to His Excellency the Governor at Government House as the member chosen to fill the high and honourable office of Speaker, and that His Excellency was pleased to congratulate me upon my election.

#### **ELECTORAL DISTRICT OF BARAMBAH**

##### **Resignation of Member**

**Mr SPEAKER:** I have to inform the House that the Acting Speaker received the following letter from Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen, member for the electoral district of Barambah—

“Dear Mr Row,

I hereby tender my resignation as the Member of the Legislative Assembly for the Electorate of Barambah, effective immediately.

Yours sincerely,  
Joh Bjelke-Petersen.”

#### Seat Declared Vacant

**Hon. M. J. AHERN** (Landsborough—Premier) (5.07 p.m.), by leave, without notice:  
I move—

“That the seat in this House for the electoral district of Barambah has become and is now vacant by reason of the resignation of the said Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen.”

Motion agreed to.

### MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

#### Changes in Ministry

**Hon. M. J. AHERN** (Landsborough—Premier) (5.08 p.m.), by leave: I desire to inform the House that His Excellency the Governor on 1 December 1987—

(a) Accepted the resignations tendered by the Honourable Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen, KCMG, as a member of the Executive Council of Queensland and as Premier and Treasurer of Queensland;

(b) Appointed—

Michael John Ahern, B.Agr.Sc., to be a member of the Executive Council of Queensland;

(c) Appointed—

the Honourable Michael John Ahern, B.Agr.Sc., to be Premier and Treasurer of Queensland;

(c) Terminated the appointments of—

the Honourable Russell James Hinze;  
the Honourable Ivan James Gibbs;  
the Honourable Donald Frederick Lane;  
the Honourable William Hamline Glasson;  
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 Robert Carl Katter;  
the Honourable Yvonne Ann Chapman;  
the Honourable Donald McConnell Neal;  
the Honourable Paul John Clauson, Solicitor;  
the Honourable Gordon Leslie Simpson; and  
the Honourable Kevin Rowson Lingard, B.Ed.St., B.A., A.Ed.  
as members of the Executive Council of Queensland;

(e) Dismissed—

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

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

the Honourable Ivan James Gibbs,  
as Minister for Works, Housing and Industry of Queensland;

the Honourable Donald Frederick Lane,  
as Minister for Transport of Queensland;  
the Honourable William Hamline Glasson,  
as Minister for Lands, Forestry, Mapping and Surveying of Queensland;  
the Honourable Lionel William Powell,  
as Minister for Education, Training and Technology of Queensland;  
the Honourable Vincent Patrick Lester,  
as Minister for Employment, Small Business and Industrial Affairs of Queensland;  
the Honourable Martin James Tenni,  
as Minister for Water Resources and Maritime Services of Queensland;  
the Honourable Neville John Harper,  
as Minister for Primary Industries of Queensland;  
the Honourable Geoffrey Hugh Muntz, AAIIV,  
as Minister for Tourism, National Parks and Sport of Queensland;  
the Honourable Robert Carl Katter,  
as Minister for Northern Development and Community Services of Queensland;  
the Honourable Yvonne Ann Chapman,  
as Minister for Family Services, Youth and Ethnic Affairs of Queensland;  
the Honourable Donald McConnell Neal,  
as Minister for Corrective Services, Administrative Services and Valuation of Queensland;  
the Honourable Paul John Clauson, Solicitor,  
as Minister for Justice and Attorney-General of Queensland;  
the Honourable Gordon Leslie Simpson,  
as Minister for Mines and Energy and Minister for the Arts of Queensland;  
and  
the Honourable Kevin Rowson Lingard, B.Ed.St., B.A., A.Ed.,  
as Minister for Health and Environment of Queensland; and

(f) Appointed—

the Honourable Michael John Ahern, B.Agr.Sc., to be—  
the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing of Queensland;  
the Minister for Transport of Queensland;  
the Minister for Education, Training and Technology of Queensland;  
the Minister for Water Resources and Maritime Services of Queensland;  
the Minister for Tourism, National Parks and Sport of Queensland;  
the Minister for Family Services, Youth and Ethnic Affairs of Queensland;  
the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General of Queensland;  
the Minister for Health and Environment of Queensland; and  
the Honourable William Angus Manson Gunn to be—  
the Deputy Premier, Minister Assisting the Treasurer and Minister for Police of Queensland;  
the Minister for Works, Housing and Industry of Queensland;  
the Minister for Lands, Forestry, Mapping and Surveying of Queensland;  
the Minister for Employment, Small Business and Industrial Affairs of Queensland;  
the Minister for Primary Industries of Queensland;  
the Minister for Northern Development and Community Services of Queensland;  
the Minister for Corrective Services, Administrative Services and Valuation of Queensland; and

the Minister for Mines and Energy and Minister for the Arts of Queensland.

Mr Gunn and I shall administer all Government departments until such time as a full Cabinet is appointed and details of all other administrative arrangements are finalised. I give all honourable members an assurance that I will attend to these matters as expeditiously as possible.

I have undertaken to His Excellency to place before the House the question of confidence in my Government.

## CONFIDENCE IN GOVERNMENT

### Suspension of Standing Orders and Sessional Orders

Hon. M. J. AHERN (Landsborough—Premier) (5.12 p.m.), by leave, without notice: Pursuant to Standing Order 52, I move—

“That so much of Standing Orders and Sessional Orders be suspended as would prevent me from moving the following motion—

‘That this House expresses confidence in the Government.’ ”

Motion agreed to.

## CONFIDENCE IN GOVERNMENT

Hon. M. J. AHERN (Landsborough—Premier) (5.13 p.m.): I move—

“That this House expresses confidence in the Government.”

I have, since 26 November, when 48 members of the parliamentary wing of the ruling party of this Parliament voted for a change of leadership, had a clear mandate as Leader of the National Party and the right to govern.

I believe in placing principle before personality. I am the chosen Leader of the National Party and, therefore, command the confidence of this Parliament and can guarantee stable progressive Government and continuity of Supply to Her Majesty. His Excellency has recognised this indisputable fact by his actions in commissioning me as Premier.

The past week has been one of extraordinary events, unparalleled, I would suggest, in any Parliament that purports to follow the Westminster system of Government. Time-honoured laws and conventions have been ignored, neglected or simply waived in recent days. However, that situation has now been resolved with the resignation of Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen, and I have, as stated, a clear right to govern.

The journey upon which I am about to embark will clearly not be an easy one, especially as I follow in the footsteps of one of the nation’s most remarkable and indeed most resilient politicians. However, I have never shirked a challenge and I will not do so now. My task will be made that much easier with the knowledge that for the first time in many months this side of the House is united as one. The National Party Government is back in full control.

It is for the first time in many months a truly unified force, one that will continue to provide Queensland with strong stable Government as in years gone by. As of today, the National Party is returned to its former glory. It will once again be the envy of the nation for its ability to provide the highest quality of life to all Queenslanders. It is of this moment restored to its previously unshakable stability. In a sense, what this Parliament is witnessing today—and what the people of Queensland will be relieved to know—is that there is a change in Government without this Government changing.

It is the beginning of a renaissance. Let me add that whilst the past achievements of the National Party have been heralded throughout the nation and have been the source of envy of our political opponents, the best is yet to come.

It is only fitting that this opportunity be taken to recognise the remarkable feats of my predecessor; a man who has been nothing less than a phenomenon in the annals of Australian political history; a man who in many ways single-handedly guided Queensland out of what I can only describe as the Dark Ages into which it had sunk during 40 years of dead-hand ALP maladministration.

It is common knowledge that Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen and I were at times very public adversaries. By and large, the media made sure that our differences were well known. However, there were more agreements than differences over the years. Of course, all honourable members know that good news is not really good news, and so times of harmony and unison fail to make the headlines.

It would be hypocritical of me to suggest that I am not proud to have been selected by my peers to lead the National Party of Queensland and to have been commissioned as Premier. However, I would rather have had the accolades without the acrimony that has accompanied my elevation to this, the highest political position in this Parliament.

The results of Sir Joh's efforts are plain to see throughout Queensland. There is no sector of our economy, there is no portion of this State that has not benefited directly or indirectly. The achievements are numerous but, no doubt, many of them will be brought to the notice of the house in the ensuing debate.

As is patently clear, the National Party has the reins of Government firmly in its hands. However, good government requires a strong, relevant Opposition, a democratised Opposition, a today-type Opposition. Sadly, there is no such thing—nor has there been—in Queensland since the turn of the century. What I see before me on the benches opposite is an antiquated, totally irrelevant, union-controlled and dominated, very loose association of factions—each faction apparently determined to cut the other's throat. It is a disgrace, and the ALP in Queensland is not worthy of the title of Her Majesty's Opposition. In my 20 years in this House, it has always been thus. Indeed, Queensland is even yet recovering from the 40 years of appalling misrule and abuse of executive power wielded by the ALP Government that came to a fittingly disastrous end in 1957.

It is worth noting that under that Government, parliamentary democracy was a mere catch-phrase. In reality, Parliament was nothing more than a blunt instrument used with a ferocity by the ALP power-brokers of the day for purely selfish purposes. The common good and good government was never a consideration.

I could spend hours detailing those abuses but I will mention just a few of the more invidious crimes against democracy perpetrated by that Government: the elimination of questions without notice in the House, the abolition of the Upper Chamber, and moves that made it virtually impossible to see the introduction of a private member's Bill or an Adjournment debate. Those moves were made by Labor. In those dark days, this Parliament was a cesspit in which ALP members and Ministers alike wallowed, with unprecedented contempt for this House and for the people of Queensland. It was a sorry, sad chapter in Queensland's parliamentary history that all decent people will want to forget.

Certainly, the Ahern Government will differ from its predecessor. Each incumbent of this high office has made his own mark on it, in his own way. The Bjelke-Petersen administration achieved much. Much more is yet to be achieved, and will be achieved, by my Government. The differences will be apparent within days. The ultimate aim will be the same—a better Queensland, a better life for all Queenslanders. There will be no slowing down of appropriate economic development. Indeed, economic development will remain a keynote of this Government. The centre-piece will be a State economic development strategy. There will be, of course, a new approach to economic development based upon greater consultation with industry, employees and all levels of Government. I have spoken already of a "vision of excellence". That is not a glib catch-phrase. It encapsulates, in a few words, the entire thrust of what my Government intends to achieve. That vision will become a reality—believe it—through quality decision-making, through efficient, cost-effective Government, through consultation and co-operation

between Government and all major sectors of the community and through rewards for performance.

Innovation will be encouraged. New ideas will be welcomed. My Government will work harmoniously with industry and commerce. All of us will work not only harder but also smarter to cope with the changes that are taking place daily in the marketplace, in the home and in the office. We are ideally situated to participate in the economic development of south-east Asia and the Pacific region as a whole.

This Government will be accountable to the people and to the Parliament. It will be consultative and it will put the people first. Queensland can look forward with justifiable optimism to the future. The detail of how this Government intends to take Queensland into the year 2000 and beyond will be detailed at the earliest possible time. The changes and the initiatives will come thick and fast in the days ahead. Be assured that Queenslanders are going to like it.

The Opposition Leader and the Leader of the Liberal Party have both made much of what they describe as the undue influence of the National Party administration upon the Government of Queensland. Honourable members will recall that when the former Premier sought a Federal post, I announced my intention then to stand for the Premiership. At that time I made it abundantly clear that I stood alone. I am my own man. I am Premier by right. And I can assure this House and all Queenslanders that I remain my own man and will not—nor will my Government—be dictated to by anyone. Clearly, however, the wishes of my party, as enunciated at the recent National Party conference, will be given due consideration. Those proposed policies were not mine alone but were reached by the rank and file of the party. Nor, might I add, were they advocated by Sir Robert Sparkes alone. He, like many hundreds of delegates at that conference—including myself—had input into the decision-making. I would indicate that the Australian Labor Party has not been game to have a State conference for four years. I repeat: the Ahern Government will not be dictated to by anyone.

There is now properly constituted stable Government, a Government that has undergone, in very recent times, a catharsis. The time is long, long overdue for the ALP to put its house in order, to justify its privileged title as Her Majesty's Opposition. However, the antics of the ALP's multifactioned organisation make me despair that such a transformation is possible. Certainly it will not come about by calling up from the south a mini-Kissinger in the form of McMullan or whoever. Nothing less than total Federal intervention can provide this Parliament with the relevant Opposition it deserves, and the people rightly demand.

It has been a long, hard, often frustrating struggle to restore the dignity, the power and the influence that this Parliament deserves as of right, and even today much work has yet to be done to elevate this House to its proper standing in the affairs of State. I give an unequivocal assurance that an Ahern Government will move with determination and all possible speed to achieve that elevation and to ensure that the parliamentary institution is held in the highest-possible public regard. Under my leadership and with the full force of the ruling party of this House, all members on all sides of the political spectrum will be able to hold their heads high as members of the State Parliament of Queensland.

I have always regarded myself as a parliamentarian first and a politician second. When the transformation I have referred to takes place—and it will—I trust that all honourable members here will treat this institution and all it stands for with utmost respect.

I urge all honourable members to support the motion before the House.

**Hon. W. A. M. GUNN** (Somerset—Deputy Premier) (5.25 p.m.): In seconding this motion moved by the Premier, I wish to place on record my congratulations to the honourable member for Landsborough on his success in gaining leadership of this Government. He has my total and unflagging loyalty and I am proud that I have received the unanimous support of my parliamentary colleagues in being re-elected unopposed

as Deputy Premier. I pledge myself to do the utmost that I can for this Government and this State.

While this is a great day in the history of Queensland, Mr Speaker, I can understand why the honourable members opposite look, and undoubtedly feel, like a sad and sorry bunch. They have never really achieved the status of a virile, viable Opposition. They have never achieved recognition as a likely alternative to this Government. In short, they have never achieved anything. Now they are faced with the dawning of a new age in Queensland politics led by this National Party Government.

It is like a breath of fresh air through the corridors that has already sent a chill into those on the Opposition benches. I know they feel daunted and down-hearted at the prospect of continuing the struggle towards providing an effective Opposition. Mr Speaker, one can easily understand why.

Only last night we saw reported on television the latest sortie of that misguided missile of the Labor Party's administration in Queensland, none other than Peter Beattie. Mr Beattie has never struck me as the sort of person who would have a rural interest. Certainly Labor federally has done so much to harm the rural sector that it could be naturally expected that Mr Beattie would be one of the last people one would expect to see on a farm; so it came as some surprise to see that he has apparently developed a sudden interest in dairy-farming.

I am sure his Labor colleagues opposite are just as keen as the rest of us to know why he had to seek advice on this or any other subject in a not-so-secret meeting down behind a farm shed in Kingaroy over the week-end. The event has become known as the Kingaroy cow-yard conference. This report adds substance to the rumours that Mr Beattie is now well down the road to becoming an agrarian socialist. Certainly he must be looking for ways to go and courses to follow now that some of his colleagues have let his little escapade out of the bag. Certainly he once again achieved nothing.

Although Beattie's latest antics have undoubtedly sealed his fate and added to Labor's woes, its parliamentary party still has an unresolved leadership problem. Mr Warburton was anxious in his calls for an election, which he mistakenly saw as necessary to resolve the Government's situation over the past week; but, when it comes to putting his own leadership on the line, he is not so keen to go to a poll. Labor in Queensland will pose no threat to this Government while it continues to be a factionalised conglomerate of competing egos more intent on holding on to positions within its own structure than trying to act for the good of Queensland and Queenslanders.

I believe I am one of the most able members here today to speak on support for this Government, having served as Deputy Premier for the last four years to a man whom history will place among Queensland's greatest Premiers. The events of the past week, based as much on poor advice to the former Premier as anything else, will not detract from Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen's great achievements during the prime of his Premiership. The new Ahern/Gunn Government will be aimed at building on the best of those foundations that have already been laid by the National Party in Government. Our Premier has already expressed his viewpoint that Government in Queensland will be driven by the pursuit of excellence, and I whole-heartedly endorse that sentiment. This new Government deserves the support of this House because, while in many ways it will be a reformist Government, it will be based on principles which are near and dear to the great majority of Queenslanders.

I turn to support for the family unit. Mr Speaker, I do not know whether you are aware of the fact that, between us, the Premier and I have 10 children. That demonstrates our commitment to the family unit. This new Government believes in the fostering of free enterprise, including encouragement of small business, and freedom of the individual to seek out and pursue his or her own goals. They are all foundation-stones of National Party philosophy.

There is also a community expectation—almost a demand—that the Queensland political system pay greater and deeper respect for the Westminster principles under

which we operate. This will be so under our new leadership, and both members of this House and Queenslanders generally will reap the benefits of more efficient and effective democratic Government through this Parliament.

Over the past year in particular I have tried, within the ambit of the portfolios I have held, to steer Queensland towards openness and integrity in Government. In conjunction with my colleague the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General, I gained the Government's backing to establish the Fitzgerald commission of inquiry.

This inquiry is undoubtedly one of the most important and effective initiatives ever taken towards the control of vice, illegal gaming and police corruption in Australia. The inquiry has had my complete support since its inception. I challenge the Labor States to do likewise. The terms of reference of the Fitzgerald inquiry are available to those States. The only thing is that it will take 10 years to clean it up in New South Wales. I have been heartened by comments made by the commissioner, Mr Tony Fitzgerald, QC, expressing satisfaction with the support and co-operation given to his team by the Government. There is no doubt that the commissioner can rely on the continued support of the Premier and me.

This inquiry is another reason why this new Ahern/Gunn Government deserves the support of this House. Both the Premier and I have already indicated publicly that we will support this inquiry to its ultimate conclusion and react to its report with neither fear nor favour.

I can also advise that changes to Queensland's firearm laws are ready to be brought before this House, hopefully to curb some of the senseless slayings that have occurred owing to the easy availability of long-arms in this State.

Law and order will continue to be among the top priorities of this Government. In particular, in this regard the Government will be examining possible improvements in the collection of evidence, including the use of secure tape-recording systems for interviews. In conjunction with the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General, some talks have already been held on this matter during the previous administration, and I am confident that they will be pursued by this new Government.

Finally, I want to say that I look forward to joining the Premier in charting a new course for Queensland. This Government has a ship of State built on a proven record of National Party guidance and leadership for almost three decades. The time has come to adopt a modern, efficient and effective approach to Queensland's needs to prepare it for entry to the twenty-first century.

I look forward to serving Queensland, with our new Premier, and to helping to introduce fresh and innovative policies and solutions to guide this great State soundly into the future. I know that those members who have this State's future greatness as their guiding aim will have no hesitation in supporting the motion moved by the Premier.

**Mr WARBURTON (Sandgate—Leader of the Opposition) (5.33 p.m.):** The Opposition foreshadows an amendment because it believes that it is premature of the new Premier to seek a vote of confidence from this Parliament before he names his new Cabinet.

**An honourable member:** You're not serious.

**Mr WARBURTON:** The Opposition is serious about it if the Government is not.

Mr Speaker, honourable members have just heard in this Parliament, under your Speakership, the only two Ministers in this Government, namely the Premier, Mr Ahern, and the Deputy Premier, Mr Gunn. Having read this afternoon's edition of the *Telegraph*, which carries the headline, "Jail Riot", and which reveals that there has evidently been a massive riot and fires out at Boggo Road—and it must be remembered that the new Premier talks about accountable Government, open and frank Government—one would have thought that either Mr Ahern or Mr Gunn, who I understand is responsible for the prisons service, would have taken the opportunity to explain to this House, which

along with the public of Queensland is waiting for an explanation, what the hell is really happening out there. Mr Gunn is the Minister and both he and Mr Ahern have failed their first test.

**Mr Gunn:** That's right, and we don't want you near the place. All your people have ever done is stir up trouble out there.

**Mr WARBURTON:** As far as I am concerned they have both failed their first test in this House. This morning there was a lot of rhetoric, but both Mr Ahern and Mr Gunn have failed their first test. There can be no excuses. Mr Gunn had the opportunity, when he was on his feet, to tell this Parliament what happened out there today, and he has failed.

The Opposition believes that it is premature and presumptuous for this new Premier—but an old member of the Government—to seek this Parliament's blessing a full six days before he intends to reveal his so-called vision of excellence. We are asked to give this premature and blind endorsement to a new Premier whose self-proclaimed high ideals on democracy begin with a Parliament that is unfairly elected through a gerrymander. The Opposition says that, on what we know so far, the only apparent difference between the first Ahern Government and the last Bjelke-Petersen Government is that one face is missing. I find it incredible that a Premier who, as National Party Leader, has waited since Friday to take office, is not in a position five days later to announce his first Cabinet. I find that absolutely incredible. Not only that, but also he was planning to achieve that position some six months ago. This House can only assume that he plans either some minor changes, or, alternatively, such a sweeping purge, that he is scared to reveal the details until Parliament adjourns and his own members have left Brisbane. By the look of it he has already emulated his predecessor, Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen. Either way the Opposition is not prepared to lend its support to a vote of confidence that is based on such an irresponsible lack of ministerial detail and policy direction.

The Opposition amendment that I intend to move will give the members of this Parliament a real choice in this important matter. I believe that it is essential that this alternative is tested, particularly since the new Premier, who wants the full support of Parliament, has already lost 14 National Party members in his own Landsborough branch since he ousted Sir Joh.

This morning we have seen the Premier nominate as Speaker the former Minister for Education, who has been among his most outspoken public critics in the past week. It is farcical for anyone to even whisper about a motion of confidence amid such political bewilderment and political divisions. Since the last election only 13 months ago, this State Government has gone through farce after farce, crisis after crisis, scandal after scandal and now leadership brawl after leadership brawl. The past 13 months have seen what I believe to be the worst and least productive period of Government experienced anywhere in Australia since World War II, and probably far earlier. As I have said on a number of occasions in this House, and it bears repeating, over the last 12 months it was the "Joh for PM" campaign, then it was "Joh for Canberra", next it was "Joh for nowhere", then it was "Joh on political probation" until he retired next August, and now finally it is "Joh for the slaughterhouse".

As difficult as your job may be, Mr Speaker, with the noise coming from your side of the House, during the same period, in almost every portfolio there has been crisis after crisis, controversy after controversy and decision after decision that have been so bad and so unworkable that even the National Party has been forced to reverse them.

Now that the Bjelke-Petersen era has concluded, the National Party is absorbed in a very desperate and dishonest campaign to blame its old hero for all of its faults, all of its extremes and all of its unpopularity. The people of Queensland must never for a moment be allowed to forget that the worsening performance of Mr Ahern's Government in Queensland has been a collective National Party effort. Certainly the Opposition will not let Government members forget it. Collectively, the present Premier, the Gunns, the

Austins, the Hinzes and the Bob Sparkeses, who have now succeeded in throwing Mr Ahern's predecessor into his Kingaroy peanut paddocks, must share the guilt. This gang of political pretenders are not suddenly the political cleanskins and the political voices of reason that they would now like us all to believe.

**Mr Ahern:** Did you send Peter Beattie up to Kingaroy?

**Mr WARBURTON:** Mr Ahern, I have never heard you interject or be more outspoken. I hope that this is your new image, because it gives me an opportunity to respond. Mr Ahern——

**Mr Ahern:** Did you send Beattie to Kingaroy?

**Mr WARBURTON:** As the Premier, you are nothing——

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The Leader of the Opposition will address his remarks to the Chair.

**Mr WARBURTON:** I say to you, Mr Speaker, that the Premier who keeps interjecting is nothing more than a new leader of the same tired, bigoted and very selfish Government. He talks about a vision of excellence. He has coined the phrase; it is so wonderful—"a vision of excellence". But his vision must have been pretty blurred while he sat in Cabinet for the last seven years and on the back bench for almost 13 years before that.

We heard Mr Innes really put Mr Ahern's weights up this morning, because Mr Innes was part of that coalition some years ago. As he said this morning, he was in the meeting rooms with the National Party. Not once could he remember the new Premier of this State, who is now full of accountability, full of hope and full of vision, standing up and arguing against some of those bad decisions taken by Cabinet.

During those 20 years that the Premier was a party to what I have been referring to, some of the worst and most vindictive decisions taken by any Government in the nation came out of those Cabinet meetings.

As I said in the previous debate, the Premier supported the state of emergency for the South African Rugby team; he supported the violence of the street-march laws; he supported the SEQEB sackings that were aired this morning; and he still supports the assault on holiday-leave loading. I did not hear him come out and say, "I oppose that." No, the Premier was there giving his support to those issues.

The Premier's record as a member of the Queensland Parliament since March 1968 shows that he is very much indeed an old extremist, a Joh product rather than the young, born-again moderate that he now pretends to be. The Premier and Deputy Premier have both been willing partners in the worst extremes of Bjelke-Petersenism. They are not the political goodies that they now pretend to be.

As Mr Gunn likes to remind us, he has been the Police Minister and has presided over the worst decline in law and order standards this State has ever experienced. As Police Minister, he would not even admit that there were prostitutes in massage parlours. The difficulty with the Premier in this place is that we all have such wonderful memories. As I said, members of the Opposition will keep reminding him about about all of those things. The recycled Deputy Premier—God help the Premier—is now about to be his financial adviser. The Opposition will certainly be reminding the Premier about the Deputy Premier's extremes and what he has been saying in this House and, of course, what he has not been saying over a long period.

**Mr Ahern:** A balanced Budget.

**Mr WARBURTON:** I am glad that the Premier interjected once again. He was a leading advocate; I have never heard him so noisy. I remind the Premier of the proposed chlorine plant that was finally abandoned as a result of public pressure. Mr Ahern surrendered his principles to Bjelke-Petersen more often on key issues than any other Minister has done. For the benefit of Mr Ahern I will say that again: he has surrendered his principles in the Cabinet more often than any other Minister has done.

This new Premier talks about his vision of excellence. However, his own performance during the past 20 years has revealed an acute short-sightedness—in fact, a near-blindness—to any suggestions of meaningful Government reform and honesty. This new leader, who obviously suffers from some form of political myopia, wants us all to believe that he is suddenly different from his predecessor.

The arguments on policy and stability of leadership that are involved in this panic motion of confidence—and that is what it is; a panic motion of confidence—were canvassed earlier during the debate on the election of the Speaker. I do not believe for one moment that this House expects me to repeat those doubts and objections about the Premier's credentials any further than is necessary to answer this frantic motion by a faceless Government for confidence in itself.

I put this to the new Premier: how many Ministers are to be changed, really? That is a question that must be asked. As my colleague Mr Gibbs has indicated, I am informed that Mrs Yvonne Chapman is in for the chop and that Mr Don Neal is headed for the "Black hole". All honourable members are able to make predictions, and a number of them have been made in this House today. The word is that Mr Neville Harper is gone, together with a couple of rats who spent last week swimming towards the party's lost flagship—as my colleague Mr De Lacy mentioned. I understand that there are problems there. Admittedly, I am relying only on rumour, but the story goes that our erstwhile friend on the Government front bench whose vim in respect of this whole new Government is such that he has gone to sleep—and I am referring to "Big Russ"—is out of favour for trying to balance his bad knees on either side of the barbed-wire fence. I do not know if that is true. The new Premier wants to flatten my old friend's loutish presence and profile. I find that difficult to believe, but it is a distinct possibility.

**Mr Hinze:** I was enjoying a little sleep. Now you've upset me.

**Mr WARBURTON:** We would miss Mr Hinze.

Without stretching this debate further, the Labor Party says that the Premier shows himself as an amateur and a novice. He is trying to rush this desperate and unnecessary motion through a very special sitting of this Parliament. It is a great pity that Mr Ahern went out there not as the Mike Ahern that I think I know but as a person who tried to establish himself as being covered with all that gloss and enamel. Really, that is not him. He talks about a vision of excellence, which I believe will backfire on him.

Had he gone out and said honestly that his Government has immense problems and that he is prepared to face up to them and to do something about them, he might have received some kudos. But no, he went out there and said, "There are no problems. We are a great team; a great new group with a vision of excellence." Do honourable members know what has happened? Nobody really believes the Premier. Nobody really believes him. It shows the Premier's immaturity.

Earlier today, the Premier took us back into the pre-1957 days. I was expecting some of the vision of excellence to spill out and the Premier to tell us exactly what he had in mind. For a long time he has been planning to attain the position that he now holds. He has had plenty of time to think about it.

This Parliament should not even consider giving a vote of confidence to a Government that cannot announce its Cabinet until Parliament is safely adjourned until next year. How can anyone here honestly give support for a vision of excellence that is preceded by an inglorious record of failure and irregularity? How can anyone here honestly give support now for a vision of excellence which the Fitzgerald inquiry shows day after day has allowed the growth of uncontrolled police corruption and organised crime? How can anyone in this Chamber today honestly give support for a vision of excellence that starts with a gerrymander that is a disgrace to the Westminster standards of government anywhere in the world?

The Opposition says that this so-called new Government has done nothing to deserve the confidence demanded in this premature motion. In fact, on its record from

the day it was re-elected a year ago until this morning, this Government deserves only a vote of censure, as the Opposition proposes, rather than the artificial one that it seeks of support.

I therefore move the following amendment—

“To remove all words after ‘this House’ and insert—

‘places on record its disgust at the way in which the National Party Government of Queensland has brought our State into disrepute.

The House also notes that the new Premier is equally as culpable as his predecessor in respect of the general low standards of Government in Queensland.

The House calls on the new Premier, Mr Ahern, to abolish the existing zonal gerrymander and introduce electoral justice in which all electorates have equal enrolments with a 10 per cent tolerance range.

The House calls upon the new Premier to immediately declare his intention to establish a parliamentary public accounts committee, and a parliamentary public works committee.

The House calls upon the Premier to pledge an immediate review of the education budget with a view of providing increased funding and to put a stop immediately to ministerial waste and extravagance.

The House calls on the new Premier to enunciate what policy changes he plans to reduce unemployment, especially since Queensland has the highest level of unemployment in Australia.

The House calls on the new Premier to introduce legislation to establish a pecuniary interests register for all members of Parliament, their spouses, and dependent children.’ ”

**Mr BURNS** (Lytton—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (5.53 p.m.): I second the amendment. I stood at Mr Ahern’s first press conference after his election as Leader and suspected that this dull, boring Minister had borrowed a backbone. I commented that I was witnessing a medical miracle—a backbone transplant—but, having watched this new “Leader” wimp around whilst one old man out of touch with his party made a fool of “Milkwater marshmallow Mike” who had a letter signed by 48 of the 49 National Party members saying that they supported him, I am led to the logical conclusion that the transplant was unsuccessful. When this happens, it generally is because the body rejects the organ that is transplanted. On this occasion, the backbone has rejected Mike Ahern as unsuitable. It is not the body rejecting the backbone; the backbone rejected Mike.

If honourable members saw this morning’s exercise, it was clear that the Premier could not control his own caucus yesterday. He got a Speaker that he did not want. He got a Speaker who represented the other side. He was out touting for the member for Warwick and offering deals to the member for Maryborough, but he got the fellow he did not want. He lost the first ballot in his own party room.

The Queensland National Party has so debased the Westminster system that it is unrecognisable in this State. Every Minister, every National Party back-bencher and every Liberal who turned a blind eye to the scuttling of the Westminster system is responsible for this debasement. The institutions and conventions of democracy have been ignored, contravened and thrown overboard in Queensland. Queenslanders have observed the playing-out of a pathetic farce because Joh’s boys did not know how to get him to go. Young Mike, the would-be Joh pretender, became so entangled that it was Joh who was leading him on a merry dance. Bjelke-Petersen might have been regarded as a political corpse, but during the last week he kept jumping out of the coffin and giving his boys and girls—his inept Brutuses—the fright of their lives.

National Party members are now paying the price for condoning the years of cronyism, corruption, the debasement and desecration of the Parliament, civil liberties, the judiciary, the public service and, of course, the police force. The National Party has

spent 19 years building up a personal patronage system of crooks, spivs, and political pay-off merchants. Many Ministers followed the example by emulating their party's corruption and cronyism.

I think Andrea Ahern let the cat out of the bag when she said that, under Mike, Queensland would have an honest Government. What an admission! It is clear from that statement that Mrs Ahern had grave doubts about the honesty and integrity of the Bjelke-Petersen Government—the Government her husband served in for so many years.

Young Mike is now trying to portray himself as a new Venus rising cleansed from the foam—beautiful, pristine and pure, untainted by the entrenched corruption and cronyism the Fitzgerald commission is now laying bare—but I tell honourable members this: he will need more than a dip in the ocean before Mike Ahern is perceived as a vestal virgin and not the same tired old whore who has gone out and just bought herself a new dress. Even if he dives into the ICI chlorine plant that he so strongly supported, he will not come up smelling clean. He has already stated that he supports the gerrymander and that he will carry out the redistribution policy of Sir Robert Sparkes.

Queensland's open-slatheer approach to ministerial expenses—with virtually no guidelines being set down—allowed Ministers to run up virtually any Bills they wanted to. I will look back to examine the Premier's record. Who was the biggest spender when it came to ministerial expenses in 1984? It was the Premier. It was none other than Mr Ahern, who spent \$74,944—nearly double his nearest rival. Oh, I have got him up. This will be No. 1.

**Mr AHERN:** I rise to a point of order. As I indicated to the press at the time, there was an accounting error which was drawn to my department's attention by the Auditor-General. The figure was approximately \$12,000. I ask the honourable member to accept that. He knows better.

**Mr BURNS:** I do not know it, but I will accept the Premier's word. I have no argument with that. The figures attributed to the Premier were in the book. I took them from the records of the Parliament.

This is the man who is going to provide Queenslanders with a new broom. His earlier statement was that he would provide "an efficient, cost-effective Government". Let me examine the first thing that the Premier did to show everyone how good and clean he was. He got Don Lane to organise the numbers for him, and that would be a fair example. The next thing he did was get Paul Clauson—nicknamed "Silent Paul" because he asked two questions and made about one and a half speeches in his two years as a back-bencher—to advise the Premier on parliamentary tactics. The Premier is really picking up the smarties on the Government side.

All honourable members will recall how Ivan Gibbs—and where is he today?—got a Ministry after donating \$5,000 to the Bjelke-Petersen Foundation and how Lindsay Hartwig failed to get a Ministry because he refused to donate. Lindsay Hartwig is on record as having said that. Why did the Premier not take him up on it if he was wrong?

Everyone would recall the favours that Keith Williams received in relation to Hamilton Island after his \$25,000 donation got him breakfast with the former Premier. Did Mike Ahern do anything about that? Not a thing.

Sir Justin Hickey was candid enough to admit that he believed he got his knighthood because of the \$100,000 he donated to a Lutheran retirement home in Kingaroy. Did Mike Ahern do anything about that? Not a thing.

No doubt "Top-level Ted" will be willing to reveal all the details of the favours he got after he ingratiated himself with the former Premier. Did Mike Ahern do anything about it? He did nothing to stop those blatant abuses when he was a member of Cabinet.

Sitting suspended from 6 to 7.30 p.m.

**Mr BURNS:** Before the dinner recess I was making the point that Mike Ahern did nothing to stop blatant abuses when he was a member of the Queensland Cabinet. He

was ever willing to turn a blind eye to the corruption that was occurring, the corruption and special deals which were approved by Cabinet of which he was a member.

Even Angus Innes, the pretender to the Liberals' porcelain outhouse throne, said Ahern is tainted—tainted because of his association with the Government's past decisions. But poor old Angus forgets that his own leader, the long-forgotten Sir William, who most Queensland voters seem to think is already dead, was one of the longest-serving members of Bjelke-Petersen's Cabinet and, using Innes' definition, one of the most tainted.

Ahern and other Ministers cannot now say they are a new Government and declare they are clean. The actions or inactions of Ahern display a complicity to tolerate and condone cronyism, corrupt deals and political abuses. We all recall Mr Ahern upholding the principles of Westminster democracy when he supported the appointment of that pathetic figure Patrick Field to the Senate. No more disgraceful act overturning all convention has ever been committed in the history of this nation's parliamentary democracy. Instead of standing up for principle, Mr Ahern voted for debasing democratic convention.

Mr Ahern was, along with many other Government members, a party to the disgraceful promotions and transfers in the Police Department that resulted in the resignation of an honest Police Commissioner who was committed to cleaning up the police force, Ray Whitrod.

My leader has said that we in the Opposition will do nothing here today that could adversely affect the Fitzgerald inquiry. I support him fully and will not reflect on the many matters involving corruption that must be eventually debated in this House. But the departure of Bjelke-Petersen does not in any way alter the fact that he should appear before the Fitzgerald inquiry to explain how the Ministry handled the Whitrod affair, the Lewis promotions and what was the National Party Government's policy on prostitution, illegal gambling and organised crime. For example, which Ministers supported the policy of toleration and containment claimed by Lewis as Government policy? Mr Ahern now promises open and honest government.

There must be a complete disclosure of the superannuation pay-out to Beryl Young, the pilot to former Premier, Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen. Reports of a \$120,000 superannuation pay-out must be explained. Ms Young was not a contributor to the public service superannuation scheme. The State Government was making contributions to this private and privileged Suncorp scheme. In fact, I understand that she was putting in 6 per cent and the Government was putting in 10½ per cent. That was under a special Suncorp arrangement.

When any public servant retires before the age of 55, he receives only his own contribution plus a lousy 3 or 4 per cent interest on that contribution. As I understand it, such a person has to give three months' notice and has to abide by the Public Service Regulations. I challenge this Government and Mr Ahern to make Ms Young abide by the Public Service Regulations. She should forfeit three months' pay for failing to abide by those regulations.

The questions requiring answers in relation to Ms Young are as follows—

- (1) When was this private and privileged superannuation scheme for Ms Young established?
- (2) Was this private and privileged superannuation scheme established by the former Premier, or was it a collective Cabinet decision?
- (3) What contributions were made by Ms Beryl Young since the scheme started?
- (4) What contributions, in all forms, by the State Government have been made?
- (5) Will the Premier table the document which set up this private and privileged superannuation scheme for Ms Young, because significant tax-payers' funds are involved?

As I said, she defied the Public Service Regulations and I expect that, in relation to her, the Cabinet will implement no privileged deal for her. Failure by the new Premier to come clean on this sleazy and suspicious financial windfall will immediately destroy any claims by Mr Ahern to be heading up a new Government that is open, honest and accountable, as he said in this place this afternoon.

We all recall the scandals which the new National Party leader presided over when he was the Primary Industries Minister. The Peanut Marketing Board collapsed just three weeks after Ahern tabled in this House the annual report of the Peanut Marketing Board giving it a clean bill of health. The Minister did not even know what was going on in his own board. He had no idea that the chairman had granted himself a massive pay hike, that he had frequent first-class overseas trips with his secretary, that 5 000 tons of peanuts was missing and that the farmers were not likely to be paid because of a \$2m shortfall.

We all recall Mr Ahern as Minister condoning the rort of the Hinze milk quotas. Mr Ahern introduced retrospective legislation in amendments to the Milk Supply Act validating the illegal transfer of milk quota entitlements to Hinze and Holm—that is Charlie Holm, the National Party vice-president.

**Mr Austin:** It had all been done before.

**Mr BURNS:** He is honest and clean now. All of a sudden he is going to try to tell us that this is not true.

Against the advice of his department and clearly in breach of the regulations, he permitted the transfer of the milk entitlement to Hinze and Holm when that entitlement should have reverted to the pool. By doing this Hinze reputedly earned an extra \$104,000 a year. If this is not favouritism to cronies, I do not know what is. Mr Ahern's lack of action and his indecisive leadership contributed to the major problems of the sugar industry in later years.

Ahern's inglorious career worsened when he became Minister for Industry, Small Business and Technology. He was then the presider over phantom projects and collapsed industries of the first order. While Mr Ahern was Minister, 10 000 metal industry jobs in Queensland were lost and some of the more notable phantom projects were added to the already long list. Members will recall the failure of the Quest mini steel mill proposal after it was beaten up by the Minister. The Minister announced that he believed there was a great need for not one but two steel-mills in Queensland. In addition to the Quest venture, Ahern encouraged the Currumbin engineering group to put in a bid as well. Both groups failed miserably because they got entangled in buying obsolete equipment that was little more than scrap metal. BHP, which the Minister initially rejected out of hand because it proposed only a rolling mill, finally came to his rescue and saved him from further embarrassment. This is just another beautiful example of how not to go about promoting industry in this State and of his incompetence. He speaks about quality decision-making and efficient, cost-effective Government, but he was a disaster as a Minister.

All honourable members recall how the Government lost \$4.6m on Sutton's Foundry because, as Mr Ahern said at the time, the Government acted with its heart and not with its head. Honourable members recall the closing down of the General Motors- Holden's assembly line at Acacia Ridge whilst Mr Ahern was Minister.

Honourable members recall the spectacular failure of Q-Net, the ill thought out, high-tech project which Mr Ahern became so fond of but which was hopelessly expensive and a poor alternative to land-based telecommunication systems when it came to cost effectiveness. The Government wanted a satellite but it gave no thought to the fact that a ground station costs \$30,000 and few people could afford such high investment costs. As honourable members saw recently, the Government had to bail out of this failed venture with a loss of some \$13m and it even had to pay a multimillion dollar subsidy to the Parry Corporation to take over this National Party created high-tech white elephant.

All honourable members recall the failure of the State Government, and in particular the department responsible for technology, to mount any credible bid for the submarine contract. I remember Mr Ahern telling this House that Queensland put up an excellent package, which he was sure would be attractive to the submarine tenderers and the Federal Government. Honourable members later found out that nothing could have been further from the truth. The submission was a lousy 30 pages. Queensland apparently put no effort into mounting a credible bid and no effort into ensuring that Queensland companies could meet the stringent quality-control standards required. It relied instead on virtually sending down a few brochures on "Life is Great in the Sunshine State". There was no regular and ongoing contact with defence officials whatsoever and even NQEA received no practical assistance from the Queensland Government in its bid for a slice of the contract. Now, three years too late, the Government has set up a submarine task force. That is the way Mr Ahern intends to give Queensland this excellence, leadership, quality decision-making and efficient, cost-effective Government he is talking about. That is an example of the way Mr Ahern performed when he was a Minister.

But when it comes to Queensland companies and Queensland jobs, the State Government ignores its tendering policies and supports its old cronies. Even Sir Roderick Proctor attacked the State Government's cronyism when it came to tendering procedures. He attacked it in the days when Ahern was a Minister. He labelled it a complete charade. Mr Ahern has not spoken out on this issue. State Government contracts are decided beforehand and it is virtually a waste of time for many companies to even consider applying. Local computer companies were always complaining that the big boys were always getting the nod and that tender invitations were written in such a way as to exclude anyone other than the preferred applicant.

**Mr Austin:** You have given this out to the media already. You are attempting to get it all in, aren't you?

**Mr BURNS:** My bloody oath I am.

This happened with the Sperry computer contract, even though it turned out later on that Sperry could not even meet the terms of the contract. In late October last year, Mr John Holiday of Palette Systems complained that, despite being the lowest tenderer and the only local bid, they lost a contract for Queensland Railways because it appeared that the Government had already decided on an American-based company. In letting contracts for Q-Net, an Australian company alleged that the Japanese NEC company was clearly given preferential treatment. The slogans of "We Make it Great in the Sunshine State" and "Buy Queensland Made" became a joke under Mr Ahern. He even scrapped the guide-lines that gave preference to local companies. No wonder he commented that the Queensland economy was in trouble. He was doing his best to close industry down.

I wonder if now that he is Premier he will change Government policy on ministerial cars and insist that his Ministers drive Australian-made vehicles rather than imported luxury limousines. I understand he told some of his colleagues that they are not to drive their supplied cars at present because they are not Ministers, that one particular Minister complained bitterly and that a back-bencher had to promise to lend him a car because Mike Ahern had said that they could not drive their luxury imported limousines any more.

In an apparent attempt to justify why he had been a dismal failure as Minister for Industry and Technology, he said that Australians got carried away with the likes of the Wally Lewises and the Greg Chappells of this world, when in fact the developers were the true VIPs. Mike Gore and Iwasaki were more than pleased with that statement by Mike Ahern.

It is no wonder that Mike Ahern showed no compassion or concern about the fate of the SEQEB workers, who lost their jobs, their superannuation and, in many cases, their homes and families because they stood up for a principle. He thinks that Iwasaki

and Mike Gore are the VIPs, not the ordinary old Queensland working family. Now he talks about being concerned about the people and families.

At the end of his time in the Industry and Technology portfolio, Mike Ahern made a final gift to Keith Williams. He exempted Hamilton Island from the regulations of the Retail Shop Leases Act, a move that he justified as freeing up leases when in reality it gave the proprietor open slather to impose any charges he liked.

Mike then moved to the Health portfolio and the long-running controversies of condom vending machines and AIDS. The only time in 20 years that Mike the wimp took a stand was when he took a stand on what he must have seen as a most important principle—condom vending machines. But as soon as Bjelke Joh said, “You will lose your Cabinet perks if you do not toe the line.”, “Milksop Mike” went limp on condoms and withdrew.

I think the former Health spokesman, Mr McElligott, put it very well when he said that Mr Ahern had revealed himself as the great pretender on the AIDS issue. Ahern constantly talked about what he would do to fight AIDS, but he delivered very little. Queensland allocated the least of all the States to fight AIDS. Mike Ahern failed to get Cabinet support for AIDS lesson in schools or for a community education program.

Mr Ahern tried to tell me today that he was a mate of the Speaker and that he tried to get the Speaker elected. The Speaker was Mike’s enemy all the way along the line, and it was a kick in the teeth for Mike today when he had to accept the Speaker. It was the first defeat of the new leader. He did not have the leadership courage to go in and say, “I want my man; I want Booth”, who sabotaged the previous Premier, or, “I want Alison”, who had been brought back with a little offer. He was not prepared to stand up and do that. He let the members of his party force the new Speaker—I do not know how to describe the new Speaker—Lin Powell down his throat.

When he was Health Minister, Mr Ahern was preparing to preside over the destruction of Queensland’s free hospital system. From 1 January 1988 there will be a \$5 charge for all drug prescriptions. The average person who goes to a hospital gets a dose of aspirin, which costs between 40c and \$1, and penicillin tablets or a needle which costs up to \$2. Now people will be charged \$5 for each of those. It is the first nail in the coffin of the free hospital system. It is the start of a gradual dismantling of the free hospital system in Queensland. The leader of the National Party Government is the man who put the first nail in the coffin of the free hospital system.

In May this year it was reported that psychiatric patients at a Brisbane hospital had to drink from lavatory bowls because no taps were provided and that patients at Wacol had been kept in an exposed cage exercise yard during extreme heat and heavy rain. Mr Ahern offered nothing but apologies. And he talks about his concern for people! This is the new leader of the National Party Government.

To prevent teenagers from smoking, Ahern proposed the totally unworkable law of making it illegal for them to smoke under the age of 17 years. The pubs are full of kids who are drinking under age. There are a limited number of pubs in this town, and the Government cannot catch the under-age drinkers; but in every cigarette shop in the nation Ahern was going to have someone picking up a kid buying a packet of smokes. What a joke! It was just a headline-hunting ploy by the Premier, who was at that stage campaigning to be Premier of this State. It was a bit of cheap publicity.

When he was Minister for Health, Mr Ahern also refused to press charges against a Princess Alexandra Hospital scientist for misappropriating more than \$100,000 on the flimsy excuse that he was a Crown employee. Is this the hard line against crooks that honourable members can expect Mr Ahern to take as Premier? Honourable members should not forget that it is Mr Ahern who has publicly supported food irradiation, despite the many unresolved questions that surround this method of preservation.

Other embarrassing incidents were the attempts to bulldoze the ICI chlorine plant through and the tossing out of patients during Christmas 1985 from the Andrea Ahern

Hospital in Caloundra because the staff wanted a break or Mr Moran wanted to make some money.

**Mr Austin:** It is a private hospital.

**Mr BURNS:** Yes, it is a private hospital. I will talk briefly about ICI and then I will deal with the private hospital.

“Milkwater Mike”, or “Marshmallow Mike” as I call him, was one of the main proponents of the siting of the ICI chlorine plant at Lytton. He forced the issue through. He asked Cabinet to take that area outside of the town-planning area. Not only did he do that, but also he sent this poor old fellow here, “Cannon fodder” McKechnie, down there to tell us and never fronted up anywhere along the line. I asked Mike Ahern a question in this Parliament and he said that there was no danger in the plant at all. Peter McKechnie was sent down there, but Mr Ahern never attended any public meetings. He made a few private visits.

When poor old Joh was in trouble up in Townsville, neither of those two courageous fellows got up to support him. Mike Ahern never got up and said, “We are all in trouble over the ICI chlorine plant. I started it, moved it, supported it and proposed it.” He never said that at all. Mike Ahern fights his war whilst he is running away. He hid behind Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen’s skirts.

**Mrs NELSON:** I rise to a point of order. It has been clearly stated in this House on a previous occasion that the Premier was not in attendance at the conference in Townsville on that day and was unable to rebut any of those remarks. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition is well aware of that fact and I ask him to withdraw those comments.

**Mr BURNS:** That is bulldust. I am not withdrawing that.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row):** Order! Unless the honourable member is personally affected, I cannot accept her point of order.

**Mr BURNS:** It is a pity that after a couple of terms in this House she does not yet understand Standing Orders.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! I would appreciate it if the honourable member would address the Chair.

**Mr BURNS:** It is a pity that the honourable member for Aspley has been here for a term and a half now and cannot even understand Standing Orders. If she is given enough time and we keep belting it into her, sooner or later she might wake up.

Mr Austin has invited me to mention the Andrea Ahern Hospital in Caloundra. Two years ago this hospital turned out all its patients over the Christmas break, and allegations have been made that Mr Ahern negotiated favoured treatment to the Moran Group which named the hospital after Mrs Ahern. Despite Mr Ahern’s denials, the Moran Group does appear to be particularly successful when it comes to receiving Government backing for private hospital development in Queensland. Up there he has a piece of Government land costing a couple of hundred thousand dollars and later on, after the development of the hospital, it was sold for about nine million bucks. The Government made a substantial profit out of that deal. Sir Edward Lyons has stated publicly that the Premier’s closeness with the Moran Group jeopardises other applications.

We have come to expect that “Marshmallow Mike” will remain silent when abuses are exposed and when corruption is evident. He said nothing when the SEQEB workers were sacked, their superannuation entitlements withdrawn and when their families were financially destroyed. I hope he does something about Ms Young and her payments. Mr Ahern said nothing when corrupt policemen were allowed to walk away with massive superannuation pay-outs despite their betrayal of the community which they were sworn to serve. Mr Ahern said nothing when churchmen attacked the Government for subverting civil liberties and when they themselves were attacked for daring to speak up. Mr Ahern

said nothing when the right to strike was effectively withdrawn in Queensland. Mr Ahern said nothing when street marches were banned, when the former Premier and his cronies were receiving Comalco shares in return for political favours and when Iwasaki was given large tracts of Crown land and property deals which were not available to Queenslanders. Mr Ahern did nothing when Hinze made a habit of rezoning land for his friends and cronies. Mr Ahern did nothing when Lindeman Island national park was being flogged off to Ted Lyons and East West Airlines. Mr Ahern did nothing and said nothing about the Behan loans affair, about the gagging of Parliament, and the rushing-through of Bills in the middle of the night. Mr Ahern did nothing about Sir Frank Moore and his conflict of interests as a private developer and head of the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation.

What did Mr Ahern say about Sir Frank Moore's involvement in the Roma Street development group, the group which bought up land in Roma Street and then flogged it off to the Government six months later for a massive profit? What did Mr Ahern say about the massive overpayments to National Party member Cox, a relative of Vicky Kippin, when he had his land resumed for the Burdekin Dam? He said nothing. What did Mr Ahern say about the Tarong Power Station scam which cost Queensland electricity-consumers an extra \$259m? He said nothing. What did Mr Ahern say about Joh's deals with the Japs, the overturning of local authority decisions, the foreign land-ownership register and the special deals for Sir Leslie Thiess? Mr Ahern said nothing. What did Mr Ahern say about the politicisation of the judiciary and the public service, something Sir Ernest Savage is now complaining about? Mr Ahern said nothing.

During Mr Ahern's years of Parliament he has played the role of the three wise monkeys—hear no evil, see no evil and speak no evil. I hope that Mike Ahern will be a very short-term Rupert Hamer as the Premier of Queensland.

**Mr HENDERSON** (Mount Gravatt) (7.49 p.m.): It gives me enormous pride indeed to rise in this House today to speak in support of the motion of confidence moved by the Premier and seconded by the Deputy Premier. At the same time, I reject totally the spiteful, if not infantile, amendment moved by the Opposition.

The National Party today is strong, united and determined in its pursuit of open, consultative, accountable and honest government. Our aim is, and always has been, to make Queensland a great place in which to live, work and to raise a family. We will continue to pursue that goal with renewed vigour and enthusiasm. The National Party to which I belong, which I support and of which I am, today, proud to be a member, is the same National Party that I joined in 1974 and the same National Party which supported me in past elections and which supports me today. It is not a different party at all. The management may have changed slightly, I might add, but the party is the same—strong, united, determined and very positive in its commitment to Queensland and its vision to do something great for Queenslanders.

The legitimacy of any Government is based solely on a clear mandate from the people to govern. That is why we are here today. We seek and will obtain a clear mandate from the people's representatives assembled in this Parliament. I believe, without equivocation, that the people of Queensland are showing, and will continue to show, overwhelming support for our Government. Not only did the people of Queensland support us at the last election but, as any objective person can plainly see, there is an enormous groundswell of support for our new leader's style of open and accountable government. If openness, consultation, accountability and honesty are so radical that they constitute a new party, then one could well ask: just what did the so-called old National Party stand for?

I share the obvious sense of excitement, enthusiasm and expectation that is sweeping through the community today as Queensland stands poised to reap the benefits of years of strong National Party Government in this great State.

*An incident having occurred in the public gallery—*

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr HENDERSON:** With all due humility and circumspection—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! That person will be removed from the gallery. If there is any more disturbance in the gallery, I will have the gallery cleared.

**Mr HENDERSON:** With all due humility—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! I ask the attendants to clear those people from the gallery.

**Mr HENDERSON:** With all due humility and circumspection, I believe that the talented and capable Ahern/Gunn-led team is admirably suited to rise to the challenge of today's increasing complex economic and social demands. We promise to deliver to the Queensland people the security, growth and strong leadership that the citizens of this State demand and deserve. Allied with a proven and tested set of economic strategies, our continued commitment to Christian family values will provide us with the kind of stability and prosperity that has been the envy of so many people in the southern States. On these points there is complete unanimity of support in our National Party and, I believe, in the community at large.

The Ahern-led National Party Government is well able to deliver good, strong government to the people of Queensland for many, many years to come, an observation which has the ALP and the Liberal Party petrified. We believe that decency and right living will always make a nation prosper. We will see that happen in Queensland.

The great historian Arnold Toynbee, in his celebrated study of the rise and fall of nations, pointed out that all enduring civilisations are characterised by three outstanding qualities, namely, justice, mercy and compassion. Justice ensures that all people live under the rule of laws which clearly distinguish right from wrong. Mercy ensures that we recognise that we are all human and thus are all, at some time, entitled to expect forgiveness and that we will be judged on our intentions. Hard cases make bad laws.

Compassion ensures that we feel towards one another a sense of love and care. No Government can be so inflexible as to lack constructive responses to the needs of its citizens. This Government has always stood for, and will continue to stand for, the highest Christian principles. That will be seen in its compassionate response to people who are victims of enormous social tragedies such as AIDS, prostitution, abortion, child abuse, poverty, homelessness or alcohol or drug abuse. This Government is doing what it believes is right in order to help protect society from the spread of such misery, rather than simply standing on the sideline and shouting, "Unclean! Unclean!" to the victims of such dreadful circumstances.

Recently, Dr Reg Klimionok, the pastor of my church, the Garden City Christian Church at Mount Gravatt, in the *Australian Evangel* of October 1987 wrote an interesting article entitled "Is the church ready for AIDS?"

*A further incident having occurred in the public gallery—*

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row):** Order! I request the gallery attendants to ensure that those people who caused the disturbance in the gallery be removed forthwith. Would the police please clear the gallery?

**Mr HENDERSON:** The article to which I have referred stated—

"AIDS is now a disease which is totally ingrained within the heterosexual community. If this is the case, our churches will soon be faced with responsibility of ministering to people suffering from AIDS—not unlike the way Jesus ministered to those with leprosy—the 'untouchables' of His day.

I can see a close comparison between AIDS and leprosy. Lepers were the unclean people of Christ's day, a system which had been established under Old Testament law. However, Jesus touched the leper when no-one else would! Look at the dramatic and wonderful story of Matt. 8:1-4."

Later in that very same article Dr Klimionok posed a series of questions—

“How will we minister to these people? They will come to us terminally ill. Do we turn our back on them and tell them they are experiencing God’s wrath? Have we taken the time to better educate ourselves to understanding this horrific killer? Are our congregations prepared to have fellowship with AIDS sufferers? These are very important questions we must address if we are to fulfil Christ’s mandate of reaching a lost world. The question therefore arises—is the church ready for AIDS?”

The Ahern Government believes that it must address that question for the whole of society today. It cannot, in pious and pompous self-righteousness, sit on the sideline and merely chant, “Unclean! Unclean!” The latter approach displays neither justice, nor mercy, nor compassion. Christianity does not mean that condom vending machines must be banned or that sex education should not be permitted in schools. Rather, as Christians, it means that we do not back away from our total commitment to realistically face difficult social issues that have arisen and may arise in the future, and to face them with compassion and a sense of mercy and justice. We must show positive leadership in terms of encouraging people to strive for excellence. This Government cannot legislate to make people good. It cannot legislate away problems such as AIDS or prostitution. A credible Government must face up to these problems. Our example must be our strong leadership. Realistic solutions must be found and pursued. That will be done. As much as possible, the policies of the Ahern Government will reflect the total needs of the community. The Ahern Government will be strong without being divisive, principled without being dogmatic, and consultative without being ineffective. The people of Queensland expect all of those qualities from a progressive Government, based on Christian principles, which is leading a progressive State. That is what the people will receive.

It has been claimed that this Government will undermine the family unit. I challenge those people who have made those reckless and ill-founded comments to look very carefully at the families of both the Premier and the Deputy Premier. Those families are characterised by all that is wholesome and good. I ask honourable members to consider the highly successful marriages of Mike and Andrea Ahern and Bill and Lorna Gunn and the way in which they have reared their children in loving, caring family environments.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber. The Chamber will come to order.

**Mr HENDERSON:** It is ludicrous to make claims that we will tear down the family unit in the light of such compelling, practical, demonstrated evidence.

The role of sex education in schools is also currently being debated. Some believe that sex education is not the role of the school. I personally believe that this responsibility lies primarily with the family unit. Although I believe that it is the primary responsibility of families, it is a sad fact of life that we are witnessing a break-down of the family unit. We know that divorce is on the increase. In 1985, some 17 000 marriages were registered in Queensland. In the same period, some 8 000 couples filed for divorce. In addition, fewer and fewer parents are shouldering the responsibility of sex education. Therefore, if it is not happening in the family, someone must take the responsibility. If the family is not doing it, or will not do it, who does? Do we abandon our youth to the consequences of ignorance and end up with higher social problems such as unwanted pregnancies? If we put our heads in the sand and resort to moralising, the problems will not go away. They will be aggravated and even more horrific and barbaric social consequences such as abortion will result.

As a Christian member of Parliament and the representative of a strong Christian electorate situated in the Bible belt of Brisbane, I have absolutely no misgivings or apprehension about the future directions that the Ahern Government will take, because I know the type of men that Mike Ahern and Bill Gunn are. I have full confidence in

their commitment to decency and family values. They display both values in their public and private lives. They display the highest sense of justice, mercy and compassion. The Government which Mike Ahern leads will respond to his positive leadership in this regard. I am prepared to stand before the Queensland public in any forum, be it church or otherwise, to endorse the policies of this Government and the National Party. And I shall do that with a great deal of pride.

This morning, we witnessed trenchant attacks on our party, in particular by the Liberal Party. Its attacks on the Government were characterised by hate, jealousy and spite. It is a worthwhile exercise to take a good look at the Liberal Party. One of the most pitiful sights of recent times has been the public posturing of the Liberal Party as displayed by its leader, Sir William Knox. The Liberals, the Pontius Pilates of this Parliament, have yet again shown the people of Queensland just what they are—nothing but unmitigated, unrepentant political opportunists of the most despicable kind. Night after night, as I tuned into current affairs and news programs, I saw Sir William Knox and Mr Neville Warburton on the same platform agreeing on just about everything. Indeed, the most common response from the Leader of the Opposition has, of late, been, “I agree with Sir William Knox.”

**Mr Sherrin:** They are a coalition in Opposition.

**Mr HENDERSON:** That is right. They are a coalition in Opposition.

Has the Liberal Party simply become another faction within the ALP? Perhaps we could say that it has added a number of new factions to the ALP, since we all know that the 10 Liberal Party members of this House form 10 different Liberal Party factions. They spend almost all their time plotting, backstabbing and decrying their colleagues on car telephones. As I watched Sir William Knox and Mr Neville Warburton on television, I was really touched by the obvious closeness and affection that they hold for one another. I was reminded of the affection that the Roman Emperor Caligula had for his horse. The trouble is that, when I saw Sir William Knox and Neville Warburton on TV, I never really knew who was Caligula or who was the horse. I had believed that the future challenges to Neville Warburton would come from the member for Logan, Mr Wayne Goss. I was wrong. The real future challenge will be from Sir William Knox, who is making a bold bid for leadership of the ALP, which will no longer be the Australian Labor Party but the alternative Liberal Party. Bob Hawke is setting this trend. He is the best “Liberal” Prime Minister Australia has ever had. With Sir William Knox as leader of the ALP—that is, the alternative Liberal Party—the prospect of a regime of hard “Labor” will be replaced by a regime of hard “Knox”.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr HENDERSON:** Listen to this. The Liberal Party in this Parliament is the original banana republic. Everyone is placing the skids under everyone else. This week I was advised that the Liberal Party has been named the pantihose party of the Parliament—“pantihose” because its members cling to people, offer a false sense of support but are easily seen through. How do I know that? That question raises two other questions. How do I know about the Liberal Party? How do I know about pantihose?

To find out about the Liberal Party, all one has to do is ask one of its members. I advise honourable members never to ask them. If they do, they should set aside two hours for a tirade of vitriolic abuse heaped by members of the Liberal Party on their colleagues. They hate one another.

How do I know about pantihose? Being inexperienced in that area, I naturally sought the expert advice of the honourable member for Toowong. My knowledge is hearsay, but the member for Toowong assures me that his knowledge is based on personal involvement in something of the order of 1 000 case-studies.

Because the politics of the Liberal Party could be branded as pantihose politics, I guess it would be appropriate to look at some of the possible brands——

**Mr Beard:** You are sick.

**Mr HENDERSON:** Yes, I am sick—sick of you!

I guess it would be appropriate to look at some of the possible brands that could be stamped on the Liberals. What is their brand of politics and their brand of pantihose? A common brand of pantihose is Razzamatazz. Look at this group of Liberal Party members, the razzamatazz group—the honourable member for Moggill, the honourable member for Yeronga and the honourable member for Nundah. Look at the razzamatazz! Isn't it exciting?

Another brand of pantihose is Holeproof. Not one of those members is hole-proof. Sir William Knox has so many holes in him that when he retires Sallyanne is going to use him as a filter at the water-treatment plant at Mount Crosby. None of them is hole-proof. Every night their little prayer is, "Lord, make us hole-proof"—especially from the member for Stafford.

Another brand, I am informed, is Jockettes—a little that covers a lot. Members of the Liberal Party could not possibly be Jockettes because they are a little that cover nothing. I am convinced that the proper brand of their pantihose politics is K mart special. It is cheap, it readily and easily sags under pressure, it does not last long and it is destined for the scrap-heap. That brand sums up the Liberal Party in this Parliament. Members of that party are nothing less than an unmitigated mob of hypocrites.

In this Parliament, Mr Neville Warburton is the best example of a shadow Minister one could ever see. He shadows the honourable member for Nundah everywhere, and he has done that during the last two weeks. Mr Warburton says that he is the leader of the ALP. He is right. He is the temporary leader of the alternative Liberal Party until such time as the honourable member for Nundah takes over.

Earlier in my speech I posed the question of who was Caligula and who was the horse. Let me examine what happened to each of them. Emperor Caligula went stark raving mad. He was so pursued by the people around him that he became absolutely paranoid. The people around him wanted his job. They wanted power and they turned on him. His own guard murdered him. The question is: which guard in the ALP will murder Neville Warburton—the Old Guard, the New Guard, or what? Let me examine what happened to Caligula's horse. It is with great sadness and dismay that I have to inform this House that the imperial war-horse of the Emperor Caligula ended up in the glue factory instead of being put out to pasture. This war-horse of the Labor Party—where is it going to end up? It will end up in the glue factory, too. When it does, it will be the only thing that will stick members of the ALP together.

It gives me a great deal of pleasure to stand up in this House and support the Premier and his Government. I reject the amendment as hypocritical, infantile and stupid. The National Party is strong and united. It is one party with one purpose and one destiny. Members of the National Party will continue to win elections and the National Party Government will govern in its own right in Queensland now and in the future so that good government can be provided to the people of Queensland. I am proud to stand in this Parliament and be a member of this Government. I shall stand in this place for many years in the future.

**Hon. Sir WILLIAM KNOX** (Nundah—Leader of the Liberal Party) (8.09 p.m.): The previous speaker, the honourable member for Mount Gravatt, has so far had a very distinguished career in this House. He has been an authority on a number of philosophers and now he is an authority on horses and Roman emperors.

**Mr Comben:** And cane toads.

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX:** It was a toss-up whether he was going to have on his personal pamphlet his photograph with Anne Warner or kissing a cane toad, and he had problems knowing what to do about it.

Many years ago, when the honourable member for Mount Gravatt was a very prominent member of the Young Liberals, he was known as "Trendy Hendy". Under some strange circumstances he had to leave.

Strange as it may seem, this is one of the only occasions in the history of Parliament when the day has been started without a prayer. We have not had a prayer today. We have managed to get through the day without it, although—I was not too sure—the honourable member for Mount Gravatt might have been leading us in prayer.

At the moment the Government comprises two Ministers. We in the Liberal Party criticise the Government of the day for its failure to provide to this House today the full Ministry. There have been five days now since the Leader of the National Party has been elected—apparently in his view and the view of his party, without any reservations. In that time it should have been possible for the Ministry to be assembled, presented to the Governor and presented to this Parliament today. It has not been done. Nevertheless, we will accept the explanation given by the Premier that he needs more time. He has sought more time from the Governor. He sought an extra eight days, but apparently that did not satisfy His Excellency and an administration has to be provided by next Tuesday. Well, so be it. We will wait and see what that is.

Tonight the Premier announced also that he was obliged, in his arrangements with His Excellency, to have a motion passed through this House indicating that he had control of the Treasury benches. That is a reasonable proposition, and it is a procedure which we in the Liberal Party support. In the light of the experiences that it has gone through in the last few days there is certainly an obligation on behalf of the new Government of Queensland to establish itself in this House as being in control of the House. That is being done by this motion.

We in the Liberal Party will be supporting that motion, because it is important to establish quite clearly that there is a Government in this State, that it is capable of governing and that it is capable of controlling the Treasury benches. It is a pity that, instead of getting into a personal debate, the honourable member for Mount Gravatt and other National Party speakers did not say why that support should be forthcoming. It is important that this debate take place. It should have taken place earlier. It could have taken place earlier. Machinery could have been put in place to have it held earlier.

However, there is a flaw in tonight's presentation of the Government's position. In trying to explain the chaos that was in the Government in the last week, it has overlooked one important point. The whole situation could have been avoided if the Ministry had been prepared to resign last week. As soon as they found themselves not able to support the Premier of the day, knowing full well they had the full support of their party—which they claimed to have—all the Ministers had to do was resign.

If the Ministers had resigned, the Premier of the day would have had to surrender his commission without any hesitation whatsoever, and all the problems that faced the National Party last week would have been resolved immediately. But, for various reasons, the Ministers did not want to resign; so the Governor had to take it upon himself to insist that the resignations be in his hand last night when he swore in the new Premier and Deputy Premier. That is what took place last night. It should have taken place last week, as soon as the Ministers found that they could not support their Premier. It is as simple as that. That is what the Westminster system is all about. If Ministers find they cannot accept collective responsibility, they resign. There is no alternative. That is what all those Ministers should have done, and the potential for constitutional crisis would have been avoided and the fuss and nonsense that went on in trying to retire the Premier would have been avoided, because the Premier would have automatically had his commission withdrawn.

Yet the Ministers chose to say critical things about their leader, to abuse him in public—and probably in private, for all I know—to make derogatory remarks and to sign a letter—all Ministers signed it—denying the Premier. They should have automatically resigned and saved themselves the bother of even signing the letter. They did not need to sign that letter. Their reluctance to resign created a constitutional problem for this State and a political problem for themselves. The answer to their problem was a very easy one indeed.

As the Premier said tonight, extraordinary events occurred. Those extraordinary events were the creation of the National Party. They were not the creation of the Premier of the day; they were the creation of the members of the National Party, who were trying to play musical chairs with power and trying to pretend that they had no responsibility in the matter. They created their own problem.

Today the Premier himself said there is a change of Government without this Government changing. What an extraordinary statement to make! There could have been a change of Government last week without any fuss or bother. But now they are in the process of de-Stalinising their party and of de-Stalinising the history of the National Party for the last 19½ years in this State. What sort of an approach is that to politics in this State? What sort of reputation has the National Party that it wants to deny the achievements of its previous leader, that it wants to keep at arm's length from anything that the previous leader did that was not popular, even if it was right? They want to walk away from those decisions, even though they were correct but may not have been popular, and pretend either they did not happen or they did not have anything to do with them. It is true, as the Premier said, that these are extraordinary events. I might say that they are historic events, too.

In recent days the people of Queensland have had paraded before them the extraordinary influence that the management committee of the National Party has over this Government. It has an extraordinary influence over a Government that once prided itself on being able to tell its organisation that the members of Parliament were independent of it, able to stand on their own feet and able to make their own decisions without that sort of interference. As has been seen in recent days, more and more the pressures of Sir Robert Sparkes and the management committee of the National Party are holding Government members to ransom. That is the reason for the peculiar speeches such as the one made tonight by the honourable member for Mount Gravatt, who only a week ago praised the virtues of the former Premier. Tonight he wants to walk away from them. So the outside influence of the faceless men of the National Party is becoming more apparent by the day. The Premier has to demonstrate that his Government is not in that position and is not held to ransom by a new set of cronies and a new set of pressures on the Government, which have been the hallmark of recent times.

The Deputy Premier, Mr Gunn, said that this is a new Government, a breath of fresh air. Those are the words of the Deputy Premier this week, who was the Deputy Premier last week. With great respect to the Deputy Premier—and I do respect him personally—he must have gone up on to the mountain like Moses at the week-end and taken a big, deep breath of fresh air and is feeling better for it.

**Mr Innes:** He took two big tablets.

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX:** Yes, and somebody broke the tablets on the way back.

I say to the Deputy Premier that the members of this Parliament will judge whether this fresh air that is now pervading the Government benches is of such a nature that it can be spread throughout the community and be of benefit to everybody and not just to people who occupy the National Party benches.

**Mr FitzGerald:** Your research shows that your fellows are worried.

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX:** Members of the Liberal Party have every reason to be worried about the future of this State if there is no change of direction in regard to the arrogance that the Government has displayed in recent times. That arrogance, that contempt for the parliamentary institution, that contempt for Executive Government's responsibility to this Parliament, has led the National Party into that blind gully that it led itself into last week.

The National Party thought that it could change Governments without reference to Parliament; that it could make decisions without reference to Parliament; and that it did not have to be accountable or answerable to Parliament. Eventually the National Party Government found itself in the position where if it had not acted of its own

volition, the Governor of this State would have had to force it back into Parliament. That is virtually what happened in the end.

**Mr Randell:** That's not right.

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX:** The Premier has said tonight that the Governor asked that this motion be put to the House to indicate to him—and rightfully so—that the Government of the day has control of the Treasury benches and has control of this Parliament. That is the ultimate test of Government.

As I said, the Liberal Party is supporting the motion. I have said it already and I say it again that the Liberal Party supports the motion, quite clearly on the understanding that the statements made by the Premier about the changes that are to be made will in fact take place. The Liberal Party does not expect them to be made in 24 hours. However, the Governor has expressed confidence that the Premier has the opportunity to demonstrate that he is capable of performing along the lines that he has suggested.

*A further incident having occurred in the public gallery—*

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX:** I will examine some of the matters that the Government can consider. If the interjector in the gallery wants to interfere with the proper processes of Parliament, she should stand for election somewhere herself—but not in Nundah!

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Unless the persons in the gallery can control themselves, I will have no option but to clear the gallery entirely.

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX:** I hope that the recommendations of the Public Sector Review Committee known as the Savage report have been brought to the attention of the Premier and the Deputy Premier, and I hope that other Government members will consider those recommendations seriously.

I will deal with some of the recommendations. One is that the Toowoomba and Bundaberg Public Abattoir Boards be disbanded and their functions become the responsibility of the Livestock and Meat Authority of Queensland. That recommendation has been deferred. It does not necessarily mean that it will not be done. However, I hope that that recommendation will be considered positively, because it could reduce, in accordance with Liberal Party policy, the number of quangos in this State. Another recommendation is that the function of the river improvement trusts should be a direct responsibility of local government. That would be a very simple amendment. That has been deferred.

A further recommendation is that the Mortgage Secondary Market Board be abolished and that its function be undertaken by the Commissioner for Corporate Affairs. Honourable members will remember who invented this board and who proposed it to the Government of the day. It was none other than Sir Edward Lyons. Legislation was introduced into the House and was supported by both the Liberal Party and the Labor Party. It was introduced as urgent legislation because it was thought that Queensland should be the first state in Australia in introducing such legislation. What happened? It was a big bungle from beginning to end. How many times was the legislation amended in an attempt to get the board off the ground? It was amended four times in an attempt to get the board operating. It was a huge bungle, mainly because the board was proposed by inexperienced people and the legislation was prepared by people who were not familiar with how to draft legislation and did not understand all the ramifications in the marketplace. There has now been a recommendation that the board be abolished and that the control and supervision of the function come under the Commissioner for Corporate Affairs.

A further recommendation states—

“That given the specialised nature of Health Inspector's work, inspections of such aspects of hotels that relate to health matters be undertaken by Health Department Inspectors.”

It is such a simple matter to have those facilities inspected by health inspectors in other fields. It is an easy thing to attend to, but it has been deferred.

A further recommendation is that the Land Information Steering Committee be abolished, but this has been deferred. Another recommendation states—

“That in view of the Government’s investment in computerisation, the Computer Policy Committee seek an independent opinion as to the suitability of the policy for future equipment acquisitions having regard to existing systems.”

There is growing concern within Government departments at the confusion that is arising owing to the multitude of systems. The Savage committee recommends that this matter be attended to, but this recommendation has been deferred.

I turn now to the recommendations that have not been accepted at all. One recommendation is as follows—

“That as soon as appropriate the Premier’s Department and the Co-ordinator-General’s Department be re-established as separate Departments each with its own Permanent Head.”

That recommendation has not been accepted. Why has it not been accepted? No-one knows. This matter should be looked at again to see if it can be accepted. A further recommendation states—

“That the Public Service Board, as presently constituted, be abolished and be replaced by a part-time Board comprising three Permanent Heads, appointed on a three year rotational basis.”

That has not been accepted either. The Government made a bungle. It abolished the board and then found that there had to be something in its place. Many amendments proposed by the Savage committee should be attended to, and I hope that this Government will do that. One of the tests of this Government as to whether or not it will be successful is the way it handles the recommendations that have either been deferred or rejected.

Under the provisions of Standing Order No. 100, I wish to move an amendment to the amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition. I move—

“Add the following words—

‘The House calls on the new Premier to immediately review and redress the drastic shortage of police manpower and facilities to combat the spiralling crime rate in the State.

The House calls on the new Premier to pledge to introduce at the earliest possible date legislation to prevent the sexual exploitation of young children through prostitution and pornography.

The House calls on the new Premier to undertake to introduce a statutory bodies review committee.

The House calls on the new Premier to pledge his Government to implement the recommendations of the Public Sector Review Committee (Savage committee) report.

The House calls on the new Premier to establish by legislation at the earliest opportunity a foreign land-ownership register.

The House calls on the new Premier to pledge his Government to repeal of the recent Education Act amendments.

The House calls on the new Premier to commit his Government to ceasing the past practice of indiscriminate ministerial rezonings.’”

I call on my colleague the honourable member for Sherwood to second that amendment.

**Mr INNES** (Sherwood—Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party) (8.29 p.m.): I second the amendment. Before saying some words in support of the amendment, may I just deal with the contribution of the honourable member for Mount Gravatt. He will be pleased to know that it came as a surprise certainly to members of my party that he

did not know anything about pantihose. We thought he wore pantihose; but of course he is a bachelor and, perhaps if he knew a little bit more about the regular and normal wearing of pantihose, he would not get quite as excited about the topic.

**An honourable member:** "Trendy Hendy".

**Mr INNES:** "Trendy Hendy".

**Mr Stoneman** interjected.

**Mr INNES:** There are some things that one says in a debate and there are some things that one does not say. One does not say in a debate the sorts of things he said tonight. A member does not make reference to other members of Parliament, even facetiously—not in regard to their personal life.

Today, the member for Mount Gravatt was wearing a very smart new suit. He has seen an opportunity. There is almost a clear deck—16 possibilities. It was a new dark-blue suit. That is what the regulations call for; it looks good on television. Tonight, he even wore a well co-ordinated shirt and tie, and black shiny shoes. He had an opportunity. He made a fatal mistake. He stood up and he shared with us those thoughts that passed through that which he chooses to call his mind. It did not go unnoticed by the new Premier. If the new Premier is looking for talent, he certainly has to avoid the member for Mount Gravatt.

**Mr White:** Are you aware that the member for Mount Gravatt went up to see Stefan today and had a blow-wave as well?

**Mr INNES:** I had better not say what instantly occurred to me.

**Mr Sherrin:** It was a great contribution to the debate.

**Mr INNES:** No, I had a bad thought.

The matter I wish to take further tonight is a matter of some substance. In New South Wales there are matters going on that are as serious as those that have occurred in Queensland and require the equivalent of the Fitzgerald inquiry. This morning I said that the member for Currumbin had referred to certain matters that had occurred at the Seagulls leagues club. I referred to a statement that was made to the New South Wales police. On 30 June this year a statement was made by Mr John Meskell to Detective Sergeant M. A. Howe of the licensed gaming investigation squad of the New South Wales police force. In that statement, he said—

"I am a Detective Inspector of Police and I am the officer in Charge of the Gold Coast Criminal Investigation Branch and Juvenile Aid Bureau.

I was the Senior Vice President and Director of the Seagulls Rugby Leagues Football Club since 1970"—

**Mr Stoneman:** That's Gately's country.

**Mr INNES:** I am helping him.

Something is crooked in that rotten Labor State. Mr Meskell stated—

"I know Colin Michael Hayes. I have known him for approximately 20 years. At one time, he and I were very good friends. Both of us were instrumental for obtaining a license in 1970 for the Seagulls Rugby Leagues Football Club . . ."

He pointed out that, on 8 March 1987, as Mr Gately has already told us, he was voted off the board of directors, where he was senior vice-president, together with Mr Jack Meekin, who was the president. Jack Meekin is the person who Mr Gately said was behind SP betting at the Seagulls leagues club and other places in northern New South Wales. Mr Meskell said—

"I don't really know what came over Colin Hayes but I consider that he changed into another personality altogether. In my opinion, he became a greedy

and unscrupulous S.P. Bookmaker. I know from information that was passed onto me that he was openly conducting S.P. betting activities within the confines of the Seagulls licensed club.”

**Mr GATELY:** I rise to a point of order. I have never made such a statement and I ask the member to withdraw those words.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The honourable member for Currumbin indicates that he did not make those statements, and I ask the member for Sherwood to withdraw those words.

**Mr INNES:** I will just pass his words to him.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr INNES:** I withdraw.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Thank you.

**Mr INNES:** After the member has read them, I will continue. I do not want to take unfair advantage of him. Sometimes we forget what we say. I am referring to the statement, and not to Mr Gately, when I say—

“I don’t really know what came over Colin Hayes but I consider that he changed into another personality altogether . . . I know from information that was passed onto me that he was openly conducting S.P. betting activities within the confines of the Seagulls licensed club. I consider that he conducted these activities without any consideration to the livelihood of some 400 employees of the club, to say nothing about the very eminent danger of the club loosing its license”——

**Mr GATELY:** I rise to a point of order. Is the honourable member suggesting that I said anything in regard to Colin Hayes and his activities?

**Mr Innes:** No.

**Mr GATELY:** I apologise.

**Mr INNES:** I can understand the honourable member’s confusion. I have been reading substantially from a statement. The only reference that was made to the honourable member for Currumbin related to a statement that Mr Meekin was behind certain SP activities.

I turn now to a later and more interesting part of the statement to which I have referred. I remind honourable members that this statement was made by the officer in charge of the Gold Coast side of the border and the Criminal Investigation Branch in that area. He was referring to activities that were occurring south of the border in the club of which he was the senior vice president. The statement continues—

“I have known from information that Colin Hayes has been S.P. Bookmaking in the State of New South Wales for many years. I have no knowledge that he ever operated in Queensland during the early years of my association with him. If he had, that information would have been passed on, by me, to the Brisbane Licensing Branch.

I have seen Hayes on many occasions pay out sums of money to people in the Seagulls Club. That conduct supported what I had been told about him.

I remember one evening, just after the Costigan Commission into Organised Crime had been commenced that I took him aside and told him to keep his guard up. I told him that I was very concerned about his S.P. betting activities and that with the finance behind the Costigan Commission, backed by the Government, that he would be a certainty to get caught and he would loose his job.

He said to me, ‘Ruff, you’ve got nothing to worry about. I only bet in Tweed Heads. I do nothing in Queensland. I’ve got nothing to worry about’.

After he made that statement to me, I considered that it was a waste of time ever talking to him about it again.

Later on, I cannot recall the date, but I know, it would be on record, Hayes' wife, Beverley, was arrested in Tweed Heads for S.P. Betting. After that incident, I recall at the next Board meeting, that Mr. Fred Johnston, a Director, asked how the arrest of Beverley Hayes placed us, because the Secretary Manager's wife was caught for S.P. betting."

Of course, Hayes is the secretary/manager and was a long-time friend of Mr Meskell before that friendship soured. The statement continues—

"I remember Hayes replying that he had sought advice from the Licensing Police and that he was okay."

I assume that referred to the New South Wales police. The statement continues—

"He then assured the Board that if he got caught betting as a S.P. bookmaker, he would resign from the club. He further assured the Board that he was not betting in the club.

In about June, 1984"—

so this goes back approximately four years; we have gone from 1983 to 1984—

"I received information from several persons within the club that a man, an employee, named Rex Butts, was acting as an agent for Colin Hayes and taking bets for him within the club.

I was very upset about this and I then went to Jack Meekin, the President."—  
who is allegedly behind another SP operation—

"I told him of my concern and that if Butts was collecting bets for Hayes, that we would be in grave danger of loosing our license should Butts be apprehended.

Because I had received this information and because I was at that time a Detective Senior Sergeant of Police, Jack Meekin asked me to speak to Colin Hayes about this matter.

I later saw Mr Fred Johnston, a fellow Director, and told him what I had learnt. He told me that he had the same information and that it was common knowledge all over the club. I then told Mr. Johnston that I was going to speak to Hayes about it because I wanted it stopped immediately and asked Mr. Johnston to accompany me whilst I did so and to be my witness.

I recall quite clearly that Mr. Johnston accompanied me into Colin Hayes' office at the club. I then informed Hayes that Butts was collecting bets and the allegations were that Butts was collecting the bets for Hayes. Hayes did not deny the allegations, nor did he confirm them. He assured us that he would look into the matter. I then emphasised with him the importance of the matter and the serious consequences that could happen if this matter was successfully investigated by Gaming Police.

I told him that the whole club was talking about it and it had to stop there and then. He assured me that it would.

On the 8 December, 1984, Rex Butts was arrested in the club for S.P. Betting by the Newcastle Gaming Police. Six months after Hayes had been told by me to make sure this matter was stopped.

Although Butts was subsequently bought before the Judiciary of the club, he would not reveal who he was taking bets for and no action was taken against Hayes because the evidence was not then available.

I received information from the Catering Manager of the Club, Jan Kuiper, to the effect that he had seen and heard Colin Hayes taking large amounts of bets openly over the telephone in the General Managers office.

I remember that Mr Kuiper was extremely upset about Hayes conduct and demanded to know from me why the Police didn't do something about him and

the club would be in danger of losing its license and he would be out of a job. I remember he said that if Hayes could continue on the way he was, then Police, including me, must be in Hayes pocket. I knew by that remark that he was alleging that Hayes was corrupt and that Police were being paid for protection.

Mr Kelvin Gersbach, the Manager of the club at the time, also told me that he had been in the office of Colin Hayes and was astonished that Hayes had been blatantly been taking bets over the telephone in the office. He told me that this was common knowledge and he also wanted to know how he was getting away with it.

I was extremely angry by these remarks and I was angry with the conduct of Colin Hayes. I was worried about the club losing its license. I became so worried about it, and I knew it was a waste of time talking to Hayes, that I went to the Tweed Heads Police Station where I discussed this matter with Detective Sergeant Peter Dunstan."

As I understand it, every month the Gold Coast police and the Northern Rivers police criminal investigation branches meet to talk about common problems. I continue—

"Detective Sergeant Dunstan, in turn, arranged with me to meet Inspector John Harding of the Tweed Police District.

I met Inspector Harding and told him of my concern about Hayes betting in the club and my concern that the club may lose its license should he be apprehended.

I went to Inspector Harding, not only as a fellow Police Officer, but also as a responsible member of a Board of Directors of a Licensed Club in the State of New South Wales.

Inspector Harding, then made certain arrangements with Superintendent West from the Sydney Gaming Squad and I later saw members of the Sydney Gaming Squad with Inspector Harding.

Investigations were made by them. They were unsuccessful in apprehending Hayes at the club,"—

surprise, surprise, I seem to have heard something like that north of the border—

"who from my information, particularly from Jan Kuiper, had been regularly betting in his office on Saturday mornings. Hayes did not turn up on this date, or another occasion and everybody was of the opinion that information had been leaked to him."

He made that statement at the request of the New South Wales police.

The question that arises out of that is the suggestion that for years, to the knowledge of the management and the directorship of that leagues club, SP book-making was being conducted on the premises and by one of their senior employees—the secretary/manager—to boot. That would suggest that a situation exists in New South Wales of a type that has been alleged in Queensland. It would add some support to the suggestion that people use the border deliberately to facilitate their hiding from the law enforcement of one or other jurisdiction.

On the evidence that is available from that statement, one would suggest that the New South Wales Government should be conducting a commission of inquiry of a type similar to the Fitzgerald inquiry. There is something rotten in the State of New South Wales just south of our border.

**Mr Gately:** Would it be true to say that they wouldn't be game to?

**Mr INNES:** Mr Gately asks, "Is it true to say that they wouldn't be game to?" I think that Mr Gately is absolutely right. I think that they would run, and have in the past run miles from any open investigation.

Another matter of concern is: what is the responsibility of a senior officer in the Queensland police force in relation to criminal activities out of this State that are being conducted in premises which are partly under his responsibility? If the matter had been going on for several years, one would have thought that there was a significant responsibility on the part of that police officer to take some action and bring it to the notice

of the authorities in New South Wales. Perhaps as a matter of administration in the Queensland police force some interest should be taken in those activities or organisations in which members of the Queensland police force become involved in other jurisdictions. It is an extraordinarily curious thing when a person in a position of authority apparently does not act until a very late stage in pursuit of the enforcement of the laws of another jurisdiction.

There are many matters that this Government must attend to. Members of the Liberal Party have suggested many reasons for Parliament's being recalled this year. What is needed are answers to a variety of questions as well as action on urgent and pressing legislative considerations, such as amendments to protect young persons from sexual exploitation. Among the questions that one would like to take further is the matter that was raised prior to the dinner recess. Honourable members will recall the advice from the Solicitor-General that was tabled in this House by the Deputy Premier in relation to the actions that could be taken in respect of police officers who are either named or more seriously involved in the Fitzgerald inquiry. As I understand it—and I did not know this at the time when the matter was first debated—some precedent exists in the form of previous occasions, or at least one occasion, when a Commissioner of Police exercised his rights not to accept the resignation of a police officer because the man was still involved in investigations of a type in which a successful conclusion was a matter of importance. I think that discretion is hinted at in the Solicitor-General's opinion. Apparently there is the capacity for the Commissioner of Police, for public reasons, to refuse to accept a resignation from a police officer. I understand that, interestingly, the gentleman—Mr Meskell—who deposed to that statement on 30 June this year, which is a long time after the events to which he deposes, is proposing to resign early in the new year. I ask the Deputy Premier to look again into this whole matter. I ask also that he look into whether or not the Commissioner of Police has acted, in relation to police officers of commissioned rank, to refuse in the public interest to accept a resignation. One would have thought that public interest could apply to serious allegations made to the Fitzgerald inquiry as well as to the need to bring to a successful conclusion investigations that are important to the State.

I propose to send a copy of the statement from which I have read extensively to the Fitzgerald inquiry in Queensland because it seems to me that some implications are of very grave concern to the State. I table the document to which I have referred.

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

**Mr FITZGERALD (Lockyer) (8.47 p.m.):** It is with pleasure that I rise in this Chamber to speak principally to the motion that was moved by the Premier and seconded by the Deputy Premier. I realise that two amendments have been moved to the motion.

First of all, Mr Speaker, I congratulate you upon your elevation to the position of Speaker. I hope that you do not mind my digressing from the subject-matter to do that.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! While the remarks are complimentary, the honourable member has free rein.

**Mr FITZGERALD:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I wish you a long and healthy stay in your position. I know that you will not forget those people who have worked so diligently with you in the past.

The question before the House tonight is: does the Government of Queensland have the support of the House of Parliament? That is the basic question. I know that members have raised other matters, such as problems associated with the police force in border towns located in close proximity to New South Wales, because they may regard those issues as electorally advantageous to their colleagues in other States. A number of other people who have spoken during this debate have tossed around a number of other ideas, and I wish to canvass some of them.

A previous speaker, the Leader of the Liberal Party, Sir William Knox, devoted a lengthy portion of his speech to criticising the action taken by Ministers in the former

Joh Bjelke-Petersen Government and criticised them for not resigning their portfolios. I do not know whether or not Sir William Knox needs a lesson in modern history, but I recall that in 1983, some Liberal Ministers were in the position that they did not know whether or not they should resign. Instructions came forward from the Liberal Party headquarters to say that they must resign. They decided not to resign and then they said that they were going to resign; and then they changed their minds again, and said that they were not going to resign. If a lecture is needed on Ministers clinging and holding on to the trappings of office, I would suggest to Sir William Knox that, for the full story about what he was trying to tell this House tonight, he peruse some of the files of the newspapers that were printed in 1983.

When the Leader of the Opposition was speaking in this debate, I jotted down some of his points. He said that this National Party Government was unfairly elected through a gerrymander. He said also that 13 months ago there was an election. Of course, we know the result of that election. He called our Premier and Deputy Premier, the Ministers who form the Government at present, political pretenders. He insinuated that Queensland has a faceless Government. He said that this motion was an unnecessary motion before the floor of the House this evening. They were all the points that he happened to make.

**Mr Hamill:** No members of the Cabinet are in the Chamber at present.

**Mr FITZGERALD:** The honourable member would like to divert attention away from the speech that I am about to make. He is doing his usual rabble-rousing. He just does not want me to raise those matters.

The Leader of the Opposition said this was an unnecessary motion, yet an explanation has been given to this House by the Honourable the Premier as to the circumstances under which this motion is being presented to the House. He explained fully the circumstances and why the Governor had asked him to do it. It is quite a proper constitutional request from a Governor to ask the Premier to test whether he has the support of the House. That is the reason we are here.

The Leader of the Opposition did not want to come into this House. He said that it was unnecessary. He was not game to come into this House to debate this motion. He wanted to have an election. That is what he was saying. I understand that very, very soon there will be an election in the Labor Party.

I believe that the proper thing to do was to test whether the new Premier, who has the commission, has the support of this House. If he does not have that support, the Government will fail, and that would be the proper consequence of such an action taken by this House.

I would like to speak about another suggestion that was made, that is, whether Mr Ahern and Mr Gunn are duly elected by the National Party and whether they should be the Premier and the Deputy Premier of this State. First of all, I would like to say that at the last State election 49 members of the National Party were elected to this Chamber, 30 members of the Labor Party, and 10 members of the Liberal Party.

**Mr Palaszczuk:** What were the percentages?

**Mr FITZGERALD:** I will soon talk about the percentage of votes and things such as that. I have a few details here that may be of interest to the honourable member.

It is a fact of history now that the National Party changed its leader. Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen was the Premier. I would like to pay tribute to him. I have done so in the past. That is borne out in my speech of 10 November, in which I paid tribute to the man and his contribution to Queensland and the Queensland Government over many, many years. There is no doubt, as members of the Labor Party and the Liberal Party are telling their leaders, that it is the right of any party to choose its leader.

Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen informed us that he would retire before the next election. Some members decided that, because of various circumstances, it would probably be

best to hold an election in the party room, which was quite a democratic process, and Michael John Ahern was elected as leader of the National Party. That was fully constitutional. There were no problems at all. We in the National Party do things properly.

Unfortunately, the new Premier did not have time to put together his Cabinet. He gave an undertaking to the Governor that he would face this Parliament. Naturally its decision will have a bearing on whether Mr Ahern remains as Premier and whether he can form a Government. The Opposition will have plenty of opportunities to debate any matters when Parliament is resumed after the recess.

The Opposition has claimed that this is a faceless Government and has insinuated that the National Party hierarchy somehow tells members of Parliament whom they should vote for and how they should vote. Because some people may not believe what I am about to say, I think it is very important that I make the statement in the House that at no time have I been contacted by any member of the management committee suggesting what the leadership of the parliamentary wing of the National Party should be. As Government Whip, I have never been contacted by any member of the management committee suggesting that we should select any particular person as leader of the parliamentary wing of the National Party. It is certainly the most democratic party that I know. I know of the influences that at certain times are placed on members of the Opposition.

The Leader of the Opposition also stated that the National Party was unfairly elected through a gerrymander. The Leader of the Opposition would be fully aware that at present the Parliament of Australia Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters has been set up to examine these matters. I have in my hands the National Party submission to that committee and I wish to quote from it.

**Mr Hamill:** Does it say, "Don't you worry about that."?

**Mr FITZGERALD:** I am sorry; I will keep on with my speech. I do not want to be interrupted.

The first part of the submission deals with the constitutional aspects of the proposals contained in the Constitution Alteration (Democratic Elections) Bill of 1987. The submission states that the proposed constitutional alterations seek to insert in the Constitution of the Commonwealth provisions relating to the structure of State Legislatures. That legislation is part of a deal between the Federal Government and the Opposition in this State to end what they believe is a malapportionment of voters in Queensland. The Opposition called on their Federal colleagues to pass Federal legislation to override the powers of the States.

**Mr Hamill:** Or a referendum.

**Mr FITZGERALD:** Yes, something like that.

The submission continues—

"Such a proposal to amend the Constitution of the Commonwealth is fundamentally inconsistent with the Federal compact and in particular with the principle set out in section 106 of the Constitution, namely, that matters related to the Constitution of a State are solely matters for that State.

It is also fundamentally inconsistent with the notion of a federal system of government that the Constitution of a State should be capable of being changed by processes other than the laws of that State. Where it otherwise, given the means whereby the Constitution may be changed set out in section 128 of the Constitution, it would be possible for a change which had little or no support within a particular state to be imposed upon it by persons resident outside that state."

The mind boggles when one thinks about what could happen to a State such as Tasmania. If the majority of people and the majority of States so desired, they could amend or override the legislation of a small State such as Tasmania. That means that

the smaller States could gradually be picked off one by one. If that is not interfering with the fundamental Constitution of this nation, I do not know what is.

Another part of the submission deals with a fair electoral system. I will examine the Queensland system to see if it is fair. The submission states—

“At the heart of Australia’s parliamentary democracy lies the means whereby its seven Parliaments and two Territorial Assemblies are elected. Democracy is perverted if the people are denied fair representation in the Parliaments which enact the laws which govern their lives.”

I ask honourable members opposite to listen to this, as I think they will be rather surprised by it. I think members opposite have quoted this in previous debates.

**Mr Hamill:** Nothing you say would surprise me.

**Mr FITZGERALD:** Okay.

The submission continues—

“As Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen said in the debate upon the 1949 Queensland state redistribution:

‘But when you consider the principles of the Bill you come to the conclusion that its purpose is to get greater control over the lives of the people, as it is in effect saying to the public, “Whether you like it or not, we will be the Government; whether you like our policy or not, you have to accept it.”

Little do the people realise the grave injustice that is silently being inflicted upon them. In a most subtle way their freedom to select the Government they want to represent them are being taken away from them. In many other countries people are brought to heel by more ruthless methods. In this State the bringing in of full control over the lives of the people is being accomplished by legislation of one kind or other. In this legislation the people are given the right of voting, admittedly, but the odds are so greatly against them that to achieve the results they desire is impossible because the predetermined zones and the numbers set out will mean nothing but that the majority will be ruled by the minority.’ ”

But what is fair representation and how is it achieved? To some the issue is summed up in the phrase one vote, one value. That is a phrase that is often heard from members of the Opposition. Its usual meaning is that the nation or State be divided into electorates consisting of equal numbers of electors or population. Those promoting numerically equal electorates maintain that such a system is the only just method of giving Australians equality of representation in their Parliaments. As a consequence of this, they argue that the adoption in Queensland of a zonal system, which results in numerically unequal electorates, leads to an unfair electoral system that deprives political parties other than the National Party of their proper electoral prospects.

As in any debate on a contentious public issue, it is easy for a term such as “fair” to have various meanings, depending on the context in which it is used. For example, any system in which a single member represents each electorate will not produce the same electoral result as a proportional representation system, and the Queensland electoral system is not atypical in this. For example, in the 1987 Federal election, on the basis of numerically equal electorates—and that is what the Federal Government has got—the ALP’s share of the two-party preferred vote declined, yet it won seats from the Opposition, and its share of the two-party preferred vote in Queensland, according to the latest figures available, was 49.18 per cent—

**Mr HAMILL:** I rise to a point of order. The honourable member is misleading the House. He knows as well as I do that the ALP’s share of the two-party preferred vote in Queensland increased at the last Federal election. The honourable member is deliberately misleading the House and you, as a very fair Speaker, of course, will call him to order.

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

**Mr FITZGERALD:** I am quoting from a submission that was handed to a standing committee.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The honourable member will proceed.

**Mr FITZGERALD:** That vote of 49.18 per cent was lower than that of the Liberal and National Parties, which gained 50.82 per cent of the vote yet, as appears from attachments to the submission, it won more seats in Queensland—13 seats—than those parties combined—11 seats. So one can look at percentages gained and seats won and they do not always add up.

Two fundamental things should be considered. First, an electoral system must be such as to allow the people as a whole to determine what Government they are to have. On a two-party preferred basis, the party receiving the support of the majority of the people is entitled to govern after an election. I will stand by that. Second, the system must provide for adequate representation of the people as local communities, subgroups and individuals. Neither of these criteria automatically mandates a zonal system or a system of numerically equal electorates. Either system can, given appropriate circumstances, satisfy both or comply with neither.

Another important consideration must be whether all the people are being represented. Of course, in practice it is difficult to achieve electoral boundaries so that precisely 50 per cent of the population can change the Government. One will not get 50 per cent of the people changing Governments but it is desirable to get as close to that as possible. That is a reasonable aim for any Government. A fair electoral system provides that when a party gets around the 50 per cent, the people should have an influence and the Government should be changed.

For example, under the most recent electoral distribution in New South Wales effected on a basis of numerically equal electorates, it has been estimated that the non-Labor parties would need to win 52 per cent of the two-party preferred vote to win an election if the swing to them was uniform, as appears from Dr Mackerras' analysis in the *Bulletin* of 31 March 1987. I have had the article enlarged for the benefit of honourable members. He says——

**Mr Hamill** interjected.

**Mr FITZGERALD:** I believe that he is wrong because he says——

“Unsworth will return to power next year.”

I do not believe that. I will read the honourable member some of the reasoning, which I believe is quite correct. He states——

“My guess is that the Unsworth Labor Government will win the 1988 New South Wales state election.”

I disagree with him on that.

**Mr Hamill** interjected.

**Mr FITZGERALD:** The honourable member believes him at times. He continues——

“I have come to this opinion, after a close examination”——

**Mr Goss:** Are you prepared to table that document?

**Mr FITZGERALD:** Yes. He states——

“I have come to this opinion, after a close examination of the NSW redistribution of seats, the final version of which was released recently. As I pointed out in my last article on this subject (May 14, 1985) the old boundaries contained a pro-Labor bias worth 2 per cent. The recent redistribution creates 10 new seats, of which five each go to Labor and non-Labor. More importantly the bias in the boundaries is, overall, left unchanged.

According to my calculations, the 1984 two-party preferred aggregate votes were: Labor 52.7 percent, Liberal National Party coalition 47.3 percent. In a perfectly fair set of boundaries, therefore, one would expect the median seat to have roughly that split. But on the new boundaries the 1984 adjusted vote in the median seat of Ryde was 54.7 percent for Labor and 45.3 for Liberal.

For Labor to lose a majority of the votes would require a swing of 2.8 percent. For it to lose the median seat would require a swing of 4.8 percent.

If the coalition were just to get a majority of the votes it would, on a uniform swing, gain only two seats—Gosford and Albury.”

Under the present Commonwealth electoral boundaries the unfairness in this sense is even greater. The national two-party preferred vote in the House of Representatives, on the most recent figures available, was Labor 50.31 per cent and Liberal/National 49.69 per cent. Yet as Dr Mackerras’ analysis published in the *Bulletin* of 15 September 1987 shows, a uniform swing of 3.3 per cent is required for the Liberal/National Parties to win an election.

I will quote from this document, which shows that there is an absolute bias in favour of Labor. In contrast, based on the results of the 1986 State election, the Labor Party in Queensland would need to win only 51.4 per cent of the two-party preferred vote.

**Mr Hamill:** Only 51.4!

**Mr FITZGERALD:** That is very close to 50 per cent. It compares with the bias that the Labor Party in New South Wales and the Federal Labor Party have in favour of their parties in those other two electorates.

The Labor Party in Queensland would need to win only 51.4 per cent of the two-party preferred vote to become the Government on the basis of a uniform swing. These figures appear in the *Commonwealth Parliamentary Library Background Paper* on the 1986 Queensland elections. Therefore there is a possibility of a change in Government in Queensland with approximately a 50 per cent vote.

Another important matter that I wish to refer to in regard to redistribution is how the Queensland system compares to those in other areas. I am referring to the House of Representatives in Australia where, because of its one vote, one value policy, there are electorates such as Rankin and Fisher—one is partly in my electorate and the other adjoins it. There is a great difference between the States in the number of voters required to elect a senator. In Western Australia there is a difference at present between the smaller seats and the larger seats of 8 to 1 and under its recently proposed State Labor Government redistribution, Western Australia ends up with 3.8 to 1. The figures show that the largest electorate in the United Kingdom contains 94 000 people and the smallest electorate contains 22 822. In Canada the difference between the smallest and the largest electorate is 9 to 1. I can also give this House the figures from the United States of America. The honourable member for Ipswich calls these Governments democracies! Can he tell me where there is a democracy if he uses his criteria to find a democracy? In West Germany the largest constituency in the Bundestag has 220 000 voters and the smallest has 120 000. In Japan, the largest seat is 3.94 times the size of the smallest seat. In the 1984 election in New Zealand the largest seat contains 25 553 voters and the smallest seat contains 17 001. In Queensland, the largest is approximately twice the figure of the smallest. One looks at the difference between the number of seats that are outside the average. I am referring to the number of electoral voters.

**Honourable members interjected.**

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr FITZGERALD:** Our system is one of which the Government is quite proud. Members of the Government can defend it wherever they go. I am sure that a perusal of the document that I have in my hand will answer many of the queries that some

people have raised. It is a fact that this National Party Government has the support of the people of Queensland. I support the Premier. I believe that this House will carry, by a very large majority, a vote of confidence in his Government.

**Mr AUSTIN** (Nicklin) (9.11 p.m.): I move—

“That the amendment to the amendment be now put.”

Question put; and the House divided—

In division—

**Honourable members** interjecting—

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The Chamber will come to order and remain silent during the ringing of the division bells.

Later in division—

**Mr Goss:** You gagged your first debate. What a record! You gagged your first debate. What a fraud!

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I warn the honourable member for Logan.

**Mr Goss:** I was just pointing out—

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! If the honourable member does not keep quiet, he may have difficulty pointing out anything else.

AYES, 47

Ahern	Lane
Alison	Lester
Austin	Lingard
Berghofer	McCauley
Booth	McKechnie
Borbidge	McPhie
Burreket	Menzel
Chapman	Muntz
Clauson	Neal
Cooper	Nelson
Elliott	Newton
Fraser	Randell
Gately	Row
Gibbs, I. J.	Sherrin
Gilmore	Simpson
Glasson	Slack
Gunn	Stephan
Harper	Stoneman
Harvey	Tenni
Henderson	Veivers
Hinton	
Hinze	
Hobbs	<i>Tellers:</i>
Hynd	Littleproud
Katter	FitzGerald

NOES, 36

Ardill	Sherlock
Beanland	Smith
Beard	Smyth
Braddy	Underwood
Burns	Vaughan
Campbell	Warburton
Comben	Warner
Davis	Wells
De Lacy	White
Eaton	
Gibbs, R. J.	
Goss	
Hamill	
Hayward	
Innes	
Knox	
Lee	
Lickiss	
McElligott	
Mackenroth	
McLean	
Milliner	
Palaszczuk	<i>Tellers:</i>
Schuntner	Prest
Scott	Gygar

Resolved in the affirmative.

Question—That the words proposed to be added to the amendment be so added—put; and the House divided—

AYES, 36		NOES, 47	
Ardill	Sherlock	Ahern	Lane
Beanland	Smith	Alison	Lester
Beard	Smyth	Austin	Lingard
Braddy	Underwood	Berghofer	McCauley
Burns	Vaughan	Booth	McKechnie
Campbell	Warburton	Borbidge	McPhie
Comben	Warner	Burreket	Menzel
De Lacy	Wells	Chapman	Muntz
Eaton	White	Clauson	Neal
Gibbs, R. J.		Cooper	Nelson
Goss		Elliott	Newton
Hamill		Fraser	Randell
Hayward		Gately	Row
Innes		Gibbs, I. J.	Sherrin
Knox		Gilmore	Simpson
Lee		Glasson	Slack
Lickiss		Gunn	Stephan
McElligott		Harper	Stoneman
Mackenroth		Harvey	Tenni
McLean		Henderson	Veivers
Milliner		Hinton	
Palaszczuk		Hinze	
Prest	<i>Tellers:</i>	Hobbs	<i>Tellers:</i>
Schuntner	Davis	Hynd	Littleproud
Scott	Gygar	Katter	FitzGerald

Resolved in the negative.

Mr AUSTIN (Nicklin) (9.23 p.m.): I claim the closure on the amendment and on the original question.

Question—That the question be now put—put; and the House divided—

AYES, 47		NOES, 37	
Ahern	Lane	Ardill	Shaw
Alison	Lester	Beanland	Sherlock
Austin	Lingard	Beard	Smith
Berghofer	McCauley	Braddy	Smyth
Booth	McKechnie	Burns	Underwood
Borbidge	McPhie	Campbell	Vaughan
Burreket	Menzel	Comben	Warburton
Chapman	Muntz	De Lacy	Warner
Clauson	Neal	Eaton	Wells
Cooper	Nelson	Gibbs, R. J.	White
Elliott	Newton	Goss	
Fraser	Randell	Hamill	
Gately	Row	Hayward	
Gibbs, I. J.	Sherrin	Innes	
Gilmore	Simpson	Knox	
Glasson	Slack	Lee	
Gunn	Stephan	Lickiss	
Harper	Stoneman	McElligott	
Harvey	Tenni	Mackenroth	
Henderson	Veivers	McLean	
Hinton		Milliner	
Hinze		Palaszczuk	
Hobbs	<i>Tellers:</i>	Prest	<i>Tellers:</i>
Hynd	Littleproud	Schuntner	Davis
Katter	FitzGerald	Scott	Gygar

Resolved in the affirmative.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Silence, please. Would the tellers resume their seats?

Mr R. J. Gibbs: Please, sir, can I go to the toilet?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Only if the honourable member has a need.

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

In division—

**Honourable members interjecting—**

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Those members holding a subcommittee in the back will please keep quiet.

AYES, 47

Ahern	Lane
Alison	Lester
Austin	Lingard
Berghofer	McCauley
Booth	McKechnie
Borbidge	McPhie
Burreket	Menzel
Chapman	Muntz
Clauson	Neal
Cooper	Nelson
Elliott	Newton
Fraser	Randell
Gately	Row
Gibbs, I. J.	Sherrin
Gilmore	Simpson
Glasson	Slack
Gunn	Stephan
Harper	Stoneman
Harvey	Tenni
Henderson	Veivers
Hinton	
Hinze	
Hobbs	<i>Tellers:</i>
Hynd	Littleproud
Katter	FitzGerald

NOES, 37

Ardill	Shaw
Beanland	Sherlock
Beard	Smith
Braddy	Smyth
Burns	Underwood
Campbell	Vaughan
Comben	Warburton
De Lacy	Warner
Eaton	Wells
Gibbs, R. J.	White
Goss	
Hamill	
Hayward	
Innes	
Knox	
Lee	
Lickiss	
McElligott	
Mackenroth	
McLean	
Milliner	
Palaszczyk	
Prest	<i>Tellers:</i>
Schuntner	Davis
Scott	Gygar

Resolved in the affirmative.

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

AYES, 57

Ahern	Lane
Alison	Lee
Austin	Lester
Beanland	Lickiss
Beard	Lingard
Berghofer	McCauley
Booth	McKechnie
Borbidge	McPhie
Burreket	Menzel
Chapman	Muntz
Clauson	Neal
Cooper	Nelson
Elliott	Newton
Fraser	Randell
Gately	Row
Gibbs, I. J.	Schuntner
Gilmore	Sherlock
Glasson	Sherrin
Gunn	Simpson
Gygar	Slack
Harper	Stephan
Harvey	Stoneman
Henderson	Tenni
Hinton	Veivers
Hinze	White
Hobbs	
Hynd	
Innes	<i>Tellers:</i>
Katter	Littleproud
Knox	FitzGerald

NOES, 27

Ardill	
Braddy	
Burns	
Campbell	
Comben	
De Lacy	
Eaton	
Gibbs, R. J.	
Goss	
Hamill	
Hayward	
McElligott	
Mackenroth	
McLean	
Milliner	
Palaszczyk	
Scott	
Shaw	
Smith	
Smyth	
Underwood	
Vaughan	
Warburton	
Warner	
Wells	
	<i>Tellers:</i>
	Davis
	Prest

Resolved in the affirmative.

## SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

Mr AUSTIN (Nicklin) (9.40 p.m.): I move—

“That the House, at its rising, do adjourn to a date and time to be fixed by Mr Speaker in consultation with the Government of the State.”

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The question is that that motion be agreed to. Those of that opinion say “Aye”, to the contrary “No”. I think the “Ayes” have it.

Hon. Sir WILLIAM KNOX (Nundah—Leader of the Liberal Party) (9.40 p.m.): I wish to move an amendment to that motion—

Mr AUSTIN (Nicklin) (9.41 p.m.): I move—

“That the question be now put.”

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: I wish to move that we sit at 10 o'clock next Tuesday. There is urgent business to be attended to.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The House will come to order. I have put the question and declared that the motion is carried.

Opposition members: Divide!

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

AYES, 47		NOES, 37	
Ahern	Lane	Ardill	Shaw
Alison	Lester	Beanland	Sherlock
Austin	Lingard	Beard	Smith
Berghofer	McCauley	Braddy	Smyth
Booth	McKechnie	Burns	Underwood
Borbidge	McPhie	Campbell	Vaughan
Burreket	Menzel	Comben	Warburton
Chapman	Muntz	De Lacy	Warner
Clauson	Neal	Eaton	Wells
Cooper	Nelson	Gibbs, R. J.	White
Elliott	Newton	Goss	
Fraser	Randell	Hamill	
Gately	Row	Hayward	
Gibbs, I. J.	Sherrin	Innes	
Gilmore	Simpson	Knox	
Glasson	Slack	Lee	
Gunn	Stephan	Lickiss	
Harper	Stoneman	McElligott	
Harvey	Tenni	Mackenroth	
Henderson	Veivers	McLean	
Hinton		Milliner	
Hinze		Palaszczuk	
Hobbs	<i>Tellers:</i>	Prest	<i>Tellers:</i>
Hynd	Littleproud	Schuntner	Davis
Katter	FitzGerald	Scott	Gygar

Resolved in the affirmative.

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, when the House adjourns tonight my wife and I would like members and their spouses to join us for drinks and savouries in the Members' Dining Room.

## ADJOURNMENT

Mr AUSTIN (Nicklin) (9.46 p.m.): I move—

“That the House do now adjourn.”

Question put; and the House divided—

In division—

Mr SPEAKER: I appoint the tellers for the “Ayes” as the honourable member for Lockyer and the honourable member for Condamine; the tellers for the “Noes” are the honourable member for Brisbane Central and the honourable member for Nundah.

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX:** I decline.

**Mr SPEAKER:** The tellers for the "Noes" will be the honourable member for Brisbane Central and the honourable member for Port Curtis.

AYES, 47		NOES, 37	
Ahern	Lane	Ardill	Shaw
Alison	Lester	Beanland	Sherlock
Austin	Lingard	Beard	Smith
Berghofer	McCauley	Braddy	Smyth
Booth	McKechnie	Burns	Underwood
Borbidge	McPhie	Campbell	Vaughan
Burreket	Menzel	Comben	Warburton
Chapman	Muntz	De Lacy	Warner
Clauson	Neal	Eaton	Wells
Cooper	Nelson	Gibbs, R. J.	White
Elliott	Newton	Goss	
Fraser	Randell	Gygar	
Gately	Row	Hamill	
Gibbs, I. J.	Sherrin	Hayward	
Gilmore	Simpson	Innes	
Glasson	Slack	Knox	
Gunn	Stephan	Lee	
Harper	Stoneman	Lickiss	
Harvey	Tenni	McElligott	
Henderson	Veivers	Mackenroth	
Hinton		McLean	
Hinze		Milliner	
Hobbs	<i>Tellers:</i>	Palaszczuk	<i>Tellers:</i>
Hynd	Littleproud	Schuntner	Davis
Katter	FitzGerald	Scott	Prest

Resolved in the affirmative.

The House adjourned at 9.51 p.m.