Queensland

Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 10 MARCH 1988

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Mr SPEAKER (Hon. L. W. Powell, Isis) read prayers and took the chair at 10 a.m.

FILMING OF PROCEEDINGS

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I remind honourable members that the media are filming from the gallery and also from the floor of the Parliament for their historical records. I have given them permission to do that until the end of question-time. There will be no sound-recording.

PARLIAMENTARY HANDBOOK

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members are also advised that photographic sessions for updating portraits for the new edition of the *Queensland Parliamentary Handbook* are scheduled for Tuesday, 15 March, and Wednesday, 16 March. Photographers from the Public Relations and Media Office will be stationed in room 5.14 of the Parliamentary Annexe between the temporary chamber and the cafeteria from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. on both days. Would honourable members please avail themselves of that facility so that they can have photographs taken?

PETITIONS

The Clerk announced the receipt of the following petitions—

Bundaberg Child Health Centre

From **Mr Campbell** (34 signatories) praying that the Parliament of Queensland will increase the staff at the Bundaberg Child Health Centre.

Noise-attenuation Barriers along Western Arterial Road

From **Mr Schuntner** (83 signatories) praying that the Parliament of Queensland will reconsider the construction of noise-attenuation barriers along the widened western arterial road.

Citybus Pty Ltd, Ashmore Services

From **Mr Veivers** (102 signatories) praying that the Parliament of Queensland will rearrange bus services operated by Citybus Pty Ltd in the Ashmore area.

Penrith Island National Park

From **Mr Gygar** (1 946 signatories) praying that the Parliament of Queensland will take action to preserve Penrith Island national park and reject tourist resort development proposals.

Budget Allocation to State Schools

From **Mr Littleproud** (122 signatories) praying that the Parliament of Queensland will take action to increase the Budget allocation to State schools.

Similar petitions were received from **Mr Burns** (1 262 signatories) and **Mr Veivers** (130 signatories).

Closure of Banyo, Zillmere and Hamilton Police Stations

From **Mr Innes** (2 680 signatories) praying that the Parliament of Queensland will oppose the intended closure of the Banyo, Zillmere and Hamilton police stations.

Prescription Charge at Public Hospital Pharmacies

From **Mr Burns** (247 signatories) praying that the Parliament of Queensland will take action to remove the charge of $5 per prescription at public hospital pharmacies.

Physiotherapist, Wynnum Community Health Centre

From **Mr Burns** (382 signatories) praying that the Parliament of Queensland will take urgent action to appoint a physiotherapist to the Wynnum Community Health Centre.

Establishment of Shopping Centre at Deagon Race-track

From **Mr White** (338 signatories) praying that the Parliament of Queensland will withdraw the proposal to establish a shopping centre at the Deagon race-track.

Upgrading of Gateway Arterial Road

From **Mr Mackenroth** (362 signatories) praying that the Parliament of Queensland will take urgent action to allocate sufficient funds to upgrade the Gateway Arterial road to four lanes.

Petitions received.

FEES PAID BY CROWN TO BARRISTERS AND SOLICITORS

Return to Order

The following paper was laid on the table—

Return to an Order made by the House, showing all payments by the Government to barristers and solicitors for the year ended 30 June 1987 stating the names of the recipients and the amounts received separately.

PAPERS

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

Reports—

Trustees of the Funeral Benefit Trust Fund for the year ended 30 June 1987

Department of Community Services for the year ended 30 June 1987.

The following papers were laid on the table—

Orders in Council under—

Collections Act 1966-1981

The Supreme Court Act of 1921

Magistrates Courts Act 1921-1982

Auctioneers and Agents Act 1971-1985

Liquor Act 1912-1987

Co-operative and Other Societies Act 1967-1986

Credit Societies Act 1986

Building Societies Act 1985-1987

Regulations under—

Futures Industry (Application of Laws) Act 1986

Companies (Application of Laws) Act 1981

Appeal Costs Fund Act 1973-1981

National Companies and Securities Commission (State Provisions) Act 1981-1987

Building Societies Act 1985-1986

Public Trustee Act 1978-1985

Community Services (Aborigines) Act 1984-1986

Community Services (Torres Strait) Act 1984-1986

Reports—

National Companies and Securities Commission for the year ended 30 June 1987

Queensland Trustees Limited for the year ended 30 June 1987

Perpetual Trustees Australia Limited for the year ended 30 June 1987

Privacy Committee for the year ended 30 December 1987

A.N.Z. Executors and Trustee Company Limited and Subsidiaries for the year ended 30 September 1987.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Misuse of Parliamentary Privilege

Hon. M. J. AHERN (Landsborough—Premier and Treasurer and Minister for the Arts) (10.07 a.m.), by leave: Honourable members will recall that on my election as Premier I vowed that this place would at all times be a forum for democracy; that it would be a place in which the best traditions of Westminster parliamentary procedure would be adhered to at all times. I am sure that in my efforts to achieve this worthy goal I have the support of all political parties represented here.

It therefore came as a shock to hear the honourable member for Windsor yesterday turn this place to his own personal use; to use it not in the best traditions, but in the worst; to use this place to make a cowardly attack upon the character and reputation of a senior public servant, namely, the Lands Commissioner, Mr Wally Baker.

Knowing that Mr Baker is unable to defend himself, the honourable member for Windsor, in my view, misused dreadfully the powerful weapon of parliamentary privilege. My only consolation is that I am certain that not only does he not enjoy the support of members on this side of the House but also that he does not enjoy the support of members of the Opposition. Mr Baker enjoys the support and confidence of members on the Government side of the House. I believe that he is an honourable gentleman.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Retirement of Under Treasurer, Sir Leo Hielscher

Hon. M. J. AHERN (Landsborough—Premier and Treasurer and Minister for the Arts) (10.10 a.m.), by leave: Today I wish to formally advise the House of the closing of an important chapter in the history of the Queensland Public Service. Sir Leo Hielscher, Under Treasurer and Under Secretary of the Queensland Treasury Department, has indicated to me and to the Government his wish to retire as from 30 April this year. It is with mixed feelings that I have accepted this decision. I invited him to be here today to hear me make this statement, which I know I make on behalf of many honourable members in this place who have admired him down through the years.

Predictably, I am sad that what has been a close and successful working relationship between Sir Leo and my Government, as well as former administrations, dating back to his first appointment to a senior position in Treasury in 1964, is coming to an end. However, the Government, and I personally as Treasurer, have accepted Sir Leo's wishes that he be freed from the full-time commitment of his Under Treasurer's role to allow him to pursue personal objectives, which will include business activities. He recognises that he is passing over the reins of Treasury and the public service responsibility for the

economic management of the State with some problems still to be solved and with some major achievements still to be realised.

The ideal of a clean slate with everything realised tantalises each of us without really being achievable. However, this should not obscure the underlying strength of the Queensland economy, which we both indicated in greater detail earlier this week and for which the Government pays tribute to the work and commitment of Sir Leo Hielscher.

Sir Leo leaves Queensland Government finances in a more sophisticated, resilient and sound position than they have ever been before. His decision to retire is also totally consistent with his life-long philosophy of giving young talent every opportunity to achieve its potential for the benefit of both the individual and the State.

During a public service career, which has spanned some 46 years, which began in the then State Government Insurance Office in 1942, and which has seen service in a number of departments, Sir Leo has targeted professionalism as the most essential requirement both for his departmental staff and for the public service generally. Some of his many career highlights include—

- the introduction of budget management and control systems, which at the time led the way in Australia and still do;
- development of the first Australian use of Government cash balances in the money-market from which the State has benefited greatly;
- the first State Government access of overseas capital markets since the 1920s, where both his personal standing and that of the Government is excellent;
- the establishment of the first central borrowing authority in Australia;
- the innovative funding arrangements which have made possible such major community assets as the Queensland Cultural Centre, the Gateway Bridge and Expo, without imposition on the pockets of Queensland tax-payers.

Such arrangements have also been instrumental in the development of State infrastructure, the development of coal deposits, the development of ports and new coal rail lines, the electrification of railways and the provision of modern Government office accommodation, for the benefit of all Queenslanders.

In recognition of his exceptional skills and the value of his services to the State, Sir Leo was awarded an Eisenhower Exchange Fellowship in 1973 and last year was awarded a knighthood by Her Majesty the Queen.

On behalf of the Government and, I am sure, all honourable members of this Parliament, I express our gratitude to Sir Leo for a life-time of service to Queensland. I know that all honourable members join with me in extending to Sir Leo and Lady Hielscher best wishes in his new endeavours.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Work Skill

Hon. V. P. LESTER (Peak Downs—Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Affairs) (10.13 a.m.), by leave: It was with a great deal of pleasure that this morning I launched the Work Skill championships for 1988. Queensland has had a very significant record as far as Work Skill is concerned.

Queensland became involved in Work Skill in 1984, not long after the election of the National Party Government in its own right. Since then, the co-operation of everybody has been outstanding and the results have been brilliant.

I wish to put on record some of those achievements. Since Queensland became involved, approximately 1 200 young people from this State have taken part in the competitions.

In 1984, not too long after Queensland became involved in those competitions, the Australian championships were held. People were encouraged to go along and see those young people participating in the various trade competitions. From there the winners were selected to go to Osaka in Japan and, for the first time ever, Australia won medals. Never before had Australia won a medal. Three of those medals were won by Queenslanders. Paul Braisen from the Gold Coast, representing northern New South Wales, won the gold medal for brick-laying; Stephen Clark came second in the world for industrial wiring; and Carolyn Cody came third in the world for cooking. Since then, the Australian championships, which many members of this House attended, were held in Adelaide. At the recent world championships that were held in Sydney to commemorate the bicentennial year, Australia did even better. Previously in Osaka, Australia had come seventh in the world. In Sydney, Australia came third in the world. In fact, Australia, with 12 medals, was just behind Korea with 21 medals and Taiwan with 19 medals, and just ahead of Japan, West Germany, the United Kingdom, the United States and many other up-front countries.

I put on record the congratulations of this House to the four Queenslanders who won medals in the Sydney championships. All four of those people from Queensland won gold medals. No other State won a gold medal. I wish to put on record the efforts of those young people. In industrial wiring, Russell Cooper from Gladstone was first in the world. Stephen Perryman from northern New South Wales, which is included in the Gold Coast region, won a gold medal for brick-laying. Devin Flor from Mackay won a gold medal in auto mechanics, and Mark Edison from Toowoomba won a gold medal for plant mechanics.

In 1988, the next Work Skill championships will be held in Birmingham in England. Australia has come from nothing to seventh, and then to third; let us hope that we all get behind Australia and make it the best in the world in Birmingham this year.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Inspection of New Electrical Installations

Hon. M. J. TENNI (Barron River—Minister for Mines and Energy) (10.17 a.m.), by leave: In recent weeks, Queensland's many electricity-customers have been subjected to a series of ridiculous outbursts from the ALP concerning the safety aspects of a proposed change to the Electricity Act. The change relates to the procedure by which testing of new electrical installations will be performed in future. The Opposition's feigned horror over this so-called safety issue would be almost laughable if the matter were not quite so serious.

Let me explain first what this Government proposes and how the proposal fits into the order of things. When electrical installations are made in new premises, be they domestic or commercial, this Government will expect the contractor performing the installation to be responsible for the quality of that work. Since 1977, contractors have been following exactly that procedure when making alterations and additions to existing electrical wiring.

At the time that this procedure was introduced, there was a great howl of "Unsafe!" from electrical contractors and the Opposition. It is significant that, since the system came into operation, the number of electrical accidents has not changed at all, even though there has been a most significant increase in the volume of this kind of work being carried out. Those earlier claims of falling safety standards were proved by events to be completely wrong. Now, we are hearing exactly the same furore centring on exactly the same misleading claims that safety standards will fall. I ask just one thing: why should they?

Some critics are claiming that checks of the electrical installations will no longer be carried out. In fact, they will be. The State Government proposes to ensure that the local electricity boards will continue to employ installation inspectors to examine those parts of new installations for which the boards are responsible, that is, from the mains

right up to the switchboard. At that point, the electrical contractor must accept his or her full responsibility.

If a contractor is in any doubt about the quality and safety of his work, he can pay his local electricity board to have one of its installation inspectors check the work or pay another contractor, authorised by the board, to do so.

Similarly, a customer who is concerned about any safety aspect——

Mr Vaughan: Another mistake.

Mr TENNI: If the honourable member listens for a while he may learn something. He is making a fool of himself. In a minute I will prove that to him.

As I was saying, similarly, a customer who is concerned about any safety aspect of electrical work can apply at any time to his local electricity board for an inspection. This inspection will be paid for by the customer in question.

Whatever the contractor in question opts for, the fact remains that the work will be checked by someone with appropriate qualifications and the person responsible for the work will accept full responsibility for it. Nothing could be more simple. The interesting point is that this is exactly what electricity customers want to see happen.

The electricity supply industry has just completed a survey of electricity-users in this State, which shows that customers strongly believe that electrical contractors are competent and should shoulder the responsibility for their work. There is also a very strong belief that each electricity customer—not the consumer—should bear the cost of inspecting work done for him.

The survey, undertaken by the Kingsley research group of Brisbane, showed the following: 88 per cent of the 450 domestic customers surveyed believe that electrical contractors can wire houses safely.

Mr Vaughan: How would they know?

Mr TENNI: If the honourable member listens for a minute I will tell him.

Seventy-two per cent believe that electrical contractors are sufficiently qualified to check their own work; and 97 per cent believe that electrical contractors should accept responsibility for their own work.

For the benefit of the doubting Thomases opposite, I seek leave to table a copy of this research document, which without doubt proves what I am saying.

Mr SPEAKER: Is the Minister seeking leave to table the document?

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! If the House would come to order the Minister may be able to hear me. I am trying to find out what the Minister for Mines and Energy wants to do. Would he please inform the House?

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The House will come to order. I am having difficulty in hearing the Minister.

Mr TENNI: I seek leave to table the document.

Leave granted.

Whereupon the honourable member laid the document on the table.

Mr TENNI: It is important to remember that contractors and installation inspectors have the same qualifications. Neither one is more qualified than the other to inspect new installations.

Mr Prest: That is rubbish.

Mr TENNI: It is not rubbish at all, and the honourable member knows that.

It is equally important to recognise that the boards will require their inspectors to carry out spot checks of installations in future as a further safeguard to electricity-users. Queenslanders also need to be made aware that there is a substantial monetary saving in adopting this new procedure, which clearly will be passed on to them in the form of lower electricity accounts. Up to now, the old system of inspecting every new electrical installation has been costing the consumers $9m a year to operate. The new system will reduce this cost to about $3m a year.

It is completely wrong for the electricity customers throughout Queensland to have to bear the cost of these inspections the way they have been doing all these years. We believe, as they do, that it is up to the individual contractor to bear the cost of ensuring that his particular work meets all the required safety standards.

I also make the point that any contractor discovered performing shoddy work will be subject to swift action from the Electrical Workers and Contractors Board. It is clearly understood by the industry that any contractor committing a serious safety breach risks losing his or her right to operate in Queensland. I cannot emphasise too strongly that, year after year, the principal cause of electrical accidents on customers' premises has been not new installation work but inadequate maintenance.

There is a clear safety message in this fact. It is essential to have wiring in a home or commercial premises checked every five years or so.

I give an undertaking that, regardless of the distortions of the ALP, I have absolutely no intention of reducing the high standard of electrical safety in Queensland when I bring forward the proposed amendments to the Electricity Act.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Opposition Criticism of State's Economic Base and Employment Opportunities

Hon. R. E. BORBIDGE (Surfers Paradise—Minister for Industry, Small Business, Communications and Technology) (10.25 a.m.), by leave: I would point out to the House the hypocrisy of the Labor Opposition over its criticism of Queensland's employment situation and the Government's alleged failure to expand the State's economic base. It may be news to the Opposition, but the creation of jobs does not simply happen by decree. Real jobs, whether they are in Queensland or in any other State in Australia, only result from a healthy private sector.

At a time when the Queensland Government is striving to expand its industrial base, all the Labor Party seems to be doing is undermining the Government's progress. This is particularly evident in north Queensland where the results of World Heritage listing threaten massive job losses.

Mr Burns: What progress?

Mr BORBIDGE: The honourable member should listen.

Mr Goss interjected.

Mr BORBIDGE: I can understand why the Leader of the Opposition interjects. He will be very embarrassed by what I have to say, so I suggest that he just listen.

Instead of the local Labor members, particularly the member for Cairns, trying to stimulate secondary industry, they are doing their utmost to destroy it.

Mr Tenni: Two thousand jobs in Cairns.

Mr BORBIDGE: As the Minister says, 2 000 jobs were lost in Cairns.

Mr Tenni: That was supported by the Opposition.

Mr BORBIDGE: And supported by honourable members opposite.

The most recent case in point concerns Cairns ship-builders and engineers, NQEA Pty Ltd, which is currently the single largest private employer in north Queensland, with approximately 550 staff. When the Hawke Labor Government took office five years ago, NQEA's work-force was more than double the present level. This was during the building of the Fremantle-class patrol boats for the navy. However, despite winning an award for its workmanship and coming in ahead of time and under budget, NQEA has not won another major naval contract since, even though it has invested——

Mr De Lacy: Why do you blame the Federal Government?

Mr BORBIDGE: I can understand the sensitivity of the honourable member for Cairns, because he should be hanging his head in shame.

NQEA has invested hundreds of thousands of dollars in tenders.

Mr Austin: There was cronyism.

Mr BORBIDGE: As the Minister for Finance says, if members of the Opposition want to hear a little about cronyism—the Federal Labor Government has awarded contracts worth more than $8,500m to ship yards in the four Labor States while companies in Queensland have been locked out.

Mr Burns: Did they submit the lowest tender?

Mr BORBIDGE: The honourable member should keep listening.

Mr Burns: Was NQEA the lowest tenderer?

Mr BORBIDGE: NQEA was on the short list.

Mr Burns interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the Minister for Industry.

Mr BORBIDGE: The most recent example was the ANZAC frigate contract which was awarded to New South Wales and Victoria on Christmas Eve, after only four weeks of consideration. If NQEA had been successful, this project alone would have generated an extra 500 full-time jobs in Cairns.

I have reliable information to the effect that the NQEA bid was competitive and that it was on the short list. The Federal Government's treatment of NQEA is a disgrace. I am advised that NQEA was permitted only one 20-minute briefing session with the Defence Department in Canberra on 18 December. The company was locked out on 24 December and there was a week-end in between. The Federal Government took only four lousy days to examine the NQEA bid. The bid was competitive and NQEA should have been considered.

It would be reasonable to expect that the honourable member for Cairns, Mr De Lacy, would be doing all within his power to convince his Federal Labor colleagues in Canberra that NQEA, as a viable local industry, is well worth assisting and should receive a fair go. Such action would be a welcome change coming from the Labor Party, which, in the past, has offered nothing but empty rhetoric in its criticism of this Government, whilst conveniently turning a blind eye to blatant Federal Government discrimination against Queensland and Queensland industry in the awarding of major defence contracts.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Kennedy Committee Review of Penal System

Hon. T. R. COOPER (Roma—Minister for Corrective Services and Administrative Services) (10.30 a.m.), by leave: I wish to bring to the attention of all members a vital aspect of the current review of the penal system being undertaken by Mr Jim Kennedy, with assistance from a special consultative committee. By this time all honourable

members will have received a copy of the terms of reference for the review. The terms are far-reaching and give Mr Kennedy and his support team a totally free hand.

The review has a strong community base, and I am confident it will produce recommendations which will accurately reflect community attitudes and needs in this controversial area of our social system. I will not detail the terms of reference at this point, because they have, as I mentioned, been widely circulated through my office. However, I do want to make a special appeal to everyone in this Chamber to consider offering some input into this review. That goes for members on the Opposition and cross-benches as well as my colleagues on this side of the House. The review commissioner is most anxious to get submissions from as wide a cross-section of the community as possible. Quite frankly, not many people are better placed to reflect community interest and values than local State members.

This review will lay the basis for our corrective services system for many years to come. Now is the time for everyone who has a genuine interest in this subject to put forward his or her views. I anticipate a very strong response from various community groups and agencies, together with prison officers and prisoners. I hope many parliamentarians also will take this unique opportunity to provide Mr Kennedy and his committee with their views. As to the recommendations which will come forward, I know that the Ahern Government has a strong commitment to undertake meaningful reform in this area and I am fully prepared to bite the bullet on Mr Kennedy's proposals.

I have called for an interim report by 31 May, with a final report and recommendations by 31 August. By then we will be at an advanced stage with the construction of three new prisons and well placed to implement recommendations on such subjects as staff recruitment, training and operating procedures. I also anticipate some innovative recommendations on parole and probation, together with proposals for alternative sentencing, segregation of first-time or minor offenders from hardened criminals, grievance-handling systems for both prisoners and prison officers and prisoner rehabilitation programs.

It is imperative that members from both sides of the House give this review their full support. In return, I pledge my efforts in ensuring that the review commissioner and his committee get access to any prison, prison officer, prisoner and staff member of my department. Meanwhile, pending the outcome of the review, I will continue to apply a firm hand in maintaining a secure and safe prison system in this State. I offer the hope also that the review will be carried out in a quiet environment, with a minimum of disruptive behaviour from prisoners and a peaceful industrial situation with regard to prison officers.

LEAVE TO MOVE MOTION WITHOUT NOTICE

Mr GOSS (Logan—Leader of the Opposition) (10.35 a.m.): I seek leave to move a motion without notice to allow debate on the Prospect——

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Question—That leave be granted—put; and the House divided—

AYES, 38		NOES, 43	
Ardill	Schuntner	Ahern	Lester
Beanland	Scott	Alison	Lingard
Beard	Shaw	Austin	Littleproud
Braddy	Sherlock	Berghofer	McCauley
Burns	Smith	Booth	McKechnie
Campbell	Smyth	Borbidge	McPhie
Casey	Underwood	Burreket	Menzel
Comben	Vaughan	Chapman	Muntz
De Lacy	Warburton	Clauson	Neal
Eaton	Warner	Cooper	Nelson
Gibbs, R. J.	Wells	Elliott	Newton
Goss	White	Gately	Randell
Gygar	Yewdale	Gibbs, I. J.	Sherrin
Hamill		Gilmore	Simpson
Hayward		Glasson	Slack
Innes		Gunn	Stoneman
Knox		Harper	Tenni
Lickiss		Harvey	Veivers
McElligott		Henderson	
Mackenroth		Hinton	
McLean	*Tellers:*	Hobbs	*Tellers:*
Milliner	Davis	Hynd	FitzGerald
Palaszczuk	Prest	Katter	Stephan

Resolved in the negative.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr De LACY (Cairns) (10.45 a.m.), by leave: My personal explanation——

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Before the honourable member proceeds, I remind him and other members of Parliament that a personal explanation must be explained quickly so that the member shows that he is personally affected or that he has been misrepresented, and that no debate can follow.

Mr De LACY: I refer to the remarks made this morning by the Minister for Industry and his allegations that I have not been supporting NQEA in its bid to win submarine and other contracts from the Federal Government.

I reject completely the allegations. On numerous occasions I have made representations on behalf of NQEA. I must say that whenever I have made those representations what I have come up against has been the negative attitude of the Queensland Government.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Cairns can say how he is personally affected and go no further.

Mr De LACY: The Minister made allegations that I have not made representations on behalf of NQEA and that I am supporting the Federal Government in such a way as to do away with employment in Cairns. I need to set the record straight.

I must say that every time I made representation on behalf of NQEA I came up against the fact that other States actively got in and supported their firms, which were likewise making representations, in terms of infrastructural support, departmental advice, promotional support, research advice and what-have-you.

In conclusion, I must say that the Queensland Government seems to think that support comes in the form of issuing press releases criticising the Federal Government or criticising local members instead of providing real support for the Queensland firms.

QUESTIONS UPON NOTICE

1. Psychiatry Services, Townsville General Hospital

Mr BURREKET asked the Minister for Health—

"What is the current state of the review into the operations of Ward 10B in the Townsville General Hospital?"

Mrs HARVEY: At my direction psychiatry services of the Townsville General Hospital, which include Ward 10B, are being constructively reorganised and upgraded by a high-level task force.

The task force was established following investigations by senior officers of the State Health Department and a visit to the hospital by the Director-General of Health and Medical Services and the Assistant Director-General (Mental Health Services). It consists of two highly respected senior officers of the department—Dr Bruce Westmore and Mr Bob Rosenthal, the Director of Forensic Psychiatry and the Assistant Chief Nursing Officer (Psychiatric), respectively. It commenced operations on 8 February 1988.

The task force is assisted by hospital staff, the hospitals board and a special senior consultant who has responsibility for receiving and analysing complaints about the past operations of the service.

The task force has conducted a thorough, comprehensive examination of the psychiatry services and their accommodation. This has already resulted in a number of recommendations and positive changes in the following areas—

1. Service philosophy and patient-care practices.
2. Service organisation and administration.
3. Communication and liaison at all levels.
4. Multidisciplinary teamwork.
5. Accommodation facilities and equipment.
6. Ward security and general safety.
7. Staff training, supervision and morale.

The hospitals board has accepted all of the recommendations of the task force to date. In general, the staff of the hospital has taken up the challenge of improving services. The task force has made excellent progress over the past month. It has my strong support. I have absolute confidence in its ability to help the hospital build a service of high quality for the north Queensland community.

I commend the member for Townsville for his actions in organising a dinner while I was visiting Townsville, which included——

Opposition members interjected.

Mrs HARVEY: Wait for it!

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mrs HARVEY: —which included all of the consultants who had over a period expressed various concerns about the operation of Ward 10B and the Townsville General Hospital.

During the course of the evening I was able, in a speech, to outline to those consultants exactly what was happening in the hospital, what the recommendations were and what would happen at the hospital in the future. I expect that in time Townsville's psychiatric ward will become a model for the rest of Queensland. I cannot afford to send to Townsville the two best people we have in Brisbane and not utilise their services in the best manner possible. Therefore, as a result of the extended stay of three to four months by those two gentlemen, Dr Westmore and Mr Rosenthal, Townsville General Hospital will have what I believe will be a model psychiatric unit.

At the meeting with the consultants I also had the opportunity to inform them that I realised that their concerns were genuine and that those concerns had been expressed in many ways over a period of time. It would have been appreciated if their expressions of concern had first been made to the Health Department rather than to the media, where matters were blown out of proportion. As a result of that meeting arranged by Mr Burreket, I think that we have established a reasonable line of communication. I remained with those gentlemen until 1 o'clock in the morning, explaining to individuals different aspects of their personal concerns regarding the operation of the Townsville General Hospital across the board in relation to its research capacity as well as many other areas.

I have made a commitment to go back in three months' time for a general question-and-answer meeting with the consultants. That meeting will also be organised by Mr Burreket. I am satisfied that the local member has a firm grasp of what has happened to date, what is happening now and what is likely to happen in the future. I am relying upon him to keep me informed about local issues.

I believe that the Health Department has acted swiftly and effectively. I also believe that the results of this action will be of great benefit to the Townsville area generally.

I am satisfied that the investigations that have been carried out by Dr Richards will prove to be such that the community will accept that he will be able to ensure that any future problems will be sorted out before they flare up into major problems. Therefore, I am satisfied that Townsville General Hospital has a great deal to look forward to, not only in the operation of its psychiatric unit but also in its growth and development into a major hospital.

Opposition members interjecting—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is far too much audible conversation in the Chamber. The honourable member for Ipswich, the honourable member for Windsor and the honourable member for Thuringowa will be named unless they keep quiet.

Mrs HARVEY: The honourable member for Townsville has a great deal to look forward to from this Government in the future operations and development of the Townsville Hospital.

I have had long discussions with consultants of the James Cook University as to how this Government could work in with them on other programs. While I was there sorting out their concerns, I also sorted out other concerns of theirs, which go beyond the Townsville Hospital and into the field of mosquito eradication in the far north together with general research policies in relation to Townsville.

Opposition members interjected.

Mrs HARVEY: Honourable members opposite laugh. However, their Federal colleagues in Canberra have——

Mr HAMILL: I rise to a point of order. I understand that, under Standing Order No. 20, a Minister's answer must be relevant to the question. I am not quite sure what mosquito eradication has to do with psychiatric hospitals.

Mr McElligott interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I warn the honourable member for Thuringowa under Standing Order No. 123A. The honourable member for Ipswich is being frivolous in his point of order. He knows that there is no point of order.

Mrs HARVEY: I am aware that this topic greatly upsets honourable members opposite because they know that there is no excuse for the actions of their Federal colleagues.

Townsville Hospital has a great future. The honourable member for Townsville is ensuring that all of its concerns, including its psychiatric concerns, are being attended to.

2. Air Ionisers

Mrs NELSON asked the Minister for Health—

"Is she in a position to assure the House that no public health risk existed with respect to faulty air ionisers, such as that found at the Milton Brewery, and further, that any occupational health risk therefrom has been eliminated?"

Mrs HARVEY: In early February 1988, Bond Brewing advised my department that it had received a notice from the Australian representative of the manufacturer of certain equipment that the equipment should be withdrawn because of the possibility of local environmental radioactive contamination. The particular equipment was used in the extraction of dust from air in a processing line at the brewery. Officers of my department confirmed that some localised environmental contamination had occurred and have assisted Bond Brewing in the removal of the equipment and the necessary clean-up action.

Investigations by my department indicate that there is no risk to the public of exposure to radiation through contamination of beverage. It is also unlikely that employees at the brewery were exposed to risk.

Similar equipment at Coca Cola Bottlers was found to have caused some localised contamination, and appropriate remedial action has been taken. I am advised that similar devices may have been installed in other premises, and inspections are proceeding.

3. Workers Compensation Board's Rehabilitation Centre, South Brisbane

Mrs NELSON asked the Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Affairs—

"What progress has been made with the Workers' Compensation Rehabilitation Centre, recently established at South Brisbane?"

Mr LESTER: A total of 400 injured workers have so far attended the Workers Compensation Board's rehabilitation centre at South Brisbane. Of those, 160 achieved an immediate return to work at the completion of their program—a figure surpassing all initial expectations. Of the remainder, 80 have been conditioned ready for return to work. A further 160 are continuing on to longer-term rehabilitation programs that are conducted by the Workers Compensation Board's own rehabilitation medical officers and rehabilitation counsellors.

I am indeed proud to inform the House that the South Brisbane Centre is proving to be extremely successful. Sixty per cent of the injured workers who have attended the centre are now either back at work or capable of returning to work.

For the information of honourable members, I table additional information regarding the centre's activities to date.

Whereupon the honourable member laid the document on the table.

4. Lions Eye Bank

Mr LINGARD asked the Minister for Health—

"With reference to the work carried out by the Lions Club at the Lions Eye Bank and the recent liaison with Professor Lawrence Hurst—

What is the current situation with regard to the proposed Lions Eye Bank?"

Mrs HARVEY: For the information of the honourable member, I point out that over the past year my department has had numerous discussions with Professor Hurst and Princess Alexandra Hospital. Professor Hurst has recently informed me that some

start-up funds for an eye bank might be available from a foundation. I have asked my office to arrange a meeting with Professor Hurst so that the matter can be discussed further.

I appreciate the interst that the honourable member for Fassifern has in this matter. I firmly support the proposal for an eye bank. I am very pleased that others would support me on that. I am sure that everything possible will be done so that some commitment can be made in the near future.

5. Teviot Brook Storage Sites

Mr LINGARD asked the Minister for Water Resources and Maritime Services—

"With reference to feasibility studies on proposed dam sites on the Teviot Dam south of Boonah—

On what dates will these studies on the second site at the junction of Teviot Creek and Carney Creek be available for presentation to Cabinet?"

Mr NEAL: The feasibility study being undertaken of storage sites on Teviot Brook is one of a number being undertaken by the Queensland Water Resources Commission throughout the State. The unseasonally dry conditions which have prevailed over significant areas for the past couple of years, which includes the member for Fassifern's electorate, have determined that these studies be given a high priority. I expect to take a number of these reports to Cabinet in the first half of this year, including that on the Teviot Brook study, which should be available for presentation by the end of May.

6. Transfer of Upper Coomera Valley Dairy Property and Milk Entitlement

Mr De LACY asked the Premier and Treasurer and Minister for the Arts—

"With reference to the sale, in 1982, of a dairy property and milk entitlement by P. K. & L. A. Whyte, Bonnie Doone, Upper Coomera Valley, to W. R. & J. F. Drynan and R. J. F. & D. T. Dennis and L. A. & C. R. Bischoff, Beaudesert, the transfer of which was approved on 8 October 1982 by the Hon. M. J. Ahern when he was Minister for Primary Industries—

(1) Was this transfer initially not approved by the Milk Entitlements Committee and that is why the Minister was approached to approve the transfer?

(2) Did the (then) Minister receive a copy of written advice from the Acting Director of Dairying and Fisheries, Mr G. G. Crittall, recommending against approval of the transfer?

(3) Did he receive any other advice on whether or not to approve the transfer?

(4) If so, from whom was the advice received and what was the nature of the advice?"

Mr AHERN: In reply to this little bit of ancient history—

(1) The transfer was not approved initially by the Milk Entitlements Committee.

I ask honourable members to pardon me in case I am accused of repeating myself. I have answered this question in the House at least six times.

(2) The departmental advice was that the transfer should not be approved. However, this was in respect of the requirements under the Dairy Produce Act regarding details of the areas of land registered for dairy production.

(3 and 4) No other specific advice was given to me for or against approval, but I sought background information from industry sources.

An Opposition member interjected.

Mr AHERN: In 1982. My memory is quite clear about all these matters.

Section 84(a) of the Milk Supply Act clearly gives the Minister for Primary Industries the power to direct the Milk Entitlements Committee in respect of its actions to vary, alter, amend or cancel milk entitlements.

On the issue in question, the so-called Whyte/Drynan affair, I considered advice from a number of sources, namely the department, the Milk Entitlements Committee and the dairy industry. After considering the various recommendations, it was my decision that on the grounds of equity and fairness, the transaction should proceed and I directed the Milk Entitlements Committee accordingly.

I might remind the House that this transaction occurred in 1982 and that this issue was raised in the House by the then member for Murrumba, Mr Joe Kruger, and fully debated at that time. The attempt to discredit me as the then Minister for Primary Industries failed dismally then, as has this attempt to further discredit me as Premier.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Unemployment

Mr GOSS: In directing a question to the Premier and Treasurer, I refer to a report to State Cabinet 12 months ago by the Ministers responsible for Employment and Industry highlighting how the Queensland Government spent $2.40 a head on employment and training initiatives—less than half the amount spent by the second-lowest-spending State—and calling for an additional $18.5m to be spent by the Queensland Government in this area. I refer also to the latest unemployment figures released at 10.30 this morning, and handed to me a few minutes ago, showing Queensland's continuing unemployment crisis, with Queensland's unemployment rate at 10.1 per cent—more than 126 000 Queenslanders—and nearly 20 per cent higher than the national average and 50 per cent more than the Victorian unemployment rate. I now ask: how does he justify not having allocated one dollar of this $18.5m sought in the submission to State Cabinet in March last year, which is nearly a full year ago?

Mr AHERN: The honourable member, for his own political purposes, has sought to highlight the recent figures.

Mr Goss: The figures are out. I have a copy of them here.

Mr AHERN: When it suits honourable members opposite to quote seasonally adjusted figures, they do so; when it does not, they do not.

The seasonally adjusted figures published by the Federal Government show that Queensland's unemployment rate stands at 9 per cent—down one full percentage point since last month's figures. Queensland now does not have the highest level of unemployment in Australia. The unemployment rate has dropped to a figure which is below South Australia's—the Labor Party's own home State and hallowed ground, and the example for others to follow.

The honourable member will have to do his homework on these economic issues in future before he gets up and makes a fool of himself in Parliament. Queensland's unemployment rate is behind that of South Australia and Tasmania. The plain facts are that the high rates of employment in this country are to be found in those States that are given high protection levels by the Commonwealth Government. Those States—New South Wales and Victoria—are issues——

Mr Goss: Do you have any policy, apart from blaming Canberra?

Mr AHERN: As the honourable member has made an allegation, let me analyse the figures before I talk about how the Government will respond to them. The issue is that the high-employment States in Australia—those that have the lowest levels of unemployment—are New South Wales and Victoria. They are no longer South Australia, Western Australia, New South Wales and Victoria. These are the States that the Federal

Labor Government has quite intentionally subsidised through its policies in many, many ways.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr AHERN: Well, it certainly has in terms of Defence Department contracts, because the States of Western Australia, New South Wales and Victoria have profited heavily from the initiatives of the Commonwealth Government.

Let me look to the issue of protection. Queensland derives the least from tariff protection and stands to gain the most if it is scrapped. The Economic Planning and Advisory Council, which was set up by Labor and is an authority which honourable members opposite would accept, I take it, has stated that, if Federal aid to industry through tariffs and import quotas was converted to a subsidy, Queensland would get only $224 per capita, compared with a national average of $406. EPAC says that Queensland also stands to gain more from a cut in protection. Total State output would rise by approximately 1.5 per cent if a 20 per cent cut in industry assistance was made.

The National Institute of Economic and Industry Research in Melbourne says that Queensland would gain $31m in additional revenue if industry protection was removed.

Mr Goss: Well, what are you going to do?

Mr AHERN: I will tell the honourable member in a minute what I am going to do. This is because Queensland's economy is export orientated rather than import-competing, as Victoria's is.

Mining and agriculture would need to be stimulated if protection was scrapped, which would favour Queensland. Queensland industry has developed in line with its mineral and other resources. Queensland is therefore competitive and needs less protection. That is the reality of the situation faced by the Queensland Government today.

I made a statement in the House—honourable members will recall that Sir Leo Hielscher and I made a statement to this House—in which I categorised the problem and accepted that an unacceptably high level of unemployment exists in this State. In other words, although there is a good growth in employment generated in this State and although that continues to outstrip some of the other States in Australia, an unacceptably high level of unemployment still exists. The Government is developing programs to target those particular issues. Those programs will be announced at the appropriate time.

Conduct of Mr R. J. Hinze

Mr GOSS: I direct a further question to the Premier and Treasurer. In view of the unacceptable behaviour of Mr Hinze, a member of this House, in (1) undermining, by public criticism, the work of the Fitzgerald inquiry and (2) failing to fulfil his obligations as a member of this House, I ask: is the Premier prepared to exercise his authority as Leader of the National Party Government and advise Mr Hinze that his conduct is unacceptable in terms of somebody who seeks to be a Minister and that, unless he ceases his criticism of the Fitzgerald inquiry forthwith and immediately attends the sittings of this Parliament, the Premier is not prepared to reappoint Mr Hinze to the Ministry, irrespective of whether he is cleared by the Fitzgerald inquiry?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Before I call on the Premier, I ask that his answer be heard in silence.

Mr AHERN: The Leader of the Opposition is merely posturing on this issue. There is no basis for his interest in this matter. A former senior Minister in this Government has been named before the Fitzgerald inquiry and this has created a substantial problem for this Government, as it would for any Government in Australia. It has happened before. It happened in New South Wales. These issues are not easy to deal with, but the Government is dealing with them in a satisfactory manner and does not need the assistance of the Leader of the Opposition.

Plagiarism by Premier

Mr FITZGERALD: I direct a question without notice to the Premier. This question is further to my question yesterday about plagiarism. I read in today's *Courier-Mail* an article that is right beside the headline "Unsworth rolls out the pork barrel". The article is written by the columnist Des Partridge and accuses the Premier of plagiarism back in 1984 at Townsville. I ask: can he advise the House of the facts of the matter?

Mr AHERN: In recent days I have been cut to the quick by allegations of plagiarism. This is a dreadful allegation to make of anyone, and I reject it totally. I expect that when those kinds of allegations are made from time to time, honourable members opposite will reject them also.

This morning my attention was drawn to an outrageous example of plagiarism which recently occurred in this country and ought to be highlighted in this forum. Last night I was watching a presentation from Sydney on the television and out rolled the campaign slogan "Now more than ever, Unsworth". I thought to myself, "Haven't I heard that before somewhere?" Sure! Not too long ago, the slogan in Queensland was, "Now more than ever, Joh and the Nationals." I would like to see something done about plagiarism. If something is not done very shortly, there will be bumper-stickers saying, "Barrie for PM".

Queensland Water Police

Mr BURNS: I ask the Minister for Police: why has the Queensland Water Police been forced to advertise for sale its flagship, the Vedette, on the eve of Expo, when the water police will be on show to the world 24 hours a day on the river? Further, is it true that Cairns wanted a new, larger police boat and was forced to take as a compromise the Don Dowling, a former customs boat which needs a $100,000 refit? Is it also true that the water police requires a new shark cat for Expo and that the Vedette is to be sold to pay for this purchase? Is the Minister also aware that the police power cat and shark cat vessels, which are six and eight years old respectively, need to be refurbished for Expo and, despite a very low quote of $9,000 for this work, funding was refused and the police are carrying out the work themselves? Is the Minister also aware that, on a coastline where drug-runners and illegal migrants threaten the life of our people and the prosperity of rural communities, one water police vessel has run up only 20 hours' work in 20 months because it is not allowed to leave the wharf at the week-end owing to overtime restrictions or stay out overnight in the bay or on the coast because of the travelling allowance of $30 a night? Can the Minister explain why this most-needed service is being so drastically treated under his ministerial direction?

Mr GUNN: First of all, I should say that, on a recommendation from the police, the Vedette has become surplus to requirements. I am sure that the honourable member for Lytton knew that the Dowling was a gift from the Commonwealth Government.

Mr Burns: That's right. You spent one hundred grand on it; that is what you did.

Mr GUNN: Yes. It was a gift. It is a good boat, which will be used in the Torres Strait.

Mr Burns interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Deputy Leader has asked his question. I ask him to listen to the answer.

Mr GUNN: The Queensland Government appreciates the gift of the Dowling, which is a very good boat.

I want to make one point about overtime very, very clear indeed. In 1986-87, the police budget was $250m. Even though the State suffered severe cut-backs from the Federal Government at the last Premiers Conference, for this year, 1987-88, the budget is $254m. In 1986-87, an amount of $9m was paid for police overtime. For this financial year the budget for overtime was $10.2m. I have been so disturbed about this that I am

now engaging consultants to examine the efficiency of the police force. The consultants will find out why half-way through this financial year the overtime budget had been used up whereas in the previous financial year, with a budget that was $1m less, the amount lasted for the entire year.

School Textbook Allowances

Mr STEPHAN: In asking a question of the Minister for Education, I refer to yesterday's blatant and irresponsible pork-barrelling exercise by the New South Wales Premier. According to today's *Sydney Morning Herald*, Mr Unsworth promised to double that State's textbook allowance for secondary students to a total of $78 for Years 8, 9 and 10 and to a total of $128 for Years 11 and 12. I now ask: how do those figures compare with the amounts paid in Queensland?

Mr LITTLEPROUD: I saw that article in the newspaper this morning. It highlights quite a significant point. On Tuesday the member for Ipswich commented that education was in crisis. Mr Unsworth's pork-barrelling highlights the fact that in Queensland education is in good shape.

If New South Wales doubles the textbook allowance paid to parents, the total for Years 7 to 10 will become $104 for those four years. Queensland pays parents of schoolchildren $156 for the three years from Years 8 to 10.

Mr Ardill interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Salisbury will cease his constant interjections.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: If New South Wales doubles the textbook allowance paid to parents for children in Years 11 and 12, the total will be $126. Queensland currently pays $155. It is significant that Queensland's textbook allowances were not increased last year in the State Budget, yet they are still well above the levels proposed in New South Wales. That highlights the inaccuracy of the comments made on Tuesday by the member for Ipswich that education in Queensland is in crisis and the fact that Mr Unsworth is undertaking a great pork-barrelling exercise.

Employment Training for Youths

Mr STEPHAN: In asking a question of the Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Affairs, I refer to recent statements about the lack of a training program for young people, particularly school-leavers. I ask: what initiatives has the Government been taking to encourage traineeships and to provide employment for school-leavers in Queensland?

Mr LESTER: As distinct from apprenticeships, traineeships are a mini form of apprenticeship. To give people skills in those areas, we must concentrate on this type of training. In the past we have tended to take a go-as-you-will, learn-as-you-can approach. That is no longer sufficient. As a result, in the past two years the Queensland Government has been moving very forcefully in this field to provide a pre-vocational type of training with an emphasis on better performance.

I am pleased to say that there are some 22 models in this area. Some of those models include the hospitality, retailing, clerical, warehousing, nursery, automotive tyre services, automotive replacement parts, furniture removal and local government areas. Trainees in those areas will now acquire a certain expertise and will have to meet certain requirements. That puts those young people further up the scale for advancement. They will have a certificate that, hopefully, will be recognised Australiawide and can be used by them as a basis for advancement up the ladder. After all, Australia is all about giving young people the opportunity to start small, advance up the ladder and provide other people with the benefit of their expertise.

The Government is very pleased to have been associated with the scheme, which has been in progress for two years. Presently Queensland has 2 006 trainees, which compares very favourably with the numbers in other States of Australia.

I suggest also that the group apprenticeship scheme provides for traineeships. The Government is covering that aspect and providing training that was not available previously.

The Government must pursue that scheme and continue to improve it. The types of schemes to which I have referred will reduce the unemployment rate. Our Work Skill competitors are starting to win medals and on a per capita basis are more successful than those in any other country.

Redevelopment of Expo Site

Mr INNES: In directing a question to the Premier and Treasurer, I wish to pursue a line of questioning on the Expo redevelopment contract that I started yesterday. The Premier said that at a certain point in time the Government decided to include a casino in the redevelopment proposal. As I recall it, 1 February was the Monday of the Cabinet decision following which the proposed successful tenderer was announced. I ask: will the Premier tell the House precisely the date on which the Government decided that a casino would be included? How was that decision made—in other words, by what body? Who was the originator of the proposal to put a casino into that development?

Mr AHERN: I thought that I had indicated to honourable members yesterday the full sequence of decision. To briefly recap, I point out that the Government—that is, the Cabinet—made the decision on the inclusion of the casino proposal. The decision was made that it would be unwise to proceed back through the evaluative process to further retrospectively include things that the Government wished at that late time to add. The decision to select the preferred developer was made on all of the criteria that had previously been announced to the developers. It was at that Cabinet meeting that the decision that the overall issue of the Government including at a later stage a casino and a world trade centre was made.

Cabinet made a recommendation based on advice, in terms of all the criteria that had been considered by it, from the technical committee. The technical committee took me personally through the various proposals, I made the recommendation to Cabinet and a good development will result. There is nothing wrong.

Mr Innes: I am after the date of the casino decision.

Mr AHERN: The decision was made at the Cabinet meeting at that time.

Police Overtime

Mr INNES: I direct a question to the Minister for Public Works and Minister for Police. The subject of police overtime has been raised. I ask: is it not a fact that as from about October last year restrictions were imposed on police overtime which had the effect, at least in the Brisbane area, of suburban police stations being closed for more evenings of the week and more of the week-ends and 10 mobile patrols being removed from duty? In view of that background, how could the Minister have recommended that $65m be spent on a new police headquarters as opposed to the staffing of police stations that were closing because of the absence of personnel?

Mr GUNN: Let me say at the outset that I appreciate very much the interest in the police force shown by the honourable Leader of the Liberal Party. However, I wish that he would get his facts straight. He has been running round the countryside talking about police matters, and on every occasion he has been wrong. I am sick of correcting the honourable member.

The police force is divided into regions. Each particular region has an obligation, as far as overtime is concerned, to spend a certain amount of money. It is up to the superintendent of each particular region.

I make no apologies for making the Queensland police force the most modern in Australia, which is what it will be in due course when construction of the new building is completed. At present the police force is fragmented, with some parts of the force being located in Forbes House and the CI Branch across the road.

The Queensland police force has very modern equipment. Recently I launched a fingerprint computer that will give results from all over Australia. It is now available in every State. That has just been done. There is really no place for that equipment. I was very, very pleased when Cabinet decided that a new police headquarters would be built, as part of the Government's $600m loan program.

It is ironic that the honourable Leader of the Liberal Party, who considers himself to be very progressive, would want the Queensland police force to remain in its present situation and condemn the fact that the Government intends to make the Queensland police force the most modern in Australia, by virtue of the fact that it is having this very modern headquarters built. I make no apologies for that.

Prospect Marine Pty Ltd Lease, Whyte Island

Mr McLEAN: I ask the Minister for Water Resources and Maritime Services: in relation to the decision to spend $2.5m buying back a lease at the mouth of the Brisbane River from Prospect Marine, is it true that the Port of Brisbane Authority obtained a valuation of the property in question before a decision was made to spend $2.5m to buy back the lease? Will the Minister table that valuation in this House?

Mr NEAL: I thank the honourable member for his question. The Port of Brisbane Authority did obtain a valuation of the Prospect Marine facilities prior to the purchase. There was no expenditure from consolidated revenue. The Government was aware of the negotiations that were taking place between the Port of Brisbane Authority and Prospect Marine.

The Government was supportive of the purchase of that marina and its associated facilities. I believe that that was the action of a responsible Government. I repeat that it has been at no cost whatever to consolidated revenue and that the Port of Brisbane Authority will be able to recoup that money from future users of the facilities.

In relation to the second part of the honourable member's question—I will have discussions with the Port of Brisbane Authority in regard to that matter. I assure the honourable member that I will get back to him on that.

Prospect Marine Pty Ltd Lease, Whyte Island

Mr McLEAN: I ask a second question of the Minister for Water Resources and Maritime Services: will he provide further information about the lease of Whyte Island granted in 1982 to Prospect Marine? I ask: is it true that under the lease agreement Prospect Marine had to pay only $1,000 a year for the first five years of its lease? Is it also true that after April this year Prospect Marine could have converted the lease to freehold at the cost of $2,500 per hectare, or a total of about $80,000?

Further, is it true that Prospect Marine failed in its obligation under the lease agreement to start reclamation work within the first 12 months of the lease? Will the Minister detail the other areas in which the company failed to meet lease obligations?

Mr NEAL: That is a fairly involved question, to which I cannot give an answer off the top of my head. I ask the member to put the question on notice and I will give him a detailed answer next week.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The question will be placed on the Notices of Questions.

Dent Island Lease

Mr GYGAR: I ask the Minister for Environment, Conservation and Tourism: will he confirm or deny rumours that the Government has approved or is in the process of approving a change in the lease conditions covering Dent Island in the Whitsundays?

Is the lease over that island being changed from a grazing lease to a tourism lease? Is the lease held by Mr Peter Faust, the chairman of the Proserpine Shire Council? Is Mr Faust a prominent member of the National Party and well known to the Minister?

Mr MUNTZ: It is typical of the member for Stafford to adopt an attitude of knocking somebody who has made great achievements. He is knocking somebody who has, over a life-time, achieved a great deal for the Proserpine Shire. That person is not standing for re-election to the position of chairman of that shire.

In answer to the honourable member's question—the Government is not considering, nor has it considered, a change in the lease of Peel Island.

Mr Gygar: Dent Island.

Mr MUNTZ: I am sorry, Dent Island.

The other sections of the honourable member's question are unrelated, but I point out that the Government has not considered a change in that lease.

Inquiry into Conviction of James Richard Finch

Mr BRADDY: In directing a question to the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General, I refer to the submission to him from the solicitors for James Richard Finch seeking an inquiry into the conviction of their client and the circumstances surrounding such conviction for murder arising from the fire-bombing of the Whiskey Au Go Go night-club on 8 March 1977, and I ask: (a) will he order an inquiry into the very serious and substantial allegations concerning the conduct of Queensland police officers in that case; and (b) will he grant indemnity from prosecution and protection in suitable circumstances to serving police officers who are prepared to give evidence at such an inquiry?

Mr CLAUSON: It simply amazes me that the honourable member has asked that question this morning. If the honourable member knew anything about this matter, he would understand that it is not incumbent upon me to order an inquiry of any description; that is a job for the Government. I certainly do not support the idea of having an inquiry in every case in which persons consider that they have been wronged by the justice system.

In their submission to me, Mr Finch's solicitors put forward what they claim to be Mr Finch's sound evidence for a rehearing. The situation is simply this: the appropriate action for Mr Finch's solicitors—hopefully on the instructions of Mr Finch—is to seek a pardon from the Crown. In those circumstances, under section 672A of the *Criminal Code*, as the honourable member is probably aware, there is power to refer the matter to the Court of Criminal Appeal.

I want to make it very, very clear to honourable members that in a submission from Mr Nyst on behalf of Mr Finch there are no proofs of evidence on which I can act in any form. There are no sworn statements to the effect that there is new evidence—none at all! If the honourable member expects me to act on that basis, then he has another think coming. I have put it to Mr Finch's solicitors that they could provide proofs of evidence. They have accused me of leaking the submission—goodness knows what for, because there is no advantage to me in leaking his submission. Furthermore, I am awaiting their approach to me to hear what they want to do on behalf of their client. The ball is squarely in their court.

Police Complaints Tribunal

Mr BRADDY: In directing a further question to the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General, I refer to the recent criticism by the Premier of the Police Complaints Tribunal as being "ineffective" and to his statement that "the tribunal's operation has been unsatisfactory", and to the Minister's own criticism that the tribunal did not seem to be living up to what he believed were its obligations. I ask the Minister: will he ask the current members of the tribunal to resign and then replace them with new members

so that there is an effective and operative tribunal to which the public can take complaints against Queensland police officers pending the handing down of the Fitzgerald report, which might contain recommendations for a differently constituted tribunal?

Mr CLAUSON: Firstly, I point out to the honourable member that responsibility for the tribunal was included in my portfolio only last week. At that time I consulted with my policy and legislation officers and directed them, together with the under secretary, to commence formulating a new idea for the Police Complaints Tribunal. I hope that Mr Braddy would understand that that will certainly not occur overnight. He strikes me as a man of some intelligence. Perhaps I flatter the man unduly.

Notwithstanding that, I do not intend to move with undue haste. In due course, I intend to make the normal considered recommendations as to how that complaints tribunal should be restructured—if it is restructured at all—and what powers it will have.

Cyclone Relief

Mr STONEMAN: Given the ever-increasing toll in terms of financial and personal suffering following the destruction that was caused by cyclone Charlie last week, I ask the Premier: (1) are all necessary procedures in place to facilitate the flow of relief to the affected areas, and (2) will his office provide for representatives to visit those devastated areas, and when would he expect to have a more detailed report to hand?

Mr AHERN: On behalf of the Government, I give thanks to all of those people who have played their part in minimising the hardship and suffering that has been created by that very substantial recent event in central and northern Queensland. Obviously, considerable loss of property was occasioned and not inconsiderable hardship has been suffered by a number of people. Many people have co-operated in the clean-up operations, and I thank both Federal and State agencies for the help that they have offered in that regard.

I have been kept directly apprised of the situation by honourable members and Ministers, and a preliminary report on the matter was presented to Cabinet last Monday. I expect that continuing reports will come to hand as additional information is received.

Because flood waters were high—and are still high in some areas—it has been difficult to obtain proper evaluations of the damage that has been caused.

As soon as possible all matters will be satisfactorily concluded. The necessary declaration has been made to enable the necessary Commonwealth and State procedures to be put in place for applications for relief. I understand that those matters will be reviewed again next Monday.

I intend to send officers to the affected areas without delay to ensure that all of the necessary procedures are put into effect in order to minimise hardship as much as possible and to give everybody the maximum assistance possible.

Conservation Legislation Amendment Bill

Mr STONEMAN: In directing a question to the Minister for Environment, Conservation and Tourism, I refer to the Federal Government's continuing attack on the economy of this State and the jobs of thousands of decent men and women, particularly in north Queensland. I ask: would the Minister advise the House of the main provisions of the Conservation Legislation Amendment Bill that was introduced into the Senate by Senator Richardson on 25 February 1988?

Mr MUNTZ: The honourable member for Burdekin, together with all Government members, has insisted that the livelihood of more than 2 000 workers and their families within the timber industry of north Queensland be saved.

Thursday, 25 February will be remembered by the Australian people for a long time——

Mr Palaszczuk: What date was that again?

Mr MUNTZ: Thursday, 25 February 1988. For a long time, that date will be remembered by every Australian as black Thursday.

At that time Senator Richardson introduced into the Federal Parliament the Conservation Legislation Amendment Bill. That Bill would be the most appalling and obnoxious piece of legislation that has ever been introduced into that Parliament. It was draconian in content. It behoves every Australian to read it very, very carefully, because it will affect his future and the democratic rights of every Australian.

It is a desperate attempt by a dying Government to take on a political issue and win votes. The Federal Government is not interested in conservation. All it is doing is trying to appease the radical elements, such as the greenies of Sydney and Melbourne. In its dying throes, the Federal Government wants to centralise power in Canberra. It already knows that Unsworth is on his last. He has less than one week remaining in power. He will be followed by Hawke. I do not believe it is "Barrie for PM"; I think it is "Paul for PM", which is the campaign in Canberra at this stage.

The Federal Government, in introducing that legislation, has been aided and abetted by Opposition members in this House. Bluntly, the Federal Government is saying that it is illegal to challenge Commonwealth legislation. That is the very Hawke Government that tried to introduce a Bill of Rights, which was thrown out of the Federal Parliament by the people of Australia, not by the Government of Canberra. The lofty ideals of democratic principles and all the things that the Labor Party said were right have been thrown out the window in this legislation. The Federal Government proposes that the World Heritage Commission—and I could speak for 10 minutes about the composition of that commission—will replace the High Court as the avenue for appeal.

The legislation proposes to override the basic civil rights of every Australian, every Queenslander, every organisation and every State Government in this country. It is an invasion of States' rights. It behoves all members of this House, whether they belong to the National Party, the Liberal Party or the Labor Party, to oppose the legislation and to get the message through to their colleagues. The one light on the horizon is that the Federal Government contains some straight shooters who are prepared to stand up against Mr Hawke and Senator Richardson, who is basically Hawke's henchman in this exercise. I hope that Senator Haines and the Democrats will at last demonstrate a bit of spine. They have an opportunity to throw this legislation out of the Senate, as do some of the straight shooters in the Federal Government.

The Opposition benches in this House also contain a few straight shooters. Those Labor members who represent north Queensland, including Mr De Lacy, Mr Casey, Mr Eaton, Mr McElligott, Mr Smyth and Mr Smith—those who so often falsely profess ideals as north Queenslanders—have an opportunity now to say to Mr Hawke, Mr Keating and Senator Richardson, "This is not on." We know jolly well that the Socialist Left—De Lacy, Smyth——

Mr Casey: I wasn't born on the Gold Coast.

Mr MUNTZ: As everyone knows, Mr Casey is a has-been. Although he fires a few blanks, there is probably one straight shooter on the Opposition benches, and that is Mr Bill Eaton. This is an opportunity for him to say something to the factions within the Labor Party which ousted Mr Warburton and replaced him with that Fabian socialist, Mr Goss. There is truth in that. The general community would consider Mr Warburton to be a fairly straight shooter. He has been ousted by the Socialist Left. Mr Eaton has the chance to stand up for north Queenslanders and say to Mr Hawke and Mr Richardson, "This legislation is not on. This legislation can't be on, simply because it involves civil rights."

I would like to quote a few statements that have been made about the legislation, to prove to the Australian people that it really does strike at the very roots of our democracy. One statement reads—

> "The Bill establishes a Gestapo Force of Inspectors, appointed by Senator Richardson to enforce his will. This private army can

(a) enter and search any land, building or structure nominated for, or listed on, the World Heritage list, or even declared by the Commonwealth to form part of our heritage

(b) take photographs and record occurrences.

(c) inspect, examine and take photographs and measurements of any item prescribed by the Commonwealth.

(d) stop, detain, enter and search any vehicle."

They are just some of the provisions contained in the Bill.

Senator Richardson has made a huge concession in actually not authorising inspectors to enter private homes. However, these same inspectors are authorised to do any of the other things that I have mentioned if they—and I quote from the Bill—

"... believe on reasonable grounds that it is necessary to enter in order to prevent the concealment, loss or destruction of any thing; and the entry is made in circumstances of such seriousness and urgency as to require and justify immediate entry without the consent of the person in charge, or the authority of a warrant."

All that Senator Richardson's Gestapo army needs—and it is a private army—is to be justified on reasonable grounds. Perhaps it is appropriate to mention Hitler's Gestapo because, on the same grounds, during the last war, it was able to enter premises and put people in gas chambers.

What the Federal Government is doing is betraying the very basic principles of States' rights and civil liberties. I again urge Mr Eaton and Mr De Lacy to stand up and oppose this legislation. It is only about appeasing the radicals and keeping the numbers. The Canberra Government could not care less about Mr Eaton or Mr De Lacy, or any of the Federal Labor representatives from north Queensland. The Canberra Government believes that it can win eight, nine or 10 seats in Sydney or Melbourne. Members of the Hawke Government could not care less about the 2 000 jobs lost in north Queensland. They could not care less about the women who agonise every night. The honourable member for Mourilyan knows that as well as I do. The people in his electorate are agonising over their future and the future of their families. The kids will be affected by this. It is not 2 000 workers; it is 2 000 families. The honourable member for Mourilyan has an opportunity to prove that he has some concern for the people of north Queensland.

The honourable member is the only member of the Opposition in whom I have enough faith, and who has enough backbone, to lead a deputation to Canberra to tell Mr Hawke to back off with this legislation and bring nomination of World Heritage listing back to the States. If a State—whether it is Queensland, New South Wales or Victoria—agrees or consents to a World Heritage listing, it would be okay to go ahead with it. What the Federal Government is doing to north Queensland is basically locking up 900 000 hectares of land that has been well managed for more than a hundred years.

Every honourable member knows what selective logging is all about. It is not face-clearing. The area of 900 000 hectares that I mentioned earlier already contains 20 per cent of national park and approximately 67 per cent of forest reserves and forests that are locked up. It already contains 11 per cent of Crown leases and 1 per cent of freehold. Only 17 per cent of that World Heritage listing will be selectively logged. Of the area that will be logged, nine-tenths has already been logged once. Moreover, only 4 000 hectares will be logged in any one year over a widely dispersed area. In effect, in one hectare only approximately 8 or 12 trees will be taken on a selective-logging basis. Less than one-half of 1 per cent of the World Heritage listing area will be affected by selective logging. It is not face-clearing.

The facts are quite plain. What the Federal Government has done is stop an economy that paid approximately $15m in wages to the timber industry. The Federal

Government is stopping that industry from making sales worth $30m. In addition, the added value effect——

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

LAND ACT AND ANOTHER ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 9 March (see p. 5018).

Hon. W. H. GLASSON (Gregory—Minister for Land Management) (11.48 a.m.), in reply: I take this opportunity to sum up the debate on the Land Act and Another Act Amendment Bill.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The House will come to order. Those members wishing to leave the Chamber will please expedite their movement. I call the Minister for Land Management.

Mr GLASSON: I repeat: I wish to address comments made by various members in relation to the Land Act and Another Act Amendment Bill that was before the Parliament yesterday and on the previous day.

I wish to thank those members who spoke about the contents of the Bill for their contribution to the debate. I note with interest that the Opposition spokesman on Land Management, the honourable member for Mourilyan, has given his approval to the amendments contained in the Bill.

I have noted his comments on the leasing of land by trustees. The prohibition on such leases from having improvements effected on them is deliberate. Any such improvements would, in the long term, defeat the purpose for which the reserve or grant in trust was made. I am surprised that in this day and age he can still support the concept of no freeholding and insists on leasehold only, with the pegging of the price of land. It is quite unbelievable. If that is the thinking of the Labor Party—that land prices should be pegged—it would be of great concern to land-holders within the State of Queensland. The honourable member for Mourilyan talked of the high cost of land, which infers high rents or purchase prices, while other members opposite took the Government to task for not slugging the lessees hard enough.

In regard to the level of grazing rents, I advise members that legislation, which was passed by this House last year, made provision for the introduction of a common date and decennial rental periods for the reassessment of annual rents of pastoral leases and grazing homestead perpetual leases. The first such decennial rental period is to commence on 1 January 1990. At the moment these tenures have individual 10-year rental periods commencing from the beginning of the term of each particular lease. This has been the case from the inception of these tenures, and does not allow for relativity as to the quantum of rents between individual leases, as they are usually assessed at different dates. Any change in the rental standards under the present system takes some 10 years to apply to all leases. The new system will allow changes to rental standards to apply to all leases from the commencement of the decennial rental period. However, owing to contractual arrangements for existing periods, any increases from 1 January 1990 will not become effective until the old rental periods would have expired.

It has been the practice in the past for new rental standards to apply to the grazing industry tenures after inquiry as to those standards by the Land Court, upon reference to the court by the Minister in terms of section 37(2) of the Land Act. Sections 242 and 243 of the Act set out the principles for the determination of such rentals. There is a lot of economic and other data to be collected by my officers prior to any such reference to the court. That evidence is at present being collated, so that I will be in a position later this year to make reference to the court for the consideration of the rental standards to apply to the grazing-type tenures of this State. I can not speak for future Ministers,

but I would anticipate that now there is a decennial rental period and common date commencing 1 January 1990, that prior to the commencement of any new period the court will be requested to investigate the rental standards for those new periods.

Statistics contained in the report of the Land Administration Commission for 1986-87 indicated that there were 1 630 pastoral leases returning an average rent of $737. Not contained in that report was the fact that 1 131 of those leases are below a living standard as the result of the policy of the Labor Governments prior to 1957 in implementation of a very restrictive closer settlement policy. Averages quoted in isolation do not convey the whole story. Those holdings of less than a living area return an average rent of $323; those equal to a living area give an average rent of $1,085; those above one living area and equal to or not less than three living areas have an average rent of $2,188; and those above three living areas, of which there are some 35 in existence, give an average rent of $5,279. Before members opposite query why there are some 35 greater than three living areas, let me hasten to add that the majority of these are in the more remote areas of the State and, to be economical to run, require strong financial support.

The honourable members for Cook and Rockhampton spoke mostly about the Aboriginal and Islander deeds and Aboriginal reserves. My responsibilities here are purely procedural in the issue of such deeds and any adjustments that may be subsequently required. Members opposite appear to have misunderstood my second-reading speech. Let me assure them that the officers of the Department of Community Services and Ethnic Affairs discussed fully with both the Island Co-ordinating Council and the Aboriginal Co-ordinating Council the matters in the Bill pertaining to the deeds of grant in trust.

They were given drafts of the proposed amendments affecting them, and the Under Secretary of the Department of Community Services and Ethnic Affairs has assured me in writing that it is his understanding that those councils consulted with legal counsel on these matters.

Both councils informed the under secretary that they find no difficulty with the proposals and have no objection to their being submitted to Parliament for consideration.

There also appears to be some confusion about the inability of Aborigines or Islanders holding their own residential land. Members should be aware that the Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders (Land Holding) Act 1985 makes provisions for just that. These people can apply, for areas up to a hectare, for a lease in perpetuity. For greater areas, the lease would be one under the Land Act.

The member for Moggill, with his knowledge of surveying practice—that is not the first time that he has made worthwhile contributions on that subject—spoke of the great technological advances that have been made and are being made in that profession, which will have a lasting effect on the way mapping will be carried out in this vast and diverse State of Queensland.

The members for Toowoomba North and Burdekin spoke with a knowledge of the Land Act and the implications of the Bill. I thank them for their support.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I have one very distasteful matter to bring to your attention. As yet, I have not made mention of the speech of the member for Windsor, who made some very wild statements and some very defamatory remarks about the Department of Lands and, in particular, about Mr Wally Baker, the Chairman of the Land Administration Commission.

I have respectfully requested that these remarks be brought before the Privileges Committee to be dealt with in the appropriate manner. Mr Baker, as the permanent head of the Department of Lands, carries out his duties in a most professional and dignified manner. His reputation is not to be sullied in this House under parliamentary privilege for the purpose of scoring cheap political points.

I think that members would agree that to use the Legislative Assembly to make a cowardly, unfounded attack on someone who is probably one of the most highly regarded

permanent heads within the Government ranks is despicable and of the lowest order. I think it must shame all members, no matter on which side of the House they sit, to think that this place could be used to denigrate a public servant with such a high standing.

Motion agreed to.

Committee

Hon. W. H. Glasson (Gregory—Minister for Land Management) in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—

Mr COMBEN (11.58 a.m.): The notes that I have in front of me were made before the Honourable the Minister who is in charge of the Bill replied to the second-reading debate and made his comments about referring a matter to the Privileges Committee. Yesterday, and today by way of a ministerial statement, Government members have been critical of the remarks I made yesterday.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr Booth): Order! I must remind the honourable member that speaking to clause 1, which is the short title of the Bill, allows him to make suggestions only about the title of the Bill. In a discussion on clause 1, I cannot allow him to reply to the Minister's statement. In that regard I rule the honourable member out of order.

Mr COMBEN: I appreciate what you have said, Mr Temporary Chairman. Earlier, I attempted to check with Mr Deputy Speaker. I wanted to make some brief comments about my comments yesterday. I intended to seek leave of the Minister for a little discretion in the matter. I will only be speaking for some two minutes.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: I do not know what the honourable member told the Deputy Speaker previously. However, I suggest that, if the honourable member wishes to make a reply, he should seek leave of the House to make a personal statement. If the honourable member wishes to do that, I will stick to my ruling.

Clause 1, as read, agreed to.

Clause 2—

Ms WARNER (12 noon): I wish to draw attention to the deed of grant in trust legislation as it now stands in the Land Act. The deed of grant in trust legislation to which I am referring, which is part of the principal Act, in respect of Aboriginal reserves was first introduced in 1983 and was further amended in 1984. The problem with the form of tenure which was being suggested for Aboriginal people—deeds of grant in trust—is that there has been some continuing concern that the State Government could change boundaries at will.

The legislation as it stands does not attack that principle too badly. I mention that the original legislation was amended in 1984 to prevent the Governor in Council from changing the boundaries of any deed of grant in trust land, so that it could be done only by Act of Parliament. It seems that this particular piece of legislation addresses that problem again. The suggestion is that the Governor in Council again will be able to alter boundaries in respect of roads and to grant other land.

I do not believe that the legislation as it now stands has the full weight of legislative protection for the integrity of the deed of grant in trust lands, although I believe that a legal argument about that exists. I personally would feel happier if a system of tenure could be devised which actually enshrines the notion of inalienable freehold tenure. The deed of grant in trust, although it goes some way to providing a secure tenure, does not allow for that firm tenure.

I believe that at this stage the Bill is acceptable in the main to Aboriginal people. However, I wish to sound a note of warning that, if it becomes apparent in the supposedly

minor changes that Aboriginal land is being taken over in an unseemly manner, there will be trouble. I believe that is what will happen.

It seems quite reasonable that as a Legislature and as a society we make Aboriginal land available for specific purposes to offer some kind of recompense for the way that Aboriginal people have been treated by white Australia for 200 years. I do not wish to go into all the rights and wrongs of the last 200 years. However, I wish to point to a particular problem that has arisen in the South Brisbane area in relation to Musgrave Park. Musgrave Park was a different kind of deed of grant in trust. It was a deed of grant in trust to the Brisbane City Council. It was alienated from the city council very simply by an Act of this Parliament when the Expo Authority took over that land. It is an example of what can happen to a deed of grant in trust area by a simple Act of the Parliament, which was intent at that time on something else.

A legal argument exists. I have heard a number of people—for instance, the Chairman of the Expo Authority—claim that, because Musgrave Park is covered by a deed of grant in trust, the Expo Authority does not have any right to use the site for Expo or to include the land in the site that is for sale after Expo. The Aboriginal people of the area and the residents of South Brisbane were quite relieved to hear Sir Llew Edwards make those comments because there has always been, and still is, concern about the future of Musgrave Park, which honourable members would probably be aware is a subject of considerable community debate at present.

I understand that the Minister for Community Services, in consultation with a number of Aboriginal people and other residents, has formulated a plan for the establishment of an Aboriginal community cultural centre in Musgrave Park. I commend the Minister for his good common sense in taking advantage of the opportunity to actually do something a little bit useful for Aboriginal people, give them a bit more security and enable them to conduct activities in that centre.

The announcement of the building of the cultural centre was taken up by the Lord Mayor, Sallyanne Atkinson, and has led to predictable opposition by a number of vested interests in the area—and I stress "vested interests".

A particular group of people who call themselves the Highgate Hill/West End Association sent round the area a very misleading leaflet in an effort to stir up opposition to the cultural centre. Amongst other things, the leaflet claimed that the cultural centre was part of a great master plan by the Minister for Community Services to ensure that Musgrave Park was an Aboriginal park only. That is complete rubbish. It claimed that the centre would be completed within the next six months, before Expo is over.

I have spoken to the Minister. He does not even have the funds for that centre yet. There is no way in the world that that centre will be completed in that space of time. The leaflet also claims that a large part of the remaining open space will be built on. That is completely false. What is being talked about is the building of a cultural centre, which is just one building, and it is proposed that it be built on a tennis court that is already there. That is hardly what one would describe as open space.

The leaflet called on residents to attend the meeting that was held last Monday night at State High and have their say. There was also a very inflammatory article on 1 March in the *Courier-Mail,* in which Don Petersen spoke about the racial conflict that exists over the use of Musgrave Park. The residents of Highgate Hill and West End did respond to that leaflet, they did respond to that article in the *Courier-Mail* and they did attend the meeting in considerable numbers. More than 800 people attended that meeting. Not all of those residents were opposed to the cultural centre.

The meeting was chaired by John Hutton, a barrister. Also on the platform was a Mr Phil Hassid, a real estate agent and landlord. I mentioned Mr Hassid yesterday in the Chamber. I want to point out a few facts about Mr Hassid. He has demonstrated only his commercial interest in the area. Whenever interests which relate to people have arisen—for instance, the building of Housing Commission units in Brighton Road—he is not interested. He tried to lead a residents' action group against those Housing

Commission units which, thank goodness, failed. Now, on this occasion, he seems to be interested in developing his commercial interests. He seems to think that an Aboriginal community cultural centre would lower property prices, which is just utter rubbish, and the residents of West End told him so very clearly on Monday night.

The meeting became heated only when Mr Hassid called for the drunks to be forced out of the park. At that point I think people became quite irate. I can only suggest that Mr Hassid has the wrong idea, and that basically all he is doing is attempting to inflame racial tension. Fortunately, the people of the area are very tolerant, very understanding and have a great feeling of community identity with the Aboriginal people. The local alderman, Mr Tim Quinn, stated his position, which was that the park should be maintained for the people of the area but with recognition of the special links that Aboriginal people have with the park.

The fact is that the loss of Aboriginal culture has been the reason why there have been so many social problems within the park. The loss of identity and the associated problems of unemployment, homelessness and social rejection can only be addressed if we all work together to provide some infrastructure so that Aboriginal people can restore their sense of identity and tradition, which has been lost. An Aboriginal community culture centre—and the Minister for Community Services agrees with this—is one way in which we can demonstrate our commitment to helping Aboriginal people overcome their problems. We cannot do it for them and the Government cannot do it for them. We have to intervene and help where necessary and stay out when we are doing damage.

The vested interests who oppose such a centre are substantial. Those people have a considerable amount of money and a considerable amount of sway. I urge the Minister for Community Services and Cabinet as a whole to note that last Monday night the residents of West End made their position quite clear. If necessary, we will do that again. However, last Monday night we made it quite clear that we would like to see in Musgrave Park an Aboriginal community culture centre controlled by Aboriginal people. That would help us all to be enriched by Aboriginal culture and it would foster a greater sense of community unity.

I raise the issue of Musgrave Park because it is interesting in terms of what happens to a deed of grant in trust, which simply can be taken away by an Act of Parliament. Who has responsibility for that park and who will have responsibility for it after Expo? Will it be the Brisbane City Council? Will it be necessary to introduce a new Act of Parliament to give it back to the city council under a new deed of grant in trust, or will the title to that land simply remain confused, as it now appears to be, and the subject of great argument?

In passing, I use this opportunity to point to the fact that a feature article that appeared in the *Courier-Mail* last week was fairly inflammatory. It referred to racial conflict. The meeting on Monday night demonstrated that there is no racial conflict from the right-minded, ordinary people from West End. We made that quite clear. The 800 people showed extreme tolerance. The meeting was attended by representatives from the churches and housing groups as well as by ordinary residents. Those people stand at one with the Aboriginal people in that area. We will deal with anyone, such as Phil Hassid, Bill Edwards or any other vested interest, who wants to intervene in our area and to inflame people's passions on the subject of race relations that are otherwise quite harmonious.

Mr GLASSON: In relation to the honourable member's concern about the dealings with the deed of grant in trust and the security of those areas, I refer her to section 352A, which ensures that any land surplus to the requirements of the trust granted for the benefit of the Aboriginal and Islander inhabitants may be resumed only by an Act of Parliament.

As to Musgrave Park—it was subject to a deed of grant in trust under the trusteeship of the Brisbane City Council. Musgrave Park is a park for all the people of Brisbane, not a particular section of the people of Brisbane. It was taken over and incorporated

in the area that was required for Expo. It was not required for Expo itself. The Expo Authority was satisfied that the area nearest the bank of the Brisbane River provided adequate space.

The matter of what will happen to Musgrave Park after Expo is a matter that has to be determined. I would say that discussions will take place between the Brisbane City Council and the Government on what would be the best usage of that land in the future. I am not aware of any move other than to retain it as a park. I am not in a position to comment in any more detail on the future of Musgrave Park. The honourable member may rest assured that the deed of grant in trust for the Aboriginal and Islander people is secure.

Clause 2, as read, agreed to.

Clause 3—

Mr COMBEN (12.13 p.m.): As I attempted to state earlier, comments were made yesterday in this Chamber that apparently reflected substantially and severely on the honesty and integrity of Mr Wally Baker, Chief Commissioner of Lands in Queensland. Having had the opportunity of reading the proofs of my speech and of reflecting on the remarks I made yesterday, I now wish to set the record straight.

Mr Wally Baker has served Queensland with honesty and integrity for a long time. Whatever misgivings I may have about the general administration of the Department of Lands in this State are the responsibility of the Minister in this place, and I do not resile from the general thrust of my remarks made robustly in the heat of debate yesterday. But these should not have reflected on the Chief Commissioner of Lands. Mr Baker's personal ability and popularity are well demonstrated by the concern about remarks shown by members of both the Government and the Opposition in this Chamber yesterday, and I unequivocally withdraw any imputations that I might have apparently made against Mr Baker. I sincerely apologise to Mr Baker for any such imputations.

I do not withdraw my general concerns about the Lands Department in relation to (1) low rentals for leasehold land; (2) low freeholding prices; and (3) the hindrance of the department to alternative land uses other than development as defined in the Act. I will pursue those matters at other times. However, I have no hesitation in apologising to the head of the department.

Mr GLASSON: I am pleased to acknowledge the apology that has been offered by the honourable member for Windsor. I am sorry that I cannot say that his comments were made in the heat of the moment, because he was reading from a prepared speech. Therefore, there was an intent to somehow defame Mr Baker.

I do not intend to mention this matter again, but I refer to the two comments that were made by the honourable member. He implied that Mr Baker is either corrupt or incompetent. I respect the honourable member for at least being man enough to apologise for the comments that he made.

Clause 3, as read, agreed to.

Clause 4—

Mr EATON (12.16 p.m.): I endorse the remarks that were made by my colleague the honourable member for Windsor. In the past I have had nothing but high praise for Mr Baker and his officers in the Lands Department. As the Opposition Land Management and Forestry spokesman, I receive complaints from people all over Queensland who are not fully aware of the reasons behind the department's decisions. I am often required to telephone Mr Baker at the Lands Department. If he is not available, his secretary takes a message and he always gets back to me. On many occasions when Mr Baker has been tied up in meetings, his secretary has rung around and ascertained to whom I should speak about a particular problem. I have then contacted the relevant people. On many occasions Mr Baker and many people within the Lands Department have assisted

me with my inquiries and problems. I have nothing but the highest of praise for the department.

The only criticism that I have ever levelled against the Lands Department is that it is understaffed. Quite often when I have visited the department with a problem, someone has had to be taken away from another task. I realise the problems that that can cause, because it happens to me in my office as well. Sometimes I will be flat out working on a particular problem when someone will come in with a more serious problem that I have to attend to first. On many occasions I have made the comment in *Hansard* that the Lands Department is understaffed.

The proposed amendment to section 171 of the Land Act covers a fairly wide field. In relation to the notification of land for sale it is intended to include the following—

"(i) if for cash, that there shall be payable at the time of sale—

(A) the full amount of the purchasing price;"

I tried to speak about this aspect on the last occasion when these amendments were being debated in this Chamber but I was too busy taking interjections from honourable members.

I agree with the proposed amendments under which a person who successfully bids at a cash sale can pay 10 per cent deposit at the time of the sale without the necessity of paying the full purchase price at that time. The department is to be complimented on the proposed amendment. It is not easy for someone attending an auction to know how much he is going to pay for a particular block of land. He knows how much he is prepared to pay for it, but he does not want to have to run around borrowing $10 here and $50 there to make up the difference. I have attended auctions at which I have found it necessary to borrow $5 or $10 from my mates so that I could complete the cash sale. Because land sales go far beyond the reserve prices on many occasions, I can understand the implications of the proposed amendment.

I return to my perpetual whinge that, in relation to the notification of land for sale, it is always for sale at an upset price in fee simple. As I said earlier, a purchaser should have the option of paying a development cost, taking the land on a leasehold basis for a reasonable period, and having the option of converting it.

Depending on how much a working class man pays for a residential block, he can often build a house on it for less than twice the price of the block. I ask honourable members to work out his interest payments. On the sum of $30,000 he can in the first year pay $5,200 in interest, $600 in rates and $250 in rent, which brings his commitments to a total of $6,000 without reducing his debt.

In the next 12 months he is up for another $6,000—and I am using round figures. He has paid $5,000 or $6,000 for the development costs, his first year's rent in advance and the cost of the survey fee. If costs are reasonable, that fee should be no more than $6,000. The block of land can then be used as security to obtain a loan for a house, which could cost $30,000, $35,000 or $40,000. If I remember rightly, the figures tabled recently by the Minister indicated that the average price of a house and land in Queensland is $75,000. Therefore, under the leasehold system the cost of the land and house is well below the average price. Depending on the cost of the house, a person can be up for $100 to $132 a week for interest payments and other commitments such as rates. After a few years maintenance will be another cost.

Contrary to what the Minister said in his reply, the biggest problem is the high cost of land. In many cases it is an artificial cost. The Lands Department makes available blocks of land in rural communities, country towns and cities. If sufficient land is available, there is no demand. If land is in short supply, the private developer is allowed to come in and charge high prices. There is no way in the world that a developer will charge such high prices if people can go down the road to a reasonable settlement or a new suburb that is operated by the Lands Department in conjunction with the local authority and buy cheaper land.

I am pleased that people are now permitted to buy only one block of land. Many times people who have had a little bit of money put aside would buy more than one block because they knew that future development would occur, and that proved to be a money-spinner for them.

The Minister referred to the high price that was paid for the Line Hill property in north Queensland. It was sold for $14m. Northern Queensland has a great future. A space station is proposed for Weipa. The people who bought Line Hill are not silly, because they can see into the future. They wanted it because it was the only freehold property in the area. Any Government, whether it be Labor, Liberal or National, wants to see progress. If that progress is to occur, land for the future is required. That is why that block was sold for $14m. It probably was not worth that much as a grazing block or for any other purpose other than to build a town with the amenities and facilities that people look for in order to get away from it all. I love nothing better than going up to the cape, where there are no telephones or anything else. People often laugh and say, "Why do you want to go up there with the crocodiles?" In the gulf and the cape people are safe from the crocodiles because they know what they will do. Down here in Parliament House a member cannot vouch for anyone who is trying to stab him in the back. That is why I like to take my holidays up there, to get away from it all.

Mr FitzGerald: We sit in front of you.

Mr EATON: The honourable member will notice that I have a back seat.

If in the future the Land Act is being restructured, I ask the Minister to give consideration to inserting in section 171, which deals with notification, the option for a person to take the land on a leasehold basis. Then, after a person has reared his family, met all of his obligations, and when he is probably on a higher rate of pay and his children have grown up, for security he can then convert that land to freehold. The Labor Party has no objection to that happening, particularly in residential areas. That will give people a little bit of comfort for their old age because they will feel that much more secure. It is the Government's responsibility to insert that option in the section so that people can dovetail their needs with their desires.

Mr GLASSON: I note that the member for Mourilyan has paid a compliment to the logic and common sense of the amendment. To address the second part of his contribution to the debate, I return to the matter of leasehold. I can see the logic behind his thinking. It is a financial burden on young people today to try to meet all of the costs associated with purchasing a home. Basically the lion's share of the upset price for the blocks developed by the Lands Department is caused by the requirements of the various local authorities. The lion's share of the price is taken up by the provision of bitumen roads, kerbing and channelling, water, sewerage and, as is becoming more prevalent, underground power. Those costs cannot be escaped; they have to be paid. The development branch of the Lands Department has allocated to it a certain amount of money, and that has to be spread right throughout the State. Land was issued in leasehold tenure, but it was changed to freehold because people were given a deed of grant to purchase. I can see the logic behind the honourable member's thinking.

The department pays to the local authority the cost of developing the land. The land component, particularly in the more isolated areas, is a very minimal part of the actual cost. The honourable member referred to many brochures concerning land sales throughout Queensland. I will refer to Longreach land sales because the honourable member cited that example. I think that the land component is so minimal in western areas because people do not really believe the price that has to be paid. Before the Government started developing land, a person could buy for $2,000 or $3,000 a fully serviced block in the town that probably existed for 50 or 60 years. The whole market concept of dealings associated with vacant land has changed—irrespective of whether it is private or Government land—because prices had to come into line with what the Lands Department was doing on the northern side of Longreach.

I can see the logic of what the honourable member has said. It is most certainly deserving of further consideration. The possibilities will be looked into. What can be done to keep the fund in a sound financial position has to be addressed as well. I can see the point that the honourable member makes and I think that he can see the difficulty faced by the department.

Clause 4, as read, agreed to.

Clause 5, as read, agreed to.

Clause 6—

Mr CAMPBELL (12.26 p.m.): I refer to section 204 that relates to the terms and conditions of special lease. A major factor is the collection of rent. I am deeply concerned about the responsibilities of the Lands Department to collect the annual rents on different types of land in Queensland.

I am very concerned because this matter of non-collection of rent or non-collection of the appropriate rent has been raised by the Auditor-General in his reports over many, many years.

I wish to look into some of the losses that the Auditor-General has picked up because the department has not collected the correct rent for the different types of land. Let me go back to the Auditor-General's reports on departmental accounts for 1984. Under a heading of "Losses" in the notes to the accounts, the following notation appears—

> "Losses of or deficiencies in public moneys or other moneys—
>
> Losses due to failure to assess and levy revenue or other amounts receivable $50 954."

That amount represented income forgone that should have been collected in respect of rents and other charges.

The report for the following year lists losses and deficiencies for the year ended 1985 at $136,441. The situation is that the losses or deficiencies got worse and worse. The stage was reached in the year ended 1986 at which losses or deficiencies incurred by the Lands Department in respect of forgone assessments or collections amounted to $512,466, or more than half a million dollars.

It seems to me that different leases that should have been revalued were not revalued in time. The end result was that lower rents were charged and not what would be regarded as a fair rent.

In the Auditor-General's report for the year ended 1987, again he has noted under "Losses or Deficiencies" as follows—

> "Public moneys or other moneys due to—
>
> Forgone assessment of collections $306 113."

The Auditor-General regards the loss or deficiency as so significant that, in his report, which was tabled on 6 December 1987, he made special mention of this matter.

The Auditor-General's report of 1987 states—

> "Department of Lands—Losses Arising From Late Re-Assessments of Lease Rents
>
> Under the provisions of the Land Act 1962-1987, rents payable to the Crown in respect of certain leasehold tenures are required to be re-assessed at fixed intervals during the term of each lease. As the Land Act places a limitation on the recovery of retrospective rental adjustments of this nature, prolonged delays in the re-assessment process can result in losses of revenue."

Now the situation has arisen in which, according to the Auditor-General, over $800,000 worth of income has been lost from the people's money. This is very important. The Auditor-General's report states further—

> "In 1985-86, losses aggregating $510,018 were recorded on account of previously due re-assessments which had not been performed on a timely basis. The Accountable Officer has reported further losses totalling $306,113 in 1986-87, but has indicated that action taken during the year to substantially reduce the number of long-outstanding re-assessments is expected to limit the number and value of losses which would otherwise occur in the future."

The Auditor-General states that he believes that appropriate action is being taken.

I ask the Minister: why were these controls not implemented previously and how is it, if the Minister was responsible, that this situation got out of hand or the staff were not available to make the reassessments? In most other areas, ordinary people who are paying rates have their land revalued every year, and every year their rates increase because revaluations are brought in. How can the Government forgo $800,000 under the Land Act and yet under the Valuation of Land Act ordinary rate-payers are hit every year? The situation has to be looked at. I ask: have any people been favoured in any special way, because $800,000 is involved, and can the Minister assure this Chamber that action has been taken and the situation will not arise again? Parliament has a responsibility to ensure that rentals on leasehold land and other leases are collected when they fall due.

Mr GLASSON: I refer to the comments made by the honourable member for Bundaberg about the findings of the Auditor-General. Regrettably, these findings are correct. The Act prohibits the Government going back more than 12 months. There was a reassessment of rent on the new valuations and action has been taken. The matter has been rectified and should not occur again.

I mention that the chairman and secretary of the commission brought the outstanding rental figures in Queensland to my notice and the total is in the region of $7m. The Government is again taking action, as it did with the Local Government Act where people found it was financially beneficial to them to allow their rates to overrun. They invested the money or paid less interest on a borrowing commitment until, under the Local Government Act, the penalty for the late payment of rates was increased above the bank interest rate. This solved the situation immediately. The Government will do the same thing in relation to the Land Act when the next amendments come before the House and the situation regarding rents will be rectified. There will be no further backlog in the collection of rents on Crown land.

Mr CAMPBELL: I ask the Minister if he is prepared to take this issue to the incoming public accounts committee for examination.

Mr GLASSON: There is no need for the matter to go to the public accounts committee. The Government is quite open about what has occurred and it has been rectified. The situation arose simply because the department did not have a sufficient number of valuers to cover the area where the rents fell due in that particular year. There is nothing to be alarmed about. It is behind us. Nothing can be retrieved under the Act because the Government cannot go back more than 12 months. The situation will not arise again.

Mr WELLS: I ask the Minister: is he therefore saying that he would refuse to give a reference to the public accounts committee to investigate the matters referred to by the honourable member for Bundaberg, Mr Campbell, and which are contained in the Auditor-General's report?

Mr GLASSON: I have never heard anyone so obsessed with a public accounts committee. It will achieve nothing. This is a cheap political act on the part of the honourable member for Murrumba in an attempt to say that corruption is involved. There is nothing corrupt about it. I admit that a mistake occurred, but there is absolutely

nothing to be investigated. It is typical of the honourable member, who wishes to score political points. There is nothing whatsoever to hide. Because of the numbers in the work-force, regrettably a mistake has occurred.

Mr WELLS: I make it perfectly clear that I did not say that the Minister was corrupt or that anything corrupt was going on. I asked the simple question: would he be prepared in principle to refer such a matter to a public accounts committee? I take it that the answer is "no".

Mr GLASSON: If it is felt appropriate that it go to a public accounts committee, by all means. I have nothing to hide. But what would that achieve—absolutely nothing! However, I have no objection whatsoever to it going to a public accounts committee.

Clause 6, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 7 to 15, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

Third Reading

Bill, on motion of Mr Glasson, by leave, read a third time.

SCARTWATER STATION TRUST EXTENSION ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 16 September 1987 (see p. 2658).

Mr EATON (Mourilyan) (12.37 p.m.): I will not take up much of the time of the House. I mention the great foresight and the great charity that this man possessed in those days long ago when he left this estate to service the needs of the ex-servicemen of that era. Because everyone in those days thought that the First World War was the war to end all wars, he was not to know that after his death there would be another world war.

The Government is to be congratulated. I know what the A. H. W. Cunningham Memorial Home does. I think it is his son, Mr Ted Cunningham, who now runs the station. I have been to properties that he owns and all of the workers speak well of him. That is a fine way to judge a man. If his workers speak well of him, that is a good indication of the type of man he is. If the boss is not a good type of man, the workers do not speak well of him.

The Opposition fully supports the Bill. I have great pleasure in supporting the Government when it is filling a need in the community. The memorial home in Bowen is so well run that it has a need to take people from outside the area. Naturally, with the age of ex-servicemen from the First World War, not too many of them are left. Those who served in the Second World War are now getting on in years, so the home can cater for the needs of those people from all over Queensland. That is to be commended.

Mr McPHIE (Toowoomba North) (12.39 p.m.): I stand beside our friend the honourable member for Mourilyan in supporting this Bill, which is a tribute to the generosity and foresight of the Cunningham family, who were pioneer pastoralists, for what they have done and to the trustees, who wish to expand the scope of the entitlements.

The legislation was originally introduced in 1941 and the benefits were restricted to servicemen from northern electorates. In 1981, because Scartwater station, which is a very extensive property, was doing very well and had some equity that was available for use by the memorial home, the area of the trust was extended to include ex-servicemen and their widows and children north of the Tropic of Capricorn.

In 1986, the Act was further expanded by an amendment to permit grandchildren of servicemen to be eligible for education grants, scholarships or bursaries. As the member for Mourilyan mentioned, there is also an entitlement to accommodation for

ex-servicemen at an aged people's home. Because quite a number of beds at that old people's home have not been occupied, the trustees have asked for a further expansion. The intention of the Bill is to expand the eligibility to take in all ex-servicemen who were resident in Queensland prior to enlistment, who have attained 60 years of age and who are in receipt of a war service pension. The Bill provides a great concept of generosity by the family and of progressive administration by the trustees.

I am certain that every member of the House will whole-heartedly support the Bill.

Mr BEARD (Mount Isa—Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party) (12.41 p.m.): Like the members for Mourilyan and Toowoomba North, I am delighted to have an opportunity to speak to this Bill, because I was actually a Scartwater and a Cunningham scholar in my young days.

Mr Braddy: How long ago was that?

Mr BEARD: It was a long time ago. I will not go into that any further.

Scartwater station, together with the whole heritage of Mr A. H. W. Cunningham, is one of the greatest things to happen in Queensland, particularly north Queensland. It is typical of those who get out and do succeed in what they are doing and pass on the fruits of their labours to people who may not have had it quite so easy. From the original indenture signed by Mr A. H. W. Cunningham and the then secretary of the Lands Department in the State Government in 1920, through to the extension Act in 1941, a further extension Act in 1960, a further extension Act in 1981 and now this Bill in 1988, the benefits of this great trust have spread throughout the State.

Mr Cunningham was born in 1879. He spent practically his whole life in north Queensland. In his younger days, he was a noted horseman, being an excellent amateur jockey, a fine horse-breaker, a grand roughrider and a skilled show rider. He was noted for the long hours that he spent in the saddle, and rides of 100 miles a day were a common occurrence for him. His main love was always for horses and horse-racing. No-one has done more for racing in north Queensland than that gentleman.

After World War I, when he wanted to do something for the returned soldiers, he took up some virgin land. Because his views on the land settlement of returned servicemen were in direct conflict with those of the Bowen War Council and the Government itself, he found that he could not support the work that was being done by the council. He got some supporters together and obtained some virgin land about 170 miles inland from Bowen. He got friends to donate cash and stock to the property. Between 1920 and 1929 they ploughed the profits back into the property until, in 1929, they were able to make their first direct grant of cash. From then on they have poured large sums of money almost wholly into benefits for returned soldiers and their dependants. Those benefits have included direct payments to RSL clubs, grants to ex-soldiers to seek medical treatment from as far afield as Melbourne, in the old days, and the awarding of Scartwater Scholarships, which used to be granted following the old Queensland Junior public examination to assist brighter students to complete Years 11 and 12. In those days, they were called sub-Senior and Senior. The benefits included Cunningham Scholarships, which allowed students to attend university, and, eventually, the establishment of the A. H. W. Cunningham Memorial Home for aged returned servicemen in Bowen. This Bill will enlarge the group who may be eligible to enjoy the privileges of living at that home.

In concluding my remarks, I want to quote from a letter that I wrote on 28 December 1952 and which was published in a book called *The Story of Scartwater*. I had to report at the end of my studies at secondary school. In the last paragraph of that letter I said—

> "I should like the members of Scartwater Trust to know that I greatly appreciate this, and will always remember the assistance given me, and other children of service men and women, through the foresight, and generous efforts of the late Mr A. H. W. Cunningham."

Today, 35½ years later, I can only endorse those comments when I see the Cunningham estate, the Scartwater station, still being very generous to people who need help in north Queensland. That assistance is gradually being extended to people throughout the whole of Queensland. I have great delight in supporting the Bill.

Mr SMYTH: Mr Deputy Speaker——

Mr GLASSON: Mr Deputy Speaker——

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Alison): Order! I call the honourable member for Bowen.

Mr SMYTH (Bowen) (12.46 p.m.): I support the Bill. The Cunningham home is in my electorate. First of all, I assure Mr Beard that I will be notifying the chairman of the committee that at least one member of the Queensland Parliament has benefited from the Scartwater Trust. I must admit that I was not aware that Mr Beard was a beneficiary of the trust.

I congratulate Ed Cunningham and his board of trustees for the position that the trust is now in. As the Minister pointed out in his second-reading speech, the Cunningham home is self-supporting. It requires no additional funds from the State or Federal Governments.

The history of the Scartwater Trust has been outlined by earlier speakers. I too express my gratitude to the Cunningham family and their forefather for having such a vision and for providing something for those people who fought to allow this country to remain democratic.

As has been pointed out by the Opposition spokesman, Mr Eaton, the Cunningham family is well-known and well-liked in Bowen. As has also been pointed out, the present legislation only makes provision for people who live north of the Tropic of Capricorn. This amending Bill will ensure that all returned service men and women in this State will be able to benefit from this trust.

The idea of the Bill is to open up the provision of the trust to allow for an increase in the number of residents in the Cunningham home and to allow the home to carry on as a viable and worthwhile facility. The member for Toowoomba North, Mr McPhie, might be able to encourage some of his constituents to retire and to spend the rest of their lives in the Cunningham home——

Mr McPhie: It could well be me.

Mr SMYTH: Yes. I will welcome the honourable member when he goes there.

As everyone is aware, the Bowen climate is the best in Queensland——

Mr McPhie: The mangoes up there are pretty good, too.

Mr SMYTH: Yes. Bowen tomatoes and mangoes are pretty good, as is the fishing.

Mr De Lacy: There is even water there now.

Mr SMYTH: Yes. Rainforests were mentioned earlier today. I can assure honourable members that there are no rainforests in Bowen. It has a very dry climate and clean environment.

In conclusion, I congratulate the chairman of the committee and the managing trustees.

I support the Bill.

Hon. W. H. GLASSON (Gregory—Minister for Land Management) (12.49 p.m.), in reply: It is quite obvious that the Scartwater Station Trust Extension Act Amendment Bill has the unqualified support of the Government, the Opposition and the Liberal Party.

It was refreshing to all honourable members to hear Mr Beard, who was a recipient of assistance from the trust, speak in such glowing terms of a man who can only be described, as my colleague said, as a man of great generosity and foresight, who wanted to help people who were less fortunate than he.

Mr Smyth spoke along similar lines. I apologise to him if he thought that I tried to gag his contribution. I certainly would not do that because the Cunningham home is situated in his electorate.

Ted Cunningham, the son of A. H. W. Cunningham, is still alive and lives at Strathmore.

I thank honourable members for their contributions to the debate. The Government supports fully the move that will broaden the group of people who can take advantage of the assistance provided by the trust. I refer to returned servicemen and their families.

Motion agreed to.

Committee

Clauses 1 to 4, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

Third Reading

Bill, on motion of Mr Glasson, by leave, read a third time.

ROOFING TILES ACT REPEAL BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 8 September 1987 (see p. 2189).

Mr MACKENROTH (Chatsworth) (12.52 p.m.): The Opposition is not opposed to the repeal of the Roofing Tiles Act of 1949. It accepts that since 1949 there have been improvements in the way in which building products can be checked. The Opposition accepts the Minister's explanation that, in fact, the Government now adopts the Australian standards. For those reasons, the Opposition supports the legislation.

Hon. N. E. LEE (Yeronga) (12.53 p.m.): The Liberal Party also supports the Bill. It is a shame that other obsolete Acts do not receive the same treatment. The Liberal Party would encourage the Government, where possible, to repeal similar legislation. As the member for Chatsworth said, it has not been necessary to use the Roofing Tiles Act since 1949.

Mr Mackenroth: I said that it was brought in in 1949.

Mr LEE: It was introduced in 1949 and has not been used since 1975.

The legislation was introduced because a shortage of roofing materials presented an opportunity for the manufacture of inferior roofing materials. Therefore it was necessary to introduce the legislation. Today, competition between companies is so strong that they cannot afford to manufacture any roofing material of an inferior quality. It is good to have competition in that field. The members of the public benefit from that competition because they are able to purchase a superior product at a much cheaper price.

As I said earlier, the Act has not been used since 1975, so the Liberal Party certainly supports the Bill. Again the Liberal Party urges the Government to examine similar Acts that should be repealed.

Hon. B. D. AUSTIN (Nicklin—Leader of the House) (12.54 p.m.), in reply: I thank honourable members for their contribution to the debate. I am sure that the Government will take on board the suggestions made by both honourable members. As the honourable member for Yeronga would be aware, the State Government has considered the Savage

committee report. Each Minister has been given the task of reviewing the legislative framework within his portfolio. I am sure that the honourable member's desires in relation to those pieces of legislation to which he referred will be fulfilled in the ensuing months of this Parliament.

Motion agreed to.

Committee

Clauses 1 and 2, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

Third Reading

Bill, on motion of Mr Austin, by leave, read a third time.

SALE OF GOODS (VIENNA CONVENTION) ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 6 October 1987 (see p. 2824).

Mr BRADDY (Rockhampton) (12.56 p.m.): The proposed amendment to the Bill is very brief in that it is intended to correct a printing error that occurred when the original Bill was introduced into the House. Therefore, the Opposition supports the Bill.

Sitting suspended from 12.57 to 2.30 p.m.

Hon. P. J. CLAUSON (Redlands—Minister for Justice and Attorney-General) (2.30 p.m.), in reply: This is simply a machinery piece of legislation required to correct a spelling error which occurred in the original Act. Consequently, I commend the Bill to the House.

Motion agreed to.

Committee

Hon. P. J. Clauson (Redlands—Minister for Justice and Attorney-General) in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—

Mr INNES (2.31 p.m.): Because of the slightly earlier resumption and my lack of attendance in the Chamber earlier, at this stage I would like to add the support of the parliamentary Liberal Party to the proposed small and technical amendment.

Clause 1, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 2 and 3, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

Third Reading

Bill, on motion of Mr Clauson, by leave, read a third time.

DISPOSAL OF UNCOLLECTED GOODS ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 6 October 1987 (see p. 2825).

Mr BRADDY (Rockhampton) (2.35 p.m.): This is a very brief and terse amendment to enable one of the duties of the Commissioner of Police to be carried out by police officers authorised in writing, on behalf of the Commissioner of Police, to undertake

disposal of certain uncollected goods. That is the sole purpose of the Bill. The Opposition can foresee no problems with the amendment and supports the Bill.

However, one matter I should comment on is what seems to me to be a lack of knowledge by the community of the rights of people in respect of uncollected goods. From time to time, the Department of Justice carries out education campaigns for members of the public. I commend the Minister for his attention to an education campaign explaining the rights of people under this legislation, which was originally enacted in 1967.

When practising law, it was my experience that many people really had no idea of their rights. The day-to-day problems involved tenants who did not know what they could do when they had left goods behind in a landlord's premises, or landlords who did not know what their rights, duties and obligations were. When the Department of Justice carries out its campaigns of community education from time to time, I suggest that that is one matter that could be given some attention.

I again indicate that the Opposition supports the Bill.

Mr INNES (Sherwood—Leader of the Liberal Party) (2.36 p.m.): The Liberal Party supports the proposals in the amendment. This debate is an appropriate time to talk about a very important, current phenomenon. Increasingly—and, I think, rightly—people are talking about victims of crime as opposed to the perpetrators of crime.

Recently there were some very spectacular demonstrations made by the convicted perpetrators of crime. It is interesting to note that one of the four persons who spent time on the roof of Brisbane Prison—there were a couple of murderers and a person convicted of violent assault—had not only raped an 80-year-old woman but also chopped off her finger to get her gold ring. Through 24-hour vigilance by television crews, who were perhaps more interested in the moment when the prisoners would fall off than they were in attending to something more important, the prisoners were given a certain amount of notoriety and even a certain amount of sympathy, which they absolutely did not deserve. Rather than sympathy, they certainly deserved the complete contempt and abhorrence of civilised society.

What is the relationship between that theme—the rights of victims—and the disposal of uncollected goods? The amendment deals with motor vehicles, particularly stolen motor vehicles. Stolen motor vehicles impose an enormous burden and cost on the community that rebounds not only in personal inconvenience but also in personal misery for people who have lost a vehicle—who have had a vehicle stolen but are still obliged to make monthly or fortnightly repayments of a very high order and who have to get a replacement vehicle on top of that.

Stolen motor vehicles impose an enormous burden in the form of additional premiums on the honest and responsible insurers of motor vehicles. Many people who have bought motor vehicles on terms may take out comprehensive insurance. Comprehensive insurance does not apply only to people without means. For a variety of reasons, from taxation to a lack of ready cash, people may enter into a term-payment agreement or even a lease agreement which requires that a comprehensive insurance policy be taken out on the motor vehicle.

I am not talking about matters that involve marginal cost. For many people of average means, the amount paid in hire-purchase or lease payments and running costs adds up to more than their house repayments. It is a very high cost in the modern world.

All honourable members would have seen figures published recently that indicate that keeping the average family vehicle on the road costs something in the vicinity of $120 a week, even before provision is made for recurrent expenditure, which takes that amount up to $200 a week. That, in turn, is more than the average provision for rent. I am talking about a matter that has an enormous financial impact.

The massive business of stealing motor vehicles falls broadly into two categories. So many vehicles are stolen that it must represent a level of organised crime that would suggest a network around at least the eastern seaboard of Australia. Even members of the police force have been charged with and convicted of sophisticated crimes involving stolen motor vehicles.

I wish to deal with another sector involving stolen vehicles—juvenile offenders. They are proving to be a difficult group to deal with. Approximately half of all motor vehicles stolen are stolen by juvenile offenders. Sometimes the vehicles are stolen for the purpose of a joy-ride and are damaged, but if the vehicle-owner is lucky, it is only joy-riding and no damage. However, there is usually some damage done by the offenders in order to get into the vehicle.

Not infrequently, the theft involves a joy-ride plus burning of the vehicle, because some idiots believe that they will get rid of the fingerprints, and thereby avoid detection, by incinerating the motor vehicle. Each year in this city and State dozens of motor vehicles are burnt in an attempt to get rid of any possible incriminating evidence resulting from a joy-ride.

Then there is straight-out stealing vehicles for stripping because there is a business in the stealing of vehicles, stripping them and on-selling parts. Vehicles are not always stripped merely to get parts for another vehicle. This is a very considerable business and one that the Insurance Council of Australia has stated will lead to further increases in insurance premiums. The loss of a vehicle and the need to buy a new vehicle can cause devastation to a battling family, because they are often left with a residual responsibility to continue the payments for the stolen vehicle. What can be done about it?

Mr Scott interjected.

Mr INNES: Mr Scott is saying something, and no doubt he has sympathy more for the perpetrators of the crime than for the victims of crime. The Labor Party does not like people talking about the victims of crime.

Mr Scott: We'd fix it up. That is what we'd do.

Mr INNES: Yes, I have seen what happened in New South Wales, that great exhibition of Labor Party fix-up of the legal and penal systems.

Mr Lee: Mr Jackson.

Mr INNES: Yes, Mr Jackson, the former Minister for Corrective Services in New South Wales, has a very intimate knowledge of the workings of sympathy. In fact, sympathy is bought for the perpetrators of the crime.

Juvenile offenders are a group of people who are responsive to deterrent punishment, but the big problem with juvenile offenders is finding a deterrent. Young offenders cannot be locked up, because they cannot be exposed to hardened criminals. Special rules are laid down by the Children's Court which mean that society has to bend over backwards, then bend over backwards again, then do a backward somersault, and then do a double backward somersault, to ensure that the perpetrator of the crime, if he or she is below the age of 17, is not saddled with the consequence of the crime and given a criminal record that might be used against him or her later in life.

There is an enormous amount of crime involving motor vehicles. The 16 or 17-year-old joy-riders are a real phenomena and not an occasional occurrence. There is a rash of them and they operate every week-end in this city and State. I suggest that this Government implement a system of punishment for young and juvenile offenders who are committing crimes involving motor vehicles. If they are convicted of the crime, they should not be allowed to hold or acquire a driver's licence until the damage done by them to any car when it was stolen or unlawfully used by them is paid for. Perhaps they can be made to pay for the entire value of the car if the car was destroyed, and

not be allowed to become a registered owner of a motor vehicle until the damage to a car or the loss of a car is paid for.

If there is one thing that young people—particularly young males, who are usually the perpetrators of this kind of crime—react to, it is the removal of the right or entitlement to drive a car. At some stage they will want to drive legally, and they cannot always run the risk of taking a joy-ride and being undetected by the police. At some stage they all want to own their own motor vehicles, so a potential threat that might actually operate in the mind of a young offender is: "You damage a motor vehicle, write it off completely, get rid of it or cannibalise it for use in other vehicles after you have stolen it or used it for joy-riding, you will not lawfully be able to hold a licence and you will not be allowed to become the registered owner of a motor vehicle until you have paid for the damage that you have done and the loss that you have caused." That is the type of threat that will be real and effective, because the one dream that young people have is to own their own vehicle, soup it up, modify it and dress it up with squirrel tails, speed stripes or whatever. The one thing that gets through to young people is the image of owning their own motor vehicle. They realise that at some time they have to go straight.

This legislation, which deals with the commissioner's certificate on whether or not a vehicle is stolen, provides a ready occasion to focus attention on this enormously costly phenomenon and on this real area of concern, cost and imposition on the community, that of juvenile crime. With my suggestions, I do not draw the line at juvenile crime; anybody who steals, damages or destroys another person's motor vehicle should pay for the damage or loss. I am saying that that penalty be imposed even in the Children's Court, where a young offender should be told, "Right, young fellow, if you commit this offence, it will not mean a rap on the knuckles or half-hearted probation. If you, as a 15, 16 or 17-year-old, are tempted to go for a joy-ride, you will not own a motor vehicle until you have paid for the damage or the loss." I think it would be simple. I think it would be a threat. I think it would be effective.

Hon. P. J. CLAUSON (Redlands—Minister for Justice and Attorney-General) (2.47 p.m.), in reply: I express my thanks to honourable members for their support of this legislation. I thank the honourable member for Rockhampton for his suggestions on public awareness. I do not know what deleterious effect the giving of advice for unclaimed goods might have on our colleagues in the legal profession; however, I thank him for his contribution.

I also thank the honourable member for Sherwood for an insight into his childhood dreams of owning a motor vehicle with high horsepower and with pony tails on the back. Some of his suggestions on juvenile crime involving motor vehicles could be taken on board.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Motion agreed to.

Committee

Clauses 1 to 3, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

Third Reading

Bill, on motion of Mr Clauson, by leave, read a third time.

COURTS OF CONCILIATION ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 29 October 1987 (see p. 3791).

Mr BRADDY (Rockhampton) (2.50 p.m.): This legislation has languished on the legislative list of Queensland for a considerable time. The last occasion on which it was amended was in 1931. Part of the Minister's purpose for bringing the Bill before the House is to propose amendments such as changing the language from "Police Magistrate" to "Stipendiary Magistrate". It is clear that the legislation has not been tested by experience too often. That is what I wish to speak about this afternoon.

I would be interested to hear if the Minister and his advisers could inform the Parliament how often this particular piece of legislation is availed of by the litigants of Queensland. In my years of practice, I do not recall any occasion on which it was availed of by lawyers or litigants with whom I mixed. It is a pity that the conciliation processes cannot be availed of more often. They obviously should be encouraged. They lie in the same area of common sense and beneficial behaviour as do the small debt courts and modern-day efforts to achieve results.

Honourable members are aware of the enormous expense of litigation these days. It is commonly said—and it is true—that the only people who can afford to litigate are the very poor, on those occasions when they can obtain legal aid, or the very wealthy. The ordinary working people, the middle-income people and even some of the upper-income people cannot afford to litigate. It is incumbent on everyone in society, particularly lawyers and parliamentarians, to examine the processes whereby litigation can be curtailed and disputes can be settled.

I am not sure that this Bill does anything towards that process. It appears to contain provisions which basically tidy up a use of language. From reading the Bill, I do not see that the processes are such that any real encouragement will be given to the community and to litigants to enter into conciliation processes. In that area, perhaps some aspects of the Bill do not help. For example, the Bill provides that a conciliation justice is not allowed to act upon a request for conciliation if either party is blind. I cannot see why blind people in society today are prohibited from engaging in the processes of a conciliation process. It seems extraordinary that that particular part of the legislation remains unamended. For what purpose are blind people discouraged? It seems to be a hangover from the days in which blind people were suggested to be of lesser intelligence. Perhaps it is merely because in the processes of amending this legislation that was not looked at. However, it is certainly an area in which people should be enabled to make application if they wish.

Mr Hamill: It might be a reference to the sweat-shop rates that they get at the Queensland Blind Institute with their basket-weaving.

Mr BRADDY: Indeed.

The litigation options for blind people are something that should be guarded zealously. The Act contains other provisions which are not amended that I suggest should be examined. The encouragement is that people attempt to conciliate and settle their litigation without the use of lawyers. The Act provides that representation of the parties by legal advisers is not to be allowed. Corporations may be represented by agents who are not practising barristers or solicitors or the clerks of either. Again, for the life of me, I cannot see why there is an absolute prohibition on people using the conciliation process with the assistance of lawyers.

Under the legislation, some quite serious disputes can in fact be referred to the conciliation process. We know that at present that does not happen. That is apparently the practice. Use of the conciliation process should be encouraged. Although endeavours should be made to ensure that people are not unequal in representation—and that can certainly be done—I suggest that people should be able to engage legal representation, provided that both sides are in agreement and both sides are happy about it, to enable the conciliation process to take place.

In reality, I suggest that we are really shadow-boxing here. The people of Queensland either do not know of, or do not wish to use, the Courts of Conciliation Act. I would be very interested to hear the figures in relation to the use of the process and, if those

figures are as low as I believe them to be, to hear what efforts will be made by the Justice Department, in conjunction with the Law Society and the Bar Association, to encourage people to use this process and try to have these disputes mediated and settled at very little or no expense. If that is not going to be done, the legislation might as well remain unamended, as it has done since 1931, and be left to lie on the statute-book to rust away in quiet decay.

Mr INNES (Sherwood—Leader of the Liberal Party) (2.56 p.m.): The Liberal Party supports the amendment. Like the member for Rockhampton, I cannot recall hearing of a single instance of the legislation's being resorted to. The apparent arguments in favour of its use appear to be clear. Nevertheless, it appears not to have been attractive to people, I suspect partly because its provisions are unknown by many people. As was indicated by the member for Rockhampton, a marketing exercise is probably needed to demonstrate its availability. We know that, in a variety of jurisdictions, modern attempts are made to provide, shall we say, community-based resolution of conflict without resort to litigation.

In my experience, the majority of lawyers would prefer that there were informal ways of resolving small disputes, because it is not a matter of satisfaction but a matter of dissatisfaction to a practitioner to have to make an hourly charge. I speak particularly on behalf of solicitors. Solicitors have to make an hourly charge because they have staff, office space and equipment—far more than the bar—which has to be paid for. If their time is consumed by matters involving small amounts of money, the fee just cannot be justified. In a sense, the fee is related to the magnitude of the amount in dispute.

I think that most lawyers would be far more comfortable with a system that did allow a cheap, preferably non-litigous way in which significant disputes between people could be solved. How often have members of Parliament been asked by people to solve the problems that they are experiencing with their neighbours? Sometimes one can do it, but members of Parliament have a natural reluctance for getting involved in disputation between one constituent and another. It is a search for, shall we say, some type of middle role. So if use of the Act can be encouraged, that is fine. I do not think that any responsible lawyer I know would try to impede in any way the operation of the Act on the grounds that it takes away any business. It seems that there is a problem with its attractiveness.

If we move into the big time in conciliation, we find that arbitration has flourished. Arbitration is now in itself becoming a business. It is particularly suited to the solution of technical-type problems where one starts off with people who, unlike a magistrate or a judge, do not have to be educated in a particular field but who began on the basis of knowing what might be an engineering problem, an architectural problem or a specialised engineering problem and who are trusted by both parties to come to a fair resolution of a dispute.

In Australia, arbitration centres, which have people with a variety of qualifications, have been established. An institute of arbitrators has been established and arbitrators can operate from premises under the terms of the Arbitration Acts that operate in the various jurisdictions. Queensland has an Arbitration Act that has not been standardised with the Acts of other jurisdictions. Indeed, aspects of the Queensland Arbitration Act are technically better than those Acts that have been brought into tandem, but some qualified Queensland arbitrators believe that the absence of the standardised Act is a bar to the resolution of disputes, particularly where an interstate party is involved.

Very often, technical disputes that occur in the building industry are of a type to which arbitration is fitted. It might be desirable to consider the revamping of Queensland's Arbitration Act to bring it into accord with the Acts that, to a great extent, have been standardised in other States. If other States can be persuaded to accept the technically preferable provisions of Queensland's legislation, all the better.

Increased publicity is required to give the current legislation some real effect. Having noted the operations of the Minister's department, I have no doubt that the department

is not ill-disposed towards publicity. If I was in the business of quipping around, I could say that it is another opportunity for a photograph. Publicity might open up the possibility of resolution to more members of the public. Its lack of use would suggest that there is perhaps some resistance.

The Small Claims Tribunal has been particularly suited to a certain level of problem. Its jurisdiction now embraces fencing disputes, which is one of the most frequently occurring disputes in our society. Perhaps the problem with this legislation is that it falls between those areas to which the small claims type of operation is particularly suited and the bigger zones into which the Arbitration Act begins to move. I support the Bill and hope that recourse to the legislation is more frequent.

Hon. P. J. CLAUSON (Redlands—Minister for Justice and Attorney-General) (3.03 p.m.), in reply: I thank honourable members for their contributions to the debate. I think that the frequency aspect, as highlighted by the member for Rockhampton, has probably resulted in a reticence on the part of lawyers to advise their clients of the availability of this legislation. Perhaps the lawyers did not know about it themselves. However, with the passage of this amending Bill it is hoped that this legislation will become more obvious to the lawyers in the community, who are not, of course, precluded from helping their clients prepare their case for hearing before this particular tribunal. Consequently, I think that lawyers can still assist their clients in this area to make sure that their clients have a fair chance of a reasonable hearing before the magistrate—the conciliator.

I realise that there is a publicity difficulty with this legislation. I certainly intend to try to overcome that. After all, a former Attorney-General, the Honourable Sir William Knox, put the Justice Department on the map with certain publicity items that he implemented. He certainly showed me the way, and I am learning from him every day in that regard. I hope that this legislation will be well publicised.

Larger companies are now looking to alternative dispute resolution to save themselves litigation costs, as outlined by the honourable member for Sherwood. Every day I hear or read about alternative dispute resolution. This legislation enables the average person in the street to avail himself of similar alternative dispute resolution.

As the honourable member for Rockhampton pointed out, this is a very ancient Act dating back to 1892. It contains many anachronisms. The last amendment to this Act occurred in 1931. No doubt some shortcomings or deficiencies within it have become apparent.

I thank the honourable member for Rockhampton for pointing out the situation in relation to blind people. I tend to agree with him that this Government should be considering that aspect.

I have written to the president of the Queensland Law Society and have drawn his attention to the fact that this legislation is being amended. The last two paragraphs of the letter that was sent to Mr Channell, the president of the Law Society, read as follows—

> "As the public knowledge of the existence of this legislation increases and use is made of the Courts of Conciliation, their effectiveness will be closely observed and any defects or problems which become apparent will be remedied.
>
> According to the Arbitration Committee of the Law Society of New South Wales, a similar scheme in that State has been operating successfully for at least four years, has been well accepted by the courts, and the public have voiced practically no opposition to it. I would hope for a similar success in the Queensland context."

I believe that that sums up this Government's attitude towards this legislation. I commend the Bill to the House.

Motion agreed to.

Committee

Clauses 1 to 17, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

Third Reading

Bill, on motion of Mr Clauson, by leave, read a third time.

DISTRICT COURTS (VENUE OF APPEALS) BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 18 November 1987 (see p. 4548).

Mr BRADDY (Rockhampton) (3.09 p.m.): This legislation will enable the hearing of appeals in District Courts in places other than Brisbane, Rockhampton or Townsville, where convenient.

Queensland has always been a greatly decentralised State. In the days before the railways connected the cities of Brisbane, Rockhampton and Townsville, judges resided and operated in those three cities. They were in effect the administrative and judicial capitals of southern Queensland, central Queensland and northern Queensland respectively. That is as it should be.

Some years ago I can remember some members of the Bar Association campaigning fairly actively to try to have the central judge removed from Rockhampton. Certain members of the bar saw themselves as likely Supreme Court appointments. Although they were more than keen to accept an appointment in Brisbane, where they lived, they were not so keen to change their residence to Rockhampton. Because of that, they decided they would campaign to try to have the position of central judge abolished.

The Government of the day resisted that move. Within a matter of only a few years it was found that judicial work in central Queensland had increased so much that it was necessary to have resident in Rockhampton not only a Supreme Court judge but also a District Court judge.

The legislation before the House is supported by the Opposition. It has the means and the efficiency of making litigation cheaper. Appeals will now be able to be heard in towns and cities other than Brisbane, Townsville and Rockhampton. It is comparatively cheaper to take the court and the court officials to the place where litigation is to occur than to take, in many cases, the litigants, their advisors and, in some cases, the witnesses some distance to the place at which the appeal is to be heard. The legislation is supported by the Opposition. It is a good measure. It is to be hoped that, where a discretion is to be applied, as the legislation will allow, litigants and judicial officers will use their discretion and apply for hearings in those places.

Since its reintroduction in Queensland, the District Court has been of great benefit to the people of Queensland. By and large, the people who have been appointed judicial officers in this State have ably served the people of Queensland and its legal system. They are to be congratulated for the service they have given.

I congratulate the Government on the introduction of this measure. As I said before, it is proper that litigation should be made as cheap as possible. God knows it is dear enough for the people in middle ground Australia to pursue litigation in the District Court or any other court. Anything that can be done by us as parliamentarians and those people in the Government who administer justice to keep litigation as cheap as possible must be advanced. Therefore, I say quite enthusiastically that the Opposition supports this particular measure.

Mr FITZGERALD (Lockyer) (3.13 p.m.): It is with pleasure that I rise in this House this afternoon and welcome this legislation. As the member who has just resumed his seat said, it will be welcomed by all of those people who are living in decentralised

areas throughout Queensland. Because of his legal experience, he knows that sometimes the cost of justice is exorbitant for those people who do not receive legal aid, or for those people who can afford it but who belong to that large group in the middle ground of people who find that the costs of launching an appeal can be quite substantial.

I have a particular interest in this matter because the legislation will specifically allow a court of appeal on application to meet in such places as may be deemed from time to time. They include places such as Cairns, Mackay and Toowoomba. At present appeal courts sit only in Brisbane, Townsville and Rockhampton.

I can see great benefits flowing to many people who live in Toowoomba who from time to time may wish to appeal and avail themselves of the opportunity of having the case heard in Toowoomba, with a resultant substantial saving. Toowoomba has a bar. If such appeals were heard there, the bar would be less inconvenienced. Judges do travel on circuit to Toowoomba. I appreciate that judges move round Queensland. It is an indication that this Government is mindful of the need to have courts visit throughout Queensland. I do not think there is diminution at all in the type of justice that is handed down.

I understand that under the terms of the legislation, if a judge finds during the course of an appeal that justice would be better served if he moved back to Brisbane, he will be able to adjourn the court and move to another venue. From speaking to a number of litigants who have appealed against judgments that were handed down in lower courts, I know that the cost involved in appeals is always considerable.

I welcome the legislation. Time will tell how it will benefit places such as Toowoomba, Cairns, Mackay and others that may appear on the circuit list from time to time. I believe that, when appeals can be heard in places such as Toowoomba, it will be a recognition that justice can be done throughout Queensland.

Mr INNES (Sherwood—Leader of the Liberal Party) (3.16 p.m.): The legislation before the House is practical. As mobility in the State has increased and as District Court judges and District Courts have increased in number, legislation should also change to take into account the convenience of the litigant, subject to reasonable allocation of judges. Obviously a judge cannot be sent to a particular district for only one appeal, but judges will be able to travel the State with sufficient frequency to allow the discharge of appeal functions to occur with some regularity.

While I am on the subject of the District Courts, it might be proper to raise a rather serious matter. In view of publicity given to certain matters in recent times, everybody occupying senior positions in the judiciary and in the public service should be mindful of the old senses of self-control and responsibility that used to apply. Judges should not have communication with people about personal matters or about work-related matters if in any way that can be seen to compromise the integrity and the impartiality of the judiciary.

Mr SCOTT (Cook) (3.17 p.m.): I mention briefly a matter that concerns me about the operation of courts in Cairns. It is appropriate to mention it now, following the statement made by the Opposition spokesman on Justice indicating the Opposition's support for the Bill.

The Bill provides for the extension of appeals to the District Court in Cairns. I wish to raise a humane aspect that is troubling people both in Cairns and in surrounding communities, mainly Aboriginal communities. I draw this matter to the attention of the Minister because I will be writing to him about it and it would be remiss of me not to mention it now. I refer to problems faced by Aboriginal people who are required to travel to Cairns for appearances before various courts. No doubt Aboriginal people will receive the benefit of the extensions provided by this Bill. The people to whom I refer are generally indigent. They have to find their own fares to travel from their communities to Cairns. Depending on whatever happens to them, they have to find their fare back to their communities, even if no charges are laid in the end result. This problem is

creating a great deal of difficulty for these people and their families as well as for other people in Cairns.

Quite often people are released by the court either because further bail is granted or because charges are dismissed. They may have to spend a couple of days in the watchhouse in Cairns as a penalty. When they are released, they often do not have the fare to enable them to get back to their community. The inevitable happens and they find that they get into trouble in Cairns. The trouble that confronts them, or the trouble that they cause, impinges on many other Aboriginal people who live in Cairns, so someone has to make the effort to find their fares for them to enable them to travel back to their community.

I know that the Government is being a little magnanimous in introducing this amendment and in allowing the courts to travel a little farther in the State. I am pleased to note that constituents in various electorates will benefit.

This matter may not directly concern the Minister, but I will be writing to him and I would be remiss if I did not draw it to his attention at this time. The problem has arisen previously when Aboriginal people in particular were released from Stuart Creek gaol. In the old days they received their fare from Townsville to Cairns and were left there to the tender mercies of goodness knows who.

The current problem has been occurring for some time and has created additional concern around Cairns. I do not know whose responsibility it is. No doubt the Minister will say that it is the responsibility of the litigants or the people who are charged. I do not think he will go that far, and I realise that it is not necessarily the responsibility of the Justice Department. The Department of Community Services must also contribute to solving the problem.

Despite the fact that Aboriginal people have been given a greater degree of self-management—with which I agree—it is well known that there are few employment prospects within their communities and little opportunity for them to earn the money that would enable them to pay the fares, travel down and face the charges. I do not doubt that in many cases they deserve to be charged and are willing to face up to their responsibilities. Without doubt, the people in those communities are learning a great deal about the way the world works, although they still have a long way to go. I have spent many hours in this House talking about the problems of employment and earning money in those communities. I appreciate this opportunity to have the ear of the Minister.

Hon. P. J. CLAUSON (Redlands—Minister for Justice and Attorney-General) (3.21 p.m.), in reply: I thank the honourable members for Rockhampton, Lockyer, Sherwood and Cook for their respective contributions to this debate. They have all touched on the major issues and thrust of this legislation, that is, the Queensland Government's policy of decentralisation and the reduction in costs to people in remote areas. The honourable member for Rockhampton also touched upon the good work of the District Court which has been carried out since the creation of that court by this Government.

The advantages of this legislation are manifold. The honourable member for Lockyer touched upon the question of the venue being agreed to between the parties and the ability of the court to move the venue from one place to another place that is more convenient for the litigants or people involved. All these changes will make for a far better, more expedient and cost-effective administration of justice in Queensland and will be well received by people living in remote areas of Queensland.

The honourable member for Cook touched on the question of Aboriginal people who have to go to Cairns for court cases. As he rightly pointed out, this legislation will probably not assist in regard to travel costs for those persons.

Mr Scott: The courts would be unlikely to sit in Aurukun or Lockhart River.

Mr CLAUSON: That is right. Unfortunately, this matter causes problems and Mr Katter's department might be better equipped to handle this question, particularly if a

person is acquitted on appeal. The provision of some kind of assistance is something that the Government could look at. On behalf of the honourable member for Cook, I intend to raise the matter with Mr Katter.

This legislation is appropriate for Queensland and will result in better accessibility to the courts for Queenslanders involved in appeals to the District Court.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Motion agreed to.

Committee

Clauses 1 to 19, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

Third Reading

Bill, on motion of Mr Clauson, by leave, read a third time.

EVIDENCE ON COMMISSION BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 18 November 1987 (see p. 4550).

Mr BRADDY (Rockhampton) (3.26 p.m.): This legislation also is supported by the Opposition. Its purpose, just to remind the House, is to enable evidence in relation to alleged criminal offences to be taken overseas and brought back for use in the judicial process in Queensland. These days, in terms of communication, on the one hand we are only too aware of how small the world is and, on the other hand, of how costly it is to travel. Every effort must be made to ensure that costs are kept down.

From the Minister's second-reading speech, I understand that some doubt was cast on the previous process in which this was done by an administrative letter system. A similar process, which had been in use in Western Australia, has been rejected and the Bill is brought before the House to enable a definite piece of legislation to be placed on the statute-book of Queensland so that evidence on commission can be taken overseas. Clearly that is a matter that is of great interest to us. In recent times it has become evident that justice cannot be served unless overseas processes can be properly wedded to our own process. Although it involved matters outside Queensland, there was the case of Mr Trimbole, whom the authorities were unable to bring back to Australia although very serious crimes were alleged against him and who in Australia would have been indicted on very serious offences. However, on an international basis, the judicial process still has not caught up with the reality of how small the world is.

It is a pity that Governments are not able to get together and ensure that the judicial processes can be eased so that things such as extraditions can apply. Of course, bringing the matter even closer to home, at the present time in the United Kingdom is a former Queensland policeman by the name of Herbert who, similarly, so far has been able to lead the judicial authorities a merry dance. Even though he has been implicated by evidence in a commission of inquiry in Queensland to the extent that he is a central figure to matters that are being inquired into by Mr Fitzgerald, QC, the state of the law is such that the authorities are not able to compel his attendance in Queensland merely as a witness. It is necessary to bring him back to Australia—if indeed he is ever brought back—for him to be charged with an offence. Clearly, when serious matters are before the public forums, the judicial authorities in Queensland and Australia—and internationally—have to do more to ensure that all people who have or know something that is of importance to the community can be placed in a position in which they can be forced to do the correct thing.

In this particular case, there can be no quibble by the Opposition or anybody else with the legislation before the House to enable evidence on commission to be taken overseas, brought back to Australia and used as part of the judicial process.

I understand that the legal bodies in Queensland—the professional bodies—have no complaint to make about the contents of the Bill. In those circumstances, the Opposition has no complaints to make in relation to the proposal that is before the House. The Opposition supports the Bill.

Mr INNES (Sherwood—Leader of the Liberal Party) (3.31 p.m.): The Liberal Party also supports the legislation. In a more complicated world, particularly where the complexity of crime is making major inroads into the ways of life of all countries, it is necessary to reinforce the law enforcement agencies and the legal agencies with new powers. Documentation often discloses or gives evidence of transactions of all types, legal and illegal. Particularly in transactions between countries, it is likely that documentation has to exist somewhere along the line. To be able to conveniently gain access to that documentation, or copies of it, is often a vital link in the chain not merely for the ordinary law but also for the criminal law. Organised crime, of necessity, has to have links in its chain. That is why it is called organised crime. With the transactions that involve the movement of goods between countries, the acquisition of large amounts of money and the development of a chain of transactions that will hide or dissipate that money, there are more occasions on which documentation comes into existence.

It is always informative to remember that some of the world's greatest criminals and criminal organisations have been brought to heel or to account to some extent not directly by their operations in crime—they have often been able to avoid the direct involvement in murder, extortion, prostitution or gambling—but by their deeds showing up somewhere along the line. If they are generating large amounts of money, as organised crime of necessity does—that is the object of its organisation—at some stage the money trail comes into account.

This type of legislation is particularly invaluable in gaining access to documentation. It is obvious that evidence itself—the sort of thing that a witness could say in the witness-box that might relate to credibility: if the person is believed, the person is gaoled; if the person is not believed, the person is not gaoled—is not the type of evidence that is really envisaged by this Evidence on Commission Bill. I am sure that no court would respond in that way.

Evidence on commission is customarily taken in civil proceedings, and it can be the direct evidence of witnesses that can determine or significantly influence cases. It is unlikely that that will be so resulting from legislation that deals with criminal matters. It is more useful in relation to the production of documentation for the less compelling or crucial parts of the chain of criminality that, nevertheless, can create a background, a scenario, circumstantial situations or just the basis of questions to witnesses that can disclose the more active participation in crime.

The Liberal Party supports any fair amendments which achieve the right level, shall we say, of combative techniques and detection techniques against the tentacles of organised crime. One always has to bear in mind the seriousness of the result of being convicted of crime, which is the deprivation of a person's liberty. Subject to that, one has to be as smart as those who organise themselves to perpetrate crime on the community.

The Liberal Party supports the legislation.

Hon. P. J. CLAUSON (Redlands—Minister for Justice and Attorney-General) (3.35 p.m.), in reply: I thank the honourable member for Rockhampton and the honourable member for Sherwood for their support for this legislation. As has been outlined by both speakers, the legislation will assist in following the money trail and in the gathering of evidence against persons in overseas jurisdictions.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Motion agreed to.

Committee

Clauses 1 to 10, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

Third Reading

Bill, on motion of Mr Clauson, by leave, read a third time.

LAND (FAIR DEALINGS) BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 18 November 1987 (see p. 4547).

Mr BRADDY (Rockhampton) (3.37 p.m.): This Bill has the support of the Opposition. It relates to the setting-out of a series of offences that are not presently covered by the law in relation to people who obtain unfair profit by unconscionable land dealings. The Opposition is, of course, very keen to support any such legislation. Indeed, I can indicate that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, the member for Lytton, who has had a long-standing interest in Russell Island and the dreadful scams which occurred there, will be speaking in support of this legislation.

There is one aspect that I wish to draw to the attention of the Minister and his department which I think is a bit of a pity, and that is the fact that the legislation relates only to fixing monetary penalties—which, of course, go to the Crown—in relation to these offences.

One can only wonder again, "What about the victim?" It appears to me that in 1988 we should have the ability to enact legislation that covers both the interest of the community in ensuring that criminal offences of this type are punished by a penalty which goes to the community and also that the victims are in some way compensated.

It seems to me that what the Government should be looking at in this particular case is a provision in the Bill itself for the penalty, or some portion of the penalty, or costs to be paid to a purchaser who has unfortunately been involved in such a transaction.

I refer particularly to a transaction that has not proceeded to settlement and to circumstances in which it is still possible for the purchaser to retain the purchase money. What about the legal cost involved in entering into the contract? I suggest that it would be proper for the Government to consider a provision whereby an automatic payment is made or the court has the power to ascertain the costs incurred by the potential purchaser and to order, in addition to the monetary penalty visited on the unscrupulous vendor or agent, that the costs set at a fixed amount or an assessed amount be paid to the purchaser.

When considering legislation of this type, we should be more conscious of the victim. I suggest that this legislation is not sufficiently conscious of the victim. The penalty is visited on the miscreant, but what about the victim? Why do we not make things easier for the victim to seek some recompense? I request that this legislation be examined and followed carefully by the Justice Department to ascertain how many cases come before the courts in the next 12 months. An assessment should be made in those cases to determine whether the purchasers who have been defrauded have been unable, without any extra expense, to recover their costs. If purchasers have not been able to recover their costs, the necessary amendment should be introduced to enable the victim to be compensated by the courts on the occasion that the unscrupulous vendor or agent comes before the court and is dealt with by penalty.

Mr INNES (Sherwood—Leader of the Liberal Party) (3.42 p.m.): The Liberal Party also supports the legislation. It is fair that the same rules apply to all persons selling land. False representations, if they are made, are a blight on the industry. I am not suggesting that that is the practice of the majority of the people in the industry. Those

laws that govern the proper standards that are set down by the Auctioneers and Agents Act should apply to similar transactions conducted by similar persons. The consequences should be the same where the character of the activity is the same.

Land transactions are significant because they involve a very large investment on the part of the majority of ordinary people. That is why the law, Parliaments and others are sensitive to the nature of dealings that surround sales that, for the majority of ordinary people, involve very valuable items.

It is sensible to bring the legislation into line with the Commonwealth legislation. That will overcome the jurisdictional problem of a potential conflict with the Constitution. The members of the Liberal Party have no objection to the legislation; in fact, we think that it is sensible and in the interests of the public.

Mr BURNS (Lytton—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (3.43 p.m.): Mr Speaker, as you and honourable members would realise, some time ago I spent a considerable amount of time in this Parliament referring to Russell Island land sales. I mention in passing that the late Vince Mahoney, the sergeant of police who was responsible for that area at that time, would have liked to have been around today to see what is happening at the Fitzgerald inquiry, particularly in relation to Russell Island.

I wish to refer to what has been happening on the islands in Moreton Bay and to the developers who are part of the push for the bridge to Stradbroke Island. I refer particularly to a bloke by the name of Herd, a fellow by the name of Hodson, the Peter Kurts people and others. The Minister knows the people to whom I am referring because he lives in that area. He would know what I am going to talk about.

I will give a classic example. A fellow from Townsville contacts an agent to tell him that he has a block of land on Macleay Island or Lamb Island and that he wants $7,000 or $8,000 for it. The agent says, "Okay. We will see what we can do for you." That afternoon, while the agent is driving people around the island, he says, "That block of land is for sale for $16,000." The client says, "Offer him $15,000 and we can see how we go." The agent goes down to the telephone box and pretends to make a phone call to the fellow in Townsville. He steps outside the telephone box and says, "Yes, he will take $15,000." The agent gets the purchaser to sign the contract. The agent then flies to Townsvile or contacts the owner of the land and buys the land from him for $7,000 or $8,000. The agent thereby makes an extra $8,000 on the day's transaction. In case honourable members do not believe what I am saying, let me quote some of the figures that have been obtained from the Titles Office in relation to title registers.

On 8 January 1985, Martin Place Investments, which is a Peter Kurts company, bought a block of land on Lamb Island for $4,700. Twenty-three days later it sold that block for $11,990. In cases such as that the purchaser says, "We will buy the land on 90 days settlement." The block of land is probably only worth $4,700. If settlement has not occurred at the end of the 90 days and the vendor wants to try to get the money out of the puchaser, he will go to a lawyer and the lawyer will say, "Look, it is a waste of time, mate. It is going to cost you hundreds of dollars to go to court. All you are going to get—if you get it—is your $4,700." The vendor is usually a battler who does not have very much money, so he realises that the whole exercise is a waste of time. The developers offer to buy the land for sale on 90 days settlement and then they flog it off during that period. If the land is sold, settlement occurs on the very same day. The sum of $4,700 is paid to the vendor. The other person to whom the land has been sold hands over $11,990, and both titles are transferred on the same day in the Titles Office. Therefore, the first purchaser is paid with the money from the second purchaser. They do not even need to have any money—not a cracker. That has been happening on Russell Island for many years, and it is still occurring. I understand that a few of those people have been caught and are being charged and not before time. The legislation must be changed.

Let me turn to a few of the other transactions that have occurred. On 29 July 1986, Tropical Island Sales bought a block of land on Lamb Island for $9,000 and sold it on

18 August 1986—18 days later—for $21,995. That company ripped those people off to the tune of $12,995, and the system allows it to do that. It bought the land from some people at Toowong and sold it to some people from Victoria. Many of the people who are buying and selling come from overseas.

Tropical Island Sales purchased a block of land on Macleay Island for $13,000 on 19 July 1986 and sold it 11 days later for $25,995 on 30 July 1986. That company picked up an additional $12,995 and did nothing. It did not have to risk one cent in the market-place; it just ripped off the owner of the land as well as the next purchaser.

The same company purchased a block of land on 10 September 1986 for $10,500 and sold it for $41,995 on 11 October 1986. It made $31,495 profit, and did not risk one cent.

One of the other companies bought a block of land for $14,000 on 6 December 1985 and sold it on 14 December 1985 for $33,990. Queensland Acreage and Land Sales is another one of the rip-off merchants on the islands. Adrian F. and Rosemarie C. Hodson are rip-off merchants. They bought land for $7,500 and sold it three weeks later for $14,950. Another block was purchased for $10,000 and sold for $22,000. One was bought by Glen Donald Herd for $5,500 on 15 February and sold on 8 March—23 days later—for $15,900. In that case he made a profit of $10,400 and never risked a cent.

Some of the other companies that are involved are Rolcorp Pty Ltd, GDH Investments Pty Ltd, Debra Janet Pty Ltd, Kevtex Pty Ltd, Starport Pty Ltd, Queensland Acreage and Land Sales, Martin Place Investments and Peter Kurts. Peter Kurts has a public company that has a real-estate agent's licence. They should be run out of town, because he has trained more crooks than any other person I know of. Most of the crooks on those islands were trained by Peter Kurts. The organisers behind the campaign meetings for the bridge to Russell and North Stradbroke Islands are Glen Herd and Martin Place Investments.

The Minister has dealt with a couple of blocks on those islands, so he knows all about this.

Mr Clauson: I've told you about them.

Mr BURNS: The Minister has told me about them. He does not intend to hide that fact.

Something must be done about these investors and speculators. The legislation must be changed so that this sort of thing cannot continue. People should be protected from speculators such as that. The Minister is aware of the problem. I want to see the legislation amended so that those speculators do not have a chance to continue what they are doing. The Real Estate Institute has a code of conduct that should be written into the law. Speculators should be forced to register. Real estate agents and solicitors should be forced to tell clients that the sale is being made to a speculator; that it is not a real estate deal in the normal sense; that it is not a case of a private person selling to another private person. That should be disclosed to the people involved.

Some protection should be given to the buyer who comes from out of town. People from Lusaka and the southern States bought land. It is always discovered that a block that was bought for $5,000 ended up being sold for $18,000 to a person in Victoria or somewhere else where massive advertising was conducted. That does Queensland no good. It does not do Queensland any good to be the home of the rip-off merchants, the sharks and the spivs over on those islands. They are beautiful islands. I do not attack Russell Island, Macleay Island, Karragarra Island or Lamb Island; they are good islands. Many good people shifted there, wanting to get away from it all, wanting to get cheap land. The problem is that when they got over there they found a mile of sharks operating. The sharks are not in the water at Russell Island; do not worry about that. At Russell Island a person is safer in the water than he is on the land.

Mr Milliner: Are there any sharks around Sanctuary Cove any more?

Mr BURNS: I think a few sharks are around Sanctuary Cove. In fact, I see that one is going to Canada. I think that Canada's loss is Queensland's gain.

One could continue referring to some of the companies involved, but I do not want to speak about all of them. I understand that that fellow Herd is a friend of Crocker and Bellino. I wonder whether he will end up being mentioned in the inquiry. I understand that a Christmas party at Pinky's at Kangaroo Point for all of the salesmen who were in this shoddy deal was organised by the Crocker and Bellino group, and Crocker and Bellino were there with Mr Herd, along with a couple of police inspectors. At this stage I will not mention the names of the other real estate agents who were there because I am not too sure whether they are crooks. They are salesmen. In those circumstances it would be a little unfair to name them.

The real problem is that if a block of land on Russell Island is sold for, say, $5,000, the little salesman involved will receive a total commission of about $250. The commission is 5 per cent on the first $18,000 and 2½ per cent on the balance. I think they are the correct figures. On that basis, on a $5,000 sale the total commission is about $250, out of which the boss will take $125, or half. The salesman has to pick up a prospective buyer on the mainland, put him on a boat and take him over to the island, use his own car to drive him around the island, sell him the block, put him back on the boat and carry him home—all for $125. A salesman selling land around Brisbane does not have any of that trouble, because the buyer himself drives up to the block and inspects it. It can be seen that not a lot of money can be made out of selling land on those islands. Therefore, the salesman naturally looks to a quick deal. If he deals with a speculator—with Herd—who picks up a cheap block, he is better off.

The salesman wants listings of cheap blocks that cost a couple of thousand dollars. Some of the blocks sell for $1,700. The salesman knows that all he will receive in commission from the sale of a block worth $1,700 is about $30. However, if he buys a block for $1,700, convinces a speculator to sell it for $25,000 and does a deal with him, he receives far more commission. He receives commission both ways. He says to the speculator, "If I pick up these cheap blocks and you buy them off me I will get the commission and you have got to sling in." And the speculators do sling, because it is good money. Hundreds of thousands of dollars have been ripped from unsuspecting buyers and sellers on that island. I know it is virtually an impossibility, but I would like the Minister to try to get as much publicity as possible when the cases of Herd and others come before the courts. I would like to see some of those people who have been affected take some action to see if some of the money can be recovered from Herd and others, because, under Queensland's legislation at the most they will probably be fined $500. They are smart business people. They are smart, top-of-the-range business people. They know their way around. They will receive a pat on the back, a knighthood and be fined $500. They will walk away and live in the lap of luxury for the rest of their lives while the little fellow who sold his block of land to them for $4,000——

Mr Innes: And made trustees of the National Party.

Mr BURNS: I do not know about that. I am not going to be naughty today. I am trying to be very good.

Mr FitzGerald: You are not vindictive, are you?

Mr BURNS: Not today, anyway.

It might not be a bad idea for some of those islands to follow New Zealand's practice in this regard. In New Zealand real estate agents advertise the price on a sign on the block. A requirement that the price has to be advertised on a sign on the block would be far better than some of the other regulations that are introduced. That would allow people to drive around and see the price of the real estate that is available. If a person is selling his block of land he would know the prices being asked for land around it because they would appear on the signs. If a person is buying a block of land, he too

would know the prices of surrounding blocks because they would be written on the signs. Both seller and buyer are protected against being ripped off by a smarty.

In real estate, it is only natural that if a vendor has a house worth $50,000 and an agent can list it for $40,000, there is a better chance of the agent's selling it quickly and making some money. At $50,000, it might be difficult to sell. In fact, the agent may never be able to sell it at that price, or it may be sold by another agent; but if the price can be brought down to make the house a very cheap item on the market, the agent will pick up a commission. It is bad luck that the vendor has lost $10,000 on the deal; the point is that the agent has picked up some money.

If prices appeared on the signs, the scenario I have outlined would not occur. These days, everybody seems to put signs on properties that are for sale—and why not? The figures do not have to be large. The price does not have to be splashed over the sign in big figures, but there should be a place on the sign where the price appears. It would mean that if a person wanted to sell a block of land, he would be able to find out the price of the block next to his. If he was a stickybeak, he could find out anyway; but beyond that, a person would be able to find out market values in his area and he would not be ripped off. Everybody else would be able to value the block in the same way. That seems to me to be a very sensible course.

The provisions relating to registration and licensing have to be tightened up so that the Herds, the Kurtses, Dan Kennedy and those involved in Tropical Island Land Sales, Queensland Acreage Sales and Kevtex Pty Ltd—there must be a million of them—can be stopped. There are too many of them to mention individually.

Mr Clauson: I would like to clarify that it is not Dan Kennedy of Stradbroke Island you refer to but Dan Kennedy Investments.

Mr BURNS: The Minister is correct. It is not Dan Kennedy from Stradbroke Island that I referred to but Dan Kennedy Investments. Rolcorp is one of the others, together with Martin Place Investments. I have mentioned most of the companies that sell and purchase in the manner I have outlined.

The point I make is that those companies want speculation on the islands. I think the Minister would agree that communities on the island are involved in great disputes over whether they want bridges and improvements of that nature. Many of the people bought land on the islands for peace and quiet and to get away from it all, but others bought land for speculative purposes. The people I have mentioned who are involved in those companies are a nuisance to the sensible people who argue about what the island wants. The speculators are using their money and influence. All they are interested in is making a quid. When they have finished developing and making a buck, and after the Minister changes the rules, they will move somewhere else. In fact, they already have. They operate at Burpengary, Jimboomba and north of Bundaberg and they are doing the same thing in many other places—not only at Russell Island. Lots of the people I have named are involved and they are probably operating in many other country centres that I am presently unaware of.

It is important that something is done about them. People have lost hundreds of thousands of dollars through their rorts.

Hon. P. J. CLAUSON (Redlands—Minister for Justice and Attorney-General) (3.57 p.m.), in reply: I thank the honourable members for Rockhampton, Sherwood and Lytton for their contributions to this debate. It is indeed an important piece of legislation which hopefully will move to head off some of the injustices that are being wrought by some of these less-scrupulous people.

In his speech, the member for Lytton made some very pertinent points, and I agree with many of them. I happen to know about the difficulties that exist on the islands. One of the major problems, as I understand the situation, is that people who have been

charged have in fact been selling to secret companies that they owned, and were on-selling land at a much higher price. One of the major difficulties is that these people have been receiving secret commissions in that manner.

The legislation will go some of the way towards trying to alleviate the rip-off by speculative land agents that has been occurring. The legislation will allow the general public a degree of protection from this type of activity in the future.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Motion agreed to.

Committee

Clauses 1 to 10, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

Third Reading

Bill, on motion of Mr Clauson, by leave, read a third time.

HEALTH ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. L. T. HARVEY (Greenslopes—Minister for Health) (4.01 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

"That leave be granted to bring in a Bill to amend the Health Act 1937-1987 in certain particulars."

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

Bill presented and, on motion of Mrs Harvey, read a first time.

Second Reading

Hon. L. T. HARVEY (Greenslopes—Minister for Health) (4.02 p.m.): I move—

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

The Health Act has been reviewed to simplify its construction and to ensure that it provides for prompt action in response to contemporary health needs. The new Act reflects modern concepts of disease control and has a more compact structure.

The present law refers to notifiable diseases, infectious diseases, communicable diseases and venereal diseases. The proposed Act has only two categories, notifiable diseases and controlled notifiable diseases. The latter will include those diseases which are sexually transmitted and may cause serious illness or death. These provisions retain the offence of knowingly infecting another with certain diseases and provide for any court action to be in camera. The existing secrecy provisions are also retained. Both notifiable diseases and controlled notifiable diseases will be specified by notification in the gazette rather than by listing in the Act, thereby facilitating change at short notice.

Under present provisions, medical practitioners are obliged to notify the Director-General, and in some instances the local authority, of cases of notifiable disease. It is clear that many cases are not formally reported and this Bill sets out the obligation of medical practitioners, including those in pathology laboratories, to report cases of notifiable disease. The amendments clarify the obligation of laboratories to report notifiable diseases. Precise data are required by the Health Department to devise and implement programs designed to prevent or control the incidence of particular diseases in the community. The amendment will allow medical practitioners and laboratories to report cases by means of an identification code. Where circumstances require further information in relation to a particular case, the Director-General will be empowered to obtain from the notifier or other medical practitioner further information for the purposes of preventing or suppressing the disease.

The present Act places major responsibilities on local authorities to provide in-patient care for persons suffering from certain diseases. This provision is archaic. With the inception of centralised medical services, it is appropriate for in-patient care to be provided by public hospitals. The amendments will recognise this and will make it the responsibility of public hospitals to provide the facilities for treating notifiable diseases. The Director-General will have the power to require a hospitals board or the governing body of a hospital to provide the necessary service to limit the spread of a disease. The role of local authorities in suppressing the spread of notifiable disease will be preserved.

The present Act prohibits the sale or supply, by vending machines, of drugs, poisons and contraceptives. It is proposed instead that the Director-General be empowered to prohibit, by notice in the *Government Gazette*, the sale or supply, by vending machine, of any of these items specified in the notice at any specified class of establishment. Local authorities already possess the power to make by-laws, under the Local Government Act, to license vending machines, although the power has not been exercised.

The existing Act permits the Director-General to adopt by reference any standards, rules, codes or specifications of the British Standards Institution, the National Health and Medical Research Council or the International Organisation for Standardisation. There are now many organisations developing codes of practice, standards, rules and specifications and it is proposed to give the power to adopt by reference the publications of any of these organisations.

The present provisions of Division IV dealing with smallpox, a disease which has now been eradicated worldwide, are no longer required and are being repealed. In view of the comprehensive nature of the amendments to Division III, which are adequate to provide for hookworm, tuberculosis and venereal diseases, Divisions I, V, VII and VIII can also be repealed.

The amended Act will be clearer and more concise, incorporating modern concepts, and be more responsive to contemporary requirements.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Comben, adjourned.

The House adjourned at 4.07 p.m.