

WEDNESDAY, 15 SEPTEMBER 1993

Mr SPEAKER (Hon. J. Fouras, Ashgrove) read prayers and took the chair at 2.30 p.m.

PRIVILEGE**Threatening Telephone Call**

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I refer to the matter of privilege raised yesterday by the member for Broadwater. I am of the view that this is a matter which should first be investigated by the proper policing authorities. If the person concerned can be identified, then the member could move that the matter be referred to the Privileges Committee for its consideration.

PETITIONS

The Clerk announced the receipt of the following petitions—

Ambulance Service

From **Mrs McCauley** (36 signatories) praying that the Parliament of Queensland will object to the proposed tax for the Ambulance Service.

Railway Services

From **Mrs McCauley** (234 signatories) praying that the Parliament of Queensland will enact legislation which secures the services provided by 29 railway branch lines which are to be closed.

Railway Services, Lockyer Electorate

From **Mr FitzGerald** (176 signatories) praying that an improved railmotor shuttle service be provided to service Gatton, Helidon and Laidley and that buses not be considered as an alternative when the electrification of the railway to Rosewood is completed and that the service from Helidon to Toowoomba via Murphy's Creek be continued weekly.

Native Animals and Plants

From **Mr Slack** (40 signatories) praying that the Parliament of Queensland will actively maintain legal sanctuary and permanent preservation for all native animals and plants in Queensland national parks and revoke all sections of Acts which appear to allow hunting or gathering of native wildlife.

Sunshine Motorway

From **Mr Laming** (525 signatories) praying for the development of a 24-hour service station to replace the existing Mooloolaba toll booth on the Sunshine Motorway.

Sale of North Queensland Land

From **Mr FitzGerald** (73 signatories) praying that the Parliament of Queensland will ensure that the proposed sale by George Quaid of a large area of North Queensland to overseas interests be not proceeded with.

Railway Services, Lockyer Electorate

From **Mr FitzGerald** (1 288 signatories) praying that an improved railmotor shuttle service be provided to service Gatton, Helidon and Laidley and that buses not be considered as an alternative when the electrification of the railway to Rosewood is completed.

Noosa National Park

From **Ms Robson** (2 538 signatories) praying that the Parliament of Queensland will reject any development proposal, private, commercial or otherwise in the Noosa National Park.

High School, Murrumba Downs

From **Mr Hayward** (2 435 signatories) praying that the Parliament of Queensland will take urgent action to establish a high school at Murrumba Downs.

Bridges, Caboolture Area

From **Mr Hayward** (4 112 signatories) praying for urgent action to upgrade and widen both the Caboolture River and Sheep Station Creek Bridges.

Petitions received.

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

In accordance with the schedule circulated by the Clerk to members in the Chamber, the following document was tabled—

Local Government Act—

Reference, dated 2 September 1993, of a reviewable local government matter to the Local Government Commissioner by the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Planning. The reference relates to the Shire of Croydon.

PAPER

The following paper was laid on the table—

Minister for Tourism, Sport and Racing (Mr Gibbs)—

Review of the Racing and Betting Act 1980—Discussion Paper.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Ministerial Offices Expenditure

Hon. K. E. De LACY (Cairns— Treasurer) (2.35 p.m.), by leave: As has been the case from our first term in office, this Government continues to place accountability high on the agenda. In accordance with the guidelines for the financial management of the offices of Ministers, I table a summary of ministerial expenditure of the previous financial year. In doing so, I draw the attention of members to the relevant section of Budget Paper No. 3, which provides further aggregate expenditure information on offices of Ministers.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Alcohol-related Problems, Doomadgee

Hon. R. J. GIBBS (Bundamba— Minister for Tourism, Sport and Racing) (2.36 p.m.), by leave: Members will be aware of ongoing alcohol-related problems at the Doomadgee community in the Gulf Country and the deleterious effect they are having on that community. Last March, these deep-seated and long-standing problems came to a head again with a series of disturbances involving fighting among different groups of people, at times numbering 400, by police estimates. Let me stress that alcohol abuse in this community is certainly not the province of the Doomadgee area or the wider Aboriginal community. The issue of alcohol abuse among Aboriginal people is one of the tragic consequences of European settlement of this country.

In the case of Doomadgee, the community has embarked on a course of self-determination of its laws and attitudes relating to alcohol, and it does so with the full support of this Government. At the time of the March disturbances, much of the blame was attributed by local police and residents to port known as "monkey blood". No-one is saying the port, which is purchased in Burketown some 93 kilometres away, is solely to blame. Rather, it was considered to exacerbate existing tensions. Indeed, Liquor Licensing Division inspectors are satisfied the Rosetta

port is a legitimate fortified wine, bottled under appropriate conditions.

In response to the problems, the Government established a working party comprising officers from my department, Queensland Health, the Police Service, the Department of Aboriginal and Islander Affairs and the Community Justice Program. The outcome initially will be the enactment of a by-law by the Doomadgee Council prohibiting the consumption and possession of alcohol, other than beer, on the area covered by Doomadgee's deed of grant in trust.

The community will trial the by-law for three months and its effectiveness will be reviewed. At the same time, educative programs on alcohol and related issues will be considered. The Attorney-General has encouraged Doomadgee residents to use the resources of the Community Justice Program. But the issues are much wider than this. It would be naive to expect that problems dating back decades will be solved in three months. Rather, the people of Doomadgee are being encouraged to take whatever steps they deem appropriate to limit the trauma inflicted on their community by alcohol abuse. It is a problem which impacts as much on the elderly and the young as it does on the drinkers.

In conclusion—the Government will await the outcome of the trial period and will continue to support the people of Doomadgee in their endeavours with all of the resources at our disposal.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Safety Improvements, Parliament House

Hon. M. J. FOLEY (Yeronga—Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations) (2.38 p.m.), by leave: Workplace health and safety entails a duty of care not only for those who are employed in the workplace—be it a shop, factory or business office—but also for others who visit the workplace, such as customers or members of workers' families. As a parent of two small children at a particularly mobile and adventurous age, recently I became concerned at the potential risks on the fifth floor balcony of this Parliament House surrounding the Speaker's green. Members may have observed a large gap between the floor and the railing along the fifth floor walkway of Parliament House. A young child could easily fall through that gap.

I raised my concerns with Mr Speaker and with officers in the Division of Workplace Health and Safety within my department. I

was disturbed to learn that the balustrade does not conform with the current requirements of the Building Code of Australia 1990. Officers representing the Speaker, Q-Build and the Division of Workplace Health and Safety have since met to consider the matter.

I am pleased to be able to advise the House that an order has been placed with Q-Build by the Speaker's office to install barriers similar to those already provided elsewhere on the fifth floor of the building. These are currently being manufactured, and the Parliament House Services Manager, Mr John McDonough, informs me that they should be installed after our current sitting and before we reconvene next month.

Mr Speaker, please allow me to express my appreciation of your positive action in addressing this safety issue.

PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE FOR CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Transcripts

Mr DAVIES (Mundingburra) (2.40 p.m.): I seek leave to lay upon the table of the House two transcripts provided to the Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee by the Criminal Justice Commission in relation to a report written by Mr Stephen Lambie and published in the *Sunday Mail* of 29 August 1993 under the headline "Secret gag on cops". The *Sunday Mail* article alleged that a secret deal was done by the Queensland Police Union and the Criminal Justice Commission to buy the silence of two controversial detectives.

The committee is charged with the responsibility of monitoring and reviewing the functions of the Criminal Justice Commission. Whilst no specific complaint was made against the Criminal Justice Commission, the *Sunday Mail* report implied some wrongdoing. Accordingly, after reading the *Sunday Mail* report, I immediately instructed the committee's research director to write on my behalf in relation to the allegations seeking a complete and detailed report from the commission outlining the facts, matters and circumstances surrounding the alleged deal. The letter was forwarded to the CJC Chairman, Mr R. S. O'Regan, QC, on 30 August 1993.

The central questions that the committee asked the CJC to address were whether, firstly, an extraordinary deal was hammered out by the Police Union with the Criminal Justice Commission to grant two former detectives early retirement from the Police

Service in return for their silence, and, secondly, on 2 June 1993 were Messrs Harris and Reynolds offered a CJC clearance for early retirement if Harris were to withdraw his court action against the CJC?

On 30 August 1993, the Chairman of the Criminal Justice Commission, Mr R. S. O'Regan, QC, responded in the following terms—

"I am unable to furnish you with a complete and detailed report from the Commission outlining the facts, matters and circumstances surrounding the alleged 'deal' referred to in the *Sunday Mail* article because no 'deal' was done. An approach by the President and Secretary of the Police Union was made to me seeking settlement of the Supreme Court action with each party bearing his or its own costs and this was rejected. In the event, as the Court record shows, the applicant withdrew his application unconditionally and was ordered to pay the Commission's costs. Furthermore, there is no substance in the suggestion in the article that Harris and Reynolds were offered a CJC clearance for early retirement if Harris withdraws his court action against the CJC.

In short, the *Sunday Mail* report is incorrect and mischievous."

At its meeting on Tuesday, 31 August 1993, the committee resolved that it was in the public interest to place the matter on the agenda for the joint meeting of the PCJC and the CJC on Friday, 10 September 1993. At the meeting of 10 September 1993, the commission provided the committee with a complete transcript of the meeting held at the offices of the Queensland Police Union of Employees on 2 June 1993. The commission further provided a copy of a transcript of the article produced in the *Sunday Mail* of 29 August 1993.

On each of the transcripts, those sections of the transcript which do not appear in the *Sunday Mail* article have been marked. Honourable members will see that that makes up the majority of the transcript, which is some 26 pages long. The newspaper article is condensed to about a page and a half of newsprint. The transcript published in the *Sunday Mail* is incomplete and contrived. The published transcript has been heavily edited in order to give it a certain flavour and to suggest, contrary to fact, that some deal had been worked out involving the CJC pertaining to Messrs Harris and Reynolds.

QUESTIONS UPON NOTICE

1. Australian Labor Party, Invoice

Mr LINGARD asked the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General and Minister for the Arts—

“With reference to an invoice for \$25,000 dated 3 January 1990 and made out to the Australian Labor Party, 16 Peel Street, South Brisbane which was hand delivered to Wayne Swan and was over the name of J Duran who was a consultant with Yates Professional Investigations and Security Pty Ltd and which stated, ‘Re Archives’—

What archives work was carried out in respect of this invoice to the ALP?”

Mr WELLS: The State Archives is not the responsibility of my portfolio. The John Oxley Library, which holds the archives of many organisations, is part of the State Library of Queensland and is administered by me as Minister for the Arts. The Deputy State Librarian advises that there are no records of any dealings with the individual or firm referred to in the member’s question.

2. Stolen Files, State Archives

Mr LINGARD asked the Minister for Police and Emergency Services—

“With reference to a break-in at the State Archives in December 1989 and newspaper reports which indicated three files were stolen, two concerning Thiess Watkins and one a personal file of a State Government employee—

To which State Government employee did that file refer and has the file ever been recovered?”

Mr BRADDY: A breaking and entering occurred at the State Archives building at Acacia Ridge some time between 10 a.m. on 15 December 1989 and 8.45 a.m. on 18 December 1989. A check of the building revealed that three boxes of personnel files had been removed from the filing cabinet shelves and were located on the floor, and also that one box of Expo records was also taken from its shelf and was found in an aisle different from the aisle where it was usually kept.

A few weeks prior to that breaking and entering occurring, a set of four keys had gone missing from the possession of the administrative assistant, Mr Willett. According

to the police, the building was probably broken and entered by use of one of the keys. Certainly, no other method was found.

A check of the personnel records showed that one file was missing. It belonged to Cecil Lorraine Francis Ferguson, who had been employed as a welfare officer at Her Majesty’s Prison, Townsville, between 28 January 1975 and 7 December 1979. I understand that Mr Ferguson is still alive and residing in Townsville. He was born in 1914.

In relation to the files that were shifted—two books relating to progress payments to Thiess Watkins in relation to World Expo 88 were missing. Those books—

Mrs Sheldon: Were they on your hit list?

Mr BRADDY: At that stage, we could have gone into the archives building at any time. Did the honourable member notice the dates? The Labor Party was in Government then. Those books related to the period 31 August 1987 to 27 November 1987—those are the Thiess Watkins documents that the honourable member’s former Government might have had some interest in hiding—and 13 May 1988 to 30 May 1988.

There is no evidence in relation to those matters. Those documents were missing from the relevant files that were found on the floor in a disturbed condition. Whoever carried out that process was obviously very tidy and very grateful, because the person involved left three of the four keys on a mat outside the archives building when he or she left, only taking one key with him or her.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Medusa Case

Mr BORBIDGE: In directing a question to the Attorney-General, I refer to allegations concerning a protection racket in official circles in Queensland on behalf of former Police Superintendent John Huey, and I refer also to the allegations referred to by the Chairman of the Parliamentary Criminal Justice Commission, which are contained in the published transcript of a bugged meeting involving former officers Harris and Reynolds, legal representatives and officials from the Queensland Police Union, and I ask: given the gravity of those allegations and the central importance—the great importance—of Mr Huey to the reform process in Queensland, will the Attorney-General now order an independent inquiry into all facets of the Medusa case? If not, why not?

Mr WELLS: I do not order inquiries to take place. It is not any part of the role of the Attorney-General to order inquiries to take place. I noticed that the honourable the Deputy Leader of the Coalition was saying yesterday that she wanted a Joh jury style inquiry into something or other, and now the honourable the Leader of the Opposition wants an inquiry into the matter to which he has just referred. Of course, it is interesting to note that the Joh jury style inquiry was an inquiry conducted by the Criminal Justice Commission. That brings us to this very clear and obvious fact: the Criminal Justice Commission was set up to investigate the type of allegation which the honourable member for Surfers Paradise is making. He stands up in this House—as do his colleagues—and mouths off all sorts of absurd propositions, all sorts of defamatory statements, all sorts of superficialities and all sorts of nonsense and then says, “Conduct an investigation.” The fact is that the Fitzgerald process established a body the very purpose of which was to investigate the types of allegations that the honourable member opposite is seeking to make.

If the Leader of the Opposition wants such an investigation to be conducted and if he has information which would lead the law enforcement authorities along a track that was not a complete wild goose chase, he has an obligation and a duty to put that information before the appropriate law enforcement authorities. The Leader of the Opposition should not use this place as some sort of theatre in which he can advance his own forensic pretensions. He ought to do what is his duty as a citizen and as a representative of citizens—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr Beanland interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I have just called the House to order. I warn the member for Indooroopilly under Standing Order 123A.

Mr WELLS:—and refer any such allegations to the appropriate authorities. Honourable members might care to reflect that, if one can understand how it is that a once great political party can elect as its leader somebody such as the honourable member for Surfers Paradise, one can also understand how it is that the ancient Egyptians used to worship an insect.

Former Police Superintendent Huey

Mr BORBIDGE: To assist the Attorney-General to resolve this matter forthwith, I ask: given that the Criminal Justice Commission now has no objections—I repeat “no objections”—to the release of the report by the Director of Prosecutions concerning former police Superintendent John Huey, will the Attorney-General now release that report and, if not, why not?

Mr WELLS: There is no such thing as the report to which the honourable member refers. I take it, however, that what he means to refer to is the opinion of the Director of Prosecutions on the question of whether a prosecution ought to have been brought. The honourable member will recall that, some time ago, the two police officers to whom he referred commenced a prosecution. The Director of Prosecutions, acting on the independent discretion provided to him by the Director of Prosecutions Act, took over the prosecution. He notified Huey’s legal representatives that he would discontinue those proceedings but would then thoroughly examine the matter and, if it was considered that the proceedings should be commenced afresh, they would be commenced in the appropriate way.

Mr BORBIDGE: I rise to a point of order. I ask that the document from which the Attorney-General is reading be tabled. I move that what he is referring to be tabled.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! It depends on whether the Attorney-General is reading from his own notes or from a document. If it is a document, I will put the motion.

Mr WELLS: I am in fact reading from notes.

Mr BORBIDGE: Mr Speaker, I move—

“That the documents being referred to by the Attorney-General be tabled.”

If the Government wants to cover this up, it can vote against my motion. I move accordingly.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Attorney has told me that he is reading from notes. There is no document. The motion is out of order. I will not put the motion.

Mr WELLS: I am happy to table and I will table, but I would like to complete—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Attorney-General will conclude his answer now.

Mr WELLS: Mr Speaker, I have only just begun. This is not a question that can be answered shortly.

Mr SPEAKER: I appreciate that.

Mr WELLS: The honourable member for Surfers Paradise wants the revelation of an opinion by the Director of Prosecutions on the question of whether a prosecution ought to be brought. An opinion as to whether a prosecution ought to be brought against—

Mr Littleproud interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I warn the member for Western Downs.

Mr WELLS:—a person, against a citizen, is a unique document. It is a document which gathers into a very small compass a great deal of information—

Mr Borbidge interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I am on my feet! The Leader of the Opposition is constantly interjecting. I now warn him under Standing Order 123A.

Mr WELLS:—to the detriment of an individual without a court case preceding it which enables that individual to put the contrary viewpoint. If that were to be released or if any opinion of any prosecutor were to be released, a great deal of that sort of information would be released with great unfairness to individuals.

A prosecutor's opinion as to whether a prosecution ought to be brought might look like the document I have in my hand. There exist opinions as to whether a prosecution ought to be brought against a vast number of people. For example, the Special Prosecutor, as we all know—

Mr BORBIDGE: I rise to a point of order. My earlier point of order was that the documents being referred to by the Attorney-General be tabled. He said that he was reading from notes. He has just held up a file.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. The Leader of the Opposition will resume his seat. I have made a ruling on that matter. The Attorney will continue his answer.

Mr WELLS: Each and every member of the then Opposition front bench was investigated by the Special Prosecutor. It might very well be that there is an opinion—

Mrs SHELDON: I rise to a point of order. Mr Speaker, would you mind asking the Attorney to withdraw that comment? I was certainly never investigated by anybody.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Deputy Leader of the Coalition asks for a withdrawal.

Mr WELLS: I withdraw any implication that the Deputy Leader of the Coalition was involved. I said—

Mr BORBIDGE: I rise on a similar point of order. Unlike the Attorney-General, I have a letter of clearance from the Director of Prosecutions. I find his remarks offensive, and I ask that they be withdrawn.

Mr WELLS: I withdraw anything that the honourable member finds offensive, but I point out that in 1989 each and every member of the National Party front bench was investigated by the Special Prosecutor. In each case, one might very well expect that there exists a Special Prosecutor's file, which might look like the one I have in my hand. There might very well be such a file on the honourable member for Surfers Paradise. There might be such a file on the honourable member for Crows Nest. There might be such a file on the honourable member for Beaudesert. There might be such a file on a number of the members opposite, and it might look incredibly similar to the one I have in my hand. If I were to release the opinion that the honourable member has asked for, why would I not release all of the rest? Why would I not release all of the opinions? The principle of equal justice says that if one is to release a prosecutor's opinion with respect to one person, one will release it with respect to all.

Honourable members opposite can rest secure in the knowledge that I will not release a Director of Prosecutions' opinion, because to do so would violate the principle of equal justice. If this House did not uphold the principle of equal justice, it would not be serving its functions as a Parliament.

Private Sector Business Investment

Mr PITT: In directing a question to the Treasurer, I refer him to a report in this morning's *Australian Financial Review* on Queensland's economic performance, and I ask: does the Treasurer agree that private sector business investment in Queensland is disappointing? What is the Government doing to address this problem?

Mr De LACY: I note that members of the Opposition have made reference to it already. They cast around every morning looking for something negative about Queensland. When they find it, they use it as an opportunity to knock Queensland. This particular article in the *Australian Financial Review* is headed "Why Queensland is not a boom economy". I can understand why members of the Opposition would salivate at the prospect of reading such an article. It is true that all they do these days is knock and whinge and knock and whinge. If they took the trouble to read the article,

members opposite would find that it would probably put everything into context. In fact, in general, I would give it eight out of 10. I might say that I would not give the headline eight out of 10, because it does not reflect the article. The second sentence states—

“An analysis of the Queensland economy shows that while the State’s growth rate is still well above the national average, it is being driven by government spending and a rapidly increasing population.”

How true!

Recently, the Opposition has been saying that all of our spending on capital works is not achieving anything. Yet economists around Australia are saying that our economy is being driven by Government spending and by population growth. I have never said that we have a boom economy in Queensland. How would anyone expect us to have a boom economy when the rest of the world is in recession, when Australia is still struggling to come out of the current recession, and when Queensland is facing probably the worst drought on record? Of course we do not have a boom economy. However, one thing of which I am proud, and of which all Queenslanders ought to be proud, is the way in which we performed during these very difficult times. It does not matter how members opposite measure the statistics; Queensland’s performance is significantly better than that of every other State in Australia.

Recently, quite a deal has been said about business investment. People say that business investment in this State is down. It is down and it is not as high as it ought to be. Some people have picked on the fact that we have said that our business investment is forecast to be quite strong, but that it is being bolstered artificially by the prospective sale of the Gladstone Power Station. That is true. However, I caution honourable members about comparing Queensland’s business investment performance with that of the other States when they have one-off factors which are substantially bolstering their business investment—things such as the sale of Loy Yang in Victoria. Victoria’s business investment has increased because it has sold Loy Yang. Western Australia’s business investment has increased because it has a new LNG offshore platform. If Opposition members are going to separate it out from one State, they should separate it out from everywhere else.

Members opposite are all saying, “Let’s go back to the halcyon days when the National Party was in power.” Let me cite some figures. In June 1989, Queensland’s share of business investment, which includes plant and equipment—the things that people have been talking about—was 13.9 per cent. In June 1993, it is 15.9 per cent. It has increased by two full percentage points in a relative sense since there has been a Labor Government in Queensland.

If honourable members want to talk about private fixed capital investment—that includes business investment as well as dwelling investment—in June 1989 Queensland’s share of national private fixed capital investment was 15.9 per cent. In June 1993, it is 18.3 per cent. If there is anything that Opposition members can get from this story and a million others, it is that Queensland is improving under a Labor Government relative to the other States of Australia.

Perlite Deposit, Chillagoe

Mr PITT: In directing a question to the Minister for Minerals and Energy, I refer to recent newspaper comments attributed to the member for Tablelands, and I ask: is there a perlite mine under consideration near Chillagoe? Is it true that it will have an annual production of 300 000 tonnes?

Mr McGRADY: I thank the honourable member for the question, which certainly shows that he is interested in that area. I suppose that he has asked the question as a result of certain newspaper articles and also a speech which was delivered in this Parliament last night by the shadow Minister for Minerals and Energy in which he claimed that this resource consisted of some 300 000 tonnes of perlite. Can I just say that it is not 300 000 tonnes of perlite per year; it is 3 000 tonnes of perlite. In one article, the honourable member referred to it as being granite. Not only has he got the figures wrong; he has also got the product wrong.

The honourable member for Tablelands has also been quoted as saying that this was potentially a \$40 billion development in this State. Although I would personally love to see such a development take place in Queensland, I must point out to the Parliament that these figures are absolute nonsense and they cannot be sustained. Mr Gilmore might be referring in this instance to a mine outside Chillagoe in regard to which two leases have been sought. In the transcript from the Wardens Court, reference is made to

some 3 000 tonnes a year. We are talking about a difference of 100 times the actual amount. As well, the honourable member referred to revenue of \$40 billion. Last year, this product was selling on the world market for \$30 a tonne; this year, it is \$32 a tonne. The total amount of revenue would be about \$100,000 a year, and Mr Gilmore is referring to a \$40 billion project.

A resource of perlite has certainly been identified, but there are no indications as to the quantity of reserves. I will refer to the transcript from the Wardens Court. The warden asked, "So that you were merely sampling from the outcrop—surface sampling?" The reply was, "No, Your Worship, not at this stage. There has been no drilling of any kind done." Again, we do not even know what quantity is there.

I am reminded of an occasion just before the last Budget when the shadow Minister was running around the State claiming that the Government was going to take \$300m out of the QEC. Of course, he had egg on his face because the figure was nothing like that at all. I suggest that members opposite try to get their facts right.

Mr Casey: Do you think he might have been making samples out of some of that \$50m worth of—

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr McGRADY: What the Minister may have said could be correct. All I am suggesting to members opposite is that on this occasion, again, they are completely incorrect. They are not running the risk of losing their credibility in this place; they have lost it.

Government Insurance Policies

Mrs SHELDON: I direct a question to the Treasurer. In a letter from the Under Treasurer to the Police Commissioner, which I now table, the Under Treasurer stated that the State Government is scrapping virtually all insurance policies on Government essentials to avoid paying premiums. The letter stated—

"In the long run savings can also be expected in the aviation and marine area, although there is always the risk of a very large loss or claim in a single year."

I ask: will the Treasurer now outline how he can assure the people of Queensland that they will not be left paying multimillion-dollar bills out of consolidated revenue for claims against the Government because of this short-sighted action?

Mr De LACY: This question is from left field. The answer is simple. It is called self-insurance. When we are running a \$10 billion Budget, I cannot see why we should be paying insurance companies a premium and a profit to carry out the insurance. We are insuring ourselves. There is no potential loss that can happen that we cannot cover ourselves. It is simply a cost-effective way of carrying our own insurance and ensuring—

Mr FitzGerald: Big companies spread the risk—lay off.

Mr De LACY: My point is that when we have a \$10 billion Budget, we can carry the risk ourselves. It is called risk management.

Mr FitzGerald: You're laying off. Even big insurance companies do, you know that. They spread the risk.

A Government member: Stick to onions.

Mr De LACY: Yes, the honourable member should stick to his onions. I am saying that we have come to the considered conclusion that it is more cost effective to carry our own insurance.

Queensland Economy

Mr LIVINGSTONE: I ask the Premier: can he inform the House whether the Government's policy of maintaining Queensland's competitive advantage is producing any results? Can he report to the House whether or not there is support for this policy from the private sector?

Mr W. K. GOSS: Yes, as a matter of fact I can. In the past day or so, I heard Mr Lindsay Fox speaking on the radio about economic matters and the Queensland economy. If I understand him correctly, Mr Lindsay Fox is better known as being associated with a party other than the Labor Party.

Mr Connor: Yes, the Federal Labor Party.

Mr W. K. GOSS: Often times there is a difference—certainly when it comes to Budgets. Mr Fox is a leading businessman. I am sure that the Deputy Leader of the Coalition, Mrs Sheldon, would join with me in endorsing as credible the opinions of Mr Fox.

Mrs Sheldon: Mr Fox is certainly a very able person.

Mr W. K. GOSS: Mrs Sheldon and I agree. Mr Fox said—

"Take as an example the fuel taxes in both Victoria and in New South Wales compared to Queensland. There are no fuel taxes in Queensland and Victorians

and New South Wales people are currently paying 12.5% more for their fuel. Have a look at where the mass migration of Australian people are going today. They are going across the Queensland border in their droves, primarily because there's a lot of activity, it's a State that isn't burdened down with debt like we are here in Victoria and taxes are a thing that will work against a community."

Of course, taxes increased under the former Liberal/National Party Government. So I thank Mrs Sheldon, the Deputy Leader of the Coalition, for her endorsement of Mr Fox's views.

Mrs SHELDON: I rise to a point of order. I said that Mr Fox was an able person. I did not endorse his views. I ask the Premier to withdraw what he said.

Mr W. K. GOSS: I withdraw absolutely, and I will be happy to write personally to Lindsay Fox and tell him that it is wrong for anyone to suggest that Mrs Sheldon endorses his views on taxes and economic policy.

Mrs SHELDON: What a pathetic man you really are!

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mrs SHELDON: Mr Speaker—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Is the member rising on a point of order?

Mrs SHELDON: Yes.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Is the member rising to make a speech, or is she rising on a point of order?

Mrs SHELDON: Both, if you will allow me.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! No. What is the member's point of order?

Mrs SHELDON: I would like the Premier to unequivocally withdraw the comment that I asked him to withdraw.

Mr Mackenroth: He did.

Mrs SHELDON: No, he did not.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr W. K. GOSS: Let me do it again. I unequivocally withdraw the comment I made that Mrs Sheldon endorses the views of Mr Lindsay Fox when it comes to taxes or economic policy, and I am happy to communicate that to Mr Fox.

Mrs Sheldon: Make my day.

Mr W. K. GOSS: The member says, "Make my day." I welcome the new macho approach from the Liberal Party. It is wonderful to see that its members have come out from their cupboards and under their

beds. From speaking to members of the National Party in this place who share Mr Everingham's views about members of the Liberal Party being wimps, I know that they also will welcome this new macho approach from the Liberal Party. There is a new force on the other side of the Chamber.

To return to the subject—in addition to Mr Fox's views, which are not accepted by the Leader of the Liberal Party, in the *Australian* newspaper today is a report that commences thus—

"Queensland will again lead the other States in its overall performance and economic growth . . ."

It goes on to say that this survey was "based on the views of 32 private and public sector economists". It also makes a number of other comments about the benefit to Queensland from the Olympics, the problems associated with Mabo, and so on.

Last month, a report in the *Courier-Mail* from Melbourne's Monash University stated—

"Queensland is the star economic performer of the Australian states, according to new research.

Prospects for industry and employment growth make the state a 'high flier'."

It goes on, but I will not read it all out because I know that Opposition members just hate to hear positive things being said about Queensland and the Queensland economy.

I also refer to an article in *Business Queensland* that quoted a Queensland Confederation of Industry survey. It talked about "the attractiveness of Queensland's buoyant economy to businesses in other states".

A document distributed by Wilson HTM, leading Queensland and national brokers, said—

"Queensland listed industrial companies have continued to outperform those based in other states during the recession."

It goes on to say—

"There are four main reasons for Queensland companies stock price outperformance.

Business conditions in Queensland are superior to other states.

. . .

Queensland's economic growth has underpinned strong company growth.

...
There is an institutional buying trend toward smaller companies"—

that we find in Queensland, and there is our population growth. Those are glowing figures, and it is a glowing report from a range of independent commentators. Even if the Leader of the Liberal Party does not agree, and if members of the Liberal Party find it hard to take, they should go back under their beds and into their cupboards, because no-one will miss them.

Queensland Economy

Mr LIVINGSTONE: In directing a question to the Treasurer, I refer to today's report by Price Waterhouse on the performance of the State economies, and I ask: can he inform the House what this report says about the Queensland economy?

Mr De LACY: I thank the honourable member for the question.

Mr FitzGerald: Damage control.

Mr De LACY: I guess that we need to get into damage control, because we have been trying to paint the true picture of the Queensland economy but day after day the Liberals take us off the front page. We are at our wits' end. We do not know how to get the message across, because they have a new trick every day. I am told that Denver has been in front of the television cameras today. He will probably have the front page tomorrow morning and the TV tonight.

Nevertheless, back to the mundane business of the Queensland economy—reference was made this morning to the Price Waterhouse study in conjunction with the University of New South Wales. This is about the fourth or fifth time that this study has been carried out. It is a survey of 32 private and public sector economists throughout Australia—the most reputable economists in Australia. It is a survey of the business and economic performance prospects of the States of Australia. The results of this survey put into stark contrast the assessment that has been made by members opposite. In fact, I think that one would have to say that their interpretation, or their analysis of what is going on in Queensland, is substantially different from that arrived at by these 32 economists.

Mr Connor interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Nerang!

Mr De LACY: There were a number of issues surveyed, but on the overall economic prospects—the prospects for the next five years—Queensland scored a perfect 100. The way in which a State scores a perfect 100 is if every one of those economists agrees that that particular State is the best. That is why Queensland scored the perfect 100—some people call it the Bo Derek index.

In summary, Queensland has again been judged to be the best all-round performer, and the best-managed State. I rest my case.

Starcke Pastoral Holdings

Mr SLACK: In directing my first question to the Minister for Lands, I refer him to the proposal by the Government to appoint a QC to review the arrangements arrived at between Mr Quaid and the previous Government over the Starcke land-holding. I understand that he was supplied with legal advice on this matter, and he would be aware of the Cabinet submission and legal opinions obtained by the previous Government, which I table, and I ask: did advice obtained by him in his investigations of this matter suggest any impropriety or illegality on the part of the previous Government? Does he believe a further review is necessary in respect of the advice available to him?

Mr SMITH: It is true that in reviewing the record of the Starcke matters, on the legal advice that came to me, there was nothing that would have indicated any improper action by Mr Quaid. Nevertheless, a number of people have made allegations, including one that more information is actually available.

Mr W. K. Goss: Including a former Liberal Leader.

Mr SMITH: Including a formal Liberal leader. Because of that view—and that view is widespread—it is incumbent upon the Government, before spending public money to regain land which in all probability ought not to have been transferred in the first place, to obtain a second and independent legal opinion.

Mr Johnson: Is Angus going to head the inquiry?

Mr SMITH: I might say that this is not an unusual action. Frequently, advice by the Government's own officers is checked against the advice of an external source and, in this respect, the proposed action is not in any way unusual.

Starcke Pastoral Holdings

Mr SLACK: In directing my second question to the Premier, I refer him to his intention to appoint a QC to review the Starcke land arrangements despite him having stated already on the *Henshaw* program on 7 September 1993—

“There is no evidence of illegality or impropriety on the part of Mr Quaid or the previous government.”

I ask the Premier: what will be the terms of reference of this review? Who is the QC he has in mind? How much is to be spent on the exercise, and will he table the complete opinion in the House when it becomes available?

Mr W. K. GOSS: The report that has been sought has been sought for Cabinet, which will make a decision as to whether it goes any further, and whether it is released. Whether or not that concludes the matter or whether that forms the basis of a recommendation to Government that there be a more wide-ranging inquiry in the nature of a commission of inquiry is yet to be decided.

The problem that we face is that a range of people have expressed concern, including the former Liberal Leader. Earlier, somebody from across the Chamber challenged me as to whether we would have him on the inquiry. If he wants to agree on that, that is fine.

Mr Stoneman: You'd have him, all right.

Mr W. K. GOSS: The Nationals are always critical of the Liberals, are they not? The concerns were raised by former members of this Parliament. A former member of this Parliament did raise that matter many years ago at some length and in some detail and had his allegations rebuffed and ignored by the National Party Government which includes, of course, people who sit across the Chamber now.

However, concerns have been raised by other people, such as members of the Wilderness Society. I think that the average member of the public would have a question mark in his or her mind as to the propriety of policy and the propriety of the actions of the Nationals when they were in Government in 1989 under these circumstances: in July 1989, the Nationals took the special step of calling in the previous tenures and issuing a special tenure to overcome certain problems. The freeholding price for this tract of land was \$30,000.

Mr HOBBS: I rise to a point of order. The Premier is misleading the House with that figure.

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

Mr W. K. GOSS: In respect to the relevant tract of land, the freeholding cost was \$30,000. It is now on sale for millions of dollars. The other matter about which we should obtain some independent advice, rather than simply have a Government assertion, is in terms of the price that the National Party Government extracted from Mr Quaid. What was the date at which that price was set? Was it a 1989 value, or did the National Party Government set a value that went back years. If so, why did that previous Government do it?

The Government is going to examine the policy that applied at the time, the application of that policy and the actions of relevant people. At the end of it, there are two possibilities: either the Government will decide that no further action is required, or the Government will decide that further action is required. If that happens, the Nationals will run under the bed with the Liberals as fast as they possibly can.

State Government Office Building, Maryborough

Mr DOLLIN: My first question is to the Deputy Premier.

Mr Cooper interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I am on my feet. I warn the member for Crows Nest under Standing Order 123A.

Mr DOLLIN: I ask the Deputy Premier and Minister for Rural Communities: could he please advise the House of the status of the proposed State Government office building for Maryborough?

Mr BURNS: The honourable member for Maryborough keeps his promises. He has fought very hard to get this building in Maryborough. I am pleased to announce that \$2.9m was allocated for the construction of a new Government office building in Maryborough. The building is to be situated on the corner of Alice and Lennox Streets in Maryborough. It will be two storeys in height, contain useable office area of 18 000 square metres and provide 40 car parks for the public.

The tenants will be the Department of Education and the Department of Environment and Heritage. The building is currently being designed, and I expect my department to call tenders for its construction in January next year. With construction expected to commence in about May 1994, occupancy of the building is expected to be late 1994 or early 1995.

As well as providing some excellent facilities for the staff and for the people who live in the area, the project will also provide a number of jobs. In addition to that, I understand that once we make this announcement, the Maryborough City Council will move to purchase the Telecom building and provide a home for the Maryborough Family Heritage Institute, which currently occupies the old police station. I thank the member for the work that he has done on this particular project.

Torres Strait and Cape York Visit

Mr DOLLIN: In directing my next question to the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Planning, I refer to a story that appeared in the *Sunday Mail* on 12 September 1993, which stated that he and a number of backbench members travelled to Weipa, Aurukun, Leichhardt River, Thursday Island and Yorke Island. I ask: can he advise the House of the purpose of this trip?

Mr MACKENROTH: The honourable member would well recall the trip in which he participated, as did a number of members of the parliamentary backbench committee. On 1 December last year, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander housing portfolio was shifted to my department.

Mr Veivers interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Southport! I warn the member for Southport under Standing Order 123A for interjecting.

Mr MACKENROTH: During the trip we undertook in June, we visited Weipa, Aurukun, Thursday Island, Yorke Island and Leichhardt River. Last Sunday, the *Sunday Mail* was able to discover that this trip had taken place. I wondered to myself how the newspaper could have found this out, and I thought back to a story that appeared earlier in the week in the *Courier-Mail*. Under freedom of information, the *Courier-Mail* had obtained details in relation to all trips that had been taken by Ministers. When that story appeared, I went back and looked at the trips that I had undertaken as a Minister in Government aircraft. The *Sunday Mail*, as did the *Courier-Mail*, counted this trip as seven trips because the plane landed seven times.

I guess I would be the first person to be accused of swanning around Aurukun on a luxurious holiday. The *Sunday Mail* decided that because the trip was to the Torres Strait, it would get a little bit of the action under freedom of information. Obviously, Queensland Newspapers had spent a lot of

money to get this information and it may as well use that to put a little bit of a story together. What it failed to look at is that when we returned, the member for Cook, Steve Bredhauer, and I held a press conference to which all media outlets were invited. We told the media where we had been and what we had seen. Because that press conference was held in Cairns, we provided the *Sunday Mail* with its own press statement of what had happened, but it failed to print the information.

Three months later, that newspaper was able to spend a bit of money and get the information under freedom of information so that it could be printed in the newspaper. In future, if the *Sunday Mail* wants my media releases, it can get them under freedom of information.

Starcke Pastoral Holdings

Mr HOBBS: In directing a question to the Minister for Lands, I refer to the Starcke land arrangements, and I ask: is it correct that Mr Quaid surrendered 57 490 hectares of his land-holding to the then Government for national park as part of the arrangement to enable him to freehold 24 400 hectares of Starcke land?

Mr SMITH: The whole matter of the Starcke land deal has taken place over a long period. As the member suggests, certain areas of the pastoral leasehold were surrendered to the Crown for the purpose of excising areas that were thought to be of high heritage value. The remaining area in which surveys were to be conducted was left as an occupational licence until such time as that survey could be completed. In fact, the survey was not completed until a much later time.

Mr Slack: Was the 57 000 hectares surrendered by Mr Quaid for national park?

Mr SMITH: "Yes" or "No" what?

Mr Slack: The 57 000 hectares.

Mr SMITH: Speak up or shut up.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr SMITH: I believe I have answered that question.

Mr Slack interjected.

Mr SMITH: Ask another question then.

Mr Slack: Why don't you sit down?

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Starcke Pastoral Holdings

Mr HOBBS: In directing my second question to the Minister for Environment and Heritage, I refer to the Premier's decision to acquire the Starcke land-holdings and I ask: was the acquisition of the Starcke holding a priority of her department? If so, why was the purchase price not provided for in her budget? Can she inform the House how the purchase will be funded—that is, will the funds come from her department?

Ms ROBSON: Certainly, my role in terms of this Starcke land-holding exchange negotiation is that we had not identified that particular piece of land for our acquisition program in terms of the biodiversity of this State.

Mr Elliott interjected.

Ms ROBSON: If I can just continue, the member will get the answer. We recognised that Mr Quaid had decided that he was going to sell this particular piece of property and, as the member for Warrego would be aware, pressure was put on us by the community—and a lot of that came through Opposition members—to address the values of this particular piece of wilderness and the biodiversity that it represented.

While it was not within our allocated budget that is calculated to achieve the 4 per cent of national park estate that we want to acquire for this State, which would represent 63 per cent biodiversity, we recognise that the people of this State wish to have that particular piece of land, or part of it, added to the national park estate. Accordingly, we recognised that, but statements I have made indicated clearly that we had not budgeted for that particular large purchase. As the member for Warrego would be aware, the price asked by Mr Quaid is \$US18m. There is no way that my budget could meet that.

However, the Premier and the Cabinet have taken a decision that has been announced publicly. We are pursuing the value of this property through a Department of Lands valuation so that we know the value of the land. We will continue to pursue inclusion of that land when financial arrangements have been made. I think that the member for Warrego has seen the budget for my department this year and should be able to work out quite clearly that \$4.6m for the year would not, at this point, include that acquisition, but those decisions have not yet been finalised.

Prosecutions

Mrs ROSE: I ask the Attorney-General: has he received advice from the Director of Prosecutions on whether prosecutors' opinions should be made public when those opinions relate to the question of whether a prosecution should be brought?

Mr WELLS: Yes, I have. The honourable members opposite called upon me a little while ago to table a document. In fact, that document was the first page of a rough draft of a letter that I had written to the Director of Prosecutions requesting his advice on the subject. The members opposite immediately—and this is their response to most pieces of scrap paper—was to take 10 photocopies of it, and then they did not ask me, though they had several chances, what the Director of Prosecutions' advice on the subject was.

I table the final draft of the letter which I wrote to the Director of Prosecutions, which I actually signed, and the reply that he wrote to me, on the understanding that it would be made public.

Mr Borbidge interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Department of Education

Mrs ROSE: In directing a question to the Minister for Education, I refer to comments made by the Leader of the Opposition on this morning's Rod Henshaw program wherein he claimed that the administrative costs of the Department of Education had increased by 70 per cent and that increases in funding had not resulted in an increase in services in schools. I ask: can he inform the House whether this is the case? What is the more accurate situation?

Mr BORBIDGE: I rise to a point of order. The question relates to the Budget debate, Appropriation Bill (No. 2).

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

Mr BORBIDGE: It relates directly to a speech that I made yesterday, and it is before the House.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. The honourable member has reduced that to absurdity. The Budget concerns everything about the State. Everything would be out of order.

Mr BORBIDGE: I rise to a point of order. Mr Speaker, a dissent motion is before the Parliament because the ruling that you just

gave was not applied to the Opposition last night. Can we have some consistency from the Chair on that matter?

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

Mr BORBIDGE: With respect, there is a dissent motion before the Parliament.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. The honourable member will resume his seat. It is question time now. I call the Minister for Education.

Mr Borbidge interjected.

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

Mr Borbidge interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I now ask the honourable member to leave the Chamber.

Whereupon the honourable member for Surfers Paradise withdrew from the Chamber.

Mr COMBEN: While the Leader of the Opposition is leaving the House, I have pleasure in informing the House that he was wrong—

Mr FITZGERALD: Mr Speaker, I give notice that tomorrow I will move a motion of dissent against your ruling.

Mr COMBEN: As I was saying, the Leader of the Opposition was wrong in his general comments about administration in the Department of Education.

Mr FITZGERALD: Under Standing Order 117, I move—

“That Mr Speaker’s ruling be dissented from.”

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

Mr COMBEN: The Leader of the Opposition had it wrong in his general comments about administrative costs within the Department of Education. The facts as to whether whether administrative costs increased over the past four years—and this is not specific to a Bill before the House—are that, over the past four years, central office numbers have declined from 1 475 to 667, and funding for corporate services declined from \$120m last year to \$96m this year. Those things mean that more money has been provided at the chalkface for teachers in front of classrooms. The department has downsized to the extent that Education House now has three vacant floors.

Mrs Sheldon: How many buildings in the regions?

Mr COMBEN: I will tell the Deputy Leader of the Coalition about the benefits being provided to education in her electorate. The Government has provided \$2.25m for capital works and a 114 per cent increase in funds for school grants, from \$232,000 to \$498,000. Obviously, the Deputy Leader of the Coalition—

Mr Burns: They get that much without good representation. Just imagine how much money they would get with good representation!

Mr COMBEN: Certainly. The Deputy Leader of the Coalition has done well in terms of the expansion in funds provided in the Budget for her electorate. The Government has provided \$28,000 for computers in schools in her electorate and \$88,000 for literacy and numeracy programs. During the time when her party was in Government in this State, apart from capital works, such amounts would not have been spent in her electorate. If I were to look at the electorate of the Opposition Leader, I would find that almost half a million dollars has been provided for computers in schools and \$50,000 for literacy and numeracy programs. All of those things add up to dollars being spent on education, not on administrative costs. Once again, the Leader of the Opposition got it wrong.

Mr GRICE having given notice of a question—

Mr GRICE: I table a transcript regarding the question.

Taped Telephone Conversation

Mr GRICE: In directing a question to the Deputy Premier, I refer to the transcript of a taped telephone conversation on 17 January 1992. I have tabled that transcript. I ask: will the Deputy Premier explain his threat to former Senior Constable Gordon Harris, “We’re talking about insurance frauds in my name—I’ll bloody sue your arse off.”?

Mr BURNS: I am only too pleased to confirm that I said that to that policeman. I will sue the arse off anyone else who defames me in public—make no bones about it. That is the way that I treat people who try to defame me, and that is what I said to him. If he says it outside, I will sue his bloody arse off.

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

MATTER OF SPECIAL PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Freedom of Information

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I advise the House that I have received a proposal for a Special Public Importance debate pursuant to the Sessional Order agreed to by the House on 5 November 1992. The proposal submitted is—

“That this House notes the success of this Government’s freedom of information legislation.”

I now call on the member for Everton to speak to the proposal.

Mr WELFORD (Everton) (3.46 p.m.): It is my pleasure to speak in support of the proposal that the House notes the success of the Government’s freedom of information legislation. There is plenty of evidence to confirm the success of the freedom of information legislation in Queensland. Members need only look at the facts to see that that is the case.

In Queensland, since the freedom of information legislation came into operation in November last year, more than 6 300 applications seeking information have been lodged with various departments of the Government. The information requested in 93 per cent of those applications has been released in full or in part. In more than 80 per cent of those applications, the information was released entirely. That is, in 80 per cent of the 6 300 applications seeking information which have been lodged in Queensland, the information has been released in full—I repeat, “in full”. That is a remarkable distinction from what happened in the past, when getting information out of previous National and Liberal Party State Governments was like extracting teeth.

Seventy-five per cent of all applications have been lodged by people requesting access to personal information. It is a significant feature of the freedom of information legislation that, for the first time, Queenslanders have the opportunity to obtain from Government documents personal information relating to themselves. That information was never previously available. In the past, countless numbers of citizens sought information that the Government holds about them, but they were denied that information.

From what I have said, it is clear that only 7 per cent of the 6 300 applications that have been lodged have been refused, and they have been refused according to the exemptions that the Freedom of Information Act 1992 expressly lays down. Many people obviously apply for material which in whole or in part is exempt under those specific exemptions in Division 2 of Part 3 of the Act.

It should be noted, however, that when it comes to the percentage of refusals in terms of the total number of applications lodged, the level of refusal in Queensland is amongst the lowest of any State in Australia. Let me give some specific examples. Between December 1982 and June 1983—the first six months of the operation of the Commonwealth legislation, which is very similar to ours—13 per cent of applications were refused in full on the basis of exemptions in Commonwealth legislation.

In New South Wales, between 1989 and 1990—the first 12 months of the operation of its freedom of information legislation—8 per cent of applications were refused. In Victoria, between 1983 and 1984—the first 12 months of its legislation coming into effect—28 per cent of applications were refused. In Tasmania, freedom of information legislation was introduced in January this year. In the first three months of its operation, 20 per cent of applications were rejected in full. That demonstrates clearly that, of all of the major jurisdictions in Australia in which freedom of information legislation operates, Queensland is the most open and the most frugal in its use of exemptions to deny the release of information.

Contrary to a recent editorial in the *Courier-Mail*, those exemptions are not just carte blanche exemptions. That editorial states—

“This turn-out shows that Freedom of Information legislation in Queensland is a mockery. The exclusions and exemptions available under the Act are, on the tests we have applied, so all-encompassing as to make retrieval of public information a meaningless activity in many cases.”

It is interesting to note just what tests the *Courier-Mail* may have applied in coming to the conclusion that freedom of information legislation in Queensland is a mockery. It cites one example of superannuation information relating to the private financial affairs of former members of this Parliament. The newspaper cites the example of a letter released under freedom of information which contains only the words “Dear Sir” at the beginning of the letter and “Yours faithfully” at the end of the letter. That letter was sent by the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General, Dean Wells, to the Premier, Mr Goss. Quite clearly, according to the provisions of the Act, the information contained in that letter was exempt.

Let us consider briefly what those provisions are. Matters relating to Cabinet are limited, and exemptions relate to information

that is part of the Cabinet deliberative process. Matters relating to law enforcement and public safety are exempt from outright disclosure. Matters affecting legal proceedings are also exempt. Importantly, under section 44, specific provision is made to exempt a matter if its disclosure would disclose information concerning the personal affairs of a person, whether living or dead, unless its disclosure would on balance be in the public interest.

Of course, it is always a matter of discretion—and, at the end of the day, a question of law—as to whether it is indeed in the public interest to release certain information. But in defining precisely the extent of the exemptions under the Queensland legislation, it is entirely appropriate, I would have thought, that information relating to the personal financial affairs especially of former members of Parliament—who are no longer the subject of public scrutiny in this place—might fall within the exemption provisions. If those are the only sorts of questions that the *Courier-Mail* has asked and if those are the only tests which it has applied, is it any wonder that the information it sought has not been provided. It quite properly falls within the exemptions that the Act quite properly provides.

I note that there is nothing in the criticism levelled by the *Courier-Mail* against this Government or the legislation which claims that any of the provisions for exemption under the Act are inappropriate. There is nothing in the editorial, apart from a blithely and widely targeted attack on the so-called all-encompassing exemptions, which would indicate that any one of the exemptions is an inappropriate provision for the Act to contain.

It is important for members of this place, for the *Courier-Mail* and for the members of the public to understand that this legislation, when applied properly, may in certain circumstances protect information which is appropriately confidential information. It is also appropriate for those who seek that information, if they contest the validity of the public interest discretion exercised by the relevant department, to seek an internal review and, if that fails, to proceed to seek an external review by application to the Information Commissioner, as provided for under the Act.

This is a perfectly healthy process. It does not follow that, simply because information is not released, the exemptions are necessarily too wide. It may mean that the applicant is asking the wrong questions. It may mean that the applicant is quite improperly asking for information which it is entirely appropriate for the Government, in the interests of private

individuals, to protect. This occurred when I worked for the Commonwealth and had extensive experience with the operation of the Commonwealth Freedom of Information Act, the terms of which are very similar to those of the legislation of this State.

There are two very important features of the State Act. The first is that it has opened up, at no cost to any individual citizen, the opportunity to gain information that concerns that person's personal affairs. The second is that it has brought about a change in the culture of Government departments so that, for example, departments such as the Health Department now release as of right personal information that people seek from it. That information is provided as of right, and people do not even need to make an application under the FOI Act. The fact of the matter is that this Act is working successfully. All members of this Parliament and the public ought to recognise that fact.

Time expired.

Debate interrupted.

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Palaszczuk): Order! Honourable members, I am delighted to acknowledge in the Speaker's Gallery the presence of Vice-Governor Soesmono, Mrs Soesmono and other key officials from our sister prefecture, Central Java Province. Our Indonesian guests are part of a 270-member contingent who are here to play a key role in the forthcoming Warana celebrations. Salamats Siang.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

MATTER OF SPECIAL PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Freedom of Information

Debate resumed.

Mr BEANLAND (Indooroopilly) (3.57 p.m.): I note the wording of the matter that we are discussing. It is fair to say that there is a general view at present that the freedom of information legislation has never been given a fair go under this Labor Government. We heard a great deal of rhetoric from the member for Everton. He cited figures which suggest that 93 per cent of applications under the freedom of information legislation have been approved in full. He forgot to mention, of course, that that 93 per cent of applications were largely personal matters and were certainly uncontentious matters. Certainly, with matters which are not contentious and which will not embarrass this

Labor Government, it is very happy to release information. However, as soon as an application is made for information that is a little contentious or embarrassing, the Attorney-General, the Ministers and the people responsible for freedom of information matters in the various departments all go to water very quickly.

There have been many complaints about this legislation from the community. More than five or six complaints have been received. I am aware of nine—and there may be 99—that I could cite to the House right now. If honourable members cast their minds back to the beginning of this year, they will get the gist of what I am saying. At the beginning of this year, a newspaper was refused information on the Indy car race. The day before that incident, there were ongoing arguments about documentation involving the State health system that was refused to be released. The Labor Party went to great lengths to hide that information. We had the ludicrous situation in which all 352 pages of information requested by a person about Queensland Health were refused because the Minister said, "All 352 pages are part of the deliberative process." This Labor Government now claims that the information sought on the Indy was refused because it is in the public interest.

The member for Everton referred to a current issue—a recent article in the *Courier-Mail* which carried the headline "Pollies' super secrets. Censors snip out details". Once again, a newspaper requested information, this time in relation to superannuation. The editorial of the newspaper stated—

"The Joke

On FOI, we've all been had.

The joke is alive and well in Queensland. Only this one is a new joke. It's called freedom of information and it is nothing of the sort: it is a smokescreen of a variety only politicians and bureaucrats could dream up. What has been provided to The *Courier-Mail*—after months of inquiry and appeals under the Act the Goss Government has so fulsomely praised—is revealed on page 1 today. Readers will note that it amounts to nothing of substance: so much for the people's right to know."

That is the same type of editorial that we have seen from other newspapers and the same sort of frustration that other groups in the community are suffering from the Government time after time.

We heard a great deal from the member for Everton about exemptions. In fact, there were 15 exemptions in all.

Mr Bennett interjected.

Mr BEANLAND: There is a noise coming from a cocky somewhere or other—perhaps up the back of the Chamber. I suggest that the cocky should wait for his turn to get up to speak and stop parroting on. We are talking about a very serious issue. We have 15 exemptions which allow the Government to spread right across-the-board the use of exemptions. However, the Government is not content with 15 exemptions to weasel its way out of providing information. The Commissioner for Information has overruled the Government on a number of occasions on matters which should have been clear. People should not have been forced into that position in the first place.

This Attorney-General, who would like to clothe himself in glory over the issue, is not getting much glory out of it at all. In fact, he is getting flak—so much flak that the caucus made him come here today to debate this issue in an attempt to prop up his ego and to prop up the whole issue because the Labor Party is receiving such a caning on it. He knows that that is true. I have heard the rumblings. All members of this Parliament know that that is true. There are a lot of rumblings about what is occurring with this freedom of information legislation.

An article in the *Courier-Mail* titled "Mum's the word" stated—

"Queensland Information Commissioner . . . the man charged with protecting the state's secrets—is so tight-lipped he refuses to discuss work with his wife."

It talks about the fact that this Government is not releasing information that ought to be released.

Another article in the *Courier-Mail* titled "Cabinet attacked on secrecy Information ruling hits 'elitist' policy" stated—

" 'Not even our elite bureaucratic policy makers have a monopoly on wisdom,' he says in a ruling published yesterday."

That is the Information Commissioner. No doubt he is referring to Mr Rudd and the Cabinet officers—those senior officers who receive so much money to protect the Government on so many fronts.

Shortly, the Attorney will tell us how there are FOI officers in all the departments and

that it has nothing to do with him and nothing to do with people such as Mr Rudd. However, we all know how the system is working behind the scenes. When these very sensitive issues from which the Government wants to hide come to the fore at a moment's notice, its members run from them. They know that knowledge is power and that, if people acquire the knowledge, that is power, and they will be forced to be accountable to the people of Queensland.

I have spoken of what occurred a few months ago and what is happening now. If members cast their minds back to March 1993, they will remember that the Government got itself into trouble on a number of occasions. At the time, there was an appropriate cartoon which pointed out what we all knew, that the new rules were becoming inoperable. The matter can be summed up in this cartoon I hold up which appeared in the daily paper in March. In it, the public ask, "Well, what exactly does freedom of information mean?" It is the Attorney-General behind the counter who says, "It means that we are completely free of information." That just sums up the Attorney. He is certainly completely free of information.

What we have in this very serious matter is an attempt by the Government to prop up its very poor record on this subject. A series of complaints have been made. The latest is concerns by various groups of people in the community about the excessive charges that this Government is imposing for the photocopying of information. We have raised the matter previously in this Chamber. Those charges are making it virtually impossible for many people to acquire information other than that relating to their own personal information. We all know that personal information is free, but I am talking about the sensitive matters that this Government wants to hide.

Mr Comben: If it is personal, it is free.

Mr BEANLAND: The Minister for Education is a prime example of someone who is hiding behind a wall of secrecy. We all know how he is building up his empire and his administration, and how much administration costs in his department have risen over the past four years. They have fast overtaken the rest of his budget. In his department, administration costs have increased from 4 per cent to almost 10 per cent of the operating costs of the department. He is putting a lot of effort into making sure that information is not released from his department. Ministers are looking for protection. They are looking at ways to hide

their various decisions. They want to avoid this freedom of information legislation.

Earlier, I mentioned that groups in the community are very concerned about this charge of 50c a page for photocopying. I take this opportunity again to appeal to the Minister to look at reducing that exorbitant charge. If a person wishes to photocopy 100 pages of a document, it will cost \$50, which is on top of the \$30 application fee. It is not unrealistic to be requesting 100 pages of a sensitive document. It is quite clear that this charge is designed to discourage the average citizen in our community from applying for freedom of information material. Previously, we have highlighted the high cost of that service and how it is inhibiting many people from applying. That is not merely my view; there is a group of over 30 organisations in the community that are protesting about those exorbitant charges.

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN (Caboolture) (4.07 p.m.): We have just had a perfect demonstration of the reasons why Mr Everingham has been so forthright in his opinions of the members of the parliamentary Liberal Party.

Mr Beattie: And he's going to be the new leader.

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN: I do not think so. I recall in this place not so long ago that the member moved a disallowance of regulations under the Freedom of Information Bill. At that time, he was carping on about the cost of obtaining information, particularly for himself—although he has not mentioned that today. I will inform the House about these "excessive" charges to which he just referred.

Mr Vaughan: So-called.

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN: So-called excessive costs. The charges that this Government has placed on people seeking non-personal information will actually be less than the charges that were approved by the Electoral and Administrative Review Commission. The Parliamentary Committee for Electoral and Administrative Review, which endorsed those charges, included his colleague the now member for Merrimac, who was then the member for South Coast, and it included National Party members Mr FitzGerald and Mr Stoneman, who represent the electorates of Lockyer and Burdekin respectively. EARC recommended that the first 50 pages would be free, the next 50 would be charged at \$1 a page, and anything over that would be charged at \$2 a page. We have reduced that to 50c a page.

For the information of Mr Beanland, I will talk about these so-called excessive charges for information information. He had some criticisms about freedom of information relating to the Health Department. About a month ago, the *Courier-Mail* published an article about a member of Parliament who ran up quite an excessive bill having some information put together by the Health Department.

Mr Beattie: Name him.

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN: I will name the person in a moment. Earlier this year, the person ran up a bill of about \$18,000. It took 450-odd person hours to process the request, which is a lot of person hours. Although the information has been ready for the best part of six months, if not longer, this member of Parliament has not responded to any request from the department to go and view the information. Who is that member of Parliament? It is not Mr Beanland. He knows that it is not him. It is his leader, Mrs Sheldon. She sought information from the Health Department, which has run up a bill of nearly \$18,000, but she has not even bothered to have a look at it.

Mr FitzGerald: How did you discover that?

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN: Mr FitzGerald asks how I discovered that. That is a fair question. If he would like to put his request in writing and give me a cheque for \$30, within 45 days I will tell him whether or not I will release that information to him.

Let me say something about members on the Opposition side of the House. Old Joh knew a thing or two. He knew that he had to have somebody with legal expertise on his benches. What did he do? When the late Mr Goleby died accidentally and his position had to be filled, Joh went out and found a solicitor to bolster up the numbers. There is no legal training amongst members on those Opposition benches. How can we expect them to know what is going on? It is about time that they got somebody who knows something.

Mr Beanland says that, already, the Information Commissioner has overruled the Government. In fact, the Information Commissioner overrules freedom of information. That is his job. That is what he is there for. If someone does not like what the Information Commissioner says, that person can probably seek judicial review. But the point is that we have to develop some kind of case law on that issue. That is what the Information Commissioner is about. That is his job.

As my colleague the member for Everton told the House, 75 per cent of requests for information have been for personal information. This is the great strength of freedom of information legislation in Queensland. In the debate that took place when that legislation was debated in this Parliament, the member for Yeronga made quite a stunning speech. He said that the freedom of information legislation and the Judicial Review Act are two powerful weapons for people. He said that they give them the opportunity to acquire the information in respect of decisions that are made about themselves. The most powerful thing about freedom of information is that it gives people information about themselves. It is not about Mr Beanland, any member of the Opposition or, heaven forbid, the *Courier-Mail* getting the dirt on anything. It is about people getting information about themselves and having a chance to correct that information if it is incorrect.

I cannot remember precisely which member made the point during that debate about a person seeking a taxi licence and being refused that taxi licence on the basis of incorrect information. It is important that people are able to get to that information and change it. That is what it is all about. The people have been brought in from limbo.

I am dreadfully sorry if Mr Beanland or any other member of the Opposition in this place feels that he or she is not able to get enough information out of that to bludgeon the Government into submission. Let us face it: freedom of information in this State has unlimited retrospectivity. That is unusual. I believe that in other jurisdictions it goes back about 12 years at the most. I can tell members that there is more dirt on those blokes opposite than there will ever be on us.

The criticisms that have been made of freedom of information have come primarily from people who have sought information that is exempt. Why should they be critical? Again, I refer to the debate on the legislation in August 1992, when one member of the Opposition said—

“I believe that the public has been led to believe that everything will be open to public scrutiny.”

That may be so. He went on to say—

“Of course, after a scrutiny of this Bill, it is obvious that this is not the case—and nor should it be.”

That is what Mr Littleproud said. Not everything should be wide open. There are

some exemptions. As the member for Everton said, nobody has seriously questioned any of those exemptions, other than to put together some wide-ranging statement to the effect that they are too broad. Perhaps, if we were given some examples of this, we could fight it. I recall a cartoon that appeared recently in one of the newspapers, and I do not believe that this Government is about to get itself caught with a lance in a windmill.

We have come an awfully long way in this State since the days of the National/Liberal coalition Governments. There is a demand for openness and accountability at the State level. Queensland and South Australia have the only two jurisdictions in this country in which freedom of information has been extended to local government. I would like a quid for every time that I have heard somebody say to me that local government is the most important level of Government because it is the level of government nearest the people. In this State—as distinct from most other States—people can get access to their personal information that is being held by a council. Quite often, the decisions of local councils are more likely to affect the day-to-day living of people in this State. If for no other reason, I believe that the people of Queensland are very grateful for that legislation.

As I have said, other jurisdictions have charged a great deal more for supplying this information. I have given the example of Mrs Sheldon costing the Health Department \$18,000. Yet it cost her only \$30. If Mrs Sheldon had sought that information in other jurisdictions—not necessarily in the federal jurisdiction, because she would have used her status as a member of Parliament—she could have been charged \$18,000—the cost of production. Yet, to date, she still has not been down to see that information. That is disgraceful. It is interesting to note that people have made their applications for information mainly in four departments.

Time expired.

Mr FITZGERALD (Lockyer) (4.17 p.m.): In joining this debate, I first raise the issue of why the member for Caboolture was able to quote the circumstances of somebody who had made an application for information. Is this available to every member of the public? Does the general public know about everybody who makes an application? That is the question that is being asked.

Mr J. H. Sullivan: Write me a letter.

Mr FITZGERALD: No. I want to know whether that information is available under

FOI. When anyone makes an application under FOI, is everybody advised what application was made, what information was sought and what the cost was of providing that information? Is that what freedom of information is all about? How did that information get into the hands of the member for Caboolture?

The second question that I ask is: am I right in saying that Ministers of the Crown are advised of all information supplied to members of Parliament who make applications under freedom of information? I really believe that members should know that. I want to know whether Ministers of the Crown are advised of information supplied to members of Parliament under freedom of information. I believe that they are, and I want the Minister to deny it.

The member for Caboolture raised the issue of the Ombudsman, who is the Queensland Commissioner for Information, and how, on a number of occasions, he has overturned decisions made by departmental officers who provide the information. I agree with that. He was supportive of Mr Fred Albitz, the Commissioner of Information. But what did that person say about the charges for information to members of Parliament? What did he say in his reports? His submission was sent to EARC. His submission states that the information should be provided free to members of Parliament.

Mr J. H. Sullivan: You were on EARC. You made the decision. Tell us about it.

Mr FITZGERALD: No. He said that it should be provided free. The commissioner is bound by the legislation and the regulations of this Government.

There are two important points to be made with regard to the information that is available. Private information is available—and the member for Everton spoke about that matter—and the largest number of requests is for that type of information. That is free and open, and everyone expects that to be so. The second important point to be made is: what is provided to members of Parliament and to the general public? What is the design of the freedom of information legislation? Is it only to provide personal records, or not? It certainly has never been designed to provide only personal records; it has been designed to provide the Parliament and members of the public with the truth and the information.

I refer to the article by Spencer Zifcak, in which he quotes this poem by John Milton—

“And although the winds of doctrine were let loose to play upon the earth, so Truth be in the field, we do injuriously, by licensing and prohibiting, to misdoubt her strength. Let her and falsehood grapple; who ever knew Truth put to the worse, in a free and open encounter.”

In other words, this Government does not have a proud record with regard to freedom of information. Firstly, consider how it introduced the legislation. EARC recommended that we have freedom of information. It handed down its report, then the parliamentary committee presented the report. The EARC report came down in May 1990, and the FOI report came to the parliamentary committee in December 1990. The Bill was introduced on 5 December 1991. It laid on the table, and the second-reading debate took place on 5 August 1992. This Minister of the Crown claimed that there were some technical problems arising. He never substantiated that claim and said what those problems were. He just mucked around to delay the introduction of the freedom of information legislation.

Mr Hollis: You don't believe that.

Mr FITZGERALD: I certainly do believe that. The member is not in his correct seat. He would not know where he was, anyway. The Bill was assented to on 19 August 1992. Of course, we know that the State election was held on 19 September 1992. There was a three-month period before the legislation came into operation and any information could be released.

Of course, the Government claimed that it had to set up the structures. I accuse this Government of running away from freedom of information. It is providing information only for personal records, and whatever it can do to stymie members of Parliament from obtaining information, it does it. We know that under Commonwealth legislation, information is generally available to members of Parliament free, under certain criteria. Have members read those criteria? The guidelines state—

“There is no automatic remission of fees, or reduction or non-imposition of charges, in the public interest for Members of Parliament. Again the central issue to be focused upon is whether the giving of access to the particular documents is in the public interest. The tests referred to in paras 85 6 (above) concerning the content of the documents and the context of their release are relevant.”

The guidelines state further—

“If information contained in a document sought by a Member of Parliament is of a kind which is customarily provided in answer to a Parliamentary Question and the work involved in processing the request does not exceed what is normally accepted for answering Parliamentary Questions, the fees should be remitted and no charges imposed.”

That happens under the Federal legislation. What happens in Queensland? People have to pay an application fee. In Victoria, the information was free. However, now there is a \$20 application fee and the information costs 20c a sheet to copy.

I accuse this Government of making sure that people do not use the freedom of information legislation for questioning the Executive arm of Government. Fitzgerald wanted the Government to be questioned. At page 129 of the report, he stated—

“The importance of the legislation lies in the principle it espouses, and in its ability to provide information to the public and to Parliament. It has already been used effectively for this purpose in other Parliaments. Its potential to make administrators accountable and keep the voters and Parliament informed are well understood by its supporters and enemies.”

It is well understood by its supporters and enemies; there is no doubt about that. When it comes to providing information to parliamentarians, I contend that this Government is one of the enemies of freedom of information. Why on earth does it impose an application fee? Why does it not waive the fee? Why does it go against the recommendations in those areas? Why does it provide only personal information free? Are Ministers advised of any FOI material that is supplied to other members of Parliament? I asked all of these questions. The Commissioner of Information, in his submission, stated—

“An exception in the case of Members of Parliament would probably be justified on the basis that a Parliamentarian's duties require him to be as informed as possible as to the workings of government and he should not be impeded in discharging these very important responsibilities.”

Mr Robertson: You don't even take that seriously.

Mr FITZGERALD: The member says that I do not take the responsibilities of being a member of Parliament seriously. I disagree with him. I take my role and responsibility as a member of Parliament very, very, seriously. It is important that the newspapers of this country, with which we may agree or disagree from time to time, should have access to information, provided that we have the right to set the record straight when we believe that they have gone beyond the bounds of decency and have written a report that is unfavourable to us.

I repeat that once truth and falsehoods lie side by side, provided one makes the truth available, the falsehoods will eventually die. If the truth is allowed to come out and is not stymied, it will always overcome the falsehoods. That is what we are all about. We want the truth to come out not only for those people who want their personal information but also for the Parliament and for the people generally. It has not been demonstrated to me by any of the previous speakers that there is any impediment the good workings of Government if its actions are questioned under the freedom of information legislation.

Time expired.

Hon. D. M. WELLS (Murrumba— Minister for Justice and Attorney-General and Minister for the Arts) (4.27 p.m.): It is marvellous to hear honourable members opposite speaking in tones of honour, tones of dignity and tones of reverence for such concepts of accountability, open government, openness—all of these concepts which were completely alien to them in the dark days when they governed this State. All of these concepts now drop like pearls from their lips, and they speak with such enthusiasm for these new concepts that were introduced in 1989 by the Goss Labor Government. There is more joy in Heaven over one sinner that repenteth than over 9 and 90 righteous men. These repentant sinners are standing here seeking their absolution by a full confession. They go so far as to quote the scripture and the magical words of openness, accountability and so forth. They even quote Milton and Milton's winds of doctrine poem.

Mr Beanland: Let's hear it for Keats, Milton and the lot.

Mr WELLS: I rise to the honourable member's challenge. After all, I am the Minister for the Arts and I respond not with Milton, but with Shakespeare. It applies to honourable members opposite: the devil can quote scripture to his purpose, and that is what is happening here. Those honourable

members are standing up, mouthing language that they do not understand. They espouse doctrines that they never believed until they were in Opposition. What a massive and wonderful conversion it was! How swift was their conversion when they were in Opposition! Honourable members opposite have been frenetic campaigners for open government ever since they went into Opposition.

I will respond to some of the points which the honourable members opposite raised. The honourable member for Lockyer wanted to know whether freedom of information applications are publicly available. The point is that anybody can make a freedom of information application about whether somebody else has made a freedom of information application. People can find out that information because it is all part of open government. It is a little bit inconsistent for the honourable member to say that he thinks it is a bit of bother and that the only people who should be capable of conducting their affairs in secret are the people who make inquiries under freedom of information. If we are going to open it up, we are going to open it up all the way, just as we did with the unlimited retrospectivity for our freedom of information legislation.

Our freedom of information legislation is the only legislation that has unlimited retrospectivity provisions. If a person wants a document that is a hundred years old, if we have got it, he or she can have it. We have the freest freedom of information in the whole of Australia. If people want information under freedom of information legislation in Victoria, the Commonwealth and in New South Wales, they have to pay very much more than do people in Queensland. In Queensland alone, people can get information under the freedom of information legislation without cost, if it concerns a person's own personal affairs. Over 75 per cent of the people who make applications for freedom of information are people who are seeking information about their own personal affairs.

I know an honourable member who is now in this Chamber who had the experience of a constituent coming into his electorate office and saying, "I just came to say 'Thank you very much' for your role in introducing freedom of information because I have now been able to find out how my wife died and why my wife died. I tried for 15 years, but I could not find out until freedom of information came in. Now I know, and now that I have got that information I can put it all behind me. Thank you very much." That person left the

office. I understand that the man was so emotional that he was in tears and I understand that the member had slightly moist eyes also. That is what freedom of information was designed to do.

Freedom of information was not designed to provide a junketing roller-coaster for honourable members to get \$18,000 worth of material which they do not subsequently bother to look at, as a certain honourable member opposite just did. What conceit! What dissimulation, to stand in this House and say that the freedom of information legislation is not good enough while people on his own front bench come in and make freedom of information applications which cost honest public servants their time and the taxpayers—the honest people whom these members are supposed to be honestly representing—\$18,000, and then not bother to come and get that information. How absurd! This legislation was designed for ordinary, decent Queenslanders, primarily, and those are the people who are benefiting from freedom of information.

Mr FitzGerald: You're saying we are not decent, are you?

Mr WELLS: I pause to take the interjection, if the member will say it a little more quietly.

Mr FitzGerald: Are you saying that we are not decent?

Mr WELLS: No, certainly not. I think the honourable member who interjected is, in particular, a thoroughly decent individual who is sometimes mistaken with respect to quite obscure points, and this is one fairly obvious point with respect to which he is mistaken. The point with respect to which he is mistaken is the rather obvious point that freedom of information has changed the face of Queensland. Primarily, freedom of information is for the ordinary, decent Queenslanders who want to know what is going on in their own lives because this Government works on an assumption that is different from the one worked upon by the previous Government. The previous Government worked on the assumption that information held by Government was secret unless there was some overwhelmingly good reason to the contrary whereas we work on the assumption that information held by a Government is available, unless there is some overwhelmingly good reason to the contrary.

Mr FitzGerald: Tell that to the papers.

Mr WELLS: I will speak in response to the honourable member's point because that is what I was about to say. While primarily the

legislation is for ordinary, decent Queenslanders, it is also for the maintenance of the whole environment so that government is not carried out behind closed doors, and decisions made by Government are not kept in closed boxes but are made in the clear light of day. Freedom of information means that public servants and Ministers make their decisions in the knowledge that those decisions can subsequently be open to scrutiny.

Obviously, in the first year of freedom of information, there will be cases of journalists trying to test the limits of the legislation. Of course, that has happened a lot and, of course, exemptions have been relied upon on a number of occasions. As the honourable member opposite would be the first to concede, there are some matters that should not, in the public interest, be revealed—for example, the proceedings of Cabinet.

Mr FitzGerald: They are exempt anyway. That is part of the legislation.

Mr WELLS: Quite so, but a number of the applications to which the honourable member refers are applications for Cabinet documents, and those applications were refused on the grounds that they were part of the Cabinet process. It is a good and healthy sign that the fourth estate should seek to test the limits of this legislation, to define the boundaries and to find out what can and what cannot be obtained. It is a good and healthy sign, and this Government encourages it and welcomes it, but that is not a sign of the malfunctioning of the legislation. It is a sign of a positive, healthy piece of legislation.

If the honourable member thinks that the freedom of information legislation needs finetuning, he will be pleased to know that the legislation provides for a two-yearly review. A review will occur two years after the date that freedom of information was introduced, and he may contribute to that. The remarks he and his colleagues make in this House are taken on board by me and by my departmental officers. If he cares to be even more formal, the honourable member can also write a letter. His remarks are never treated dismissively. However, the suggestion that this Government or I are enemies of freedom of information is rather wounding. It is akin to calling a doctor who actually delivers an infant an enemy of childbirth. After all, it was this Government that introduced the legislation.

Mr FitzGerald: Are you going to disown it, though?

Mr WELLS: No. This infant will not be disowned. This is a robust and precocious

infant which will be nurtured and which will be maintained because the best freedom of information legislation in Australia defines the climate in which government is carried out in this State and defines the concept which the people of this State have of the Government and of the polity in which they live. This freedom of information legislation enables the citizens of Queensland to travel to Melbourne, Sydney, Adelaide or any part of this fair continent and say to the people in those places, "We have the most open Government. We have a Government which allows freedom of information at all levels of Government—all three of them. We can get documents from any level of Government in Queensland and you can't. We can get information about all sorts of decisions and you can't. We have the best freedom of information in Australia."

Time expired.

Mr QUINN (Merrimac) (4.37 p.m.): When I first saw the topic of this debate, quite frankly I thought that it was a joke. I have been following the debate in the newspapers recently and noted that the *Courier-Mail* had been refused access to certain material for quite a considerable period. I thought that the last thing this Government would want to do would be to bring on this debate on public interest in freedom of information laws. This House should be eternally grateful to the member for Everton for exposing the extent of the joke because when he instanced statistics during his speech, he damned his Government by his own words. Let me illustrate the extent of the problem facing Queensland under the FOI laws being administered by this Government.

The member for Everton provided the following statistics: 6 300 applications from various departments; 93 per cent released in full or part, 80 per cent released entirely. The member claimed that that was a remarkable performance and he went on to say that 75 per cent of all applications had been for personal information. Quite rightly, one would think that in relation to applications for personal information, most of the information would have been released in its entirety. That would be a reasonable assumption which leads to the following very interesting statistics. Honourable members should bear in mind that the rest of the applications would be in relation to matters concerning Government decisions on policy and matters of public interest. It is in relation to those areas that the Government is put in the spotlight because it is the crucial information.

We could go on all day talking about people being allowed access to their own personal information and make changes where necessary if they deemed the information to be incorrect, and we would all agree with that. However, in the final analysis, the real nitty-gritty of FOI is to allow ordinary citizens access to documents to put the spotlight on Government and its activities. Here is where the real joke occurs. Honourable members should remember that 75 per cent of applications are for personal information. As regards the remaining 25 per cent of applications, we have the following very interesting statistics: 5 per cent were acknowledged in their entirety. Of all applications for that sort of information, one-fifth—or roughly 20 per cent—are satisfied entirely.

One of the statistics was that 93 per cent of applications are filled in part or completely, that is, 7 per cent do not receive any response at all. Honourable members should remember that the remaining 25 per cent are the people who seek information about Government decisions. That 7 per cent translates into 30 per cent of those people seeking that other sort of information. Those people get a complete rebuff. They receive no information at all. Almost one-third of applications for information about Government decisions are rejected across-the-board. Twenty per cent are filled—that is, one-fifth are filled—one-third are rejected, and the remainder are completed in part. More applications are rejected than are filled in their entirety.

That is the level of scrutiny that the Government allows. More applications are rejected than are filled in their entirety. Let us consider the 50 per cent that are filled in part. Here is the 50 per cent that Government members are counting as being filled in part. I have an example from the *Courier-Mail*, which contains the information "Dear Mr Goss", and is signed by Mr Wells. Of the applications, 50 per cent are like that. What sort of open, accountable Government do we have? That is the Government's FOI legislation. Twenty per cent of applications are filled, 50 per cent are like that letter, and one-third are rejected.

Mr Welford: You supported the legislation.

Mr QUINN: The honourable member opened his mouth. He condemned himself. That is the extent of the open accountability of the Government.

For those who lodge an FOI application, there is a salutary lesson. Let us look at what happens when one lodges an application to

Mr Wells, the Minister responsible for the legislation. I have an example from the *Courier-Mail* of 29 June 1993. The *Courier-Mail* lodged an application for information on Asian gangs in Queensland. Honourable members should look at the hurdles that were placed in front of that application. All of the tricks of the trade of the bureaucracy were tried—with the Minister's approval. The bureaucracy took the application right to the limit of the time allowed. An officer wrote back to say that there were no documents, but that the department would consult with people to see whether it could release them! That was part of it. That was a good joke. Finally, the Minister gave an exclusion certificate to say that the *Courier-Mail* could not have the information at all.

Honourable members should listen to the story. A policy adviser first claimed more time than the 45 days allowed under the Act. That is the first hurdle that is put in front of people. The department says that it cannot complete the request within the required time and that it needs more time. More than the 45 days allowed under the Act were needed so that outside parties could be consulted. That policy adviser then refused to release any of the documents and said that their existence could neither be confirmed or denied. That is a great sentence! "I refuse to release the documents but I can neither confirm nor deny that there are documents." That one is a beauty!

As a result of that, an appeal was lodged with the Information Commissioner. During that process, an exclusion certificate was issued by the Minister. Those are the sorts of hurdles that people run up against when they try to get FOI from the Minister's department.

Mr Wells: Will you take an interjection?

Mr QUINN: No. Another application was lodged with the Health Department. This time, information was asked for concerning a funding crisis in the Health Department. There were a number of documents comprising something like 300-odd pages. When the reply came back, the department said that not only could the applicant not have any of the documents, but also that the applicant could not even have a word from 320-odd pages—not a word. That is part of the one-third of applications that are rejected.

I return to those statistics. Of all of those applications that are for information other than personal information, one-fifth are filled in their entirety, 50 per cent are filled partly—and "partly" can be one or two lines—and a full one-third are rejected outright. That is the level of FOI that we have with the Government.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Briskey): Order! The time allotted for the debate has now expired.

APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 2)

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 14 September (see p. 4311).

Mr DOLLIN (Maryborough) (4.46 p.m.): Once again, the Goss Labor Government has delivered the best State Budget in Australia by a country mile. Queensland is still the only State that has not imposed a fuel tax. The record \$3.5 billion State Capital Works Program—an increase of \$250m, or 18 per cent—will generate 44 000 jobs spread across the State. That augurs well for the Maryborough/Hervey Bay region, as it will maintain and boost our record building figures as well as keep our timber industry at maximum production, where it has been for the past four years.

The Budget gives record expenditure to Education, Police and Housing and doubles the drought relief to our hard-pressed farmers, who are suffering the mother of all droughts. That proves that the Government has a heart and has been prepared to put some money where its heart is—unlike the previous Government. When that Government handed out drought relief, the money went mainly to the Government's mates and the rest went without. A record \$2.8 billion has been allocated for Health—an increase of \$187m. An extra \$150m has been provided to rebuild the Queensland hospital system in the first part of a \$1.5 billion, 10-year program. That will be funded from the tobacco tax.

That huge investment in Health is necessary to bring hospitals up to scratch after years of neglect by the previous National and Liberal Party Governments. While on the subject of health, I will take the opportunity of putting the member for Toowoomba South and shadow Minister for Health, Mike Horan, straight on a few facts surrounding the health facilities in the Maryborough/Hervey Bay region. Recently, the member for Toowoomba South stated in this House that Maryborough's new \$2m maternity facility was downgraded in comparison with the old Lady Musgrave Maternity Hospital that served the Maryborough region for over 35 years.

I realise that the member for Toowoomba South would have relied on information given to him by the AMA, private specialists and other people in Maryborough who have an axe to grind, whether it be for personal power,

financial gain or both. I ask the member for Toowoomba South to listen while I explain the mess that I inherited when I was elected in 1989, and why we need Budgets such as this to bring health services in our region back to a reasonable standard.

I will start with the old Lady Musgrave Maternity Unit. The *Maryborough Chronicle* of 25 November 1989 stated—

“Conditions at Maryborough’s Lady Musgrave Maternity Hospital are so grave and facilities so inadequate that patients’ lives are at risk, according to a city obstetrician and gynaecologist.

The doctor’s concern was serious enough for him to withdraw his services until the situation improved and emergency operating facilities were made available.

In the doctor’s opinion all that was required to open a temporary emergency facility was the provision of surgical gowns, surgical instruments and the corridor around the emergency theatre cleared of clutter. He said structural work had already been done.

The doctor, who could not be named for professional reasons, said he had been an obstetrician and gynaecologist for 15 years but had never before seen the kind of conditions that exist at the Lady Musgrave.

‘It is dirty, derelict and belongs somewhere back in the 1950s. It has no place in modern obstetric care.’

The doctor said that in his view, there was no question that someone was going to die or a baby would be born seriously ill if the present arrangement of transferring emergency patients by ambulance to the Base Hospital’s main operating theatre continued. The process, he said, took about 45 minutes.

‘For the past fourteen months, if a patient needed an emergency caesarean section at Lady Musgrave, an ambulance is called, the ambulance then has to drive to Lady Musgrave, the patient has to be transferred from the bed to a trolley, loaded into the ambulance, driven to the main hospital, transferred to another bed, carried up a flight of stairs, into the elevator and up to the main operating theatre.

The doctor was angry that he had been forced into taking the action he had, but said the people of Maryborough had a right to know what was going on.

‘Other doctors around town are really angry at me for withdrawing my services, but I’m the one who has to wear the responsibility if someone dies. The doctor said he believed that ‘someone is going to die, there is no question that someone is going to die’.

He hit out at the hospital’s failure to implement even a minimal emergency operating facility at Lady Musgrave since the operating theatre was closed down on September 26, 1988. The Base Hospital’s medical superintendent, Dr Frank Cavallo, was quoted at the time as saying the theatre was ‘unsafe’.

The doctor said he made a list of the changes necessary to provide an emergency operating service which he said was later approved by Dr Cavallo.

‘I got him to agree to change the (existing) theatre to provide an emergency theatre. I drew up plans so we could do our elective surgery in the main theatre where it is electrically safe but for the moment have an emergency facility available.’ But the doctor maintains that although the structural changes were made the balance of the plan was not implemented.

...

The doctor said that before he came to Maryborough about two years ago, Lady Musgrave had been managing for years with an operating theatre at the end of a corridor. He said there were several problems: A hole in the roof through which insects flew during a caesarean section operation, congested working area which restricted anaesthetic supervision and paediatric resuscitation, complete absence of a clean area around the operating room and inadequately organised storage for drugs and instruments.”

Another article states—

“The doctor’s criticisms are not confined to the lack of operating facilities.

He also fired a broadside at what he described as the ‘deplorable state’ of the labour ward, nursery and in-patient facilities.

The doctor said that after the operating theatre was closed down on September 26, 1988, —it was also inspected by a Health Department engineer—he had suggested that the entire hospital be closed, fixed, then reopened.

'They (hospital) responded by keeping the theatre closed. They did not do anything to the rest of the hospital, and that is how it's remained.

'The community has a right to expect that the maternity unit at a Base Hospital is hygienic, well organised and provides for the needs of its patients. The work load of the Lady Musgrave, about 650 deliveries a year, and the population it serves, approximately 70,000 people, justifies the modest level of expenditure that is immediately necessary to up-date facilities.'

The doctor said that in September and October last year and again this year he had written to Dr Cavallo outlining the changes which were necessary.

'Many of my proposals were for the reorganisation of the existing facilities, disposal of outdated equipment and the purchase of soft furnishings and nursery equipment and decorations. They wouldn't cost a lot of money,' he said.

The doctor maintained that 'the labour ward is not a clean area'.

'It should be a minimum standard to reduce the risk of infection. Public access is open and direct access is open to the outside within three metres of one delivery room. Windows are left open allowing insects to freely enter the delivery rooms. Furnishings in the delivery rooms in no way reflects the more modern trend of softening the environment during labour.

'The corridors and store rooms are cluttered in a disorganised way, with ageing cupboards and cardboard boxes. Gas bottles, drugs in unlocked cupboards and instruments clutter the corridors obstructing free movement if there was an emergency.

'In the nursery, ageing humidicribs are still in use, alongside more recently acquired units which are demonstrably superior. The unit is clinical in appearance, much too large for the number of babies and is separate from the main nursing station and post-natal rooms. Facilities for baby bathing are dated and need replacement.

...

'Standards are terrible. At the present time, bed pans are cleaned within a metre of the area where medical staff scrub up to deliver a baby,' he said."

This is the way in which the National Party handled those sorts of problems. Another article carried the headline "MLA gives hospital all clear" and stated—

"Mr Alison"—

a National Party member at the time—

"said after his visit that the Lady Musgrave was the safest place in the Wide Bay for a mother to have a baby.

'Lady Musgrave may not be trendy, but it's functional,' he said.

Mr Alison said he was totally satisfied with the level of cleanliness in the hospital and that the corridors were wide enough to cater for any emergencies. He said this view was supported by the medical people he spoke with.

Mr Alison said he wanted to assure the district's residents that the Lady Musgrave was safe. He gave this assurance after inspecting the hospital and meeting with the acting medical superintendent, Dr Padayachey, the director of anaesthesia and intensive care, Dr Mark Gibbs, and the hospital board manager, Gordon Penny.

Mr Alison said that sufficient facilities now existed in the theatre to allow it to be used in the case of an 'extraordinary emergency'."

Does the member for Toowoomba South now realise that he was led up the garden path by the AMA and doctors at Maryborough when they convinced him that the older Lady Musgrave maternity unit was of a higher standard than the new \$2m maternity facility that is fitted out with the latest technology and is a state-of-the-art facility that is situated on the same level as the operating theatres, where the specialists have always wanted it?

This 16-bed unit was financed from last year's Budget. It was opened on 27 January this year, and it is designed to handle 1 200 births a year. Last year, there were just under 800 births at the unit, still leaving what one would believe to be a fair safety margin. But due to peaks in births, in the last eight months there have been three occasions on which we have had more mothers than beds. The overflow, though undesirable, lasts at most for only two nights. With the exception of one occasion, mothers have been accommodated in other private rooms nearby. On one occasion, two beds had to be set up in the lounge of the unit. Since then, two extra private rooms have been assigned to the unit with contingency plans for further beds if we should experience such peaks again.

I further point out that whilst we were overcrowded in Maryborough, seven beds were empty at the Hervey Bay maternity facility. They remained empty because Maryborough specialists refuse to do the 20-minute drive to Hervey Bay in the case of emergencies. For some reason best known to themselves, they do their damndest to discourage mothers who are classified as being of low-birth risk from delivering there.

The Wide Bay/Maryborough region has received a record health budget of \$75.9m—an increase of \$4m over the record budget last year. This budget will allow the continued upgrading and development of existing public health services and the introduction of new ones where appropriate. This is additional to the capital works projects which are provided in the Budget for our region as part of the Goss Labor Government's new \$1.5 billion a year hospital rebuilding and modernising program.

Mr Johnson: How's your railway line to Hervey Bay? Are you going to hold onto that or lose it?

Mr DOLLIN: It is still there. This funding will enable the Wide Bay Regional Health Authority to continue to meet the needs and demands being placed on our health system by our region's enormous growth rate, which is now the highest in Queensland. Our rapidly increasing population and our ageing population escalates the cost of medical services. Land has been purchased at Hervey Bay for a new multimillion-dollar hospital, which is to be constructed in the near future.

On 15 June this year in Maryborough, in an interview on the ABC, the member for Toowoomba South and shadow Minister for Health stated that he could not support a multimillion-dollar hospital at Hervey Bay as it was only a short drive to the Maryborough Hospital, yet our specialists claim that it is too far to drive down there. On the other hand, Mr Nioa, a National Party candidate at the last State election, called for a hospital at Hervey Bay. It would appear that the Nationals are becoming as disoriented as their coalition partners. One thing of which I can assure Mr Horan is that my good neighbour the member for Hervey Bay, Bill Nunn, just loves comments such as that.

Mr Johnson: He won't be the member for Hervey Bay after the next election.

Mr DOLLIN: He will, with no trouble at all. This additional hospital facility will greatly enhance the health care of the citizens of the Wide Bay region. It will also give citizens a much wider range of treatment options,

allowing them to choose between two hospitals and a wider range of specialists.

Hervey Bay women will no longer be made to feel guilty by the Maryborough specialists for wanting to give birth in Hervey Bay close to their family and friends. Those specialists have been accused by Hervey Bay mothers of using scare tactics to prevent them from giving birth at Hervey Bay. The *Maryborough Chronicle* of 11 September 1993 carried an article with the headline "Bay mums want own facilities". It stated—

"That Hervey Bay women want to deliver their babies in Hervey Bay was the clear message to emerge from a public forum at the Hervey Bay Hospital yesterday.

Although only three mothers attended the meeting, called by the Wide Bay Regional Health Authority, the trio told a common story. Having to travel to Maryborough to deliver their babies was a major disruption to family and personal life and to their preparation for birth, and an added stress at an already tense time.

The women related their stories to a taskforce of specialist doctors and midwives who have spent the past week visiting maternity facilities at hospitals throughout the Wide Bay region.

Health authority project officer Vicky Eckart, who chaired the meeting, said the public forum had been advertised in the media and notices had been sent to relevant groups like the Nursing Mothers Association. Medical practitioners in the area had also been invited, but none showed.

In addition, questionnaires had been sent to 650 new mothers throughout the area seeking their submissions to the review.

Ms Eckart said although only three mothers had attended yesterday's forum, their views tended to reinforce what the authority already knew about women's feelings on maternity services in Hervey Bay.

Ms Eckart asked the women a series of questions relating to the service and facilities in Hervey Bay and how they could be improved.

The Bay unit, with one labour ward, is categorised as a low-risk birthing unit, and few general practitioners recommend their patients give birth there.

One woman told the forum that women were made to feel guilty if they even considered using the unit because of the risk they were exposing their unborn child and themselves to.

'Scare tactics' had resulted in an average of one birth a week at the unit.

The women said the Bay's population demanded a bigger, better equipped maternity unit and more trained staff to handle at least medium risk births.

They were told the authority had recently advertised for a visiting anaesthetist and a visiting obstetrician gynaecologist for Hervey Bay. But they were warned that both types of specialists were in heavy demand, with as many as 22 vacancies for anaesthetists in country Queensland, and major hospitals like Rockhampton and Mackay scouting around for obstetrician-gynaecologists."

Further health service enhancements planned in the 1993-94 Budget for the Maryborough/Hervey Bay region include extra visiting medical specialists—an anaesthetist and an obstetrician-gynaecologist. We are after salaried specialists so that we will have them when they are needed. We need a specialist physician, a specialist psychologist, a health promotions officer, increased community health staff, an occupational therapist and a physiotherapist.

Those positions have been advertised and interviews are taking place. With the appointment of those specialists, and with the new facilities, health care in Maryborough/Hervey Bay will be among the best in the State. This Budget in all its facets has been welcomed in Maryborough and district, which has been going ahead in leaps and bounds. The Budget will enhance our economy. I see the Budget bringing even greater prosperity to our region. I congratulate the Treasurer on this excellent Budget, which I am proud to support.

Mr CONNOR (Nerang) (5.03 p.m.): I rise to speak generally about the Budget, in particular a few issues relating to payroll tax, the role of the Queensland Treasury Corporation and the Queensland Investment Corporation, and also a few matters relating to my own electorate of Nerang, such as funding for an overpass on the Pacific Highway and capital works funding for the Gold Coast generally. I also have a few questions in relation to the poker machine tax and how it pertains to my electorate.

But, firstly, I would like to ask a few questions of the Treasurer in relation to a few local issues—that is, if he is paying attention. I

refer him to the issue of the Department of Lands planning to introduce a new charge on local authorities which use Crown land for commercial purposes. I refer the Treasurer also to the fact that the Gold Coast City Council has already been slapped with a \$3.25m bill for a parcel of Coolangatta land used as a car park.

In my own electorate, there are a number of what could be perceived to be commercial uses of council land that may or may not be in the Government's name, but I would still like to touch on them. One is the new Nerang Bowls Club and another is the Respite Centre in Nerang. What I am asking the Treasurer—he will obviously have plenty of time to be able to check on this before he replies—is exactly what the definition of a commercial enterprise is. Does it include such things as bowling clubs and respite centres? Do those activities have to be profitable?

I also refer the Treasurer to Budget Paper No. 6 Capital Works. I have tallied up the capital works funding for the Gold Coast and I can come up with only a bit over \$60m, and part of that is the \$3.4 billion Capital Works Program. The Gold Coast is receiving only about 2 per cent from that Capital Works Program. Although the Gold Coast has almost 20 per cent of Queensland's population and should be receiving almost \$600m, it is receiving only about 10 per cent of what it should be receiving.

The latest figures from the ABS show that the Gold Coast has over 14 per cent unemployment. In the last three months, unemployment has ranged between 13 per cent and 15 per cent, but it is averaging around 14 per cent, which is 4 per cent or 5 per cent above the Queensland and Australian average and about 5 per cent or 6 per cent above the Brisbane figure. Yet the Government says that it is initiating these Capital Works Programs for the purpose of creating employment.

Mrs Edmond: You are saying we shouldn't spend it in regional areas.

Mr CONNOR: No, I am saying that they should spend it in regional areas.

Mrs Edmond: No. You're saying they should overspend in the south-east corner and not spend in regional areas. You tell that to Vaughan Johnson.

Mr CONNOR: The Government is not spending it on the Gold Coast, yet Brisbane, which has a much lower level of unemployment, has been receiving most of the capital works funding in the last few years.

Mr T. B. Sullivan: That's not true. It's untrue.

Mr CONNOR: Brisbane has been receiving far more than its share and the Gold Coast less than its share.

I would like to remind the Treasurer of some instances of the extreme need for capital works funding in my electorate. I notice that he has left the Chamber, which makes it very difficult for me to receive any indication as to what is occurring with the Budget.

Mr Wells: He'll read it in *Hansard*. If it's an important matter, he will read it in *Hansard* and he'll get back to you.

Mr CONNOR: I thank the Minister. All the way to Brisbane and most of the way through the Gold Coast, the Pacific Highway has overpasses, except at Nerang, which has three sets of traffic lights at a very busy section of the highway. Honourable members may be aware that only a few days ago a tragic accident occurred on that stretch of road and three people died. I accept that it is a very expensive intersection at which to build an overpass. The cost is estimated at \$12m. But I have written to Mr Hamill, the Minister for Transport, requesting that he construct an additional overpass at Pappas Way.

Mr Johnson: Did you get a reply?

Mr CONNOR: No. I only just wrote. That intersection needs work to be carried out urgently. I ask the Treasurer to look into that. At that same intersection about a week earlier, a similar accident occurred in which people were injured. It is only a matter of time before more people are killed there.

The other issue that I would like to address from a local point of view relates to the Nerang RSL. As I understand it, the Treasurer is intending to increase the poker machine tax by an additional 2 per cent for clubs with poker machine revenue between \$2m and \$3m and increase it by 0.5 per cent for clubs with a turnover of more than \$500,000. As I understand it, the Nerang RSL would fit into the latter category. However, when it increases its number of poker machines—it has projected to increase that number shortly to 50—it will possibly be included in the former category. The Nerang RSL, like most clubs, has had problems over the years. Its finances were not as good as they should have been. In common with most other clubs, it is just starting to get its finances into order. Many of those clubs have had to extend their premises to allow for the additional poker machines. As a result, they have had to go further into debt. They have

planned for those poker machine returns to pay for those extensions. However, out of the blue, the Government is talking about raking off additional money, which will make it extremely difficult for the clubs to service those debts.

Mrs Woodgate interjected.

Mr CONNOR: Those debts have been incurred on the expected returns of the poker machines. It has made it very difficult, especially for the Nerang RSL. I would also like to consider the Budget in general. Firstly, I ask the Treasurer: what has been the impact on this Budget of all the changing around of the Federal Budget in relation to the petrol excise? I imagine that the Budget was framed originally on the basis of the expected excise on fuel. But there have been two or three changes since then. I wonder whether the Treasurer has considered the likely impact on the Budget of the varying amounts of fuel tax. If the Treasurer could respond to that in his reply, I would be much obliged.

There is one other issue that the Treasurer might like to clarify. I have been hearing a few things around the business community, mainly in Brisbane, to the effect that the Treasurer is considering a joint venture between the Government and the private sector in establishing a venture capital company. *Business Queensland* has, in fact, suggested a model for that corporation. An article that appeared in that publication stated—

“Leading money managers and businesses should be invited to invest in the new company at a level large enough to give them control. In turn, the new company would come under private management with a mutually agreed upon charter with the Government to promote the growth of Queensland based companies.”

Is the Treasurer intending to initiate something along these lines using the corporations legislation as a model? If so, does he have a time frame for it and a model on which it will be based? Does the Treasurer have in mind some joint venture partners in this style of operation? Does he have some target investment amount in mind? What level of exposure will the taxpayers of Queensland have? Are we likely to have a Government guarantee associated with this? Or is it possible that we could have an open chequebook situation?

I turn to another aspect of the Budget that the Treasurer was quite happy to talk about, namely, the windfall profit from the sale

of the Gladstone Power Station—some \$880m. The Treasurer intended to retire the debt, which would bring it down to about \$1 billion. That being the case, I note that State Cabinet is about to consider whether or not it wishes to link up with the power grid in New South Wales. This was brought about partially as a result of the projected need for an additional 300 megawatts of power by 1998. New South Wales has more than enough generating power to supply itself until 2005. This means that Queensland has the power-generating capacity to keep us fully supplied only until 1998—another four or five years.

I note that there has been procrastination on the issue of a number of other power stations. The Government has even been talking about resurrecting some of the older ones. Is the Treasurer intending to link up with the New South Wales power grid? If so, has he considered what the cost will be to the taxpayer in the form of the actual price of electricity? Is the cost of production of electricity in New South Wales higher or lower than it is in Queensland? Is it cost neutral, cost effective or whatever?

Mrs Edmond interjected.

Mr CONNOR: That is what I am asking the Treasurer: what is the likely effect on the taxpayers of Queensland? I refer the Treasurer to his own Budget Paper No. 5, which states—

“ . . . investment in plant and equipment fell 10.6% compared with a 13.1% decline during 1991-92 and further, this category of investment is likely to remain recessed for some time.”

I might add that this is the type of investment that creates manufacturing jobs, and it is the solid investment that creates the majority of jobs on an ongoing basis.

Another set of figures backs up the Budget papers. I refer to the Treasurer's *Quarterly Economic Review* of June 1993, which states that commercial lending in Queensland was 3.4 per cent less than it was a year ago. The same paper also explains that the low level of business investment has reduced economic growth and probably job growth as well.

I note the huge jump in the Australian Bureau of Statistics figure for unemployment between last month and the previous month. The Treasurer has argued that most of the slow-down in business investment is as a result of the drought and low world commodity prices, that a lot of investment in the mining industry has been put on the back burner and

that is why we are not seeing that investment in plant and equipment. Up to a point, that statement is justified. But I might add that a number of things which have been slowing down investment have nothing whatsoever to do with foreign commodity prices or the drought.

I refer to the general bogging down of the bureaucracy in making decisions. A prime example of that is the sale of the Gladstone Power Station and the associated \$750m in the Boyne Island smelter. Four years ago, that was on the drawing board. It should have been finalised by now. But that is typical of the things that are occurring in Queensland. Unless the Government can speed up some of its decision-making processes so that business can get on with it and start investing, we are going to continue to see unemployment rise and investment decline.

Another disincentive for investment—and it is probably the No. 1 issue—is payroll tax. It is worth putting on the record the changes that have been effected. I shall make a comparison between the actual figures for 1989 and the actual figures in this Budget. In 1989, land tax was \$76m. In the current Budget, it is \$209m. In 1989, payroll tax was \$670m. In this Budget, it is \$809m. Liquor licensing fees were \$76m. They are now \$108m.

Government members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Briskey): Order! The House will come to order.

Mr CONNOR: With almost zero inflation and during the worst recession that we have had in 60 years, businesses have had to absorb massive increases in their operating costs. The cost of running a business in Queensland is rising when it should not be. It is rising mainly as a result of State Government charges. The Government cannot keep siphoning off funds from business and expect it to increase investment, especially if it siphons off those funds in employment-related areas such as payroll tax.

I accept that this is something that the Treasurer has inherited. But this Treasurer is in a unique position. As he explains it himself, at the end of this financial year he will be in the position of being only \$1 billion in debt—assuming that the sale of the Gladstone Power Station goes ahead. The Treasurer also said that he can bring in a Budget with a \$206m surplus, or a negative net financing requirement. It is all well and good to bring in a surplus Budget, but is it the best idea in the middle of the worst recession

in 60 years? Would it not be better to bring in a balanced Budget and reduce payroll tax?

As to the gross figure of around \$800m in payroll tax—I got the figures today from Treasury. A total of 27.16 per cent is actually going from one Government department or authority—

Mr Beattie: You got that from the Parliamentary Library. It's got a cover sheet on it.

Mr CONNOR: I got it today from Treasury. A total of 27 per cent is going from one Government department to another, or from one Government authority to the Treasury. Over \$200m of that has a nil effect, because it is going from one Government pocket into another. So the net return to the Government is only around \$600m a year. If we take off the \$200m surplus, the Treasurer has to find only \$400m, or, alternatively, he can reduce expenditure. But at the same time as this is going on, the Treasurer is actually broadening the tax base in payroll tax to include a fringe benefits tax.

The Treasurer said that he expects at least a 1 per cent productivity increase from corporatisation. In effect, that is \$650m—his figure. We are talking about finding an amount of \$400m net. If the Treasurer phased in corporatisation at the same speed as he phased out payroll tax, he could have extra money left over. Queensland is the only State that is in a position to be able to do that. Can members imagine the response of business if this was to occur? We would have droves of business people coming to Queensland, and investment would be coming here in a hurry. One has only to look at the figures to see that that is not occurring. Our Investment in this State is declining.

I turn to another area of concern relating to the Queensland Treasury Corporation. I must say that some of the figures look very strange. I note that, for the last financial year, the exposure to foreign currency by the Queensland Treasury Corporation was \$2.2 billion—the majority of it in Japanese yen. These are bond offerings offshore, and that is what the QTC is all about. I accept the fact that a lot of those occurred during the term of the previous Government. However, the biggest of those occurred in 1990 or later. So the Treasurer cannot say that he inherited it from the previous Government. Anyone who reads the financial papers would have noticed that the Australian dollar has decreased dramatically in value over the last 12 months. The trade-weighted index has fallen from 55 to 47. What that comes down to is a blow-out

in the liabilities of the QTC. Granted, there is some hedging from the QIC, but I would like to quote from this document—

“An approved percentage of the portfolio remains unhedged, taking into consideration market conditions and currency forecasts.”

No-one forecast that the Australian dollar was going to depreciate by that amount during the last 12 months. Budget Paper No. 2, page 92, states—

“The increase in gross liabilities”—

this is referring to the QTC—

“reflects market activity undertaken by the Queensland Treasury Corporation (QTC). QTC is an active market participant and rapid changes in the composition of its asset and liability portfolios means that care should be taken in interpreting movements in gross balances.”

It would seem that we have a massive, billion dollar-plus blow-out in liabilities in the QTC, and most of that has occurred as a result of its exposure to foreign currency. The QTC is paying performance dividends, yet at the same time it has just had a billion dollar blow-out in its liabilities. Granted, it has hedged with the QIC, but the QIC returns its money as current revenue, and we will not be paying off the additional liabilities until those bonds mature. It means that future Budgets will have to meet the losses that have occurred over the last 12 months, although the Budget has received the benefits of the increases in the QIC's investments.

I quote again from page 9 of the QIC annual report—

“The Queensland Investment Corporation Investment Trust holds investments on behalf of the Queensland Government, the Consolidated Fund and its trust, the Motor Vehicle Insurance Defendants' Fund, the Workers' Compensation Fund and under superannuation.”

The Government is receiving that money, and the QIC announced a huge windfall in profit for this year as a result of its offshore equity holdings and bond holdings. That is why the Budget has been balanced and that is why we were able to have a surplus but at the same time move those liabilities.

Time expired.

Mr BEATTIE (Brisbane Central) (5.23 p.m.): After that wimpish performance, no wonder Paul Everingham thinks the Liberals are all wimps.

Mr Szczerbanik: He's not a stud.

Mr BEATTIE: I am not taking any interjections today. I got into trouble the last time I did that. Before I start my contribution to this debate, I point out that anyone who knows the payroll tax situation in Queensland would know that the honourable member for Nerang has probably been reading the Budget papers for New South Wales. The reality is that Queensland business will continue to benefit in the 1993-94 financial year from the State's low rate of payroll tax of 5 per cent—for the benefit of the honourable member for Nerang, I repeat, 5 per cent—representing a saving of \$320m a year, which can be compared with the rate of 7 per cent in the member's old home State of New South Wales, and which is the rate that applies generally in other States. The figure that the member was bandying around, which was supposedly given by Treasury, obviously included a component from local authorities. The figure that the member sought to interpret as simply applying to the State Government obviously included local authorities.

Mr Connor: No, it didn't.

Mr BEATTIE: Yes, it did. That is the only sense that can be made of it. Obviously, what the member was saying was absolute nonsense.

Mr Connor: It only included Government authorities. It did not include local authorities.

Mr BEATTIE: Yes, it did. The member should go back and do his homework. In terms of a comparison with the other States—the Opposition has tried to draw this blurry line to attack this very sound and stable Budget. The criticism that the Opposition has made of the Budget has been very limited. In fact, other than making the formal responses that it has had to make in this House, the Opposition has been very silent in attacking this Budget.

Mr Connor interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: As the honourable member knows well, the financial writers have overwhelmingly supported this Budget. The Goss Government has also progressively extended the payroll tax threshold, lifting it to \$700,000 from 1 July 1993, which is an increase of 40 per cent since it came to office, while inflation between December 1989 and June 1994 is estimated at just 14 per cent. If one compares that threshold with the thresholds of other States and—because the Opposition needs some help—if one reads the *Budget Overview* and *Statements of Receipts and Expenditure* at page 17, one will

see it states that the payroll tax exemption threshold in New South Wales—the member for Nerang's old home State—is \$500,000; in Victoria, it is \$515,000; in South Australia, \$456,000; in Western Australia, \$375,000; in Tasmania, \$565,000; in the Northern Territory, \$500,000; and in the ACT, \$500,000. So Queensland has by far the best tax exemption threshold level for payroll tax. Not only that, it has the lowest rate of payroll tax. I have no idea where the member for Nerang obtained his distorted analysis. It is a little bit like the Leader of the Opposition, who, we understand, disappeared for a week after the Budget was presented.

Mr Vaughan: Where was he?

Mr BEATTIE: I take that interjection. Where was the Leader of the Opposition? That is a matter that should be the subject of an inquiry. The Opposition is always calling for inquiries. What happened to the Leader of the Opposition after the Budget was brought down?

Mr T. B. Sullivan: He was looking for something to criticise, and he couldn't find anything.

Mr BEATTIE: Exactly! He went missing for a week, then came back with a blurry type of criticism—the sort of criticisms that the honourable member for Nerang made—based on misinformation, disinformation and a misunderstanding of the facts. He came back and gave a glossy overview, when he did not understand the Budget.

Mr Connor interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: The more I see of the member for Nerang, the more I agree with Paul Everingham. I would like to refer to the capital works benefits which came out of this Budget for my electorate of Brisbane Central. They are quite significant. Contrary to what was said by the honourable member for Nerang—who, as I said, cannot read the Budget—the Capital Works Program is shared throughout Queensland. However, I am pleased to see that my electorate has benefited specifically out of the Capital Works Program. For example, the inner-city railway link has been allocated \$24.1m. That is a continuation of a past program, which was the quadruplication of the inner-city railway link between Roma Street Station and Bowen Hills Station, including the construction of new tunnels.

That quadruplication will increase the inner-city capacity for trains by 80 per cent, and it will improve service reliability and accessibility to stations. That will enable

additional passenger services to be introduced for peak periods. Completion is scheduled for 1996. Works during 1993-94 include the continuation of tunnel lining on new tunnels between Central Station and Brunswick Street Station, commencement on tunnelling between Central Station and Roma Street Station and new station works at Roma Street Station, which I applaud.

Members of this House would be aware that I have raised previously the issue of an inner-city rail link to service the Kelvin Grove campus of the QUT. When this tunnelling program is completed in 1996, that inner-city rail link will be a possibility. This quadruplication will be a significant improvement to rail services in Brisbane and an important asset to its transport system.

In terms of other capital benefits—I am delighted to see that an amount of \$358,000 has been allocated to the New Farm Special School for an amenities block and refurbishment. While I am talking about the New Farm Special School, I make reference to the fact that, yesterday, a report from Robert Andrews, John Elkins and Robert Christie titled *Report and Operational Plan for the Provision of Special Education 1993-96 Metropolitan East Education Region* was provided in which an issue was raised on page 117 in relation to the future of the New Farm Special School.

That matter was discussed this morning at a meeting of a number of caucus members with the Minister for Education and Department of Education officials. No doubt, that will be sorted through in the long term. I have had a close relationship with the New Farm Special School. I will do everything I can to ensure that the students who attend that school are well looked after. Nevertheless, I appreciate that this is a matter which will need constant consultation with the local community. These are not the only ways in which the electorate of Brisbane Central has benefited from the Capital Works Program.

I am delighted that the Fortitude Valley Police Station will undergo a refurbishment program at a total cost of \$690,000. The Government has provided a record Police budget, and I will refer to that in more detail later. Of that \$690,000 for improvements to the Fortitude Valley Police Station, \$350,000 will be spent in the 1993-94 financial year and the remainder will be spent during the following financial year when the work is expected to be completed. The Fortitude Valley Police Station is a busy 24-hour complex. I am pleased to be part of a Government that recognises that police

officers need the best resources to carry out their role in maintaining law and order in inner city areas.

Significant advancements have been made in law and order in the Valley area, particularly in the Brunswick Street and Chinatown Malls, and refurbishment of the Fortitude Valley Police Station will complement those improvements. The Fortitude Valley Police Station provides accommodation for uniformed police officers as well as CIB, Juvenile Aid Bureau, Intelligence Branch, and break-and-enter staff. This year's allocation is an example of the Goss Government's commitment to maintaining law and order in Queensland.

There are other very important contributions to capital works in my electorate, and I am pleased that the Royal Brisbane Hospital has received a significant grant in two areas. Firstly, it has received \$3.55m for the provision of psychiatric facilities, which the hospital desperately needs. I regularly inspect the hospital and spend time talking to both the staff and management. In addition, an amount of \$6.5m has been allocated to the Royal Children's Hospital Medical Block Stage 2. The Governor-General, Bill Hayden, and the Premier, Wayne Goss, recently opened Stage I of the medical block, and this \$6.5m allocation will be used for construction of the second. I am delighted to note this Government's firm commitment to continuation of the provision of high standards of medical facilities and services by the Royal Brisbane Hospital.

An additional sum has been allocated to the Ballymore Rugby Union club for the construction of additional grandstand facilities. This is an ongoing program of financial assistance, and this year's allocation is \$500,000 for the 1993-94 year. I am happy to say that although there was some sensitivity about parking in areas around Ballymore, the problems between the local community group, the Herston-Kelvin Grove Community Association—with which I have a lot of contact—and the Ballymore Rugby Union Association have now been resolved. Extra city council buses have been provided. I believe that the problems that existed in the past are being addressed in a most sensible and constructive way.

A number of other capital works projects have been provided for in my electorate, including \$240,000 for the Brisbane Court of Appeal building. I will not go into any great detail about money that has been allocated to other facilities, other than to refer briefly to

child care. An estimated \$4.5m has been set aside for 1993-94 for the provision of new child-care centres in high-need areas throughout the State and for the completion of centres that were commenced in 1992-93. As a result of that allocation, eight long day care centres are to be established under the National Child Care Strategy 1992-96, and one of those centres will be located in Kelvin Grove in my electorate. This Government has demonstrated its firm commitment and continued support of child-care facilities, and I think that most sensible members of Parliament would acknowledge that child care has become a quality-of-life issue which is a matter of paramount importance to many parents.

I turn now to general planning issues that are important to my electorate, where quality-of-life issues relate directly to what happens in the infrastructure planning area, in particular. If road planning is not done correctly, people will be able to travel through my electorate in droves. That is why I am pleased that the Treasurer said in his Budget Speech that the Government is meeting the challenge by future infrastructure provision which requires careful planning and coordination. Three specific initiatives are set out in the Treasurer's Budget Speech, and two of them are particularly relevant to my electorate. One is funding for master planning to oversee land development in the strategic Gateway industrial precinct adjacent to the Brisbane sea and air ports and the other is that, following receipt of the SEQ 2001 report, a unit will be established in the Department of Housing, Local Government and Planning for development and implementation of regional growth management strategies. The Treasurer also stated—

“Approximately 80% of this massive program of infrastructure expansion will be carried out by the private sector, with some 53% occurring outside of south-east Queensland.”

One of the tragedies of the maladministration by previous Queensland Governments that has affected the south-east corner of the State is the insufficient commitment given to planning. This has resulted in roads, schools, water supply and sewerage facilities either being placed in the wrong area or not being placed in the areas where they are needed. Frankly, that is a waste of public money, and it is about time that we got it right. One of the things that this Government has got right—infrastructure planning—was commenced by Tom Burns and continued by Terry Mackenroth, and I am

delighted that the Treasurer has allocated funds for it to be further continued. The whole-of-government approach that is being adopted in a number of areas is fundamentally important because if we do not get infrastructure planning right at this stage, Brisbane will finish up like Sydney—an absolute mess—where the roads into the city are always choked with traffic. Everybody knows that Parramatta Road is a disaster.

For some time, I have been firmly committed to the construction of a ring-road around Brisbane, similar to the M25 in London and the ring-roads around Paris and Rome.

Mrs Edmond: Outside built-up areas.

Mr BEATTIE: Indeed, outside built-up areas. The major capital cities of the world have ring-roads. Freeways should not be designed to carry traffic through the city or through large built-up areas. That is short-term, stupid planning, and that is why I am strongly of the view that infrastructure planning to which this Government has given financial commitment is important. While I am on the topic of local area management, let me say that I am pleased to note that this Government's continuing commitment to local government is reflected in its financial allocations.

I think it is important to have an overview of this State's Budget position. In the first three years of the Goss Government, net debt fell from \$4.3 billion to \$1.9 billion. A great deal is said in this Parliament and in other places about the good nest egg that the National Party left this Government. People should bear in mind that when the Goss Government came to office, it inherited a net debt of \$4.3 billion which has been reduced to \$1.9 billion, and they should compare the economic management exhibited by this Government to the financial position it inherited.

Mr Connor: Oh!

Mr BEATTIE: The honourable member can interject, but even a person with his limited financial understanding would know that it is better to have a net debt of \$1.9 billion than a net debt of \$4.3 billion, which was the case when we came to Government. Even the honourable member could understand that!

It is important for honourable members to note the forecast that, on current trends, Queensland will have more financial assets than liabilities by 1995-96. In other words, to use the Treasurer's terms, “the State of Queensland should be ‘net debt free’ by

1995-96." Bearing in mind the financial difficulties that other States have had over the recent past, that is not a bad track record. For the cynics who want to be critical about it—going from \$4.3 billion to \$1.9 billion net debt over four years is a significant achievement.

In the few moments remaining to me, I want to make a couple of other general comments about funding that I think are important. At the last State election, the Government introduced a tobacco tax. From that, the Deputy Premier has provided specific help to my electorate. I want to put on record today my appreciation to Tom Burns, the Deputy Premier, for the way in which the funds are being used. I refer to the Wilston State School, to which Tom accompanied me, the New Farm State School and the Windsor State School. The Wilston State School will have a new playground for Years 1 and 2. The fact that my children are in Year 2 at that school makes me even more delighted. But let me make it clear that I have no self-interest.

The New Farm State School will also have a new playground, which was desperately needed. The Windsor State School will have a new tuckshop, which again was desperately needed. Under the National Party Government, many of the traditional, older inner suburbs in electorates that were held by the Labor Party were ignored. The Government has redressed some of the imbalance that existed in the past.

Mr Bredhauer: They even have lights in the classrooms.

Mr BEATTIE: That is right. Exactly. That is why I am pleased that three of the schools in my electorate—Wilston State School, New Farm State School and Windsor State School—have all directly benefited from the tobacco tax. That tax has meant not only direct benefits but also jobs for the long-term unemployed. The P & Cs at those schools have been enthusiastic about the benefits that they have received from the tobacco tax. Again, I firmly put on record my appreciation to the Deputy Premier for his efforts in visiting my schools and sharing around the benefits of the tobacco tax in such a way that children at schools in my electorate will benefit specifically from it.

One aspect of the Budget that gives me particular joy, or gives me cause for appreciation, is the commitment to safety and security. In this place, we hear a lot of hoo-ha from members of the National and Liberal Parties about crime and violence. The Budget

allocates a record \$477m for the Queensland Police Service—an increase of 5.5 per cent. That means an extra 120 police on the beat this year, taking the police strength in Queensland to 6 300. We have put our money where our mouth is. We have put police out on the beat.

I know that the business community in Fortitude Valley, for example, where foot patrols and horse patrols have operated, are delighted with the commitment that the Government has given to policing not only in that area but also in the other suburbs of my electorate. The Budget also provides \$40m over three years for expansion of the Queensland Police Service in line with population growth. That was a pre-election commitment that the Government has fulfilled.

Time expired.

Mrs McCAULEY (Callide) (5.43 p.m.): Although the Budget has obviously given a warm inner glow to some of the Labor lawyers in the Government, the sound conservative people in the Opposition—the good money managers—have expressed their concern time and time again about matters such as the enormous 9 per cent increase in recurrent expenditure, the growth in the Government sector and not the private sector and the fact that the Government has imposed more indirect taxes, levies—call them what you will—and ratted more hollow logs than has any previous Government yet still does not have enough money. All of those matters greatly concern members of the Opposition.

Lest it be thought that I am simply expressing a political opinion, let me read briefly from an article in today's *Australian Financial Review* which was titled "Why Queensland is not a boom economy" and which stated—

"These figures show that as far as underlying real business activity is concerned, Queensland is not the business powerhouse it is believed to be in the south.

The single major contributor to growth in Queensland in 1992-93 was private consumption expenditure (what people spend on food, clothing and other consumables) which grew by 4.5 per cent. It provided 2.7 percentage points of the 5.4 per cent in annual growth.

Spending on housing, which rose by 16.8 per cent to meet the demographic demands, contributed 1.1 percentage points of growth.

And government spending, principally through a combination of the Federal Government's One Nation package and the State Government's capital works programme, provided 0.8 percentage points of growth.

Business investment caused a 0.5 percentage point decline.

For the current year, the economy will be even more reliant on government spending to promote growth."

I will not quote again what the Leader of the Opposition, Rob Borbidge, said. He made the point very well that, when the Cain Government's fourth Budget was brought down, it was regarded as a very sound, steady Budget. He then referred to what happened in the ensuing years. He made the comparison and noted the very, very strong similarity between Mr Cain's fourth Budget and Mr Goss' fourth Budget. It does not augur well for the future.

For Callide, which is the sixth-largest electorate in the State, there is only one capital works project in the Budget, and that is the preschool at Jambin, which is already finished. I do not have a lot to look forward to in that respect. A positive—and it is probably the only one that I will mention; but it is a positive and I was very happy to see it—was in the Regional Arts Development Fund. I was lobbied, as were, I presume, many other members, about the fact that money in that pool should be increased from \$5m to \$10m so that the interest can be spent in the regional areas on arts activities. That was done, and I was more than pleased to see that councils with a population in excess of 200 000 will be cut out of the income from that \$10m that has been invested. That money will assist the Banana Shire Council, the Monto Shire Council, Mundubbera, Eidsvold, Gayndah, Biggenden, Taroom, Rolleston, Springsure, Bauhinia and all of the areas within my electorate where people who are interested in the arts and have tremendous talent feel that they should not be disadvantaged simply because they live in a rural or remote area.

Last weekend, I opened an exhibition called Brigalow Bondings. An artist teamed with an artisan. Whether they were silversmiths, potters or sculptors, they teamed up together. It was one of the best exhibitions that I have ever seen. Some time in October, it will come to Brisbane. I would recommend that exhibition. If any honourable members receive an invitation to see it, they should go and see it. The piece de resistance of the

Brigalow Bondings exhibition was a Brahman bull that had been made by two women called Jo Lawrence and Dorte Cridland. It was made out of copper float valves that they had cut and moulded to shape. It was a superb centrepiece for the whole show, which was first-class, quality stuff.

Recently in my electorate we have seen the rail closures and then the rail non-closures. We are not quite sure where we are at. I was pleased to go with the Deputy Premier, Mr Burns, to Monto and Gayndah to talk to people about the closure of the Monto-Mungar line and the Monto-Gladstone line. He also went to Biloela—I could not be there because I could not get back from Parliament quickly enough—to talk about the Biloela-Baralaba line. All of those meetings were fruitful and the people put their cases very well. We look to Mr Burns to make the recommendations that we need to avoid the social dislocation that the closure of those lines would bring.

I will not dwell yet again on the Stickmakers and their use of road transport that supposedly goes from Monto and through Biloela on the bitumen to Gladstone. Residents of the Boyne Valley tell me that they sneak up the Boyne Valley Road in the middle of the night. That is foolish. DBIRD has a lot to answer for, in that it originally did not even consider rail transport, and it should have. Somebody in DBIRD should get a good kick in a very sensitive place for that.

Roads are a most important part of my electorate. Because I spend a lot of time travelling around that electorate, I know that the roads are most important. I am very pleased to see that money has been put aside to upgrade the Rolleston Road. It runs in almost a straight line due west from Biloela. It is a very narrow bitumen road with very poor shoulders. It carries road trains and other heavy traffic constantly. To travel out to that area is a bit of a challenge. The road is also on a school bus route. There is a need for money to be spent. There is a need for the shoulders to be widened and for that road to be made safer for people to travel on.

When I was in Taroom some time back, I was pleased to notice that the road from the junction at Palm Creek into Taroom—which is some 18 kilometres—appears to be undergoing a complete upgrade. That is excellent. Some concern has been expressed by the conservation committee in that area about the olinda trees which are being threatened by the construction of that new road. However, I believe that representatives

of the Transport Department are meeting with the council to discuss the matter. Hopefully, a satisfactory conclusion will be reached.

Because of the drought conditions in my area and in the Bauhinia area, I have been lobbying very hard to have Highway 17—which goes through Biloela and down through Gayndah—converted to a road train route while the drought prevails. If that occurs, people from the western area can transport their cattle right through to the Beaudesert meatworks without having to stop to have them dipped. There is a clean area from Taroom south, and people have to stop to have their cattle dipped if they travel through that area. That costs time and money. I have not been successful in my efforts in that regard.

Some months ago, I was speaking to a very senior official of the Transport Department, and I was quite astounded that, when I mentioned Highway 17, he did not know what I was talking about. He did not realise that that route is called Highway 17. That is the name used for that highway in all tourist brochures. All of the towns along that route refer to it as Highway 17, yet that Transport Department officer was not aware that it was called Highway 17. That set me on my heels a bit. As I said, I have not succeeded in my request for road trains to be allowed on that route, but at least I have raised the awareness of the Transport Department about the needs of the people transporting their cattle to the south.

I turn now to primary industries. Recently, I attended a meeting about the need to dip cattle being transported from Wandoan to Toowoomba. Some 150 people attended that meeting in Wandoan. They were all keen to discuss the matter of ticky cattle travelling through clean areas to get to the meatworks. The problem is that if cattle are dipped immediately prior to their going to market, there is always a concern about pesticide residue. I would like to see some statistics on that. I would like to see how many cattle have had a problem with pesticide residue because they have been dipped in the week before slaughter before I pass judgment on the topic. It was very interesting to note that those in the clean area were dead-set against ticky cattle going through their area, and the ones who really wanted that to be allowed to happen came from the ticky areas. Obviously, people have a vested interest in the matter. I could not help but be amazed to discover that Mr Casey may be in favour of the proposal to allow ticky cattle to travel through clean areas, because he wants to take the tick line back to

Mount Isa. Any action to allow ticky cattle to travel through a clean area really is going the other way. I wonder whether Mr Casey knows quite what he is up to.

Mr De Lacy: Just like you—representation from both groups.

Mrs McCAULEY: And then he has to decide accordingly. Another recent meeting in that area that was well attended by 120 people dealt with the issue of stock stealing and the need for a program of education for the judiciary on the need for more realistic penalties and hence stronger deterrents for stock stealing.

I have a grave concern about the DPI research piggery at Biloela. At present, no projects are being given to that piggery. I believe that the bureaucrats in charge of this area are saying, "We do not want to have a research piggery in a tropical area. We would rather have it at Wacol and have all our work there." Because the facility at Biloela is being given no projects, the powers that be will say, "Well, there is no work; therefore we will close it down." That research piggery is almost totally self-funded from the sale of pigs. Recently, I took the Opposition spokesman on Primary Industries, Trevor Perrett, through that facility. He was very interested in it. I am very concerned that that piggery not be closed down. The Biloela/Monto area is a very large area which contains some very large piggeries. The Biloela facility is the only research piggery in tropical Queensland, and we have to keep it. It is as simple as that. I send fair warning to the Minister that, if he tries to close that facility down, he will face grave opposition.

I want to refer to the Brigalow Research Station at Theodore. Recently, I was talking to some local councillors who pointed out that no contribution is made by the State towards roads or any infrastructure for those types of facilities, yet many bureaucrats, each in their own car, use that road every day and cause the council to spend more money on it. However, the State Government does not contribute a thing to the upkeep of that road. I think that is unfortunate.

I turn now to water resources. The water allocation year starts on 1 September. There are nil allocations from the Dawson River for irrigators in the Theodore/Moura area. That demonstrates the seriousness of the problems being faced in that area. There is simply not enough water left in the Dawson River. The operators of the Moura mine are extremely worried about its future. Imagine if that mine, which has a work force of some 600 men, has

to close because of a lack of water. The workers could perhaps be sent on holidays, but not for long.

The Dawson Valley Development Association is doing a tremendous job in promoting the need for future planning on the Dawson River. A survey is presently being undertaken by the Minister's department on the potential for the Dawson River and the need for water storage in that area. The results of that survey have been promised for some time now. The results seem to be delayed from one month to the next. Those results are needed now. They need to be discussed urgently. We need to know where we are going. Those results are most important. Even if it rains and the Dawson River runs again, the importance of those results will not diminish. The Government will have to consider spending some money in that area. The Wandoan area is really the forgotten area of Queensland. I would like very much to see a green fields project there with the coal mine and the power station and a huge dam for water storage. I believe that would be a tremendous contribution to the area. It has great potential. It is a very exciting area. If the railway is extended from Wandoan to Gladstone to transport coal, the whole area will really go ahead. I look to this Government to do something about it, but I do not have a lot of hope that it will.

I turn now to health services. There is a need right through the Callide electorate for more health professionals. I have just presented a submission to the Health Minister for two occupational therapists in Biloela. The need there is tremendous, not just with the older people but also with the younger people and the ones in between. We also need speech therapists at the Eidsvold Pre-school and other pre-schools in the area which have disabled children who need therapists' services so that they can remain in their home environment and not be disadvantaged by living in a rural area. All of those areas need more services.

As to hospitals—we no longer have a doctor at Eidsvold. There was a lengthy wait for a doctor to be appointed to that area. In fact, when I spoke in the Budget debate last year, I mentioned that Eidsvold did not have a doctor. We are back to square one. They had a doctor for a little while, but he has now gone. I know that there will be a lengthy wait for another one. It is very difficult to get personnel to go to places such as Eidsvold.

There are enormous waiting lists for public dental services right throughout the

electorate. In Biloela, even if a person has a severe toothache, that person will be lucky to see the public dentist before Christmas. In Taroom and Mundubbera, there is a need for nursing home facilities attached to the hospital. All of these areas need to be addressed. Although such a facility is provided through combined Federal/State funding, it is important that this Government consider those areas and plan ahead so that people retiring in rural areas do not need to be dislocated and sent away from their family; so that they can spend their old age in the area in which they grew up and have lived their whole lives.

I have been writing to Mr Burns for over 12 months about the old school premises in Mundubbera. Finally, I believe that the Government has given first offer on that premises to the Mundubbera Shire Council. I know that it has plans for that site which has been sitting idle and empty for some years now, which is a real waste.

It is disappointing that a mammography service is still not available in the Wide Bay area. Apparently, it will not be available until 1994, and perhaps not until the end of 1994, if we are lucky.

Sitting suspended from 6 to 7.30 p.m.

Mrs McCAULEY: In the short time remaining, I would like to concentrate on education. It is of no surprise to me that, according to the Budget, the administration component of the Education budget has gone from 4 per cent four years ago to almost 10 per cent today, because I have in front of me a list of the extra administration duties that are required of teaching principals. This, I believe, was behind the introduction of the concept of clustering. There are four areas in this list of devolved responsibilities that are impacting on schools. The management component includes nine areas such as school development planning, annual operational planning, shared decision making, attendance and participation in forums and committees, school advisory councils, principal professional development, principals' performance review, collaborative school review and internal school reviews.

The studies component has 11 sections, which include English language arts, numeracy, student performance standards, HRE, technology, curriculum, catering for disadvantaged groups, social justice and equity issues, supportive school environment, LOTE and active and informed citizenship. The human resources component includes such areas as staff professional development, staff in service priority area, staff performance

and review, AST selections, sexual harassment policy, recruitment and selection, workplace health and safety, grievance procedures, teacher transfer policy, freedom of information, gender equity in school sport and the Anti-Discrimination Act. The resources and administration component includes six different sections such as budget, provision of resources, and maintenance of assets. Is it any wonder that our poor old school teaching principals are sinking almost without trace?

The Peek-A-Doo State School must be the most remote school in the Callide electorate. On the last occasion I visited that school, I managed to smash my car on the way back and had to walk for an hour and a half to a telephone to get some help.

Mr Burns: Who did you run into?

Mrs McCAULEY: I ran into a large bump in the road. I must say that it is a long way to anywhere from Peek-A-Doo. That school is concerned at the proposed changes to the PCAP system. I will quote from its letter—

“Our School Staff, P & C. Association, and community would like to strongly recommend that the Priority Country Area Program remain in its current form to serve the schools of the South-Western Region that are disadvantaged by restricted access to social, cultural and educational activities and services as a result of their geographic isolation.

In the past our school has benefited from the current P.C.A.P. program in the following ways . . .”

It lists a number of ways, including—

“We have accessed the Mobile Field Study Unit at the Carnarvon Gorge . . .

We have taken advantage of the Regional Technical Officer’s visits to have our equipment repaired and maintained.”

Those honourable members who have lived in remote areas would know that when a fax machine or a photocopier breaks down it is difficult to get that sort of equipment repaired. The letter continued—

“In conjunction with St. Mary’s School (Taroom) we have participated in the Itinerant Cultural Pursuits Programme in Taroom.”

The letter went on further to state—

“Our cluster of small schools have used the P.C.A.P. Mini-buses to transport our children to and from camps on the coast.”

They would not otherwise have been able to afford transport. The letter continued—

“Our own school and small schools cluster often have special needs that cannot be met by existing funds either within the school or community.”

The letter finally stated—

“We believe that the proposed changes will have a negative effect on the equitable distribution of funds available to address the needs of geographically isolated schools.”

The PCAP program has been a tremendous success in rural and remote areas and I, personally, would like to see it continued.

Mr BENNETT (Gladstone) (7.34 p.m.): What I have gleaned most from the members of the Opposition in this debate is that they are engaging in “Goebbeling”—if they repeat false information often enough, people may believe it. That is exactly what Opposition members are doing in this debate. This is the most successful Budget that has been delivered in Australia this year. Opposition members have stated that the increased spending in the Budget—which comes from a well-managed State Treasury and Government departments—is due to a bloated bureaucracy. They try to imply that the regionalisation of Government departments, which I believe will lead to regional economic zones, has created this bloated bureaucracy. They say that, because there are new administrations in country centres, there is bloated bureaucracy. But what they fail to point out, or deliberately overlook, is that most of the bureaucracies in Brisbane are downsizing and moving to regional centres. That is why the regional administrations are growing, and so they should.

But what bemuses me most is the Opposition’s constant tactic of criticising Labor for being a big spending Government on services. Speaker after speaker from the Opposition side keep moaning about more spending. I cannot understand it. Opposition members keep going on about the Government being a big spending Government, and then speaker after speaker on the Opposition side states that the Government should be spending more money on this and on that.

Mrs Woodgate: The member for Nerang did that.

Mr BENNETT: That is so.

Mr Pearce: They have always been knocking, knocking, knocking.

Mr BENNETT: That is right. They keep knocking, knocking all the time. They never have anything constructive to say. I wish that they would make up their minds on the Budget strategy. Obviously they have not got a strategy, so they keep knocking, bleating and carrying on.

The successful measure of this Budget is that, after it was delivered, Mr. Borbidge disappeared from the scene.

Mr Pearce: In the cupboard.

Mr BENNETT: I do not know whether he went to the cupboard, but he disappeared from the scene. One would think that the Leader of the Opposition would be going out trying to sell an alternative Budget strategy.

Mr Pearce: What he said was, "I can't beat Goss, so I'll join Goss in the cupboard."

Mr BENNETT: He may well have done that. But all he did was leave Mr Cooper to attack the Budget for the National Party and the poor old hapless Liberal Leader, Joan Sheldon, to do what the Opposition should be doing—offering an alternative Budget. That is what Opposition members consistently failed to do in this debate—offer an alternative Budget. All they kept doing was bleating, carrying on, knocking and peddling false information about the Budget.

More importantly, what they overlooked, and deliberately failed to congratulate the Government on, is that Queensland will be debt free by 1995-96. That is a great achievement, considering that the Government is not introducing new fuel taxes or financial institution duty taxes. I believe that this Government should be congratulated on its Budget strategy for the next couple of years. I believe that Queensland will be the better for it. It must be hard for the Opposition in Queensland to go around attacking this Budget. Because Opposition members have no alternative Budget of their own, they keep knocking and bleating. Mr Borbidge and Mrs Sheldon get up day after day in Parliament knocking and bleating.

Queensland is a progressive, well-managed and financially sound State which espouses traditional Labor philosophy. It has focussed its Budget on employment directly through the Jobs Plan and by creating an environment in which the private sector can prosper through the \$3.4 billion Capital Works Program which will provide more than 44,000 jobs. Queensland can prosper also through the initiatives contained in the NIES scheme

conducted by DBIRD, creating a better environment for business. Life is also more than just economics. There is the increase in the Budget to assist drought-stricken farmers through RAS and other social programs.

One of our most important social programs is our women's policy, which is outlined in the Budget papers. Our women's policy is allocating \$5.7m for breast and cervical cancer screening and prevention programs, \$18.6m for extra child-care places—which will be a great boost to women in our community and will enable them to enjoy a more rewarding career and home life—and \$2.33m for the prevention of violence against women. However, what disturbs me greatly is that the member for Aspley, through an article in today's paper, was portraying women as playing a subservient role. That is exactly what we do not want to happen under our program for the prevention of violence against women. I realise that the honourable member posed for that photograph as a prank.

Mr Ardill: He was the one under the bed.

Mr BENNETT: That is right. He was under the bed. The honourable member posed for that photo as a prank. However, it portrays male stereotypes of women's role in our society, that is, it portrayed the role of women as being beneath that of men. That is not the case. We want to avoid having men in our society who think they are studs and resort to violence if their partners want to be treated with equal status. This is exactly what we are spending \$2.33m to avoid. Yet we have members in this House—and one spouse on the front page of today's paper—portraying women in a subservient role. Frankly, I am disgusted by that. Even though members opposite may regard that as a prank, I believe that it is appalling. I believe that all women in our community should be abhorred by it.

Ms Spence: We are.

Mr BENNETT: The honourable member for Mount Gravatt is correct. A lot of women have recently rung members and told them how disgusted they were by that photo. I believe that Mr Goss, the member for Aspley, has a lot of explaining to do to the women of our community.

I want to talk about the great things that the Budget has brought to the Gladstone/Calliope region. As to education—as members would be aware, the Goss Government, with assistance from a Federal program, is going to build four university campuses in Queensland. One will be built as part of the University of Central Queensland

campus in Gladstone, namely, the Gladstone marina campus, which will be a centre for engineering excellence. The State Government has allocated the sum of \$1.25m towards the construction of that university. It is important to note that the sum of \$420,000 has been allocated to two new science laboratories at the Gladstone High School. That will enable local students to have a better understanding of science and engineering subjects so that they can attend the university in their own city. I believe that every city comes of age once it has a university. I believe that the City of Gladstone will come of age with the Gladstone marina campus and the provision by the State Government of \$420,000 for the new science laboratories.

The Gladstone/Calliope region also gets its fair share of the \$2.35 billion for the Education budget. I believe that this budget goes a long way to assisting P & Cs with their basic requirements. The sum of \$37.6m has been allocated for the special School Refurbishment Program, which has been well received by the general public, P & Cs and teachers.

Mr Pearce: It creates employment.

Mr BENNETT: That is right. It has created a lot of jobs in our community. Recently, I spoke to staff at Q-Build, who were pleased to see the refurbishment program going ahead so that they can keep up the working hours in that department. I fully support the use of local labour in the refurbishment projects.

Schools have received fresh coats of paint, carpets and windows. Some of the smaller schools now have adequate water supplies. I believe that the refurbishment program was well overdue—some 30 years overdue. The Government must be congratulated on having the courage to use the tobacco tax to fund that program. That program has also funded bikeways, which in turn has created more jobs. Measures such as imposing a tobacco tax are not popular, because people do not want to pay more for cigarettes. But we believe that this has a twofold purpose, namely, discouraging people from smoking, and building hospitals and bikeways and refurbishing schools.

Mr Pearce: The public can see where their money is going.

Mr BENNETT: That is right. The honourable member for Fitzroy is dead right. The public can see where the money is going. As schools become part of a community project, more and more parents join P & C associations and help out where they can

because they see things happening at those schools.

Mr McElligott: It's not going up in smoke.

Mr BENNETT: That is right. The money is not going up in smoke. I point out to Mr Connor that there are a lot of smoke stacks at the Gladstone Power Station. Mr Connor claimed that this Government is not interested in investment in Queensland because it dragged its heels with the sale of the Gladstone Power Station and the third smelter expansion. I would like to know how Mr Connor is privy to what goes on in CRA's boardroom. Do the CRA board members invite him along to all their meetings and discussions? I recall that when Mr Ahern, the then Premier, announced the sale of the power station, it was for a paltry \$450m. Two independent assessors have since visited that station. The bottom line is that it is worth about \$800m. The Goss Government, in conjunction with the Federal Government, had the foresight to negotiate a \$750m proposed sale, with a \$75m loan redemption from the Federal Government. This amounts to some \$825m for our Government. The power station is not an asset that belongs to Gladstone or Comalco. It belongs to the Queensland public. It is the Government's duty to get the top dollar for it and to facilitate a job creation project.

Mr Johnson: It's taken you a long time to do it.

Mr BENNETT: There is more to this than meets the eye. I invite the honourable member to visit Gladstone so that I can show him the work that is going on with the due diligence process. There are numerous databanks, and massive teams of solicitors and lawyers are going through the project to see whether it is worth while. In the end, it will be a commercial decision by Comalco. But to say that the Goss Government is dragging its heels is just plain wrong.

This Government is interested in job creation and value-adding processes. Gladstone produces 25 per cent of Queensland's value-added industries. If that project goes ahead, it will be because of the Goss Government's assistance, foresight and ability to get on with the job—not just a simple announcement that we are going to flog off a power station for \$450m, as Mr Ahern did. The cost of replacing a power station is about \$1 billion per megawatt. It would be wrong to give that power station away so cheaply.

As I mentioned, Budgets are not solely about economics. They are also about social services. The Gladstone electorate will receive

some \$2m for 29 public houses in addition to the public housing program that was implemented last year. I defy anybody to go around Gladstone and pick out the new Housing Commission houses. They are nice houses, which are well presented and well looked after. These people are not being treated like second-class citizens. They can take pride in their homes, which are attractive and decent.

One of the main Budget announcements was the \$25m Clinton coal expansion by the Gladstone Port Authority. The Clinton coal facility has an annual throughput of some 21 million tonnes of coal. That capacity has been increased by the addition of a second ship-loader. Construction of the second ship-loader and duplication of the ship-loading conveyor system are beginning. The two new stockpile areas have been constructed. Stockpile 11 was commissioned in 1992. The coal comes from the Gregory mine, the South Blackwater mine, the Kenmare longwall mine and new mines such as Gordonstone, which is currently exporting coal through Clinton and Ensham. The first railing was received on 7 September this year.

The combined exports from those mines should raise annual throughput of the facility from 17.9 million tonnes in 1992-93 to around 25 million tonnes in 1997-98. The total cost of that expansion to a 30 million tonne capacity facility is approximately \$60m. It is expected that it will be completed in January 1994. That publicly owned corporation has one of the most efficient coal ports in the world today. I think it ranks sixth. With the new facilities, it will rank even higher. It is an economic facilitator for the Gladstone area. We must remember that that facility is publicly owned. There is no privatisation involved. The port in Newcastle, which was privatised, exports coal at a much dearer rate than Gladstone does, and Gladstone's port is publicly owned.

The Queensland Budget allocates some \$1m to the Yarwun industrial estate, which is a contingency for the provision of accessory services such as sewerage, and raw and treated water supply for the magnesium metal project operated by the Queensland Metals Corporation opposite ICI on Reid Road. This is forward planning by this Government to ensure that when the technology does come together for the magnesium metal pilot project, we are ready to go ahead straight away. This is good Budget planning and it is a good strategy. I congratulate the Treasurer and the Minister for Business, Industry and Regional Development on being a part of it. Indeed, under the previous administration, the

Department of Business, Industry and Regional Development had no office in Gladstone, but now we have. The Goss Government has shown planning foresight. It has allocated moneys in the past for a land use study and the Gladstone area transport study, which have paid dividends for Gladstone.

I would like to point out that the Gladstone Port Authority is constructing a new slipway, which will be operated by Bulk Handling and General Services. This should increase the amount of the ships being maintained in Gladstone by some 100 per cent.

Mr HOBBS (Warrego) (7.51 p.m.): In 1989, Queensland took a lurch to the left. We have just heard the member for Gladstone congratulate the Goss Government on its Budget strategy. So far in Queensland, as a result of that Budget strategy, we have seen the number of Queenslanders unemployed increase to 172 100—up by 77 300 people, or 81.5 per cent, since Labor came to power. This is the strategy that Government members want. This is the strategy for Queensland.

Mr Szczerbanik: How many more people have come to live in Queensland?

Mr HOBBS: The member will have to sit back and take some more. Each and every day of the 1 740 days that the Goss Government has been in office, an additional 45 Queenslanders have been put on the dole. That is the strategy that Government members want. That is good! That is really great!

Mr Milliner: You should stop breathing the sheep dip.

Mr HOBBS: That member, who poses as a Minister, should talk to the people who do the work in Queensland. Those people do know something about what is going on, unlike the Minister who sits in the Chamber of power and keeps his seat warm.

Government members talk about this Government's strategy and say that it is not dragging its heels in regard to the Budget. However, every day, every Queenslanders is paying an \$417 more to run the State Government than they did when Labor first came to power. Taxes have increased by \$311m, or 10.5 per cent over the last financial year, so I do not think that there is one thing that Labor members can show that indicates that they have helped Queenslanders.

Many things have happened throughout Queensland and my electorate of Warrego, which is one of the largest electorates, has

certainly copped a lot from this Government. Of the services provided by the Police Service, the Education Department, Queensland Health, the Office of Rural Communities, the DPI, the Department of Lands, the Water Resources Commission, there are not many that the Government has not hit, and hit hard.

Whatever happened to the Charleville Police Station, with quarters for the inspector, that was to be built in 1992-93? It has been taken off the list. Perhaps some other Labor area got it. Government members talk about accountability. I think that they really should look at what they are doing. Generally speaking, the police are regarded as doing a good job with their hands tied. In many areas, the incidence of break-ins is increasing, and police morale is very low. However, overall, they are trying to do the best job they can with very limited resources.

The Budget provided no significant benefits for education in my region. In fact, the Remote Area Incentive Scheme that was brought in by the previous Government has not been improved under this Government.

Government members interjected.

Mr HOBBS: Mike Ahern brought in that scheme. Government members know that as well as I do. They have starved that scheme. They have not put the necessary resources into it. They have been scabbing on the resources of those teachers who work in those remote areas. Government members should know better than to say that they have tried to do something for them. They are doing nothing at all. In fact, many of those schools, particularly the smaller high schools, are now worse off. The 450 high school teachers that the Government is taking out of the system will affect those smaller schools. The smaller and more remote regions will not have the academic subjects that are available in the metropolitan areas, or the provincial areas. That will affect people in my electorate. After all, there should be education available across-the-board that will assist not just a few select Queenslanders but those who live throughout Queensland.

Mr Livingstone: You are being hypocritical.

Mr HOBBS: I am not being hypocritical. The facts are there. I have the member on my list. I will go back to him later. He should remind me if I forget. One little school in my electorate is in the town of Amby.

Mr Turner: It is criminal what they are doing there.

Mr HOBBS: The member for Nicklin is exactly right. The former member for Warrego has referred to Amby. It is a beautiful one-teacher school that has served the region for 99 years. The people of Amby have been told that the school will close.

Mr Johnson interjected.

Mr HOBBS: That is right. The member for Gregory says that they—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Palaszczuk): Order! The member for Warwick and the member for Mooloolah are not helping the member who is on his feet at all by cluttering up the aisles. Could you please resume your seats?

Mr HOBBS: I refer to a statement made in this House by the Minister for Education on 12 November 1992. He said—

“ . . . I wish to confirm to the House that under my Ministry there will be no forced school closures or mergers. I stress that there is no change to existing policy on school closures.”

In answer to a question on 24 August 1993, Mr Comben referred to closing or clustering schools. He stated—

“We are not closing any school anywhere.”

Mr Cooper then asked—

“Why cluster them?”

Mr Comben said—

“We are not clustering.”

Mr Lingard then said—

“Thanks for the information.”

Basically, the Government is doing that. This little school at Amby, on the Warrego Highway 75 kilometres west of Roma, is doing all the right things. Its numbers are down because things are pretty bad in rural industry at the present moment. It has eight students. The enrolment next year will be six, but enrolments in the recent past have been as high as 11 or 12, and could be again. So it has a reasonable number of students— not flash, but reasonable. Next year, on 26 February 1994, that school is celebrating its centenary year. Plans are under way to celebrate its centenary. What is going to happen? The Government is going to close it down.

Mr Bredhauer: How far away is the nearest school?

Mr HOBBS: Twenty-five kilometres—at Mitchell.

Mr Bredhauer: It's a long way.

Mr HOBBS: As the member says, it is a long way. I think that it is very unfair and unreasonable. I want to also mention the TAFE college that is needed in St George, which is a growing community. It is a long way from existing TAFE facilities at Roma, Charleville and Toowoomba. Work has been done and the Minister, Mr Foley, has certainly had a look at the matter at this stage. However, things have stalled. I call on the Minister to take another good, hard look at the necessity of establishing a TAFE facility of some description in that town.

Many members, particularly Government members, may not understand what has happened with PCAP because they may not have an association with it. PCAP has been a success story throughout rural and regional Queensland. There is an old saying, "If it's not broken, don't fix it."

Mr Bredhauer: It is a Commonwealth program.

Mr HOBBS: That is quite correct; funding does come from the Commonwealth. However, at the present moment, funds have now been directed to the State Government for it to distribute. The regional director in my electorate has suggested that the money should go into the special schools program, and an investigation is under way. PCAP must be maintained in its present form and updated as time goes by. I make the point that, in particular, there is an excellent music course among the very popular courses that are being run. The program should not be thrown out the window.

Throughout the whole of my electorate, the issue of the closure of railway lines is a very important and emotive one, particularly as it appears that four lines will be closed, namely, Charleville-Quilpie, Charleville-Cunnamulla, Meandarra-Glenmorgan and Dirranbandi-Thallon. The people who live in the regions which may be affected by the impending closures have done a fantastic job in putting together their submissions. I believe that all those lines should stay open. One of the disappointing aspects of the proposal of which honourable members may not be aware is that since the Government announced the possibility of closure of the lines, no maintenance has been carried out on those lines.

Mr Livingstone: Some of those lines had not had maintenance done on them for 30 years.

Mr HOBBS: They always had maintenance done on them, and the honourable member knows that as well as I

do. Maintenance has finished and, in the last few months, two derailments have occurred. In one derailment, 16 wagons fell over, and in the other derailment, eight wagons went over. Each time a derailment occurs, the Government is looking at spending \$100,000 in bringing cranes and other equipment to the site and in rounding up the cattle that have escaped. At some time in the future, unless some maintenance is directed to those lines, a passenger train will be derailed, and that will be on the head of this Government. The work needs to be done, and the member for Ipswich West knows what I am talking about. Members of this Government should recognise the problems and move sooner rather than later towards resolving the dilemma of which lines to close and which lines to leave open.

Drought assistance provided by the Federal Government and the State Government has been very good in some cases but has been insufficient in other areas. Presently, people submit claims in accordance with the existing guidelines, but nothing happens. The QIDC is running out of money; it is as simple as that. My time is limited, but I will mention the numerous reports which have appeared in the press suggesting that QIDC has no money. For example, the President of the UGA has suggested that although people are putting in applications, the money is not forthcoming. The Budget contains an allocation for drought assistance, and the people who saw that in the Budget papers said, "Isn't that great? The Government has put in more money." In actual fact, all that the Government has done is continue the routine funding for the following year.

Of course, that is a good thing, but it does not involve the provision of extra funds. The Government should continue to provide financial support until such time as the rural industry comes into better seasons. The levels of drought assistance funding desperately need to be examined. I was pleased to note that there will be ongoing funding for the provision of drought relief workers who have played a very important part in rural districts. I believe that their work will need to continue for quite some time.

An issue that is of great concern but which has been temporarily put on the back burner is the accommodation costs confronting nurses. Apparently, as a result of the trade-off for the 38-hour week, the rent paid by nurses in remote areas increased from approximately \$43 to approximately \$170. Most people would say that those figures are not correct, and I acknowledge that it is an

extraordinary situation. However, they are correct figures, and they are the facts.

Mr Bredhauer: But what I can't understand is why the Nurses Union offered that.

Mr HOBBS: What the member says may be right, but I do not really know. The point is that he is a member of the Government of the day. The Government is using increased rents as a tool; and, obviously, it is not reasonable to expect nurses to pay that amount for rent.

Many people may not realise that QTV is the main commercial television channel that is received in rural Queensland. Presently, it does provide a news service in the 6 p.m. to 7 p.m. timeslot; however, on the weekend, I think it is 10.30 p.m. before people can see the news on television. I believe that the Government should start some discussions with QTV, bearing in mind the fact that QTV receives a subsidy from the Government.

Mr McGrady: That is Channel 10, not QTV.

Mr HOBBS: QTV can get the news from anywhere.

Mr McGrady: If Channel 10 does not produce the news broadcast, they can't broadcast it.

Mr HOBBS: But QTV can get the news from anywhere and can find a news agency and bring forward the timeslot, or it can relay the news from elsewhere. Several options are available, and I think the Government should examine them because this is a matter that is brought to my attention frequently by people who live in my electorate.

The rural task force visited my area, for which I was very grateful. The Deputy Government Whip is a member of the task force and he visited my electorate. Everything was going really well until the rail closures were announced, whereupon the task force disappeared. However, it was not the fault of the task force members.

Mr Livingstone: We were not there when the rail closures were announced, and you know it. You are misleading the House.

Mr HOBBS: The member was there a couple of days before the announcement and the members of the task force were big-noting themselves and talking about regional strategies for mulga lands, landcare and so forth. They were going to do wonders for that part of the world, but as soon as Mr Goss announced the rail closures, the people of my electorate never saw them again. That is what happened. However, I am asking members of

this Government not to forget about the far-flung areas of the State. Obviously, the member for Ipswich West has been demoralised by the whole issue.

Mr Livingstone: Actually, there were a lot of your members out there who were speaking very highly of us and telling us that we have done a better job than you guys ever did.

Mr HOBBS: Obviously, I would dispute that.

Mr Springborg: If anyone had said that, they would have been run out of town.

Mr HOBBS: As the member for Carnarvon says, if the member had been in the area during the week after the announcement was made, he would have been tarred and feathered and run out of town on a rail.

Mr Littleproud: If the rail line was still there.

Mr HOBBS: If the rail line was still there. Members of the task force have to go back out to rural areas and do some more work. They have to go out and face the problem.

Mr Littleproud: Get on to your Federal members, too.

Mr HOBBS: That is right. Another point that I must not overlook during my speech relates to festivals that each town in my electorate holds each year. One that has been in the news in recent times has been the Cunnamulla-Eulo festival of opals where the lizard races appear to be finished.

Mr Livingstone: Have you been running in them?

Mr HOBBS: As a matter of fact, each year in some form of other, I participate. I bet on them, and I do not care who knows about it. Sometimes I win, and sometimes I lose. However, I, together with the people of Cunnamulla and Eulo, am determined that the lizard races and other races, such as worm races or crayfish races, will be able to continue. Fancy having a nature conservation plan that means Cabinet has to approve lizard races! My God, what is this Government coming to! How far does a person have to go to find some sanity in this place?

Mr Horan: What about the worm races at Crows Nest? Will they be abandoned?

Mr HOBBS: That is right. Perhaps Labor members can bring it up at the next caucus meeting.

Ms Spence: When are you going to refer to the Budget?

Mr HOBBS: The member has missed that part. She was out of the Chamber when I was talking about the Budget at an earlier stage.

Mr Livingstone: Have you seen the Budget document?

Mr HOBBS: Yes. I am discussing areas that are of importance to my electorate. The next issue I wish to discuss is particularly important. Obviously, the matters I have been raising are a very sore point with Labor members. They cannot take criticism. One of the important points about the Budget is the fact that land rentals have been increased right across the State. I will be dealing with this topic in greater detail during other debates. However, I must ask this question: why on earth would the Government want to increase rentals by 2 000 per cent in some cases in these difficult economic times? Can somebody please tell me?

Mr Bredhauer: Put a dollar figure on that 2 000 per cent.

Mr HOBBS: It is \$13,000 instead of whatever. It is really big money. People who cannot feed their kids must suddenly find \$10,000, \$12,000 or \$13,000.

Mr Littleproud: It is charged before tax.

Mr HOBBS: That is quite right. Those figures are increasing.

Mr De Lacy interjected.

Mr HOBBS: Why has it gone up?

Mr De Lacy: One per cent of unimproved capital value.

Mr HOBBS: Can the Treasurer see that graph? It is a graph of the increased rental charges at the Government's so-called concessional rate of 1.1 per cent, which, in most cases, will increase to 2 per cent.

Mr De Lacy: Two per cent on land you are saying is exorbitant.

Mr HOBBS: The honourable member is the Treasurer of the State. Does he not realise that the best that farmers can get when the season is good is 3 per cent—and that is without a recession, without a drought and without the collapse of the wool industry.

Mr De Lacy: Would you rent your property out for 2 per cent? Why should the taxpayer?

Mr HOBBS: We only make about 3 per cent, and the Treasurer must understand that. He is so thick. He does not understand that. The rural industry is lucky to make 3 per cent when things are going well. Can the Treasurer

not understand that? Our industry operates at a very low margin.

Time expired.

Mr PEARCE (Fitzroy) (8.11 p.m.): Mr Deputy Speaker—

Mr Littleproud: You understand about the bush. You tell them.

Mr PEARCE: I certainly do understand about the bush. What disappoints me about being a representative in a country electorate is that, over the past couple of days, all we have heard from members of the Opposition, who are supposed to be the representatives of rural Queenslanders, is knock, knock, knock. Where was the Leader of the Opposition—the man with the white shoes from the south coast—48 hours after the Budget was brought down? He was gone. He could have been in the cupboard with the honourable member for Aspley, Mr Goss.

The honourable member for Warrego has had a lot to say. In common with every other member of the Opposition, all he did was knock, knock and continue to knock. I wish that the Opposition would start performing as an Opposition should perform. People in my electorate say to me, "For God's sake, when are the people on the other side of the House going to give you some opposition?" That is what they think of Opposition members.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I know that you would appreciate my feelings about the Premier's Rural and Northern Task Force. We have put a lot of effort into going into rural Queensland and talking face to face with and listening to people.

An Opposition member interjected.

Mr PEARCE: The honourable member should not talk to me about railways. I will give him a few examples. I have been carrying some information for months, waiting to have a go at him about that matter. I will start with the task force. I am a member of the Premier's Rural and Northern Task Force. I have been proud to go to rural areas and listen to the people. A few things have happened—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr PEARCE: Here they go! Yap, yap, yap! Why do members of the Opposition not sit there for five minutes and listen? I listen; those members do not listen. That is the difference between us. The task force has listened to the people. A decision was made that the task force did not know about. However, that has happened. I will tell honourable members one thing, and they had

better get it very clear. As a member of that task force, my colleagues and I will go back to the community to talk to people. We are not afraid to face up to the people and take some flak.

We are genuinely concerned about people who live in rural Queensland. I have said it here before. Members of the Opposition do not like it. As a trade unionist and a member of the Labor Party, I can talk about rural people such as cattle graziers and grain growers. Members opposite know that I have some relationship with those people because I have been to rural areas. Members of the Opposition do not like it. They must live with it, and they must live with it for a few more years.

Let me refer to the railway closures. A total of 43 railway stations were closed by the previous National Party Government in its final 18 months. Let us have a look at some of the railway lines that were closed in the last term of the former Government, when it was starting to drift away and the people of Queensland were turning against it. I cite as examples 9.8 kilometres of the Port Alma line and lines from Gracemere to Yeppen, Kabra to Wowan, Baralaba to Moura, Blair Athol to beyond 101 kilometres, and Biloela to Thangool.

Members of the Opposition should not give me their rubbish. They are hypocrites. They did what they are having a go at this Government for doing. Let us look at the work force, too. It is frightening that, in 1957 almost 30 000 employees worked for Queensland Railways. In 1989, 21 000 worked for Queensland Railways. Opposition members should not be hypocrites. Do honourable members know what sticks in my neck? I have a lot of feeling for those people—the fettlers, the hard workers, the battlers—who worked their butts off on the railway lines in the sun. What did the previous Government do? It sacked them and gave them nothing! At least the people who were retrenched under our Government received decent redundancy packages so that they can do something else. No-one was forced to leave. Members of the Opposition should take that on board. I am sorry. I have been getting a bit worked up. I appreciate members opposite giving me the opportunity to have my say.

Much has been said about the Goss Government's fourth Budget. No matter where one goes, one gets good feedback about the Budget and the thought that has gone into it to try to cover every Queenslanders and to make sure that every Queenslanders benefits.

It has won Statewide endorsement for its emphasis on education, health and the Capital Works Program. As I said, it does not matter where one goes. Recently, when I went to a meeting at Dysart, people congratulated me on an excellent Budget. I was proud to be part of the Government, but all of the credit should go to the Treasurer and those people in Treasury. On the day following the Budget, I got a kick out of reading in the Rockhampton *Morning Bulletin* that even the member for Keppel—one of the knockers in this place—

Mrs Bird: Who?

Mr PEARCE: I had to think for a minute, because I have not seen him in the House for a while. Even the member for Keppel praised many aspects of the Budget. At least he had the courage to do that. It is more than many other people have done—to give some praise and credit where credit is due.

The reporter for the Rockhampton *Morning Bulletin* got it right on the morning after the Budget, when the headline read "CQ big winner from funding". The article was written by Steve Keating, who is a very well-respected journalist in Rockhampton.

Mr Bennett: Intelligent, too.

Mr PEARCE: And he understands politics. On the front page of the Rockhampton *Morning Bulletin*, he wrote—

"Central Queensland is the biggest proportional winner from yesterday's fourth consecutive Labor Government Budget. Treasurer, Mr De Lacy's, job-creating Budget has allocated Fitzroy \$567,423,000 and the central west \$62,241,000 out of \$3.4 billion for capital works."

I was very touched by that article. When I was returning from the newsagency, a gentleman, who is a good supporter of the Government and me, pulled me up and said, "Well done, Jim. I am very pleased that you got so much money for Fitzroy." The amount is \$567,423,000, and I thought that was an excellent effort. He was very happy. I appreciate his comments and the phone calls that I have received since the Budget was brought down. People have said, "You're doing a great job for Fitzroy, Jim, and we hope that you keep it up." Although it breaks my heart to be honest about this, I must be honest and say that that amount of money is for the Fitzroy region, which takes in a great proportion of central Queensland.

Mr Campbell: You are a good representative for the whole region.

Mr PEARCE: I will certainly take the credit. I am a Labor Government member operating in central Queensland and bringing the message back to the Premier, the Treasurer and the Ministers of this Government.

Another respected citizen of Rockhampton, Mr Ryan, who is a lecturer at the Central Queensland University, said that the funding provided in the Budget for central Queensland was recognition that the region was the State's resources powerhouse. I acknowledge that. Mr Ryan's comments are very true. Government spending per capita in the central west is four times the State average and, in Fitzroy—which takes in the areas of Rockhampton, Gladstone and the coastal regions—it is nearly three times the average. No doubt exists that central Queensland emerges as the State's biggest per capita winner in this Budget.

One of the aspects of the Budget that made the people of central Queensland and particularly the rural producers very happy was that no fuel tax was levied. Queenslanders from all walks of life appreciate the fact that the Treasurer resisted great temptation and calls by a number of people in the community to impose a fuel tax.

I want to mention a few of the infrastructure projects that will be undertaken during this term of the Government. Only a few months ago, the Premier was in central Queensland to open the new Stanwell Power Station. In this Budget, \$287m has been allocated for the completion of the Stanwell Power Station, and just under \$5m has been allocated to the Stanwell-Bouldercombe transmission line. I am very pleased to see that the Port Curtis Road school is to receive a double-storey teaching block. As well, buildings will be constructed at the Dysart and Mount Morgan schools.

The Rockhampton State High School is not actually in my electorate; it is in the electorate of the Minister for Police and Emergency Services. However, many students in my electorate attend the Rockhampton State High School. The students at that school were very pleased to receive the funding which will allow the performing arts and music block to be completed. They have been waiting for a long time for that funding.

A total of \$34.7m has been allocated to roads in the region. Most important to my electorate and to the people in the Gregory electorate and west of Rockhampton is the \$15.3m that has been allocated to the Capricorn Highway. A number of projects are

under way, and some of the money allocated to roads will complete those projects, but funds are also available for new projects. Importantly, the Capricorn Highway has been upgraded to a satisfactory two-lane highway. We are getting rid of a lot of the old narrow sections and some of the very rough sections. That will allow road trains to cart cattle from Duinga to Gracemere. That has to be of benefit to the beef industry.

A total of \$8.2m has been allocated to housing for the region. People have been waiting for a long time for the establishment of the community health centres at Rockhampton and Yeppoon. It will be a few months before those centres will be put in place. I am very pleased about the establishment of a community health centre at Yeppoon. As the member for Broadsound, I assisted the local community of Yeppoon to put together a submission, and I lobbied some Ministers to ensure that Yeppoon got its new community health centre. I am very pleased for those people, because they worked very hard on that project. It demonstrates that if one puts one's mind to the job and receives the right support, one can get these things done. The Rockhampton Base psychiatric unit is presently under way. I am sure that the people of central Queensland will appreciate that unit.

In the area of transport, there will be the completion of the Gordonstone and Moura projects; duplication of the main North Coast Line; and a \$900,000 refurbishment of the Spirit of Outback passenger train, which travels from Rockhampton to Longreach. As well, \$24m has been allocated for the completion of the State Government building in Rockhampton.

Another project that will be undertaken is a new police station at Moranbah. Although I did not have a lot to do with the project personally, I certainly wrote letters to Ministers on behalf of the community. The conditions under which the police in Moranbah had to work were nothing short of disgraceful. I believe that members of the task force, when they visited the area, inspected the existing facilities and supported submissions to the Government for a new police station. I am very happy to see that project eventuate. An amount of \$1.75m has been allocated for that project. Those funds will construct a new station, provide accommodation for uniformed police as well as the CIB and other officers and staff. A watch-house will also be constructed, which will include a breath analysis room, male and female cells, a padded cell—and a few members opposite

might be looking for a padded cell in the future—exercise yards and an emergency generator.

In acknowledging and showing my appreciation on behalf of the people of Moranbah for that project, I place on record the good work that the former member for Bowen, Ken Smyth, did in getting that project under way. I know that Ken worked very hard to see that project to fruition. He copped a lot of criticism. I am very, very pleased for him that the project has gone ahead.

At present, one of the problems facing the Government is the ongoing drought. Although the media has reported that rain has fallen throughout the State, there have not been what one could call drought-breaking rains. Although some growth has been brought on, there is a need for follow-up rains. It does not mean that the drought is over. In fact, rain is needed over an extended period to bring back further growth, and then heavier follow-up rains are needed so that we can get some run-off to fill the dams and creeks. It is not until then that we can really say that the drought is over. Even then, the problems of rural producers caused by the drought will take many, many months to resolve.

It is important that the Government has allocated in its Budget sufficient funds to provide ongoing subsidies for freight of fodder, water and livestock, interest on loans, drought crop and restocking loans, household support and other forms of assistance. I support the Government in its provision of that necessary assistance. As the Treasurer said in his Budget Speech, rural producers can be assured that the Government will maintain its wide range of drought assistance measures for as long as the drought persists. I know that members of this House will continue to support the Treasurer for as long as he sees that need.

Budget Paper No. 2 gives some detail of the provision that has been made to the Department of Primary Industries for subsidy relief to drought-declared primary producers. This money will assist thousands of producers with fodder and stock freight subsidies. It takes into consideration a recent Government decision to increase the return freight subsidy on core breeding cattle from 75 per cent to 100 per cent. This is an example of a Labor member in the rural sector talking to graziers and listening to what they have to say.

I am very pleased to say that I made a lot of representations to the Minister for Primary Industries in trying to get that subsidy brought up to the level at which it presently stands. I

know that the producers appreciate that. That level of subsidy will apply for the duration of the drought. It applies to the core breeding cattle that are taken away for agistment purposes and that are later returned to the owner's property. That is important. In the past couple of months, many graziers have taken their stock away for agistment purposes to ensure that they are fed. When the drought breaks, they will return those stock to their own property.

In Budget Paper No. 2, the State Government has committed around \$30m as its share of the total drought package costing over \$50m. The Federal Government has contributed about \$20m to that package.

The people of rural Queensland appreciate water resources and landcare. If there is one good thing to come out of the drought, it is the importance of our water to primary industries and to rural and urban communities. We would be far worse off if we had plenty of water but were unable to use it due to contamination and pollutants. That probability is a real concern, and the Integrated Catchment Management Strategy is one way of ensuring that we have clean water and healthy catchments for the future. Ongoing support for the strategy and for landcare programs is assured with an amount of \$5m provided in the Budget. This continued support is needed to encourage community based action to tackle degradation in local catchments. There is a greater acceptance by the community that we must act now if we are to address the serious problems with our land, water and vegetation.

I turn now to the coal industry. The central Queensland mining industry is to have expenditure totalling \$113m for the upgrade or provision of new infrastructure for the haulage of coal and minerals.

Time expired.

Mr JOHNSON (Gregory) (8.31 p.m.): I rise tonight to speak in the debate on the Appropriation Bill. At the same time, the members of this House should know that this Budget will have industrial, commercial, domestic and social implications that nobody has ever dreamed of. This is a big city Budget. This Budget has been brought down by a big city member. It is a south-east Queensland Budget. I have been through the Budget papers. Members opposite talk about pork-barrelling under the former National Party Government, but this is first degree pork-barrelling by the Goss Labor Government.

Mr Bennett: Don't judge everybody by your own standards.

Mr JOHNSON: The member for Gladstone interjects. He would not have a clue what he is talking about. I heard the drivel that fell from his lips a moment ago. After the people of Gladstone read his speech, they will be wondering who is representing them.

I wish to speak about issues in my electorate of Gregory. First of all, I will address the growth area of Emerald. My colleague the member for Fitzroy mentioned the coal mining industry. Honourable members would be aware that the coal mining industry was brought into reality by former National Party/Liberal Party Governments in this State. They are the ones who promoted growth, who gave the central part of Queensland the employment that its people enjoy today, and the growth industry of coal export that we see from this great State of ours.

Emerald is situated on the eastern end of the Gregory electorate. It is probably the second biggest growth area in Queensland. Last year, it had a population growth of 10.6 per cent. It is now a dormitory town to the mines of Gordonstone and Gregory, and soon it will be a dormitory town to the mine of Crinum.

Mr McGrady: How about the rail freights?

Mr JOHNSON: I will get to those shortly. My colleague the honourable member for Tablelands will talk more about that. My colleague the Honourable Vince Lester represented so ably the electorate of Peak Downs, as it was known before the redistribution. We have both seen in Emerald a growth in income generated by this State that has no parallel anywhere in the nation. The only other development that would come close to it would be the iron ore projects in Western Australia.

The Budget refers to Stage 2 of the redevelopment of the Emerald Hospital. That is long overdue. There is no maternity section at the Emerald Hospital and no specified area for maternity, but six infants a week are born at the Emerald Hospital. About 300 babies are born in that district every year. Those figures are accurate. The former Minister, Mr McElligott, would know that they are accurate.

Mr McElligott: This Government gave you Stage 1 and now we are going to give you Stage 2.

Mr JOHNSON: I do not doubt that, but it was a long time coming. This year, we will see \$984,000 of \$1.937m spent on the redevelopment of Stage 2 of the Emerald Hospital. I am pleased to see that, but at the same time I say that it is long overdue.

I am pleased that, last year, \$2.72m was earmarked for redevelopment of the Barcardine Hospital and that this year \$2.45m will be spent on it. That is very gratifying, but it should be spent. Whether people live at Barcardine, Emerald or Brisbane, they should be entitled to the best health services that we can provide. Health and education are two of the most important things that we can have. I will deal with education in a moment.

Mr Bredhauer: It's a pity the National Party didn't have that philosophy when they were in Government.

Mr JOHNSON: I take the interjection from the member for Cook. He said that the National Party did not have that philosophy when it was in Government. I will give him the mail: the National Party gave this State more than Government members ever dreamed of giving. The National Party was a visionary Government. The Labor Party has no vision at all. We were a Government that promoted growth, development and employment throughout the State.

Mr Davidson: You could get an operation when the National Party was in Government.

Mr JOHNSON: That is exactly right. As the member for Noosa said, people could have an operation when the National Party was in Government. Under this socialist government, people cannot have an operation. People are dying in the large urban hospitals in Brisbane. Shame on the Government! The other issue which I wish to address is education in the Central Highlands, in the central west and the far west of this State. It is an important issue.

Mr Campbell: Read the Budget papers. See how much you've got.

Mr JOHNSON: I have the Budget papers here.

Mr Campbell interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Palaszczuk): Order! The member for Bundaberg will cease interjecting.

Mr JOHNSON: I am pleased that an amount of \$376,000 has been earmarked for an education facility at the Ilfracombe school. That is long overdue. An amount of \$1,084,000 has been earmarked for the Emerald home economics block and a further \$290,000 for the Emerald performing arts and music.

Mr Bredhauer interjected.

Mr JOHNSON: The honourable member is a former teacher, so he should listen to this.

High school enrolments in Emerald in 1992 were 637. This year, the figure is 692, and the projection for 1994 is 815. Yet the Government pulled the rug on the public works program for the Emerald State High School the day before the kids broke up for their Christmas vacation in 1992. Shame on Government members! The children in that area deserve the best education, yet the Government does not have the foresight or the guts to pursue it because the school is in a National Party electorate. The Government is going on with its agenda of pork-barrelling. This Budget is an agenda of pork-barrelling to the first degree.

Mr McElligott: Barcaldine, Emerald.

Mr JOHNSON: Yes, two places. I am very grateful for the money that will be spent at Barcaldine and Emerald, but what about the rest of the electorate? That electorate covers one-quarter of the area of Queensland. I ask members to look at the production and growth that comes from that area. Look at the dollars that are generated for the gross national product.

Mr Dollin interjected.

Mr JOHNSON: I would not talk if I were the honourable member for Maryborough. When we discuss the Transport Estimates on 7 October, I shall remind him and the Minister for Transport about a few things that he said prior to 1989. The member will have egg on his face at the next State election.

Mr Dollin interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Honourable members, I think you have all had a fair enough opportunity to interject. It is obvious that the member on his feet is not taking interjections. Therefore, I ask honourable members to refrain from interjecting. The member for Gregory may continue.

Mr JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. The other issue that I want to address in relation to the Emerald region is police housing, for which no money has been provided in this Budget. Emerald has a population of some 10 000 people. The facility at the police station is still what it was for a population of 3 000. That is scandalous. Because of the growth in that region, that situation must be reviewed now. Because of the commercial rates charged for housing, some people in Emerald are paying up to \$250 or \$260 per week for a three-bedroom house. That is scandalous. If those people are on a wage of only \$400 or \$500 per week, they are paying half their weekly wages in

rent. If they have a wife and two or three kids, they struggle to exist. I have written to the Minister for Police and the Minister for Rural Communities asking them to address this problem, but to date it has been to no avail. I hope that Ministers and members on the back bench will force the Government to recognise these very contentious issues which must be addressed now.

Mr Davidson: Lack of social justice.

Mr JOHNSON: Social justice, all right! I would like to speak briefly about remote education, which is very near and dear to my heart. The School of Distance Education provides a great service. Its facility at Emerald must continue to be upgraded, as must the facility at Longreach.

Mr McGrady: Is that distance education you are talking about?

Mr JOHNSON: Yes, I am talking about remote education, the School of the Air or whatever one wants to call it. Those facilities provide a great service to rural and isolated kiddies. The part of the Rural Education Program about which I am concerned—and no doubt the honourable member for Mount Isa is, too—is the PCAP funding. It is paramount that that PCAP funding is forthcoming. I urge Government members to persuade their Federal counterparts in Canberra to make sure that those dollars are still readily available for that great concept of PCAP.

I turn to youth unemployment. As members would be well aware, in this State we are confronted with youth unemployment of 31.5 per cent, which is absolutely scandalous. In the western regions of this State, we do not have high schools in all centres. Therefore, all our children do not have access to a high school education. Many of those who leave to pursue a high school education do not return to their respective local areas to work or to live. This is of great concern to people who live in those regions.

A fortnight ago in Longreach, when the Honourable the Minister for Education was addressing a teachers seminar, I said that it is paramount that the Government ensures that those dollars are forthcoming so that we can generate development in those regions—whether it be the far west, the central west, north or south—and create employment for the youth of this State. Our most important natural resources are our children. If we cannot give them a fair go, we should not be in this place.

I turn to road funding. In the Budget, road funding for 1993-94 will be \$690m, a decrease from \$710 in last year's Budget. The Minister for Transport spoke about \$50m from the tobacco tax. I urge Government back bench members such as the member for Fitzroy and others from rural electorates to ensure that some of that money is spent in our western and northern areas. It is absolutely paramount for the survival of some of the remote rural shires that the local people who are employed by those local councils—the salt of the earth people—are able to continue to rear their families and enjoy a decent quality of life. It is paramount that we see the dollars forthcoming so that those local authorities can continue to operate.

Mr De Lacy: It is all going into those shires.

Mr JOHNSON: I hope that it is. I shall take the Treasurer up on that. I am pleased to hear it. The member for Noosa said that members on this side of the House are about representing the workers, who are the salt of the earth. Members opposite used to represent the workers, but now they represent that yuppie group on the Right. They have really lost the plot.

Mr Davidson: You've been a worker.

Mr JOHNSON: I have been a worker all right. I got my diplomas from the school of hard knocks. Where did that lot opposite get theirs? I have had a fair bit of dirt under my fingernails, which is more than some of them can say.

As to railway cuts—this is a contentious issue throughout the length and breadth of this State. It will haunt this Government until the next State election, because I will make sure of that. When this Government came to power in December 1989, 20 477 people were employed in Queensland Rail. Today, that figure is back to 16 978—a drop of 3 499. Because of the way that the Government's program is going, I believe that that figure will be close to 8 000 by the end of 1994. It is absolutely shameful.

It is a bit like the Primary Industries Department. The Government has gutted that department and removed the real people—the people who provide services for animal health. There will be egg on the Government's face and dirt on its hands if there is an infectious disease outbreak in this State.

I return to railways. The people who work

in the railways are traditionally Labor Party supporters, but this Government has sold them out.

Mr Davidson: Labor voters.

Mr JOHNSON: They are traditional Labor voters. I have been in Townsville, which is in the electorate of the honourable member for Thuringowa. I have also visited Mundingburra. I have been in the workshops there and at Rockhampton. I have walked along the railway lines in the west and talked to the people in the workshops and the boys on the line who drive dog spikes. A lot of those blokes opposite would not be able to pick up a sledgehammer, let alone drive a dog spike. However, the point that I want to make is that those people are keeping Queensland Rail going. However, this Government is hell-bent on gutting Queensland Rail.

On 20 April 1989, this Government's own Minister for Transport said in this House, when speaking to a Railways Act Amendment Bill—

Mr Bennett interjected.

Mr JOHNSON: I ask the honourable member to listen to what Mr Hamill had to say. He said—

"Indeed, it is proper to question whether it is the policy of Queensland Railways, under the National Party's political leadership, to serve the needs of the public or to act like any private-sector corporation and make profitability paramount. When the Commissioner for Railways can appear on television and state that members of the Queensland public have to get it through their heads that the railway is not there to provide a service, but rather must be a commercially viable undertaking, then I suggest that the railways, under this Government, are on the wrong track."

On the wrong track! What is he trying to do? Exactly that!

Speaking again on 20 April 1989, the Minister for Transport said—

"The people of Queensland ought to know that the shabby treatment of them as customers and as potential Queensland Railways customers by successive conservative State Governments will not continue under a State Labor administration."

Those words will haunt the Minister and this Government until the next State election. I am waiting anxiously for the report of the railway review committee on 25 October. Apparently,

there have already been leaks in today's paper. That is what this Government is all about—leaks. It is full of leaks. But at the same time, the fight for railways in this State is not over.

As the Minister for Transport said in 1989, the railways in this State are an essential service. They were put there 127 years ago to deliver the blood, sweat, tears and hard-earned labour of the people of this State to the markets in the south-eastern corner and right along the eastern seaboard. Today, the Government does not want to know about the people who generate the dollars—the people in the mustering camps in the west, in places such as Winton and Quilpie, who deliver the bullocks to the railways in those towns. They are the people who make Queensland Rail pay, as do the coalminers in central Queensland who mine the coal to load on to those coal trains. They provide the dollars for this nation's growth, for the economy of this State, and for the lifestyle that we in this State are so accustomed to. Thanks to the Bjelke-Petersen, the Mike Ahern and the Russell Cooper Governments, we enjoy that lifestyle in this State.

I hope that it will not be too long before the National Party is back on the Government side of the House to stop the ruin that this State is facing at this point. All that Government members care about are their social justice programs. They cannot continue to take from the people who are generating the dollars. They must continue to respect the people who are trying to generate the dollars, because they are the ones who are providing employment. Over the last three and a half years, the public service in this State has increased by 20.6 per cent. That is absolutely scandalous. The productive sector has been tortured all the time.

Time expired.

Mr ARDILL (8.52 p.m.): A big-spending Budget—that was the story from the Leader of the Opposition before he went into hiding after the Budget was delivered. Absolute nonsense! Tonight, the member for Gregory has talked about big-city spending.

Mr Johnson: That's what it is.

Mr ARDILL: More nonsense! For a start, I should congratulate the member for Gregory on the great result that he has achieved in his share of the Budget compared with that received by the people in south-west Queensland, represented by a number of National Party members, and the people along the northern railway line from Townsville to Mount Isa. The member's electorate

received twice the rate of per capita spending that those electorates received. So congratulations to the member for Gregory—but please stop grumbling about it. He has achieved great success at the expense of other National Party members, so why does he not acknowledge that fact? Spending in the Gregory electorate is \$5,000 per capita. In the south west, it is \$2,000 per capita. On the Darling Downs, it is less than \$1,000 per capita. His electorate has done five times better than other electorates, yet he is still squealing. I think that it is time he patted himself on the back and stopped grumbling or squealing like a tomcat. Let us get it straight: this is not a big-spending Government.

Mr Johnson interjected.

Mr ARDILL: The member should read the Budget before he rises to speak. Land tax is \$27m below the national average. In financial transaction taxes, Queensland is \$10m below the national average. There is no fuel tax, so Queensland is \$73m below the national average. Queensland's payroll tax is 40 per cent below the national average.

Mr Johnson: Petrol is 99c on the western border. How would you be here in Brisbane if you paid 99c like our blokes pay way out.

Mr ARDILL: I listened to the member. I interjected only once. He ignored my interjection, so I am not taking any more from him. He has had his day. In Queensland, the payroll tax threshold is 40 per cent above what it is in any other State. The threshold is a payroll of \$700,000, which means that hardly any small businesses in Queensland pay payroll tax. Ninety per cent of small businesses do not pay payroll tax. Therefore, they have an advantage over big business in Queensland. The stamp duty on expensive houses will certainly rise. However, stamp duty for the first-home buyer will rise by a moderate amount—up to about \$1,000 on average, which is way below what it is in any other State. Land tax will be down this year on last year—7 per cent—and still the National Party squeals. I believe that absentee landlords should be paying more, but that is something to be looked at in the future. Admittedly, the debit tax on bank transactions will be increased by about 8 per cent, but it is still 33 per cent below the national average. The Nationals keep on telling the lie that it is a big-spending Government. What rubbish!

Mr Bennett interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Palaszczuk): Order! I suggest that the member for Archerfield not accept that interjection

because the member for Gladstone is not sitting in his correct seat.

Mr ARDILL: Admittedly, all State taxes are regressive, and we do not want to impose any more taxes.

Mr Davidson interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I also warn the honourable member for Noosa for interjecting from a seat that is not his own.

Mr ARDILL: Mr Deputy Speaker, I have no problem ignoring the member for Noosa. He deserves to be ignored.

Mr Hollis: He might be the new leader.

Mr ARDILL: Has he two supporters in the House? I doubt it. That is all one really needs in the Liberal Party. In the Liberal Party, one must have two supporters to become leader. That is all one needs—two supporters to become leader.

After that litany of low taxes in this State, I would like to talk about the spending this year.

Mr Stephan: Tell us about the record spending.

Mr ARDILL: That is right. I can tell the member for Gympie that spending on health has increased by 8.4 per cent in the areas where it counts. It is good, record spending in all the areas that count—nurses, teachers, police. Funding has increased by 8 per cent in health, 4.3 per cent in education, 12.5 per cent in vocational training such as TAFE training, 10 per cent in environment and heritage, 8.9 per cent in housing, 24 per cent in tourism and a whopping 37 per cent in the State's contribution to legal aid which, in my area, I welcome very much. I really appreciate it.

In the transport area, the spending from State sources has increased by 15 per cent, but because of the parsimony of the Federal Government, it will actually be a negative 9.3 per cent situation because the Feds have cut us by 35 per cent, which I must deplore. I do not know what everyone else thinks, but, in my opinion, at a time when they have increased the fuel tax, that is ridiculous. In point of fact, we cannot afford to spend less on transport. Why is transport different from every other service? Why do we expect to make a profit from public transport? Why cannot we spend sufficient on the roads of Queensland and New South Wales, which are way below world standard? The Feds have looked after their own Australian Capital Territory and Northern Territory which have magnificent roads that are equal to any

throughout the world, but for a decade the Federal Government cut back on funding for roads in the States of New South Wales and Queensland.

The welfare allocation in the Budget has increased by 6.5 per cent, including \$2m for the prevention of assaults on women. I certainly welcome that allocation. The Sixty and Better Program has been trialled in my electorate and in your electorate, Mr Deputy Speaker. Recently, I received a nice letter from New South Wales which advised me of how the other States are looking into the program and are quite impressed by it. It will certainly improve the lifestyle of elderly people who are able to get about and who enjoy good health, and it will enable them to lead full lives. It is a great scheme.

The Home Assist, the Home Secure and the HACC programs have all received an increase of approximately 20 per cent. The Urban Renewal Program will receive increased funding for Townsville and Ipswich, and I hope that improved funding will be provided for the Brisbane area. Of course, at long last, public housing has been given an appropriate priority in Queensland's capital city area. For 20 years under the National Party Government, Brisbane and Ipswich got nothing in terms of public housing. Not one estate was built in the metropolitan area during a period of 20 years.

Mr Livingstone: And no maintenance for what was there.

Mr ARDILL: There was totally insufficient maintenance. I have large Housing Commission areas in my electorate which received absolutely no maintenance under the National Party Government. At long last, something is being done about that. Tom Burns has done a magnificent job, and his fine work has been taken over by the Honourable Terry Mackenroth.

I turn now to talk about transport, which is the favourite subject of the member for Gregory. This year, \$1.5 billion will be spent on upgrading of transport, and that is long, long overdue. As the Treasurer said, over the past 30 years most of Queensland's rail system suffered from a chronic lack of investment. We have seen stations with goods sheds that people could not possibly work in; we have seen cranes that did not work; and we have seen lines that more resembled fencing wire than rail lines, yet having trains running over them. The railways throughout Queensland during that 30-year period were run down to a condition where, outside Brisbane, they could hardly operate.

Mr Bredhauer: One good sleeper to every chain.

Mr ARDILL: That is right. In many areas, the sleepers could be pulled out by hand from under the tracks. I can well remember when a National Party member came into this House and made stupid remarks about the dangerous state of the track between Ingham and Tully. In fact, he was reading from a report which was out of date. The Labor Government had already commenced restoration work on the line to bring it to a condition which would enable trains to travel over it at a reasonable speed. It was very dangerous. His report was correct, but it related to the period of National Party Government. What has happened to all the carriages that should have been restored and used on the Kuranda rail service? Don Lane had them burnt—hundreds of cars—up at Wulkuraka.

Mr Slack: Are you saying that Don Lane didn't do a good job as Transport Minister?

Mr ARDILL: He did an appalling job as Minister for Transport. His record is the greatest furphy of all time. He destroyed the railways because of its lack of patronage and by allowing the condition of the railways to run down.

Mr Stephan interjected.

Mr ARDILL: I will admit that he did a great job—although many years overdue—in Brisbane, but in country areas he did an appalling job.

Mr Livingstone: How many new engines did they buy?

Mr ARDILL: I am talking about passenger cars. For the first 25 years when the National/Liberal Party Government was in power, it bought nothing. The only new cars that appeared on the scene were the ones that had been ordered by Jack Duggan. The electrification of the rail line was Jack Duggan's scheme. It was deferred by the Nationals until finally introduced in Brisbane.

Mr Livingstone: And they sold off half of it.

Mr ARDILL: It was sold to the Japanese, the Swedes, and to anyone who would buy it. During the period of Government by the National Party, 20 branch lines were closed down. I will list them as follows: Atherton-Ravenshoe, Kajabbi, Dajarra, a branch from Malbon, Netherdale, Owens Creek, Eton, Emu Park, Port Alma, Mount Morgan, Wowan, Mount Perry, Wallaville, Proston, Tarong, Nanango, Yarraman, Cooyar, Amiens, and Injune. It also downgraded depots such as

Warwick, Gympie, Emerald, Alpha, Hughenden, Cloncurry, Bluff and Barcaldine. Yet the member for Gregory has the hide to talk about a reduction in staff!

The National/Liberal Party Government reduced the railways staff by approximately 4 000 in the last years of Don Lane's regime, and those workers did not have a VER scheme to fall back on. People at the lower end of the hierarchal scale were out of the railways, and they were trying to find jobs in country areas where there were no jobs because other industries were reducing at the same time.

Mr FitzGerald: What was the unemployment level in those days compared to what it is now?

Mr ARDILL: What was the employment level in country areas then? What town in Australia had the highest unemployment level during the administration by the National Party Government? It was not a town somewhere down south; it was Innisfail, in north Queensland. What really alarms me are the scare tactics employed by the member for Gregory. I am very saddened to hear him use figures for which the former member for Flinders, Mr Katter, was famous. He used to go round the State making alarmist statements and saying, "We'll be down to 8 000", and members opposite know that that is not true.

Mr Johnson: What are you going to do in Townsville? You are going to completely gut Townsville?

Mr ARDILL: I have every confidence in Tom Burns and his committee arriving at a just result which will keep open most of the railway lines, and all of the railway lines in the member's electorate. Apart from the member for Gregory, that just result will be arrived at without much thanks being due to members of the National Party because I do not think many of them have done much towards the outcome.

Mr Stephan: You are the Government. You are making the mess.

Mr ARDILL: The member for Gympie is one such member. Throughout the whole period he has been a member of this Parliament, he has seen the downgrading and has done nothing about it.

A point of view which I wish to express during my speech tonight and which may not be well received is that most of the railway lines that Tom Burns' committee will save will be community service obligations that this Government must face.

Mr Stephan interjected.

Mr ARDILL: Opposition members do not want to hear this, and they did not want to hear about fuel tax, either. They wanted to talk about spending, but they did not want to raise funds.

Mr Davidson: You were talking about fuel tax.

Mr ARDILL: The member is quite stupid.

Mr Stephan: Your Mr Keating is responsible for that.

Mr ARDILL: The member for Gympie should be supporting what I am saying. The Government has a community service obligation to keep these lines open.

Mr Stephan interjected.

Mr ARDILL: The member for Gympie should keep quiet. He is a drongo. As I was saying, the Government has to honour a community service obligation by keeping open these lines. It is not Queensland Rail's responsibility to fund recurrent expenditure. Queensland's railways need new cars, and the Minister for Transport is doing something about it. He has discussed introduction of the tilt train which will replace the present Spirit of Capricorn. It is a great idea, and the Minister should be praised for it. In a few years' time, the Gold Coast line will be rebuilt. Honourable members will recall that the National Party vandals tore up that line at the very stage when the Gold Coast started to go ahead. It was a crazy thing to do.

Ms Spence: That was stupid.

Mr ARDILL: It was quite crazy. I believe that the present Minister for Transport has achieved quite a lot. He has obtained funds for the projects I have already mentioned, for the upgrading of the north coast line and the western line from Roma to Charleville as far as Thallon. This is great work, and I hope he will receive due recognition from people who are supposed to represent country electorates.

I have two minutes left, and I would like to say what a great job the Treasurer has done in finding funding for education. Many of the worries that were raised in previous discussions did not eventuate. Although there are some shortfalls, because of the work that has been put into the education system in Queensland, every child in this State will have a better standard of education, and every teacher in this State will have a better standard of living and an improved work performance.

In my electorate, some schools were neglected for 20 years. We had a Liberal

Party member who could never get a cent spent in the schools by the National Party Government, even when the Liberals were in coalition. Those schools now receive attention. The school at Coopers Plains will get a new toilet block and be painted. Half a million dollars was spent on Salisbury State High School. The Algester State School now has a music centre. At the school at Calamvale, a new library and a new administrative centre will be built. Great work is being done in education. Although we can all criticise, we should praise the Treasurer for what he has achieved.

Time expired.

Mr HORAN (Toowoomba South) (9.11 p.m.): This Budget was brought following a great fanfare of pre-Budget cutbacks. After the Premiers Conference in Canberra, we heard about the ripping up of railway lines, cutbacks in Education, with over 500 secondary school positions to be lost, and the \$20m worth of cutbacks in Health. All were totally unnecessary. All caused great chaos. All caused strikes and all sorts of stoppages in the rail, education and health systems and total disruption to our economy.

The Budget should try to address the real problems of our State, such as the 11.2 per cent unemployment, the 32 per cent youth unemployment, of which everyone in this House should be ashamed, and particularly the decline in this State of full-time employment for males—for the fathers of families, for the breadwinners. At the same time, in the Budget, taxation and charges have increased by a massive 10.5 per cent.

Tonight, plenty has been said about unemployment and the railways. In the Toowoomba railway yards, 22 jobs will go from the central traffic control centre. Another 100 jobs in the railway workshops are under threat. In the past two or three years, about 300 jobs have been lost. They are part of the 3 000 or 4 000 jobs lost from Queensland Rail under the Goss Labor Government. Recently, Tom Burns was in Toowoomba talking about the effect on Toowoomba of the tearing up of the railway lines. We told him about the problems with road trains, which come in from Quilpie, through the suburban roads of Toowoomba to the saleyards, where they must be broken up so that they can continue on to the meatworks at Dinmore and Tancreds.

The Government does not seem to understand some of the problems and it does not seem to be interested in the permanent loss of jobs from the railway workshops and the traffic control centre in Toowoomba.

Anyone who thumbs through the Budget Speech and reads the rhetoric comes away with one feeling, that is, there is no direction, no plan for export and no plan to increase private enterprise. It is no wonder that some of the members of the media have described the Budget as boring.

Toowoomba relies heavily on the primary industries sector. There has been only a 4.4 per cent increase in funding for the DPI—about half of the average funding increase in the Budget. The DPI should provide services for those industries that provide jobs, for example, meatworks and transport, yet there is hardly an adviser left in the entire DPI in Toowoomba for people who operate feedlots or engage in industries such as intensive dairying, grain growing or cotton. It is all falling to private enterprise. The old-fashioned service that the DPI gave in the past is virtually gone. All that one sees at the DPI are administrators administering themselves. The real problem on the downs is the drought. Three winter crops have virtually failed. There has been only one summer crop out of the past two. After three years of disastrous drought, funding for the DPI is increased by only 4.4 per cent.

There has been a \$570m increase in recurrent spending—we are now locked into that—which is an 8.5 per cent increase on the actual spending. Taxes are up by \$311m. The important thing for us all to remember is that all Queenslanders must now pay \$417 more per year than they did when Labor came to office. The big claim is that there are no new taxes, but who needs new taxes when the Budget, from Estimate to Estimate, contains an estimated 10.3 per cent increase in taxes, fees and fines. From actual to Estimate, there is a 4.4 per cent increase. Regulatory fees are estimated to increase by 8.5 per cent.

The other night in Parliament, we heard about the massive increases in ambulance charges. I will give honourable members one good example of that. A week ago in Toowoomba, four lads were hurt. They were 7 kilometres from the Toowoomba General Hospital in Prince Henry Drive. They all travelled in one ambulance. With the driver, there were five people in that one ambulance. Because they were non-subscribers, the charge was \$250 each. The Ambulance Service—and, inadvertently, the Goss Government—received \$1,000 for a 7-kilometre ride. Those are the sorts of charges that everyone is facing. I cite also the examples of the Building Services Authority and workers' compensation.

The poor old pensioners used to be given a ride on the trains. The National Party Government seemed to be able to provide that for them. When Tom Burns was in Toowoomba, he was told about people being turned away. They cannot buy a ticket at the railway station any more. They must walk uptown and try to find a travel agent. They can no longer buy a ticket in Toowoomba to go from Brisbane to Bundaberg. They are told to go home, ring a 008 number and walk back to the railway station to tell the officer what ticket they have.

It is similar to the departure tax that is levied on people travelling overseas. Now, under Labor, pensioners who used to get a free ride on a train once a year pay a departure tax of \$5 each way. The people who came to see me who had gone to collect their free ticket to travel from Brisbane to Bundaberg had to fork out \$10. It is all part of the plan to increase charges to fund the flagrant spending of the Labor Government.

The Budget should have been about jobs. The PR was about the 43 500 jobs. We all know that the Treasurer was forced to acknowledge that, although last year he claimed that he would generate 30 000 jobs, he had to admit that only 8 000 jobs were generated. The big PR exercise of 43 500 jobs will end up at about an additional 4 500 jobs.

I turn to capital works in Toowoomba, particularly in my electorate of Toowoomba South. I was on record in the *Toowoomba Chronicle* as saying that my electorate had fared fairly well in the allocation of capital works. I was pleased with that part of the Budget. I will be pleased—provided that the Government keeps its promises. Firstly, the Harristown State High School and the Centenary Heights State School each received \$680,000 for a new home economics block. I give some praise to the Minister for Education, whom I asked to come to the city to see the two schools. I feel sure that his efforts are one of the reasons why we have the two blocks. I also thank Ron McLean, a previous Minister, who assisted Harristown to get a manual arts block.

The Centenary Heights State High School uses as a sports ground a block of land that is a long way from the school. That block is not of any convenient use to the school. It would like to sell it, and the P & C would like to see most of the proceeds of that sale return to the school to be used to build a swimming pool, which the school does not have, and to develop a second oval. Recently, the P & C

association at that school developed a \$200,000 community hall. In three years, the P & C association has paid off all but \$23,000 of that money. It has been a fantastic effort. It is worthy of the Minister's considering allowing that land to be sold and allowing a major proportion of the proceeds to go back to the school so that it can achieve some good results.

This year, in the Budget, the Toowoomba General Hospital has received an allocation of \$2.6m towards the \$6.4m cost of the new theatre block. That theatre block has been sitting empty for about two or three years on top of a fully completed double-day surgery unit, which is one of the best in Queensland. Because the vacant surgeries are upstairs, that unit has never been used. Last year, we were promised \$649,000. Nothing happened. This year, we were promised \$2.6m for a \$6.4m job. If it is done straight away, it will not be completed and operational for, at the very least, two years. Downstairs, those two magnificent day surgeries will sit empty for about three or four years.

Last year, the Mount Lofty Nursing Home was promised \$500,000 towards the \$4m cost of a new building. Nothing happened. This year, we were promised \$3.8m towards Stage I, which will cost \$4m. Last year, almost \$1m was promised towards the \$10m cost of the TAFE building at the old Toowoomba showgrounds. Nothing happened. This year, we were promised \$4.2m of the \$11.5m cost of the building. Let us hope that happens. However, the daddy of them all was the ambulance centre. Last year, with a great amount of fanfare and advertising in the Toowoomba North electorate before the election, we were told about the \$550,000 refurbishment of the Toowoomba Ambulance Centre. Guess what? Nothing happened. It was part of that disastrous loss, waste and squandering of the \$42m of ambulance trust money that had been collected from all of the ambulance boards when that system changed. This year, we are told that the Budget allocated \$300,000 towards that \$550,000. I hope like mad that it happens. In public housing, we have fared reasonably well. In that area, \$7.8m was promised, compared with the \$6.5m that was promised last year.

In the past 12 months, we saw from Queensland Health and the Minister, Mr Hayward, a dramatic deterioration in health and hospital services coupled with monumental financial bungling, cutbacks, closures and severe losses of experienced medical staff. There was one bungle after another. First of all, we had the classification remuneration system. We had hospitals with

unfunded wage rises amounting to around \$53m, and all the drama and trauma that followed from that. The Townsville Hospital had to find \$700,000. The Royal Brisbane Hospital had to find \$3m. The Maryborough Hospital had to find \$300,000. Those hospitals are typical of hospitals throughout Queensland. All they could do to cope with that unfunded wage rise was to cut back. The Treasurer himself privately admitted that it was a mistake to provide that unfunded wage rise.

Then we had the Health Minister's obscene rush to sign the Medicare agreement and his subsequent loss of \$40m for Queensland. For the first time ever in Brisbane—in the capital city of Queensland—we saw the cessation of elective surgery for three weeks over Easter. In addition, we saw the imposition of quotas for heart surgery—again, a first in our State. We saw the blow-out of cardiac surgery waiting lists from 35 weeks up to 22 months. We saw the waiting time for radiotherapy blow out to four weeks. Under the National Party Government, people with serious cancer could receive attention immediately.

We saw an unprecedented vote of no-confidence in the Minister by the Queensland Nurses Union after he bungled and misled nurses throughout this State on the matter of the position of the executive officer for the Queensland Nurses Council; on the matter of the 38-hour week, in regard to which he did a total backflip on Labor Party policy; and on the matter of nurses' board and lodging, which he foolishly tried to increase from \$47 to \$187 a week. We saw industrial unrest throughout the nursing profession over the ripping apart of the nurses' career structure, which they took years to achieve. After only two years, a pre-emptive decision was made by the Treasurer and the Health Minister to rip that structure apart. Never mind that there was an investigation under way in which the Queensland Nurses Union was participating!

Then we saw the second major review of the Health Department during which the PSMC, the Treasury and the Office of the Cabinet all investigated the Health Department. Now we have a ministerial task force. There can be no non-clinical appointments in Queensland Health at the moment unless it is with the explicit approval of that task force, which is based in Brisbane and which is under the direction of the Minister. A hospital cannot employ a gardener or a chief executive unless such a decision is made by the central office in Brisbane. We had the letter from Treasury telling Queensland Health to lift its act; blood bank cutbacks; resignations of senior medical staff;

shortages of VMOs; and crises in the number of anaesthetists. We are something like 20 or 30 anaesthetists short of the 70 required.

We saw the greatest fiasco of all on the south side of Brisbane with the QE II and Mater Hospitals. The Government attempted to force the children's section of the Mater Hospital to move to the QE II Hospital. They refused to do it. The idea was to force the staff from the QEII Hospital to the unfunded Logan Hospital. There have been many more fiascos. We have seen the attempt by the Government to force the gynaecological department from the PA Hospital—one of the best in the State—to the QE II Hospital and to force staff from the QE II Hospital to the Logan Hospital. Talk about medical musical chairs!

The member for Mount Gravatt, who usually stands up for women, gave a scant half-paragraph mention to the QE II Hospital. That hospital provides one of the most important services to women on the south side of Brisbane and it is about to be ripped apart just for political gain because the Government did not fund the Logan Hospital properly. I think that the member for Mount Gravatt, the member for Archerfield, the member for Mansfield and the member for Sunnybank ought to tell their constituents just what they have got and what they have lost. They have lost a community hospital; they have lost an accident and emergency centre; they have lost an intensive care unit; they have lost a cardiac care unit; they have lost most of the elective surgery; and they have lost the maternity section. What they have received in return are two or three floors of psycho-geriatric wards, some remaining elective surgery and a community health centre about which the medical superintendent has told local doctors, "Do not bring anyone here if they have to be admitted to hospital." That community health centre can basically only deal with splinters and sprains.

The current situation in Queensland Health is that people can go to a community health centre and get their toenails cut, but if they need to have some life-saving cardiac surgery they will have to wait about 22 months. The second biggest accident and emergency centre in Queensland at the PA Hospital is suffering from a drastic lack of senior staff, a lack of resources and a serious shortage of space. The maternity ward at Maryborough is overflowing, and the local member is apologising and saying that it has happened three times since the beginning of the year. The member for Maryborough has even set up a complaints units in his own

electorate office. That is how bad it is. Psychiatric wards at Kirwan and the Gold Coast were lying idle before they were properly staffed and, even recently, nine patients from the Gold Coast were transferred because there are plenty of beds but no staff. Waiting lists are growing in Bundaberg, where there is a lack of surgeons and anaesthetists. There is a threat to do the same at Bundaberg as was done at Maryborough, that is, convert the maternity section to offices and transfer the maternity section to a smaller ward.

Rockhampton is short of anaesthetists, and the psychiatric ward is experiencing absolutely disastrous problems because of a lack of staff. There are huge problems in Mackay, where medical staff and administrators are involved in a terrible fracas over the systems of reporting of the medical staff. At Townsville, we saw the appointment—after a meteoric rise—of a director of nursing who, two years ago, was an assistant nurse at the Wolston Park Hospital. At Charters Towers, an old lady who had a broken hip could not be looked after for five days. Despite continual demands for cutbacks and efficiencies, Corporate Services increased its budget by \$2m this year, and it increased the budget of the Minister's department as well. We saw a rural health backflip by the Minister. First of all, he cancelled the Rural Health Advisory Committee, then he realised that he was wrong and he reinstated it. He cancelled the medical students' work experience system, then he realised that he was wrong and he had to reintroduce it. Owing to pressure from the Opposition, we saw a backflip over the gynaecologists at the PA Hospital.

The Minister, Mr Hayward, was left out in the cold by Goss and De Lacy over the PSMC report. Minister Hayward was left out in the cold when it came to industrial negotiations. They had to bring in the heavy artillery with Minister Foley to negotiate with the nurses; they could not do it on their own. We saw \$25,000 spent on a conference table at Queensland Health in Charlotte Street. How many angioplasties would that have funded? Probably seven out at the Prince Charles Hospital. We saw cutbacks in the number of physiotherapists at the Royal Brisbane Hospital. We saw shortages at the Queensland Radium Institute. The list goes on and on. The regional health authorities did not even have quorums for one month; they were totally paralysed.

Against the background of a Health Department lurching from crisis to crisis, today we debate a Budget which, first of all, includes unforeseen expenditure of \$32.6m for Health.

So much for the Minister's continual bleating about coming in under budget! The unforeseen expenditure was \$32.6m from the Consolidated Fund, and there was none last year. What went wrong? Was it the classification remuneration system that the Minister and Treasurer refused to admit was one of the major financial bungles of the year? Total unforeseen expenditure for the State for 1992-93 was \$310m, and it was \$133m the year before. In his Annual Statement the previous year, the Treasurer said that program management had significantly reduced the need for unforeseen expenditure with its much increased scope for accountable officers to allocate and reallocate funds as necessary to programs within the same subdivisional item. It certainly has not worked within Health.

Despite all the rhetoric that has come from the PR machine of the Goss Government, the real increase in the Health budget is not \$187m, or 8.9 per cent; it is \$155m, or 7.4 per cent. That is the figure that one arrives at when one subtracts the actual spending last year from what has been budgeted and estimated for this year. For the total health policy area, the actual cost of running Queensland Health was \$2.12 billion last year—about \$32m more than the budget. We should subtract that \$2.12 billion from the estimate of \$2.275 billion, and that gives us \$155m. The department will never, ever be able to manage Health on that extra \$155m. Conservatively, it has to cover inflation to the tune of \$40m—that is, 2 per cent on \$2 billion—\$90m for capital works, which is the \$150m budgeted less \$60m spent last year; the ongoing classification remuneration system; and 1 045 new staff. All up, that alone comes to some \$180m or \$190m. It is clear that we are headed for more and more cutbacks.

Let us consider the media releases that the Minister has put out to the regional health authorities. It must be borne in mind that there is a \$155m increase, and that \$90m of that is for the new Capital Works Program. That leaves \$65m for recurrent spending increases. The releases that the Minister has sent out to six health authorities only—Sunshine Coast, the Downs, Gold Coast, West Moreton, Wide Bay and Brisbane North—show a \$68m increase for them, not counting the other seven health authorities. It is just a phoney increase, and we are headed for more and more cutbacks. I think that the real test of this Budget is: how much was the Goss Labor Government prepared to pull out of its own pocket to put into Health? I can inform the

House that it was absolutely nothing. In fact, the Government put in less this year than it did last year.

The estimate for outlays for 1993-94 from State sources is \$1,312,542. The actual figure for outlays for 1992-93 from State sources was \$1,315,923. That means that there has been a cut in spending of over \$3m from this Labor Government. I wonder what Senator Richardson would say about that. Obviously, the Government is pulling more and more out of the Federal Government and less and less out of its own pocket.

First of all, the Government misled us on the actual Budget increase. It is \$155m, not \$187m. On top of that, funding from our State to our health system has been reduced by \$3.381m. We were just fortunate enough that there were some increases coming from the Federal Government to prop it up. The truth is that funding from State sources to Queensland Health is down and funding from Commonwealth sources is up. The increase in outlays exists only because of the increase in the Commonwealth specific purpose payments.

It is interesting to look at staffing. There are 2 000 full-time equivalent employees, an increase at that; but then there are 326 positions disappearing in health promotion, 616 in the important area of medicine, leaving a net total of 1 045. There has been a cut of \$256,000 in the Royal Flying Doctor Service grant. The Minister for Health has voted himself an increase of 9 per cent and the Minister's office has received an increase of \$59,000. At the same time, corporate affairs funding has risen by \$2.4m.

Time expired.

Mr BREDHAUER (Cook) (9.31 p.m.): A very serious charge has been levelled at members of the Government this evening, mainly by the member for Gregory when he was speaking in the debate. In his concluding remarks, the member for Gregory made the rather serious allegation that what we care about in the Labor Party is the social justice program. Well, Mr Deputy Speaker and members of this Parliament, I plead guilty as charged—guilty that this Government cares about the social justice program and guilty that this Government cares about the prudent financial and economic management of this State so that we can get on with the job of providing services to Queenslanders no matter where they live. If the member for Gregory had any idea of what he was talking about when he came into the House on these occasions, he would not stand up and make

stupid assertions as if they were a criticism of the Government.

We stand here proudly today debating a Budget that is all about trying to manage our economy prudently so that we can get on with the job of trying to provide services to people no matter where they live in Queensland. It is a difficult job. Queensland is a vast State. Queensland does have very remote and decentralised areas. It does have population centres a long way from the capital. It does have the high cost of service delivery which all honourable members on the other side of the House should know about. I am not saying we are perfect in terms of our service delivery, but we are out there trying to do our bit.

One of the things that I despair of when I come into his House and listen to honourable members opposite is the appalling ignorance that they show about the economy and financial management. I am no economic Einstein—I do not deny that—but I try to understand the processes that we go through and I try to understand why we have resources at our disposal so that we can increase spending on education, so that we can increase spending on health, so that we can increase spending on transport.

Mr Campbell: And the Red Cross.

Mr BREDHAUER: And the Red Cross. A few minutes ago, the member for Toowoomba South made the assertion that we had cut funds to the Red Cross. However, if honourable members look at the Budget papers, they will discover that we have increased funding for the Red Cross from \$1.2m to approximately \$1.9m. That puts to rest half the arguments that he puts in this place when he cannot draw breath.

One of the things that I want to talk about that this Treasurer has achieved is the net debt reduction, because that is an important element of our Budget strategy. We do not borrow for social infrastructure. Unless we can get an economic return on it, we do not borrow the money—we pay it out of our revenues. As a result of that policy that we have adopted, our net debt has declined from something like \$4.3 billion when we came to Government to \$1.9 billion.

Dr Watson: That is a policy you inherited.

Mr BREDHAUER: I take the interjection, because I was going to say that it was a strategy that was put in place by the previous Government. I was going to admit that, because one of the best legacies—in fact, one of the few good legacies—that was left to us by the previous Government was the fact

that it fully funded its future liabilities such as superannuation and worker's compensation. I do not think some of the members opposite fully understand how significant that is in terms of today's Budget and how much of a better position that places us in when we are compared with the other States and with the national situation.

The forward funding of future liabilities was an important policy, but we have continued it. Members opposite should give recognition for the fact that we have recognised something good that Bjelke-Petersen did. It might have been hard to find good things that he did, but we recognise one of the things that he did do well, and we have continued it and improved on it. As a result of that, our debt servicing costs in Queensland are \$43 per head, compared with the average of the other States of \$575 per head. In about two years' time, we will be net debt free, according to our current projections. That means that, progressively, we are freeing up more and more of our revenue to spend on the services to people in the State.

A moment ago, the member for Warrego stood up here, once again displaying his ignorance, and said that we now spend \$453 more per head of population for services than was spent in 1989. What he is implying is that every man, woman and child in Queensland pays \$453 more for services than they did in 1989. Nothing could be further from the truth. If honourable members opposite take the comparison between our debt servicing charges of \$43 per head and the average of the other States at \$575 per head, that yields \$1.6 billion approximately to the Queensland Government that we could spend on services. Do honourable members opposite know what \$1.6 billion works out to? It works out to be roughly \$500 per head per annum. Yet the honourable member stands up and talks about how we are sticking our hand into other people's pockets for \$453 per capita to provide services. It is nonsense.

The honourable member said that taxes are up by 10 per cent. I do not know what he is talking about. Maybe he is talking about Budget revenues being up by 10 per cent. The fact is that so many of the members opposite stand up here and confuse the issues. They do not understand. I have made comments about some of the good things that they have done, but for them to talk about it costing every Queenslanders \$450 a head more for services is wrong. We are not out there increasing the charge burden on every Queenslanders by \$450 a head. We are in that superior position in the 1993-94 Goss

Labor Government because we have continued the policy of fully funding our forward liabilities. We have continued the policy of not borrowing for our social infrastructure, and that means that our debt servicing charges are minuscule by comparison with those in the other States.

The Treasurer made a comment in a meeting this morning that I attended that he thought we should be pushing the line that we will be net debt free in 1995-96. I agree that we should continue to push the line that we would have zero net debt in 1995-96. I was interested in the comment that the Treasurer made. He said, "It's a bit hard to get out there and talk to people about having zero net debt in 1995-96. It is not sort of a sexy figure." The thought that occurred to me was that one thing that has been demonstrated in the Parliament and the papers in the last couple of days is that the interpretation of what is a sexy figure is a matter for very personal interpretation.

I want to talk about the relationship between the Budget and the Cook electorate. The constituents of the Cook electorate once again in this fourth Labor Budget, as they have done in the last three Goss Labor Budgets, owe a debt of gratitude to the Treasurer; they owe a debt of gratitude to the Government; and they owe a debt of gratitude to the efforts that we have made to improve infrastructure.

Mr FitzGerald: They just owe a debt. Just leave it at that.

Mr BREDHAUER: They owe a debt of gratitude to the Government. I listened to the member for Gregory when he was ranting and raving and talking about how the members of the National Party cared about providing services to people in Queensland no matter where they lived. Well, nothing could be further from the truth. If people happened to live in the most remote parts of Queensland such as Cape York Peninsula, the Torres Strait islands or the Gulf of Carpentaria, they did not care too much about the service standards, the schools or the health services. I stand here proudly and state that this Government, over four Budgets, has made a massive injection of capital works money, infrastructure money and services money into the Cook electorate. I have no shadow of doubt that that has been done on the basis of need. I am proud that this Government has adopted a needs-based approach to the way in which it expends its capital and recurrent revenue.

Mr T. B. Sullivan: Is Mr Horan aware of the developments in the hospital in the Torres Strait?

Mr BREDHAUER: I would doubt very much that the member for Toowoomba South would be aware of the developments in hospitals in the Torres Strait. That is a good point for me to start on when talking about the Capital Works Program.

As part of this Government's strategy that we took to the election last year, we said that, over the next 10 years, we would have a \$1.5 billion hospital refurbishment and rebuilding program. There have been many capital works needs in the Cook electorate because of the sad decline in the state of health facilities there, which was presided over by the previous Government. I am extremely happy that the regional health authority in Cairns, the Peninsula and Torres Strait Regional Health Authority, the Health Department and this Government have seen fit to make one of their highest priorities for the hospital rebuilding program the medical facilities in the Cook electorate.

Those facilities were nothing short of abysmal. I am not talking only about the ones in the Torres Strait, where \$6m has already been spent on upgrading health facilities. In many instances, health facilities in Aboriginal communities were nothing short of abysmal. Over the next three years, about \$27m will be spent on health capital works in the Cook electorate, and \$18m of that will be spent in the next 12 months. The sum of \$1.2m will be spent on a new community health centre at Cooktown. A total of \$13.6m will be spent on the Thursday Island Hospital to see it redeveloped into a well-appointed 38-bed hospital with full facilities, including operating theatres. Primary health care facilities will be provided for Aurukun, Horn Island, Kowanyama, Lockhart River, Mapoon, Napranum, Pormpuraaw and Wujal Wujal, along with the continuing upgrading of the other health-care centres in the northern peninsula area in New Mapoon, Umagico, Seisia and Injinoo. These facilities are most important. Their upgrading will be well received.

If only members would visit New Mapoon and see the old fibro shack that measures about 12 feet by 12 feet, where people have been dispensing primary health care. I know that there is a hospital in Bamaga, which is not far away, but for years those people have been dispensing primary health care in the most appalling of conditions. This Government, through its commitment to

proposals like this, will rectify three decades of neglect. I should not overlook the money that will be spent on accommodation for health workers. Accommodation in remote areas is an important issue. It is a bread and butter issue for the health workers in remote areas. We will be spending about \$8m on upgrading accommodation for health workers in remote areas.

I want to talk about some of the other initiatives that have been taken in this Budget. Tonight, I am focusing on those areas that do not relate to the Estimates, which I hope to have the opportunity to debate over the next couple of weeks in relation to Environment and Heritage, Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs, and Lands. I am concentrating on those areas that are not covered by those portfolios.

As to the TAFE sector—the Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations did a trip with me about six weeks ago. One of the things we did was to identify the site for the new TAFE college in Normanton. The sum of \$1.37m will be spent there. I remind the House that, when the Minister was making a ministerial statement in about March of this year about spending \$1.37m on the Normanton TAFE college, the member for Burdekin interjected and said, “You are wasting your money.” The people in Normanton, Karumba, Croydon, Burketown, Doomadgee and Mornington Island do not think that we are wasting our money. I find it shocking and appalling that the member for Burdekin could interject in that way during the Minister’s ministerial statement and say that we were wasting our money building a TAFE facility in Normanton to service all the lower gulf area.

Mr T. B. Sullivan: It was a disgraceful comment.

Mr BREDHAUER: It was indeed. The sum of \$1.72m has been allocated for the rehabilitation of the Horn Island mine. In the past couple of days, members have spoken about mining. I do not know how many people on the opposite side of the House might have been to Horn Island and seen the mess that was left there. A couple of weeks after I was elected to Parliament in December 1989, on Christmas eve the owners shut down the mine, laid off about 150 workers and walked out. One can imagine the sort of Christmas those people had. The former Government walked away from an enormous mess. By virtue of policies that it adopted at the time, it had only a \$500,000 bond on that place. We realised about another \$500,000 on the

auction of the mine plant and equipment. We are going to spend \$1.72m this year on top of the \$500m that we have already spent. When the member for Nudgee was the Minister for Resource Industries, he was a strong advocate—

Mr Fitzgerald: \$500m?

Mr BREDHAUER: I beg the honourable member’s pardon—\$500,000. When the member for Nudgee was the Minister for Resource industries, he gave a commitment to the people of the Torres Strait that we would see to that rehabilitation. It will cost the taxpayers of Queensland \$1.2m to rehabilitate that site, because the miners irresponsibly walked away from it. I have a lot of miners in my electorate, and I know that the irresponsible ones are few and far between. Most of them are in there trying to make a few dollars. Places such as Comalco at Weipa have very good policies for regeneration and environment protection. But that action cost the taxpayer dearly. That is why we had to look at those policies.

Roadworks have to be carried out on the Kennedy Highway and the Peninsula Development Road. There is to be an upgrading of the wharf at Weipa at a cost of \$2.3m. That is important. I would like the advise the people at Palmer River, Lakeland Downs, Laura, Cooktown and places like that—

Mr FitzGerald: Have you done the wharf at Bamaga yet?

Mr BREDHAUER: The wharf at Bamaga is nearly finished. We have got about another \$30,000 or \$40,000 allocated in this Budget to finish off the job.

As to the Kangkirr Creek section of the road, which will just about complete the sealing of the road to Palmer River—we have allocated \$1.4m in this Budget to do that. Some people were concerned that we were going to do the major engineering, earthworks and drainage works and then not seal it, but we are committed to sealing that section of the road.

As to public housing funds—such funds have not been expended to any great extent in the past in the Cook electorate. One of the things that we have heard about is that, under previous Governments, the policy was not to build public housing in some areas. A total of \$1m will go into public housing in the Cook electorate. About half of that will be spent in the Douglas Shire. We will also be building public housing for the first time in the Torres

Strait and on Horn Island. I welcome those initiatives.

Schools are another important sector to which we are committed. We are going to spend \$2.3m on education facilities in the Cook electorate over the next 12 months, including a twin learning area at Badu Island State School and a new science laboratory and computer classroom at the Cooktown State School.

Units of accommodation for teachers are being built at Bamaga, Coconut Island, Dauan Island, Kubin, Mer and Yam Island. We will be looking at upgrading teacher accommodation in those places. We still have the ongoing \$60m School Refurbishment Program, which is funded from the tobacco tax. I think that about \$750,000 of that was spent in the Cook electorate over the period of the allocation.

I want to talk briefly about the Aboriginal Rental Housing Program. The Minister for Housing and Local Government visited the Torres Strait and peninsula areas. He was referring to the super sleuth from the *Sunday Mail* who found out through freedom of information that we had been up there.

Mr FitzGerald: Did you go swimming, too?

Mr BREDHAUER: I went swimming. I did not go fishing. I spent six months trying to get the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Planning to go up there after we transferred the responsibility for Aboriginal and Islander housing from the Minister for Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs to the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Planning. I take offence when people say that, when I do my job and get Ministers and other members—and I appreciate the support of members of the Minister's backbench committee—to go up to my electorate, there is an inference that I am on a junket when I am trying to educate the Minister and trying to get people to understand some of the issues. It is something that members from both sides of the House suffer from and, to be honest, I think that it was a cheap shot by the journalist.

In conclusion, I commend the Treasurer for increasing some taxes. I support the changes that were made to the stamp duty concessions for houses worth over \$250,000. I think that is reasonable and equitable. I support the inclusion of non-cash wage items in payroll tax. Likewise, I think that is reasonable and equitable. I do not see why people who are able to take part of their wages in non-cash items should get away with not paying payroll tax. I support a number of other changes that were made. In general, it

was a good Budget. I measured how good the Budget was by sitting here on Budget day and looking at the expressions on the faces of members opposite. They were wishing that they were bringing down such a good Budget. Another measure was the fact that the Leader of the Opposition seemed to go AWOL for a couple of days after the Budget when one would expect him to be out in the community taking up the Budget.

The Treasurer and I have had numerous discussions about economic strategies and budgets. Over the last four years, I have tried to understand the complex procedures involved. I think that I am getting a better grasp of it, but I also think that the Treasurer has a very good grip on the reins. I commend the Treasurer, and I commend the State Government for a great Budget.

Dr WATSON (Moggill) (9.51 p.m.): It is a pleasure to take part in the debate on the 1993 Budget and the Appropriation Bill that accompanies it. Tonight, I thought that I should look at this Budget not in the context of simple, dry economics, or financial statistics, or one that is simply a bookkeeping exercise in whether one can add up or not, but rather in the context of the credibility and the integrity of the process which produces the figures that we are discussing tonight. I was glad to hear the member for Cook talk about the complexities and how much he has learnt over the past four years, because I think that the Treasurer has done likewise. Going back to that fateful day on 7 March 1990 when the Treasurer produced and tabled his first document about the Queensland economy, he came here and tried to justify an alleged \$13 billion debt. That is something that I am sure he would like to live down. The then Leader of the Opposition and the then member for Landsborough chastised him. I was glad to read in this year's statement his recognition and understanding of the difference between net and gross debt, and his recognition that the net debt of the State when he took over as Treasurer was \$4.9 billion. There is no doubt that after having presented three Budgets—and this is his fourth Budget—like the member for Cook, the Treasurer has learnt a lot. He is no longer that naive individual trying to justify the position that he had taken in Opposition in attacking the previous Government for debt levels that did not exist. He is somebody who now understands the process, somebody who has used the process over the past four years.

Of course, the Treasurer has learned a lot. I think it is fair to say now that when the Treasurer comes into this Chamber and

places something on the table of this House, he does so deliberately and carefully. He is not somebody who has just tabled something that his minders or his bureaucracy has given to him. He understands what the document contains. Everything that is not there but which ought to be there and everything that is there which is false is something that he has done deliberately. He understands what he is doing completely and utterly. Therefore, I think that it is worth while looking at the context in which we find ourselves with this Budget. This Budget did not begin, of course, when the Treasurer brought it down last Thursday fortnight. It started some time ago. Although we may not be able to pinpoint the precise day, we know that it was well under way in February 1993 when the Premier and the Minister for Health signed the Medicare agreement. I want to go through that, because that document forms the basis of some of the financial dealings with the Commonwealth and some of the information that we have been given by the Treasurer in yet another document that he has laid on the table.

What has that financial agreement done? Members probably have not read it. If they had, they would have found a few interesting things. The first thing that Medicare agreement did in February 1993 is that Queensland, along with the other States, agreed to a reduction of \$400m in the hospital funding grants. The Premier and the Minister for Health knew that that would result in a reduction in the base hospital funding grant for Queensland. There was no way that that was not going to occur. They understood that. They also agreed, by signing that same document, to a change in the way in which the Commonwealth Grants Commission adjusted for the inequities that the smaller States face—the thing that the Treasurer refers to continually as fiscal equalisation.

Some factors were taken out of the calculation for determining the financial assistance grants and the general purpose grants, which was against Queensland's interests and was going to favour New South Wales and Victoria in the allocation of the financial assistance grants. That was the consequence. That was admitted, and it was understood. If members do not believe that, they should look at the letter to the Commonwealth Grants Commission on 5 February, which clearly specified it.

At the time, the Premier, the Minister for Health, the Treasurer and everyone else claimed that it was a good deal for Queensland. Why? One reason, of course,

was that we were in the middle of a Federal election campaign. But that was not the only reason. Some other things were done from which Queensland would benefit. As a consequence of this Medicare agreement, that \$400m which came out of the base hospital grant was moved to another pool—a bonus pool and a penalty scheme. The Commonwealth also agreed to put in a significantly greater amount. In fact, the Commonwealth Budget papers show that nearly \$400m was added. Into that new pool that was created was placed \$800m which is in addition to the base hospital funding grant pool.

The Commonwealth further agreed to take those relativities that were removed when deciding the financial assistance grants to this new pool, and that is the pool from which Queensland was going to benefit significantly. When one calculates the way in which Queensland was funded under the financial assistance grants, the general purpose grants and the base funding grants, it is quite incorrect—in fact, it is deliberately misleading—to simply concentrate on that and ignore the other pool. Of course, that is what the Treasurer has done, and I am going to outline that in detail in a moment.

What happened? In 1992-93, Queensland received \$2,777m in general purpose grants, and it also received \$668m in hospital funding, which included a small quarantined amount, making a total of \$3,445m. In 1993-94, Queensland received \$2,776m in general purpose grants, another amount of \$805m in the hospital funding grant together with a larger quarantined amount out of this special pool, making a total of \$3,581m.

The Treasurer is very fond of going around and saying that Queensland was duded because it received only \$2,776m in finance assistance grants this year. But he deliberately leaves out the agreements that were made when the Medicare agreement was signed, and he deliberately leaves out the \$805m that Queensland is receiving from the Commonwealth. What the Treasurer and the Premier did after they returned from the Premiers Conference—and I am glad that the Premier has come into the Chamber—was act in a politically opportunistic fashion.

Mr Elliott: That wouldn't be like them, would it?

Dr WATSON: No, of course not. They decided that they would come back to Queensland and undertake certain cuts that they wanted to implement, such as cuts in

Education, Health and Transport—cuts that they were scared to undertake off their own bat. They decided that they would make those cuts and use Paul Keating as a scapegoat. To do so, they produced a set of figures that the Treasurer tabled in this House which were completely and utterly misleading. I refer, of course, to the famous Interim Budget Statement, which was produced on 13 July. A set of figures appeared on page 1 which justified the \$115m cut. I have already gone through one of the figures—the \$30m—which we found, by looking at last year's Budget and by looking at the information that was faxed to the Opposition by the Office of Prime Minister and Cabinet, although we could not get that information when we asked Treasury for it in spite of its being a public document, that the \$30m was a one-off grant for 1992-93. This was something that Queensland was never going to get again. It was something that any responsible Treasurer would never have expected to get and would never have counted on getting, let alone regarded as a reduction in Commonwealth funding.

In addition to that, there were three other figures. It is interesting that in the Federal Budget Paper No. 3 for this year, a table is set out which is similar to what this State's Treasurer attempted to do in the Interim Budget Statement. The table compares 1992 Federal assistance grants and hospital funding grants and other things with 1993, and shows the various changes which affect this year's result. When one examines the papers, the Treasurer's statement shows a minus \$33m from the impact of the application of Commonwealth grants. When one looks at the Commonwealth's statement, there are two figures, one of which is a negative \$63m and a positive \$30m, which add up to a negative \$33m. One can also see the minus \$42m for the Medicare guarantee levy to New South Wales and the minus \$10m for Queensland's share of the Northern Territory and the ACT funding.

What is in the Federal Budget statement and what does not appear in the Queensland document are the changes that take place because of the Commonwealth's agreement to include up-to-date population relativities. A figure of \$49.8m is clearly important in trying to analyse and understand the difference between Commonwealth funding in 1993-94 compared to what it was the year before, yet the Treasurer has deliberately left that out. I say "deliberately" because I believe that since 1990 the Treasurer has learnt that when he puts these matters before Parliament, information is not left out accidentally. In fact,

the Treasurer has done it quite purposely to create a contrived and misleading position. Moreover, on page 2 of the same document, the Treasurer stated quite incorrectly—

"It should be noted that no compensation is provided to the States for increased population factors, which impact most severely on Queensland with its high relative population growth."

Page 37 of the Medicare agreement sets out the formula. It is quite clear that, in the grant year, the States are compensated for the estimates of population made by the Australian Bureau of Statistics up to 31 December of that year. For this year, 1993-94, what is in the formula is the population estimate made by the ABS for 31 December 1993. It is quite obvious that the formula compensates for higher growth. When one looks at the very same Budget Paper No. 3 and goes through it, one can identify the effect. New South Wales, which is losing relative to Queensland, loses; Victoria loses; Western Australia shows a small loss; South Australia loses; Tasmania loses; the Northern Territory loses; and the winners, because of population changes, are the ACT by a small amount and Queensland, which is the big winner with \$49.8m.

That is important because, if one sets out to evaluate the credibility of this year's Queensland Budget, one has to be able to understand how we got to the Budget figures. Not only that, one has to see whether or not the same kind of line runs through all the statements. I am devoting considerable time to this because, while other people have mentioned other matters, it is possible to follow through with this piece of information. The 1993-94 Commonwealth Budget Papers and the 1993-94 State Budget Papers show that these matters follow through yet again. On page 90 of the Commonwealth's Budget Paper No. 3, a table is shown of the distribution of hospital funding grants for 1993-94, and that is compared to 1992-93. These are partly the figures to which I referred earlier, and they quite clearly show that Queensland received a total of \$668m in 1992-93, made up of \$665m in hospital funding grants plus \$12.2m quarantined. In 1993-94, the Commonwealth expects to give Queensland \$805m, made up of \$610.7m in hospital funding grants and a quarantined amount coming out of that pool of \$194.6m.

Mr De Lacy: After all that, we have less money than we got last year.

Dr WATSON: The Treasurer got more money that he got last year. There is no

question about that. I have already said that he got \$136m more in this area, and when the financial assistance grants and the total amount derived from hospital funding grants plus the new pool to which the Treasurer agreed and the dedicated road funding are combined, it can be seen that the Treasurer received \$136m more for Queensland, not less than the amount he received last year. Queensland received a 4 per cent increase, and the Treasurer can check the figures.

I turn to Queensland's Budget Paper No. 4, page 55, table 4.6, which shows that in 1992-93 the Treasurer recognised \$668m in recurrent health funding, and that is the same figure which is in the Commonwealth's Budget Paper made up of the hospital funding grant plus the quarantined amount. What did the Treasurer do for 1993-94? He included \$611m in that area to perpetuate the con that he had been playing at. This is also incorrect. Unlike 1992-93, when he included the quarantined amount, this year the Treasurer left it out.

This year, the Treasurer has tried to put in a footnote to explain it, but in actual fact he is engaging in a deliberate manipulation. I say it is deliberate because a mistake could be made in one table, but lo and behold, in the same Budget Papers—Budget Paper No. 4, page 77 at table 5.7—the same mistake crept in again. In 1992-93, Queensland was supposed to have received \$3,439m in financial assistance grants and health grants, and in 1993-94, only \$3,358m. Of course, this table does exactly the same thing. When one looks at 1992-93, it can be seen that it includes the financial assistance grants and all the health grants. When one looks at 1993-94, it can be seen that the Treasurer has conveniently left out the \$194m yet again.

Mr T. B. Sullivan: How can we rely on you?

Dr WATSON: These figures are all contained in the Labor Government's Budget Papers. What is extremely interesting in all of this is that when one comes to examine the credibility of the information that is laid before this Parliament—after all, during this debate, all members of Parliament should be looking at these statements and this is the information that is being broadcast throughout the State as representing the financial position of this State—we have to believe that the information which the Treasurer is putting before us is actually correct; that it is actually the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. However, we find in this Treasurer anything but that level of credibility.

In the health area, we have some independent sources by which to gauge the information. Government members may not think much of the Federal Treasurer or their colleague the Prime Minister. They may think that he duds them. However, one thing that is consistent throughout Australia's history is that one can place a fair bit of reliability on the information that is produced by the Commonwealth Treasury. That provides some independent assessment.

If the Treasurer and the Government are prepared to come into this House and lay on the table not once, not twice, but more than three times information, the veracity of which one can check with public sources, what can we believe about the rest of it? The member for Crows Nest and the Leader of the Opposition have talked about some of the problems with the capital works funding. We do not yet have anything with which to check the statements. However, where we can check the veracity and where there is an independent source, we find that the statements have absolutely no credibility whatsoever. That is the standard by which we will judge the Treasurer. By that standard, the Treasurer and the Government fail miserably.

Mr NUTTALL (Sandgate) (10.11 p.m.): Prior to the last speech made by an Opposition member, a number of Opposition members were very critical of the Government's social justice program in the Budget. Initially, my aim was to speak about money spent in my electorate. However, we should reflect on the social justice issues in the Budget. The Premier said—

"In this Budget, we recognise that social infrastructure is as important as economic infrastructure."

As members of the Labor Party, we are very proud of the fact that the Government has social justice policies. More importantly, we intend to implement those policies.

I want to go through some of the social justice initiatives that the Government proposes to introduce in the Budget. Assistance to increase legal aid funding: is that good or bad? Assistance to support the public library system: is that good or bad? An increase in child care places—

Mr Elder: They don't want them.

Mr NUTTALL: Members of the Opposition do not want them. Exactly. The Government has a program for the prevention of violence against women.

Mr Elder: Some of them have only just discovered an interest in women.

Mr NUTTALL: I take that interjection. That is a problem that they have. Further key initiatives are: assistance for rape and sexual assault victims, assistance for women's health programs, money to target young people at risk of entering the sex industry, foster care of abused and neglected children, an infrastructure program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, more money to assist in the implementation of recommendations of the royal commission into Aboriginal deaths in custody, assistance with juvenile crime strategies, assistance for charities and community organisations through the Gaming Machine Community Benefit Fund and assistance for families who are affected by drought. Those members who supposedly represent the rural area should take note of that. The Government will upgrade the resources of church and community centres.

Further initiatives are: assistance with the Home and Community Care Programs for our elderly; an extension of the Seniors Card for our old people; a Community Housing Partnership Program for the aged, the single and people with a disability; the Home Assist Program to help older house owners and people with disabilities; the Home Secure Program, to help our elderly people; next year, money to assist with the International Year of the Family; assistance to support regional planning in south-east Queensland; and money for the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program.

I have named 21 social justice programs on which the Government will spend money in the Budget, yet members of the Opposition say that the Government should not have social justice programs.

Mr T. B. Sullivan: You almost silenced Mr Elliott.

Mr NUTTALL: The member for Chermside is definitely correct. I want to take up some of the issues about which I have spoken. All of those social justice issues are extremely important. The first one is the prevention of violence against women. In this State, we have an unacceptably high incidence of domestic violence. The Government plans to focus on prevention strategies and funding programs. As part of a \$2.33m funding package, the Government will spend nearly \$1m to set up five new domestic violence centres in the 1993-94 year. That is in addition to five that were set up in the 1992-93 year, which were established in Emerald, Caboolture, Toowoomba, the Gold Coast and Cairns. An additional \$200,000 has been

allocated for the office of the Director of Prosecutions to ensure that women victims of violent crime have access to adequate information and support during criminal justice processes.

In terms of our youth—the Government intends to assist young people who are homeless or unemployed and who are particularly vulnerable to sexual exploitation, assault and health problems. The Government will allocate half a million dollars to provide intensive support aimed at diverting young people who are engaging in opportunistic prostitution or who are at risk of entering the formal sex industry.

In terms of foster care—the Government will spend an extra three-quarters of a million dollars to meet the essential and exceptional costs associated with the care of abused and neglected children who are in foster care. In terms of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander infrastructure—an additional \$7.4m will be allocated over three years for an infrastructure program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. In addition, the Government will include in that program a new dam to be built on Palm Island at a cost of \$11m, which will be jointly funded with the Commonwealth Government.

In terms of the royal commission into Aboriginal deaths in custody—an additional \$1.5m has been provided in the Budget to continue the implementation of the recommendations of the royal commission into Aboriginal deaths in custody. In terms of juvenile crime—a further \$2m is provided to meet the full-year costs of implementing the Juvenile Crime Strategy. As honourable members are aware, next year is the International Year of the Family. The Government has allocated \$600,000 over a two-year period for planning and promotion of that event, including a program for participation in IYF projects and initiatives and a public information and awareness campaign on valuing children. The program also includes the establishment of a task force to examine the abuse of older people.

In terms of the rural families strategy—\$700,000 will be allocated, which will be directed to community organisations to help and support people who are affected by the drought. Those funds will support existing community-based services at Charleville, Moranbah, the Central Highlands, Roma, Goondiwindi and Dalby. In addition, a new community service will be funded in the St George area. An amount of \$387,000 has been provided to upgrade the resources of 19

existing church and community neighbourhood centres throughout Queensland.

We have heard much from the shadow Attorney-General about legal aid. The amount provided for legal aid in Queensland will increase by \$2.7m, or 37 per cent. This will ensure that the office can maintain its current level of services for disadvantaged people throughout Queensland.

In terms of youth employment—the 1993-94 Budget includes almost \$100m for employment and training initiatives, including programs under the \$150m Jobs Plan. That funding expands the employment and training programs of the \$150m Jobs Plan. In terms of our elderly citizens—our seniors—the Seniors Card will be extended. Those people on New Start, special benefits and sickness benefits, and people who are 60 years of age and over who have been in receipt of benefits for more than a year will now be eligible for the Seniors Card and for all concessions, entitlements and business discounts.

There will be improved child care. This Government will implement its Better Child Care Strategy with an allocation of \$18.6m over three years to create more child-care places. The five-part strategy will provide nearly 9 000 new child-care places over a three-year period. That is on top of the 7 500 child-care places provided by the Government during its first term. There will be the establishment of a child care information service which will provide easy access to all forms of child care and related services. There will be cooperation with Queensland employers to increase the availability of work-based child care. The child care information service will include a data base of information about child care, kindergarten and preschool services.

As to public housing—funding for public rental housing in the 1993-94 Budget will be \$287m. In addition, \$12m has been provided for the Community Housing Partnership Program. This program is designed to provide funding for local authorities and community groups for long-term accommodation for the aged, singles and people with a disability. Funding is also available for the acquisition and upgrading of boarding houses to be managed by community groups. Under the Housing Industry Trade Training Scheme, 160 new dwellings will be built, providing jobs for 240 new apprentices.

As to the Home Assist and Home Secure Programs—a total of \$1.09m has been allocated to meet the cost of the Government's pre-election commitment to the

Home Assist Program. This program will provide maintenance, advice and services targeted to older home owners, private renters and people with disabilities. Twenty projects across Queensland will be funded, and I am pleased to say that my electorate is one of the areas to benefit from that program. A total of \$846,000 has been provided under the Home Safety Program for a range of home safety and security support services for older home owners and people with disabilities. Twenty-five projects throughout the State will be funded.

As to women's health—the women's health allocation, totalling more than \$10m, includes \$5.9m for breast cancer screening programs and cervical cancer prevention programs, and \$1.34m for community-based health centres and the Mobile Women's Health Program.

As to charities and community organisations in this State—they will benefit by around \$7m per annum from a new Gaming Machine Community Benefit Fund. This will be funded from an additional levy on the larger, more profitable poker machine clubs and a reallocation of some of the levy currently paid by hotels.

As to the arts—the capital base of the Regional Arts Development Fund will be increased from \$5m to \$10m over the next two years. Interest earnings on this fund are provided to regional local authorities for the support of arts activities. In addition, \$10.4m has been allocated to support the public library system.

The programs which will be implemented by this Government stand as a monument to its commitment to the people of this State. I am pleased to say that my electorate, along with most other electorates in this State, has benefited over the four years of this Government. We have not just allocated money to Labor-held seats. Members opposite have stood up in this debate and said openly that moneys have been allocated to the essentials in their electorates—schools, hospitals and police stations. We have done that right across-the-board.

I am pleased to say that in my electorate a new police station will be completed at the end of October; a new bus/rail interchange will be completed by the end of the year; and there will be additional funding for roads. We have heard the complaints about job losses by Opposition members, but they have not mentioned job creation. Most electorates would have some clubs in them. Most of those clubs have had large extensions in

terms of facilities for their members. As a result, they have put on more employees. That has occurred in my area. As I said, a new police station is being built in my area. An additional 11 police officers will be appointed in my electorate.

Mr Bennett: Good representation, that is why.

Mr NUTTALL: I take that interjection. That station will be upgraded to operate on a 24-hour, seven days a week basis for the benefit of the people in my electorate. I am pleased and proud to be a part of a Government that puts the citizens of Queensland first, and all citizens of Queensland—

Mr Budd interjected.

Mr NUTTALL: Yes, that is right, not just citizens from certain electorates; all citizens of Queensland. I am proud to be a part of this Government, and the Treasurer is to be congratulated on a great effort.

Mr ELLIOTT (Cunningham) (10.25 p.m.): I am pleased to take part in this debate. During the last contribution from the Opposition, when the good Dr Watson was having a word or two to say, I noticed the deafening silence right across the Government side of the Chamber. Occasionally, a bit of a whisper came across to say, "Oh, that is wrong." However, no-one took a point of order on the member for Moggill. That is because what he said was spot on. Government members did not like the truth one little bit. We former PAC members stick together. I have a few other fish to fry here tonight, so I will not dwell on that any further.

We have just heard about the marvellous social consciences of Government members. They claim to have a wonderful social agenda. They spoke about what this Government was going to do in the area of social justice. If Government members were interested in social justice, I suggest to them that they should provide some money to the groups that really are at the coalface; the groups that are the most efficient users of Government money in the social welfare area. I refer to groups such as the Salvation Army, Meals on Wheels, the Blue Nurses—

Mr Beattie: We do help them.

Mr ELLIOTT: I am afraid that I have to say that the level of assistance provided by the Government is pitiful. It is about time the Government recognised that the most efficient way to spend the public dollar is on those groups in society that will provide labour for free and that will assist in every way, shape

and form to ensure that the problems of society are addressed. I suggest to the Government that, in the next Budget that it frames—if it gets that far and if it does not go broke in the meantime—it really should address that deficiency. That lack of funding should be considered in addition to the massive cuts in services right across country areas of this State. Government members who live in this south-eastern corner—

Mr T. B. Sullivan: You live in the south-east corner.

Mr ELLIOTT: No, I do not live in the south-east corner.

Mr T. B. Sullivan: Where do you live? Warwick?

Mr ELLIOTT: No, I do not live in Warwick.

Mr T. B. Sullivan: Where do you live? Cunningham's Gap?

Mr ELLIOTT: It has nothing to do with Cunningham's Gap. Will someone remove this gentleman? He is a former schoolteacher. Is it any wonder that they kicked him out of Nudgee? He does not even know where Cunningham is. He thinks that it is Cunningham's Gap! The man is a mental lightweight. It is no wonder that the big farmer and a few of the other former Nudgee guys had the greatest party ever seen when this bloke left Nudgee. The parents rejoiced. They said, "Now our children might be taught properly." That is a typical example—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Bredhauer): Order! The honourable member will return to the debate before the House. He will also address his remarks through the Chair.

Mr ELLIOTT: I am sorry, Mr Deputy Speaker. The honourable member caused me to get carried away. I will return to the point. This Budget does not address the social justice issues that are prevalent in the community. Government members do not have a clue what is going on because they are not at the coalface talking to the people. They should talk to the people at Lifeline in Toowoomba or at other centres in the bush. They should see what sort of problems they are really facing.

The Darling Downs is suffering another crop disaster. That country was once considered to be the safest country in the whole of the nation on which to grow crops. The three areas that people considered to be the safest grain growing areas were the Darling Downs, Croppa Creek/North Star and down near Quirindi in the Breeza Plain and some of those areas. For four years in a row

at least half of the crops in those areas have been total failures.

If Government members believe that they have seen social welfare problems, they should go out to those areas and see what is really going on. I challenge the Government, if it has any sensibilities at all and if it believes in social justice, to go into the country and see what is going on. The greatest social problems that have ever been experienced in the country will soon manifest themselves. If the problem is not addressed, it will make the 1930s look like a Sunday school picnic. Government members at the back of the Chamber might all laugh, but it will not be amusing. It will be absolutely diabolical. What answers has the Government got for the worst drought in living memory? The Water Resources Commission allocation in the Primary Industries budget is down 19 per cent overall.

Mr Ardill: You had 32 years to do something about it on the downs. What did you do?

Mr ELLIOTT: We did not decrease the Water Resources allocation. The Capital Works Program allocation for Water Resources is down by 27 per cent. This big spending Wayne Goss/Labor Party Budget has increased 10 per cent overall, and what is the best he can do for Water Resources? He cut the Capital Works Program by 27 per cent during the worst drought that much of Queensland has ever seen. What is he doing about it?

Mr Ardill: What did you do?

Mr ELLIOTT: We built dams. We built the Burdekin Dam. The Government must address the problem in the Condamine catchment, the Dumaresq catchment, the Macintyre catchment, and the Severn River on the Queensland side of the border. When I was Minister, I ensured that a dam site was made available on the Severn River, and it is still available. At that site, it is possible to put a tunnel straight through into the Glenlyon Dam. The border rivers scheme, under which Queensland and New South Wales share water, is a good one. It is cooperation between States at its best. We should be building the Mole River dam, which is essential to the welfare of my electorate and that of the member for Warwick.

If the Government sits idly by and thinks that it can spend all its money on social issues in the south-eastern corner because of the problems that it and its Federal colleagues have created in the economy, it is away with the pixies. If it does not get some real capital

commitment into areas that will do something of a positive nature and create work and welfare—I am talking about real welfare, not social welfare—it will have a tremendous problem. It will be a legacy that Government members will live with for the rest of their days. This Government will go down as the Government which did not address any of the real problems, including the social problems, that are associated with the disaster that has been brought on by the drought. I am afraid to say that I am ashamed of Government members.

Members ask, "What would you do?" First of all, I would not waste the money that the Government has been wasting. I will provide an example of what has been occurring. In education, there was a special—it is a bit like the specials that Coles have now and again—on administration blocks. The Pittsworth State High School desperately needed a home economics block. It had been placed on the priority list.

Mrs Edmond: 20 years?

Mr ELLIOTT: No, not 20 years. It was on the priority list, and the Government said, "No, you cannot have your home economics block, but you can have an administration block, because we have a special on administration blocks."

Dr Watson: Cheaper by the dozen.

Mr ELLIOTT: They were going cheaper by the dozen. They put one of those blocks into a school at Oakey in the electorate of the member for Crows Nest, as well. You have allowed a situation in which there has been absolute and utter waste.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member should address his remarks through the chair.

Mr ELLIOTT: Mr Deputy Speaker, it is an absolute disgrace. The Government has wasted money in building administration blocks where they were not needed. Those schools were quite happy to continue using the administration buildings that they had; they wanted a home economics block. Unfortunately, that action has been repeated across the State. Honourable members should talk to teachers about the money that has been wasted on seminars and on reports that the principals have had to write. It is an unmitigated disaster. It is impractical. The Government is damaging the morale of the principals throughout the State. Recently, Russell Cooper and I went on a trip through a wide area and talked to many different

principals. The response was the same right across-the-board.

There is a very real problem with primary industries. The Minister for Primary Industries has described primary industries as the real engine room of this State—industries such as sugar cane in the electorates of the member for Bundaberg and the electorates of many other members on both sides of the House. They include the grain belt that I represent, and which the member for Warwick and the member for Crows Nest represent. All of those areas should be the productive sector that keeps the whole economy of this State going.

Mr Campbell: Not necessarily. They are part of it. They are not the only sector.

Mr ELLIOTT: I did not say that they were the only sector. The honourable member, above all others, who has worked in the DPI, should be ashamed of himself for denigrating those areas. It just shows where his priorities really lie. He has lost all the loyalty he once used to have to primary industries. He was known as someone who took great pride in what he did in the DPI. What has happened to it? He seems to have lost it. All those areas have been singled out and attacked, particularly the officers who were working at the coalface.

We have plenty of bureaucrats pushing paper around. Not only are they pushing paper around in Brisbane, which I always considered they did too much of, even in my day, but out in the regions they have now duplicated the system. We now have all these bureaucrats in Toowoomba and everywhere else sitting there pushing paper around. Where do we want them? We want them out at the coalface liaising with the farmers. Do honourable members opposite want to know what extension is really about? It is about going to Vince Lester, farmer, or Joe Blake, farmer and showing them the latest technology. It is about taking that technology and spreading it far and wide to all those people who have not picked it up. That is what extension is about. It has been highly successful over a long period. But what has happened? This Government has axed all those people. There are hardly any of them left. Most of them are leaving in disgust and going to work for private enterprise, because they have just about given up on this Government.

Recently, I was absolutely horrified when I attended a conference at which there were a large number of those people. They said to me, "What on earth is going to happen to the DPI?" What is going to happen to all those

guys who have given a lifetime of service to ensure the productivity of the rural industries of this State and nation? What has this Government done to reward them? It is going to sell off the AI centre at Wacol, which is one of the most successful centres in the Commonwealth. It has proved itself to be successful. It has made money, ensured productivity and lifted the milk production of the entire dairy industry. But this Government is selling it off. Why? Because it is broke! It has robbed all the piggy banks and taken all the money from the hollow logs. Unfortunately, this will continue to happen unless the Government addresses this problem and does something constructive about it.

Mr W. K. Goss: We will take it out of the piggy banks to fill up the hollow logs again.

Mr ELLIOTT: That is traditional Labor thought coming through. That is what we expect. It is interesting to note that the Premier was silent when Dr Watson was talking about the Budget. I did not hear too much from him then.

Mr W. K. Goss: That's when we were in the bottomless pit.

Mr ELLIOTT: I see. Is that where we were?

Mr W. K. Goss: The money in the piggy banks is in the hollow logs.

Mr ELLIOTT: I see. That is how it works. The Treasurer was silent, also. The Opposition's greatest concern is that the Government appears to be so oriented towards social justice issues, creating committees, writing reports and going through the motions of being seen to be democratic without actually carrying it out that it has lost its way in getting things going and doing something constructive in this State. Unfortunately, that is being seen at its worst in National Party electorates. The Government has cut just about every service in those electorates, particularly mine. I invite Government members to travel across the Cunningham electorate to see what is left in the way of Government services. There is not much left. That is a shocking indictment on a Government that came to power saying that it would address all of these imbalances. Members opposite used to sit here and criticise the National Party when it was in Government. I remember sitting over there as a Minister and hearing the braying from members opposite about what they would do when they got into Government.

Mr Foley: Nurture that memory.

Mr ELLIOTT: I am quite proud of that memory. I do not have any problems with that memory. But the proof of the pudding is in the eating, and this Government has not lived up to the people's expectations. That has been well and truly reflected in the opinion polls. How does it feel to be on 41 per cent and going down?

Mr Elder: It feels pretty good, quite frankly. Do you want a second opinion?

Mr ELLIOTT: That is interesting. Does the honourable member apply that same philosophy to the Broncos?

Mr ELDER: They are winning, too, aren't they? We're winning and the Broncos are winning. What a team!

Mr ELLIOTT: The member is going down. The only saving grace is that, with a bit of luck, the Broncos are going to win. The Government is absolutely bereft of any thought and action to overcome the real problems of the day. It is the same with the environment. Has this Government addressed the problems of ocean outfall and the Murray/Darling system? No. It has not done a damn thing about them. Government members run around and denigrate anyone who is trying to do something. Do they realise that the Dutch are now doing basically what it was trying to get this Government to do with the D'Oliveira methane process? The Dutch are about to do that for this Government. This Government is going to miss out on that technology, which has the capability of addressing the problems of ocean outfall and the problems of sewerage plants along the Murray/Darling system. This Government will go down in history as being so short-sighted that it did nothing about it.

Time expired.

Mr ROWELL (Hinchinbrook) (10.46 p.m.): The Budget presented to Queenslanders for this financial year has two significant factors. It spends more money but does not provide additional employment opportunities. The increase in spending of 20.6 per cent has surpassed even the disastrous Cain/Kirner experiment of 20.4 per cent in Victoria. In the past three years, the Goss Government has escalated spending way beyond other State increases, which are around an average of 5 per cent. The increase in outlays of this Budget is \$430m, with a \$570m increase in recurrent expenditure, an amount that will become part of future Budgets. This is very important, because once the Government sets a trend it has to try to maintain it.

In the past year, Queenslanders have been slugged with additional increases in fines, taxes and fees to the extent of about \$311m. The gaming machine levy was increased by about \$42m. That is not a good indicator, as people who get into financial difficulties very often play games of chance in an attempt to alleviate their financial problems.

Mr Szczerbanik: How was the union protest in Innisfail?

Mr ROWELL: Quite good. It was very interesting. No Labor Party members marched with those union people. I thought that was very interesting.

Mr Szczerbanik: I was standing out the front watching it.

Mr ROWELL: The honourable member was there? That is good. But he was not marching with his union friends. That is very interesting. It is well known that, when the economy is in a tight situation and jobs are hard to come by, people look to a quick fix to overcome their problems. I think that the member for Mundingburra is asleep. No, he is not. He mentioned that bingo and those similar types of activities, which raise money for a lot of good institutions—I presume in his electorate, too—are having some difficulty in attracting interest. Poker machines are one of the contributing factors to the lack of success of those fundraising campaigns for many institutions. This Government has substantially expanded opportunities for people to gamble by allowing the TAB to include other forms of betting to rake in extra money.

The expenditure of \$170m on a convention centre on the South Bank is a substantial investment for a particular sector of the State that will create a sense of euphoria for people in the south-east corner. This is coming on the heels of the \$104m expenditure for South Bank last year.

The casino in Cairns—and, of course, the one in Brisbane—will be another source of income for this Government. The convention centre in Cairns will cost some \$36m. That will be another edifice with which the Government will hope to captivate people's imagination for something that it is providing for them. The major tragedy is that no inroads have been made into the serious problems of unemployment. We will have a generation of young people who do not know how to support themselves and will have to depend on the dole.

Labor in Queensland in the past four years has had an abysmal record when it

comes to providing job opportunities. It is almost as if the Labor scenario is to make people depend on the dole so that it has some control over them. People will not bite the hand that feeds them. It is a subtle but devious way to control those who become dependent upon Government handouts. Since the Labor Party was elected to Government in Queensland in 1989, there has been an increase of 80 per cent in the number of people who are unemployed.

172 100 people are unemployed—an increase of 77 300, and the staggering figure of 31 per cent for youth unemployment is an indictment on this Government that purports to represent the working class. The disturbing fact is that, because of the variety of part-time occupations, these figures are being propped up by statistics that are impossible to assess. There is a wide variety of part-time occupations, and it would be extremely difficult to ascertain the true number of people who are really unemployed. Proportionately, fewer people are out in the work force earning income, imposing even greater burdens on those who are paying taxes to support the insatiable appetite of a Government that maintains its position by funding programs that are popular in order to keep it in power.

In the Hinchinbrook electorate, expenditure was kept to a minimum level. The deepening of the entrance to Mourilyan Harbour near Innisfail, at a cost of \$3m, was the biggest item of expenditure. When that work is completed, it will increase the harbour's ability to cater for larger capacity ships, which is great. With the increased planting of sugar land south of Tully, the deepening of the harbour entrance will enable larger vessels to enter the harbour. There has always been the prospect of commercial developments at Mourilyan Harbour, which could use sea transport to take away manufactured products to southern ports of Australia or even to other countries around the world.

An amount of \$85,000 was provided in this Budget to complete a child-minding centre in Innisfail close to the Johnstone College of TAFE. There was no indication in the Budget as to what the Government intends to do with the Wet Tropics Agriculture Research Station at South Johnstone. During a shadow Cabinet meeting held in Innisfail in June last year, I suggested that Innisfail, because of its climatic conditions, would be an ideal place to carry out research for many facets of tropical agriculture.

Mr Hollis: You are not the Government. You can't decide it.

Mr ROWELL: Yes, but we have to have some initiatives, and that is damned important. From Ingham to Mossman, a range of agriculture is being carried out that earns both domestic and export income for north Queensland. Excluding sugar cane, the value of crops would be about \$250m. It is possible for that income to be doubled, but it requires a greater level of input to carry out plant breeding and selection and also to counter insect and fungal problems. That is really the major role of these research centres. Post harvest transport and processing are facets that have to be taken into consideration.

Mr Hollis: It will be a long shadow before you are back in Government.

Mr ROWELL: The honourable member should listen. In August last year—that same year—the Government decided, prior to the September election, to make provision for a worthwhile facility. However, to date nothing has really happened. The Government actually picked up the initiative, which I am very pleased about. That is how we can have some input into what might happen in our regions. In fact, further cuts in personnel have occurred in the Primary Industry budget for the delivery of service, which is having an impact on services provided by entomologists, pathologists and many specialised fields of primary industries advice.

There are TAFE facilities in the three major towns in my electorate. Innisfail has a first-class complex, which was built by the National Party Government. Ingham has an annexe of Townsville TAFE, and Tully has an annexe of Johnstone TAFE. Adjoining the high school at Tully, an ideal piece of land for a TAFE college was offered to the Government at a reasonable price. However, that offer was not taken up. Currently, a business certificate course and other minor courses are being conducted in rented premises in Tully.

At Ingham, a church hall was converted to conduct TAFE courses in the town back in 1989. The National Party recognised that the district warranted a TAFE facility in Ingham, but, of course, that fell off the list when the Labor Party came into Government. This hall has rapidly become too small to conduct classes of students, and some 200 students attend courses on a weekly basis. The building was not designed to cope with the wide range of courses needed to be conducted. To provide those courses, rental accommodation was used, but the stringent requirements of the Workplace Health and Safety Act would not allow certain courses to

be conducted in the rented premises unless major modifications occurred.

Both the Ingham and Tully districts are substantial income earners at both domestic and export levels with sugar, bananas, pawpaws and fruit trees, but they are not regarded as being worthy of a decent TAFE facility where not only agricultural courses but also other courses associated with service industries could be conducted. Yet Townsville TAFE has been allocated \$9.1m. Of that amount, \$2.5m is for horticultural facilities that will probably be used to teach people how to grow lawns and flower beds. Despite the \$48m increase in funding for TAFE, the Hinchinbrook electorate received no recognition for capital works.

The Government has lost its way with priorities for areas that provide important income and jobs for Queensland. No mention is made of the Tully/Millstream project, which could supply clean, efficient, demand-type energy and jobs for people in north Queensland. Minister McGrady has been talking about how costly it is to run carbon dioxide belching gas turbines, presumably to replace this hydropower station project that has been acclaimed by a costly task force as being the best option to generate electricity in Queensland.

Since the recent decision by the Education Department to reduce its numbers by almost 460, high school teachers have come to me because they are staggered by the early retirement scheme for teachers aged 55 being offered \$20,000 redundancy packages to be made effective from 1 October. Irrespective of the remuneration package being offered, the timing is lousy. Students who are completing studies at the end the scholastic year could find their themselves with a new teacher to complete their study program.

Mr Hollis: But what about the young people?

Mr ROWELL: Why not do it at the end of the year? Why do it a couple of weeks before the scholastic year is ready to conclude?

It has been proposed that a further 30 railway workers could be made redundant in the electorate if efficiencies with train crews are implemented by working up to 12-hour shifts. That is in addition to the approximately 60 railway redundancies that occurred last year when fletcher and bridge gangs were broken up. At that time last year, I produced a report which indicated quite clearly that there were sections of the track in the Hinchinbrook

electorate that had an unsafe level of defective sleepers and loose dogspikes.

Cuts in the Health budget are creating similar disquiet among the nursing staff. Cuts in hospital and administrative positions has seen those jobs go to regional offices in Townsville and Cairns. Nurses are concerned about the level of delivery of service. I attended two rallies, and I am sure that the member down the back of the Chamber, Mr Szczerbanik, would be well aware that those two rallies were held by the teachers, the railway workers and nurses in Innisfail—

Mr Szczerbanik: And nurses.

Mr ROWELL: The nurses in Innisfail, but on neither occasion did a Labor member attend those rallies. They were very upset that a Labor Government, which is supposed to support the worker, had turned into an institution for academic bean counters.

I turn now to the Warrina Nursing Home at Innisfail, which has almost been completed. There was an understanding by the board that furniture allocations would be made for some 40 beds. The National Party Government had allocated \$2,000 per bed for new nursing homes. This would have meant approximately \$80,000 to the dedicated board of the Warrina Nursing Home. Following upon a deputation led by me and which included the board, the Minister offered to give to the home any surplus beds, etc., that the Innisfail Hospital may have available, if that equipment is suitable. One can only presume that after a system which professes to be highly efficient has no further use for the equipment, it would be probably be obsolete and unsatisfactory.

The Queensland Ambulance Service has really been turned on its ear. I commend the service's personnel in my electorate for the manner in which they carry out their duties and the loyalty that they show to the Government. Unfortunately, I believe that loyalty is governed by fear of their positions becoming vacant if they are critical of the way in which the service is administered. The Ingham Ambulance Community Committee has decided to raise money for a much-needed, four-wheel-drive vehicle to ensure that a service can be provided in the less accessible places, particularly during wet weather, which occurs in the electorate from time to time. Conditions are particularly difficult when harvesters are operating in wet conditions. Recently, a great deal of uncertainty surrounded the trust funds and the purchase of equipment for the service by the community. As a consequence, the Ingham community has requested that ministerial

assurance be given that the \$40,000 four-wheel-drive vehicle will remain under the control of the Ingham Ambulance Centre.

Earlier during this debate, the member for Archerfield referred to ambulance centres no longer needing to run chook raffles. I can assure him that a massive raffle is being run in Ingham to obtain contributions to the purchase of the four-wheel-drive vehicle for the Ingham district. Does the member think it is reasonable for the people of my electorate to be given an assurance that the vehicle will not be removed from the area?

Mr Ardill: Yes.

Mr ROWELL: That is very good. On 11 June, I wrote to the Minister requesting that he give the assurance that had been sought. I have received two interim replies, but nothing that I have received from the Minister confirms that the control of the new vehicle would be retained in the area that contributed the finances for its purchase.

In the course of conversation with senior police officers in my electorate, I gained the impression that a police station was to be built in the Mission Beach area. However, there is no sign of a proposed new police station in the Budget. I have to admit, though, that the air-conditioning that has been installed in the Ingham Police Station is very welcome. The police station is in an old building that requires a better ventilation system, and I am certain that the air-conditioning system will be appreciated by the police officers stationed at Ingham.

The Government has taken the initiative to sell off urban Crown land in Cardwell which cost \$33,000 to develop. The timing is impeccable because the multimillion-dollar marina development at Oyster Point, which will be known as Port Hinchinbrook, is well advanced in its planning. In Cardwell, land prices have gone through the roof, and the Government should reap a handsome reward for that subdivision.

The World Heritage area in my electorate received \$4.1m in the Budget. The listed area is bordered by 180 kilometres of western boundary of the Hinchinbrook electorate, and this is a matter of some significance. I await, with eager anticipation, some acknowledgment that the initiatives that have been put forward in relation to job opportunities will be recognised by the authorities, as that was part of the trade-off when the forest industries were closed down.

I turn now to raise a couple of matters associated with the sugar industry. A

Commonwealth/State allocation of \$40m has been made for a sugar industry infrastructure package. In this year's Budget, the State Government's commitment is \$20m over a four-year period, which is really great. There has also been an increase in the BSES funding from \$1.7m to \$2.5m, which is also very welcome.

However, the sugar industry experiences other problems. For example, \$38m is given in foreign aid to Thailand—a country that competes against Queensland's sugar industry. In fact, Thailand produces more sugar than does the Queensland industry at present. Not only does Thailand receive financial aid from Australia but also it is given developing countries status. Moreover, a 5 per cent competitive price advantage is given to imports that are made by using Thai sugar as an ingredient. I think that is absolutely disgraceful.

The Government is supporting a foreign industry that is ripping off one of our domestic industries in the competitive world of international trade. I believe that the Federal Government should undertake a review of this process and that the State Government should have some input into the review to ensure that the Queensland sugar industry maintains its viability. After all, the Queensland sugar industry is worth approximately \$1 billion in export income to this State. If this State's ability to compete in the larger arena of world trade is impaired, the Queensland sugar industry will have significant problems in the future. The present undermining effect of foreign support ought to be reviewed.

Time expired.

Mrs GAMIN (Burleigh) (11.06 p.m.): In joining in the Budget debate, I wish to talk about the electorate of Burleigh and the way in which various Government attitudes and defects affect the residents of Burleigh. The electorate of Burleigh takes in the suburbs of Palm Beach, Burleigh Heads and Burleigh Waters, part of Miami, Stephens and part of Andrews. It is not a wealthy electorate. It comprises families with young children and a growing retired and elderly population.

Along the beach front—from Nobby Beach to Palm Beach—there is a well established tourist industry. It is a seaside holiday resort priding itself on the fact that it offers family-type holidays, in contrast to the glitter strip that is farther north along the coast. The area has small business and some light industry, but since the change in electorate boundaries, Burleigh has become a basically urban electorate. However, we are fortunate in

having the magnificent green backdrop of the national park on Burleigh headland which extends across to Fleays Fauna Reserve and the Tallebudgera green space network.

Mr Hollis interjected.

Mrs GAMIN: I did indeed, and the member should listen.

Mr Hollis interjected.

Mrs GAMIN: The member should come down and visit my electorate, and I would make him very welcome. The people in my electorate feel the effects of the general economic downturn, the economic depression—which the whole of our nation is suffering, although we class ourselves as fortunate in that, as Queenslanders, we have not yet suffered as deeply as Victoria and South Australia have, under Labor rule—and we are concerned that the free-spending philosophy of the Queensland Labor Government could well lead us down the same track as those other States. For example, this is a very high-spending, free-wheeling State Budget, but we have no guarantee that spending will be translated into services rather than into administration.

Just like anyone else in this State, my constituents use these services, and they want services, not bureaucratic administration. Apart from roadworks, which are ongoing anyway, there is no much-vaunted capital expenditure in the electorate of Burleigh. I have heard other members of this Parliament tell the House how much is being spent on the schools in their electorates, but we are not getting that in Burleigh.

Let us examine what has happened in health over the last few years and at what has happened to the Gold Coast Hospital since regionalisation. Expenditure on health has been increased; expenditure in the region has increased; yet we will see little or no improvement in the waiting lists for elective surgery, little or no improvement in the appalling waiting lists for dental treatment, and optical services are constantly criticised. We are down to half the number of anaesthetists because doctors are no longer attracted to a public health system that they regard as gravely deficient in patient health care. My electorate office receives constant complaints about Gold Coast health services.

On 1 August, ambulance fees rose steeply simply because over the past two years approximately \$44m of reserves accumulated by the service was dissipated into administration costs. The subscription for a family paying on an annual basis has been

increased from \$66 to \$78. The subscription is even more unfair for a family who cannot afford this annual slug, but chooses to pay weekly. When the weekly rate of \$1.85 is multiplied by 52, it is obvious that poorer families will be paying \$96.20 a year. The real hike has been in the cost of fees for ambulance services to non-subscribers. It used to be \$114 for the first 24 kilometres. It was then increased to \$116, and it has now been hiked up to \$250 for the first 24 kilometres. There have also been staggering rises per kilometre after the first 24 kilometres. The rate used to be \$2.85. It then rose to \$2.90, and it has now risen to \$8.35, which is an increase of 288 per cent. Non-subscribers in the Burleigh electorate will simply not be able to afford the cost of being transferred to a Brisbane hospital. Poor and sick people will suffer even more under these exorbitant charges.

Now that the five-year averaging provision for calculation of land tax has been removed from this year's Budget, property-owners will find themselves up for huge additional land tax bills. Transport and road services are other areas that I want to talk about. I know that work will continue on the widening of the Pacific Highway. It is slow work, but at least it is gradually moving south. Mudgeeraba to Tallebudgera Creek is the next stretch to be completed.

I know that, at long last, the extension of Bermuda Street—the Southport to Burleigh road—has got itself onto the forward planning lists. That extension is very important, as it will take the pressure off Reedy Creek Road, otherwise known as the Burleigh connection road. At present, traffic coming down Bermuda Street hits Reedy Creek Road at a T-intersection and has nowhere to go other than left or right into Reedy Creek Road. That is causing serious traffic hazards. The extension of Bermuda Street to link up with the Pacific Highway at West Burleigh should be a very high priority.

Some years ago, I advised the Minister of the day that Reedy Creek Road was the worst road on the whole Gold Coast and one of the worst in Queensland. Despite the work that has been done on it, I have not changed that view. There is now a large residential area, Stephens, and part of Burleigh Waters, which is serviced from Reedy Creek Road and which is now linked up to the Gold Coast Highway and the coastal strip. That is, in fact, the growth area of the electorate of Burleigh. Increased development in the area causes dust and noise nuisance for residents, and I

wage a constant battle to get the police to monitor uncovered truckloads.

Traffic conditions along Reedy Creek Road are also extremely dangerous for parents and school buses as they try to deliver and pick up children from Marymount College. At one time when I was trying to deal with a particular trouble spot with a Department of Transport officer, I was told that it was ridiculous to put a big school on such a major road. However, as I pointed out to him, Marymount College was there first, and long before it became a major road.

Twenty-five years ago, Marymount was first established as a region and parish primary and secondary school. It was situated in a quiet country area. There were still a few dairy farms around. There was a Housing Commission estate just up the road, and that was all. Development, both residential and industrial, has grown up around Marymount, and the school now finds itself on an extremely busy road which carries large volumes of traffic, especially trucks. That road connects Burleigh with the Pacific Highway. The school itself has taken all of the safety measures possible. Nevertheless, children and parents are at risk twice a day—at the beginning of the school day and in the afternoon at pick-up time.

Recently, the Department of Transport transferred its office operations from Palm Beach to the lower West Burleigh Road. That is certainly a better position, with better parking for customers who require motor registrations, licences and so on. It is still a difficult site for vehicle inspections, especially caravans and other trailers. I urge the Minister for Transport to move quickly to utilise the site owned by the department on Kortum Drive that I identified in 1989.

The previous Government had budgeted for site and building plans, but priorities were shifted by the incoming Government and there still seems no early prospect of the department moving onto that site. The site fronts both Kortum and Ramley Drives and is ideal for the Department of Transport's total operations. There is plenty of room for a drive-through area for vehicle inspections. It is easily accessed from north and south and will one day make a suitable regional departmental operation—the sooner the better.

Not only in Burleigh but also throughout the whole of the Gold Coast, I have never known such serious social and welfare needs. With a State unemployment figure of 11.2 per cent, the number of jobless in the Gold Coast region now stands at 14.2 per cent. Many

families are struggling. Many families are becoming more and more dependent on welfare assistance from the many agencies that have been set up to help. Public housing is not only scarce; it is seriously deficient. Times on waiting lists run into years.

I have never seen so many welfare problems coming into the electorate office. I know all of the agencies to which I can refer those cases, but all of the agencies have been stretched to the very limit. By the end of June, all of the agencies that receive emergency relief funding had run out of money. Some food assistance was still available through some of the voluntary and church services, but there was literally nothing else.

All of the agencies waited for their cheques and the cheques were late. That does seem to be a bit of a habit with Government—hang onto cheques for a few extra weeks and pick up a bit of extra interest.

An honourable member: The cheque is in the mail.

Mrs GAMIN: I know. One agency that I know well finally received a letter stating "cheque enclosed", but the cheque was not enclosed. Eventually, the emergency relief cheques came through and all of the agencies found that they were cut back by up to 30 per cent. So the money that they have now will not last long, and it will all be pretty desperate by November/December until the next round of Federal and State emergency relief funding arrives—hopefully, in time for Christmas.

The transfer of the Federal Departments of Social Security and Employment Services to Palm Beach has placed those services at a central Gold Coast position but has caused many other problems in that suburb. I am constantly receiving reports of vandalism, break and enters, bag snatching and so on in the suburban streets of Palm Beach. There has been a spate of bag snatching by youths on bicycles, and it is suspected that a motor vehicle is also involved. So far, no-one has been able to come up with a vehicle registration number. Just this week, I had a phone call from an elderly lady in her eighties. She and her husband love their garden. It is very pretty. Imagine their distress when they got up early on Monday morning to collect their newspaper and found that their garden had been totally trashed during the night.

So the people of Palm Beach are disappointed that, despite thousands of signatures on petitions requesting greater police presence in the electorate of Burleigh,

the police station that they had hoped for in Palm Beach will not happen. Instead, a police post will be installed at the Pines Shopping Centre at Elanora. That will, of course, be of assistance with the problems that are happening around the shopping centre car park. It does not help the people of Palm Beach, and we will continue our efforts to get a proper police station there.

While I am talking about Palm Beach, I should mention that, last weekend, lots of people got together and put on the first Springfest, which will now become an annual event. Concerts, sporting events, a surf carnival and a great parade of local floats all added to the interest and enjoyment and gave pleasure to many people. I congratulate Springfest chairman, Des White, Palm Beach Alderman Daphne McDonald, and all of the hard workers who were involved in that very successful enterprise. It will get bigger and better every year.

Palm Beach is also the home of the Meals on Wheels service, which services the whole Burleigh electorate and surrounding areas. It operates out of the Share and Care Centre and it provides nourishing meals to many elderly people who, thanks to the service, are able to continue living in their own homes. Two Neighbourhood Watch services operate in Palm Beach, two in Burleigh Waters, one at West Burleigh and one at Treetops—six good Neighbourhood Watch services where the members really try to help each other and keep an eye on their neighbours' properties. One difficulty experienced by all Neighbourhood Watch groups is that, after a while, a certain complacency sets in, and considerable efforts then need to be made to increase and maintain the level of enthusiasm that is necessary to make those community policing systems work.

Although Burleigh is a quiet urban electorate, a number of other important services are set up from the central Gold Coast. We all complain about the Department of Corrective Services and the appalling conditions at the Southport watch-house, and those complaints are quite justified. However, the Department of Corrective Services has a community corrections office at Burleigh Heads, from where community service programs are supervised for the area from Hooker Boulevard at Broadbeach to the New South Wales border.

Many voluntary organisations have taken up those programs, which are aimed at giving law breakers useful community services to

perform, either as ordered by the courts or as an alternative to paying a fine. The new Juvenile Community Service Program for young offenders aged 13 to 16 years is also welcomed. I hope that will turn into an effective way of dealing with juveniles when prison is not appropriate, and law breakers can be handled in a way that can be of mutual benefit to the community and to young offenders.

Tallebudgera recreation camp, right on the beach at Tallebudgera Creek, has given untold pleasure to millions of people for the past 40 years. There has been genuine concern that it would be bulldozed. I hope that the Minister for Tourism, Sport and Recreation means it when he says that the camp will be refurbished. I could not find anything about that in the Budget papers, but the camp certainly needs a facelift. The possible closure of the Tallebudgera camp school is also of concern. It has fulfilled a very useful role for all of those school children from all over the State who have visited the camp.

Earlier, I mentioned social and welfare problems. There are many social and welfare agencies and organisations in both the Burleigh electorate and the whole of the Gold Coast. All of those groups survive by donations, by fund raising and by some Government welfare grants. Funding is always needed and, of course, there is never enough to provide the huge range of programs that help a wide variety of people.

I will list some of them: refuge for women in crisis, counselling and back-up for victims of domestic violence, a living skills centre for the intellectually disabled—that is what we need—a drop-in centre or accommodation for street kids, day respite for the elderly, the schizophrenia fellowship, ARAFMI—that is, the Association of Relatives and Friends of the Mentally Ill—ADARDA—Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders—alcohol and drug rehabilitation, victims of crime, back-up for sufferers from renal failure, self-esteem groups, crisis accommodation, food assistance, the Salvation Army, Lifeline, pregnancy and family support, support for remand prisoners in the Southport watch-house, support for young parents who have lost a child, St Vincent de Paul, child victims of domestic violence, Meals on Wheels, Blue Nurses, Red Cross, foster parents, church and support groups, groups such as the Stephens Community Centre, care and concern groups, hospital auxiliaries and, last but not least, the ladies who staff and run the school tuckshops. Of course, we should not forget the numerous sporting bodies and service clubs. This is only

a small start to the list of groups and bodies, agencies and organisations that are involved in the provision of welfare and other vital community services.

One blinding fact about welfare services is that needs are always greater than can be met. Governments—State or Federal—in putting forward welfare policies also provide some funding, but never enough. Governments presuppose that there will be a vast army of volunteers to deliver those services. Service delivery and administration would just not be possible without volunteers, and I pay tribute today to the many thousands of volunteers, particularly from the electorate of Burleigh, who work so hard to provide these services to many people who, through no fault of their own, cannot cope by themselves. It should be remembered that volunteers are, of course, not paid; otherwise, they would not be volunteers. They do not get holiday pay or leave loading; no superannuation; no industrial contracts; no equal employment opportunities; no formal mechanism for out-of-pocket expenses or volunteer insurance; not even proper job descriptions. Volunteers are not only service providers; they are also taking an increasing responsibility in administration and financial management.

Of course, volunteers are not engaged in welfare service delivery for what they can get out of it. They are dedicated people simply trying to give something back to the community in which they live. I point out to the Government that the services it funds simply could not happen without the vast army of dedicated volunteers.

I have mentioned Marymount as one of the schools in the Burleigh electorate. That is long-established private school. The new Lutheran College on Tallebudgera Creek Road has recently opened. Miami State High School is the only State secondary school in the electorate. It is long-established and well respected. The students from Miami State High School recently did very well in the Rock Eisteddfod held at the Boondall Entertainment Centre. There are three State primary schools in my electorate—Palm Beach, Burleigh Heads and Caningeraba at Burleigh Waters. They are all great schools with dedicated staff and hard-working parents. Each one has its own flavour. Earlier this year, I presented a nice new Queensland flag to the Palm Beach State School. This morning, Burleigh Heads Year 7 students toured Parliament House with me. Caningeraba Year 7s came through earlier this year. Burleigh Heads State School has a new principal this year, and we welcome Mike Ludwig to the district.

But education did not do well out of this Budget. Increased funding in the Budget only just holds the line on inflation. Teacher numbers will fall by 98: preschool teacher numbers are up by 26; primary teacher numbers are up by 256; special education teacher numbers are up by 74; but secondary teacher numbers will fall by 454. I do not think that many teachers aged 55 or over will bother to take the offered tin or bronze handshake for early retirement. They will be far better off to wait till they reach 60 and collect their normal superannuation. There is still a drastic shortage of speech therapists. As I said before, schools in the Burleigh electorate did not make the list for additional funds for capital works. I am pleased, however, that the Creche and Kindergarten Association was successful with its well-prepared and well-presented Budget submission for continued funding, which I was pleased to support.

In conclusion, the Burleigh electorate might not have done well, and the effects of Government and Budget shortcomings will be felt in Burleigh just like anywhere else. But it is still a great electorate populated by great people. Many of them are battlers. We have our share of unemployment; we have our share of families finding it hard to manage on one income or with one parent. Many retired residents are pensioners or self-funded retirees who are really struggling to survive. We have two excellent organisations in the electorate which cater for older people. I am honoured to have been appointed patron of both. The Senior Citizens Club and the Pensioners League will each tour Parliament with me in the next couple of weeks. They will really enjoy themselves and so will I. We are cheerful people in Burleigh—battlers, yes, but smiling, too. We are a warm and friendly electorate. We are proud of our district and proud of our history. We know that we sound parochial when we say that the central Gold Coast is simply the best part of southern Queensland, but we do not care. It is sad that we have been so neglected in this Budget.

Mr STEPHAN (Gympie) (11.24 p.m.): This debate has involved quite a lot of discussion about this Budget. We have heard quite a lot of rhetoric. I suppose that is what we can expect to hear from Government members. Unfortunately, that rhetoric is much the same as that which we heard 12 months ago. The problems that existed 12 months ago still exist today.

Mrs Bird interjected.

Mr STEPHAN: Yes, it is. If the honourable member listens for a moment, I

will tell her where they are. The member for Brisbane Central stated that the commentators have been fully supportive of the Budget. However, a couple of recent articles in the *Australian Financial Review* and the *Courier-Mail* certainly have not been supportive of this Budget. Those articles have demonstrated that Queensland is heading for the same fate as did Victoria and South Australia under Cain and Bannon. We must take cognisance of the lessons learned in other States. We really must scrutinise the actions of this Government.

The member for Brisbane Central also made a comment about introducing another tax to create long-term jobs. If ever there was a means by which this State could go down the gurgler very quickly, it is to impose another tax in an effort to create employment. Imposing another tax serves only to create unemployment, and that consequence follows very rapidly.

In the Budget debate that occurred 12 months ago, one of the stated objectives of this Government was to keep unemployment down and to create jobs. However, at present, Queensland has a record 11.2 per cent unemployment rate. That does not include those who have a part-time job. Even if they would prefer to have a full-time job, those people are considered to be in employment and are not counted as being unemployed. If the official and unofficial unemployed statistics were added together, the unemployment level would be even higher.

I turn to what some of the commentators have said about this Budget. Peter Morley stated—

“Already we have been told that there will be a capital works program involving a ‘record’ \$3 billion.”

That is the same story that we were told last year. But that alleged \$3 billion of spending turned out in fact to be much less than \$3 billion. Peter Morley’s comment stated further—

“The Government trotted that figure out early to counter the flak when July unemployment reached a record 11.2 per cent.

This money would be spent to create jobs for some of those Queenslanders out of work, according to the Premier, Mr Goss, who argued that our position continued to be aggravated by southern migrants looking for utopia.”

The same old story. The article continued—

“He overlooked the fact that this was an unacceptable excuse when he was Opposition Leader.”

How convenient that it is not an unacceptable excuse now! The article continued—

“Also overlooked, however, was the fact that in the budget Mr De Lacy introduced last year, we set another capital works ‘record’ designed to create an additional 8 000 jobs.”

Again, that goal has gone down the gurgler.

I turn now to what today’s *Australian Financial Review* has to say. It points out that Australia’s boom economy, Queensland, is not the powerhouse of business growth it is perceived to be in the south. An analysis of the Queensland economy shows that while the State’s growth rate is still well above the national average, it is being driven by Government spending and a rapidly increasing population. But in business investment, the key indicator of underlying real business activity, Queensland has trailed the nation. I will dwell on that aspect a little later. It is that aspect of which we cannot and must not lose sight. The figures are undeniably strong, but they give an unrealistic impression that Queensland’s economy is in overdrive, surging along like a locomotive of growth, pulling the nation behind it. An analysis of the figures reveals that Queensland’s growth has already been caused largely by a combination of strong Government spending and increased private consumption flowing from population rises. The key indicator of real underlying business activity, the business investment statistics, shows that Queensland surprisingly trailed the nation last year. Against forecasts of a 3.1 per cent increase in business investment in 1992-93, the Queensland economy eventually recorded a 5.5 per cent decline, and that compared with a 3.8 per cent fall nationally. But, importantly, in plant and equipment investment, Queensland recorded a 10.6 per cent slump compared with a 0.4 per cent slump nationally. It was a similar story in 1991-92, with business investment in Queensland down by 12.2 per cent, non-dwelling construction falling 10.6 per cent and plant and equipment expenditure sliding by 13.1 per cent.

That must be recognised as a large problem. It has been recognised by the Treasurer, who in 1992 made the following observation—

“Our long term strategy was spelt out in the Leading State document released by the Premier in April this year. It recognises that long term sustainable

jobs will only be created by growth in the private sector.

The strategy, referred to as market enhancement, aims to create an environment that is conducive to private sector investment and expansion—an environment characterised by low taxation, sound financial management, micro-economic reform and infrastructure provision . . .

However, there is also need to take some budgetary measures aimed at providing a quicker response to the problem.”

He was recognising the fact that we must give encouragement to the private sector and to those who have been supporting us for a number of years. This Budget does nothing to provide that incentive. We are talking about creating jobs, but we want to generate lasting jobs. We do not want artificial job creation. We need a stable economy with jobs that will flow from one business to the other and from one sector to the other.

It is interesting to note that there are many businesses in the community that want to employ additional staff. However, when they do the figures and work out the extra cost—not the cost of labour, but the cost of superannuation, holiday leave loading and the other expenses—they decide that it is not worth it. They throw their hands in the air and say, “What is the use?” Instead of jobs being generated, people are being left idle. That is not the way to go. We should try our best to ensure that the economy is turned around.

Let us look at some other aspects of the Budget and of the activities of the Government over the last 12 years—12 months, or the last four years.

Mr Vaughan: 12 years?

Mr STEPHAN: I realise that I was giving the Government a little more credit when I said “12 years”; the Government will not be in office for 12 years.

I now wish to talk about the railway closures. Someone in the Government hierarchy made a decision that a third of the railway lines in Queensland would be closed. The excuse was that, because of the cutback in Federal funding and the tight financial circumstances, the Government had to save money. Yet, when we had a deputation with Mr Burns and members of the task force, one of the first things that he said was, “It is no good looking at the economics of any of the railway lines. If we are going to look at the

economics of them, none of the railway lines would be open at all.”

We have a contradiction in terms and in facts. Government members must realise that the railway lines have contributed to a large extent to the development of the State, and they continue to contribute to the development of the districts through which they run. If those railway lines are pulled up, an enormous amount of money will be required to improve the infrastructure of roads to carry the thousands of tons of produce and equipment that are being carried by rail at present.

The railway lines will not be sold. They are being nullified. The Government will be replacing that asset with something that will be rendered useless. With that sort of mentality, the Government should be held accountable for its actions. It is incredible that the huge amount of money that has been spent on constructing railway lines will be wasted. It is interesting to see that the task force has been put in place and it is interesting to hear some of the comments that are being made about the possibility of some of those lines being kept open. They should be kept open. Their closure should never have been contemplated in the first place.

The attitude of the community can be summed up in an article in my local paper, which stated—

“Cynical actions by governments and politicians are often good reasons for criticism, but the actions of the Railway Department this week have to top the bill.”

The article was talking about the line closures. As well, at that stage, the department was starting to pull up some of the rail lines. That is why the Government and members of Parliament generally are being held in such low esteem. That matter must be reconsidered.

I turn now to the ambulance service. I know that similar comments have been made throughout Queensland over the past 12 months, but I have a letter that was written to the Minister in the past couple of days. It referred to a Clayton's ambulance service. That came about because of the requirement for an ambulance to attend an accident that occurred at the local bowls club last Saturday evening. When the people at the bowls club called the ambulance, they were advised that no vehicle was available. After some time, the ambulance officer asked, “Can you control the bleeding?” When the reply was, “Yes, we are trying”, the ambulance officer said, “Well, if

you can control the bleeding, take the patient to the hospital yourself."

That was disgraceful. An ambulance was required in an emergency to care for a patient whose artery had been severed and the ambulance station was not sufficiently staffed to cater for the emergency. I understand the concerns of the secretary of the bowls club. A service that had operated successfully over a long period has been termed a Clayton's service. It is disgraceful that a patient needing attention quickly could be told, "Sorry about that, but we don't have the equipment to look after you."

In the area of health services, it seems that the regions have become redundant as regards staffing arrangements and administration. I have a circular that was forwarded to regional offices asking the officers to refer all staffing arrangements and non-clinical positions to the ministerial task force on administration efficiencies. Here again, when the Government came into office three years ago, I considered that regionalisation of the health service would be good. However, regionalisation is going in reverse. Instead of taking staff from Brisbane and putting them into those regions, this Government is taking staff from the smaller centres—and it has classified Gympie as a smaller centre—and putting them into other regions. This is happening time and time again, and it is not being well received in the community, particularly by members of the health service and the ambulance service, which is being ridiculed for providing a second-class service.

As to agriculture—the Government brought down a Budget that caters very little for agriculture, forestry and water resources. In fact, there has been a decrease of about \$30m in funding to the agricultural sector in this Budget for 1993-94. Because this Government has cut that funding in dollar terms and in real terms, that indicates to me just how low this Government classifies the agriculture of this land. It is very difficult for the agricultural community to survive and compete. Yet it is not being encouraged at all.

I can find nothing in the Budget about any assistance through drought mitigation. Some mention is made in the Budget about subsidies for freight. That is very much appreciated by those who are seeking that assistance. It is important that drought relief is provided by way of low-interest loans. But drought mitigation is also important. We should have in place a program that will offset

the enormous damage that is being done because of a lack of rainfall.

Mr Vaughan: If you have a look at page 66 of Budget Paper No. 2, you will find the information you are looking for.

Mr STEPHAN: Is the member talking about freight subsidies or interest rate reduction? There is nothing in the Budget about drought mitigation. There is a big difference between getting assistance for transportation and being able to overcome the real problems. I fear that people in the cities do not understand the real problems or what is required by the rural community. I know that, from time to time, the member has visited rural areas, but that has certainly not been often enough.

I turn to the decision by this Government to freehold the MHLs and MHPLs in my electorate. This is creating a lot of concern in the community amongst those who would still like to have a miner's homestead lease. They cannot do so. If they do not freehold it, they will have to pay 3 per cent of the Valuer-General's valuation on that block of land each year. The Crown has been paid for the land. The Crown said, "That is sufficient. You do not need to pay any more. It is considered to be a fully paid up lease." This Government is now saying, "Unless you are freeholding it, you shall pay 3 per cent of the Valuer-General's valuation."

Time expired.

Hon. V. P. LESTER (Keppel) (11.45 p.m.): I would like to start on a very positive note and express appreciation for the moneys that have been made available to the electorate of Keppel. This has come about not easily but through a great degree of hard work by the member for Keppel. In some instances, that hard work has had a response from the Government. I am not going to belt everything in this Budget. When one gets a little windfall, one should express appreciation. A member's role is to fight for his or her constituents and to do his or her best all the time. That is what it is all about.

I note that the Budget mentions a community health centre for Yeppoon. I might add that we could have done with that earlier. However, according to the Budget, it will now be established. That health centre will add a worthwhile contribution. Previously, the health centre was working out of rented premises. As a result, it could not provide the services as well as it might have done. Now that my electorate is going to have that new centre, I say to the Government: for goodness' sake make sure that it is staffed properly; that it is

not staffed by total bureaucrats, but by people who have hands-on experience and can deliver the service to the people. That is what we are about. Service to the people is the bottom line.

We do not need sex discrimination characters and God knows what whom we seem to be getting in departments at the moment. We really need to get to the guts of the problem and fix it up. We have project officers and God knows what else around the Health Department. I might add that most of them come from South Australia, Victoria and Western Australia. They have made a hell of a mess of those places. They have made a real mess of them, and now they are continuing with all the rubbish that they went on with down south by trying to impose their will in Queensland. If the Government had any brains, it would get rid of the lot of them—send them back to where they came from. Let us concentrate on a bit of down-to-earth work. If someone wants to get a finger stitched up, let that be done, instead of fooling around with people who are not really delivering a service.

Government members interjected.

Mr LESTER: Members opposite are making some comments. One needs only to visit Rockhampton and talk to any one of the 300 people who are on the waiting list to get into the Rockhampton Base Hospital. They are not really happy. They will not vote for this Government on the next occasion. They will not vote for them in a fit. The Labor Party in Rockhampton is losing its base. I know that the more astute members of the Labor Party realise that. But people in Labor Party circles in Rockhampton have gone beyond the point of no return. Many Labor people come to me and say, "I've had these characters. Never again!"

The Minister has spoken about a new psychiatric centre in Queensland. There are a few problems with that. Without getting too personal, there are a couple of Victorian characters in Rockhampton. One particular Victorian character who is imposing his will is creating havoc in Rockhampton, with very little time being devoted to the public service and most of it being devoted to the private sector. That is not what the people want.

The Yeppoon Hospital has some outstanding staff members. Recently, a person who was waiting to undergo physiotherapy at that hospital received a letter to the effect that eight hours of additional service in physiotherapy would be made available to the Yeppoon Hospital. The person

showed the letter to me. He was delighted. I said, "That is marvellous; good on you." The poor fellow came back a week later. The regional authority had written back and said, "We are very sorry, we made a mistake. That is not the case in Yeppoon." For God's sake, what is going on there? I suggest that at the moment the regional authority is out of its tree, and it is going to have to get back to some sensible administration and get the job done. That is the sort of thing that is going on. How would one be? One receives a letter that states, "Yes, you will receive an extra eight hours." Next week, the regional authority writes back and states, "Heck, we made a mistake."

Mr Beattie: What did you do about it?

Mr LESTER: I am getting it fixed up; that is what I am doing about it. In my view, North Rockhampton needs an outpatient centre. These days, it is not fashionable to decentralise health services, but I think that is where the Government is going wrong. It tried this rubbish with police stations, by putting them all into one area, and that has not worked. One of the best things that I have ever done in the Keppel electorate is to keep the Lakes Creek Police Station open. That means that the people of the area have their own little police station, their own policeman and they have an identity. It means something to them. If the Police Service was administered out of North Rockhampton, through no fault of its own, to some extent it will become remote from the area. That is why I believe North Rockhampton needs the outpatient centre. From the very outskirts of North Rockhampton, given a bit of traffic, it will take people a quarter of an hour to get to the Rockhampton Base Hospital. If somebody has been bitten by a taipan snake—

Mr Randell interjected.

Mr LESTER: There are plenty of them up on Mount Arthur.

Mr Randell: There are a few down here, too.

Mr LESTER: I know, but I will forgive them; they cannot help what they are. If somebody has had a heart attack or whatever, that quarter of an hour could mean the difference between life and death. An outpatient centre, like the one that I got for the people at the gemfields in Peak Downs, really did a great job. It gave those people a sense of security. The people of North Rockhampton feel a bit left out at the moment and, might I add—

A Government member interjected.

Mr LESTER: The honourable member had better not interject too much, because most of North Rockhampton was represented by Minister Braddy. It has only been since I have been the member for Keppel and got into North Rockhampton that things have started to liven up and a few things have been done. I know that the Police Minister, Mr Braddy, appreciates me being there, because at least I can keep on the ball with the things that need to be done. It cuts down his workload quite a bit.

Mr Randell: What happened to the former member?

Mr LESTER: We will not talk about Mr Schwarten. I will get back to what is important, and that is services for North Rockhampton. The North Rockhampton Police Station is a bit archaic.

Mr Dollin: Who built that?

Mr LESTER: Actually, I think it was built many years ago during the days of a Labor Government. I am not suggesting that the National Party Government should not have fixed it up either, but for goodness sake, Labor Party members have been in Government now for four years. They cannot fall back on what the previous National Party Government had done or had not done. They have had four years to build a new police station in North Rockhampton. It is quite incredible that there is only about a kilometre or a bit more between the North Rockhampton Police Station and the Rockhampton Police Station. That is an absurd situation. We need to relocate the North Rockhampton Police Station into a new, modern police station right up in the centre of North Rockhampton. The Government should carry out projections and work out where the population growth will be, and build the police station in that area. I believe that that is a major priority, because on the many occasions that I have visited the North Rockhampton Police Station and talked to the policemen and policewomen there, I have seen that they live in little rabbit warrens more suited to the last century. They really do. It is not good enough. I think that it is time something was done about it.

Mr Ardill interjected.

Mr LESTER: Let us create a few jobs. Let us get the Travelsafe Committee up there as well. We can get a few new roadways outside the police station. We can build a decent police station and give these people a bit of incentive and, of course, give those very important people, particularly on the eastern side of North Rockhampton, a real sense of

security. I am appreciative of the fact that in recent times a policeman has been stationed in the Super K Mart area. I think that is of some assistance. I hope to give an opinion on that a little bit further down the track. We will see how it works. I suppose it is good that when people go into the shopping centre that they see the policeman there. However, I think that we are probably better off concentrating our efforts on building a new police station in North Rockhampton. I got off the track a little bit there.

Mr Beattie: You've been off the track since it started.

Mr LESTER: Government members should not start talking about getting off the tracks. Those characters have got right off the railway tracks altogether. They are going to cut out over one-third of Queensland's rail lines. I think that that is an indication of a Government that really has got off the track. In fact, once the *Courier-Mail* got into the Government, it thought that it had better get back on the track. I think that is one of the reasons that the popularity of the Labor Party has gone down in the latest Morgan Gallop poll. I think that it has dropped 4 per cent or so. Actually, the Opposition is ahead of it.

Mr Barton interjected.

Mr LESTER: The honourable member should read the *Bulletin* tomorrow, and he will find out. He should not argue with me now; we will settle the argument then. That will show how a Government that was in front has, through lack of care for the people, lack of delivery of services and its wanting to take services away from the bush, has got itself into this muddle. I am not going to suggest for a moment that that means that the Opposition is in front and that it is going to win the next election, but I say to Government members that I would rather be with us than them.

Mr BUDD: I rise to a point of order. Mr Lester was just saying that the National Party was in front of the Labor Party. The Morgan Gallop poll states that the Labor Party is on 41.5, the National Party on 17.5. That is not in front.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Bredhauer): Order! There is no point of order.

Mr LESTER: It is quite obvious that the member does not realise that we are a coalition. He ought to wake up to himself. That might just show that, in no uncertain terms, the idea of us getting together is working. Is it any wonder that the member's point of order

was ruled invalid. The member did not even get his facts right.

Mr Mackenroth: What I really think we should do tonight, as most of these members are new and they probably do not know anything about parthenium—they are a bit dumb—is that you really should tell them about parthenium.

Mr LESTER: I take that interjection from Mr Mackenroth because I understand that he is a learned gentleman. However, he has not learned that I no longer represent a bush electorate which has parthenium. That was through no fault of mine. I did not choose to leave my country electorate. My responsibilities are now to the coastal people and to the city people. That is why I have not spoken about parthenium. I thought that the member would know better than that, I really did. It is quite obvious, as usual, that he is living in the past. Anyway, it was good of the member to have a go and to highlight the problem. Now that he has mentioned the people in the bush, I will leave it to the Minister's Department of Local Government to give them a grant to help them fight parthenium weed. That would be putting the Minister's money where his mouth is. He can give the grant to local authorities to help them fight the spread of parthenium weed. That should indicate to the member that I have not deserted my people out there, either.

I suggested that we need a second doctor at the Yeppoon Hospital. The Minister wrote to me the other day and said that there might not be as many people using the Yeppoon Hospital as had been the case in the past. For goodness sake, when the regional authority taking away the services that we should have instead of trying to build up this hospital, is it any wonder that the number of patients attending the Yeppoon Hospital is decreasing? Two doctors who did work there literally worked themselves into the ground. They had to work seven days a week with very little time off, and they were on call the whole time. It was just too much, and both of them had to leave. They were good doctors and we did not want to lose them. Now we have another beaut doctor who is doing a good job, but I can see it coming—the poor fellow will be worked into the ground and it will just be too much for him.

Mr Barton interjected.

Mr LESTER: I will come to see the member for Waterford, who has a trade union background, to ask him to make representations and get another doctor for my electorate. That would be very helpful. I think

he should care about the poor doctor who is trying to look after a large number of people on his own. He is not getting a fair go. The Yeppoon Hospital should also be given the wherewithal to obtain more specialist services. The hospital should have an eye specialist and an ear specialist. The people of my electorate should not have to travel to Rockhampton to obtain those services. There is no reason why the Capricorn Coast should be a dormitory suburb of Rockhampton. While I am the member for Keppel, I am going to make sure that does not happen because I am going to fight for Yeppoon all the time.

During the previous National Party Government's term of office, the decision was made to provide a four-lane highway between Rockhampton and Yeppoon. What happened when the Labor Government was elected? It did not do anything about continuing that project; but it had a go at closing down our rail line, thereby ensuring that more trucks will use the road when the pineapple season is on. The road will become even more dangerous because the potential for people to be killed in head-on collisions will increase. I strongly suggest that the Government move without delay to provide a four-lane highway between Rockhampton and Yeppoon, or simply continue where the previous Government left off. If the Government does not do anything, its polls position will not improve. Labor members will lose the next election and then we will complete the roadworks, anyway.

Mr Beattie: Ha, ha!

Mr LESTER: It does not do to laugh. In the past, a lot of people have laughed when I made a comment and they have rued the day. I include the member for Brisbane Central, Mr Beattie, in that category.

A great deal of concern has been expressed about the present operational structure of the Department of Primary Industries. As a result of regionalisation, any person who wants to see the regional director will discover that he is not in the DPI office in Rockhampton. He is located in the middle of town in another great big office for which the taxpayers are paying. With all the new-fangled directors and God knows what else in the Department of Primary Industries that have replaced the provision of a hands-on service, the level of service delivery has reduced.

Recently, I phoned the DPI and was referred to the regional office in the centre of town. There are several directors who earn big salaries, but not one of them was available when I phoned because they were all at a conference. How many jolly conferences are

these people attending? How often are these people roaming around the countryside, inaccessible to members of the public? When a major problem has to be solved, it is obvious that key personnel will not be readily available. I said, "I have to get hold of one of these directors." I was told, "I can't get him out of the conference because it is very important." I said, "To hell with that. You are going to get him out of that conference, and that's it." I got the director out of the conference and the whole thing was fixed up, I might add.

A bit of work needs to be done on the Byfield to Yeppoon road. Some experimentation is being carried out in relation to light bitumen, and I hope that that will prove to be effective. Hopefully, at some time in the future there will be more national parks in the Byfield area, and the road will be of great benefit. During the last Easter period, more than 5 000 people travelled along that road. Presently, the road is in a very rough condition. During the term of the previous Government, a lot of bitumen was put onto the road, but that has not been continued since the Labor Government was elected. Of course, the people who use the road have not forgotten that.

Presently, there is a sad situation obtaining at the meatworks. I know that I am doing my best to resolve a very difficult dispute. I pay tribute to the meatworkers who have conducted themselves in a very honourable manner. Since the company concerned arrived in Rockhampton, a number of people have been put off work. I hope that the company can get its act together. Perhaps the meatworkers can work together with management to get the job done. In conclusion, I point out that the meatworkers are not pleased with the efforts of Mr Braddy, who let them down the other day. Apparently, they phoned him, but the police turned up instead, so the situation is not very good at all.

Hon. N. J. TURNER (Nicklin) (12.05 a.m.): How can one sing adequately after Pavarotti? The previous speech was one of the most moving that I have heard during my time in this Parliament, which extends over 20 years.

Government members: Ha, ha!

Mr TURNER: It is no wonder that Labor members are concerned. In joining in the Budget debate, it would only be proper to commend the Government on a local basis on the proposed funding for the Nambour Hospital.

Mr Barton: You ran away from the bush, too.

Mr TURNER: We ran away and took Labor seats, as did the honourable member for Keppel, and the Labor Government will be losing plenty more later on. The member for Waterford is a pretty slow learner. His personal lift does not go to the top floor, so I cannot be worried about him. As I was saying, I commend the Government for providing funds for the Nambour Hospital because it is an important regional health centre. However, there is a need for additional funding to be set aside for parking, which is a very serious problem.

Mr Beattie: He is scratching himself.

Mr TURNER: I caught the fleas off the honourable member for Brisbane Central. The late Tom Aikens used to say, "If you lie down with dogs, you get up with fleas", and I sit too close to the member for Brisbane Central.

The Budget presented by the Treasurer is a big-spending Budget, but it does nothing to address the real problems confronting this State.

Mrs Bird: Ah!

Mr TURNER: I hear some "Ahs", and if the member is patient we may get to some "Oohs", and she might learn something. The problems of unemployment and a lack of incentive for primary industry and the private enterprise sector are plainly evident. Unemployment in this State is now higher than the national average, which is an indictment on this Government. In real terms, if one takes into account people who would not be registered for unemployment—people whose spouses work, young people who are being kept by their families, and school-leavers who will be entering the employment market in two or three months' time—the Government will be looking at not 11 per cent, but probably 16 per cent or 18 per cent of people who are unemployed.

The Treasurer has presented a Budget which raises questions that need to be answered. On the one hand, he stated that Queensland is better off under Labor and that this State has a surplus. On the other hand, how can he justify cuts in many of the service industries in this State, such as railways, if that is the case? This type of Government performance sounds very anti-Labor to me, if one wants to put it that way. The Government's response is to appoint more committees and carry out more investigations, and this is particularly true of the railways area. The cuts that have been undertaken in the Department of Primary Industries have been decried. I will not cite my own words but, rather, the words of Mr Laurie Gillespie, who is

the Joint General Secretary of the State Public Services Federation. He stated—

“I am writing to you in relation to the State Public Services Federation Queensland’s campaign on the inadequate funding of the Queensland Department of Primary Industries.

While consolidated revenue expenditure”——

Mr Barton: That is not true.

Mr TURNER: The member is not interested in primary industries. He and his colleagues have demonstrated that over a long period.

Mr Barton interjected.

Mr TURNER: The member for Waterford has never been off the concrete footpath when it comes to country areas, so he should not enter into this argument.

Mr Randell: But he grows some lettuce in the backyard, I understand.

Mr TURNER: That might not be all that he grows there. I do not know where his backyard is. As I was saying, Mr Gillespie stated—

“While consolidated revenue expenditure to all Departments has increased by 17.7% since 1990/91, the funding of the Department of Primary Industries has decreased by \$1,532,000. In addition the Department has been required to perform a range of new expensive initiatives without additional funding. The combined effect on existing services has been disastrous.”

These are the words of Mr Gillespie, not a member of the National Party. Mr Gillespie went on to state—

“Material released under a recent Freedom of Information application by the State Public Services Federation Queensland indicates that the worst is yet to come for the department. Within the Agricultural Production Group alone, 200 jobs are almost certain to be lost this financial year. These positions will be in areas of research which are vital for the long term prosperity of the rural sector.”

Mr Davies: That is all rubbish—the whole lot.

Mr TURNER: Does the member for Mundingburra mean that primary industries is rubbish? Is that his attitude? Is that what he means?

Mr Davies: That letter—it’s rubbish.

Mr TURNER: It is similar to the attacks being made on the Government by police officers, teachers and public servants. The member is saying that what those people are saying is rubbish, but the fact of the matter is that the financial position confronting primary industries is leaving it in a catastrophic situation, yet it is one of the most productive sectors of the State.

Is it not a fact that this Government has milked all the hollow logs and has now gone broke? I think that is the real problem. This Government’s Budget is based on increased revenue from sources such as the tobacco tax, poker machines and the gambling-led recovery. In addition, this Government has increased all the fines, taxes and charges.

Local authorities are now having problems with and expressing concern about the additional tax that has been imposed upon them by the Treasurer. One of the local authorities in my electorate stated—

“The modifications as outlined by the Treasurer, are considered merely lip service reaction to the justifiable criticism of these actions in creating a State controlled monopoly. Such decisions are set to recoup an estimated \$7.5M in taxes from Local Government, for the continuation of a service of guaranteeing Local Government loans, which has been an activity undertaken by successive Queensland State Governments, in their overall control procedures of loan borrowings that Local Governments can undertake.”

It is a tremendous impost and burden on the local authorities.

The Maroochy Shire Council has written to the Minister. For that council, on current borrowing levels, the amount will come to \$300,000 a year. The council stated—

“Unless Council elects to make additional payments into the debt pool to cover the additional charge, Council officers have calculated that such charge will attract interest and accumulate until paid at the finalisation of the debt pool. In this instance the charge will amount to approximately \$2,583,000 in eight years time. This equates roughly to 11% of the existing annual repayment commitment.”

Those are the types of taxes that are being imposed by stealth. What hypocrites!

Mr Beattie: You don’t believe this. You really don’t believe it.

Mr TURNER: I would have to believe it, because I wrote it—unlike the speeches that the honourable member makes. I do not know who writes them for him.

Government members constantly refer to how much better off we are than the other States, which have been financially ruined by a series of ALP Governments in recent times. I thank honourable members for agreeing with me. To draw a comparison with those States is like being in the middle of the Atlantic in a sinking ship and saying, "We are okay. We are sinking more slowly than are the Titanic and the Bismarck. We are going down the gurgler more slowly, so we are fine. Someone else is 20 feet underwater and we are only 10 feet under, so we are okay."

Let us look at the facts as outlined in yesterday's *Australian Financial Review*. In my notes, I had written "today's". However, because I could not get on the list to speak before midnight, I had to change that part of my speech. That shows that I have the capacity to adapt. Let us look at the article. It was not written by Bob Sparkes or Joh Bjelke-Petersen. It was in the *Australian Financial Review*.

Mrs Edmond interjected.

Mr TURNER: The honourable member is too lightweight for me to answer her. An article in the *Australian Financial Review* was titled "Why Queensland is not a boom economy". The boom growth in this State is in jobs for people who advise on policy—or Labor lackeys and looneys. The article stated—

"Australia's boom economy, Queensland, is not the powerhouse of business growth it is perceived to be in the south. An analysis of the Queensland economy shows that while the State's growth rate is still well above the national average, it is being driven by government spending and a rapidly increasing population."

Government members will love this. The article stated further—

"But in business investment, the key indicator of underlying real business activity, Queensland has trailed the nation."

I will not read the entire article. However, if I read some of it, it will help my speech. I know that Government members would like to hear what the rest of the article said. They are sitting there waiting for it. They probably will not read it. Some of them cannot read it. Government members will like this. The article stated—

"According to the State Budget, Queensland grew at a rate of 5.4 per cent last year compared with 2.5 per cent nationally.

That follows growth of 4 per cent in 1991-1992, more than four times the national figure of just 0.7 per cent.

And in the current year, the Government is forecasting growth of 3.8 per cent, still a full percentage point above the Commonwealth Budget"—

Mr Beattie: Impressive.

Mr TURNER: The figures are very impressive. However, figures can be made to lie. If one ship can sail across the Atlantic in six months, it does not mean that six ships can sail across it in one month. The article continued—

"The figures are undeniably strong, but they give an unrealistic impression that Queensland's economy is in overdrive, surging along like a locomotive of growth, pulling the nation behind."

I point out that not many locomotives are left in Queensland. The article goes one—

"In fact, the bare economic statistics mask some worrying trends for the Queensland economy.

An analysis of the figures reveals that Queensland's growth has been largely caused by a combination of strong government spending and increased private consumption flowing from population rises.

The key indicator of real underlying business activity, the business investment statistics, shows that Queensland, surprisingly, trailed the nation last year."

That exposes the ALP con job. The article goes on at great length to state—

"Business investment has been the one key component of expenditure in Queensland to perform poorly.

. . .

The Goss Government has been able to produce these Budget surpluses partly because of a decision taken 20 years ago."

I do not think that decision was made by Mr De Lacy or Mr Goss. It must have been made back in the time of the National Party Government. The article continued—

"The biggest decline was felt in the finance, property and business services sector, which shed 13,400 employees,

and large falls were also recorded in the key mining and agricultural industries.”

That is a very sad indictment on what is happening in the State today.

Mr Randell: Isn't it a disgrace?

Mr TURNER: It is a disgrace. I know that most Government members feel that. They are new to this place and they did not realise what the Government was doing to the productive sector.

Mr Randell: After inheriting a great economy from the National Party.

Mr TURNER: After inheriting a great economy, the Government is messing it up. No money is being generated in the private sector to keep the Government sector going. In real, genuine terms, the Government is doing nothing for private enterprise or primary industries. They are dying on the vine.

Where are the new major projects in Queensland? I will not go through all of the projects that the Government has lost. I cite the examples of the multi-function polis, the space station and the China Steel deal. Where is the great Goss dream? The inept, incompetent, inefficient Government does not know how to attract business or development to Queensland—unlike the National Party Government, when there were some cranes on the skyline. The proof of the pudding is in the eating, and Government members can see from the results of a recent poll what is happening all over Australia to Labor's popularity. They should get used to what will come to them in the next two years.

As I said, the greatest growth industry is jobs for bureaucrats and cronies. Can Government members not understand that those people do not produce, manufacture or grow one thing? Why does not the Government set up a committee to look into the committees that have already been established, because that will create some additional jobs? The Government has no imagination. Instead of cutting services in the country areas, money should be spent on infrastructure that will be needed in the future, be it power stations, dams or railways.

The Government is cutting rail services in rural and city areas. That is the wrong way to go. I cannot imagine why a Labor Government would do that at a time when it professes to have surplus money. The Government is cutting services to places such as Doomben and Ascot. That, in turn, affects the crowd levels at the races. The shadow Minister for Tourism, Sport and Racing mentioned that to me today. We commented

that Mr Gibbs and Mr Hamill cannot know what they are doing if they are not aware of the impact on the racing industry. The Government should extend those services, not cut them.

I will now devote some of my time to the Mabo decision and the effect that it could have on State finances. Without talking about the rights or wrongs of it, that decision could cost this State a tremendous amount. As Mr Goss has said, those ambit claims for large areas of Queensland will not succeed. The Government will not give compensation, so they cannot succeed. I find it incredible.

I have a copy of a couple of letters that were sent to someone who applied for the reissuing of a waterworks licence. In a letter dated 17 August this year, the water resources section of the DPI stated—

“Due to the uncertainty regarding the impact of the Mabo decision on the issue of Section 4.32 Permits and Waterworks Licences in boundary watercourses, we request that you sign the following undertaking and return it to the Brisbane District Office at your earliest convenience.

Once this undertaking is received at this office, your Waterworks Licence will be issued and forwarded to you under separate cover.

We apologise for any inconvenience caused by this delay.”

The department wants people to sign a declaration that states—

“This is to advise that”—
whoever it is—

“has been made aware by DPI of the uncertainty that presently exists in relation to native titles as a result of the Mabo decision with respect to our Section . . .”

That has a lot to do with what that issue might cost the State. Government members must be aware of that, even though they might live in the city, in the smog, which is affecting them. The declaration states further—

“We/I are willing to accept the Permit in advance of native title issues”—

Mr Robertson: What's your answer to Mabo?

Mr TURNER: I am not here to debate the Mabo decision. I believe that we should all have equal rights. We are all born equal in the eyes of God.

Let me continue. The document states further—

“We/I are willing to accept the Permit in advance of native title issues being clarified and undertake not to hold DPI responsible for any future limitations that may be placed on the Permittee as a result of resolution of native title issues.”

Mr Goss says, “They cannot claim for compensation. I do not know where it came from. It fell off a truck.” But the decisions of the thirty-third State conference of the Australian Labor Party held in Brisbane—and honourable members will love this—state in part on the Aboriginal and Islander affairs policy—

“The grinding poverty, prejudice and loss of autonomy to which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were subjected must be recognised by the Australian people. Their loss of rights over land must be compensated. This compensation will recognise original tenure of all parts of mainland Australia and recognised offshore islands.”

What is the Government’s policy on that? It has been read into *Hansard*.

I have also in my possession a letter which has asked the councils to identify all vacant Crown land in their area. That letter stated, in effect, “If you wish to apply for any future use of vacant Crown land, we will look at giving it to you, but you must find the same amount of land, preferably in that region, to give to the Aborigines, because every acre of vacant Crown land in Queensland must be handed over to Aborigines.” I ask: where has there been any allocation, when this is the present attitude of the Premier? It is rather strange, is it not?

Government members interjected.

Mr TURNER: Government members have had their opportunity to speak, and I have not heard them say much, but still they want to yowl on. At present, the Prime Minister is overseas, where he is saying that the—

Mr Beattie: What about his coup?

Mr TURNER: What about his “coup”? I thought that it was pronounced differently, to be quite honest. Recently, the *Australian* carried the headline “Queen bad for us, Keating tells UK”. Is it not incredible, though, that a few months ago our Prime Minister stood with the Japanese Prime Minister, who said that Australia should become a republic and a multicultural society, yet not one person in this room can buy one acre of land in Japan. That is the most racist country on

earth. That man was not here as the president of the republic of Japan; he was here as the Prime Minister. Back home, Japan has its own royal family which dates back 1600 years. I am concerned about the moves being made to undermine the system that operates in this country.

Mrs Edmond interjected.

Mr TURNER: Is the honourable member not concerned about what is happening? Does she not agree that the day we remove the constitutional monarchy and replace it with a Government-appointed king or president—irrespective of whether it is President Whitlam, Halfpenny or Carmichael, or whether it is a president or king elected by a National Party Government or a Liberal Party Government—is the day that we lose the privileges, protections and benefits that have been enshrined in our system for generations? Government members should be aware of that. They want to remove the symbol of the constitutional monarchy from the flag. It is one of the few flags in the world that has any Christian significance. Government members want to replace the symbol of the constitutional monarchy with some animal or plant.

The freedoms that we enjoy in this country are a free gift from our forebears. If we do not do something to protect them, we will lose them.

Time expired.

Debate, on motion of Mr Mackenroth, adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. T. M. MACKENROTH
(Chatsworth—Leader of the House)
(12.24 a.m.): I move—

“That the House do now adjourn.”

Aldermanic Superannuation Entitlements

Mrs McCAULEY (Callide) (12.25 a.m.): I wish to draw the attention of the House to an article in today’s *Courier-Mail* which could have been overlooked because of the furphies that the *Courier-Mail* was running on the front page concerning other political parties. The article carries the headline “Ward faces axe after criticising super changes”. It deals with the rogue priest, Lord Mayor Jim Soorley, talking about changes that he made yesterday to the superannuation benefits of members of the Brisbane City Council.

Mr T. B. SULLIVAN: I rise to a point of

order. Mr Deputy Speaker, do we have to take such scum comments from Mrs McCauley as that?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Briskey): Order! There is no point of order.

Mrs McCAULEY: I will ignore that.

Mr T. B. Sullivan interjected.

Mr TURNER: I rise to a point of order. Mr Deputy Speaker, do you intend to ask that the honourable member retract that statement? I find it offensive; I do not know about anyone else. I think that it is unparliamentary.

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

Mrs McCAULEY: The article states—

“ . . . Ald Ward would be removed from the board of trustees because he had breached his responsibilities and the confidentiality of the position.”

The article states further that changes which were made to the aldermanic superannuation funds yesterday will result in a 150 per cent increase in payouts to those councillors who lost pre-selection. This is a pay-off to the three Labor councillors who missed out in the jockeying for positions within the factions of the party. With a party that is so keen on equal opportunity, it is interesting to note that the three councillors who lost their positions are all women. Aldermen Abrahams, Rae and Holliday are all women. I feel that there is a message there. It is very interesting that none of the Labor women spoke up about that point.

The article points out that this increase means that, after serving just one term, those councillors will receive an increase of 150 per cent. Instead of receiving \$13,000, they will receive \$33,000.

Mr Mackenroth: Mrs McCauley, a similar amendment was moved by the National Party to the superannuation for State members of Parliament.

Mrs McCAULEY: I am talking about local government and the Brisbane City Council. Alderman Ward protested that he had not released confidential information in his fight against superannuation changes, which would produce windfall profits for Alderman Soorley and three ALP aldermen dumped from next year's election by factional brawling. This is retrospective legislation. It is a disgrace. The aldermen went into the last election knowing what their benefits were. It is not appropriate to upgrade their financial returns without putting it to the people at an election. Alderman Ward went on to say—

“The information I have used is public knowledge and the people of Brisbane have a right to know what their politicians are paid in salary and superannuation.”

It seems passing strange to me that Alderman Soorley will approve this grab from the public purse. The newspaper article states—

“In the history of this city the trustees have always acted in a non-political way for the benefit of the fund.”

The article states further—

“ . . . the changes to the super fund were approved by Civic Cabinet and not the fund trustees.”

So the changes are approved by the Labor Party and not by the fund trustees. The changes had nothing to do with the fund trustees. They were just told, “This is what is going to happen, and that is it.” Instead of receiving a payout of \$13,000, those people who lost their endorsement will receive a payout of \$33,000. It seems to me that that certainly is a windfall profit to aldermen who have been elected for only one term, who have lost their endorsement and who will cry all the way to the bank at the ratepayers' expense—there is no doubt about that.

Overseas Trip by Member for Redcliffe

Mr HOLLIS (Redcliffe) (12.30 a.m.): I wanted to say a few words about my recent trip to the United Kingdom. During that essentially private trip to that country, I examined processes and organisations of direct interest to me as a member of the Legislative Assembly and, of course, as Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee. While I took the opportunity to inspect many areas such as education, welfare, the rural sector and the environment, the main thrust of my examination was to further my knowledge of the accountability processes of that country and compare them with those operating in Queensland. I was fortunate enough to meet with the Comptroller and Auditor-General of the United Kingdom, Sir John Bourne, and many of his senior staff. Following on from that, I met with the Chair of the Public Accounts Committee, the Right Honourable Robert Sheldon, and members of the Public Accounts Committee.

What I would like to say about the thrust of those meetings is that they have in that country the full circle of accountabilities in a system which has evolved since 1861. The new thrust of their accountability has come about following a change of legislation in

1983. In the past 10 years, the UK committee has gained much in stature through the very fact that it examines accountability on a management basis rather than on a crisis basis, as we do here in Queensland.

As members would well know, the situation with the Queensland Public Accounts Committee for the five years since it was established is that we have waited for the annual report of the Auditor-General to see whether he qualified any accounts and then acted upon his qualification. It is a very different situation in the United Kingdom. In the United Kingdom, each year, the Auditor-General, after doing the normal compliance audits, goes to the Public Accounts Committee with a list of some 100 areas which he thinks they could be of interest to it. The committee selects some 50 of those areas, and the Auditor-General then does a further report on value-for-money areas. We talk about good budgets in this place, but the second best to a good budget is how we spend that money, whether it is spent with efficiency, effectiveness and probity. That is probably the most important thing that happens in the UK.

Over the period of the following year, the committee, with these reports in front of it, examines the chief Executive officers of each department. Some of these chief executive officers or heads of department can be called before that committee to two or three times to make sure that the functions of their expenditure are carried out properly. It is a very good way of ensuring not only that the departments are working effectively but also that the heads of the departments know what their departments are doing.

I was very fortunate to be able to go through the whole process and speak to everyone from the Auditor-General to the Public Accounts Committee Chairman, and also to attend an examination of a head of a department, who was in fact Sir Geoffrey Holland of the Education Department. It was most fascinating, but also most enlightening. I often hear, as I do members on both sides of this House, the press say to us when we are travelling around the Torres Strait islands or elsewhere that we are on junkets, but they never investigate to discover the value of those trips. I believe that the value that I gained from my privately funded trip to the UK will be of immense importance to the role of the Public Accounts Committee of this House in the coming year.

The accountability process in the United Kingdom involves procedures which, if

introduced in Queensland, will be a catalyst for great budgetary savings through a reduction in ineffective and inefficient Government expenditure. It is clear that I found an exciting process for dramatically improving the accountability process in Queensland. The results of my consultations and inspections and many of the reports that I have brought back have been distributed to many departments and Ministers. I reiterate that, when members do travel, it is of great value not only to themselves but also to the Parliament of Queensland.

Waste Disposal

Mr SLACK (Burnett) (12.35 a.m.): One of the major problems facing Governments and local authorities is the need for control and management of the disposal of waste, both household and industrial. As all honourable members would be aware, there is an increasing amount of all forms of waste products which must be disposed of.

This Government should be well aware of the general public concern which is being expressed in relation to the old concept of digging a hole and burying the waste, or finding a gully and dumping rubbish within a water catchment area. We are now seeing the results, with pollution in our streams and rivers.

Of course, there is the fear of toxic pollutants seeping through the earth's structure into our underground water systems, as is the case with Gurulmundi. It goes without saying that nobody wants a dump in their backyard. It is pleasing to note that society is becoming sufficiently concerned about the developing problem of dealing with waste that they now do not want to see it dumped in somebody else's backyard.

Waste disposal is now becoming one of the major costs to local authorities and, therefore, taxpayers. Encouragement is given to recycling projects, but in the main they prove costly—in many instances more costly than, for instance, in the case of paper products, producing the original paper. While this Government has made many promises in relation to waste management, control and disposal, I believe that the actions that it is taking are falling short of what is required and is falling further behind. The provision of facilities has not matched the rhetoric, with ultimate dire consequences.

However, the most disturbing aspect appears to be the lack of forward thinking on the part of Ministers and their departments.

They do not appear to be receptive to new ideas and modern technology that are now making alternative methods of handling waste not only more environmentally acceptable but also allow for the production of valuable, useable by-products.

One such application of modern technology is that developed by Mr Cy d'Oliveira in the development of his methane gas refinery concept. There is no doubt about that concept, as revealed in a report from the CSIRO dated 14 May 1993, which stated—

“The technology upon which your system is based is sound.”

It also stated Mr d'Oliveira's invention is worth further studies and evaluating in a working model form.

Mr d'Oliveira is not a wealthy man. He has not got the finance or the financial backing to fund the type of evaluation that would be necessary. It is my understanding that both the Greens and the Democrats support Mr d'Oliveira's request for funding and the cost of further university evaluations of his concept. We also support Mr d'Oliveira's request for support from the Government.

It makes me sad when I talk to people involved in industry and who are familiar with the problems of disposing of waste in Australia. They often talk of the lack of facilities here and the lack of control methods that are available overseas. Even with the latest sump oil disposal method that we are aware of being used in the City of the Gold Coast, there is talk of exporting our waste oil to New Zealand, which has the means of treating it. This is ridiculous.

The latest development in the d'Oliveira invention is that it looks as though other nations are going to develop exactly the same methods as Mr d'Oliveira has been talking about for years and which have been rejected by this Government. Only recently, it has been announced that the Dutch Government is building a methane gas refinery which is remarkably similar to the d'Oliveira concept. It has claimed that it is planning the world's first plant to turn sewerage, agricultural compost and household waste into gas and then electricity. “We will have an almost infinite source of electricity”, said Joep Van Doorn of the Netherlands Energy Research Foundation. Officials claim that the refinery, to be built at a cost of \$73m, should be operational by 1995.

It is a big disappointment to Mr d'Oliveira. However, it will not only be his loss, but our loss, if we are not prepared to support people such as Mr d'Oliveira and his project. The

benefits to the State would be immense if his concept proves to be capable of what all the studies to date indicate that it is capable of achieving in the field of waste disposal.

North Point College of TAFE

Mr NUTTALL (Sandgate) (12.39 a.m.): I would like to draw to the attention of the House one of the major infrastructures in my electorate and the important role that it plays within our community. I refer to the North Point College of TAFE, which was formerly called the Bald Hills College and was initially opened in 1982. The North Point College of TAFE, situated at Bracken Ridge, has 311 permanent staff, 617 casual staff and 25 fixed term staff—a total of 953 employees. The college is a major employer in my electorate. Approximately 22 000 students are participating in courses at that college. There are four campuses: Bracken Ridge, Caboolture, Redcliffe and one on the corner of Queen and Edward Streets in the city. Of those 22 000 students who are participating in courses at the college, approximately 5 200 are linked to about 42 high schools.

It is important to remember that only in the past few years have secondary school students participated in TAFE-accredited courses. To that end, the Nashville High School is receiving a brand-new home economics block at a cost of a couple of million dollars. That will give students at the Nashville and Sandgate High Schools the opportunity to receive TAFE accreditation for those courses while they are in their final couple of years at secondary school.

Mr Bennett: Extra schools.

Mr NUTTALL: Extra schools indeed. In addition to helping students complete their courses, the Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations made allowances in the 1992-93 Budget, and a couple of job placement officers have been appointed at the Bracken Ridge and Caboolture campuses. They also provide a service to students at Redcliffe. Their main role is to assist students to find jobs when they complete their TAFE courses.

In 1992, the college and its associated campuses offered approximately 125 different courses in the sectors of engineering, automotive, business, catering and hospitality. Hairdressing, horticulture, business and hospitality courses are also run at the Caboolture campus, whilst the Redcliffe and city campuses conduct business courses. Adult education is run at many locations within

the college area. In 1993, enrolments to date are 20 703, with in excess of three million student contact hours. It is estimated that, in the 1993-94 financial year, the college will achieve a target of 3 345 000 student contact hours.

At the moment, a refurbishment program is being undertaken on Block C at the Bracken Ridge campus. That work is being done on an energy-efficient airconditioning system and new computer classrooms that will help the North Point College of TAFE to keep pace with increasing demands from local businesses and industry. The new facilities will allow the college to increase its intake of business and computing students, as well as provide the latest in high-technology computer training. The project will substantially boost the college's capacity to meet business and computer training needs for Brisbane's north-side suburbs. That will cost approximately \$1m. With that, the college will receive seven new computer rooms, two lecture theatres, four keyboard rooms, one tutorial room and one terminal room. I thank the Minister for his assistance with that, because in addition to the money being allocated, the Minister has shown a great deal of interest in this matter. He has visited the college and the local area and had discussions not only with teachers at the college but also with students.

Time expired.

Queensland Rail

Mr JOHNSON (Gregory) (12.44 a.m.): Tonight, I want to speak about the chaos that exists in Queensland Rail. Recently, I had representations made to me from parents in central and north-western Queensland and those along the rail line from Rockhampton to Winton, Rockhampton to Blackall and down to Yaraka. Students from schools in Rockhampton who take advantage of that rail service have been placed in a situation in which they do not have access to passenger travel via rail to their respective homes for the forthcoming vacation.

Queensland Rail is refurbishing the carriages of the former Midlander service so that the Spirit of the Outback service can take effect from November this year. Queensland Rail's general manager for passengers, John Angel, has told the people concerned—the parents, students and schools involved—that they should book the passage home for those students six months in advance. What a load of rubbish! Those parents have never had to book six months in advance.

I have written to the Minister about this. The Minister said that he cannot do anything about that at this time. That is unfortunate. However, I believe that it is the responsibility of Queensland Rail to provide alternative travel for those students, because every year they are customers of Queensland Rail when they return to their destinations. I believe that the management of Queensland Rail, the board of Queensland Rail and this Government have totally lost the plot in delivering services not only to the central part of Queensland but to the whole State. Even Brisbane's rail passenger service has problems.

Last week, I received a phone call from an agent in Cloncurry who sold 3 000 head of cattle last Wednesday. I received the call on Thursday. That agent said that the train on which the cattle were supposed to be transported on the Thursday afternoon at 6 o'clock was delayed until the following day, Friday, at 12 midday because the crews on the trains that provide the service of carrying those cattle to the coast were not available because their hours had run out. This is another example of the mismanagement of Queensland Rail.

That agent said to me—

"We are trying to work with Queensland Rail to make sure that the cattle on these services are sent through to the abattoirs—whether they be at Rockhampton or Townsville—to give Queensland Rail personnel a fair go and to give the people at the abattoirs a fair go so that the cattle are coordinated and everybody is happy."

But because of retrenchments and voluntary early retirements, there are not enough crews. The Minister, this Government and the management of Queensland Rail do not know what is going on. This is a very serious situation.

Some of the employees of Queensland Rail in Alpha have purchased their own homes there. Since this Government came to power in 1989, those homes are no longer valuable. The running crews, the guards and the engine drivers do not have a future there. This is a very serious situation. This Government has lost sight of the fact that those people are worthy citizens who are trying to provide a life for themselves and their children. They have found a place to settle, but they have been totally decimated by this Government. Their asset base has been eroded. The Government and the Minister responsible should be taking control of that situation.

In one case, a chap has just spent \$5,000 on restumping his house in Alpha to raise it above the flood level. He says that the house is worth only \$10,000. If he cannot get \$10,000 for that house, he will have to bulldoze it. What a situation to be in! Those people have given their lives to the railways of Queensland. They have given their lives to that part of Queensland. Yet this is the thanks that they get for their hard-toil labours. The point is that they are being treated as second-rate citizens by this Government.

Time expired.

Obstetrics

Mrs EDMOND (Mount Coot-tha) (12.49 a.m.) I take this opportunity tonight to speak on what has been referred to in the *Medical Journal of Australia* as "Obstetrics in Crisis". This article raised a number of issues that are impacting on a most vulnerable group—child-bearing women and their birthing expectations. For at least 20 years in this country, there has been agitation to reverse the trend to overmedicalisation of birthing and to provide women with a variety of options for birthing, from home births utilising midwives or GPs to specialist obstetricians and highly technical and often invasive birth practitioners in clinical hospital surroundings.

The push for natural birthing, with support at minimal intervention for normal deliveries, is a reaction to the concern that many women and, indeed, their partners, feel at being alienated and out of control of what should be a normal and joyous event. There is also strong concern at the high level of intervention in births where specialists are used. This concern has been expressed at every women's health forum I have ever attended. Obviously, not all women are able to enjoy unassisted births with a happy result, and certainly improved technical care and intervention have improved mother and infant outcomes over the last generation. However, there is now significant data from Australian and overseas hospitals that intervention has a direct correlation to the insurance status of the mother, and not to her health. Privately insured patients have double the rate of caesarean sections and instrumental deliveries—about 33 per cent—that public patients have, yet it should be noted that private patients are usually better nourished, better educated, better prepared for birth and, therefore, presumably, less likely to require intervention in birth compared with their poorer, uninsured sisters.

Women, when making their choice of care, have a right to know that they double the chances of having surgical delivery if they choose a private obstetrician and hospital delivery. That is their right to choose, and a free society will offer different options of care to meet the different physical and emotional needs of mothers. It has taken many years of effort to see moves to accommodate these differing needs to give alternatives to the increasing interventionalist hospital care, and to see the advent of birthing centres and more natural births. Not only is this situation normal and to be encouraged but also it is a significantly more economic use of medical facilities and resources, while meeting the needs of the ultimate consumers, the mothers and babes.

But there is now a threat to this welcome trend to more natural birthing, and an increase again in intervention and defensive birth management because of the perceived risk of litigation over obstetric outcomes or, to put it another way, suing over babies that are not quite perfect. This follows tragic trends in the US that have seen obstetric professional indemnity insurance skyrocket following huge payouts to children and their parents, and increases in some Australian States to \$20,000 a year for the annual insurance premiums. Here in Queensland, there has been a knee-jerk reaction with a concerted and calculated withdrawal of all the private obstetric backup to the midwifery practice working out of the Mater Mothers Hospital for the last two years, leaving quite a few pregnant women in the lurch. This service was negotiated to provide women with an option of a hospital birth in the care of their own midwife, somebody whom they had grown to know over the pregnancy period, and to fill a niche for women between a home birth and a hospital birth—a service that has worked well in many countries and, in fact, is the norm in many countries and is becoming more common in other Australian States.

The rationale for this removal of obstetric backup was the relative high cost of insurance with the medical defence fund, and the possible increase in risk faced by the obstetrician of litigation. This, in fact, ignores that the same article warning of these increased premiums also pointed out that they did not apply in Queensland or in Tasmania. I understand that, in Queensland, the premium is something in the order of \$1,500, not \$20,000. It also ignores the fact that the midwives themselves also have significant indemnity insurance to cover themselves. The

obstetrician would be liable only for his or her own actions, not those of the midwives.

One has to wonder if there are other reasons for this sudden withdrawal of services. Surely, the specialists concerned do not feel threatened by the increasing popularity of midwifery births when the *British Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology* a couple of months ago indicated that the average obstetric and gynaecology specialist in Australia is earning well in excess of \$300,000 a year. Surely, at a time when concern is being expressed at the reluctance of younger doctors to take on the sometimes antisocial hours incurred by obstetricians, midwife practitioners would be welcomed to take over the normal and, to the busy specialist, somewhat boring births.

I urge these specialists to recognise their actions, to reconsider their actions and the disservice that they are doing to the women of Queensland. I believe they can earn credit and appreciation for providing this service, and probably increase their own clientele in the long term and that, indeed, there is room and a need for a range of caring options for birthing. By this premature action, they have turned their backs on the progression of birthing practices in Queensland.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 12.56 a.m. (Thursday).