

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**THURSDAY, 8 OCTOBER 1987**

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**THURSDAY, 8 OCTOBER 1987**

Mr SPEAKER (Hon. K. R. Lingard, Fassifern) read prayers and took the chair at 10 a.m.

**ASSENT TO BILL**

Assent to the Commissions of Inquiry Act Amendment Bill reported by Mr Speaker.

**PETITIONS**

The Deputy Clerk announced the receipt of the following petitions—

**Establishment of Prison at Borallon**

From Mr Sherlock (3 914 signatories) praying that the Parliament of Queensland will defer the decision to establish a prison at Lovers Lane, Borallon to enable further discussions to take place on the siting of the prison.

**Fire Levy**

From Mr Muntz (661 signatories) praying that the Parliament of Queensland will declare a moratorium on fire levy charges and establish a fair system.

**Award System and Industrial Commission**

From Mr Comben (8 signatories) praying that the Parliament of Queensland will support the existing award system and the Industrial Commission.

**Repeal of Section of Land Act Amendment Act**

From Mr Comben (7 signatories) praying that the Parliament of Queensland will repeal that section of the Land Act Amendment Act 1987 which allows land to be leased in perpetuity for tourist development purposes.

**Moreton Island, Sand-mining and Declaration as National Park**

From Mr Comben (26 signatories) praying that the Parliament of Queensland will take action to reject mining proposals on Moreton Island and declare unsettled areas as national park.

Petitions received.

**PAPERS**

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

**Reports—**

Queensland Institute of Medical Research Trust for the year ended 30 June 1987

Queensland Radium Institute for the year ended 30 June 1987

Queensland Department of Health for the year ended 30 June 1987.

The following papers were laid on the table—

Proclamation under the Forestry Act 1959-1984

Order in Council under the Forestry Act 1959-1982

**Reports—**

Royal Brisbane Hospital Foundation for the year ended 30 June 1987

Royal Children's Hospital Foundation for the year ended 30 June 1987

Princess Alexandra Hospital Research and Development Foundation for the year ended 30 June 1987

Royal Women's Hospital Research and Development Foundation for the year ended 30 June 1987

Prince Charles Hospital Foundation for the year ended 30 June 1987

Retail Shop Lease Tribunal for the year ended 30 June 1987.

### ADDITIONAL SITTING DAY

#### Sessional Order

**Hon. L. W. POWELL** (Isis—Leader of the House) (10.06 a.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

“That pursuant to Standing Order No. 26, the House will meet for the dispatch of business, in addition to the days agreed to pursuant to the Sessional Order of 19 February 1987, at 10 a.m. on Friday, 16 October 1987, Friday, 13 November 1987 and Friday, 20 November 1987, on which days Government business shall take precedence of all other business.”

Motion agreed to.

### MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

#### Rural Adjustment Scheme

**Hon. W. A. M. GUNN** (Somerset—Deputy Premier, Minister Assisting the Treasurer and Minister for Police) (10.07 a.m.), by leave: The decision of the Federal Government to reduce its Rural Adjustment Scheme funding to Queensland by over 60 per cent this year for new assistance applications will cause serious hardship for many Queensland farmers.

Following the Federal Budget, advice was received that Commonwealth funding provided under the Rural Adjustment Scheme for new assistance had been cut by 66 per cent compared to the amount allocated last year. This meant that only 200 new farmers could be assisted this year, compared to almost three times as many—547—last year.

Many Queensland farmers are already suffering the effects of low commodity prices and continuing crop failures. This large cut in emergency funding will prove an intolerable burden for many farmers.

Queensland's share of Commonwealth funding under the Rural Adjustment Scheme for new applications has been cut to \$1m. Last year the amount provided for new assistance to Queensland under the scheme was \$3.2m. The money is provided by the Commonwealth as an interest subsidy on commercial borrowings for a maximum of seven years. The money is distributed in Queensland on behalf of the State Government by the QIDC.

The interest subsidy scheme was introduced by the Federal Government in 1985 but, unfortunately, the amount of money being provided by the Commonwealth was declining in terms of funds for new assistance. Consequently, the number of farmers the QIDC could assist was being drastically reduced.

Last year, the QIDC had been able to pass on interest subsidy funding under the Federal Rural Adjustment Scheme to 547 Queensland farmers. However, because of the drastic reduction in the availability of new funding for the scheme, only 200 additional farmers could be assisted this year, and funds were already exhausted. The demand for assistance had escalated, especially from grain-growing regions within the State.

The QIDC always distributed all of the Commonwealth money it received under the Rural Adjustment Scheme, unlike some other States which did not distribute their full Commonwealth allocation.

The total amount of money made available by the Commonwealth this financial year under the Rural Adjustment Scheme nationally was \$42m. However only \$6.7m of this was new funding for new interest assistance allocations. The rest went in meeting interest subsidy commitments made in the previous two years.

Quite clearly, the amount of money being made available by the Commonwealth Government to the scheme is progressively declining. It is a very serious situation because there is no other source of funds for this kind of badly needed relief.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Proposed World Heritage Listing of North Queensland Rainforest Areas

Hon. W. H. GLASSON (Gregory—Minister for Lands, Forestry, Mapping and Surveying) (10.10 a.m.), by leave: Yesterday the Federal Environment Minister, Senator Richardson, treated the people of Ravenshoe—and north Queensland—with utter contempt.

More than 1 500 very concerned citizens walked out of a public meeting in the Ravenshoe Town Hall, to register their utter disgust at his domineering, arrogant attitude towards their future livelihood. Little wonder a strong call has been made to the Prime Minister to take the issue of World Heritage listing out of Senator Richardson's hands.

But the news gets worse for the the people of the far north. Unless the Federal Government has suddenly found itself with overflowing tax coffers, Senator Richardson has offered people of north Queensland a typical ALP carrot-on-a-stick promise to ease their forced unemployment. This is typical of the manner in which the Federal Government has rushed into this World Heritage listing, with promises to the militant greenies in Sydney, Melbourne and Canberra.

At the very best, Senator Richardson seems to have very badly underestimated the costs of his plantation establishment program; or, at worst, he has blatantly lied to those people. On Monday he said that compensation payments of "maybe up to \$50m" would be made available to cover the World Heritage listing. However, he then quite blatantly goes ahead and promises a plantation establishment program which alone, on Forestry Department figures, will cost \$211m over the next six years. Just who is he trying to fool—himself, the ALP Government in Canberra or the people of north Queensland?

Senator Richardson has claimed that, through the establishment of 12 000 hectares of plantations over six years, he will provide 250 alternative jobs in north Queensland for displaced timber industry workers. His statement simply does not add up, and it indicates an abysmal ignorance of modern plantation techniques both on his part and on the part of his advisers.

The establishment of 2 000 hectares of pine plantation per year for six years for example, to total 12 000 hectares by 1993 or 1994, as promised yesterday, would provide employment for only 84 people during the establishment phase. This would drop to about 19 over the balance of the growing period of 30 years. Costs of such a program would average \$5.8m a year during the establishment period, with an ongoing average annual maintenance cost of \$1.45m a year.

However, Senator Richardson does not specify where he is going to plant this 12 000 hectares of trees. The current area available and suitable for pine-planting on State forests in north Queensland is limited to 2 500 hectares at Atherton, 2 800 hectares at Ravenshoe and 4 250 hectares at Ingham. Of this, nearly 5 000 hectares is scheduled for planting under our existing State forestry plantation program over the next six years, using in the main our existing plantation staff.

I might point out that this land today carries dry sclerophyll native forest, which will have to be cleared for plantation operations. This available forest area can be

extended only by clear-falling existing rainforest and wet sclerophyll forest. However, cleared land on the tablelands could be purchased for the purpose at a current cost of from \$1,200 to \$3,000 per hectare on both the Atherton and Evelyn Tablelands.

In point of fact, to gainfully employ 250 men, as promised yesterday, on plantation establishment and maintenance, it would be necessary to initiate a planting program of at least 8 000 hectares per year. Assuming under World Heritage listing that Senator Richardson does not intend to clear either wet sclerophyll forest or rainforest, practically all land for such a mammoth plantation program would have to be purchased or resumed from local land-holders. So, on this basis, the annual costs for employing 250 men immediately on a plantation program must include a minimum of \$12m a year for land and \$23.2m a year for establishment and maintenance costs over a six-year period. Ongoing maintenance costs after six years would amount to \$5.8m a year, with employment levels reducing to a minimum of 76 men.

I sincerely ask Senator Richardson, and indeed those members sitting opposite in this House: does he really intend to put his money where his mouth is and provide \$211m over the next six years for additional pine plantations in north Queensland? Or are these latest statements just more poorly researched and tongue-in-cheek promises to be conveniently forgotten, when they have served their purpose of misleading the people of north Queensland?

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Staffing, Richlands State High School

**Hon. L. W. POWELL** (Isis—Minister for Education) (10.15 a.m.), by leave: The editorial in today's *Daily Sun* carries the headline "Our Children the Victims". That headline makes for fine journalistic emotionalism but really does not accord with the facts. In its editorial the *Daily Sun* has assumed that the details given to it by the Queensland Teachers Union are correct. They are not.

At the beginning of 1987 the Richlands State High School enrolled 688 students; it was staffed with 45 teachers, one resource teacher and two supernumerary teachers who were there because of the special problems that that school faces. On 15 May a teacher went on accouchement leave. In spite of the fact that the school was overstaffed by two teachers, she was replaced by a temporary teacher. This was done so that classes that had been arranged from the beginning of the year would not have to be rearranged before the end of semester 1. At the commencement of semester 2, or term 3 as it is often referred to, the principal of the school went to carry out duties at the regional office at Ipswich. Consequently the deputy principal then took over as acting principal, the senior mistress took over as acting deputy principal and a staff teacher took on the job of acting senior mistress. For the sake of continuity, that staff teacher retained all of her classes except one particular science class, which was taken on by the science subject master. I would reiterate that, according to the staffing scale that every other secondary school in this State has to face, the school was still overstaffed by two teachers.

On Monday of this week, that is the commencement of term 4, the principal returned to duty and all acting teachers were returned to their appointed places. The school has now enrolled 641 student, that is, 47 students fewer than it had at the beginning of the year. At the moment it is staffed with 44 teachers plus one resource teacher plus two supernumeraries, giving it 47 teachers overall. This is still well over the staffing scale that every other school in the State has to abide by. I would point out that my investigations reveal that there is no class at Richlands State High School that has a number of students in excess of the recommendations of the select committee's report. There are no teachers at the school required to undertake duties in excess of those that every other secondary schoolteacher in the State has to undertake.

It should also not go without notice that the letter to parents was signed by the resource teacher, who is also the union representative. It should also not go unnoticed that one of the staff teachers is a Mr Bob White, who is currently campaigning for the

position of vice-president of the Queensland Teachers Union. It is quite inaccurate for the indication to be given that the Government is using children in any sort of campaign. In fact, I think it is fairly clear to say that there is a union campaign being undertaken by a small minority of teachers at that particular school who are prepared to use children and their futures.

For the benefit of the House I will repeat that, according to the staffing scale that my department maintains, the school is currently overstaffed. That staffing scale maintains class sizes at the level recommended by the parliamentary select committee. This morning a meeting was held at the school, and I will read to the House the resolutions that were carried. From these honourable members will be able to decide the professionalism of the people involved.

The resolutions carried were—

(1) Reaffirm the call for a replacement teacher to be made available to the school to cover the absence of a teacher on leave this term.

That teacher on leave is the one who went on accouchement leave on 15 May. The replacement made there was covered by the supernumerary teachers who are now on the staff. So in fact there is no vacancy. The resolutions continued—

(2) To request the union to continue negotiations with the department to achieve this goal.

In other words, the teachers of the Richlands State High School have decided that they should have a staffing level that is more generous than that at any other school in Queensland. The resolutions continue—

(3) To continue a publicity campaign with parents and school community.

One would hope that that campaign might confine itself to the facts so that people can make an accurate decision. The resolutions went further—

(4) To commence a political lobby campaign on this particular matter.

(5) Determine that the teachers currently affected by the direction undertake teaching duties on Thursday, Friday and Monday to allow negotiations outlined above to proceed.

(6) Determine that a further sub-branch meeting be held next Monday afternoon at 3.15 to hear a report on this matter and consider further action including the implementation of Queensland Teachers Union directives 2 (a) and 2 (b).

Honourable members might be interested to hear what those directives were—

“Should any member at your school be harassed or pressured as a result of following the above directive, all members of your school shall, with the approval of the executive—

(a) immediately cease work on extra-curricular activities until the harassment/pressure stops; and

(b) immediately cease instruction and provide supervision only to those classes until the harassment/pressure stops.”

If the Queensland Teachers Union wants to carry on a campaign, it has picked the wrong school. That school is currently overstaffed by two and there is a strong possibility that the department will have to staff that school according to the staffing scale so that other schools are not disadvantaged.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Townsville/Thuringowa Water Supply

Hon. M. J. TENNI (Barron River—Minister for Water Resources and Maritime Services) (10.21 a.m.), by leave: In recent days the Federal Resources Minister, Mr Peter Morris, the State Opposition Leader, Mr Warburton, and the Chairman of the Townsville/Thuringowa Water Supply Board, Alderman Brian Dobinson, have been engaged in a

blatant misinformation campaign to convince north Queenslanders that the State Government has scuttled efforts to obtain Federal funding towards the construction of the urgently needed pipeline to bring Burdekin water to Townsville.

In their efforts, they have been strongly supported by the *Townsville Bulletin*, which has poured scorn on the State Government in its editorial without bothering to independently check the accuracy of this ridiculous claim.

One of the few voices of reason against this calculated campaign of distortion has been the member for Townsville, Tony Burreket, who has done his very best to try to convince Alderman Dobinson and his colleagues to act in a responsible and reasonable manner in securing an alternative water source for this drought-stricken area. I place on record my sincere thanks to the member for Townsville for his considerable efforts in this regard.

I can assure the people of Townsville and Thuringowa that, contrary to the misleading statements from the ALP, the State Government is fully committed to supporting the efforts to quickly establish an alternative water supply for their cities during these drought conditions.

As is well known, this 30-kilometre-long pipeline is to be constructed as a matter of urgency from the Haughton River, at an estimated cost of \$14m, to boost the water supply of the Ross River Dam, Townsville's normal water supply.

The State Government, for its part, has bent over backwards in its efforts to secure a sound water supply for both cities.

As far back as May, I made the commitment to Alderman Dobinson that the Queensland Water Resources Commission would press ahead as quickly as possible with the construction of the Haughton main irrigation channel to bring the water from the Burdekin to the Haughton River.

**Mr McElligott:** It is not pronounced "Houghton".

**Mr TENNI:** The honourable member for Thuringowa does not know what he is talking about. He has not even helped them.

That construction has been achieved, despite some setbacks caused by engineering problems with faulty pipes.

I also made the commitment last May to Alderman Dobinson that I would immediately refer to the Commonwealth any submission made by the joint water board for Federal assistance for the pipeline. To date, I have still not received from the board any submission which can be referred to the Federal Government.

It was because of this that last month the commission submitted to the Commonwealth its own request for Federal assistance for the project.

I seek leave to table a copy of this letter dated 2 September to the Federal Resources Minister, Mr Peter Morris, and to incorporate it in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

*Whereupon the honourable member laid on the table the following document—*

Minister for Water Resources  
and Maritime Services

26th Floor, Mineral House,  
41 George St.  
Brisbane, Q. 4000

The Honourable P. F. Morris, M.P.,  
Minister for Resources  
G.P.O. Box 858  
CANBERRA ACT 2601

2 Sep 1987

Dear Mr. Morris,

#### TOWNSVILLE WATER SUPPLY PIPELINE FUNDING

For several months there has been a considerable amount of discussion between the Townsville-Thuringowa Water Supply Board and the State Government about the funding of a proposed pipeline from the Haughton River to the Ross River Dam.

As you may be aware, Townsville and Thuringowa Cities presently draw water from the Ross River Dam and would be looking in future to the Haughton River to supplement their requirements. The Haughton River is capable of being supplied with water as part of the Burdekin River Irrigation Project now under construction.

However, because of a series of dry seasons, the water level in Ross River Dam has dropped to a critical level and the Water Supply Board has decided to construct the pipeline from the Haughton River to Ross River Dam as a matter of some urgency in the present emergency situation. This pipeline is being built some years ahead of original planning because of doubts concerning the coming wet season and the likelihood of gaining sufficient capacity in Ross River dam to meet the needs of Townsville and Thuringowa cities.

I understand that representations have been made to your Department by Senator Margaret Reynolds and Mr E. J. Lindsay, M.P. regarding the possibility of funding for the pipeline being made available under the Federal Water Resources Assistance Program.

For its part, the State Government has already indicated a 30 percent capital subsidy will be made available for the project. It has also promised that on receipt of a proposal from the Board the project would be given top priority under the Urban and Industrial Water Supplies section in the State's submission for funds under the Federal Water Resources Assistance Program for 1987/88. In addition, its overall priority would be immediately after Burdekin Falls Dam, Bundaberg Irrigation Project and the COWSIP proposals i.e. projects already being funded.

To date no proposal has been received from the Board that would be adequate to place before your Government. Likewise, I still await a submission from the Board on any special or other circumstances that may warrant consideration by your Government of financial assistance by way of grant funding, or a reduced interest rate or an interest free period, applied to any approved loan funding.

Knowing, however, that the Commonwealth budget allocations are to be finalized in a few days, I am not prepared to jeopardise funding of the pipeline by waiting for the Board to present a proposal to me. Accordingly the attached proposal is put forward for your consideration for funding under the 1987/88 Federal Water Resources Assistance Programme.

It is realized there are some omissions in this submission but these will be clarified when the Board's proposal is finally received.

Funding is sought in principle for a 30 per cent grant to match the 30 per cent grant already committed by the State Government. A case supporting the grant, as a loan concession, is expected to be presented by the Board in the near future. When received it will be forwarded for consideration by your Government.

I would appreciate your favourable consideration of this proposal. Should you desire any further information, I will be happy to arrange for the supply of any other details necessary.

Yours sincerely,

MARTIN TENNI  
Minister for Water Resources  
and Maritime Services

C.C Regional Engineer,  
QWRC,  
Northern Region, Ayr.

Private Secretary to the  
Honourable the Minister for  
Water Resources and Maritime Services

EXECUTING AGENCY

Townsville/Thuringowa Water Supply Board  
P.O. Box 1268.  
TOWNSVILLE QLD 4810

STATE GOVERNMENT CONTRACT

Mr W. Eastgate  
Senior Engineer (Special Projects)  
Queensland Water Resources Commission  
G.P.O. Box 2454  
BRISBANE QLD 4001



**PROJECT**

*Title* Houghton Channel to Ross River Dam Pipeline.

*Location* Townsville-Giru area North Queensland.

*Background*

The Townsville Local Authorities obtain their present water supplies from Paluma Dam and Ross River Dam Stage I.

In the early 1980's Townsville City Council investigated alternative sources for the next stage of water supply after Ross River Dam Stage I, including Ross River Dam Stage 2 and the Burdekin River Project.

These investigations clearly showed that, while the Burdekin River Project represented the only practicable economic supply for the Townsville region in the long term, the construction of Ross River Dam Stage 2, was the most economic next stage of water supply for the Townsville area.

As a result, the Townsville City Council proceeded with the construction of Ross River Dam Stage 2. This development when filled will secure water supply for the cities of Townsville and Thuringowa, until perhaps early next century.

It was planned that requirements beyond that date would best be met by construction of a pipeline from the Burdekin River Project to supplement Ross River Dam.

In October 1982 the State Government agreed to a request from Townsville City Council that the design of the Burdekin River Project provide for supply of up to 120 000 megalitres per annum to meet the future urban demands of the Townsville area to the year 2020.

The Local Authorities were advised that provision for this supply would be made in the Houghton Main Channel and that funding arrangements for costs involved in drawing water from Houghton Main Channel and conveying it to Ross River Dam would be the responsibility of the Local Authorities.

Subsequent to that, a Joint Local Authority was established to be responsible for the further urban water needs of the Townsville region.

The present drought has created a serious situation for the region with little natural inflow into Ross River Dam.

The Board has therefore turned its attention to providing a supply from the Houghton River to supplement the storage.

**ACTIVITY TO BE UNDERTAKEN**

A pressure pipeline will be constructed from the Houghton Channel balancing storage outlet for some 28.5 km where it will change to a gravity main for about another 6 km before discharging into the Ross River Dam storage. A pumping station will be constructed at the start of the pipeline.

The pipeline will be sized to carry 980 litres per second. The pressure pipeline will be mild steel and the gravity main reinforced concrete.

**ENGINEERING SERVICES**

A planning report "Urban Area Water Supply, Houghton Channel to Ross Dam Pipeline", July 1987, by McIntrye & Associates Pty Ltd, Consulting Engineers Queensland is available.

**METHOD OF IMPLEMENTATION**

Contracts. Proposals have already been sought on a design and construct basis.

**OBJECTIVES OF PROJECT**

The project will prevent the pending reduction of the Townsville and District water supply to 40 percent of normal if the 1987/88 wet season fails. In addition it will provide part of the infrastructure needed to meet the area's projected demand for the year 2000.

**FINANCIAL DETAILS**

Facility	Cost (\$)
Pumping Facilities . . . . .	1 290 000
Pressure Pipeline . . . . .	9 696 500
Gravity Pipeline . . . . .	2 475 000
Reserve Acquisitions . . . . .	25 000
Overheads & Engineering (12%) . . . . .	1 613 500
<b>TOTAL . . . . .</b>	<b>15 100 000</b>

There has been no expenditure to date other than planning costs.

Anticipated sources of funds are:

Commonwealth Government	30 percent (Grant)
State Government	30 percent (Grant)
Townsville/Thuringowa W.S.B.	40 percent

#### PRESENT STATUS OF PROJECT

The planning report is complete and funds are being sought urgently.

**Mr TENNI:** As indicated in the letter, this submission was made because the State Government was not prepared to jeopardise Federal funding of the pipeline by waiting for the joint water board proposal.

The State Government's request for assistance was placed immediately after those ongoing projects currently being funded by the Commonwealth, namely, the Burdekin Falls Dam, the Bundaberg irrigation project and COWSIP, or the country towns water supply improvement scheme.

It is a blatant distortion for the ALP to claim that the project was ranked as far down as No. 11 or 12 on this Government's list of priorities. COWSIP in fact can be classed as one project, as the funds for this work are not transferrable to other listed projects under the Federal Water Resources Assistance Program. In other words, the Burdekin pipeline was ranked fourth on the list of State priorities, immediately behind the existing projects requiring ongoing Commonwealth funding.

Mr Speaker, the true facts are that the Federal Resources Minister and his department knocked the pipeline funding on the head. This can be seen very clearly from an unsigned draft of a letter prepared for Mr Morris by his department, which I now seek leave to table and incorporate in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

*Whereupon the honourable member laid on the table the following document—*

#### MINISTER FOR RESOURCES

Parliament House.  
Canberra, A.C.T. 2000

Dear Minister

I am writing to advise you of the Commonwealth Government's allocation in 1987-88 for the Federal Water Resources Assistance Program (FWRAP), and of the offer of assistance to Queensland.

In 1987-88, an amount of \$66 million will be provided under FWRAP for activities relating to the development and management of water resources in Australia. Of this, I am pleased to offer \$34.144 million to Queensland. The overall program allocation and the offer to Queensland for specific projects is as per the attachment.

As you are aware, late last financial year, as in each of the previous two years, an additional \$1.0 million was allocated to the Burdekin Dam from under-expenditure elsewhere in the program. This amount, together with the \$29 million now provided, will meet the forward obligation amount of \$30 million. In the event of under-expenditure again arising elsewhere in this program, it would be my intention again to give priority to additional funding for the Burdekin Dam.

I have now considered the State's submission and the consultant's report on the proposed Townsville water supply pipeline. In the light of the consultant's report, which indicates that the proposal is not absolutely essential and that the water rates would still be relatively low, I do not believe that a case has been made for Commonwealth financial support for the project.

I would appreciate your early advice as to whether the state accepts this offer of assistance for water resource activities.

Yours sincerely

PETER MORRIS

The Hon M J Tenni, MLA  
Minister for Water Resources  
Parliament House  
BRISBANE, QLD. 4000

Mr TENNI: This draft was later tidied up to suit the political needs of the Federal Government and was sent to me by Mr Morris on 16 September. I seek leave to table this letter also and to incorporate it in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

*Whereupon the honourable member laid on the table the following document—*

MINISTER FOR RESOURCES

Parliament House,  
Canberra, A.C.T. 2000

16 SEP 1987

Dear Minister

I am writing to advise you of the Commonwealth Government's allocation in 1987-88 for the Federal Water Resources Assistance Program (FWRAP), and of the offer of assistance to Queensland.

In 1987-88, an amount of \$66 million will be provided under FWRAP for activities relating to the development and management of water resources in Australia. Of this, I am pleased to offer \$34.144 million to Queensland. The overall program allocation and the offer to Queensland for specific projects is as per the attachment.

As you are aware, late last financial year, as in each of the previous two years, an additional \$1.0 million was allocated to the Burdekin Dam from under-expenditure elsewhere in the program. This amount, together with the \$29 million now provided, will meet the forward obligation amount of \$30 million. In the event of under-expenditure again arising elsewhere in the program, it would be my intention again to give priority to additional funding for the Burdekin Dam.

I have now considered the State's submission and the consultant's report on the proposed Townsville water supply pipeline. In the light of the low priority which the State accorded the project, and the consultant's report, which indicates that the water rates would still be relatively low, Commonwealth assistance has not been provided for the project.

I would appreciate your early advice as to whether the state accepts this offer of assistance for water resource activities.

Yours sincerely

PETER MORRIS

The Hon M J Tenni, MLA  
Minister for Water Resources  
Parliament House  
BRISBANE, QLD.

Mr TENNI: The Federal Primary Industries Minister, Mr John Kerin, in a letter to the Federal member for Herbert, Mr Ted Lindsay, on 8 September, was much more honest and open about the Commonwealth's real attitude to the Burdekin pipeline. Mr Kerin stated that the project would only be "marginally eligible" for Federal funding. I seek leave also to table this letter and to incorporate it in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

*Whereupon the honourable member laid on the table the following document—*

Parliament House,  
Canberra, A.C.T. 2000  
Telephone (062) 73 1711  
Telex 62308  
Facsimile (062) 73 2194  
8 Sep 1987

Minister for Primary Industry  
The Hon. John Kerin

Mr E J Lindsay RFD, MP  
Member for Herbert  
P.O. Box 2030  
TOWNSVILLE QLD 4810

Dear Mr Lindsay

My thanks for your personal representations of 5 August 1987 on behalf of Mr B D Stanton, Secretary, Townsville/Thuringowa Water Supply Board, P.O. Box 1268, Townsville, Queensland, 4810 concerning Commonwealth assistance for the construction of a pipeline from the Houghton Main Channel to Ross River Dam to augment Townsville's water supply.

Despite the Prime Minister's offer to consider the project under the Federal Water Resources Assistance Program (FWRAP) if the Queensland Government gave it a high priority in its submission for FWRAP funding, a formal submission seeking Commonwealth assistance for the pipeline has not been made.

With the 1987-88 Budget less than a fortnight away, it is now imperative that funds for FWRAP be allocated to specific projects. Accordingly, unless a submission is received promptly from the Queensland Government, there will be no opportunity for the proposal to be formally considered for 1987-88 funding.

In saying this, I must add that in the current economic and budgetary circumstances, assistance for any new project would need to be assessed against continued funding for existing approved high priority projects, such as salinity control, floodplain management and funding for small communities under the Country Towns Water Supply Improvement Program. The submission, therefore, would need to establish a compelling case for Commonwealth support.

While a Queensland Government submission may present a different case, the Planning Report on the Houghton Channel to Ross Dam Pipeline by McIntyre and Associates has not established a compelling need for Commonwealth funding. On the basis of the Report, the project would appear to be only marginally eligible for FWRAP funding, and in accordance with the FWRAP terms for revenue-producing projects, it could only attract funds by way of loans at market interest rates. I note also from the Planning Report's estimates that the rate burden after the proposal would still be relatively low, and that Commonwealth grant assistance would only reduce future annual domestic water rates by \$4 per household.

Accordingly, whilst I have not had an opportunity to consider a formal submission from Queensland, on the basis of the consultant's report I consider that the proposal would be unlikely to attract Commonwealth assistance under FWRAP.

Yours fraternally  
John Kerin

**Mr TENNI:** In fact, Mr Kerin said that he considered that the proposal would be unlikely to attract funding under the Federal Water Resources Assistance Program. However, despite these adverse comments, when any proposal is received from the joint water board I will be more than happy to submit it for further consideration by the Commonwealth.

The campaign by the ALP to suggest that the Queensland Government sabotaged efforts to gain Federal funding is nothing more than a fraud. The State Government has made the firm offer to meet 30 per cent of the cost of the proposed pipeline. On current estimates, this amounts to a non-repayable grant of \$4.5m. This is in addition to the fact that the State Government has outlaid, or is committed to outlaying, an estimated \$14.7m on the Ross River Dam.

The State Government has also contributed substantially to the cost of relocating the Flinders Highway and the railway, because of the Ross River Dam expansion. Many millions of dollars has also been spent in providing additional capacity in the Houghton main channel and pumping station to suit the future water needs of Townsville/Thuringowa. This makes nonsense of the ALP claim that the State Government is not 100 per cent behind the efforts to help the people of Townsville/Thuringowa overcome

their present critical need for additional urban water supplies. The sooner the people of Townsville and Thuringowa sack Alderman Dobinson as the chairman of the joint water board, the sooner they will get water for the cities of Townsville and Thuringowa.

## PRIVILEGE

### Restriction of Question-time

**Mr INNES** (Sherwood—Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party) (10.29 a.m.): I rise on a matter of privilege. This is the second occasion on a day allotted to the Estimates debate that at least half of the maximum time for questions—that is, the one hour allotted for question-time—has been taken up by extremely lengthy ministerial statements. I ask you, Mr Speaker, to use your prestige to suggest that ministerial statements be brief and, if they are lengthy, be tabled.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! At this stage I do not believe that I need to move to stop the ministerial statements.

## QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

### Early State Election

**Mr WARBURTON:** In directing my first question to the Premier, I refer to his threat to call an early State election if National Party members decide to move against him. I note that the Premier visited the Governor several weeks ago. I ask: has he had preliminary discussions with His Excellency in relation to such a matter? Has this threat, which is apparently a move to save the Premier's political hide, been made knowing full well the constitutional crisis that he could provoke and the destabilising effect that such reports of an early election must have on industry and investment in Queensland?

Does not that irresponsible threat, supported by the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing, Mr Hinze, of an election show that the Premier's only concern is and always has been for himself, and not for Queensland as he would like to make people believe? Is it not a fact that the Premier's irresponsible threat has been made without any concern whatsoever for our State and its people?

**Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN:** This is very interesting. First of all, I never made any threat in relation to an issue of that nature. The Leader of the Opposition has done exactly the same thing as I have done. I outlined, as he has outlined, the turmoil and strife that is created when someone tries to dismiss a Premier when he does not feel inclined to go. The Leader of the Opposition knows from experience exactly what happens. I sat through one. I saw what happened to the Liberal Party. I saw what happened with Gair—exactly the same thing. You split the Government; you split the party. It is not only a matter of dismissing a Premier—

**Mr Warburton:** You threatened to take the party to an election.

**Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN:** I did not threaten anybody. I tell the Leader of the Opposition exactly what has happened. He knows what happens. I am very concerned about this State. I want stability. I do not want outside interference. That is what brought about the dismissal of the Labor Government in Mr Gair's day. That is exactly what happens. I merely drew attention to what happens when one starts down that road of doing the things that some people want us to do.

The Leader of the Opposition can rest assured that I am interested only in doing something worth while for Queensland. We have a lot down the road and we will continue with it.

### **Police Corruption in Queensland**

**Mr WARBURTON:** In directing a question to the Premier and Treasurer, I refer to comment made in today's media that former Police Minister, Mr Max Hodges, knew about police corruption in Queensland during the Liberal/National Party coalition and devised a campaign, together with former Commissioner Whitrod, to eradicate it.

I now ask: is it correct that Hodges was moved sideways, causing this campaign to come to a halt? Is the Premier aware that Mr Whitrod claims that there was no point in continuing the struggle while the regime at that time remained the same? Is it correct that the Premier, through the then Police Minister, Newbery, denied Whitrod access to information gathered and the findings of the two Scotland Yard investigators in 1976? In view of the increasing comment that ties the Premier as a central figure in many of the decisions or lack of decisions concerning Government response to police corruption in Queensland, will the Premier now admit that he has a responsibility to tell this Parliament the full details about information that must have been relayed to him in relation to corruption and why he has allowed it to continue for more than 10 years?

**Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN:** The statement by the Leader of the Opposition is entirely incorrect from beginning to end. He asked a question with about a dozen different parts. Firstly, I point out that Max Hodges never referred anything of that nature to me—that there was corruption. I am quite unaware of it. I do know that he came to me repeatedly and asked for the job that he has today. It was a long time before I ultimately agreed to it. That is quite obvious, because he would not obtain it without the approval of the Government.

The point is that he never mentioned it to me—nor did Mr Whitrod. The Government did not deny him access to any material. That is the first I have ever heard of that one. Secondly, I point out that in Whitrod's day the Government had Scotland Yard officers in Queensland. On two occasions the Government paid to bring Scotland Yard officers to Queensland. They did not find evidence of corruption on either occasion.

**Mr Goss:** Will you table the report?

**Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN:** A lot of reports were available at that time. Mr Whitrod and the Minister would have had access to them.

Thirdly, in relation to the other accusation made by the Leader of the Opposition—I remind the House that Mr Whitrod has had 11 years in which to say something. Mr Whitrod refused to appear before the Lucas inquiry, which was held two years after he resigned. The Lucas inquiry did not find any evidence of corruption. The Lucas inquiry was held after Max Hodges and Whitrod left. Again, Whitrod decided that he did not want to give any evidence. He cannot have it both ways. He cannot have his cake and eat it too. He has been left right out on a limb because of his statements and his attitude. He cannot get around anything.

Honourable members are aware that, at that time, there was a lot of sour grapes over these issues, such as street marches. If I had the details I would provide the honourable member with all of the answers that he has asked for.

### **Effect of World Heritage Listing on Hydroelectric Schemes**

**Mr HYND:** I ask the Minister for Mines and Energy: will the World Heritage listing have any effect on the State Electricity Commission's proposal for hydroelectric schemes?

**Mr AUSTIN:** The Queensland Electricity Commission, the Government and I as Minister have great concerns about what might happen to the Tully/Millstream hydroelectric scheme.

**Mr Vaughan:** You called that off in April.

**Mr AUSTIN:** The honourable member should read the Minister's press statements and not those that have been made by other people.

I draw the attention of the House to an article that appeared in the *Tablelands Advertiser* of 8 September 1987. That newspaper is a very authoritative source. The article to which I refer relates to the Federal member for the area, Mr John Gayler, and states—

“Member for Leichhardt, Mr John Gayler, says he is ‘extremely confident’ that the multi-million dollar Tully/Millstream hydro electricity scheme will go ahead, providing the Queensland Government wishes to continue with it.”

That is an interesting statement. The article further states that Mr Gayler’s statement that there seemed to be some room for negotiation over the logging issue appeared to be at variance with the address that was given by Senator Richardson.

To take the matter further, one must consider one of the groups that was a part of the campaign to have the area declared under World Heritage listing.

**Mr Scott:** A successful campaign, too.

**Mr AUSTIN:** Yes. That group is known as the Tropical Rainforest Society. In the latest edition of its magazine, which I received on 7 September 1987, that group is congratulating itself. Some of the aims that that group hopes to achieve through Senator Richardson, and for which they are actively campaigning, are—

“Establishing a Steering Committee with representatives from proponents of World Heritage Listing to work towards development of appropriate legislation, whether as regulations under the World Heritage Properties Conservation Act or through a new Act. To establish a management authority capable of formulating, through a public participation process, appropriate management plans for the World Heritage area (allocating sites for scientific purposes, recreation, tourism, primitive area, seed collecting areas etc.). Development of strategies for phasing out some undesirable activities such as mining, clearing, damming, burning etc.”

The document continues—

“All logging is excluded from the World Heritage area by the end of 1987. Plans for phasing out and preventing destructive activities such as clearing, damming, roading, mining, river drainage and burning are made and implemented by the Authority through a public participation process and in conjunction with its management.”

Some Opposition members might think that they are geniuses, but I would like them to explain to me how the Tully/Millstream scheme can go ahead if roads cannot be built into the area. That is the first point. Secondly, if roads are able to be constructed to the site, how will power be taken from the site if areas cannot be cleared for power lines? If the plans of that group are implemented, not only will the area around Tully/Millstream be locked up, but the entire World Heritage listing will be locked up to power lines. Sites need to be cleared before power lines can be installed. Opposition members should come clean as to whether or not they support the total locking-up of that area. From comments that were made by Senator Richardson, it appears that that area is going to be locked up. There are hypocrites on the Opposition side of the House who claim that they want power, roads and development in north Queensland; they profess to represent that area, but they support a proposition that would stop all of that development.

#### **Minister for Transport, Interest in Taxi Industry**

**Mr INNES:** I direct a question to the Minister for Transport. As some taxi travellers in Brisbane in recent weeks have been confronted by the surprising and unsolicited information from cab-drivers that the Minister for Transport understands the industry, as he has an interest in a number of cabs, I ask him to clarify the situation. In particular, I ask: has the Minister or any member of his family, either directly or indirectly, any financial interest in any taxi, taxi licence or business involved in the taxi industry?

**Mr LANE:** The answer is a very definite "No". The only additional comment I would make is that it is not uncommon to have the dishonourable member peddling unfounded rumours in this place in the hope of capturing a cheap headline.

#### **Premier's Attitude to Condoms, Legalised Prostitution, Abortion Clinics and Sex Education for Young People**

**Mr McELLIGOTT:** I direct a question to the Premier. He is quoted as saying that the National Party State President, Sir Robert Sparkes, is trying to force the party down the road of condoms, legalised prostitution, more abortion clinics and sex education for young people. I ask him: is he not aware that the use of condoms will help prevent the spread of AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases, that legalised prostitution will help wipe out organised crime and corruption, that family-planning clinics will reduce the incidence of child abuse, that sex education will reduce the rate of teenage pregnancies and that all of those policies have been supported and endorsed by his Health Minister? Is he not therefore concerned that, if he does not support the lead of his party's State President and his Health Minister, he will continue to expose young Queenslanders and Queensland women to a life of ignorance, abuse, disease and corruption?

**Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN:** Of course, the statement largely is incorrect. I am interested to see that the honourable member has gone on side with the State President. He obviously supports him in relation to the remarks that I have made in that regard. That is very interesting and nice to know.

Secondly, as the honourable member knows, condoms are available all over the place. He knows that a number of problems are associated with allowing them into the universities. The high schools want them as well. He knows that. Several ordinary schools have applied to have condom machines installed. Those things concern one very much when one is asked to promote the honourable member's suggested life-style by offering encouragement or incentive to young people. Condoms are readily available all over the place, if anyone wants to buy them. The National Party stands for high ideals, high objectives and high morals. That is what this Government and this State have been built on. The Government will continue in that way. If the honourable member wants to go down the road that he has suggested, that is his business.

#### **Staff Reductions at Mental Hospitals**

**Mr McELLIGOTT:** I direct a question to the Minister for Health. The severe staff cuts that have occurred at Wolston Park and Mosman Hall mental hospitals have meant the close of activity centres and the cancellation of excursions and other therapeutic programs. I ask—

(1) Does he acknowledge that the loss of these programs will seriously jeopardise the treatment of patients?

(2) Does he acknowledge that the cancellation of the programs has taken away the sense of dignity and the feeling of self-fulfilment that is so important to both patients and staff?

(3) What will be the impact on staffing within psychiatric services of the proposed clinical studies unit at Wolston Park and the planned acquisition of the security patients hospital at Wacol, and what is the likely overall effect of the staff cuts on the treatment of the mentally ill in this State?

**Mr AHERN:** I suggest that one does not need a college education to know that we are living in a time of substantial financial restraint. Financial restraint has been mandated by the Commonwealth Government at the Premiers Conference and during the currency of its May economic statement.

Right across Australia, the Commonwealth has mandated a very serious policy of economic restraint. The Prime Minister and the Federal Labor Treasurer have said on many occasions that this is a time for all Australians to examine Government expenditure



at various levels to see whether all of these things are in the public interest or not and whether or not they can be afforded—having in mind the level of inflation in this country, the current account deficit and the total national economic perspective.

The issue has come back to all of the States in terms of economic restraint. It has come back to all Government departments in terms of a period in which all managers of Government departments have had to look at all of their programs to see whether or not those programs are consistent with national economic objectives.

The budget of the Health Department has fared reasonably well. However, in order to maintain that position within the overall objectives of the Queensland Government, it has been necessary to cut back in some staffing areas.

In respect of the Eventide establishments and psychiatric institutions——

**Mr McElligott** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Thuringowa!

**Mr McElligott** interjected

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr AHERN:** Instead of standing down staff, some vacancies have had to be maintained in staff establishment positions. That position has been carefully examined. The priorities have been evaluated to give maximum emphasis to treatment areas. Peripheral areas—recreational areas and so on—have been reduced in a very small way. However, there is absolutely no doubt——

**Mr McElligott** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I have already spoken to the member for Thuringowa. I now warn the member under the provisions of Standing Order 123A.

**Mr AHERN:** Absolutely top priority is being given to the treatment of patients. No patient treatment service has been underprovided, but it has been looked at very, very carefully. Across the board, all health institutions in the State and, indeed, across Australia have had to look at their positions and will be carrying some part of the burden of the present national economic restraint. It is just as simple as that.

The Prime Minister has mandated it; the Treasurer has indicated that it is necessary; and all Premiers throughout Australia have had to look at the position. All Government departments in Queensland are sharing an equal burden.

### **Cape Bowling Green Lighthouse Removal**

**Mr STONEMAN:** In directing a question to the Minister for Water Resources and Maritime Services, I refer to the recent removal of the Cape Bowling Green Lighthouse from my electorate in a clandestine operation that must surely mark one of the lowest depths that any Federal Government has reached, as well as being a savage act of vandalism against the history and heritage of north Queensland, and I ask—

(a) Is he aware that neither the State member—myself—or the Federal member nor the shire council was informed of the removal either before or after the act?

(b) Was the Department of Harbours and Marine advised by the Federal Government of the lighthouse's removal?

(c) Is he aware of what special significance a lighthouse that has served north Queensland's shipping for 114 years might have for the people of Darling Harbour in New South Wales, where it is supposedly being relocated?

**Mr TENNI:** I thank the honourable member for the question and for his concern over the heritage of north Queensland.

Of course, I am not aware of any attempt made by the Commonwealth to consult any local body or State or Federal representative before removing the historic Cape

Bowling Green Lighthouse. If I had been aware of that move, I would have very strongly opposed the navy's clandestine removal by HAM Stalwart of the lighthouse, last month, from Cape Bowling Green, north of Ayr, to its new home at the National Marine Museum at Sydney's Darling Harbour.

Although the Federal Department of Transport plans to install a new navigation light at Cape Bowling Green later this year, that is still no excuse for the Federal Government to blatantly ignore local feeling by vandalising Queensland's maritime heritage to suit the needs of this Sydney-based museum. If the Federal Government has any sense of decency in this matter, it will return the historic 114-year-old lighthouse so that it can be re-erected in a suitable location as part of north Queensland's maritime heritage. Regrettably, this is not the first time that the Federal Government has acted in a high-handed manner over the future home of Queensland's hysteric—I am sorry, historic—lighthouses.

It took a considerable fight with the Commonwealth to defeat an attempt last year by the National Maritime Museum to plunder the Pine Islet Lighthouse in the Whitsundays. Thankfully, that lighthouse will now be preserved in Mackay as part of north Queensland's maritime heritage.

No official advice, except for a routine Notice to Mariners from the navy, was given by the Commonwealth to the Department of Harbours and Marine about the removal of the Cape Bowling Green Lighthouse.

I readily accept that a lighthouse structure is a natural item for any maritime museum, but the Cape Bowling Green Lighthouse is of absolutely no historic relevance to the people of Sydney. I remind the House that, when the Queensland Maritime Museum at South Brisbane was also seeking a lighthouse, it looked locally and obtained one of the historic Cowan lighthouses from Moreton Island. I would suggest to the Darling Harbour museum that it adopt a similar policy and also look locally for its lighthouses, and stop plundering the maritime heritage of our State.

One thing that really concerns me in this case is that Mr Richardson is worried about the heritage of our rainforests, yet the Commonwealth Government is plundering—stealing, it could be called——

**A Government member: Robbing.**

**Mr TENNI:** Robbing—call it whatever you like. The Federal Government is the plunderer of the heritage of north Queensland on one hand, and on the other hand it is deliberately supported by the member for Cairns and other members in this House in the creation of unemployment in the milling industry of far-north Queensland. I would say that, without doubt, the Commonwealth Government would be called hypocritical and that it is run by a heap of hypocrites.

### **Cape Bowling Green Lighthouse Removal**

**Mr STONEMAN:** In directing a question to the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General, I inform him that it relates to the same issue as my previous question, and I ask: with further reference to the removal of the Cape Bowling Green Lighthouse by the Hawke vandals, and given what I believe to be the significance of a Federal Government seeking to, as it terms it, protect the heritage of north Queensland via the declaration of huge areas of this State's forest areas by appointing the Gaddafis of the world as keepers of that heritage—

(1) Is he aware of any other circumstance wherein a Federal department used the services of the Royal Australia Navy in the form of the HMAS Stalwart and its helicopters to remove any part of a State's heritage, much less the oldest landmark in a given area, without reference to any person or authority?

(2) Is there any constitutional means by which this gross act of vandalism might be reversed?

(3) Does this act mean that, in effect, nothing is sacred from the whim of a socialist Government determined to destroy this State, or is there a means by which the history and heritage of Queensland, and of north Queensland in particular, is able to be protected from aggressors from the south using armed services that most people believed were to protect rather than threaten Australians selectively?

**An Opposition member:** This is a speech.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I am sure everybody wants to hear about an "hysterical" lighthouse.

**Mr CLAUSON:** As I said last night, it seems that little Lucifer and the forces of darkness are at it again in north Queensland. However, it would appear that the Federal Labor Government's aim in north Queensland is to lock up the logs and turn out the lights.

As for any constitutional question that might arise in relation to this unprecedented theft of alleged State property—I should say that, if the lighthouse was built prior to the turn of the century, there is probably an argument that it remains as State property. Of course, this has not yet been tested, although my officers will be looking into the constitutional aspects of preserving any State property. As this House is aware, my department has a policy of doing that. The Government is trying to retain most of the areas of States' rights and States' powers that Mr Hawke and his socialist Government want to take from us.

With his mention of HMAS Stalwart, the Minister for Water Resources and Maritime Services struck upon a bit of a "hammy" problem. What has happened is that HMAS Stalwart has been used in this clandestine activity to virtually pinch what would appear to be State property. It is an affront to the Government, particularly now that the Federal Government has fenced the lighthouse off at its new location at the National Maritime Museum at Darling Harbour, Sydney. The Federal Government has taken Queensland's property—purloined it—for its own purposes and its own self-esteem. The lighthouse has now been installed in a socialist State, in the glory-seeking edifice at Darling Harbour, which has very little meaning to the rest of Australia. In that event, from the viewpoint of States' rights, I think it is a matter that is worth looking into.

#### **Special Lease Held by Relario Pty Ltd on North Keppel Island**

**Mr MACKENROTH:** In asking a question of the Minister for Tourism, National Parks and Sport, I refer to the proposed sale of special lease 35/43632, being part of national park 612 on North Keppel Island, to the fact that the current lessee, Relario Pty Ltd, has this lease for sale and expects to receive \$10m for a lease that it purchased for \$1.55m in 1985 and also to the report that the company's reason for selling is that "the company could not afford to build an international standard resort on the island".

I now ask: in view of that statement, will the Minister give a guarantee that section 25 of the lease, which requires the lessee to provide cabin-type accommodation, will not be amended to allow for high-rise or any other type of development in the national park?

**Mr MUNTZ:** The special lease to which the honourable member refers is a legitimate lease to the lessee, which has every right to offer it for sale by auction, tender or any other way it wishes. The conditions that attach to that lease will adhere to it until such time as the Government might consider—and only consider—an application for a variation of those conditions. However, at the present time the lease would be transferred with the conditions attached to it.

At 11 a.m.,

In accordance with the provisions of the Sessional Order, the House went into Committee of Supply.

**SUPPLY****Estimates—Second Allotted Day****Estimates-in-Chief, 1987-88****Local Government, Main Roads and Racing****Department of Local Government**

Debate resumed from 7 October (see p. 2925)

**Mr CAMPBELL (Bundaberg)** (11 a.m.), continuing: Before the adjournment of the Estimates debate last night, I outlined to honourable members the true position about State and Commonwealth subsidies provided to local authorities.

I showed that, although Commonwealth subsidies had increased in the period between 1979 and 1985 from \$49m to \$159.5m, State Government subsidies rose from \$57m to only \$63m. In real terms, that is a substantial reduction in State Government subsidies. In other words, the Federal Government is now providing the major proportion of Government subsidies that traditionally were provided by the State Government.

I welcome the Year 7 students, teachers and parents from St Patrick's convent, who are in the gallery, especially my daughter Skye and her good friends, who in the future will become very caring and responsible citizens of this nation. I hope that they enjoy their stay in Brisbane.

In the presentation of his Estimates, the Minister made mention of swimming-pools. Although he was referring to municipal swimming-pools, I express my grave concern at the number of toddler deaths that have occurred in home swimming-pools in the last few months. In the last few months the deaths of three toddlers by drowning have been reported in south-east Queensland. It is very important for the safety of young children that a proper inquiry be conducted into the reasons for those deaths. There is a need for the Local Government Department to recommend to the various local authorities guide-lines on the proper safety precautions that should be implemented in home swimming-pools to ensure the safety of children. I hope that the Minister will consider the recommendation of guide-lines for local authorities so that by-laws could be implemented covering appropriate safety measures for home swimming-pools.

I turn to a matter very important to the Bundaberg electorate, that is, the provision of a new Burnett River bridge. The Minister mentioned this last night at the beginning of my speech. A new bridge is very important for the safety of north Bundaberg residents in case of a major disaster. There is a possibility that the present bridge could be closed because of an accident or roadworks, thus isolating all essential services to the south of the Burnett River. The hospital, doctors, ambulance and fire station are all located south of the Burnett River. If for some reason the present bridge was not open to traffic, there is no way in which those essential services could be provided to the northern section of Bundaberg and to the outlying country areas north of the Burnett River.

The Burnett River bridge was built last century. It is the only bridge in the area that has been designed with a T-section at each end. As I have pointed out on many occasions in this Chamber, that may have prevented runaway horses entering the bridge. However, in 1987 it is important that a new bridge be built that will allow traffic to move freely and ensure good traffic flow. The need for a new bridge was acknowledged back in 1978. I believe that it is now even more important because of the increased road usage of today.

The annual report of the TAB is a very good report. It shows a healthy profit for the industry. Many honourable members have asked, "What wonderful job has been done for the various racing clubs in country Queensland?" One section of the racing

industry is forgotten—the small country punter. The Minister should take steps to provide better services to country Queenslanders. I compliment the staff of the TAB, especially those in Bundaberg, on the very friendly and helpful service that they provide.

Many facilities are absent, however. There are now no race broadcasts provided in Bundaberg to country punters. Many pensioners and other people who cannot leave their houses cannot obtain the scratchings or the change in jockeys. Such a service was promised by the Minister when computerised betting was introduced.

**Mr Davis:** Only on Saturdays.

**Mr CAMPBELL:** On Saturdays it can be obtained through the ABC, but there are no broadcasts of mid-week races. Greyhound and trotting scratchings are not even provided. The only information that is given by one of the stations is that people can ring them or go to the TAB. There is a real need to provide better services for country punters.

Two very important scandals have occurred in the racing industry since the Minister's Estimates were last debated by the Parliament. One was the Fine Cotton ring-in and the other was caffeine doping. A reasonable explanation has never been given as to why the technical procedures in regard to caffeine doping were improperly carried out. A good reason has never been given as to why caffeine was found in those technical analyses and why the proper checks were not implemented on those analyses. At some time the reason has to be given as to why they were not properly carried out.

It has been brought to my attention that some local authorities are not fulfilling their moral obligations and that State and Federal subsidies are being used improperly. The Brisbane City Council recently sold land that was subjected to flooding and was resumed in the late 1970s with Federal, State and council money—40 per cent Federal funds, 40 per cent State funds and 20 per cent council funds—in order that, if there were another major flood, residential property would not be affected. Now the Brisbane City Council has sold that land for a profit. This is a grave misuse of State and Federal subsidies by the Brisbane City Council. The money was given in good faith to resume, under the flood mitigation program, flood-prone land in Fletcher Parade, Bardon, which has now been sold for residential purposes.

I ask the Minister to inquire into the sale of this land, because, when State and Federal Government funds are provided for the purchase of land for a specific reason, there is a moral obligation on the authority to use that money for that purpose. The provision of funds should not be abused by the land's subsequently being resold for a profit. That is a major scandal in the use of funds provided by both Federal and State Governments and I hope that the Minister will look into that matter.

I have covered several aspects in this debate. I believe that in the past the State Government has lacked funding for local authorities, but now that has been rectified by the Federal Government. There is a need for the Burnett River traffic bridge and I ask that an inquiry be carried out by the Local Government Department into the provision of guide-lines for by-laws to cover proper pool safety.

Time expired.

**Mr STEPHAN (Gympie) (11.10 a.m.):** It is with pleasure that I join the debate on the Estimates of the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing. I compliment him on the way in which he has handled his portfolio. He is the longest serving Minister in that portfolio. As the Minister said in the presentation of his Estimates, he intends to remain in that position for a long time.

**Mr Davis:** What about the Premier? Will he be here for a long time?

**Mr STEPHAN:** The babblings of the member for Brisbane Central can be ignored. I assure the honourable member that the Minister will hold his present portfolio for a long time.

When one looks at the responsibilities of the Minister, one realises that they do not relate to isolated aspects of our way of life but cover a very broad spectrum. His responsibilities cover building by-laws and the various subcommittees that deal with them, the Building Industry Complaints Tribunal, the collection of annual driving fees, the receiving of renewal premiums for compulsory third-party insurance of motor vehicles, the registration of motor vehicles, and the construction and maintenance of roads, which is something that affects all honourable members all of the time. That responsibility should not be underestimated. The Minister also has responsibility for local government matters, town-planning, sewerage, water supply and storage of inflammable and combustible items. That is an outline of some of the Minister's responsibilities. He handles them very well.

In view of the Minister's very good record, I am amazed that Opposition members have been critical of him. Mr Ardill is in the Chamber at present. Last night he said that the Government's attitude at present reflects the attitude adopted during colonial times when Governments had to look after such matters as garbage and sloppy tracks. As the honourable member came from an area of local government, I was surprised that he made the comments that he did. He was a local government representative for a few years. He did not leave local government of his own initiative, so I believe that he was reasonably satisfied with the position at that stage. Had he left of his own initiative, a little more weight would have been added to the comments that he made. In the circumstances, I tend to cast aside those comments and regard them as being made off the top of his head.

The work of local government is appreciated. The Minister in the presentation of his Estimates said that there is no doubt that we are fortunate that local authorities are charged with the responsibility for planning and of providing essential services, such as town water supplies, sewerage, roads and storm-water drainage.

In recent times local authorities have had their difficulties, particularly with financial matters. Local authorities are not the only ones who have had financial problems. The great intrusion by the Commonwealth Government into the local government area has added to those difficulties. Because of the close ties that exist between the State Government and local authorities, we have been able to work together for the betterment of everyone.

I join with the Minister in paying tribute to the Local Government Association for the important role that it has played. The Federal Government has intruded into the responsibility of local government. For example, the distribution of funds was previously the responsibility of the Grants Commission. I fail to understand what is going on with the distribution of those funds. The amount received by the local authority in Aramac has been reduced by about \$13,000-odd from \$423,000 to \$409,000. In 1992-93, it is envisaged that funding will be reduced further to \$293,000. That is one example of the funding made to local authorities.

Gympie is a little more fortunate. Its funding has increased by \$85,000-odd from \$402,000 to \$488,000. In 1992-93, its funding will increase to \$981,000. The amount received by Widgee Shire will increase from \$724,000 to \$772,000 this year. In 1992-93, its funding will increase to \$1,332,000. Gympie and Widgee are, to a limited extent, growth areas. But so too is the Noosa area. Noosa and Maroochy have suffered similar reductions in funding. I cannot for the life of me understand why Noosa, for example, would suffer a reduction from \$744,000 to \$655,000 this year, with a determination that it will slip even further to \$573,000. Maroochy has been reduced from \$1.8m down to \$1.6m. In 1982-83 the figure was \$2.69m.

Under those circumstances, local authorities will be constantly looking over their shoulders trying to determine the amount of Federal Government funding that they will receive. They will also be endeavouring to ascertain whether they will be able to maintain their standard of services and balance their budgets to a reasonable degree.

These figures have obviously been worked out on the number of people in a particular area rather than its individual requirements such as roads. They fail to take

into account areas that are under the control of the Crown, for which local authorities do not receive a great deal of assistance. The Grants Commission was established to eliminate these sorts of anomalies and to assist local authorities over their problems.

**Mr Davis:** I don't want to be nasty——

**Mr STEPHAN:** I do not believe that the honourable member would want to be nasty. He is a gentleman in his own way. His wife is always looking for issues on which to run in the forthcoming Brisbane City Council elections. Whenever the honourable member for Brisbane Central locates information that is of interest, he passes it on to his wife. He is not a nasty man, so I will let him sit there quietly.

I turn now to main roads, which is an area that concerns me greatly. As I have pointed out, most honourable members receive a lot of criticism about main roads. I am concerned about the Federal Government's attitude in this regard. Members of the Opposition do not seem to take much notice of that attitude. If Opposition members are to be of assistance to Queensland, it will be by pointing out how much Federal Government funding is going to other States and not coming here to Queensland.

**Mr Vaughan:** We are thankful the Premier did not become Prime Minister; it would have been even worse.

**Mr STEPHAN:** Did the honourable member say that it would be worse if he spoke to them? I am sorry that Mr Hawke has that sort of an attitude. I am sorry that the honourable member cannot relate to him. Even when the Prime Minister comes up to Queensland to speak to members of the Labor Party, he is not too sure which group to speak to and he usually goes away frustrated saying, "I cannot help those fellows. Why should I even bother?"

The sum of \$180m was slashed from national road-funding by the Federal Treasurer, Paul Keating, in his mini-Budget. That is bad news for all Australians, particularly Queenslanders, 200 of whom could lose their jobs because of that cut. Queensland will suffer substantially because of the cuts in anticipated road-funding grants by the Hawke Government.

**Mr Davis:** Do you know where you can obtain one of those T-shirts with "Joh for PM" on it?

**Mr STEPHAN:** The honourable member likes to babble around in different areas. I would like to continue speaking about main roads.

**Mr Littleproud:** He would be out of his depth in the Brisbane City Council. It would be too big a pond.

**Mr STEPHAN:** Exactly. If the honourable member were to go for a paddle in the botanical gardens, he would also be out of his depth there. He should sit quietly and listen to what I have to say.

The Minister has stated that the \$20m that has been cut from Main Roads funding will have a catastrophic effect on the jobs of Queenslanders. As I have already said, approximately 200 of them will lose their jobs.

Many cuts have been made in the Works Department. I am sympathetic to the problems of that department and I can well understand its reaction to those funding cuts. Let me look at where the problems are originating and who is causing them, particularly in relation to funding.

The Federal Government is supposed to be making funding cuts, but it is forcing them on the States. The States are bearing the responsibility and the blame. That attempt to prop up the image of Mr Hawke and Mr Keating does not do too much for Queensland's image.

Queensland can expect to receive about \$257m from the Commonwealth in 1987-88, which is roughly the same as was received in 1984-85, 1985-86 and 1986-87. When

it is realised that static dollar values ignore inflation, that means an effective savage cut in real terms.

Transport operators, primary producers who take their produce to markets and the tourist industry will be affected. The Federal Government is again pulling the rug from under their feet. It is continuing its policy of reducing Queensland's road grants in real terms. As I pointed out, in real terms Queensland is receiving the same as it did in 1984-85.

Projects throughout the State will be deferred, which will mean job losses and frustration for many people in country areas and in the cities who have been waiting for jobs to be completed. We have been told that the situation will be even worse next year, which does not give us too much hope or enthusiasm.

The need for decentralisation has also been ignored. The Queensland Government is the only State Government that has not imposed its own State fuel excise to add to the burdens of the transport industry and the ordinary motorist. Ultimately, that contributes directly to rising prices. In other States, motorists pay tax both to the State and the Commonwealth Governments. I will comment on the amounts that are being put into the State coffers through the milking cow of the fuel industry. An area of concern is the distribution of 10 per cent of the funds allocated for arterial and local roads for the last three years of the life of the legislation. Over the remaining three years to June 1990, Queensland will lose a total of \$7.5m, basically in the local roads category. Arterial roads have not been affected greatly, although \$1m a year has been shifted from Queensland's rural arterial State highway system to the urban arterial systems in the larger cities.

**Mr Ardill:** What's wrong with that?

**Mr STEPHAN:** I should imagine that the honourable member would feel quite pleased with that. As I said, Queensland is a decentralised State and has many roads in areas outside Brisbane.

It is the reduction in the local roads funding which is of major concern, as almost all local authorities are dependent on this funding to maintain a safe road network, and the livelihood of rural council road gangs must be put in jeopardy.

The Federal Government's record on road funding has not been good. Last year, it blatantly used fuel taxes to try to balance its Budget, with the result that Queensland suffered reductions totalling nearly \$17m.

It must be remembered that \$6,350m is taken from the motorist each year in fuel tax, but \$1,200m goes back for road improvements. This is hardly a record where Mr Morris can claim great credit. Obviously, when reading comments made recently, I have noted that his record is seen as a great achievement by Canberra.

When motorists fill their cars with petrol, it must be realised that out of the 50c, or whatever price is paid per litre, 5.75c goes back into road improvements, with 24c being diverted into consolidated revenue. It is likely that 60 per cent of all available Federal funds, apart from national highways funds, will be spent in New South Wales and Victoria, which also is not very satisfactory.

Registration fees are the major source of State funding of roads in Queensland. In 1986-87 they totalled \$190.2m. Debentures and special financial arrangements of \$31.2m and around \$8.7m from other sources, was allocated. Altogether \$311m was allocated to roads.

I wish to highlight what some of the local authorities are doing and the part that they play in maintaining the road network, particularly the main roads and their own local arterial roads.

The actual road length in terms of improvements in, for example, the Widgee Shire, was 330.39 kilometres, which amounted to a total expenditure on improvements of \$2,884,000. Some of the major efforts have been directed to improving that portion of



the Bruce Highway that runs through the Widgee Shire. Approximately \$366,000 was spent on permanent works and \$147,000 was spent on ordinary works, which come under the category of maintenance.

**Mr Ardill:** That is all Federal funding.

**Mr STEPHAN:** It is not all Federal funding, although the honourable member tries to make out that it is. The honourable member fails to realise and to take into account that it is not all Federal funding. He also fails to take into account, as I pointed out earlier, the amount that is being paid in taxes on fuel to the Federal Government. Not too much of that revenue is being channelled back towards the costs of roads. That fact has been highlighted by the different arrangement that has been made for the bicentennial road-funding.

**Mr Vaughan:** Do you, on behalf of the Government, want Commonwealth funding on a per capita basis?

**Mr STEPHAN:** Many more things besides a per capita basis have to be taken into account—as I tried to point out to the honourable member before. The honourable member does not realise that, outside Brisbane, Queensland covers a vast area. The honourable member does not realise, for example, that although there is a great distance between Brisbane and Cairns, that Cairns is still not the northern-most part of Queensland.

**Mr Vaughan:** You are not consistent.

**Mr STEPHAN:** I am consistent.

**Mr Vaughan:** No, you're not!

**Mr STEPHAN:** I am. The honourable member is trying to say that because only 50 people live in a western town in Queensland, only a very small portion of funding ought to be allocated to it, and that the major portion should go into coastal areas where the majority of the population lives.

**Mr Vaughan:** You are talking about Federal petrol tax.

**Mr STEPHAN:** I was talking about roads and fuel tax in that particular instance; but I am also talking about the maintenance of the vast network of roads in this State.

**Mr Vaughan:** You have got to make up your mind.

**Mr STEPHAN:** But what about the mines? What about primary industries? What about the cattle trains and what they contribute to the welfare and betterment of the countryside?

**Mr Vaughan:** Aren't you aware that Queensland got \$95 more per capita than the average of the six Australian States' returns?

**Mr STEPHAN:** The amount that comes from Queensland and those western areas—the amount that is contributed to the economy of this State and the nation by that area—is certainly very high. Surely that should be taken into account also when expenditure on road improvements is being discussed in various parts of the countryside.

If only the population and the number of cars in an area were taken into account, that would be preferential treatment for large cities and it would be an unrealistic approach. Although a great number of cars travel through the metropolitan area on the way up the coast, not the same distances that are to be found in the outback have to be covered. Those are the things that need to be taken into account.

What I am saying is that most of the amount that has been gathered by way of fuel tax goes into consolidated revenue and is not spent on road improvements for those producers who contribute to the welfare of this nation. I am afraid that much of that revenue is being spent to prop up those who want to live off the system.

**Mr Vaughan:** Look, the thing is that the Premier goes down to the Premiers Conferences and comes back with all these things. He comes back here, and you people beef about it.

**Mr STEPHAN:** Is the honourable member saying that the Premier agrees with it? Has the honourable member been talking to Mr Keating and Mr Hawke? Is the honourable member saying that the Premier agrees with everything that they put to him? I challenge the honourable member to say that the Premier would agree to everything put up by Mr Keating and with everything that Mr Hawke has said. The honourable member's statements are inaccurate and he is off the beam. The honourable member is trying to mislead the House and the people of his electorate.

I wish to take a short time to compliment the Minister on his interest in and support for the racing industry. People involved in the racing industry throughout the State appreciate all the work that Mr Hinze does and the contributions that have been made from the Racing Development Fund.

Time expired.

**Mr SHERLOCK (Ashgrove) (11.30 a.m.):** I rise briefly to make some remarks on behalf of the residents of Ashgrove and my constituents. I am concerned mainly about the Main Roads traffic route—known as Route 20—that passes through the suburb of Ashgrove. I wish to discuss some aspects of safety in access and egress use, and also property valuation.

I am concerned not only about the property valuations of the residents of Ashgrove but also with the preservation of their life-styles in a quiet suburban area. The aspects of safe pedestrian crossings for school children in particular interest me, especially in the areas of the newly created four-lane facility in Wardell Street and Stewart Road and also at other crossings that are now being created in Jubilee Terrace at Ashgrove. I have a concern for elderly folk who often, in what is becoming a fairly dense residential area with units and so on, walk to the shopping centres and who, of course, use the very fine bus services. To do those things they have to cross busy roads.

During the past year, numerous complaints, referrals and queries have been made to my electorate office concerning the works of the Main Roads Department in the Ashgrove area, namely, those works in Jubilee Terrace, Stewart Road and Wardell Street. Through the Minister I pay tribute to the Main Roads Department, to the Minister himself and, particularly, to his district engineer, Mr Stephen Golding, who is responsible for the Brisbane north district of the Main Roads Department. He and his officers have always been extremely ready to assist and to come to meetings on the site to talk to residents about their problems and to explain things to them. Mr Golding has been very open about that. I commend him for that. I ask the Minister to convey that to him.

During the past year, Frasers Bridge in Wardell Street was completed. That was a most efficient project. It is a major bridgework, constructed to carry four lanes of traffic. It provides now a straightening of the road and safe access to the bridge. The upgrading of Wardell Street proper right through to Enoggera has increased the traffic flow and the speed of traffic. Hundreds of residents in that area will attest to that. That is visible proof that, if the flow of traffic and the space provided for it are improved, more traffic will be attracted to the area. They are the very points that the residents of Ashgrove make about the current upgrading of Route 20.

In the areas of Wardell Street and Stewart Road in particular, parking for property-owners is impossible. There are now four lanes of traffic in those areas, whereas a number of years ago there were only two. Relatives and visitors who call on residents in that area have to use side streets for parking. From some streets it is often impossible to gain access to the road at all. There are many examples where ingress and egress to and from private properties is totally impossible. I will refer to one case with which the Minister is presently familiar. That case involves a lady who, on her way home from work in the evenings, has to stop her car and put on her hazard lights and then, often in the darkening of the evening, back into her property, into her garage, so that the next

morning she will be able to drive straight out of her property to merge with the build-up of moving traffic. That has made things very difficult for her. The solution to her problem will be a very expensive one.

I would also like to refer to the level of lighting on that route, which has improved tremendously. It has added considerably to motorists' safety. However, that lighting is also to the detriment of some of the local residents, in that they are faced with extremely bright lights whereas previously they had reasonable quiet and darkness during the sleeping hours. However, I must say that both the Main Roads Department and SEQEB have been very co-operative indeed and they have erected shades on those lights. They have also changed the placement of the shades in situations in which the level of light was detrimental to the residents.

Certain features of the proposed Route 20 upgrading from Ithaca Creek to Pickering Street, Enoggera, where a major crossing over the railway line is planned, have advantages but they also cause some problems. Again, the Main Roads Department and its engineers have readily talked with residents about things such as resumptions, compensation and so on. As a newcomer to Parliament, I am certainly impressed with that process.

I acknowledge that it is very difficult indeed for the department to make plans freely available to residents and certainly in electorate offices. However, the department has always opened its doors to allow residents who are concerned about resumptions and about these matters to go down to the department and receive a briefing, to view the plans and so on. I am very grateful indeed to the Department of Main Roads Brisbane north district engineer, Stephen Golding, for the briefing that he has given to me and my colleagues. I compliment the Minister for that.

However, a large number of residents believe that any further upgrading of this Route 20 through Ashgrove, apart from essential safety improvements, will be detrimental to the suburb and its life-style. It is often argued by civil engineers, traffic engineers and so on that the increase in traffic volume and speed will be addressed by better road surfaces, by more road space and better facilities in general. Many people, however, support the view that Route 20 should not be a divided four-lane facility or an arterial road, and will fight vigorously to retain a two-lane facility while pressing for other alternatives.

I mention two other alternatives to Route 20. The first is the Brisbane City Council upgrading of Hale Street, which I understand has been on the drawing-board for more than 20 years. I also understand that for a long time ALP councils put this aside and into the too-hard basket but that the current Brisbane City Council is prepared to address it. I believe that the time has come when that must be addressed, to provide intercity, suburb-to-suburb access that is close to the centre of the city of Brisbane. The second alternative I propose to the Minister and his department is that in the long term the Government should plan to build a ring road west of Mount Coot-tha and Enoggera Reservoir to connect the major highways to the west and to the south with the highways to the north of Brisbane. Such a ring road, however, should be behind Mount Coot-tha and well to the west of Enoggera Reservoir. I recognise that it is a long-term project. I warn against any short-term solution that might be contemplated, and has been rumoured around The Gap area for years, that is, an upgrading of a route through Gap Creek Road, School Road and Settlement Road, through the quiet residential suburb of The Gap. That would be similarly disruptive to residents, extremely costly and would merely take the Main Roads Department and the Government out of the frying-pan and into the fire.

Residents support controlled upgrading for local traffic only. That includes the building of a pedestrian footpath or safeway on Ithaca Bridge. At present that is very dangerous. Elderly folk take their lives in their hands, and in the mornings and afternoons schoolchildren use a footpath that is less than 18 inches wide and has no safety handrails at all.

Many in Ashgrove are sceptical about the necessity for upgrading the intersection of Jubilee Terrace and Waterworks Road by the creation of an underpass. Early in the

1980s residents of Elimatta Drive and its environs went through what was for them a major upgrade that took a de facto Route 20 through the midst of a quiet suburban area. It is therefore not surprising that these people view the upgrading that is currently before them with great suspicion.

It is important that there be close co-operation between the Main Roads Department and the Brisbane City Council. I know that Alderman Brian Hallinan of The Gap ward is vitally concerned about liaison between the Main Roads Department and the Brisbane City Council to ensure a smooth, safe and effective traffic flow between the major existing roads of Route 20 and the suburban streets that are his responsibility. I am working very closely with him to make sure that the needs of residents are taken care of. I think my constituents are very fortunate indeed to have such a very hard-working and effective local alderman as Brian Hallinan.

I am also concerned about T. M. Burke Park, which is on the corner of Elimatta Drive and Stewart Road. Main Roads Department plans show that a third of that park will be resumed. That resumption will remove 13 or 14 large gum trees. It will take away playing-fields and facilities for children, together with seats. Those facilities, in some cases, have only recently been installed. Since their installation, the use of that park has greatly increased.

**Mr Davis:** Are you talking about Hale Street?

**Mr SHERLOCK:** No. I am talking about Stewart Road and Wardell Street and the T. M. Burke Park. The use of that park has greatly increased since the improvements were made to the playing facilities and the seats in that park. I ask the Main Roads Department to consider modifying its proposals in that regard.

In regard to the debate on these Estimates—the Government and the Main Roads Department must face facts. To achieve a four-lane facility in Route 20 through the suburbs of Toowong, Bardon and Ashgrove without causing massive disruption to residential areas will be very difficult indeed. The cost will be enormous. Many people hold the view that that cost is not warranted in terms of the present or the projected future traffic density. I mention in particular Kaye Street in Bardon and the Bardon shopping centre in that regard.

No definite plans exist for the Bardon route. However, the traffic flow through to that hiatus on each side of the proposed route definitely exists, and it has been intensified.

**Mr Davis** interjected.

**Mr SHERLOCK:** I am not saying that at all. What I am saying is that there should be two routes: one that is close to the centre of the city of Brisbane that allows interchange between near-city suburbs for commercial use and residents and another around the city of Brisbane which will connect the main routes to the south and the west with the routes to the north. It should provide a connection of the suburbs that is far beyond quiet residential areas.

For too long both of those proposals have been put in the too-hard basket. I have lived at Ashgrove for almost 25 years, and for those 25 years the residents of Ashgrove have been talking about those two things: an inner-city suburban link and an outer Brisbane ring road to by-pass quiet residential areas.

So it is not surprising that the residents of Ashgrove have formed themselves into a committee called CART—the Committee Against Route Twenty. That committee will exert pressure firmly but responsibly. The members of that committee are prepared to express to the Government, the Main Roads Department and other public utilities their views about the proposed changes to their suburb and their life-style.

In this Parliament I represent the members of that committee. I have taken on board their views. I believe that I have the responsibility and the right to make these points on their behalf in this Parliament. I admire the members of that committee for the action that they are taking. They are not being stupid, they are not creating a fuss

for the sake of creating a fuss and they are not scoring political points. They are exercising their democratic right to put to the Parliament and to the Main Roads Department their concerns about changes to their life-style, to the valuation of their properties and to the safety of their elderly folk and their children.

Liaison does take place between groups of residents in Toowong and Bardon who hold similar fears. Those residents will be working to prevent the devaluation of their properties and to preserve, improve and increase the safety of the ingress to and the egress from their own homes. In fact the groups in the suburbs west of the electorate of Ashgrove have formed active working committees that are working with the Main Roads Department to seek better solutions to the problems.

I have already mentioned the hiatus that exists in Bardon. Horrendous costs will be involved in solving the problem. Sufficient long-term planning has perhaps not been done. So the residents themselves are involved.

The residents make the point that any increase in the volume of traffic, other than local traffic in Ashgrove, is viewed by them as the first stage of an arterial road connecting the western suburbs with routes to the north and the suburbs to the east of Brisbane.

I have commended the Minister. Everyone admires the work that he has done in the various departments for which he has had responsibility. I have also commended the officers of the Main Roads Department. I understand that there is no easy solution to any of these problems. In the long term the answer lies in adequate planning which includes the upgrading of Hale Street, a route that is close to the centre of the city of Brisbane that will allow both commercial and private traffic to flow between suburbs. Additionally, an outer ring road beyond Mount Coot-tha to the west will allow interchange of traffic between the two major highways.

I urge the Main Roads Department planners to urgently address and take on board those two suggestions. I ask them to do it responsibly because these suggestions have been made responsibly by concerned residents, many of whom do have traffic engineering and planning skills and knowledge, can cope with the technicalities and are prepared to assist the Main Roads Department in this matter. Finally, I urge the Government to plan and budget so that the character of quiet residential suburbs, such as Ashgrove, Dorrington and Enoggera, is maintained and preserved.

**Mr McPHIE (Toowoomba North) (11.46 a.m.):** I wish to pay a tribute to the Minister and his department for the fine work that they have been doing, especially over the last four years whilst I have been in this Parliament and have been able to take a more active interest in the work. Although I am not a member of the Minister's parliamentary committee, I find some of the areas in the Estimates that have been covered, especially main roads and racing, to be most interesting. I have studied the work that has been done in those areas.

Like the previous speaker and so many speakers before him, I wish to concentrate mainly on main roads and principally refer to funding. There are problems in regard to funding which are the making not of this Government, but of the Opposition's friends down south. Funds that should be provided to Queensland and to other States for main roads are not being made available. I note from the Estimates that the total amounts allocated from Consolidated Revenue and Trust and Special Funds have increased, but I question whether or not those amounts have increased in real terms. The inflation factor and ever-increasing spiralling costs, must be taken into account. Queensland is holding its own and nothing more. When one looks at road-funding from the Commonwealth, one sees that the amounts have decreased. I want to know why. In 1987-88, funding for the overall road program amounted to \$311.8m. Of that figure, the Commonwealth's contribution is \$159.1m, or 51 per cent. Last year the Commonwealth's contribution was \$178.1m, or 60 per cent, which, despite inflation, is a decline. In addition, there has been massive taxation of the Queensland motorist through excise and crude oil levies. Each year more money is being taken by the Commonwealth under

road-funding programs. Queensland is receiving less. This is indicative of the trend in many areas.

Between 1982-83 and 1986-87, Commonwealth spending in all areas has increased by 22 per cent, but State spending has increased by only 6 per cent. I will deal with the road-funding program in more detail later but, overall, money is brought in by the Commonwealth under one program and then siphoned off to other areas. That is outright dishonest dealing on the part of Canberra. It is the work of a man who claims to be the world's greatest Treasurer.

**Mr Vaughan:** Do you think we should collect our own taxes?

**Mr McPHIE:** I will deal with road taxes shortly, because I have a lot to say on that subject. I want to look at the system. State Governments are the prime providers of services and facilities to the people of Australia, but the Commonwealth collects the bulk of the States' revenue through uniform taxation legislation which the States agree to. The Commonwealth returns the money to the States and local authorities, but the system is not being operated correctly or fairly. In fact, the Commonwealth collects about 80 per cent of the taxes levied in Australia, the States collect about 16 per cent and local authorities collect about 4 per cent. The States are entitled to a large portion of the taxation that is collected by the Commonwealth.

**Mr Vaughan:** Just a little question. Mr Sinclair, your national leader, believes the States should levy their own taxes. What do you think of that?

**Mr McPHIE:** I do not agree with State taxes, especially State income tax. A uniform system is needed, especially for income tax. That is the main money-gathering system throughout Australia. It must be uniform. There must also be a fair system of handing the money back to the States. The present systems in all States are not operating fairly because the Federal operation needs so much money to keep it going. The honourable member for Nudgee has seen what has happened. The Federal Government is siphoning off money unfairly.

In 1987-88, when Federal revenues will reach a record \$78 billion, the proportion paid to the States will actually fall. That bears out what I am saying. Road-funding is included in that. As to road-funding—I can show the honourable member where the Federal operation is becoming straight-out dishonest.

**Mr Vaughan** interjected.

**Mr McPHIE:** Since 1983-84, when Hawke entered office, the proportion of Commonwealth outlays provided to the States and local authorities has fallen by 13.4 per cent.

**Mr Vaughan** interjected.

**Mr McPHIE:** I am providing the honourable member for Nudgee with the figures and he will not listen to them.

During 1986-87, the Consumer Price Index increased by 9.1 per cent, but Commonwealth payments to the States increased by only 6 per cent. In real terms, that is a loss of \$685m, and that money should have gone to the States.

**Mr Vaughan:** The Premier should be sacked.

**Mr McPHIE:** The honourable member's leader said that he prevailed upon the Federal Government to get New South Wales, Victoria and other States to attend Expo. For a change, why does the honourable member not prevail upon the Federal Government to get a fair distribution for the States and do something for us?

**Mr Vaughan** interjected.

**Mr McPHIE:** In that context, road-funding is suffering.

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr Booth):** Order! Continuous interjections will not be allowed.

**Mr McPHIE:** Queensland is suffering because of reduced road-funding. With the massive job that Queensland must do with its roads, it is a wonder that Queensland can cope. However, it is coping and it is able to continue its extensive program of maintenance and construction.

Queensland has a network of nearly 34 000 kilometres of declared roads under the Main Roads Act. Work is being carried out in the 134 local authority areas throughout the State. If honourable members study the annual report of the Main Roads Department, they will see that numerous roads are being upgraded and new roads are being constructed. I commend a perusal of that report to all honourable members. Road development is taking place throughout the State. The standard of roads has been improved. That is being achieved despite funding problems.

I turn now to the figures that support my comments. Last year, Commonwealth aid provided for local authority roadworks was \$33m. This year, the allocation will be \$46.3m. That is a good increase. The money will be used very well by the local authorities.

As to road maintenance—\$139.8m was provided last year. This year the amount has been increased to \$145m, which is only keeping pace with the rate of inflation.

As to permanent works—\$296m was provided last year and \$309.9m will be provided this year, which is just about keeping pace with inflation, and nothing more. Queensland is not being allocated the amount that it requires.

In the presentation of his Estimates, the Minister listed the major undertakings for the coming year and the projects that will be carried out under the \$400m Special Capital Works Program. A lot of roadworks are being carried out.

The Logan Motorway will be a great boon. It is a credit to the Minister and his department. It will be an asset like the Gateway Arterial road and the Gateway Bridge over the Brisbane River. From the air one can see the massive amount of money that has been spent on the project.

The people of Toowoomba are most appreciative of the work that has been carried out in that city. Work is being carried out on the Warrego Highway, mainly at Gatton. However, upgrading has been carried out at Ipswich and further on. The New England Highway is being upgraded between Toowoomba and Warwick. The Goondiwindi road will link up with the Newell Highway that extends into western New South Wales and to Melbourne. A lot of work is being done on that road. That road runs very close to Toowoomba, and I am most appreciative of that fact. During the last four years, almost all of the main roads in Toowoomba have been significantly upgraded. They are now at the standard that they should have been brought to years ago.

One of the big programs in Toowoomba at the moment is the East Creek deviation road. I am proud to see that that work is being done. It is tied to the centre city development, which is going ahead well, because of the programs that the Minister has implemented.

When one talks about main roads, one mentions large sums of money. Over \$300m is being spent this year on road programs. What do we get for a dollar? We do not get very much for a dollar in terms of kilometres of main road or dual highway. I wonder how the Minister can continue with these programs when he has such a large area to cover throughout the State.

Recently, an announcement was made that three-quarters of a million dollars will be spent in Toowong at the Frederick Street roundabout. That figure represents a large percentage of the \$300m that the Minister is required to spread throughout the State. A vast amount of work, including earthworks, kerbing and guttering, drainage, lighting, signals, signs and paving, is involved in constructing a simple roundabout, and the money adds up.

**Mr Davis:** Where was that money spent?

**Mr McPHIE:** That money will be spent in Toowong.

**Mr Davis:** The Liberals are not here.

**Mr McPHIE:** No, they are not here. But the Government does not mind looking after the people of Brisbane. It will help them with their traffic-flow problems. The Liberals and the Brisbane City Council are not interested in doing that. The Minister and his department will accept their responsibilities and upgrade roads for the benefit of the people of Queensland.

This Government wants a fair distribution of Commonwealth Government funds. I have been harping on this topic for quite a while. This Government wants a fair distribution of entitlements under the Australian Land Transport (Financial Assistance) Act and the Australian Bicentennial Road Development Trust Fund Act. Those entitlements are not being received.

In 1976-77, 44.4 per cent of fuel tax that was paid by motorists at the pump was returned to the State for road-funding. Ten years later, in 1986-87, that figure is only 19.7 per cent. When the fuel excise tax was first applied in 1970 it was 3.4c per litre. Twelve months ago that figure was over 21c per litre. It is now probably more than that. Where is that vast amount of money going? It is certainly not coming back to the States for road-funding. During that same period the crude oil levy rose from 1.26c per litre to 13c per litre.

**Mr Davis:** I admire you, Sandy——

**Mr McPHIE:** If the honourable member would listen, I would point out that, today, 51c in the petrol dollar is taken by the Commonwealth Government and only 9c goes back to the States for road-funding. What happens to the remainder? Vast amounts of dollars are being siphoned off into Federal Government consolidated revenue to finance its operations. That is not on.

In addition, the Commonwealth Cameron report on road-funding further reduced Queensland's share of road-funding. Our share has now been handed over to Sydney and Melbourne for their massive network of roads.

The Minister and his department, which consists of five divisions and 15 districts, have done a top job. It has been really outstanding. I congratulate in particular the Minister's Under Secretary, Mr Erik Finger, who was given the Australian Road Federation John Shaw Award in 1986 for "an ability to accomplish dynamic achievements in the planning and construction of roads and bridges in Queensland". That award was well deserved. It honours the achievements of a man who has been a departmental head and has done a tremendous job.

If the Minister and his department continue to do such a tremendous job, despite the hobbling that Queensland is receiving in relation to Federal Government funding, I believe that Mr Finger will qualify for that award every year from now on.

I turn now to racing, which is another area in which I have an interest. I compliment the Minister for the advances that have been made to racing clubs through the Racing Development Fund. Last year, \$14.3m was made available and \$16.3m is provided in the Estimates for the forthcoming year. That will be money well spent in a Statewide industry that is most important to Queensland. I congratulate the Minister and the people in his department in that area.

The Toowoomba Turf Club, which is in one of the main provincial areas in the State, if not in Australia, has twice received massive assistance from the Racing Development Fund. The first program was to upgrade significantly the facilities for the public. The Minister's first responsibility should be to cater for the public and then to look after the other areas. The second program, which has just been completed, has upgraded the track and the horse stalls. At present, the complex in Toowoomba is second to none in rural Australia.



Arguably, Toowoomba is the largest horse-training centre in Australia, with over 600 horses in training at any time. Much to my surprise, I discovered that it is bigger than the Flemington area and areas in New South Wales. The racing industry is a big industry in Queensland, especially on the Darling Downs. As honourable members well know, it is also a big industry in your area, Mr Temporary Chairman.

In honouring the work done by the Minister, I wish to endorse the action of the Toowoomba Turf Club in making the Minister a life member of that club. It is an honour well deserved and recognition that was long overdue.

Facilities for and upgrading of racing have been provided not just in Toowoomba but right throughout the State. Another initiative for the racing industry is the provision of satellite dishes. The TAB has been operating for 25 years and is going from strength to strength. Pubtab and other facilities have been initiatives of the Minister. I congratulate him and I am pleased to see those programs continuing and going forward.

**Mr Davis:** How is the TAB going with the Skychannel?

**Mr McPHIE:** That is all in the program. I am not the Minister. He will enlighten the member on how it is going. I am in favour of it.

In Toowoomba, there are excellent facilities not only for the gallopers, but also for the trotters and the dogs. A bet can be placed with the TAB at any of those venues. Regular meetings are held at Toowoomba. I would be very pleased to see the honourable member for Brisbane Central up there.

I turn now to three aspects of local government. Nobody will be surprised that I turn to the area of Commonwealth funding. Federal interference has been occurring in the allocation system. It was started by the previous, conservative Government, which began interfering in the relationship between the State Government and the local authorities by attempting to by-pass the State Government and to get the local authorities under the direct control of Canberra. The Queensland Government condemns that.

The Federal Government has interfered in the funding allocation by replacing the old Grants Commission and introducing new programs. Recently, 11 rural shires have been made significantly worse off than they were previously. Why a detriment clause was not built in to the changes, I do not know; but it makes it almost impossible for a shire to continue to operate when not only is there no allowance for inflation but also there is a cut in funding. Those shires do not receive nearly as much funding as they did previously. The prediction in one rural shire is that under this program there will be a 45 per cent drop in funding over five years. Added to that is the inflation factor, which will make it worse.

The shires just cannot raise the rates. The people are battling. Country people are expecting one of the driest summers ever. That is on top of 18 or 20 months of drought. The rates cannot be raised. The shires are running at a loss at the moment. However, the Commonwealth Government is bringing the shires to their knees by the tactic of cutting funds. It simply does not understand. Surely, a simple non-detriment clause should be placed in the allocation so that the shires at least retain their status in funding level. That would overcome the problem. The Commonwealth Government will not do that. It is unfair treatment by the Federal Labor Government; it is not the fault of the Queensland National Party. The National Party would see those shires at least able to operate and not hobbled.

In his Estimates speech, the Minister referred to rezoning. I examined that and found that in 1986-87, contrary to the statements that I have heard and seen in the press about Government interference in rezoning, there were only about 56 cases in which the Government was involved in rezoning. Most of those were minor rezonings requested by the Land Administration Commission. Over 1 000 rezonings have been put through by local authorities. I ask honourable members where the problem is. The Minister and his department have a good system that is being correctly administered and used. The Government must have the power in extreme cases, when necessary, to

override local authorities. That is what is being done. There is no converse. The Government does not go in and overrule the councils when it feels like doing it. It overrules them when they are playing up and stopping genuine and necessary development. It is done through the Local Government Court. It is not done by arbitrary means. Everybody who has a case to put before the court will have the case looked at. All cases will be judged on their merits. That is the way it should be done.

In conclusion, I make comments that are in line with the Savage report. I point out to the Committee that in this State there are 134 local authorities. When some of the Aboriginal reserves gain local authority status, there will be a few more. I agree with those who suggest that some rationalising and streamlining should take place—that there should be a reduction in the number of local authorities—because I believe that there must be an overall saving in administration costs, on a cost/benefit basis. There should be a total overview and examination of local authorities right throughout the State with the aim of reducing the number of local authorities and streamlining the whole local government system where possible.

I support the Estimates presented by the Minister. I compliment him on the excellent program that is ahead. He has excellent people who will implement and administer that program. It is a pity, however, that the demands for maintenance and further development associated with the massive road network in Queensland cannot be met on a much greater scale because the Government does not have the money.

**Mr PREST (Port Curtis) (12.07 p.m.):** I am pleased to take part in this debate on the Estimates. I congratulate officers of the Department of Local Government on their co-operation during the past year.

At the outset, I comment on some of the points made by the Minister yesterday. One of my main concerns is the allocation of funds made by the Minister to racing clubs throughout the State. I must say that the Minister did honour part of the promise he made in 1982, by giving the Gladstone Turf Club approximately \$500,000. I point out, however, that that is far short of the amount that he originally promised. The position now is that the horses in the Gladstone area are stabled—or housed—as though they are kings, but the patrons—the punters—are accommodated in that same sporting complex like horses.

**Mr Hinze:** How many stables are there?

**Mr PREST:** There is a whole heap of stables, and they are adequate. In fact, Gladstone Turf Club is waiting for the Minister to give a date when he will be able to come up for the official opening ceremony.

**Mr Hinze:** That will be a day that you and I will remember.

**Mr PREST:** It will be. I sincerely hope so. Maybe we will be able to back a winner also!

What I want, however, is the Minister to fulfil now the second part of his promise, or the remainder of his promise, by providing adequate funds so that the facilities of that complex can be brought up to a standard that is acceptable. That is something that, for a very long time, the people of the Gladstone area have been waiting for.

One other thing that concerns me when I look at the turnover of the TAB is that funds derived from galloping in the metropolitan area have barely increased. They increased only to the extent of \$250,000, whereas the funds from the provincial areas increased by approximately \$5m. All told, \$141,894,174 was invested in Queensland. However, the amount that was invested on gallops alone in New South Wales was \$199m and in Victoria, \$195m. The total revenue derived from the gallops was \$541,318,935.

One must express concern about why the people of Queensland invest more on southern races than they invest on Queensland races. I suppose one could ask whether it is because they obtain better returns for their money from southern events. Is it that

the racing is fairer and conducted better in the south, or is it simply that the horses seem to be more consistent, which relates to southern races being better conducted? This matter is something that the Minister should be concerned about, because everyone knows that there is a great deal of inconsistency in horses' form, not only in Queensland but also in other parts of Australia. At all times, racing patrons should be given the utmost consideration.

Last Saturday, I was highly disgusted when, after a favourite, Glory Girl, won a race in Sydney, a protest was lodged. That protest was upheld, and the horse that came second was awarded the race. As I said, the original winner, Glory Girl, was the favourite and was substantially backed. The following day's press stated that the jockey rode a copybook race, yet the horse was disqualified and the race was taken from it. The protest was upheld. The jockey rode a masterly race, but the punters missed out on their money. That jockey continues to ride. If a protest alleging interference during a race is upheld, the jockey must take the blame. If it was not the jockey's fault, the protest should have been dismissed. I am concerned about that. I believe that on that occasion the stewards down south backed the second-placed horse.

**Mr Littleproud:** There is no graft and corruption south of the border, surely?

**Mr PREST:** No. There is enough of that going on in Queensland. Queensland has to clean up its own house before it can start talking about other States. I believe that people who live in glass houses should not throw stones.

I will now refer to road-funding. I am very pleased to say that the Federal Labor Government has done a magnificent job in the allocation of funds to Queensland for the upgrading of the Pacific Highway and other roads throughout the State. There is no doubt about it, the roads in my area are a delight to drive on. I say that to the Minister. Those roads are much better than they were when a Federal Liberal/National Party Government was in office, and when, as the Minister always stated, Queensland was starved of funds. It can now be seen that the Minister, by making funds available to continue road improvements between Gladstone, Yarwun and Mount Larcom—something that is long overdue—is honouring a promise that he made in 1982. Those improvements should have been carried out when QCL was given permission to build in that area. At that time money should have been made available, because QCL's operations have generated a lot of road transport in that area, and that has created a hazard. As I say, I am very pleased that the Minister has made that funding available for roadworks in my area. I am very pleased to see that the money that the Federal Government has given to the Minister through the bicentennial road-funding project is being used in the proper manner in that area.

I am concerned about some of the Minister's remarks yesterday about the subsidy cuts to Queensland's local authorities. The member for Toowoomba North, Mr McPhie, has just spoken about Federal grants and the Grants Commission. A newspaper article of 19 September 1987, headed "Bonus for G'stone in Federal grant funds", states—

"The Federal grant totalling \$895,164 to be paid in quarterly instalments to the council has been welcomed."

The article refers to Mr Flutter, the accountant, and it continues—

"However, Mr Flutter said the council had been concerned that the grant would not be increased on last year's figure of \$839,000."

So an increase of something like \$55,000 or \$56,000 can be seen there. The article continues by quoting Mr Flutter as saying—

"What the Federal Government has done is to recognise the problems associated with developing urban areas, somewhat neglected by the Grants Commission.

It is a perfect example of what should have been computerised years ago."

When a change in the State's Grants Commission funding is referred to, it will be seen that some of the deserving local authorities, the ones with the bigger populations,

are now receiving a fairer share. Those local authorities include the councils of Gladstone, Bundaberg, Nanango, Caboolture and Rockhampton. All of those local authorities are receiving greater percentages and they are very appreciative of that.

In my own local authority of the Gladstone City Council, improvements are being carried out. For the past three years the city has received the Tidy Towns award. The people of the city are very proud. When it is receiving from the Federal Government almost \$900,000 per year in a grant, it is no wonder that the city is given recognition by way of the Tidy Towns award. It should not be forgotten that it was only last year that that same city council received approximately \$2.5m from the Commonwealth Employment Program. The receipt of funds of that magnitude—they are not loans, they are grants—makes it possible for local authorities to do a tremendous amount of work on the cleaning-up and tidying of city areas. That is just what has been done.

On top of that, over a period of 13 years Queensland Alumina Limited has contributed \$3.5m to the Gladstone Sports and Parks Development Committee for the development of all sporting, recreational and passive areas throughout the centre of the city. That project was completed last year. With those sorts of projects being completed, it is very little wonder that once again Gladstone city has received recognition for being tidy.

When the Federal Government has to cut grants to certain areas, many people condemn it, but those same people did not condemn the State Government when in 1981 it cut the capital works subsidy to local authorities. Sir Albert Abbott has said that this year the shortfall in Federal Government funding is \$20m. He claims that he took that figure from the May mini-Budget. At the same time he did not say that in the early 1980s local authorities had been the big losers from the reduction of the State Government capital works subsidy to local authorities. He said not a word about that; in his opinion that was part and parcel of the good government of this State. All such people can do is criticise the Federal Labor Government. Where would Australia be today without it? It would be in a mess. When the Federal Labor Government took over from the Liberal/National Government, the nation was in a mess. It is to the credit of Paul Keating and Bob Hawke that Australia is now up and running and is able to move forward into the future.

One thing about local government that concerns me is the continual increase in rates. Although this year an enormous amount of money by way of grants has gone to the Gladstone and other councils in Queensland, the rates in Gladstone have increased by 6.2 per cent. According to the Gladstone City Council, the reason is that this year it used the differential rating system that was introduced by the Minister for Local Government.

Because of the QAL project ceasing in November last year—as I have just said, it has been contributing \$300,000 per year towards sports and parks—QAL's rates increased from \$190,412 last year to \$386,912 this year. Last year the Queensland Electricity Commission paid rates of \$58,233, but this year its contribution to the running costs of the city has been increased to \$162,094. Fuel installations have also been called upon to make greater contributions to the city.

I immediately condemned the city council for this and asked for the formula that was used in levying rates on these major companies. I believed that some explanation was called for. The mayor of the city immediately threw down the gauntlet and said that it should be of no concern to me that these major companies had to pay more. He said that I do not represent these major industries and that it could have been thought that I was a member of the National Party. I believe that when I took office I represented all people of all classes. The mayor is on record as expressing the following reason for the increase in rates—

“Our whole concept of differential rating this year was to call on three major industries to carry a greater share of the rate burden . . .”

He went on to say—

“Yes, we differentially rated QAL up 100 per cent; the Power Station up 200 per cent and the oil companies up a lesser degree of the three.”

He said that a full examination of the costs and the figures reveals that these industries have not made a major contribution to the city or are not presently doing so. In fact, he said that the Gladstone Power Station had paid a mere \$58,000 last year and would have to pay \$162,000 this year. He said that when those industries were established in the early 1970s, they were not called upon to make major contributions to the city.

Because QAL and other major companies do not fund the Gladstone Sports and Parks Committee, he said, “If I miss it one way, I will get it another way.” What he fails to recognise is that these major companies are major employers. Although they might not have contributed to the facilities of the city such as the cemetery and the library, those companies are major employers. Approximately 1 000 people are employed by those companies who live in, pay rates and make their contributions to the city in other ways.

The power station does not take advantage of the services provided by the cemetery and the library. I think that it was a mistake to use differential rating to increase the rates of QAL by 100 per cent and the power station by 200 per cent.

How is industry going to be attracted to a city that is crying out for it when a council increases rates retrospectively because companies did not make a contribution when they first came to the city some 15 years ago? I believe that no person is safe. People will be unsure of what rates will have to be paid if this is allowed to happen.

The cut-back in CEP funding causes me concern. CEP funding has been a wonderful thing for local authorities, sporting clubs and other bodies. They had to pay only 20 per cent of the total cost of construction of an amenity or other work that had to be done.

At a regional local government conference a motion on the books for consideration was that the conference make strong representations to the Federal Government to in effect have a continuation of the Community Employment Program or the introduction of a similar program. It was self-explanatory that the Community Employment Program and the fuel tax road-funding program had been beneficial to local government and local communities and that they should be continued in the long term. The motion at that conference was defeated.

It goes back to the early 1970s when the Federal Labor Government was in power and the RED scheme was in force. It was a wonderful employer of labour throughout the local authorities. From time to time at conferences it was said that such programs would bankrupt the community. When there was a change of Government and the Federal Liberal/National Party Government came to power, that program was withdrawn. That caused an almighty outcry. From then on the local authorities were in dire straits trying to meet their commitments to improve facilities.

When a Labor Government returned to power, the Commonwealth Employment Program was introduced. That enabled many improvements to be made to cities and shires. As I have said, organisations had to pay only 20 per cent of the total cost of facilities.

All these local authorities are supporters of the National Party Government and are against the Hawke Government. There is no doubt about it: they will regret the day that they voted against the continuation of the CEP funding.

One of the matters in relation to Main Roads that concerns me—it was pointed out yesterday by Mr Shaw—is the fact that too much money is spent on functions. The honourable member for Manly stipulated the function for the launching of the new uniforms for the Main Roads Department. I am more concerned about the number of functions held by the Minister for Main Roads during the various local government conferences that are held throughout this State. Some of the conferences are very big and there are many of them. I refer back to the 1985 Gladstone conference when the

Main Roads Department paid \$30,000 for a conference dinner, although I believe they had curry and rice, and not too much of it. Such large amounts of money do not have to be spent in order to keep in good form with the engineers and town clerks of local authorities. In answer to a question that I asked in September 1986 it was stated that the shire engineer of Livingstone, in addition to his \$60,000 salary, received the benefit of \$20,448 for work done during council time. That was described as supervisory work.

Time expired.

**Mr BURREKET (Townsville) (12.27 p.m.):** I am pleased to speak in the Estimates debate and to congratulate the Minister for the work he has carried out in regard to development in Queensland. The Minister is responsible for some very important departments, in particular the Local Government Department, and it is very pleasing to see that in general most of Queensland is very well looked after. However, those areas that have problems have brought the problems on themselves.

I represent the city of Townsville and wish to speak about some of the needs of that city. In the past one of the problems faced by Townsville has been the fact that it has been poorly represented at State level and is very neglected. I turn to the subject of main roads and suggest that the Minister might take on board some of my comments in the hope that in the not-too-distant future some of Townsville's main roads problems will be addressed.

University Road is a major road which goes past the army barracks and carries a large volume of traffic, especially military traffic. It is a very neglected road and is in urgent need of rectification. After travelling along University Road, one meets the roundabout at the turn-off to the university. In the past there have been enormous problems in this area, but I am thankful that the Minister's officers have addressed the problem by the installation of a roundabout. I do not believe that the roundabout is the complete answer to the problem and I believe that it has to be taken further. That particular area needs a four-lane highway right through from Stuart to the bridge. Townsville needs an extension to the Charles N. Barton Bridge or an additional bridge if traffic is to be effectively controlled and there is to be a good traffic flow through the back section of Townsville.

I thank the Minister for the \$3m allocation for the reconstruction of Nathan Street. This was a commitment I made to the people of Townsville whilst campaigning for the State election and I thank the Minister for responding to that promise by making the money available. Work has already commenced on Stage 1 of the Dalrymple Road and Nathan Street work. The Minister recently announced an extension of the program into Stage 2, and there will be an allocation of \$1.3m. Hopefully, by the end of this year, Stage 3 of the Nathan Street redevelopment will commence.

However, there are some other problems with main roads in the town. I refer particularly to the road from the airport that links up with the main road leading towards the city. It is a disgrace that one has to drive down a number of streets from Townsville airport to reach Ingham Road or one of the other roads that lead to other areas. A driver must make a whole series of twists and turns. He has to travel down narrow streets in residential areas. Townsville and the airport could improve their image by having a road that leads straight from the airport towards the Belgian Gardens area. Previous Federal Governments made promises to construct such a road. However, their promises have not been honoured. It is time that the construction of that road was addressed. The large numbers of tourists who travel from the airport to the city do not wish to see very old houses or travel down narrow roads. That does not give the city a good image.

I pay a compliment to Cairns for what it has done to its airport. The roadway from the airport at Cairns is very good, and that is the sort of thing that is needed in Townsville.

**Mr De Lacy:** You know how humble I am. Don't start praising Cairns.

**Mr BURREKET:** The honourable member should not get carried away; I am praising Cairns, not him.

The road on Magnetic Island was established many years ago. Very little improvement has been made to it. It is a major road that links Picnic Bay, Nelly Bay and Horseshoe Bay. Because of all the redevelopment that is taking place on Magnetic Island, the existing road needs to be extended and widened urgently. That will be a very costly process. Perhaps the Minister should address the possibility of constructing a road through the centre of the island, linking Picnic Bay with Horseshoe Bay. If that were done, it would be a simple matter of constructing diversion roads down to the various bays on the island.

I turn now to racing in Townsville. Townsville is fortunate to have the Townsville Turf Club and a major provincial race-track. I have thanked the Minister many times. I thank him again for the funds that he has made available to the Townsville Turf Club. It has a magnificent complex and one of the nicest grandstands that can be found at any race-track in Queensland, if not in Australia. The Minister made funds available to renovate that grandstand. He allocated further funds to rebuild the members' stand. It is magnificent and a credit to the planners and everyone involved in its construction. Again, the Minister was responsible for that. On behalf of the punters of Townsville, I express their thanks.

The latest innovation of the Townsville Turf Club is the use of water from the sewage-treatment plant to make the race-track greener. Funds for that project were provided by the Minister. That is a tremendous boon to Townsville, particularly during the present severe water restrictions.

Townsville also has a greyhound racing track. Substantial amounts of money were provided by the Minister for Racing. He is one of the few Ministers who have returned money to the racing industry. Throughout history, Governments in Queensland, including Labor Governments—as far back as they were—always were reluctant to put money back into the racing industry. I believe that, in accordance with the user-pays policy, if people in the racing industry put money into the industry, it is only proper that funds should be returned to the industry so that those people reap the benefits from them. One of the realities of life is that attendances at greyhound meetings and trotting tracks are declining.

Townsville has many new attractions, including a casino that is open 20 hours per day, seven days per week. There is only so much of the dollar to go around. The housewife or the worker has only a certain amount of money to spend on entertainment, so it is a case of who gets that money—the casino, the race-track, the greyhound clubs or whoever. All of the clubs and organisations in Townsville are suffering because of the impact of other attractions upon the city.

I turn now to local government. As an alderman of the city council, I have found that at every council meeting someone will say, "The State Government is taking away our rights. The Minister for Local Government is interfering with the rights of the Townsville people." The councillors continually harangue the Government. I have told them time and time again that they must look at their own back yards before they start criticising other people.

As an example, I cite the redevelopment of the Victoria Bridge project. That bridge was one of the very old bridges in Townsville.

**Mr Comben:** "Is" is the word, not "was". It has not been knocked down.

**Mr BURREKET:** I point out to the honourable member that it is no longer a bridge.

The developer who was involved in that project agreed to redevelop the bridge on the basis that he would be able to purchase from the LAC land on either side of the bridge; in other words, the banks of Ross Creek. Negotiations continue between the developer and the LAC. Subsequently, the city council was asked whether it approved

of the transfer of parkland to a developer. The council agreed to that proposal. The LAC then agreed that that land would be given to the developer.

Any city council, as the custodian of town-planning regulations, must uphold the rights of the people in a particular area. It is the normal practice that, after the LAC agrees to give land to a particular developer on a long lease, the developer applies for a rezoning of the land from Parkland to Tourist Industry. That did not happen in Townsville.

The first indication that the people of Townsville had about the development was the appearance of a number of buildings on the parkland. No application to rezone or build on that land had been submitted to the council. The buildings were erected right before the eyes of the officers and aldermen of the council.

On behalf of one of my constituents, I raised that matter with the council and was told that the Townsville City Council was doing the right thing; that it knew what it was doing, and that anybody who criticised it was a dill and a fool. I persisted with my inquiries and discovered that no application for rezoning or building approval had been made.

Because the council received some flak from the media over this issue, it submitted an application on behalf of the developer. That move was unprecedented. Every developer who wishes to develop land must make application to the relevant council. However, in this case, the council made application on behalf of the developer. Not only that, but also it did not advertise for the proper length of time and committed a series of breaches of the town-planning regulations, so much so that the town-planner was asked to comment on the objections. On nearly every objection that was raised he agreed, firstly, that the actions of the council were invalid; secondly, that the building should never have been built; thirdly, that there was no building permit, and so on. There was a litany of instances in which a city council, the custodian of town-planning in its area, had breached every one of the conditions that it imposed on other developers. That is a Labor council! They say, "It is good enough for everybody else, but we will do it our way." The town-planner, having acknowledged that the council had breached all of those town-planning regulations, recommended that the application go to the Minister for Local Government for approval. Now I ask you!

I am not pleased that that happened. As an alderman of the council, I expressed my displeasure. I asked that the council go back and do the whole procedure properly by having the developer advertise for 30 days, like everyone else. The system that is applied to other developers should apply equally to the council.

Government members have had enough of the remarks that come continually from honourable members opposite in which they wax indignant and say that they have been hard done by. They say that the Federal Government has been very good with its road-funding. I wish that for once in their political lives, in relation to Federal Government road-funding, the members on the other side of the Chamber would acknowledge that the Federal Government is wrong in giving only 20 per cent of all funds raised back to the States. They must acknowledge that.

Last night, an Opposition speaker said that the explanation was simple. I do not believe that anything could be simpler than the fact that only 20 per cent of all money raised by the Federal Government for roads is given back to the States. That is wrong, and members of the Opposition must acknowledge that it is wrong. They would help their State, their constituents and everybody here if they were to support a submission that the Federal Government should give more money to Queensland, because it covers such a large area and has many roads to service. With the allocation that Queensland receives, it is not possible to do the job properly.

I have listened to honourable members opposite for the last few days saying that the roads in Queensland are not really good. I acknowledge Mr Prest, who had the courage and the fortitude to admit that the work that Mr Hinze had done in his electorate



was very satisfactory. I hope that by this time next year I might be able to say the same thing that Mr Prest is saying, because Townsville badly needs funding for main roads.

I ask my honourable colleagues on the other side of the Chamber to do Queensland a favour and acknowledge that there is an inconsistency in the allocation of Federal funding and ask the Federal Government to give this State more funds so that it can build better roads, which will encourage tourism and all the things that the State needs. Without good roads, the State will not progress.

I find it hard to be a hypocrite—I cannot be one. I have always played it straight. That is the only game I know. One of the disappointments I have encountered in coming to this Parliament was the amount of hypocrisy. I really thought that whatever happened, whatever was done and whatever decisions were made, a sense of fair play would prevail. I feel sorry for the Labor Party and about the hypocrisy that members of that party continue to expound in this Chamber. I understand that members of the Labor Party form the Opposition, and that they have a certain role to play; but in certain areas they really must let their conscience free and they must try to do the right thing by this State. That is all I wish to say at this stage.

**Mr WELLS (Murrumba) (12.46 p.m.):** Madam Chairman, in speech after speech in this debate, honourable members opposite have paid tribute to the Honourable the Minister who presented those Estimates. I would not want to be party to such a sycophantic fugue, but I would, however, like to take the opportunity to thank the Minister for one particular matter.

**Government members interjected.**

**Mr WELLS:** Honourable members opposite may very well come to the conclusion that the Minister came here to receive their grovelling tributes—perhaps as an example, too, of what they should be doing when the Premier comes back so that they will not get out of practice.

I would like to offer thanks to the Minister for one act of his department that occurred very shortly after my election. The honourable Minister arranged for a number of officers of his department to meet with me and brief me on certain matters concerning roads in my electorate. That briefing was extremely valuable and extremely informative. The information that he provided to me was administrative in nature, but it was information of the kind that other Ministers did not make available to me—even when requested.

One of the consequences of that briefing was that a misconception that I had had and had held for some time concerning the safety of a particular road was dispelled as a result of that briefing. The Minister's arrangements, therefore, were useful to him, to the people of Queensland and to the local member as well. For that, I thank the Minister.

However, I reserve the right to criticise him on other grounds—although not so much the Minister as the Premier who, during the Minister's unavoidable absence due to illness, was intermeddling in his portfolio. I refer to the very important matter of untied grants from the Commonwealth Government to local authorities.

Over \$100m in untied grants to Queensland's local governments will be paid to those local councils on this coming Monday, 12 October. Had it not been for the incompetence of the Queensland Government and the intermeddling of the Queensland Premier, these sums of money would have been available to the local councils much earlier. Routinely, these sums of money are paid in the second week of September.

**Mr Gately:** In one lump sum by this Government.

**Mr WELLS:** The honourable member for Currumbin needs to know what I am about to say. Now it will be the third week of October before these sums of money can be paid.

In order to make it clear to the Committee how this annoying inconvenience has been brought down upon the heads of local councils by the Premier of Queensland, it

is necessary for me to explain some details of the Commonwealth's Local Government Financial Assistance Act 1986. The Act, which empowers the Commonwealth to pay untied grants to the local council, does so on a number of criteria. The criteria exist to serve the objective of the Act. The objective of the Act is to ensure that, as far as can be achieved by Commonwealth grants, each council throughout Australia is so placed that it can offer comparable services.

The first criterion is population size, naturally. The second is the criterion of equalisation, designed to allow councils—disadvantaged by remoteness, or spread of population, or shortage of revenue sources available to other councils—to nevertheless provide their citizens with community services of roughly the kind that other Australians enjoy. The broad objective of the Act, therefore, is that Australians should not be unduly disadvantaged by where they live.

**Mr Cooper:** But they are, and very much so. You should see the figures for my shire.

**Mr WELLS:** I have seen the figures for the honourable member's gerrymander.

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mrs Harvey):** Order! The honourable member is reminded to speak through the Chair. He is turning his back to the Chair.

**Mr WELLS:** My apologies, Madam Chairman. I was referring to the fact that the Act ensures that Australians should not be unduly disadvantaged by where they live. I would have thought that that would be something that the National Party would be sympathetic to. In fact, it maintains a weighted electoral system on the spurious pretext that this is going to do just that. In fact, the difference is that the Act exists to ensure quality of services to the constituents of honourable members opposite, whereas the gerrymander exists to ensure quality of services to the honourable members opposite themselves.

The first stage of the machinery of the Act is that—and honourable members opposite need to be aware of this—first of all, each State has to submit to the Commonwealth a set of principles which explain how they are going to allot the money as between the councils. These principles have to be in conformity with the objectives of the Act.

**Mr Veivers:** Principles?

**Mr WELLS:** The honourable member for Southport repeats my word. If only he could only manage not just a word but a whole sentence, he would start to talk sense for the first time in his life.

Those principles are formulated by State Local Government Grants Commissions, which make recommendations to the State Governments, which, in turn, draw up the principles for submission to the Commonwealth. That is the procedure. A Local Government Grants Commission is appointed by the State Government. That grants commission makes recommendations to the State Government as to the principles according to which the money will be allotted and then when the submission is sent to Canberra—

**Mr Cooper:** Ignored by Canberra.

**Mr WELLS:** I was just about to refer to Canberra.

The second stage is that—and the honourable member needs to be aware of this, too—if the principles supplied by a State do not conform to the objectives of the Act, the Commonwealth Minister can advise the State of this fact and have further discussions about the principles to ensure that they are redrawn so as to be within the Act. If this is not done, the Act gives the Commonwealth power to formulate a set of principles itself.

The third stage is: when the principles are approved by the Commonwealth, the money available in that particular year is paid to the State Treasury and forwarded

without delay to the local councils. Each local council then receives an untied grant in accordance with the principles.

The grants which come from the Commonwealth to the local governments are untied and are unconditional. In other words, local councils can treat them as part of their general revenue. That is the three-part machinery of the Act.

What actually happened in this case was as follows: first of all, the Queensland Local Government Grants Commission submitted early to the Queensland Government its recommendations within the principles. But there was then a three to four month delay before the Queensland Government drew them up and sent them to Canberra. Four States submitted principles that were not in accordance with the objectives of the Act. Those States were Victoria, New South Wales, South Australia and Queensland. When notified of the difficulties, the other three States submitted revised principles which were subsequently approved. On the other hand, the Queensland Government took seven weeks to reply—the Queensland Government of the Premier Sir Johannes Bjelke-Petersen—and when this reply was received, it was simply the proposition that its original principles were adequate. Furthermore, Queensland did not then respond to a request for further discussions.

In order to save further delay, the Commonwealth then drew up a set of principles. So we are up to Stage 3. The money is now being paid, but, owing to the Queensland Government's incompetence and its refusal to have further discussions at the appropriate time, it was late. I would like to go into the mistakes——

**Mr Cooper:** Dead wrong.

**Mr WELLS:** The honourable member says that I am dead wrong. I would like to go into some of the mistakes that the Queensland Government made——

**Mr Cooper:** This time they were ignored by Canberra. Canberra simply imposed its view.

**Mr WELLS:** The honourable member's interjection is incorrect. What happened was that the Local Government Grants Commission made recommendations to the State Government. For three or four months the State Government failed to send in the recommendations to Canberra. The time was running out and the Commonwealth just had to implement the principles. The honourable member might like to have a look at the mistakes that the Queensland Government made in submitting its application, because they cast an interesting light on what is happening in this Government.

To qualify for a grant, an authority has to be a local governing body constituted under Queensland's own community services legislation.

**Mr Gately:** On what dates are they being paid to the councils?

**Mr WELLS:** Next Monday. I said that earlier.

This State Government applied for a grant for one organisation which was not even a local governing body under Queensland's own community services legislation. It also failed to apply for a sum of money for a body which was a local governing body under Queensland's community services legislation. In fact, I have seen a State Government minute that admits that very thing. Of course, that was one of those documents that the lame-duck Premier, the member for Barambah, said would no longer be leaked. However, that is what was contained in that State Government minute.

The State Government wants to give grants to organisations that are not councils and does not want to give grants to organisations that are councils. In other words, the Government has lost track of how many councils it has. The Government does not even know who it is that it is governing.

A second point is that the State Government wanted to give Aboriginal councils only one-seventh of what the Northern Territory was giving to its Aboriginal councils. That is simply not in conformity with the objectives of the Act. The Committee will

recall that a little while ago I explained that one of the objectives of the Act was to ensure that Australians, wherever they live, had roughly equal access to the services that the community can provide out of community funds. The Northern Territory was giving \$80 per head to Aboriginal councils, whereas the Queensland Government wanted to give them something more like \$12 per head.

As if these technical difficulties were not enough, on Thursday, 10 September, at the local government conference on the Gold Coast the Premier weighed in with the suggestion that his Government should pull out forthwith of further consideration of recommendations made by Queensland's own Local Government Grants Commission. That commission is a statutory body—a quango of the Queensland Government with four State Government appointees on it. It performs a very useful function. It has discussions with local councils with a view to formulating the original principles. The National Party Premier wanted to pull out of these arrangements.

**Mr Hayward:** The lame-duck Premier.

**Mr WELLS:** Yes, the lame-duck Premier, the member for Barambah.

What happened in the instant case, however, was that the recommendations of the Local Government Association were tampered with by Treasury, which is one of the departments administered by the lame-duck Premier and Treasurer, the member for Barambah. The suggestion that the Government should pull out of the procedure provided by the Local Government Grants Commission is totally absurd. Honourable members opposite who dared to interject before do not dare to interject now because they know that is the case.

**Government members interjected.**

**Mr WELLS:** If I could hear one fool at a time, I could answer him.

Every State has a Local Government Grants Commission. In each case the members are appointed by the respective State Governments. The machinery of the Local Government Financial Assistance Act will not work without a State Local Government Grants Commission. The member for Barambah did not even understand this. His suggestion produced shock waves at the Local Government Association meeting at the Gold Coast and received no support from representatives of Queensland's local government.

Earlier today honourable members opposite who have been interjecting throughout my speech sat stony-faced when the lame-duck Premier stood in this Chamber and dithered his way through the answer to a question. They were not prepared to support him then, and they are not prepared to support him on this issue. As they want to interject during my speech, through you, Madam Chairman, I will ask them a question: would they support the Premier in his call to withdraw from the Grants Commission procedures?

**Government members interjected.**

**Mr WELLS:** Madam Chairman, not one of them said "Yes". Not even in an off-the-cuff remark by way of interjection was one of them prepared to support the Premier.

The Premier's position received no support from the Local Government Association meeting at the Gold Coast; it should receive no support from this Parliament, either.

Sitting suspended from 12.59 to 2.30 p.m.

**Mr COOPER (Roma) (2.30 p.m.):** I realise a former members' lunch is in progress in the Parliamentary Annexe, so I am pleased to see almost a full Chamber. I am sure that my usual betes noires on the Opposition side will be in the Chamber in pretty fair attendance.

**Mr Davis:** That's how popular you are.

**Mr COOPER:** That is right. I expected a very full Chamber. It is nice to see.

Although I am not a member of the Minister's parliamentary Bills committee, I am very pleased to take part in the debate on the Estimates for the three segments of his portfolio—local government, main roads and racing. They make a tremendous contribution to the Queensland economy, the State of Queensland and its people.

I commend the Minister for the manner in which he carries out his duties as the Minister responsible for such important areas of government. He is a most effective Minister and he is most certainly in complete control. I note that Mr Ken Mead, the Director of Local Government, Mr Erik Finger, the Main Roads Commissioner, and Mr Doug Morton, the Deputy Commissioner for Main Roads, are all in the lobby. I have had a lot to do with Doug Morton. He and I have worked extremely well together over the years, and I know that that will continue to be the case.

I know that the Local Government Department has a very close association with local authorities. I am a councillor myself on the Bendemere Shire Council in the Roma electorate. I have been a councillor on that council since 1976. I intend to resign as a councillor in 1988. I believe that 12 years as a councillor is enough. In addition, there are people in that area who are extremely capable who want to have a go. I commend the position to them. I have received more benefit from local government than I have been able to give it. Being a councillor is a tremendous experience. In that position one can contribute much to an area.

This Government has demonstrated that it is extremely close to local government. There are 134 local authorities in this State. Honourable members know that co-operation is certainly by degree. In some instances, one finds very good co-operation; in others, not such good co-operation. Nevertheless, it is a close relationship. I sincerely hope that that relationship will continue.

I am aware that problems have arisen in regard to the distribution of funds by the Federal Grants Commission. Local government has suffered losses under the Federal distribution scheme. This State lost about \$29m in 1987-88 in revenue distribution. When the Federal Government altered the distribution to the States from a fiscal equalisation basis to a per capita basis, Queensland lost a further \$23m. When the system of quarterly grants payments is introduced, local authorities will lose another \$4.5m. That is because they will lose interest on that money. That totals some \$57m.

I am fully aware that restraint is needed in all areas of government. State and Federal Governments are certainly exercising restraint. However, I question the wisdom of imposing the necessity for heavy restraint on local government, which has to provide essential services. Local government is responsible in large part for roads, water supply, health and so on. I do not think that such heavy cuts should be made. I would prefer to see the Federal Government examine some of its own grandiose schemes and make reductions to things that can be done without, at least in the short term. Local government is a continuing process. Many essential services have to be provided.

In contrast, the State Government has increased its level of subsidy to local government. This year, under the State's subsidy scheme, grants are up to \$57m. That has risen from \$30m in 1984-85, \$38m in 1985-86 and \$54m in 1986-87. That is a 91 per cent increase over the last few years.

I turn to how my own area was affected by the Grants Commission distribution. The Roma Town Council improved. The Bendemere Shire—my own shire—improved. I am still in a state of shock over that. Bauhinia Shire, Bungil Shire and Warroo Shire suffered losses. They actually suffered losses this year after their budgets were brought down. It is extremely difficult for shire councils to discover, after they have brought down their budgets, that they have received less than they received last year. I trust that that shortfall will be made up, and made up very rapidly.

I am very pleased that Roma Town Council and Bendemere Shire have received improved grants. What worries me is that some did not improve, or actually went backwards. They are placed in a very invidious position and I believe that the overall distribution method employed by the Federal Government was irresponsible and irrational.

It was done by academics in ivory towers down where many people become Canberra-ised. Some of our people also become Canberra-ised. I find that totally unacceptable. I am very concerned about those other shires. Somehow, in some way, their allocations have to be improved. Honourable members may be aware that the Federal Minister for Local Government, Mr Mick Young, actually wrote to this Government admitting that the Federal Government had made mistakes, asking the State Government to try to help.

I express my full confidence in the Local Government Grants Commission, which has a complete, intimate and very practical knowledge of Queensland local authorities. Charlie Palmer, Sir Albie Abbott and others have given their all to the Local Government Grants Commission, and their expertise should be retained.

Main Roads is a very important area, especially in my electorate. It has a large budget—over \$600m. As most people would know, a considerable amount of that comes from Federal Government refunding of State Government money—up to \$250m, in round figures. Approximately \$190m is received through car registration fees, and State Government allocations and loans make up the rest. Many people become concerned when their car registration fees are increased, but a consoling factor is that every cent paid in registration fees goes into funding for Queensland roads and everyone can feel more comfortable with that knowledge. What worries me is that sometimes when registration fees have not increased for three or four years, all of a sudden they are increased by 50 per cent. People find that hard to come to grips with, even though I know that the figures are averaged out. Perhaps there should be gradual, or steadier, increases rather than major increases every three or four years. This would allay people's fears. The same thing happens with rates in the local government area. When rates are increased, they are increased gradually each year according to the inflation rate or, hopefully, a little bit less. The local authorities do not wait for three or four years and then increase the rates by 30 per cent, because that is one good way of finding themselves out of office very smartly.

On the other side of the coin, the Federal Government has a fuel tax of approximately 60 per cent, 20 per cent of which is returned through road-funding. It is far too little. Fuel tax is not being put to the use originally intended; it is used as a revenue-gathering medium rather than to assist road-funding. That is too small a figure. Everyone knows that in a country the size of Australia—and in a State the size of Queensland—roads are vital. It is ridiculous and irresponsible to allow the condition of roads to deteriorate. It is sad to witness roads which have been well constructed being allowed to fall into disrepair. Queensland's performance has been exemplary. If one drives round Queensland and moves out of the south-east corner down here—where certainly a great deal is happening—into the west and north of Queensland, one will see a very good example of road construction and the very obvious presence of Main Roads work right across Queensland.

I have lived in New South Wales for a considerable period of time and, in the late 1950s or early 1960s I have seen the construction of roads when the road network was improved out of sight. At that time New South Wales was well in front of Queensland; but, if one returns there now, one notices that many of those roads have been completely neglected. That is very disappointing for New South Wales. Queensland must be on its guard that it never happens here. I am mindful of the fact that Queensland is a vast State, consisting of 1.7 million square kilometres. Queensland has 40 000 kilometres of declared roads and 120 000-odd kilometres of undeclared public roads handled by 134 local authorities. It is a major job to maintain roads and construct new ones. The Queensland Government knows that and has been able to come to grips with it. The department is operating as well as as it possibly can to make itself efficient and obtain value for the dollar. I commend the department for that and urge it to continue.

The Main Roads Department is a very lean department. It is putting everything it has into the construction and maintenance of roads. That must continue. This year has been a watershed for Main Roads. The secondary roads review was carried out. This is

virtually the completion of that. The five shires in my electorate have accepted the recommendations of the review. A couple of shires lodged objections. Those objections were dealt with very sensibly and with great sensitivity. I commend the department for its flexibility and co-operative attitude. It was possible to overcome any problems that arose. If all departments are amenable to that approach and listen to the objections and arguments of the people from those shires, we are a long way down the track. If the recommendations are acted upon and there is co-operation to every possible degree, which has occurred in this instance, further progress is achieved. In the initial stages I thought that we had a battle on our hands. However, that has not occurred. Thankfully, the review is over. The five shires in my electorate have accepted the review and will carry on from there.

As a result of the review, loan repayments will be pegged. Most of the loans by the State Government to the local authorities were for a period of 30 years. As a consequence of the lowering in the quantum of the repayments, the loans will gradually be repaid, and no further loans will be required under the Secondary Roads Review, which, of course, will eventually be of benefit to the shires. The Main Roads maintenance repayments will be removed after the 1986-87 operations have been finalised. This again will free local authorities of another burden. The Government has put back on local authorities the onus of making their own decisions about roads, their levels of expenditure and where they will spend their money. As a shire councillor, I welcome the responsibility for that. The people involved in local government are certainly close to the people and understand their problems and needs just that much better.

The Bauhinia Shire, which is based at Springsure, is in the central division of my electorate. I acknowledge the work done by Paul O'Keeffe, who is the assistant commissioner in Rockhampton, and Lyall Ford, the district engineer in Emerald. I have had very close co-operation with those two gentlemen, particularly Lyall Ford. I understand that he has an extremely difficult task, as do my other district engineers. Everyone approaches them for more money for more roads and other projects. All members do that. It is the responsibility of members to do that, and they must do it responsibly and not become greedy and ask for too much. I know that the engineers bent over backwards to try to accommodate our needs. They are not fools. They can see whether or not there is a need for something or whether a person is trying to get something extra on the side. The engineers have been very responsive. The roads in the Bauhinia Shire have improved out of sight, particularly following the election of Ken Tomkins, the former member for Roma. With the very close co-operation and assistance of the Minister, he worked on the roads in the area. There was a desperate need to improve those roads and, as I have said, they have improved out of sight. It is a pleasure to drive through that shire. The Bauhinia Shire is fully aware of that and cognisant of the fact that tremendous co-operation and assistance has been forthcoming from the Queensland Government.

**Mr Prest:** They don't see you out there.

**Mr COOPER:** Like hell they don't! It is a second home to me. I would far rather be there than standing here looking at a fellow like the honourable member. I can assure him of that.

**Mr Prest:** I'll tell you what—you don't turn me on, either.

**Mr COOPER:** I would sincerely hope that I don't. The honourable member has been referred to before as Rock Hudson—or should I say the late Rock Hudson—and I have no desire to get any closer to the honourable member than that. Let us keep the gap nice and wide. That suits me fine.

As I said, the Bauhinia Shire councillors are extremely mindful of the co-operation and assistance that they have received from the Minister and from the Government. One has only to live in those areas to understand the importance of roads. They are absolutely vital. I am happy to say that there has been a vast improvement in the roads. Naturally, I want to see those improvements continue. We are working on a few areas and we are getting there. The Carnarvon Development Road extends from Roma to Rolleston for a distance of 270 kilometres. The length of dirt road has been reduced to

60 kilometres. A special \$2m scheme is in train. That will be embarked on this year. Another scheme is being implemented on the Moolayember dip section at this moment. That will markedly improve that road. It is not necessarily a case of what rate-payers will be served; it is a matter of importance of that road to the State. It is vitally important to the State in relation to tourism and cattle movement. It also provides a link across the Great Dividing Range between Roma, Springsure and the central west of Queensland. The shire council, in its wisdom and judgment, decided to change its priorities to the Emerald-Springsure road. I fully understand that that has to be done. Problems are also associated with the Rolleston-Moura road on the Dawson Highway, which the shire council wants to make a priority. Shire councils must make decisions and designate which roads are most important. In this case the shire council has chosen the Emerald-Springsure road.

I commend the Main Roads Department for undertaking work on the Dawson Highway to the east of Rolleston, which was in a pretty bad state because it was narrow and had shocking edges. The department moved quickly in that regard, and \$300,000 was spent on repairing the edges of that road. I am mindful of the fact that a major road such as that has to undergo reconstruction and widening, which will make it far safer; and that is the name of the game. The Main Roads Department has taken that project on board. I have had discussions with the Minister and the commissioner, and they are going to move as quickly as they possibly can on that issue.

There has certainly been progress on the Springsure-Tambo road. That road is no longer within my electorate; it is now in the electorate of the honourable member for Warrego. However, I will continue to support the honourable member and the shire council in relation to the necessary improvements on that road.

The Bauhinia Shire Council takes an extremely close interest in the towns of Springsure and Rolleston. The people of those towns and the council are to be commended. The work that has been carried out there is A1. The showgrounds are magnificent. It is always a great pleasure to visit towns such as those and to talk to people who have such a very close interest in their district.

The south-west region covers another section of my electorate, namely, the Roma district. Based in Toowoomba is the assistant commissioner, Bill Darmody, with whom I have had a lot of experience. The district engineer in Roma is Mr Don Stone. I make particular mention of Ian Fletcher, who was a plant-inspector with the Main Roads Department in Roma. He had a lot to do with trialling and experimenting with fuel filters in machines. That has been very successful and, as the years go by, it will no doubt lead to economies in plant and machinery. I commend Ian for that. He is certainly very conscientious, genuine and sincere. It is good to know that people such as him exist in the department. They very rarely get a mention, and I think it is appropriate to mention them now.

The shires in that region include Bungil, Bendermere, Warroo and Roma town. I have been closely associated with people in all of those areas. I am aware of their problems.

The Warrego Highway is obviously of extreme importance to this State. In the past problems were experienced on that highway to the west of Roma out to towns such as Amby, Muckadilla and Mitchell. The Main Roads Department undertook a road-widening program in that area. It is now an absolute joy to drive over that stretch of road. Not only is it much safer, but also heavy trucks do not run the risk of running off the sides of the road. That program was undertaken very rapidly by the Main Roads Department, which realised that a problem existed. In the past I received endless, bitter complaints. People are now telling me how pleased they are with that road. By practical example and workmanship such as that, results are achieved and not just spoken about.

**Mr Ardill** interjected.

**Mr COOPER:** The honourable member does not say much in this Chamber. Quite frankly, it is pointless for him to say any more.



As far as secondary roads are concerned—there was a problem in the Bungil Shire with the southern road. The Main Roads Department has remedied that situation by retaining it instead of returning it to the shire under the Secondary Roads Review. For the past 15 or 16 years the Bungil Shire Council was involved in the Carnarvon Development Road between Roma, Injune and Rolleston. The shire council has withdrawn from that program during the last 12 months. It has done its bit, and it is always a pleasure to drive over that road.

Time expired.

**Mr BRADDY (Rockhampton) (2.50 p.m.):** I read the speech of the Honourable the Minister when he presented his Estimates. In fact, I read it with some sense of nostalgia, because at the beginning of his speech he referred to the record term that he has set as Minister in charge of this portfolio. No doubt he should be congratulated on achieving that record.

**Mr Prest:** He went through a few trying times during that period.

**Mr BRADDY:** Indeed, I do congratulate him. I join in those congratulations with more enthusiasm than I otherwise would have, because, with the trying times that are now confronting members on the Government benches, the chances of his extending that record for another 12 months are somewhat unlikely. Indeed, I predict that in 12 months the Honourable the Minister will be in this Chamber in a different capacity—he may even be elevated. Nevertheless, I predict that, if we have the opportunity of debating the Local Government and Main Roads Estimates in 12 months' time, he will not be in the position in which he sits today.

**Mr Hinze:** My SP adviser tells me that the price has rather lengthened this afternoon.

**Mr BRADDY:** I do not have the ability to run a book as to what position the Minister will be occupying, but I predict that it will not be the same as it is today.

I regret that, during his term of office, the Minister neglected to take an opportunity to substantially reform the organisation of local government in Queensland. The last great reform in Queensland was carried out 50 years ago by a Labor Government. During his term of office, the Minister has steadfastly said that he will not carry out reform of any substance unless he is requested to do so by the local authorities of this State.

It is an open fact that the National Party of Queensland so dominates local government under its current inequitable and unfair system that no request for reform of local government is likely to come from a substantial body of local authorities in this State. Indeed, the situation has been that the Minister, who is an able administrator, has bowed to the wishes of people who have allowed local government to meander on under an unfair system.

**Mr Simpson:** What is unfair about it?

**Mr BRADDY:** One of the Government back-benchers said, "What is unfair about it?" If honourable members examine the figures for the numbers of people who elect the various councillors and aldermen, they will see a gerrymander that puts even the State Government gerrymander to shame. If honourable members examine the figures for the local authorities in Queensland, they will see a great disparity between the number of people who elect councillors and aldermen in the towns and cities in this State and the number who elect councillors in the shires. In the Longreach Shire or in the Fitzroy Shire, the numbers of councillors who are elected from the country areas far outweigh those who are elected from the urban areas. This terrible gerrymander—this injustice—has been allowed to continue under the Minister. It is a shame that, after all his years in the portfolio, he has proved either incapable or unwilling to give a just electoral system to the people who elect the councillors and the aldermen in the local authorities in Queensland.

It is with great pleasure that I note that the shadow Minister for Local Government has moved in this place to appoint a select committee to inquire into, report upon and

make recommendations in relation to local government in Queensland. The gerrymander of the electoral system, both internally within the shires and in relation to their external boundaries, has now become an open scandal in this State. It is certainly a matter that the Labor Party will continue to address at every opportunity. The gerrymander is made worse, however, by involvement of the Minister in local government matters that he should keep away from. I refer particularly to the plethora of ministerial rezonings that have occurred under the Minister.

It is therefore no wonder that the Opposition spokesman on local government, in particularising the matters that he suggests the local government inquiry should look into, first mentions the matter of assisting or promoting small-business development. Indeed, he has received some support for that suggestion in advance from a colleague of the Minister for Local Government, namely, the Minister for Small Business, Mr Lester. The Minister for Small Business went on record in the media in Queensland as saying that he was stunned when he visited shopping centres in the Gold Coast/Brisbane region and found not only a sad lack of customers in the shopping centres, which had proliferated, but also too many vacant stores.

The Minister for Local Government and Government Ministers in the Cabinet who back him must take the blame for that situation. They have continually intervened and overridden local government to enable shopping centres to proliferate, to the extent that small-business people have been unable to make a go of their businesses and many parts of Queensland, particularly around Brisbane and the Gold Coast, are overshadowed.

As I have said, that is not only my summation of the situation—and I notice that Government members have gone quiet now—but also the summation of Mr Lester, the Minister for Small Business. What did the Government do in relation to Mr Lester's summation? At the Kingaroy Cabinet meeting this year, Mr Lester put a resolution to Cabinet to the effect that a committee be constituted to look into this matter and to remedy this deplorable situation. What has happened now, in October of the same year? Mr Lester has been put smartly back in the place to which the Premier has consigned him. The Premier has said, "Indeed there will be no inquiry to look into these matters, and that is the end of it." Despite the fact that Mr Lester is the Minister for Small Business and that he had managed to convince Cabinet in February, everyone knows that by October the examination of the situation is not on.

The small-business people of Queensland cannot look to the National Party Government—and certainly not to the Minister for Local Government—to give them support in their fight to sustain viable small businesses in their areas. They have been deserted by the National Party. It appears that they never had obtained the support of the Minister for Local Government.

I can assure the Minister for Local Government and members of the National Party who are present in the Chamber that, as the shadow Minister for Small Business, I continually receive complaints from small-business people who have been harmed by the National Party Government's policies of allowing the proliferation of shopping centres and the extension of trading hours. In Queensland, small-business people are turning away from the National Party in droves. Make no mistakes about that.

If members opposite would care to look at some of the mail that I receive, and if they were prepared to open their eyes and acknowledge the truth of their desertion of the small-business people of Queensland, they might become better lobbyists for their constituents.

It is not just a matter of the Government's having good policies on electoral justice in local government; it is also a matter of the Government's setting up proper policies in relation to zonings and allowing councils to get on with the job of proper development in their regions. Until this Government keeps its fingers out of the ministerial rezoning pie that it is continually dipping into, there will continue to be the same sadness and disaster that has been occurring in Queensland in the past 10 years.

As shadow Minister for Community Services, I also have occasion to mark this debate by referring to something that has occurred for the first time in this State. For the first time, the majority of Aboriginal and Islander councils are coming into the mainstream of local government. With legislation that has been passed by this House has come a complementary situation whereby the Aboriginal councils have sought membership of the Local Government Association. Indeed, it was not to the credit of the Local Government Association that it initially resisted the admission of the Aboriginal councils by using all sorts of guises and excuses to back away from it. However, in the long run the Local Government Association has accepted the inevitable. That was due partly, of course, to the standing of those councils and the support that they received from the Federal Government. The Federal Local Government Minister insisted that, as the Aboriginal councils were now local authorities constituted by the community services legislation, they were entitled to receive local government grants along with the councils constituted by the Local Government Act. Indeed, adequate grants were received.

Some people in the Local Government Association, to their discredit, objected to the Aboriginal councils receiving those grants. However, that battle has been fought and won by the Aboriginal councils. Indeed, it would not have been won if it had not been for the officers of the Federal Local Government Department, which is administered by Senator Margaret Reynolds, who deserves the congratulations of the people of Queensland for her determination to assist the Aboriginal councils. I regret to say that such determination has not been evidenced to anything like the same extent by the National Party Government of Queensland.

On this particular occasion it is important to note also an important milestone in the history of the Rockhampton City Council. Recently the council opened its new mall in the central business district. It is an excellent mall, which has already revitalised the business being conducted in the city. It is an example of what local authorities can do if they themselves are allowed to properly plan and prepare for the conduct of business in their areas. It stands in marked contrast to what can occur, and has occurred, in the Gold Coast and other regions where ministerial rezonings have occurred over the wishes of the local authority of the region. Therefore, as the member for the area in which the new mall is situated, I congratulate the Rockhampton City Council on its foresight in planning and on the ability with which it has planned the new mall so that Rockhampton's central business district is able now to sustain a level of business which previously had been drifting away to its suburbs. I commend the mall to all members of this Chamber and suggest that, if they are travelling in that area, it would pay them to make a visit to it. The Rockhampton city inner mall is probably one of the best examples in Australia of a central business district mall.

**Mr Milliner:** You are an educated man; is it pronounced "mawl" or "mal"?

**Mr BRADY:** The mall, which was established by the Labor council in Rockhampton, is able to conduct business in such a way that the long-standing argument about whether the word is pronounced "mawl" or "mal" no longer matters. People in Rockhampton are delighted to have an up-to-date area in which it is a pleasure to shop.

**Mr Davis:** You know that in Townsville, Brisbane and Rockhampton, the malls were all constructed under Labor councils.

**Mr BRADY:** Yes. There has been a history of successful council administration in Townsville and Rockhampton and at about the same time other provincial cities were taken over by Labor-dominated councils. I can remember that the previous council in Rockhampton, which was led by Mayor Pilbeam, resisted violently and refused to initiate the planning for a mall in Rockhampton. It was only after the non-Labor forces fell and no longer controlled the council in Rockhampton that planning was able to commence for the revitalisation of the central business district. In the space of a few weeks, the courage and planning of the Labor council have been vindicated. In that time the level of business has grown astronomically. All those people who supported

the conservative forces in Rockhampton have been made to eat their words, and they have not done so with much zest.

It is a fact that Labor councils in the provincial cities of Queensland have been able to revitalise their cities by proper planning and by proper consultation. It is therefore a great pity that at this time the same does not apply to the Local Government Department and in local government planning in this State. Although the Minister has initiated a suggestion that there be a reform of the Local Government Act, that clearly is inadequate. What is required in Queensland is a total reform of local government development and organisation.

**Mr McElligott:** A State Labor Government would do that.

**Mr BRADY:** A State Labor Government would move immediately to reform local government. The last great reform occurred under a Labor Government. It would appear that there is no opportunity for such a reform to occur again, despite the crying need, until there is a Labor Government in this State.

**Mr FRASER (Springwood) (3.08 p.m.):** Mr Temporary Chairman——

**Mr Braddy:** I don't think Joh will be cheering this speech.

**Mr FRASER:** You don't think so?

**Mr Braddy:** No.

**Mr FRASER:** The honourable member for Rockhampton and I went to the same school.

I rise this afternoon to support the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing in the presentation of his Estimates. At this point I wish to state that I believe that, after more than three terms of responsibility for the Local Government portfolio in Queensland, the Honourable the Minister is one of the most efficient in this portfolio in Australia. I say that without fear or favour.

**Mr Davis:** He told you to say it.

**Mr FRASER:** I don't think he did.

I also thank, and recognise the sterling service given to the State by, the heads of the Minister's departments. I notice that Mr Ken Mead and Mr Erik Finger are here this afternoon to take notes and to help the Minister in the conduct of this debate. I might add that my first recognition of the ability of the Minister for Main Roads occurred when I was a member of a western shire in Queensland for a large number of years. With other members of the Paroo Shire, I met with the Minister to lobby him for \$1m to compensate for damage being done in the Paroo Shire during the construction of the Jackson to Moonie pipeline. We met the Honourable the Minister. He asked, "What do you need, boys?" We said, "It will cost roughly \$1m." The Minister said, "You've got it." When we looked around, Mr Finger had fainted. However, to his credit, the money was found and the repairs to the roads in the Paroo Shire were carried out.

That demonstrates the ability of the Minister. He has the ability to assess a situation, make a snap decision and then instruct his staff to carry it out. The Minister's staff then carry out his instructions to the letter.

The member for Rockhampton raised the very valid point of ministerial rezonings. My colleague the member for Rockhampton and I went to the same college. However, I do not think that he has ever been involved in local government. The honourable member may well be a solicitor but he does not know much about ministerial rezonings. I will take him up on that point.

I am presently the Deputy Mayor of the third-largest city in Queensland. I state quite clearly that the best town-planner in Queensland is a developer because he will build a development where it will work, not where some town-planner or bureaucrat

says, "It would be very aesthetically pleasing to have that development there." That is why we have ministerial rezonings. The reason why this Minister is such a great performer is that he will consider a problem. He is prepared to stick his neck out, go over a council's head and implement a ministerial rezoning if he believes that is necessary. That is the answer to the bleating of the member for Rockhampton.

**Mr McElligott:** You should be ashamed of yourself.

**Mr FRASER:** I am not ashamed; I am very proud——

**Mr McElligott:** You should be standing up for local authorities.

**Mr FRASER:** I am a member of a local authority, and I have been a member of a local authority longer than has the member for Thuringowa.

**Mr Beanland** interjected.

**Mr FRASER:** I state here and now that if the people in division 6 of Logan City want me to stand, I will stand. I am not afraid to stand while I am a National Party member of the State Government. I will win the constituency, too.

**Mr Milliner:** Are you an independent councillor?

**Mr FRASER:** I am an independent councillor. I make no apology for that. I will tell the honourable member something else: two of the councillors are Labor aldermen and I vote in favour of their motions and they vote in favour of mine. The honourable member can put that in his pipe and smoke it.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr FRASER:** Do Opposition members want me to name them? I will name them. Their names are Russell Lutton and Steven Ayling.

**An honourable member** interjected.

**Mr FRASER:** Of course members of the Opposition do not want them to be named.

The only reason why those blokes survive in the Logan City Council is that the councillors support each other. I have nothing against Labor aldermen who adopt a reasonable approach. However, when Labor wants to dominate a council, it will not work because Labor does not have the experience to make it work.

**Mr Braddy:** It works in Rockhampton and Townsville.

**Mr FRASER:** The Mayor of Townsville is one of the highest-paid people in Queensland for the job that he does.

**Mr Davis:** What's his salary?

**Mr FRASER:** I would not be able to give the exact figure.

**Mr Milliner:** You shift your argument around a bit.

**Mr FRASER:** Members of the Opposition want to argue. I know what members of local government get paid. They get paid more than any member of this Parliament; let there be no mistake about that.

**Mr McElligott:** Does that include you?

**Mr FRASER:** It cost me money to become a member of this Parliament. "Digger" has got a smile on his face because if his wife ever becomes Lord Mayor of Brisbane, he will be on the gravy train.

**Mr Beanland:** We know what hope that is.

**Mr FRASER:** There is no hope of that.

I think I had better return to debating the Estimates. I simply say that the boys on the Opposition side will never beat me, because I have been in local government longer than any member who is present in this Chamber, except perhaps Mr Beanland. He might have been around as long as I have. I respect that.

Logan City is the third-largest city in Queensland and it is one of the fastest-growing areas of this State. It has a growth rate in some suburbs in excess of 20 per cent. I challenge any member of the Opposition who is present in the Chamber—I cannot see Mr Goss—to state that his electorate has a higher rate of growth than that.

**Mr Davis:** Under the Liberal council, we've gone backwards.

**Mr FRASER:** I point out for the information of the Labor Whip that Logan City has an independent council.

I will outline the sums of money that are proposed to be spent in 1987-88 according to the Minister's Estimates, in my council area and partly in my electorate. Roughly \$2.4m is to be spent on the Chatswood Road interchange, which includes an underpass and roundabout system that are badly needed within that area. A contribution of \$0.5m has been made by the Main Roads Department to the Moss Street drainage project. The asphalt overlay of Bryants Road, which has been taken over from the Logan City Council by the Main Roads Department, will receive the sum of \$0.5m for expenditure next year. The total of these projects is \$3.4m. Improvements are to be made on the Mount Lindesay Highway at the Vansittart Road intersection to an amount of \$0.6m. In the Springwood area in my electorate a contribution is to be made to the Queensland Railways project of \$0.9m. There is continuous upgrading of the Kingston-Beenleigh Road in Logan City to four lanes which, in the ensuing year, will receive a contribution from this department of \$1.7m. In the Beenleigh/Redland Bay area in my electorate there is continuous upgrading of roads to four lanes which will receive a contribution from the Main Roads Department of \$0.5m.

In addition, the Minister has made a far-reaching decision for Queensland by continuing with the toll system established on the Gateway Bridge through the construction and operation of the Logan Motorway. For those members in this Chamber who do not realise the extent of the spread of Logan City, it has an east-west geographical spread rather than a north-south spread. Presently there is no all-embracing connecting road in Logan City. The Minister referred to the calling of tenders for the construction of the Logan Motorway and four of them have been accepted at a total of \$41m. The Logan Motorway will be the first fully integrated toll road in Queensland.

**Mr Davis:** I tell you what—haven't we gone backwards to pay to use the roads?

**Mr FRASER:** We do not have to pay to use the roads, because these roads——

**Mr Beanland:** The Labor Party rips us off on the fuel excise.

**Mr FRASER:** The honourable member for Toowong is quite correct. The reason why Queensland now has toll roads is that the Federal Government in Canberra is ripping this State off.

**Mr Davis** interjected.

**Mr FRASER:** You cannot argue, because a great edifice has been built in Canberra costing in excess of \$1 billion and Hawke will have an office that is bigger than this Chamber. I wonder what he wants that for?

**Mr Littleproud** interjected.

**Mr FRASER:** The honourable member for Condamine is right.

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr Campbell):** Order! All comments must be addressed through the Chair.

**Mr FRASER:** I am being annoyed by some of your colleagues, Mr Temporary Chairman.

**Mr Milliner:** Do you know why Mr Hawke needs a big office? He needs it for big heads like you.

**Mr FRASER:** I do not believe that my head is as big as the honourable member for Everton's head. Everyone can see more of his because it has no hair on it.

The Logan Motorway is a first for Queensland. Already four tenders have been let totalling \$41m. They, together with other contracts on the motorway, bring the total cost of the motorway to \$70m. It is proposed that the motorway will be completed by December 1988. Last Thursday I visited the area with the Honourable the Minister when he conducted the official sod-turning ceremony. I mention to honourable members on the other side of the Chamber that when the Minister dug the shovel into the dirt—and it was a pretty rough old bit of dirt as one would expect in the electorate of Logan, which is held by the Labor Party—the Minister looked around and said, "Where's Gossie?" He was going to throw the first silver shovelful of dirt at the honourable member for Logan.

The proposed fee for driving along the 31-kilometre-long Logan Motorway is \$1.50. This fee is reasonable. The total length of the motorway and the highway will be 100 kilometres. The motorway will have three toll booths.

**Mr Davis:** It's extortion with a capital "E".

**Mr FRASER:** It is not extortion. Where can the honourable member drive for a distance of 31 kilometres for \$1.50?

**Mr Davis:** On the freeway.

**Mr FRASER:** The only reason the freeway is working is so that people are able to get out of the electorate of the honourable member for Brisbane Central; otherwise they would never get out. The member for Brisbane Central has mentioned that motorists can use the South East Freeway without paying a toll. I agree with that statement. But where can a person drive for \$1.50, when the cost of operating an average motor car today is 20c for every minute that the motor is turned on? The Logan Motorway will extend for a distance of 31 kilometres. People from Ipswich, Cunningham's Gap or western Queensland will be able to travel to the Gold Coast and save at least 30 minutes' travelling time. It must be borne in mind that the average motor car costs 20c a minute to operate. There is no law that provides that a person must drive on the Logan Motorway. It will still be possible for him to travel along Ipswich Road and the South East Freeway, on which, as the member for Brisbane Central said, there is no toll. I put to bed the honourable member's argument that the driver will have to pay a fee. A driver will only pay voluntarily.

**Mr Davis:** At the same time you forgot to tell the Chamber we've got the highest registration fees in Australia.

**Mr FRASER:** I do not believe that the member for Brisbane Central has quoted the correct figure. He is referring to registration fees; I am using the total figure, including third-party insurance. The registration fees are not the highest in Australia, as he would well know.

**Mr Davis:** I said "registration".

**Mr FRASER:** I referred to the total fee paid to the Main Roads Department.

**Mr Davis:** Whose question is it?

**Mr Littleproud:** Whose speech is it?

**Mr FRASER:** I think that it is my speech. The member for Brisbane Central has been beaten. If I were him, I would just keep quiet.

I return to the Minister's responsibility in relation to local government. Already I have mentioned that, in Queensland, Logan City is the growth centre of the eighties. Between January and August 1987, 1 964 building applications were received in Logan City, with a total value of \$67.2m. That figure includes only \$1.95m for incidentals. By "incidentals" I mean pools, pergolas, garages and that type of addition. That gives honourable members some indication of the size of the building activity in Logan City.

**Mr Davis:** What is the average delay in approval?

**Mr FRASER:** I am glad that the member for Brisbane Central asked that question. When the very independent council took over in 1985, the average delay was six weeks. When it was a hung council, with half Labor and half Independents, the delay was six weeks. Now the council is commonly called a National Party council because the deputy mayor is the member for Springwood. The time taken to obtain approval for a home is three weeks. The time taken to approve an application for a major building is five or six weeks.

**Mr Davis:** Ten weeks in the Brisbane City Council.

**Mr FRASER:** I cannot be responsible for the inefficiencies of the Brisbane City Council when it has a Liberal administration, with all due respects to Mr Beanland.

**Mr Beanland:** Six months under Labor; four weeks under the Liberals.

**Mr FRASER:** The member for Brisbane Central asked a loaded question. Mr Beanland has condemned the former Labor administration, saying that the time taken to approve a building application was 6 to 10 months. I can assure Mr Davis that the Logan City Council will process an application in three to four weeks. If it is a major building, it will be approved in six weeks. The Logan City Council has what is called fast-track movement within the council. Without any extra charge, if it is a major project in the city, we will make sure that the application goes through.

**Mr McElligott:** Do you know the definition of "fast track"?

**Mr FRASER:** The meaning of "fast track" is that if the honourable member approached me as a member of the council's town-planning committee and said, "I have a project here worth \$6m. It is costing me a lot of money. How long will it take me to get it through?", I would immediately ring the town-planner, the building section and the health section and say, "Look, give this priority and run it through the system as fast as you can." That is what we mean by "fast track". There is no backhanding or any other type of mechanism. We are out to help developers and to save them money. If they are saved money, that means that the development will be cheaper and that the eventual rents will be cheaper to the businessmen who rent that building.

I commend the Minister's Estimates to the Committee.

**Mr SCHUNTNER (Mount Coot-tha) (3.25 p.m.):** I would like to speak for a few minutes about the development of a particular road that comes under the administration of the Main Roads Department. That road is called Route 20 or, in Main Roads Department terminology, the western arterial road.

In 1983, responsibility for the development of that road moved from the Brisbane City Council to the Main Roads Department. The part of that road that is of particular interest to me is that portion—as one travels northwards—from Birdwood Terrace, along Rouen Road, Kaye Street, MacGregor Terrace and Jubilee Terrace as far as the J. A. Turner Bridge over Ithaca Creek.

In March or April of this year, I asked a question of the Minister regarding the development of that road. Part of his answer was that the Government intended to develop Route 20 into a four-lane divided facility.

During the following two or three months, concern amongst local residents increased quite dramatically as they realised what was in store for them with the development of



a so-called four-lane divided facility. As a result of the mounting public concern, I convened several public meetings.

**Mr Comben:** You weren't at the first public meeting. I was there; you weren't in sight.

**Mr SCHUNTNER:** As the honourable member is well aware, that was not a public meeting that I convened.

Public meetings were convened by another group that related to the development of land in the foothills, and some people mentioned Route 20 at those meetings. The honourable member needs to know more about what he is talking about and should think a little more about his own electorate.

I convened three public meetings. Because those meetings were attended by such large numbers of people, it was impossible to hold them all at the one time. In all, some 500 or 600 people attended those meetings.

The purposes of those meetings, which were held on 5, 6 and 10 August, were to inform residents of developments that were planned for that road and to ascertain the views of the residents in relation to those proposed developments.

In preparation for those meetings, I letter-boxed approximately 1 300 residents living in the corridor along Route 20 from the Birdwood Terrace intersection through to the J. A. Turner Bridge.

**Mr Innes:** A tremendous effort.

**Mr SCHUNTNER:** That tremendous effort resulted in some very well-attended meetings.

**Mr Innes:** I don't think the Ministers are listening to you. They seem to be at some crossroads deciding which way to go.

**Mr SCHUNTNER:** This matter is of enormous importance, and it would be appreciated by the residents of Mount Coot-tha if the Minister followed what I am putting forward on their behalf.

Overwhelming opposition was expressed at those meetings on a number of grounds. People felt that the development of a western arterial road would be very disruptive. They could see that it was not going to be used merely by local traffic; that it was going to attract a great deal more traffic to the area; and with more traffic comes more noise, more air pollution and a whole lot of other problems. People at those meetings also expressed their concerns on financial grounds. Suddenly, the value of properties close to Route 20 has dropped quite dramatically. They were concerned also on environmental grounds. Social disruption of the community was also foreshadowed. There are several schools within a very short distance of Route 20. People were also worrying about the safety factors involved in the development of a major arterial road through that area.

**Mr Davis:** You would obviously be against the Petrie Terrace problem, too, wouldn't you?

**Mr SCHUNTNER:** I am very concerned about my electorate. The honourable member should worry about his own electorate and he will be all right.

Regardless of how one looks at the development of roads through the Bardon area, it is totally inappropriate for a major arterial road to be built in that area. As a result of the meetings to which I have referred, on 27 August I led a delegation to the Main Roads Minister. At that meeting, those expressions of concern were conveyed forcefully to the Minister. He indicated that if the local residents could devise solutions to the traffic problems that were superior to what had been put forward already, and the Main Roads Department could be convinced of that, he would certainly listen to, and take notice of the alternative set of solutions that might be developed.

After the meeting with the Minister on 27 August, I convened another public meeting on 3 September. The purpose of the meeting was to inform the residents of the outcome of the delegation that met the Minister and to plan future action in relation to the community's concerns over the proposed development of Route 20. A committee was formed to co-ordinate local action on the problem. That committee has met many times since its creation at that public meeting on 3 September.

At this point, I emphasise the very significant stress that I place on safety. There is need for some work to be done on some portions of Route 20 to overcome pressing safety problems. The people in Rouen Road are very concerned about the nature of that part of the route. I am well aware of accidents that occur frequently in that section of Route 20. Similarly, the infamous Kaye Street, that adjoins the rear portion of the Government House grounds, makes the newspapers far too often because of the accidents that occur frequently on that very steep grade.

I am very well aware, as many others are, of the dangers associated with the pedestrian crossing in MacGregor Terrace. Action needs to be taken to improve safety for pedestrians and, indeed, for motorists in that part of MacGregor Terrace.

**Mr Comben:** Aren't they going to put in a tunnel in Kaye Street?

**Mr SCHUNTNER:** That interjection shows just how ill-informed the honourable member is.

**Mr Comben:** I am asking you, that's all.

**Mr SCHUNTNER:** I thought that the honourable member was supposed to be well informed from having attended whatever meeting he went to. The answer is that at this stage there is no firm plan of which the Main Roads Department can advise the local residents regarding the development of MacGregor Terrace, Kaye Street and part of Jubilee Terrace.

**Mr Comben:** So you can still get knocked over?

**Mr SCHUNTNER:** I have been told that a range of options is being considered currently.

Having stressed the safety angle, which I believe is extremely important, I make it clear that there is no need to develop Route 20 into a major arterial road along the lines proposed by the Main Roads Department at this stage. The objectives of upgrading that road for safety purposes and for meeting the needs of local traffic could, it is felt by local residents—and I share, appreciate and support their view—be met without the degree of upgrading to a four-lane facility that is proposed currently.

The public meeting gave the newly established committee a set of objectives to work towards. I will read those three objectives. The committee is working towards a resolution for overcoming the traffic problems in that area through—

- “1. Negotiating a controlled upgrading of any proposed or existing Route 20 road system with minimum disruption to the community by ensuring that only proven traffic demands for local traffic use are satisfied.
2. Ensuring that Objective 1 is achieved without the area becoming a major through route for non local and/or heavy traffic by analysing data and negotiating alternative solutions with relevant authorities.
3. Achieving Objectives 1 and 2 through general community and specialised professional commitment by maintaining a co-operative approach with authorities.”

It is apparent from those objectives that the local community is adopting a very responsible and very positive approach to the solution of what is obviously a difficult problem. However, I stress that the plans that are adopted by the Main Roads Department are unacceptable to the people of the Bardonia area.

I exhort the Minister and his department to proceed on the basis of overcoming the safety problems that are evident in some parts of the road and to ensure that whatever development occurs is in line with what local residents would wish to happen.

**Hon. R. J. HINZE** (South Coast—Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing) (3.37 p.m.): I thank all honourable members who made a contribution to this debate. That such wide-ranging discussion has occurred emphasises the scope of the activities included in my portfolio.

The honourable member for Manly made a number of points that I would like to address. On the matter of local authority boundaries—which the honourable member believes should be reviewed—I make the point that it is Government policy that these boundaries should not be altered without the consent of all councils that would be affected. It is certainly not true to assert, as the honourable member did, that there have not been any major changes for 60 years. There have been significant changes and, of course, I instance the Gold Coast area, the City of Logan, the Darling Downs, Hervey Bay-Maryborough, and Pioneer and Mackay.

I cannot accept that a 25 per cent rates-saving benefit would result from any amalgamation between the Gold Coast City Council and the Albert Shire Council. This figure is too suspiciously rounded off, and I would be interested to see what evidence is available to justify this assertion.

I believe that at the beginning of this debate I covered the matter of what has been termed “ministerial rezonings”. None of the criticism that I have heard during the debate has persuaded me to change my mind. Of course, it is very easy to identify a small handful of these rezonings, which have not been totally agreeable for the council affected, and then draw completely misleading conclusions about the number and scope of these rezonings Statewide. I accept as a fact of life that, for political reasons, there will be criticism of these rezonings: but when I believe that they are warranted and are in the best interests of Queensland, I will not be deterred from implementing those procedures.

There have been allegations during the debate that Queensland’s motor vehicle registration fees are the highest in Australia. This particular piece of inaccuracy has almost passed into popular folklore. For the benefit of honourable members opposite, I point out, for example, that a Ford Laser sedan, which costs a total of \$278.10 to put on the road in Brisbane costs \$320 in Canberra, and \$292.50 for a private car and \$346 for a business car in Sydney. Additionally, motorists in all other States contribute to their Treasury coffers by way of a State fuel tax of around three to four cents per litre of petrol.

The honourable member for Toowong made a sadly predictable speech on the subject of ministerial rezonings. I reject utterly his term “interference” as the description of the exercise of a proper and legitimate power. The Government has had and always has had the right and the power to play a role in land rezonings, and the use of the word “interference” is nothing less than emotive nonsense. Surely the honourable member for Toowong could have done better than resort to a tired old cliché.

Symptomatic of the misrepresentations made by the honourable member for Toowong were his allegations about the Taylor Point rezoning. The member should be aware that this particular land is freehold, it is not subject to a trust, and has been the subject of an application for development for the Mulgrave Shire for at least three years. Research will show that extensive litigation plagued this project and there seemed to be no resolution in sight. Town-planning is involved with the suitability of land for development of certain types, and that is a typical example of where the need for legislation to enable the Government to intervene is entirely justified.

I am surprised at criticism levelled at this particular action, as I thought, until now, that the Liberal Party was pro-development. That does not seem to be the case. Some comment was made about the use of ministerial rezonings to avoid the need to comply with town-planning requirements and standards. The honourable member was obviously not listening to my speech, in which I said that agreement with the local authority

concerning conditions is always attained before approval is recommended to the Governor in Council.

For the information of honourable members, I point out that the Logan Motorway Company Limited has an authorised capital of \$10m. Issued shares are held by Mr Geoff Fraser, the chairman; Mr John Andrews and Mr Jack Woods, who are directors; Mr Steve Lonie, who is secretary, and Mr Brian McCafferty, who is the company's solicitor. There will soon be issued four parcels of shares—one parcel each to Thiess Watkins, John Holland Constructions, Thiess Contractors and White Industries, who were the successful tenderers for construction of the project. Each parcel will consist of 2 000 shares.

The Logan Motorway Company is a non-listed public company that was incorporated this year. Its assets are works in progress for the Logan Motorway. Its liabilities are capitalised debt of approximately \$8m today. Company returns are sent to the Corporate Affairs Office and disclose the financial situation of the company. It is expected that duplication of the motorway will be carried out in about 15 years. The final break-even is expected in about the year 2010, and the end of the franchise period is the year 2018. As at the close of business on 7 October the project was on time and within budget.

I thank the honourable member for Broadsound for his strong support. He has drawn attention to the crying need for the Commonwealth Government to make more funds available for roadworks which will facilitate income-generating developments, particularly new tourist facilities.

I would like to thank the honourable member for Salisbury for his generous praise of me with his description of me as the most effective Minister on the Government benches—although my glowing inner warmth is cooled somewhat when I recall that he also praised in generous terms the honourable member for Toowong. The honourable member for Salisbury made a very candid admission which, although he did not realise it, was an endorsement of the exercise of my own ministerial powers in rezonings. He said that there should be no interference in rezoning matters when a local authority is working efficiently. I could not agree more. However, in so many cases I have been obliged to intervene simply because a particular local authority has not been operating efficiently. I thank the honourable member for his brilliantly argued, if inadvertent, defence of my exercise of my ministerial powers.

The member for Salisbury has referred to the need for upgrading the Gateway Arterial and South East Freeway. These high-standard facilities are attracting ever-increasing volumes of traffic and will be upgraded as and when the traffic requires and funds can be made available. He is no doubt aware that the Gateway Arterial and the magnificent Gateway Bridge have been provided without a penny of Commonwealth road funds. He could do well to devote his energy to persuading his colleagues in Canberra to provide the funds to this State for roads which are so obviously needed.

I do have to take issue with him, however, on his reference to the expertise of my Main Roads Department officers in traffic matters. Whilst I have a lot of respect for the ability of local government engineers throughout Queensland in traffic matters, I also recognise the very competent officers in the Main Roads Department, who are among the leading traffic engineers in the nation.

The honourable member for Cook, very sadly for him, was reduced to some rather cheap personal abuse of me, and I would suggest that he could do no better than read the very positive contribution to this debate by his colleague the honourable member for Salisbury.

I was intrigued by the call from the honourable member for Cook for me to allow freedom for the Torres Shire Council, and I can only wonder whether that is his party's official view. If it is, I will be more than pleased to give the call serious consideration and to allow the re-establishment of an elected council, as I have done in the neighbouring Cook Shire, if the honourable member agrees that any freely elected council should pay its own way and not receive any special assistance.

I move on to the subject of World Heritage listing of north Queensland rainforests. Again the honourable member for Cook appears to be out of step with his northern colleagues in this Chamber, who realise the terrible implications for them politically of this listing. I can only hope that the honourable member's comments are given extensive media coverage in north Queensland.

Quite frankly, I was amused by the assertion of the honourable member for Cook that the return of elected government to the Cook Shire Council was his doing. Perhaps he might like to provide this Chamber with some evidence to back up that outrageous assertion. The honourable member also suggested that an Aboriginal council secretariat be set up in the Local Government Department. I point out to him that these councils are established under legislation under the control of another Minister, and therefore fall outside my ministerial portfolio.

I wish to assure the honourable member for Cook that I visit far-north Queensland sufficiently frequently to be aware of the problems and challenges unique to that area. I also have a team of first-class officers who provide me with regular briefings from far-north Queensland. The honourable member's colleagues from southern Queensland would certainly not agree with his assertion that a disproportionate percentage of funds for roadworks is spent in their area at the expense of far-north Queensland. I suggest that the honourable member for Cook read the annual report of the Main Roads Department, from which he would quickly realise how absurd his assertion is. Obviously the honourable member is seeking to create local prejudice for blatantly political reasons.

My colleague from Cunningham has drawn attention to the need for upgrading the Toowoomba to Goondiwindi road via Pittsworth and Millmerran. In the current year the Budget provides for expenditure in excess of \$3m for the upgrading of this route, but this is far short of the needs. This is another rural arterial road that is starved for funds by the road-funding policies of the Commonwealth Government, despite the fact that it is carrying more and more traffic from New South Wales and Victoria via the Newell Highway.

I thank the member for Warwick for his strong commendation of the efforts of the department. He drew attention to a significant matter. The Main Roads Department is placing more and more emphasis in its program on upgrading the length of highway pavements to carry the higher loadings of modern transport vehicles; yet, despite the concessions that have been granted to permit transport-operators to carry greater loads, some persist with an irresponsible attitude of gross overloading, thereby significantly reducing the life of the State's pavements. These people are bludging on their mates, and the department has no option but to continue its efforts to police their activities and enforce the loading regulations.

The honourable member for Bundaberg was sadly wide of the mark with his claim that no reasonable explanation was ever given to explain the caffeine crisis in the racing industry. At the time the Deputy Director-General of Health, Dr Ken Donald, who headed the investigation, provided a comprehensive explanation for this regrettable episode. This was widely reported in the media. I can only wonder what the honourable member for Bundaberg was doing at that time to miss this news.

I wish to assure the honourable member that I have not forgotten or overlooked the matter of the Burnett River Bridge. He knows that the department has strengthened the existing bridge and is keeping under close scrutiny the condition of the bridge and the operation of traffic there. Given the severe restraints imposed on road-funding by the Federal Government that I have outlined on many occasions, provision of an additional crossing in Bundaberg is at present not possible.

The honourable member stated that the small country punter has not been looked after. On the contrary, many initiatives have come to fruition under my administration. The TAB provides a greatly improved service, with bets able to be made right up to the advertised starting-time. Form guides, odds displays and race broadcasts—soon there will be race telecasts—have been of immense benefit to punters everywhere. Improved

amenities and betting opportunities have been made available at nearly every racecourse in this State. I am disappointed that race broadcasts are not available generally in many parts of the State, but those broadcasts are made available to every radio station free of charge. I have no power to cause stations to broadcast that service, but all avenues continue to be explored in an endeavour to achieve this. It is more likely that race telecasts will be made more generally available before race broadcasts.

The honourable member for Gympie has drawn attention to the very serious matter of loss of jobs as a result of Federal road-funding cuts. Despite the claims of the Hawke Government that it is interested in creating employment, every action it takes seems to be designed to have the opposite effect. The honourable member also reminded us of the warped thinking in Canberra shown by the recent Cameron report. If the formula derived from that source is applied to future grants to the States for local and arterial roads, the result will be an even greater job loss.

The honourable member for Ashgrove outlined a number of aspects relevant to planning for efficient traffic operations for both local access and intersuburban trips on Route 20. He acknowledged the record of Main Roads officers in sensitively listening to people and dealing with their problems. Main Roads activities in relation to this complex issue will continue to take into account the views of responsible groups.

The honourable member for Port Curtis made some scathing comments about the administration of racing in New South Wales which I can only interpret as meaning either that he has not had much success with his selections there or that he has no confidence in his Labor Party colleagues there to intelligently handle the administration of the industry or, more than likely, both.

In reply to the honourable member for Port Curtis—I acknowledge that the Commonwealth totally funds construction of national roads, but the Commonwealth is certainly not meeting the cost of roadworks on the Gladstone-Mount Larcom Road. Those works are being funded as part of the \$400m State Capital Works Program.

I thank the honourable member for Toowoomba North for his strong support. The details he outlined clearly demonstrate how well this Government is farming out the limited road funds available and he seconds my call for the Commonwealth Government to make a more realistic allocation to Queensland instead of pocketing the lion's share of fuel taxes.

The honourable member for Townsville reminded honourable members of the many needs for road-upgrading in the beautiful city of Townsville. Again the Government has no option but to restrict progress as a result of Canberra's tight-fisted road-funding policies. Main Roads, in consultation with the city council, has published a plan for road improvements based on the Townsville Transportation Study. Regular reviews are being made with council to enable progress with this plan as funds permit.

The honourable member for Townsville raised the question of the procedures adopted by the Townsville City Council in relation to the rezoning of lands and the erection of buildings in connection with the development of the old Victoria Bridge.

My inquiries reveal that the council did in fact initiate rezoning procedures, under procedures contained in the Local Government Act. There was a minor discrepancy in these procedures but as I consider that no person was adversely affected, I propose to recommend that the Governor in Council exercise his discretion under the law and approve the rezoning.

My inquiries also reveal that certain building works were carried out as part of this development without the necessary approvals having been obtained, and I propose to take this matter up with the Townsville City Council to ensure that similar circumstances do not recur.

I am informed, however, that this course was adopted by the council to assist the developer so that his work-force on the bridge project could be gainfully employed on the other works.

The honourable member for Bundaberg alleged that the Brisbane City Council had sold land previously acquired by it with Commonwealth/State and council flood mitigation moneys for residential development. If the honourable member is prepared to give me specific details as to the property description of the land in question, I will have the matter investigated and report back to him.

**Mr Davis:** On behalf of the member for Bundaberg, I will see that you get that.

**Mr HINZE:** I thank the honourable member for Brisbane Central or, should I say, the "right honourable Alderman Davis".

I thank the honourable member for Roma for his kind remarks about road improvements in western areas during my term as Minister.

As regards more gradual increases in registration fees—certainly I am aware of the fact that large increases cause financial hardship to some persons. I will consider his suggestion for annual increments rather than three-yearly increments.

I can advise honourable members that arrangements are in hand for new methods of payment of registration renewal fees through Westpac branches and Australia Post offices from late January 1988. Special arrangements have also been made with Australia Post for the introduction of time-payment facilities similar to those available for telephone accounts.

The honourable member for Rockhampton spoke warmly of the Rockhampton Mall, which he ascribed to the general brilliance of the Labor Party city council. I would have thought that he might have made some mention of the very significant grant provided by the Government for this project and the personal support that I gave the project.

The honourable member misrepresented the Government's policy on the question of boundary alterations for local authorities. The facts are that changes occur only when the affected local authorities agree on when special circumstances exist. In fact, in the honourable member's own area not too long ago, a major change was made in the local authority boundaries when a substantial area of Livingstone Shire was included in Rockhampton City.

The honourable member for Mount Coot-tha raised the subject again of Route 20 and I have previously addressed this matter which was also raised by the honourable member for Ashgrove.

Before I conclude I would like to make some mention of my department's administration costs. The honourable member for Toowong, who likes to portray himself as some sort of economics guru, drew completely misleading conclusions about the cost of administration in the Local Government Department by comparing actual expenditure last year with budgeted expenditure this year. He was comparing apples with oranges. Actual expenditure last year was below budget in a number of areas because we did not create the new Drug Testing Branch for Racing. Budgeted expenditure this year has to make allowance for this administrative cost.

Costs in the Local Government Department are also up because of new staff required in the Town Planning Branch to more speedily process their work. I would have thought the honourable member for Toowong, as a former deputy mayor of Brisbane, would have no argument against the provision of an improved service for town-planning.

The honourable member also drew attention to the significant increase in general administrative expenses in the Main Roads Department Estimates. The major item causing the increase is interest and redemption for loans which have increased from \$15.1m to \$43.1m for 1987-88. Regrettably, we have been forced increasingly to rely on loan funds because of the severe shortfall in Federal road-funding and these loans have to be serviced.

Mr Temporary Chairman, by way of conclusion I would make the observation that the debate has been notable for the singular lack of any major issue having been raised.

I feel confident enough to claim that this reflects well upon my administration and the high standard of service provided by my departments. I again thank all honourable members for their contributions, and I commend the Estimates to the Committee.

At 3.57 p.m.,

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr Alison):** Order! Under the provisions of the Sessional Order agreed to by the House on 16 September, I shall now put the questions for the Vote under consideration and the balance remaining unvoted for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing.

The questions for the following Votes were put, and agreed to—  
Local Government, Main Roads and Racing—

\$

Department of Local Government . . . . .	13,763,000
Balance of Vote (Trust and Special Funds) . . . . .	706,518,000

Progress reported.

**TRADING HOURS BILL**

**Hon. V. P. LESTER (Peak Downs—Minister for Employment, Small Business and Industrial Affairs)** (3.59 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

“That leave be granted to bring in a Bill to amend the Factories and Shops Act 1960-1985, the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act 1961-1987 and the Anzac Day Act 1921-1985 each in certain particulars.”

Motion agreed to.

**First Reading**

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

**Second Reading**

**Hon. V. P. LESTER (Peak Downs—Minister for Employment, Small Business and Industrial Affairs)** (4 p.m.): I move—

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

On 12 January 1987 I announced the establishment of the Trading Hours Investigation Committee to examine and make recommendations on trading hours in Queensland.

The committee handed down its report on 20 July 1987. This report has been made available for public comment. The report contained a number of recommendations which, in part, included—

- deletion of the exempted goods list provided in regulation 31 of the Factories and Shops Act 1960-1985;
- a new classification of shop to be established to be called an independent retail shop; and
- three classifications of shops to be provided, namely, an exempt shop, an independent retail shop and a non-exempt shop.

It has become obvious that small shops, to remain viable and compete with present-day supermarkets and hypermarkets and to meet the public demand for a wider choice of goods, have had to undergo changes. These changes have included an increase in the size of the shop to accommodate the increase in variety of goods stocked.

This Bill will delete the definition of “small shop” and provide for the introduction of an independent retail shop. This amendment will permit an independent retail shop to be operated by an individual, partnership or a proprietary company, but excludes a public company. Such a shop may be operated subject to a franchise agreement. It may



have a maximum number of six persons, including the working owners, engaged in the business at any one time. In addition, the owner of the business may have more than one shop, provided that not more than a total of 20 persons, including the working owners, are engaged at any one time in all shops.

Certain classes of shops have been excluded from the definition of "independent retail shop". These are shops selling motor vehicles or caravans, shops selling goods by wholesale and a stall within a market.

The Bill provides that the only restrictions in trading for an independent retail shop are that these shops are to remain closed on Christmas Day, Good Friday, Labour Day—unless employees are not employed on this day—and on Anzac Day until 1 p.m. Independent retail shops which are predominately a food and/or grocery shop will be permitted to open on these public holidays. This is no different from the provision that applies now for convenience stores selling those items on the exempt goods list.

An amendment to the Factories and Shops Act will provide additional classes of shops to the list of exempt shops presently contained in the Factories and Shops Act. Such list will now include a number of classes of shops which are presently specified as exempt shops, a number of classes of shops which were declared exempt shops by Order in Council and a number of classes of shops which previously sold exempt goods only. Hair-dressers, beauticians and service stations have been included in the list of exempt shops.

An exempt shop would have unrestricted trading hours as at present, irrespective of the number of persons engaged in the shop. To accommodate these changes it will be necessary to repeal regulation 31—list of exempted goods—contained in the Factories and Shops Act.

A provision has been included in the Bill to provide in the Factories and Shops Act a new penalty provision for trading hours offences. The penalties are similar to the provisions contained in the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act for trading hours offences. This provision will provide a penalty for offences committed by a body corporate not to exceed \$10,000 and, for offences committed by an individual, a penalty not exceeding \$2,000.

In introducing the new independent retail shop classification and the extended list of exempt shops in the Factories and Shops Act, certain machinery amendments have been included in the Bill to amend the Factories and Shops Act, the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act and the Anzac Day Act.

The provisions contained in the Bill are designed to satisfy the demands of the public to have access to a wider choice of goods outside the present restrictive trading hours and at the same time enhance the future prosperity of small business.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Braddy, adjourned.

The House adjourned at 4.06 p.m.