THURSDAY, 19 MARCH 1992

Mr SPEAKER (Hon. J. Fouras, Ashgrove) read prayers and took the chair at 10 a.m.

PETITION

The Clerk announced the receipt of the following petition—

Corporal Punishment

From **Mrs Edmond** (406 signatories) praying for urgent action to amend legislation to ensure that corporal punishment is not inflicted on any pupil attending any school or institution.

Petition received.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Police Service Reforms

Hon. N. G. WARBURTON (Sandgate—Minister for Police and Emergency Services) (10.02 a.m.), by leave: It is a well-established fact that this Government inherited from the previous Government a Police Service that had the worst reputation of any service in Australia. After two and a half years of dedicated effort, the majority of the Fitzgerald recommendations for reform of that moribund service are now in place. In essence, the commitment of this Government to the implementation of the Fitzgerald reforms has already seen the Queensland Police Service brought back to the people whom it is appointed to serve—more effectively, more responsibly and more accountably. Fitzgerald made recommendations on 127 matters directly related to policing. One hundred and five recommendations have been implemented, 12 are substantially developed, and 10 are awaiting longer-term action or have been superseded.

New Acts, regulations and codes of conduct, together with new procedures, are in place to provide proper legislative policy and a procedural base on which to build in the reforms. The implementation of any new system requires careful monitoring and review to ensure that the reforms are in fact practical and effective. To this end, review teams have been appointed to monitor and review the practical efficacy of the changes related to administration, personnel and operations. The process is also working well with a joint Criminal Justice Commission/Police Service/ministerial review committee now established.

In regard to crime statistics—the Police Service is finally providing statistics that are honest. Fiddling the figures was part and parcel of the culture that existed under the previous regime—both police and political. It has now stopped, and for the first time Queenslanders are being given the real facts. At the same time, the reform process aims to ensure that police have the necessary skills so that the sophisticated approach needed to tackle the problems of serious crime becomes a reality.

In conjunction with the Criminal Justice Commission, the first-ever effective action against organised crime in this State is being taken. A measure of reform success that cannot be assessed simply by counting the number of Fitzgerald recommendations implemented is the way that officers throughout the service have adopted the intent, and not just simply the recommendations, of the reform process. Attitudes have shifted. Officers are no longer simply blindly following rules and regulations, and they are no longer reluctant to make changes or improvements because these were not according to existing instructions. Officers throughout the State are using their initiative to

improve service delivery at the local level, and are working to guidelines that enhance accountability and professionalism, rather than simply following the book. Throughout the State, officers of all ranks and unsworn members at all levels are developing and trying new initiatives that provide a better service to the community. There is an acceptance of change and a heartening willingness to advance reform at all levels—not just of the Fitzgerald recommendations, but beyond them.

This statement touches on other matters of importance in the reform process, such as regionalisation, promotions and transfers, civilianisation, communications and education. The status report, which I intend to table, concerns itself with the Fitzgerald recommendations. We should all be aware that they cover only part of the needs of the Queensland Police Service, which is changing and reforming after years of neglect, mismanagement, debilitating leadership and stagnation. I seek leave to have the remainder of my statement incorporated in *Hansard*. I also table two copies of a status report on the Fitzgerald inquiry recommendations that apply to the Queensland Police Service.

Leave granted.

In his report Fitzgerald said:-

> "The Queensland Police Service is debilitated by misconduct, inefficiency, incompetence, and deficient leadership. The situation is compounded by poor organisation and administration, inadequate resources, and insufficiently developed techniques and skills for the task of law enforcement in a modern complex society. Lack of discipline, cynicism, disinterest, frustration, anger and low esteem are the result. The culture which shares responsibility for and is supported by this grossly unsatisfactory situation includes contempt for the criminal justice system, disdain for the law and rejection of its application to police, disregard for the truth, and abuse of authority."

Now there is a very different picture. Corruption has been tackled by persistent and dedicated efforts to remove such officers from the Service. Systems are in place to prevent entrenched corruption.

A new leadership has been appointed. A regionalised structure is in place. A new rank structure has been introduced. New operational, administrative, financial, and technical systems have or are being put in place to improve techniques and skills of law enforcement. New legislation and a Code of Conduct were introduced. Selection, training, promotion and transfer systems have been established to ensure promotion on merit and the recruitment of the best individuals to the Service.

Queensland now leads the way with many of the reforms initiated being copied by other Australian police forces and attracting international interest—particularly those reforms relating to the education of recruits and serving officers.

With the assistance and supervision of the Criminal Justice Commission, the strategy of the Police Service in dealing with the implementation of the recommended reforms were based on five critical areas of achievements:

- establishing the legislative and procedural foundations for reforming the Service
- appointing a new leadership
- establishing Regional Commands and clarifying the requirements for successful delivery of police services at a regional level based on community policing principles
- redesigning central structures in line with regional requirements following detailed review of all headquarters functions
- reviewing, designing and implementing systems necessary to support effective regional policing and to meet the overall policy of the Government, including the Fitzgerald recommendations.

The essential ingredients necessary for the success of the reform process included:

- the establishment of an appropriate legislative, policy and procedural base
- the appointment of managers and staff (often from outside the Service) skilled in their areas of responsibility who understand clearly what has to be achieved

the provision of appropriate resources (both financial and human) from new sources and more efficiently used existing sources to see the changes through to their conclusion.

A new Act, Regulations, and a Code of Conduct, together with new procedures are in place to provide the proper legislative, policy and procedural base on which to consolidate the reforms. The Queensland Police Service is now operating under a very different legislative framework than before Fitzgerald - the Police Service Administration Act—which gives clear direction to the Police Service as to its function and its responsibility to the Queensland community—much more so than under previous legislation.

The regionalisation process is another major initiative which gives independence to the eight geographical areas covering the State. Effectively, it gives Assistant Commissioners full autonomy for their areas of control. They have the freedom to determine how they use their budget and personnel to best meet and serve the needs of their local communities. Regionalisation and rationalisation of the police rank structure has and is continuing to bring police closer and more accountable to the people and communities they serve.

Regionalisation works hand in glove with the increasing emphasis on community policing. A Community Policing Support Branch has been established reporting directly to the Deputy Commissioner of Operations. The first trials of community policing which recognise the co-operative partnership between public and police in successfully maintaining order in the community have begun.

Community Consultative Committees are being established across the State. Community programs such as Neighbourhood Watch are being enhanced and expanded. While there is no doubt that a lot more work still needs to be done in establishing the concept of community policing, the way of the future is now clearly set.

Perhaps the most exciting innovation has been education and training of police. With the advice and guidance of the Police Education Advisory Committee chaired by Professor Paige Porter, a new educational curriculum has been developed and adopted.

Under this system new recruits pursue tertiary studies in justice administration by spending six months of their first year on a university campus—either Griffith University or the Queensland University of Technology—where they undertake studies ranging from societal issues to ethics and law. The second six months involves training in policing subjects at the Police Academy. This is followed by a year of carefully supervised field-based training while undertaking operational duties under the supervision of field training officers now appointed in each region to be responsible for the continued training of recruits.

This has been an outstanding step forward—it will broaden the appreciation of police officers about their role in the criminal justice system and their relationship to all sectors of the community. Graduates of this first year intake are now working across the State and are being well accepted by the community and other officers.

This innovation goes hand in hand with the total restructuring of the Police Academy aimed at enhancing the professionalism of the Police Service. Other training initiatives are being developed and progressively introduced. A Competency Acquisition Program has been established, applying distance education techniques, to provide in-service training to all officers even those in remote locations. A number of different training packages are being developed targeted at improving aboriginal-police relations, with the support the Commonwealth funding.

These initiatives in education and training are making a significant contribution to making the Service the most professional and skilled police agency in Australia.

One of the essential and most sensitive areas needing attention through the turbulent and traumatic post-Fitzgerald period is to rebuild the morale of dedicated and hard-working police officers. Obviously one of the most significant contributors to rebuilding morale has been the long overdue review of wage structures and of salaries that had been much lower for Queensland police than in other states. Very recently the second phase of those increases, which average at around 20 per cent of base pay, came through. People who are underpaid cannot feel valued and this recognition has been a major plus in improving both morale and productivity.

Another boost to morale is through public recognition of the police role. An indication of how far police have come in public perception has been the increasing public comment on police courtesy. A community attitude survey commissioned by the CJC last year showed over three-quarters of the Queensland population are satisfied with the service received

from Queensland police. Only nine per cent were actually dissatisfied while the remainder were neutral or responded “don’t know”.

Both morale and efficiency have been improved by the introduction of personnel practices based on merit and not seniority. New promotion and transfer systems have been developed and established, supported by review and appeal mechanisms. The current system is in stark contrast to what Fitzgerald said about past selection practices, which supported corruption and inefficiency.

As well, the Police service structure has been opened up so that civilians take a greater role, bringing with them specialist skills and expertise in areas than were previously available within the ranks of police officers. For example, unsworn members are now contributing substantially in areas of policy advice, finance, technical services, information systems, research and program development at both senior and lower levels.

The civilianisation process also frees up more trained and experienced police officers for active police work. At the moment, the process is in an initial phase and is expected to advance as more resources become available.

There has been some comment on increasing crime rates and declining clearance rates over recent years, but what has not been recognised generally is that this is partly due to the Police Service finally producing statistics that are honest and reliable. As I have already said, fiddling the facts was part and parcel of the culture that existed under the previous regime—both police and political. It has now stopped and for the first time Queenslanders are being given the real facts on crime, to the best extent allowed by existing systems that are still largely manual. Computerised systems of the future will provide greater detail and publicly available information on crime statistics throughout the State.

At the same time, the reform process is aiming to skill police in such a way that the sophisticated approach needed to tackle the problems of serious crime becomes a reality. Queensland Police have always shown that they could investigate serious criminal offences and get results. However, like all other Australian states, until recently there were no real inroads being made against major organised crime. With the restructuring of the Task Force, much head way is being made in the area both by way of Task Force operations and joint operations with the Criminal Justice Commission.

In addition, initiatives targeted at property crime, such as Operation Daybreak last year, are having a substantial impact on property crime figures.

To focus only on the Fitzgerald recommendations is to fail to adequately recognise the issues uncovered in the course of addressing the recommendations themselves—such as the constraints and limitations imposed by shortages of equipment and lack of management skills. It is widely acknowledged that the state of police resources inherited from the previous government was abysmal. This Government was elected with a policy commitment to increasing the strength of the police force by 1,200. We have already achieved an increase of an extra 900 operational police officers and will be well on target to meet that commitment in full this year.

No organisation can operate effectively in the 90’s without utilising modern technology. Government has committed substantial funds to equipping operational police including the allocation of computers currently under way. Again, there is still much to be done and a substantial resource commitment would be required to bring the Service to an appropriate standard.

Despite the obvious need to achieve major reform due to the political commitment to the Fitzgerald Report recommendations, the Service will continue to have limitations placed upon it by budgetary constraints. It would simply not be possible to allocate all of the necessary funds to address in full the cumulative neglect of the past. That said, current success in the reform process has been achieved for little or no cost in many areas.

The CJC Chairman, Sir Max Bingham, has taken a firm position that it is far better that the Queensland Police Service put its own house in order and therefore, the Commission fulfils its responsibilities from a constructive watchful distance.

The Criminal Justice Act formally established the watchdog body which has, along with its many other hats, the job of acting as an independent police complaints resolution mechanism. In performing that role the CJC has a great deal of public confidence in contrast to the thoroughly discredited Police Complaints Tribunal of the past.

We have come a long way in the State of Queensland compared to the policing situation pre-Fitzgerald. There are still problems in the competencies, skills and attitudes of some officers that need to be constantly addressed. There are still entrenched cultural attitudes

which will take far longer than two years to change. However, I firmly believe that a solid basis has been built in our police service through hard work, commitment, and a vision of the future which can only continue to improve the face of policing in Queensland.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Queensland Grain Industry Policy Council

Hon. E. D. CASEY (Mackay—Minister for Primary Industries) (10.06 a.m.), by leave: I wish to advise the House that, in line with the Goss Government's commitment to ensure close and real consultation with rural industries, today I will be moving to form the Queensland Grain Industry Policy Council. This will be the first time that a Queensland Government has established an ongoing mechanism to liaise with all sections of the grain industry. It will formally bring to an end the ad hoc consultation process that plagued the industry before the present Government took office. It will also provide the whole industry with the opportunity to address issues of a strategic nature in a coordinated and open manner.

The formation of the policy council also marks the final stage of one of the most remarkable industry restructuring processes undertaken in Queensland primary industry. Over the past 18 months, the industry, with the assistance of the Government, has undergone a transformation with the amalgamation of four statutory bodies and two grower cooperatives into Grainco—Australia's largest grain-marketing cooperative. As I said, this amalgamation was an industry initiative which, as Minister for Primary Industries, I was proud to be able to encourage and assist. Although the formation of the policy council is the last step in the process, it is perhaps the most significant. The policy council will be a peak body with broad industry membership and will allow industry to deal with long-term strategic issues such as domestic market growth, export strategies, quality control, legislative matters and storage and handling practices. Nominations for appointment to the council will be invited from Grainco; the Australian Wheat Board; the Queensland Produce, Seed and Grain Merchants Association; the Queensland Flour Millers Association; the Australian Grain Exporters Association; the Queensland Stock Feed and Grain User Association; three representatives of the Queensland Grain Growers Association, including one from central Queensland; a person representing the grain industry from north Queensland; and a representative of employees nominated by the Trades and Labor Council. I intend to chair the council.

This whole of industry approach will ensure that the participants in our $500m a year grain industry will have direct input into the industry and Government policy-making process. Following the success of a similar body in the sugar industry, I am confident that the Queensland Grain Industry Policy Council will ensure that the grain industry is better positioned to cope with the demands of the marketplace and capitalise on the undoubted potential for future growth in production throughout the State.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

PSMC Review of Department of Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs

Hon. A. M. WARNER (South Brisbane—Minister for Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs) (10.08 a.m.), by leave: I wish to advise the House that the Public Sector Management Commission has completed its review of the Department of Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs. In December 1991, the report of the review was endorsed by the Machinery of Government Subcommittee and noted by Cabinet on Monday, 10 February 1992. The Department of Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs was formed in December 1989 by amalgamating the Department of Family Services, the Department of Community Services and the Office of Ethnic Affairs. The department has responsibilities in five areas—community services

development, protective services and juvenile justice, intellectual disability services, ethnic affairs, and Aboriginal and Islander affairs. It is significant that, although the PSMC review team applauded the headway made by the department in planning and development, it found its ability to achieve key welfare and social justice objectives had been hampered by poor resourcing. The review concluded that there were no excess resources within the agency which could be reallocated to priority tasks. In that context, the review acknowledged that it has been through the goodwill and dedication of staff and the support of non-Government organisations that the department has been able to operate as well as it does. To address that resource issue, a review is under way by officers of my department, together with Treasury officials. Treasury has made a significant commitment to the project by making available three senior officers.

Another important recommendation of the review is that the department will be the Government's lead agency on social justice and welfare. To complement this responsibility, the department will be the lead agency for Aboriginal and Islander affairs, ethnic affairs, social impact assessment, child welfare, child-care, disability, ageing, and domestic violence. That is in recognition of the expertise within this agency in those areas and will require close cooperation with Government and non-Government agencies in both policy and program development. The lead agency role would require the department to—

coordinate the activities of other Government agencies at a policy level on social justice, welfare and access and equity issues;

establish policy and standards;

develop, with other relevant Government agencies, legislation; and

coordinate the links between State and Commonwealth Government and local government agencies, community organisations and clients of Government services.

Favourable comments were made on processes developed within the department for consultation with non-Government organisations and peak bodies representing client interests. Those processes are to be extended across the department. New appeals and grievance mechanisms for individuals and organisations affected by decisions of the department have been recommended. That will provide a mechanism for the client groups of the department, many from lower socio-economic groups who are often unaware of their rights, to be informed of any significant decisions affecting their interests. Most of the recommendations of the PSMC report concentrate on specific aspects of departmental programs. Their implementation will help focus the direction of the department and its services and improve effectiveness. Although there will be change in some areas, generally, recommendations support or build upon plans already under consideration.

The name of the department will not change. However, "Minister for Ethnic Affairs" will be added to my title to recognise Ethnic Affairs within the portfolio of the ministerial responsibilities. An implementation task force has been established within the department to progress the implementation of the PSMC recommendations. A priority project for the implementation task force is the development of the new focus and structure for the Division of Aboriginal and Islander Affairs. Emerging roles such as advocacy on arts, culture and rights were endorsed, and the devolution of the administration of major service areas such as housing, roads and water-related infrastructure were to be expedited and consultation mechanisms were to be expanded. As the lead agency on Aboriginal and Islander affairs, the division will concentrate on advocacy and support roles such as coordination, resourcing, rights, culture and Aboriginal and Islander interest in land. There are diverse and competing demands for the services and programs offered by the Department of Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs. I thank the PSMC for reinforcing the direction of the department as it works towards meeting those demands and the goals of justice and equity. I seek leave to table a summary of the report and recommendations.

Leave granted.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Q-Fleet

Hon. R. T. McLEAN (Bulimba—Minister for Administrative Services) (10.13 a.m.), by leave: Last week, I was asked a series of cryptic questions about Q-Fleet, the business unit in my department which has revolutionised the management of the Government's car fleet. I am also aware of vague allegations that the concept of having a business unit responsible for purchasing all the cars needed by the Government and then leasing and hiring them out is not working. Nothing could be further from the truth. I wish to put the record straight and at the same time pay tribute to general manager, Les Clarence, and his staff.

The Q-Fleet motor vehicle contract that was put in place in July 1991 produced an average reduction of 6 per cent in the cost of passenger sedans and station sedans compared with the previous contract. This will bring about a reduction in the capital cost of vehicles of about $3m a year. The contract also allows Q-Fleet to negotiate further reductions for bulk purchasing. Prior to Q-Fleet, the average premium paid by departments and agencies was $240 per vehicle a year. Q-Fleet has arranged comprehensive insurance of $175 for each vehicle—a reduction of more than 25 per cent. The commission rate on the sale of vehicles has been renegotiated so that on a sale price of $10,000, we are saving $107, and on a sale price of $14,000, the saving is $133. If sales continue at about 3 000 a year, the savings will be about $400,000. Improved arrangements for servicing and maintenance are likely to lead to further savings. These savings mean that more money will become available for spending on essentials in departments such as Health and Education and the Police Service.

PAPER

The following paper was laid on the table—

Regulation under the Health Act 1937.

PRIVILEGE

Ministerial Code of Ethics

Mr BORBIDGE (Surfers Paradise—Leader of the Opposition) (10.15 a.m.): I rise on a matter of privilege. I table the Premier's Cabinet handbook, which proves that 14 Cabinet Ministers have breached their code of ethics, and I seek leave to move a censure motion without notice.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Any member in this Chamber may rise at any time on a matter of privilege and speak to it. However, honourable members may not, under that guise, seek to move a censure motion at this point in the proceedings.

LEAVE TO MOVE MOTION WITHOUT NOTICE

Mr BORBIDGE (Surfers Paradise—Leader of the Opposition) (10.16 a.m.): Mr Speaker, my understanding is that any Minister who has breached the code of ethics may well be in breach of the privilege of this place. However, I accept your ruling, and I seek leave to move a motion without notice.

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

AYES, 31		NOES, 53	
Beanland	Watson	Ardill	Mackenroth
Booth		Barber	McElligott
Borbidge		Beattie	McGrady
Connor		Bird	McLean
Coomber		Braddy	Milliner
Cooper		Bredhauer	Nunn
Dunworth		Briskey	Palaszczuk
Elliott		Burns	Pearce
FitzGerald		Campbell	Power
Gilmore		Casey	Robson
Goss J. N.		Clark	Schwarten
Harper		Comben	Smith
Hobbs		D'Arcy	Smyth
Horan		Davies	Spence
Johnson		De Lacy	Sullivan J. H.
Lester		Dollin	Sullivan T. B.
Lingard		Eaton	Szczerbanik
Littleproud		Edmond	Vaughan
McCauley		Elder	Warburton
Perrett		Fenlon	Warner
Rowell		Flynn	Welford
Santoro		Foley	Wells
Sheldon		Gibbs	Woodgate
Slack		Goss W. K.	
Springborg		Hamill	
Stephan	*Tellers:*	Hayward	*Tellers:*
Stoneman	Neal	Hollis	Prest
Turner	Quinn	Livingstone	P i t t

Resolved in the negative.

LEAVE TO MOVE MOTION WITHOUT NOTICE

Mrs SHELDON (Landsborough—Leader of the Liberal Party) (10.23 a.m.): I seek leave to move a motion without notice.

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

AYES, 31		NOES, 53	
Beanland	Watson	Ardill	Mackenroth
Booth		Barber	McElligott
Borbidge		Beattie	McGrady
Connor		Bird	McLean
Coomber		Braddy	Milliner
Cooper		Bredhauer	Nunn
Dunworth		Briskey	Palaszczuk
Elliott		Burns	Pearce
FitzGerald		Campbell	Power
Gilmore		Casey	Robson
Goss J. N.		Clark	Schwarten
Harper		Comben	Smith
Hobbs		D'Arcy	Smyth
Horan		Davies	Spence
Johnson		De Lacy	Sullivan J. H.
Lester		Dollin	Sullivan T. B.
Lingard		Eaton	Szczerbanik
Littleproud		Edmond	Vaughan
McCauley		Elder	Warburton
Perrett		Fenlon	Warner
Rowell		Flynn	Welford
Santoro		Foley	Wells
Sheldon		Gibbs	Woodgate
Slack		Goss W. K.	
Springborg		Hamill	
Stephan	*Tellers:*	Hayward	*Tellers:*
Stoneman	Neal	Hollis	Prest
Turner	Quinn	Livingstone	P i t t

Resolved in the negative.

PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Report and Correspondence

Dr FLYNN (Toowoomba North) (10.28 a.m.): Mr Speaker, the Parliamentary Committee of Public Accounts is pleased to present its final report on matters arising from its review of the Auditor-General's second report on audits for the year ended 30 June 1990. As a result of this review, the committee identified five matters that require further investigation. The present report deals with concerns raised by the Auditor-General with respect to the accounting practices of a drainage board, a water supply board and two river improvement trusts. The Don River Improvement Trust and the Townsville/Thuringowa Water Supply Board had already given commitments to the Auditor-General to take remedial action, and therefore the committee considered that action on its part with respect to these two bodies was not necessary.

At the request of the Minister for Primary Industries, following an approach from the committee, the East Deeral Drainage Board, which had not kept separate and distinct funds for operating and capital works transactions as prescribed, has now undertaken to comply in future with the prescribed requirements. The Wambo Shire River Improvement Trust, which had not kept separate books and accounts as legally prescribed, put a strong case to the committee for the integration, on the grounds of efficiency, of its activities with those of the Wambo Shire Council. As a result of this submission, the committee investigated the relationship between river improvement trusts and their associated local authorities, and has made the following recommendation—

> "The Committee recommends that the existing provisions for River Improvement Trusts be retained, but that the option be made available for a local authority (or a joint local authority) to engage in river improvement work and have

the same powers (and Government financial support) as those provided to River Improvement Trusts."

I thank all members of the committee, including the former Chairman, Mr Ken Hayward, and the committee staff for their work on this project. Finally, I also table the correspondence received by the committee relevant to the inquiry.

Ordered to be printed.

PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE FOR CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Report of Police Commissioner

Mr BEATTIE (Brisbane Central) (10.30 a.m.): Mr Speaker, I lay upon the table of the House, pursuant to section 4.7 (4) of the Police Service Administration Act 1990, the report of the Acting Commissioner of the Police Service, being a certified copy of the register of all reports and recommendations made to the former Minister for Police, the Honourable Terry Mackenroth, MLA, and his successor, the Honourable Nev Warburton, MLA, under section 4.6 (1) (a), and all directions given in writing to the commissioner under section 4.6 (2) of the said Act, along with the report of the Chairman of the Criminal Justice Commission.

Sir Max Bingham's report includes copies of correspondence between him and the Commissioner of the Police Service, Mr Noel Newnham, regarding the content of the register. Having considered the views of both Sir Max and Commissioner Newnham, it was the committee's view that Sir Max's interpretation is correct—that the Act only requires inclusion of those reports and recommendations from the Commissioner to the Minister "which have been required by the Minister" pursuant to section 4.6 (1) (a) and the directions from the Minister to the commissioner pursuant to section 4.6 (2) of the Act. The committee sought the opinion of senior counsel to ascertain the correct view, and includes with this report the advice of Mr Kerry Copley, QC, which confirms the approach taken by Sir Max and the committee. With the advice of Mr Copley, the committee unanimously passed the following resolution on Friday, 6 March 1991—

> "That the Commissioner be advised that the Committee has received the opinion of Mr Copley, that the opinion is consistent with the Committee's own views, and that a copy of the opinion should be forwarded to the Commission which would take appropriate action to have the Police Commissioner complete the requirements within the terms of the Act as identified by Mr Copley and by the Chairman of the Commission."

Accordingly, a strict interpretation of the Act provides that the register to be kept by the commissioner for presentation to the Chairman of the CJC and to be tabled in the Parliament by me should be restricted to the range of reports, recommendations and directions as required by the Act. Last year, the committee recommended that the substance and format of the report should be improved to include the actual correspondence, reports and directions as part of the register. The committee approves of that procedure and notes the opinion of Mr Copley that this is the correct interpretation of the Act. I advise that the report was received by the committee on 19 March 1992, although an earlier version was provided to the committee on 28 February 1992, referred to previously. It is therefore tabled within the period of 14 sitting days as prescribed by section 4.7 (4) of the Act.

The acting commissioner has also sent to the committee some supplementary material for the information of the committee. That material from the acting commissioner supports the case for a review of this part of the current legislation. At its meeting of 17 March 1992, the committee also unanimously resolved that—

> "the Chairman table in the House the report of the Police Commissioner under section 4.7 of the Police Service Administration Act when it is received and that the opinion of Kerry Copley QC, obtained by the Committee, be tabled with the report."

I table the report accordingly.

PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE FOR ELECTORAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW

Reports and Submissions

Mr FOLEY (Yeronga) (10.33 a.m.): I lay upon the table of the House the report of the Parliamentary Committee for Electoral and Administrative Review on the review of the external boundaries of local authorities. I lay upon the table of the House the submissions received by the committee. As they are voluminous, they appear on a trolley at the entrance to the Chamber. The committee received 2 915 submissions. In accordance with established parliamentary practice——

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Some members may not wish to hear the member for Yeronga, but I do.

Mr FOLEY: Thank you, Mr Speaker, for your protection. In accordance with established parliamentary practice, the committee has determined not to publish 23 of those submissions which contain material potentially defamatory in respect of some person or persons. This report follows an extensive public consultation program which began with familiarisation visits by committee members to 41 councils throughout the State in September and October 1991 and also included a series of public hearings held throughout the State over two weeks in December 1991. During the course of that review, committee members travelled in excess of 20 700 kilometres throughout Queensland.

I also lay upon the table of the House the report of the Parliamentary Committee for Electoral and Administrative Review on the review of information and resource needs of non-Government members of the Queensland Legislative Assembly. I lay upon the table of the House the 28 submissions on that matter received by the committee. I thank all members of the committee for their contribution on that matter—the deputy chairman, Mr Mark Stoneman, Ms Molly Robson, Dr Lesley Clark, Mr Tony FitzGerald, Mr Robert Quinn and Mr Rod Welford. The committee records its thanks to Mrs Jan Warren of the secretarial staff. The committee also records its thanks to its research director, Ms Janet Ransley; and its consultant, Mr John Orr, for their diligence and scholarship which were of invaluable assistance to the committee.

Ordered to be printed.

Mr SANTORO proceeding to give notice of a motion—

Mr WELFORD: I rise to a point of order. I find the comments of the member grossly offensive, and I ask that they be withdrawn.

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

Mr SANTORO continuing to give notice of a motion—

Mr WELFORD: I rise to a further point of order. This is not a notice of motion. The member is continuing the very debate that he ran last night.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I have a great deal of sympathy with the sentiments expressed by the member for Stafford. I suggest to the member for Merthyr that the giving of notices of motion should not become a debate. It appears to be a debate, but I will listen more closely before I make a ruling.

Mr SANTORO: I am almost finished but, with respect, I am putting on record a motion that I would like——

Mr SPEAKER: Order! With respect, the honourable member is making a very long statement rather than putting a motion on notice. I suggest that, in future, notices of motion are not two pages in length. As they appear on this business paper every day, a

lot of trees would have to be chopped down to supply the paper that would be required.

Mr SANTORO: Mr Speaker, you will be pleased to hear that I am about to finish.

Mr SANTORO continuing to give notice of a motion—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I am not going to allow the member for Merthyr to give notice of those sorts of motions. I rule that out of order. It will not appear on the notice paper.

QUESTIONS UPON NOTICE

1. Golden Mile Ferry Service

Mr JOHNSON asked the Minister for Transport and Minister Assisting the Premier on Economic and Trade Development—

"With reference to his decision to dump the Golden Mile Ferry service to inner Brisbane—

(1) Why has he ignored the key finding of the Brisbane River Ferry Study, which I now table, which found that the Golden Mile Ferry Service had the highest utilisation and was the most efficient in capital usage and operating costs?

(2) Why has he also ignored a further finding of the Report that with active promotion, the demand for ferry services will increase by 50 per cent in 12 months?

(3) Why is he subjecting Brisbane's already congested road network to further chaos?"

Mr HAMILL: (1 to 3) I refer the honourable member to my answer to his question without notice yesterday.

2. Public Transport in South-east Queensland

Mr BEATTIE asked the Minister for Transport and Minister Assisting the Premier on Economic and Trade Development—

"With reference to the South East Queensland Passenger Transport Study which identified a lack of knowledge about available transport as one of the major impediments to increasing the use of our public transport system—

(1) What action is being taken to redress this situation?

(2) What is he doing to upgrade the capacity of the inner-city rail system to cater for future expansion of urban services in South East Queensland?"

Mr HAMILL: (1 and 2) The Government has placed a high priority on improving public transport in Queensland and is paying particular attention to the rapidly growing south-east corner of the State. In a move to develop long-term plans for public transport improvement in this region, the Government initiated the South East Queensland Passenger Transport Study. This study recommended the establishment of a public transport information service. The service is presently being established by the Department of Transport in consultation with Queensland Rail, Brisbane City Council and private bus operators. The information line will provide fingertip information on what services people can use, how much they will cost, and how often the services will be provided. The cost of this new coordinated system will simply be the price of a local call.

To cater for future expansion of urban services in south-east Queensland, the Government recently began work on one of the largest rail tunnel projects ever undertaken in Australia. The two new rail tunnels to be built below Brisbane's central business district will cost $23m and are just Stage 1 of a massive $135m project to upgrade the capacity of the entire inner-city rail system. This is a vital move to cater for

future growth in outer urban areas and to allow trains to run effectively between Brisbane and the Gold Coast. More than 130 000 tonnes of rock will be excavated in the 32-month project, which will increase the capacity of the inner-city system from 25 to 45 trains hourly in each direction. The construction of the tunnels will be a major long-term boost to Queensland's public transport infrastructure, and in the short term it represents a further commitment by this Government to job creation, through fixed capital investment.

3. Brisbane River Study

Mr BEATTIE asked the Minister for Environment and Heritage—

"With reference to the announcement by Government and the Brisbane City Council during the week ending 13 March of a $140 000 study on the Brisbane River—

Will he detail the aim of the study and how it relates to his plans for co–ordinated management of the Brisbane River?"

Mr COMBEN: Mr Speaker, I seek leave to table the answer and have it incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

Last week, the Lord Mayor of Brisbane, Alderman Jim Soorley, and I launched a jointly-funded study on the water quality of the Brisbane River, its estuary and Moreton Bay.

This study will cost $140,000, jointly funded by the Department of Environment and Heritage and the Council.

The objective of the study is to review all available scientific information relating to the River and the Bay—both of which are vitally important to the business and recreational lives of so many Queenslanders. This information which has been collected by several Government Departments and the Brisbane City Council for many years has never before been assembled into one data base.

The assembled information will be of great benefit to the Government and the Council in planning ecologically sustainable development in areas that could impact on these waterways. The determination of the impacts of future projects requires a thorough understanding of the existing conditions.

The study is expected to identify any areas where environmental problems presently exist or are likely to occur in the near future. This will allow appropriate management procedures to be put in place.

The study will also identify areas where there is insufficient data available at present to assess the current environmental health of these waterways.

One of the Council's major interests is the effects of its present sewage treatment plants. The results of this study will be of great use in the development of plans for future augmentation and upgrading of the wastewater treatment plants.

My Department of Environment and Heritage sees this study as a significant contribution to the successful operations of the proposed Brisbane River Management Group. Following the release of a Green Paper last year, this Management Group is being established to co-ordinate the activities of the many State and Local Government agencies that are responsible for matters which impact on the Brisbane River.

Scientific information relating to Moreton Bay will also be reviewed in this study. That aspect of the study will be of benefit to the Moreton Bay Commission which I propose to establish later this year.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Comments by Acting Police Commissioner Blizzard

Mr BORBIDGE: In directing a question to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, I refer to concerns expressed and reported in today's media by the Acting

Police Commissioner, David Blizzard, of a deliberate and orchestrated campaign to undermine Commissioner Newnham and to his concern, stated previously, that "a wholehearted commitment to the commissioner was not there". I ask: has the Minister discussed these concerns with the acting commissioner, and what action has he taken?

Mr WARBURTON: I am not aware of the article to which the honourable member referred. That is the first point.

Mr Borbidge: That's convenient.

Mr WARBURTON: Well, it is the truth, which is a word that the Leader of the Opposition cannot even spell. It is a fact. I would not stand up here and say it if I did not mean it. The point is that I am not aware of the article. In any discussion that I have had with Mr Blizzard since he became the acting commissioner, I have indicated, as I indicated yesterday, that I have cemented a very good working relationship with the commissioner. As far as the comments that are attributed to Mr Blizzard are concerned—now that I know about it, I will have a look at the article and, if it is true,I will raise the matter——

Mr Borbidge: On page 6 of the *Australian*.

Mr WARBURTON: If the honourable member had tabled the article, I might have been able to have a look at it. However, the point is that I will now discuss it with the acting commissioner to see if there is any truth in the allegation.

Mr G. Hannigan

Mr BORBIDGE: In directing a question to the Premier, I refer to media reports this morning concerning a briefing conducted by Mr Gary Hannigan, who is now a senior adviser to the Minister for Justice, and to the statement allegedly made by Mr Hannigan that "Newnham was stupid and the Government was going to get rid of him". I ask: as those reports confirm an orchestrated campaign to smear and destabilise the Police Commissioner, does the Premier consider this acceptable behaviour by a senior adviser to his Government? Whom does the Premier support—Mr Newnham or Mr Hannigan?

Mr W. K. GOSS: The first point is that I understand that the particular reference alluded to by the Leader of the Opposition is without factual foundation. That is the first point. The second point is that this Parliament and the public are well aware of the break-down in the relationship that occurred between the former Police Minister, the Police Commissioner and their respective officers. That is history. We are getting on with our commitment to rebuilding and reforming the Police Service from the tattered state in which it was when we came to Government.

Mr Borbidge interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition will cease interjecting.

Mr W. K. GOSS: Furthermore, I repeat that I understand the reference is without foundation. In any event, the views of staffers on these matters do not count; it is the Government that determines our position. Our position has been consistently one of support and working with the Police Commissioner over the course of the last two years, and we are committed to continuing that good working relationship with the Police Commissioner.

Bashing of Prison Officers in Townsville

Mr PREST: I direct a question to the Minister for Justice and Corrective Services. The recent bashing of two prison officers in Townsville is claimed to be related directly to the reduction in staffing levels. I ask: can the Minister advise whether staffing levels at Townsville have been reduced? Further, what were the actual circumstances surrounding the Townsville bashing?

Mr MILLINER: I thank the honourable member for Port Curtis for the question, because in these very difficult times this is an important matter. As to the incident that

occurred in Townsville—we are constantly berated by the media's saying that the incident was a result of understaffing at the Townsville Correctional Centre. I want to reject that allegation out of hand, because if one looks at the staffing levels at the Townsville Correctional Centre, one will see that there has not been a reduction. Since 1988, there has in fact been an increase in staffing levels. In 1988, at that centre there were 220 staff members to 476 inmates. In 1989, there were 219 staff members to 466 inmates. In 1990, there were 223 staff members to 418 inmates. In 1991, there were 246 staff members to 281 offenders. In 1992, there are 230 staff members to 242 offenders. It is quite clear that there has been a dramatic reduction in the number of offenders at the Townsville Correctional Centre, brought about by the opening of the Lotus Glen Correctional Centre in far-north Queensland.

Mr Connor interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Nerang!

Mr MILLINER: I totally reject the allegation and the suggestion that is being bandied around that staffing levels at the Townsville Correctional Centre have been reduced. Another allegation that is being bandied around is that there has been a reduction in the budget of the Townsville Correctional Centre, which has also contributed to this unfortunate incident. The budget of the Townsville Correctional Centre has actually increased this financial year. Previously, it was $11.9m. It has now risen to $12.3m. One can see that there has been an actual increase in the budget, but at the same time there has been a reduction in the number of offenders being housed at that centre. I reject out of hand the suggestions that this tragic incident was brought about by understaffing or underfunding.

As to the actual circumstances surrounding this unfortunate incident—they are still the subject of an investigation. There are a couple of investigations going on—one by the police, and an internal investigation by the Corrective Services Commission. Unfortunately, these investigations are being hampered by the current industrial stoppage. I am informed that the procedure that took place on the morning of the incident at Townsville had been taking place for some 30 years. I am told that the officers concerned started duty at approximately 5.30 a.m. They then went to the part of the correctional centre in which the prisoners were housed. They took those trusted prisoners out of that part of the institution to the laundry to start operations for that day. I am advised that those officers were also involved in selecting those prisoners, and that that process has also been going on for some 30 years. Until such time as the officers at the Townsville Correctional Centre return to work and the investigations can be completed, we will not get to the bottom of this matter.

Manning of Tower at Townsville Correctional Centre

Mr PREST: In directing a further question to the Minister for Justice and Corrective Services, I refer to claims that an unmanned tower was a major factor in the bashing of the two Townsville officers, and I ask: can he inform the House whether the manning of that tower is a relevant issue?

Mr MILLINER: That question is very relevant in regard to this unfortunate incident. First of all, I want to say how deplorable I think the actions of those people were in attacking those prison officers, and my best wishes and thoughts go out to those officers. I know I speak on behalf of all members of this House when I wish them a very speedy and a full recovery. The situation was as I have outlined. The procedure has been in place for some 30 years. A suggestion has been made that if one of the towers had been manned at the time that this incident would have been averted. As I have indicated, the investigations are still going on, but I am also informed that the tower which is the subject of this allegation has never been manned before 6 a.m. This incident occurred between 5.45 a.m. and approximately 5.55 a.m., so it was before 6 o'clock. The tower has never ever been manned before 6 a.m., so the suggestion that the manning of that tower would have averted this tragic incident just is not relevant.

Statement by Assistant Police Commissioner

Mrs SHELDON: In directing a question to the Premier, I refer to a statement in today's *Australian* by Assistant Police Commissioner Kevin O'Reilly, in which he states that he found improper an instruction that he received from the former Police Minister, Mr Mackenroth, to attend a meeting of the Albert Shire Council with the member for Albert, Mr Szczerbanik. I ask: does the Premier condemn the former Police Minister for this clear political interference in the running of the Police Service?

Mr W. K. GOSS: The short answer is "No." The more complete answer is to this effect: what occurs from time to time is that there are meetings of community representatives in relation to issues involving State Government services. I understand that at one stage there was a meeting at the Beenleigh Police Station, I think it was, in relation to police numbers in that area. I was busy with other matters, but the other local member, Mr Szczerbanik, was invited to attend. As I understand it, Mr Mackenroth, the then Minister, did not direct, but asked Mr O'Reilly whether he would attend the meeting as well, because obviously it would be helpful if information could be forthcoming from a senior officer in relation to police resources and the future plans of the Police Service to attend to that problem, if in fact a problem was identified. A request was made to Mr O'Reilly. It is true that Mr O'Reilly did not attend, but I cannot condemn the former Police Minister in relation to that or the fact that Mr O'Reilly did not go, because it was, as I understand it, the Police Commissioner, Mr Newnham, who said that Mr O'Reilly should not attend. That was accepted by Mr Mackenroth. No problem. The reason the Police Commissioner, I understand, told Mr O'Reilly not to go was not because of any impropriety, but in fact because the Police Commissioner thought it would be better if he went himself, and the Police Commissioner attended the meeting himself.

I would like to endorse—and I trust that the member for Landsborough will endorse and support—the very proper actions of the Police Commissioner in responding to community and police concerns in the Beenleigh district. I know that Beenleigh is a long way from her home. It is much closer to my electorate than it is to hers, so I am very keen to support and endorse the actions of the Police Commissioner in that regard. As I say, I would hope that the member for Landsborough would have the good grace to do that as well. Lastly, let me say that the fact that that very important detail was left out of the account that was given to the journalists indicates that the person who gave that account was either acting out of ignorance or out of malice as part of a smear campaign in respect of the former Police Minister.

Mr G. Hannigan

Mrs SHELDON: I refer the Premier to a political briefing given to ALP members in marginal seats by Mr Garry Hannigan, the former private secretary to the Police Minister, who now works in the office of the Justice Minister, and I ask: who authorised the briefing? In what capacity did Mr Hannigan attend, and how many other public servants are assisting the campaigns of ALP members in marginal seats?

Mr W. K. GOSS: I think that now that these facts have come out, I should confess that backbench members of the Labor Government are, in fact, quite keen to be re-elected and are doing all in their power to ensure that the member for Landsborough stays in her current position—at best.

Mr Hamill: And so is she.

Mr W. K. GOSS: As the Minister for Transport has said, and so is she. In relation to the meetings that are convened in this place by members of Parliament—whether those members be on the Government back bench or whether they be members of the other parties, they are entitled to convene in this place such meetings as they wish and to invite to those meetings who they wish. They invite a range of people. On some occasions, Mr Swan comes to talk party political——

Mr Borbidge: He was at that one.

Mr W. K. GOSS: Yes. As I understand it, he attended the meeting referred to to talk about political matters. Other people have been here. Mr Hannigan is not a public servant, but a ministerial staffer. As I understand it, he was asked to attend the meeting, and quite properly attended to give a briefing and answer questions in relation to issues such as household safety, domestic safety, and law and order.

Government members: Hear, hear!

Mr W. K. GOSS: "Hear, hear!" they say. From the tone of the interjections from the Government back bench, it was much appreciated. Let me say this: I am sure that if the member for Landsborough is really interested in those types of issues and she made a request to the Minister for Justice, he would provide a similar facility to the member for Landsborough and her colleagues.

Job Creation in Queensland

Mr PITT: I refer the Treasurer to recent comments made by the Opposition Leader that Queensland will need to create an extra 38 000 new jobs a year to cope with its projected increase in population. I ask: how many jobs have been created in Queensland in recent months and how does this compare with the rest of Australia, particularly New South Wales, which last month had the lowest recorded unemployment rate?

Mr De LACY: I was very interested in that figure of 38 000 jobs, which the Leader of the Opposition has been bandying around. I note that yesterday it was picked up by the *Courier-Mail* when it was editorialising on the national accounts. The *Courier-Mail* stated—

". . . the demand for job creation is plainly very high."

That is a sentiment with which I am sure everybody agrees. The *Courier-Mail* continued—

> "According to the State Opposition, it amounts to 38 000 new jobs a year, a target the Opposition Leader, Mr Borbidge, sees as unobtainable under the present Government. He says Labor isn't working. Clearly, on the jobs front, it isn't working as well as it might."

I humbly say to the editorial-writer of the *Courier-Mail* that when he or she is writing about the employment position in Queensland, he or she ought to look at the facts instead of taking advice from the Leader of the Opposition. The facts are that in the nine months since May last year, 47 300 new jobs have been created in Queensland. The Leader of the Opposition——

Mr Borbidge: How many have you lost?

Mr De LACY: This is net additional jobs. Let me say that there are 47 300 more jobs in Queensland now than there were nine months ago. I know that it is very difficult for members of the Opposition to understand that. The Leader of the Opposition is going around saying that his party has a policy that will create 38 000 additional jobs in a year. In the last nine months, the Labor Government has created 47 000 jobs. The Opposition is a long way behind, and it has not even got its billboard up.

Mr Littleproud interjected.

Mr Borbidge interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Both the Leader and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition will cease interjecting.

Mr De LACY: If I might just endorse that, if those honourable members stopped interjecting, they would stop displaying their ignorance to the people in this Chamber. While Queensland has created 47 300 new jobs, the rest of Australia has lost 59 700 jobs. Mr Pitt asked about the performance in New South Wales. That State has the policies that this mob opposite will introduce. During the last nine months, 32 400 jobs were lost in New South Wales. The 32 400 jobs that were lost in New South Wales

should be compared with the 47 000 jobs the Labor Government has created in Queensland. That is the job creation performance and comparison that the Opposition ought to be focusing on.

Mr Johnson: The dole queue is getting longer. How do you work that out?

Mr De LACY: People ask, "Why is our unemployment rate higher than it is in New South Wales?" According to the latest figures, it has been marginally higher. That is because the labour force in Queensland is growing at three times the national average. Two factors are at play. Queensland's population is increasing. People around Australia are voting with their feet. They are coming to Queensland because it is the only State which is creating jobs. There is one other factor, and that is the increase in the participation rate in Queensland. Queensland's participation rate is one percentage point higher than the national average. I am advised that that is normal when a country is coming out of a recession. As confidence builds up, people once again register for employment. There causes an increase in the participation rate, which is what has happened in Queensland, which is the only State that is creating jobs. Another interesting statistic is that if the whole of Australia created jobs at the same rate as that at which Queensland has created jobs, the unemployment rate throughout Australia would now be 7.1 per cent and falling. My point is that the Queensland Government is doing its job, our strategies for creating employment are working, and we are creating jobs at a rapid rate. If the rest of Australia were doing the same sort of thing, we would not have anything like our current unemployment problem.

Teacher Graduates; School Grants

Mr PITT: I thank the Treasurer for his answer. In directing a question to the Minister for Education, I refer to the issue of the employment of teacher graduates in our schools, and I ask: how many teacher graduates have been employed this year, and how many new teaching positions overall have been created under this Government? Can the Minister inform the House what additional assistance is being provided to schools by the Government through the school grant?

Mr BRADDY: This question is very timely, given the speech made by the member for Fassifern, Mr Lingard, last night in this House during the Adjournment debate. Mr Lingard made an extraordinary claim. During the course of his speech, he asked the Government to comment on whether or not only 20 teacher graduates had been employed this year. The member made other outrageous claims, but I shall deal with this one first.

Mr Lingard: I said you haven't got any money for new teachers.

Mr BRADDY: Last night, I listened to the member. I ask him now to listen to me. As at 5 March this year, the Government had employed 502 new teacher graduates. That means that Mr Lingard's figure is out by only 2 500 per cent. Even for Mr Lingard, it is not a bad effort to be out by 2 500 per cent! It really means that he has no regard for the truth or for checking facts. He makes outrageous statements, knowing that they will be included in *Hansard*. As to teacher graduates—the Government has announced a policy that, by the end of this year, it expects to employ 1 500 teacher graduates. We are well on the way to achieving that target.

Mr Lingard: Only replacing teachers.

Mr BRADDY: I am talking about 1 500 new teacher graduates—not 20, as the member suggested, although he knew that figure was incorrect. What about new teachers? Since this Government came to office, it has created 2 200 new teaching positions. Within our first two weeks in office, we employed 200 extra teachers whom the former National Party Government—in its dying days—had refused to employ. The member should not suggest that this Government is vulnerable in relation to teaching positions. The former National Party Government performed so poorly that this Government had to fix the position as a matter of urgency. As to the additional 700 teaching positions sought by the QTU—that is its business. Any union tries to get the maximum number of its members employed. However, no data exists to show that 700

extra teachers are needed. By mid-April, the employment figures will be available, and we will look at the facts. The member does not care about the truth, he simply makes claims that will be included in *Hansard*. In relation to school grants—the member for Fassifern suggested that this Government had required schools to do more with their grants. He knows that that is not true. Sure, matters such as carpet-cleaning and pest control must now be paid from school grants.

Mr Lingard: Admin officers.

Mr BRADDY: Not admin officers. This Government provided an extra $190,000 in school grants, specifically for those payments. In the past two years, an extra $7m has been paid in school grants. Anyone in Queensland who wants to know the truth would know that most schools have received school grant increases of 60 per cent to 100 per cent. Once again, it is an untruth for the member to imply that school grants have not been increased.

Mr De Lacy: He's misleading the House.

Mr BRADDY: He is misleading the House, and obviously does not care about education in this State.

Principles of Natural Justice

Mr LITTLEPROUD: In directing a question to the Attorney-General, I refer to the ministerial code of practice that was tabled today by the Leader of the Opposition. Page 67 of that Cabinet handbook suggests that the rule of natural justice should be excluded or modified only in exceptional circumstances. I ask: under what circumstances is this Government prepared to destroy the principle of natural justice?

Mr Wells: Could you repeat the second sentence of your question?

Mr LITTLEPROUD: Page 67 of the Cabinet handbook suggests that the rule of natural justice should be excluded or modified only in exceptional circumstances. I ask: under what circumstances is this Government prepared to destroy the principle of natural justice?

Mr WELLS: Not at all. I do not understand what the member is referring to when he talks about natural justice. In fact, I do not understand what his question is about at all. The Government in which I am very pleased to be the Attorney-General places very high store in the principles of natural justice.

Mr Borbidge: You've got a secret document that says you don't.

Mr WELLS: Who is asking the question? If it is the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, his question is quite unintelligible. If he is asking about natural justice, I should like to say a few words about the Government's record in respect of natural justice.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I hope that the Attorney is not going to debate his philosophy on natural justice.

Mr WELLS: I am simply answering the question as I understand it. The question is largely unintelligible. I do not know what the member is seeking.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: I rise to a point of order. I can help to clarify this matter——

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Condamine will resume his seat. I call the Attorney.

Mr WELLS: I am happy for the member to clarify his question, because I cannot make sense of it.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member has asked the question, and the Attorney will now answer it.

Mr WELLS: The answer to the honourable member's question is: this Government places very high store in the principles of natural justice. Unlike the previous Government, which used to have pieces of legislation peppered with violations of

natural justice, this Government has laid out in very clear terms in the Cabinet handbook and in other necessary documents that all legislation must be vetted by the Department of the Attorney-General to determine whether the fundamental legislative principles, including those relating to issues of natural justice, are adhered to. The Attorney-General's Department examines all these matters.

However, the fundamental principles of legislation are not absolutes. The fundamental principles, being principles, are capable of being pitted against other principles and, consequently, in those circumstances a choice has to be made between those principles. If a choice has to be made between questions of natural justice and whether or not an abuse—an illegality—which has not been countenanced by this Legislature is allowed to be unapprehended, then that choice has to be made, and it has to be made in the drafting stages of documents. As I understand it, this is the concern which the Deputy Leader of the Opposition raised, that is, the meaning of the phrase "exceptional circumstances" as it appears in the Cabinet handbook at that point. I understand that that is the technical question that he was asking. The reason for my doubt at the beginning was that I cannot conceive how the Deputy Leader of the Opposition could have understood what he was asking, and therefore I am convinced that he was asking something else. I believe that he has another question up his sleeve. If he wants to articulate it a little more clearly, I am happy to answer it.

Reversal of Onus of Proof in Criminal Proceedings

Mr LITTLEPROUD: In directing a second question to the Attorney-General, I remind him that we are talking about a document that applies to the Cabinet of which he is a member. I refer now to page 65 of the Cabinet handbook, which states that this Government is prepared to reverse the onus of proof rule in criminal proceedings by applying it to the defendant, not to the Crown, for the sake of policy.

Mr W. K. Goss: You did that a million times in Government. What are you talking about?

Mr LITTLEPROUD: This is a simple question to the Attorney-General. I ask: will he provide one example of Government policy which he believes could possibly justify reversal of the onus of proof?

Mr WELLS: I now understand what the honourable member is on about. He has been reading the latest edition of *Proctor*, which is the journal of the Queensland Law Society. The latest edition of *Proctor* has gone into a great deal of technical legal argument of this kind. It has made allegations that fundamental legislative principles have not been balanced in respect of certain pieces of legislation as the author would have liked them to have been. Coincidentally, those circumstances, about which the author of the argument in *Proctor* was complaining, tend to be circumstances in which the particular balancing of fundamental legislative principles, which was done in the construction of the documents concerned, did not lead to the financial profit of lawyers. That is unfortunate for them in those circumstances, but a balance has to be struck, and a balance has been struck in the case of all these principles. However, I would emphasise that the fundamental legislative principles are applied by this Government in a way that they were not applied previously.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition has asked specifically about the reversal of the onus of proof. Let me tell honourable members about the onus of proof. There are two different standards of proof which are required by the courts. The first standard of proof is proof beyond all reasonable doubt, and that is the proof which is required in criminal proceedings. The second standard of proof is proof on the balance of probabilities, and that is the standard of proof which is required in civil proceedings. The phrase "balance of probabilities" means exactly what it says, just as "beyond all reasonable doubt" does. It is very hard to explain these concepts any further than in the phrase which identifies them, but let me say that, when we are talking about "balance of probabilities", we are talking about a balance, and it is a question of who has to take the lead in discharging an onus of proof. In the balancing of these questions in the drafting

of legislation, one only reverses the onus of proof against the defendant when circumstances require it. One of those circumstances which require it relates to the defences which reduce murder to manslaughter in the Criminal Code relating to matters which are exclusively in the mind of the person who has allegedly committed the act. One of those circumstances which the Criminal Code has acknowledged and which honourable members opposite acknowledged tacitly—though they never understood them, of course—and which this Government explicitly acknowledges is that the principle that the burden of proof should not be reversed is one which can be waived in circumstances in which the information is solely in the mind of the person in respect of whom——

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I believe that the Attorney has adequately answered the question. I call the member for Pine Rivers.

Mr ELLIOTT: I rise to a point of order. The Minister for Environment and Heritage has given the Opposition 30 minutes' notice of a motion he proposes to move. I do not even have my file here.

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

Mr ELLIOTT: I find it quite incredible that we have——

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I am on my feet. I warn the member for Cunningham under Standing Order 123A. At this juncture, the honourable member has no right to take that point of order. I call the member for Pine Rivers.

Queensland's Economic Performance

Mrs WOODGATE: In directing a question to the Premier, I refer to repeated claims by the Director of the National Party in Queensland, Mr Crooke, seeking to denigrate the present State Government's management of the Queensland economy. I ask: can the Premier outline to the House the strength of Queensland's economic performance relative to that of other States?

Mr W. K. GOSS: I have noted some comments by Mr Crooke, presumably to try to bolster the fairly pathetic performance of the coalition forces in State Parliament on economic policy and economic issues. What have the National Party and the Liberal Party contributed to the debate in terms of policies and positive suggestions? The only thing that they can point to is their Federal colleagues' Fightback proposal. That is all they have going for them—the Fightback proposal, which would cause tremendous social division and increased unemployment and place a very severe burden on low income to middle income families in this State. When it comes to the economy and employment, that is all they have—Fightback. They stick up for the Fightback package, most of which was drafted for them by some private consultants in Canberra.

Mrs Sheldon: I thought you supported it.

Mr W. K. GOSS: I do not support the Fightback package. The Liberal Party could not think up the Fightback package itself; it had to be drafted for it by private consultants in Canberra to whom it paid $1m. In relation to the position in Queensland compared with other States—I have been given a copy of a journal issued last week in Canberra which reviews the performance of the States. It gives a very favourable report when comparing Queensland with the other States.

Mr FitzGerald: It was well based on a solid foundation. You had a great advantage.

Mr W. K. GOSS: The journal says that it should be recognised and understood that Queensland, after a mild downturn, is leading the nation into recovery. The journal also states, in relation to which States have had the worst recession, that Victoria has had the sharpest recession. It goes on to say that Queensland had only a minor fall in employment and the softest landing of any State. In relation to the timing of the recession, it states that—

> "Queensland is clearly out of the recession already and Western Australia, which was the worst behind Victoria in mid 1991, also appears to have turned the corner."

This journal is published by Access Economics, which is the private consultancy firm used by the Liberal and National Parties in Canberra to draw up and verify their Fightback package. The private economic consultants employed by the people opposite say that Queensland is the best of all the States when it comes to economic performance and employment. The Liberal and National Parties' economic consultants stated that New South Wales and Queensland avoided the financial collapses of the other States. New South Wales appears to have moved into the recession later, when Queensland was already starting to emerge from a mild slow-down. The most telling point of all that exposes the people opposite for the frauds they are is when their own private economic consultants and advisers state that—

> "Queensland is clearly leading the nation out of the recession based on his tourist and resource strengths, as well as the healthy state of its public finances which allowed some modest pump priming in the last State budget while other States were cutting back."

That was from their own consultants—an endorsement of what this Government has been saying in relation to its economic performance and its superior performance compared with every other State in relation to employment creation. The concluding comment from the Liberal Party's economic consultant is, "If you are after a job Queensland and Western Australia are the places to be."

Breast Cancer Screening Units

Mrs WOODGATE: I thank the Premier for that detailed answer. I ask the Minister for Health: is he aware that women in my electorate who are at risk from breast cancer are now being screened by the mobile breast screening and assessment service which is currently located at the Aspley Hypermarket? Can the Minister inform the House of the Government's plans to introduce breast screening to service the needs of all Queensland women, wherever they live?

Mr HAYWARD: I thank the honourable member for the question. I am aware of her very personal interest in this issue. Tragically, every year in Queensland 300 women die of breast cancer and 900 are diagnosed as having cancer. Last Wednesday, I launched the breast screening plan which will provide breast screening and assessment facilities in each of the State's 13 regions over the next three years. I acknowledge the support in this exercise of the Queensland Cancer Fund, because from the outset it has provided great support and encouragement. It has also been able to provide funding of $260,000 that went towards the mobile unit to which the honourable member referred. Currently, breast screening services operate in Brisbane through a permanent facility at the Royal Women's Hospital, and also through mobile screening units at the Gold Coast, Townsville and Rockhampton. There is also a mobile unit on the Darling Downs which will begin screening as soon as the back-up assessment facilities are finally completed. A new mobile unit will go into service in the peninsula regions of north Queensland next month. Another mobile unit is due on line next year to service the central west region. I want to again acknowledge the support of the Queensland Cancer Fund by saying that it has offered substantial capital funding for the unit that will go into the central west. By December this year, other permanent screening and assessment facilities will be established in Brisbane south and on the Sunshine Coast. By 1996, this Government will have a Statewide program fully implemented.

Police Commissioner Newnham

Dr WATSON: In directing a question to the Premier, I refer to the fact that Commissioner Newnham believed that action should be taken against politicians referred to in the CJC report, and I ask: was the Premier aware of, or made aware of, the Police

Commissioner's views on Thursday, 5 December 1991, the day the CJC report was tabled in Parliament?

Mr W. K. GOSS: Not as far as I recall. I do not know when the Police Commissioner made that statement. I have heard it referred to subsequently, but it is not material. To a large extent, I answered this question the other day—I think it was Tuesday—and I refer the member to *Hansard* for my answer. The other point that needs to be understood—even though the member chooses deliberately to ignore it—is that the question of legal liability was one that was not being determined by the Government and the Police Service, it was being determined by the independent counsel in the Criminal Justice Commission in consultation with the independent Director of Prosecutions. They made the decision and formed the opinion in relation to liability which has been accepted.

Dr Watson: I asked for your knowledge. It's a simple question.

Mr W. K. GOSS: It is a stupid question, because it has no relevance. Unless the member is able to give it some relevance, I am saying that I have heard that statement attributed to the Police Commissioner. I do not know when I heard it, but the point is that the statement is irrelevant to any material consideration of the question of liability or prosecution.

Retrospective Legislation

Dr WATSON: In directing a question to the Premier, I refer to page 65 of the Cabinet handbook tabled today by the Leader of the Opposition where it deals with retrospective legislation and states that rights should not be removed or liabilities imposed retrospectively unless there are exceptional circumstances, and I ask: can he explain, in the context of retrospective legislation which is removing citizens' rights or imposing liabilities, what is meant by the term "exceptional circumstances"?

Mr W. K. GOSS: Anybody with a reasonable education would understand that "exceptional circumstances" means exactly what it says. "Exceptional circumstances" means exceptional circumstances. Let me give an example so that the member can understand and appreciate that "exceptional circumstances" means exceptional circumstances; that the definition of "exceptional circumstances" is "exceptional circumstances". An example would be the legislation that was introduced in relation to Daydream Island, which contained a serious conflict between two competing policy goals.

Dr WATSON: I rise to a point of order. Is this not a debate that is before the House right now.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Premier is giving an example.

Mr W. K. GOSS: I will sit down.

Mr SPEAKER: No. I do not think that the Premier is debating aspects of the legislation at all. I will not rule the answer out of order. The Premier may answer by giving an example.

Mr W. K. GOSS: All I am saying is that that is an example of two significant and important competing policy considerations. It is the view of the Government that retrospective legislation is obnoxious. I think that all members would share that view. The Leader of the Opposition shares that view—although it depends on which week one is talking to him, because last week he objected to retrospective legislation in that context, whereas the previous week he was part of a bit of a circus at City Hall, dodging the pigeons and saying that we should have retrospective legislation to put an end to the Rochedale dump.

In a particular case, one might have, for example, a serious policy dilemma in terms of continuing with a particular commercial development which had been proceeded with on the basis of an alleged or perceived understanding, or the preservation of freehold ownership and control—particularly in relation to land use matters—in the hands of the State and the people. A difficult choice has to be made, and the decision that is made is

not a pleasant undertaking or one that is readily taken. It is one that has to be made because the circumstances are exceptional.

Sunshine Coast Flooding

Mr SZCZERBANIK: In directing a question to the Minister for Transport and Minister Assisting the Premier on Economic and Trade Development, I refer to recent flooding on the Sunshine Coast and specifically in the Pacific Paradise area. I refer also to residents' concern that Stage 2 of the Sunshine Motorway will increase the likelihood of flooding in the area. I ask: what action has his department taken to ensure that Stage 2 of the motorway will not increase flood levels along its route?

Mr HAMILL: I thank the honourable member for the question because there are a great number of similarities in the situation which is alleged to have prevailed on the Sunshine Coast and in the issue with which the honourable member is concerned, namely, reservation of land for the eastern corridor to the Gold Coast. The similarity is that there are coastal wetlands and coastal canelands in both areas. The situation on the Sunshine Coast was that the local growers near the Maroochy River were saying that Stage 1 of the Sunshine Motorway had contributed to the flooding in that area. Indeed, one of the growers is reported in the *Noosa Citizen* newspaper as follows—

> " 'Although the flood was caused by record rainfall, growers consider the new motorway has increased the height and duration of the flood,' said Mr Clarkson.
>
> 'This has undoubtedly contributed to the extent of damage suffered by growers. In the Maroochy River flood plain, the flood was probably the highest since 1893—a true 1 in 100 year flood.' "

The valid point in that statement is that, indeed, it was a very substantial flood, but there is no evidence whatsoever which suggests that Stage 1 of the motorway was a contributing factor to the flooding. In fact, the floodwaters passed to the north of Maroochy River and crossed to the Pacific Paradise area. The presence of the Sunshine Motorway had no effect on the movement of that water.

I assure the community in the area that extensive hydrology testing is undertaken with respect to any development, such as Stage 1, or indeed Stage 2, of the Sunshine Motorway. In fact, a large model was actually constructed for Stage 2 in the Queensland Hydraulics Laboratory, reproducing the whole watercourse area of the Maroochy flood plain, and the other creeks and tributaries in the area. In fact, the area that was under examination extended from Maroochydore in the south to the Yandina-Coolum road in the north and to a point approximately nine kilometres west from the coast. In order to look at the worst possible scenario, using the model, an examination was made of the effects of a 1 in a 100 year flood on that region, taking into account ongoing rainfall and, as well, a tidal surge of up to one metre. The planning has ensured that the culverts, watercourses, etc., which have to be provided in the new motorway development are such that they will not have a significant effect upon the height of waters that a 1 in a 100 year flood would generate. In other words, the community is being protected absolutely from any flooding that may occur to the level which the cane-growers have said could occur, namely, the 1 in a 100 year flood level.

I also give the assurance that the Maroochy Shire Council is concerned about the drainage problems that may affect residents in the Pacific Paradise area. After all, the Pacific Paradise area is located on the Maroochy River flood plain, and my department stands prepared to assist the Maroochy Shire Council in every way to ensure that the drainage requirements of the area are addressed properly.

Worongary Land Purchase

Mr SZCZERBANIK: In directing a question to the Deputy Premier, Minister for Housing and Local Government, I refer to the recent scare campaign undertaken by the member for Nerang regarding the purchase of land at Worongary, and I ask: what was the process by which this land was purchased? What facilities will be provided by the

Goss Labor Government in that area? Is it true that Liberal Party policy is to sell off all public housing?

Mr BURNS: I thank the honourable member for Albert for the question because over the past two years he has spent a considerable amount of time as a member of this Parliament trying to address the major problems that exist on the Gold Coast which arise from both the shortage of land and the fact that there are 2 500 people on the waiting list for housing. I am sure the honourable member will agree that the fact that 2 500 people are on the waiting list is terrible. Some people have to wait up to four years, which is a long time when one is in great difficulties. In the past, under a Liberal Housing Minister, in an area named Stephens, the Housing Commission built 289 Housing Commission homes in one lot. If one looks at places such as Rockonia Road in Rockhampton and Murray Street in Cairns, one finds some very bad Housing Commission developments that were produced by previous Governments. That has scared many people into saying that they do not want Housing Commission developments near their homes. Integration means putting Housing Commission homes in the midst of other homes. To do that, the Government must upgrade the standard of Housing Commission homes, landscape the frontyards as much as it can and try to make those homes meet the standard of other houses in the district. The member for Nerang has said that the Government is developing an estate of 239 blocks of land. He has convinced people that 239 houses will be built. He uses as an example——

Mr CONNOR: I rise to a point of order. I find that offensive. It is untrue. I did not do that.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member will resume his seat. How often do I have to express concern about frivolous points of order? I call the Deputy Premier.

Mr BURNS: The member for Nerang uses as an example the Swift Park estate, which was bought by the previous Government. I will not mention the name of the Minister concerned because he is not here now and cannot defend himself. The Minister bought three parts of the estate; the other quarter of it had been developed. As a result, a number of people on the estate said that, if the Government was going to build another couple of hundred houses on the estate, they wanted to sell their homes. When I became Minister for Housing, the Government bought the homes from the people on the estate. At that stage, the Government still had plans to put, as we say, approximately 20 per cent of the houses on an estate into public housing. The Government cannot keep those Swift Park numbers, because it bought the houses from other people. In relation to Swift Park—the Government has said that it will not locate 8, 10 or 20 houses together. We certainly will not put 289 houses together, as the Liberal Party did in its day, and we will keep the numbers down. The Government will try to work it out. I say to the people at Worongary: do not worry about the member for Nerang, Mr Connor; he is interested in the votes. I can understand that. It is a politician's way of life to be worried about the votes.

Mr Hamill: Particularly when the Liberal Party is on the slide.

Mr BURNS: Did the member see the cartoon last night, "Denver's Drop" and "Sheldon's Slump"? Through my officers, I gave the people at Worongary an assurance that the Government will integrate the houses in the estate and that it will try to keep the figure at 20 per cent as much as it possibly can, remembering that the Government buys houses from people who are in trouble and tries to help people out. I cannot say exactly what percentage of houses will be Housing Commission homes, but it is my policy to try to keep the figure at 20 per cent.

The member for Nerang said also that the Government must give a guarantee that the Housing Commission homes will be brick and tile. The Government does not give those guarantees. Most times, brick homes are built. However, there are times when we build homes with iron roofs. When one drives around the suburbs, one finds that many people are reverting to bull-nose roofs and all sorts of other styles. Contractors come to the Government with house-and-land packages. Those contractors design a house, but it is not the old Housing Commission style of years ago, when every house was built in

the same shape and style and had the same coloured fence. Sometimes, material other than brick is used.

Mr FitzGerald: Make a ministerial statement.

Mr BURNS: The member for Nerang is running a campaign on the coast. We must answer his questions. As far as the young man is concerned—the Government will put up for sale 136 blocks of land on the Swift Park estate. Some of them will go in by way of our project home scheme; others will go by way of sale. The Government will put them up for auction.

Mr FitzGerald: This is a Dorothy Dixer from your own side. You're debating the issue with the member for Nerang.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! A point of order——

Mr BURNS: There is no point of order. I have no point of order. I am keeping going, Mr Speaker. The Government will put the land on the market. If the member for Nerang continues his campaign and the Government does not sell the blocks, Housing Commission homes will have to be built on them. So, if the Government does not sell the land at auction and builds Housing Commission homes on it, the member for Nerang will be at fault. He can go back to the people at Worongary and say, "I caused you to have those houses here."

Prison Security

Mr FITZGERALD: In directing a question to the Minister for Justice and Corrective Services, I refer to the current crisis in prison security in this State and to the march on Parliament House today by prison officers, and I ask: will the Minister explain how he can pretend to maintain the safety of the public, the safety of prison officers and the safety of prisoners when the State Government has cut the custodial corrections budget by $21.9m this financial year and plans, by the end of the year, to employ 306 fewer prison officers?

Mr MILLINER: I quite clearly outlined the position in relation to staff numbers in Townsville. It is quite clear that a change is happening in corrections. It is very interesting to note some of the other things that are happening. I cite the example of the staffing levels at Borallon. Borallon was an experiment to see how the State system would compare with a privately operated system. In Borallon, there are 88 custodial officers to 240 inmates, which is a ratio of 1 to 2.73 offenders. In the State system in Townsville, the ratio is 1 to 1. It is amazing how the private sector at Borallon can do it but the State system cannot. The Government is constantly considering ways and means of improving the system. The member would be aware of the very successful Outreach camp in western Queensland and the tremendous job that is being done there by offenders. Very few officers are involved in that project compared with a normal correctional institution. I can give the people of Queensland an assurance that the Corrective Services Commission will continue the reform process so that Queensland is not only the leading State in this nation but also recognised internationally in corrections.

Prison Security

Mr FITZGERALD: In directing a question to the Minister for Justice and Corrective Services, I refer again to the crisis in prison security in Queensland and to the Government's expected saving of $7.5m a year in the running of the new Wacol remand centre on the basis of privatisation, and I ask: given the inadequacy of the current allocation of custodial corrections to protect the safety of the public, the prison staff and the prisoners, will the Minister ensure that some of those savings are allocated to improving the security of the system elsewhere, or is it the Government's intention to use those savings to reduce further the Budget allocation for custodial corrections?

Mr MILLINER: The suggestion in the honourable member's question is quite wrong. The situation is quite clear. The Government is reforming corrective services in this State.

Mr FitzGerald: What are you doing with the money that you are going to save from the remand centre—the $7.5m?

Mr MILLINER: That is a typical approach by members opposite. They think they can sit back and throw buckets full of money at problems. The fact of the matter is that we will provide to the people of this State the best and most cost-effective correctional system that we possibly can.

Mr De Lacy: They have opposed every efficiency initiative we have ever introduced.

Mr MILLINER: That is right, they do oppose every efficiency initiative that we put in place. This is a classic example of something that they do oppose. They obviously support the State-run system that would have cost between $16m and $18m. Does the honourable member for Lockyer support that?

Mr FitzGerald: I support the saving. What are you doing with the money?

Mr MILLINER: He does support it. He admits that he supports a system that would cost the taxpayers of this State between $16m and $18m. This Government is committed to financial responsibility. It has proven that time and time again, and it will continue to prove it.

Mr W. K. Goss: He supports us on this one.

Mr FitzGerald: I support the savings. What are you doing with the money?

Mr MILLINER: The honourable member for Lockyer has now changed his mind. Within 30 seconds, he has changed his mind. I am pleased to hear that. This Government is committed to financial responsibility. As I indicated, it has demonstrated time and time again that it is committed to financial responsibility. In the area of corrections, it is demonstrating that it is financially responsible.

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

WORLD HERITAGE LISTING OF FRASER ISLAND AND GREAT SANDY REGION

Hon. P. COMBEN (Windsor—Minister for Environment and Heritage) (11.38 a.m.): I seek leave to move a motion without notice.

Mr BORBIDGE: I rise to a point of order. I wish to speak to the——

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition may not do so.

Mr BORBIDGE: Well, I rise on a point of order.

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

Mr BORBIDGE: I rise on a matter of privilege.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition will resume his seat. At this stage, matters of privilege suddenly arising can be debated at any time. But at this time, leave has been sought to move a motion without notice. The Leader of the Opposition may——

Mr Borbidge: Debate it.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! No, he may not debate it. He may object to it or he may divide the House on it, but he may not debate it. I will put the motion that leave be granted.

Leave granted.

Mr COMBEN: I move—

"That this House supports the World Heritage Listing of Fraser Island and the Great Sandy Region."

Debate interrupted.

PRIVILEGE

Conduct of Business of House

Mr BORBIDGE (Surfers Paradise—Leader of the Opposition) (11.39 a.m.): I now rise on a matter of privilege. It relates to the farcical conduct of this House. There are 100 notices of motion on the business paper, and for the second Thursday in a row——

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I am on my feet.

Mr BORBIDGE: —the Government has run out of business.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I warn the Leader of the Opposition under Standing Order 123A. I am on my feet. We now have a debate.

Mr Borbidge interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! During this debate, the Leader of the Opposition will have the opportunity to make that point. He may not use the raising of a matter of privilege to——

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Honourable members, I am getting extremely annoyed at members who decide that they will rise on a matter of privilege just to make a point which is not within the context of Standing Orders. The Leader of the Opposition will have the opportunity to make that point when this issue is debated.

Mr LINGARD: I rise to a point of order. Mr Speaker, your role, as Speaker, is to protect all members of this Parliament. Therefore, it is also your role to protect the minority in this Parliament. Government members have the opportunity to give a notice of motion on anything suddenly arising. It is up to you, Mr Speaker, to decide whether this is an urgency motion suddenly arising on which this House should make a decision and whether the minority of the Opposition should be imposed upon immediately. You, Mr Speaker, have that role to decide whether this notice of motion is urgent and whether this minority should be subjected to a Government motion in this way. You should decide that.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The House decides whether leave is given or not. The House has decided. I call the Minister.

WORLD HERITAGE LISTING OF FRASER ISLAND AND GREAT SANDY REGION

Debate resumed.

Mr COMBEN: May I remind the House that, on 25 August 1987, a former Minister in my portfolio came into this House and, with leave and without notice, moved that this House condemned World Heritage listing. In some way, that is now seen to be different from what is going on here today. The House has given me leave. I have moved a motion, which we support. What is really going on is that the embarrassment of the other side, the embarrassment of the National Party——

Mr Elliott: It is a lack of common courtesy; that is what it is.

Mr COMBEN: A lack of common courtesy! I well remember the day of 25 August 1987. No-one gave me any of the notice that the Government gave the Opposition today. I sat there and wondered what was going to be moved. Geoff Muntz came in and just went bang, and that was the first we knew of it. We gave the Opposition notice today. The Opposition is embarrassed by its lack of policies in this matter.

Mr Elliott interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Cunningham will cease interjecting.

Mr COMBEN: It is with great pleasure and considerable pride that I rise in this House this morning, having given notice to the member for Cunningham, to move this motion.

Mr BORBIDGE: I move—

"That the debate be now adjourned."

I do so under the provisions of Standing Orders on the basis that we have a situation in which the Government had the opportunity earlier this morning to give appropriate notice to the Opposition. It failed to do so.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! If the Leader of the Opposition were to move, "That the question be now put", the Speaker would then have to judge whether there had been adequate debate on the matter. The motion has been moved that the debate be now adjourned. I have to put that question to the House. I would not have to put the question, "That the motion be now put", unless I thought that there had been adequate debate but I have to put the question on the motion that the debate be adjourned.

Question—That the debate be now adjourned—put; and the House divided—

AYES, 31		NOES, 53	
Beanland	Watson	Ardill	Mackenroth
Booth		Barber	McElligott
Borbidge		Beattie	McGrady
Connor		Bird	McLean
Coomber		Braddy	Milliner
Cooper		Bredhauer	Nunn
Dunworth		Briskey	Palaszczuk
Elliott		Burns	Pearce
FitzGerald		Campbell	Power
Gilmore		Casey	Robson
Goss J. N.		Clark	Schwarten
Harper		Comben	Smith
Hobbs		D'Arcy	Smyth
Horan		Davies	Spence
Johnson		De Lacy	Sullivan J. H.
Lester		Dollin	Sullivan T. B.
Lingard		Eaton	Szczerbanik
Littleproud		Edmond	Vaughan
McCauley		Elder	Warburton
Perrett		Fenlon	Warner
Rowell		Flynn	Welford
Santoro		Foley	Wells
Sheldon		Gibbs	Woodgate
Slack		Goss W. K.	
Springborg		Hamill	
Stephan	*Tellers:*	Hayward	*Tellers:*
Stoneman	Neal	Hollis	Prest
Turner	Quinn	Livingstone	P i t t

Resolved in the negative.

Mr COMBEN: We see yet another attempt by the National Party Opposition, and the Liberal Party in this instance, to try to prevent the people of Queensland and members of this House from seeing the real policies of those parties on Fraser Island. Their credibility is on the line. Are they prepared to let the people of Queensland see where they stand? Are they prepared to reveal whether they support the basis of the growth and development strategy and policy for that region or whether they are still away with the dinosaurs, as they used to be? Some four years ago, when they were in Government, members of the Opposition used to move the sorts of motions without any form of notice about which they are so upset and petulant today. They have conveniently forgotten that.

As honourable members would know, I have had a longstanding interest and involvement in Fraser Island and the Great Sandy Region. I have visited the area on many occasions, and I am always struck by the sheer beauty of Fraser Island and the Great Sandy Strait. Shortly before coming to office, I had the pleasure of visiting Fraser Island to announce the extension of the existing national park to ensure the further protection of important parts of the island. At the time of announcing that extension——

Mr Dunworth: Can't you speak off the cuff on this after all these years, or are you going to read this for half an hour?

Mr COMBEN: At the time of announcing that extension to the national park, the Government also announced its intention to conduct a full inquiry into the future conservation, management and use of Fraser Island. I will not take the up time of the House by answering frivolous interjections or going over the background to the establishment of this commission of inquiry, or the excellent work that the commission did under the leadership of Mr Tony Fitzgerald, QC. Suffice to say that the findings of that commission of inquiry were no great surprise to me.

Fraser Island is indeed a unique part of Queensland and Australia. It is the largest sand island in the world. The island contains the oldest known dune sequence and the greatest number of distinct independent dune systems in the world. The region also has a diverse number of lakes, including perch lakes and the world's largest dune lake. In

terms of vegetation, Fraser Island and Cooloola are one of the few places in the world where rainforests have developed on sand. The island also has wetland ecosystems, estuarine areas and a range of diverse habitats. Despite the proximity of the region to Brisbane and other major population centres in south-east Queensland, Fraser Island, Cooloola and the upper Noosa River and its catchments represent the primitive or semiprimitive wilderness end of the scale of development on coastal sand dunes with outstanding aesthetic wilderness, educational and research values.

In short, as Mr Fitzgerald found, Fraser Island is recognised as having areas of high, even outstanding, landscape values, within an Australian context. Further, Mr Fitzgerald found that Fraser Island possesses an overwhelming range of features not found elsewhere in Australia and is unique in a global context. It is in that context that Mr Fitzgerald made his recommendation. The principal recommendation of his report was that Fraser Island and the Great Sandy Region be nominated for World Heritage listing. Mr Fitzgerald stated in his report—

> "World Heritage listing of this area would be compatible with the optimum conservation management and use of the region and would emphasise the need to maintain its ecological integrity."

Furthermore, Mr Fitzgerald went on to say—

> "In its present condition, the entire region would be a magnificent inheritance to pass on to future generations."

Given those findings, I was particularly pleased to be part of the Cabinet that took the decision to recommend the nomination of Fraser Island and the Great Sandy Region for World Heritage listing. That nomination has now been forwarded to the World Heritage Committee. Earlier this year, Dr James Thorsell of the World Heritage Committee came out to inspect the region. It is the hope of the Government side of this House that Fraser Island and the appropriate parts of the Great Sandy Region will be inscribed on the World Heritage List at the end of this year.

This Government supports the inscription of appropriate sites on the World Heritage List in recognition of their outstanding value to all peoples of the world. However, the Government has to assess whether or not the opposition National and Liberal Parties are prepared to have a similar view of the world and to similarly support the local people. Indeed, it is unfortunate that throughout the period of the debate on Fraser Island, a number of members opposite, and a very small section of the Maryborough and Hervey Bay community, tried to whip up fear in that region. They told anyone who was prepared to listen that the Government would do nothing for them, that it would leave them high and dry, and that it did not care about them. Again, the facts speak for themselves, but, interestingly, the same members were running around telling anyone who would listen that World Heritage listing would be a disaster for Maryborough, Hervey Bay and Fraser island. Never before have I seen a more concerted campaign of smear and fear to whip up community anxiety over an issue such as World Heritage listing on Fraser Island. Never have I seen such psychological damage inflicted on a local community. It was tragic to see attempts to score political points at the cost of the confidence of the local community. Members opposite, and also a small section of the Maryborough and Hervey Bay community, told people that World Heritage listing was somehow or other removing their sovereign right to the land and that it was passing Fraser Island and a part of our coastline over to some international body. I think honourable members will remember that at times it was Colonel Gaddafi and the Libyans. I have said many times before, and I will say it again for members opposite to hear—hopefully it will eventually sink in—that World Heritage listing of Fraser Island and the Great Sandy Region does not affect the ownership or control of the land. Control is not passed from the Commonwealth, or to the Commonwealth, or from or to any international body. The World Heritage Committee does not and cannot have any legal rights over that particular area.

I will now refer to the public statements made by the Leader of the Opposition, his colleagues, and members of the Liberal Party. By so doing, one begins to get an insight

into where they stand on this particular issue. When Mr Borbidge visited Maryborough on 24 January this year, an article in the *Maryborough Chronicle* stated—

> "He said he regarded World Heritage listing as unnecessary."

Mr Borbidge's opposition to World Heritage listing and the protection of Fraser Island is a longstanding one. I point out that in October 1989, when Mr Borbidge was the Minister for Conservation, he stated—

> "No clear thinking person would ever consider it a reality that the island could be locked away. That is simply neither desirable nor possible . . . as to logging, the record of forest management on Fraser Island speaks for itself, in fact, while providing a valuable resource, sustained selective logging actually enhances, some parts of the island."

So much for Mr Borbidge and his commitment to environmental protection. So much for his commitment to the package of growth and development. The opposition to this listing by the National Party's Environment spokesman, Mr Elliott, is also well documented. Last October, in this House, he stated—

> "The National Party"—

and the highest compliment that I can pay him is to quote his own words—

> "of course takes a stance different from that of the Labor Party in respect of the Fraser Island issue. I do not know why the Government continually turns to a body like the World Heritage mob."

A media release from Mr Elliott in May last year stated—

> "The Government has accepted recommendations that pander to one section of the community and had accepted a massive overkill of what was needed to adequately protect Fraser Island."

The Opposition is clearly opposed to World Heritage listing. Where does the Liberal Party stand on the matter of World Heritage listing of Fraser Island? Does it support it or does it not? Is it going to stand up to the National Party—if it ever gets into Government—and ensure that this area is maintained on the World Heritage List and is protected, is not logged, and is not sand-mined? While Mr Borbidge and Mrs Sheldon are kissing on television, making up and telling us that they are a new unified team, they have fundamental differences in policy positions. It is clearly a contrived arrangement and not a love match made in heaven. It is hard enough to get a policy out of members opposite, but when one considers their public statements in an attempt to find out what their policy is, one sees that they have fundamentally different policy positions. That is not surprising. I remind honourable members of Mr Perrett's comments in September last year at the public meeting in Maryborough, when he stated—

> "In the long term Canberra has to be made to understand that we don't need world heritage. It has nothing to offer us, we must throw out the world heritage bureau."

I will quote from a Liberal Party document. The Hewson Federal coalition position in relation to World Heritage listing is—

> "Against this background the Liberal and National Parties also now make it clear our attitude to World Heritage listing of sites in Australia. The Liberal and National Parties support the inscription of appropriate sites on the World Heritage List in recognition of their outstanding value to all the peoples of the world."

Even more recently, on 24 May last year in a press release, Fred Chaney, the shadow Federal Minister for the Environment, stated—

> "The preservation of the unique qualities of Fraser Island has a strong support of the Federal Opposition . . . Fraser Island is a special place which combines a fascinating history with some splendid forest and wet land areas."

He continued—

> "I have not yet had a chance to study the Fitzgerald report but as far as any proposal for World Heritage listing is concerned, coalition policy supports listing."

Even the Queensland Liberal Party's policy on World Heritage listing differs from the views expounded by Mr Perrett and his colleagues in the National Party, particularly Mr Elliott. Again, in reference to national parks and World Heritage listing, the conservation and environment policy of the Queensland Liberal Party, released by a former Liberal leader, stated—

> "When the entire package is in place the Government will, where appropriate, seek Commonwealth support in nominating the area for World Heritage status of those areas which merited under internationally recognised and accepted criteria."

Today, I challenge the opposition parties—particularly the Liberal Party—to support this motion and be acknowledged as a party that recognises the unique environmental values of Fraser Island and the Great Sandy Region and that those areas should be protected, properly managed and conserved. If they do not, their opposition to this motion for reasons of petty, political point-scoring will again remind Queenslanders where those parties stand on the environment—out of step with friends and foes. The National Party is opposed to national parks; it is opposed to the protection of Fraser Island; and it is opposed to World Heritage listing. It is also opposed to environmental protection and to many of the positive initiatives that this Government has begun to put in place to turn this State's back on the development-at-all-costs philosophy that was predominant under the National Party Government and the National/Liberal Party coalition. As I said at the outset, it is with a great deal of pleasure and pride that I move this motion today. I hope that all members will support it.

Time expired.

Dr CLARK (Barron River) (12.01 p.m.): It is with great pleasure that I second the Minister's motion that this House supports the World Heritage listing of the Great Sandy Region. Preparing for today's debate brought back memories of a magical holiday many years ago on Fraser Island—memories of walking barefoot along the crystal clear waters of Wanggoolba Creek, memories of forest giants, ancient ferns, vivid blue lakes and endless beaches. To know that this priceless treasure will be there to be enjoyed by my children and grandchildren is a great joy to me and, I am sure, to all Queenslanders.

Preparing my speech for today also brought back many vivid and painful memories of conflict, anger, despair and bitterness, because those are my memories of the battle that was waged in north Queensland when the Hawke Labor Government proposed to nominate the Wet Tropics for World Heritage listing. The Minister said that he had never experienced such shameful scaremongering as that which occurred over the issue of World Heritage listing of Fraser Island. I have experienced that, and I know just how bitter that was and how exaggerated were the claims of the National Party as it fuelled and directed that battle over the Wet Tropics listing, primarily for its own political ends. As well as the desire for a States' rights battle in north Queensland, I maintain that much of the opposition in 1987-88 to World Heritage listing was based on shameful ignorance of the real significance of our natural heritage and ignorance of the nature of the World Heritage Convention.

It is interesting to note that, in 1988, Mr Muntz, the then National Party Minister responsible for conservation, said—

> "In north Queensland there would be a revolution. The people up there are actually livid.
>
> You really cannot expect people to stand back and let a centralist government take over on the advice of countries such as Bulgaria, Cuba, Tunisia telling them what we should do about our heritage."

He said also—

> ". . . listing was a State rights issue and the people of Australia would ignore the listing."

Regrettably, that is an example of the level of debate that occurred in far-north Queensland. Members have already heard that Mr Borbidge regards World Heritage listing as unnecessary. When talking about the different stance that the National Party adopts, Tony Elliott, the National Party's Environment spokesperson, said—

> "I do not know why the Government continually turns to a body like the World Heritage mob . . ."

That was really high-level debate! At a public meeting in Maryborough, Trevor Perrett, the member for Barambah, representing the then Leader of the National Party, Russell Cooper, said—

> "In the long term Canberra has to be made to understand that we don't need world heritage. It has nothing to offer us . . . we must throw out the World Heritage Bureau . . ."

The hostility and antagonism to World Heritage listing appears to be based on a mistaken belief that Queensland would be taken over and dictated to by foreign powers. In view of that, I have decided to give members opposite a brief history lesson and explain the workings of the World Heritage Committee in an attempt to show that the fears of the National Party are totally baseless and, hopefully, prevent a third repetition of the nonsense that has occurred in the past in relation to the whole process of World Heritage listing.

Members opposite fail to recognise the leading role that Australia has played on the World Heritage Committee—a role of which we should be proud. The World Heritage Convention, properly known as the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, was adopted in 1972 by the UNESCO General Conference. I remind members that Australia was actually one of the creators of UNESCO. America was the first signatory to that convention, and Australia ratified the convention in 1974. It now has more than 100 signatories, with other countries adding their names all the time. The convention's philosophy is explained in the preamble, as follows—

> "The cultural heritage and the natural heritage are increasingly threatened with destruction not only by the traditional causes of decay, but also by changing social and economic conditions which aggravate the situation with even more formidable phenomena of damage or destruction.
>
> The deterioration or disappearance of any item of the cultural or natural heritage constitutes a harmful impoverishment of the heritage of all the nations of the world.
>
> Since parts of the cultural or natural heritage are of outstanding interest and therefore need to be preserved as part of the world heritage of mankind as a whole . . . it is incumbent on the international community as a whole to participate in the protection of the cultural and natural heritage of outstanding universal value, by the granting of collective assistance which, although not taking the place of action by the State concerned, will serve as an effective complement thereto."

I would have thought that members on all sides of this House would support that philosophy.

The signatories to the convention commit themselves to help in the identification, protection, conservation and preservation of world heritage sites and to refrain from taking any action which might directly or indirectly damage them. They recognise that the identification and protection of those parts of the heritage which are located on their own territories is primarily their responsibility, and they agree that they will do all that they can with their own resources and with what international assistance they can obtain to ensure adequate protection. They agree, amongst other things, to adopt policies which integrate the protection of that heritage into comprehensive planning programs and to take appropriate legal, scientific, technical, administrative and financial measures necessary for its protection. The convention is administered by the World Heritage Committee, which is composed of 21 American States elected at a General Assembly of

States every two years. Australia was elected at the first General Assembly in 1976, and has served continually since then.

I will comment on the powers that people believe accrue once we become a signatory to the convention. I refer to a paper in the last issue of the *Environmental and Planning Law Journal* of 1 March 1991. The author of that article, the foundation director of the Trinity Peace Research Institute, stated—

> "The Convention is not, in my view, as strong as some Australians would like, or as dictatorial as other Australians fear. Australia cannot be compelled to add further properties to the List—any more than it could be compelled to become a party to the Convention in the first place. If a government fails to take adequate action to protect a property on the List, the property could be removed eventually from the List—but the government could not somehow be 'punished' for allowing this deterioration to take place. A property which does get onto the List remains under the control of the original owner; it does not become a direct responsibility of international civil servants. If the property is not (in Australia's case) on Commonwealth Crown Land (say it is on State Crown Land) then it will still not be transferred to the Commonwealth via this Convention. Being listed means that a property may attract some international financial and technical assistance . . . Only Australia can nominate Australian properties to the List—no other government and no individual or organisation may do this. The World Heritage Committee cannot unilaterally add properties to the List."

I hope I have demonstrated that the fear that has been expressed continuously by the National Party is totally baseless.

Turning to the Great Sandy Region—we have already heard of many of its qualities from the Minister. It is one of the few properties that meets all four criteria that are necessary for World Heritage listing. When the Goss Government was elected in 1989, one of the first things it did was to drop the doomed High Court challenge mounted by the National Party against World Heritage listing of that region. I believe that the timber industry in far-north Queensland was exploited by the National Party for its own political ends. It wanted a State's rights issue to create opposition to the Federal Labor Government. Had the National Party cooperated with the Federal Government at that time, the timber-workers would have had the type of compensation package delivered by the Labor Government for the workers of Maryborough.

Dr CLARK: With the attitudes of the National Party and the Liberal Party to World Heritage listing, what would one expect for the future? I now pose the question as to what might happen if the unthinkable occurred and the National Party and the Liberal Party were back in Government. We know very well what would happen. The Liberal Party's support of World Heritage listing would mean nothing, because the National Party would have its say and we would be faced again with constant struggle and conflict. We would never see support for a World Heritage nomination and, once again, Queensland would suffer at the hands of a National Party displaying its ignorance and lack of care for our natural heritage.

Mr ELLIOTT (Cunningham) (12.10 p.m.): Before putting forward the Opposition's position on Fraser Island and the Great Sandy Region, I will touch briefly on the total and absolute ignorance and hypocrisy——

Mr Comben: 25 August 1987—I remember the date well.

Mr ELLIOTT: That is exactly what is wrong with Government members.

Mr Comben: We gave you notice, that's what happened.

Mr ELLIOTT: At the last election, the Government went to the people of Queensland on the platform of open, accountable government. It claimed that we would not see any more actions such as this.

Mr Comben: Since when has the debate been undemocratic? It is something that has been debated for 40 years.

Mr ELLIOTT: The Minister knows exactly what I am saying. There is legislation on the notice paper and there are notices of motion listed. Had the Opposition requested a debate on the Fraser Island issue or World Heritage listing and the Government brought forward the debate without notice, it would not be in a position to squeal. It would cop it sweet and debate the issue. However, the Government is cutting across its guidelines and everything that it promised the public of Queensland, which was that we were not going to see any more of these excesses. The Government is treating the Parliament of Queensland with distain and contempt. I will give an example why that is so. I do not have my file with me, and my temporary secretary, who has been employed for a week, has no chance of finding the complete file or even of faxing a document from my files. I am more than happy to debate any issue at any time, but I suggest that the Minister should display common courtesy. Because he treats people with arrogance and ignorance, he is becoming the most hated person in Queensland. When he travels throughout Queensland, he even takes a food-taster with him. He should not be surprised that people regard him in that fashion.

On the issue that is being debated, it is interesting that there is a complete division between the Federal ALP and the State ALP. We have Keating trying to draw the flak away from the debate on the economy by saying, "We want to be a republic. We want to be independent of other countries. We want to do our own thing. We want to stand on our own feet." However, on this issue, the ALP wants to hide behind the World Heritage listing of the entire Fraser Island and Great Sandy Region. What the Government is saying about the National and Liberal Parties is totally wrong. Both those parties have an unequivocal commitment to the protection of Fraser Island and the Great Sandy Region. The public record on that issue is there for all to see.

I was the Minister who extended Stage 2 of the Cooloola National Park. I did so for a very good reason, which was to ensure that the pristine nature of the Noosa River area was maintained for future generations. By coming in here and talking the way they do, Government members are being hypocritical. They do not know what they are talking about. I was the Minister who declared the environmental park on the north shore of the Noosa River. The reason for that is quite clear. I believed that an environmental park in Noosa was necessary so that people would have open space and areas in which to enjoy bushwalking. The declaration was a means of protecting the river's environs. It stopped the sort of development that I believe would have taken place if nothing had been done. My commitment to that area is unequivocal and my actions are on the record. At that time, the National Party did not make declarations in respect of large parts of the Noosa north shore for very good environmental reasons. We were advised by people with impeccable credentials and we acted accordingly.

Mr Barber: Ian Cameron advised you.

Mr ELLIOTT: Ian Cameron had nothing to do with it. It was not an issue in those days. The Government, for political reasons, is prepared to put a blanket cover over an area of the Noosa north shore in which not a tree is left standing. It has been totally denuded of vegetation.

Mr Barber: That is untrue.

Mr ELLIOTT: It is true. The honourable member is a hypocrite. He has seen the areas that I am talking about. How dare he come in here and talk in that way! He knows only too well that large areas, such as Swin Nicholson's dairy, have been suggested for heritage listing. It was denuded of much of its natural vegetation. Large areas have been sandmined. The honourable member should not come in here and tell me what he is doing, because I can see for myself. It is absolute hypocrisy for the honourable member to suggest those areas should be part of the World Heritage List. I believe that the Government will come a cropper.

I have received mail from the gentleman who came to examine the proposal for World Heritage listing. He will not have his principles compromised simply because the ALP is running a political agenda. The mail I have received says that he was not the least bit impressed with a lot of those areas and does not believe that they should be placed on the World Heritage List. The Government is doing nothing more than running a

political agenda to try to have re-elected a member who has run away from his own electorate because he told lies about tolls in letters that are on the public record. The Government went ahead and imposed tolls, anyway. The member is running away from his electorate.

Mr BARBER: I rise to a point of order. The honourable member has said that I am running away from my electorate. I have lived in Coolum for 10 years and will continue to live there. I will continue to represent the towns of Coolum and Noosa. The honourable member is misleading the House.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Palaszczuk): Order! I take the point of order. I hope that the member for Cunningham appreciates the sentiments expressed by the member for Cooroora.

Mr ELLIOTT: It is interesting that the Government is prepared to take such action. The Government has the power and legislative capability to be able to declare whatever area in this State it considers should be a national park. Honourable members opposite can come in here, give notice of a motion, and go through all the customary forms of debate——

Mr Gilmore: They can set the controls.

Mr ELLIOTT: The Government can set the controls and do whatever it wishes in respect of protecting the environment. I know that the Government poses by pandering to a body which, quite frankly, is totally hypocritical in its actions. The Government is protecting people who belong to the World Heritage Committee. Let us have a look at some of its members. What is the environmental record of Brazil? The only thing Brazil seems able to do about its environment is to clear-fell and burn the timber for charcoal. Did honourable members see the television program depicting that? I did, and I was absolutely horrified at the environmental vandalism that Brazilians have perpetrated on their country, yet this Government puts forward Brazil's vandalism of its pristine environment as an example that should be followed. I do not want Brazil to tell me how to protect the environment; neither should the Government. The Government should take Keating's advice in one respect—he does not give much good advice—which is that it should be prepared to stand on its own two feet and do its own thing. Mr Keating has said that Australia does not have to run to Britain for protection, and I say that the Government should not have to run to an international body in order to protect our environment. The Government is totally hypocritical in that respect. Because it is frightened that it will lose seats, it is not prepared to stand up and be counted. The Government is trying to hide behind an international body.

Let me refer to the Fraser Island issue. I have feelings for Fraser Island as strong as those of any other honourable member in this Chamber. I have probably been there more times than have most other honourable members, and I know it as well as anyone does. I find it absolutely unbelievable that honourable members opposite will not give credit where it is due and praise the actions of the joint committee comprising the Forestry Department, the Department of Lands, the National Parks and Wildlife Service and the Department of Mines. A lot of concessions were made and a joint management program put in place. The end result was that instead of Fraser Island being covered with rubbish and facing a lot of other problems, people started to manage it properly. Regrettably, the Government has not put much money into the management of the island's environment. I keep saying in this Chamber that the Minister should be putting more money into the island's management budget, but all that he wants to do is go out west and steal properties from the poor old cockies. He wants to take properties that, in many instances, have had the timber cleared by bulldozers with chains. Nevertheless, the Minister is still prepared to take them.

I have no argument with national parks being declared in areas that have never been in anything but a pristine condition and are suitable for national parks purposes, but all that this Minister is doing is chasing acres. He is prepared to take any sort of land as long as it gives him an aggregated area and as long as he can tell the people of Queensland at the next election, "We have increased the national parks estate from 2 per cent", to whatever it might be at the time of the election. The Minister is not

prepared to take into account the sensitivities associated with management of the land. I do not know what the Minister learnt when he worked on the land, but it was obviously not a lot. When people take up a property and construct extra watering points, it increases not only the property's stock-carrying capacity but also the capacity——

Mr COMBEN: I rise to a point of order. I have some difficulty in understanding how this relates to the motion before the Parliament.

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

Mr ELLIOTT: It has every relevance.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I have ruled that there is no point of order. I direct the member to continue with his speech.

Mr ELLIOTT: I am drawing an analogy between the Minister's attitude in this Parliament and the attitude he displays right across the State. After all, I thought he was the Minister in charge of national parks.

Mr Comben: But that's not what we are talking about. We are talking about Fraser Island.

Mr ELLIOTT: We are discussing the Minister's attitude, which is reflected right across the State because he is not providing sufficient funds for management. At one stage, he increased the acquisition budget by 400 per cent and at the same time lifted the management budget by only 14 per cent, yet he has the hide to come into this Parliament and say that he loves Fraser Island and that he is the great Messiah of conservation. The Minister is not doing a decent job on the management of the area. He is increasing the area of national parks throughout the State, yet he is not prepared to stand up and fight for the management budget he should have to enable him to look after these areas. The Minister is bereft of policy and is so strapped for cash that he has to steal—lock, stock and barrel—my policies on the conservation corps, which would provide an opportunity for looking after Fraser Island by encouraging volunteers to work with national parks officers to manage the area much better.

The Minister should put revenue where his mouth is and stop pandering to everyone else. He should stop squealing about a lack of funds and saying that it is all the fault of the previous Government. The Minister is part of this Government, and he should stand on his own two feet and tell the Parliament how he is going to manage this area. He should stop trying to get money from everyone else and start doing these things himself. He is a lame-duck Minister. He is a failure, and since he has been Minister for the Environment, he has not managed properly the environment in this State. All he has done is acquire grazing properties. He has taken advantage of the opportunity afforded by the worst recession that Australia has ever seen and the worst land prices in six or seven decades. To my knowledge, he has not acquired one important area in the Scenic Rim proposal. What is the Minister doing about that? If he is concerned about Fraser Island and the Great Sandy Region, why is he not declaring national park areas himself? He is not prepared to put his money where his mouth is, but he wants other organisations to do it for him.

Mr Dunworth: That's all he's done. He's done nothing else.

Mr ELLIOTT: That is right. Unfortunately, that is all he has done. Quite frankly, he is an apology for a Minister. I find it quite abhorrent that the Minister could come into this Parliament and, without notice, expect members to engage in a detailed and rational debate. Although the debate on this matter has been relevant, it is not as detailed as it would have been if the Minister had extended the courtesy of giving members reasonable notice. I am telling the Minister right now that he is on the wrong tram if he thinks he can drive a wedge between the Liberal Party and the National Party, because members of both parties have an absolute commitment to Fraser Island and the Great Sandy Region. My commitment is on the record as a previous Minister for Tourism, National Parks, Sport and The Arts and the Liberal Party's spokesman is on record by virtue of his press releases. If the Minister took the trouble to read those press releases, he would know that the Liberal Party's spokesman also has a strong commitment to

Fraser Island. He has probably visited the island more often than the Minister has, and he knows the area backwards.

For someone who professes to understand Fraser Island, it is absolutely unbelievable and quite repugnant that the Minister would recommend that the area from the Ngkala Rocks to Sandy Cape be closed to all except backpackers. That is a pristine area which is not affected one iota by people driving along the beach, and the Minister knows that. He also knows that no damage is being caused to Fraser Island by people driving anywhere along the beach, so what is the difference if they drive just above the waterline to take their children to see the sights? The average yahoo who visits Fraser Island to muck about does not go to that area, anyway, because it is too much trouble. The people who visit that area have a complete commitment to Fraser Island, and they have an understanding of, and empathy for, the area. They want their children and future generations to be able to enjoy it. The Minister will go down in history as one of the most hated men in Queensland because he is the one who closed off the area from Ngkala Rocks to Sandy Cape. Again, he was not game to take that action himself; he had to hide behind an overseas organisation. The Minister has not got the guts to come into this Parliament and take the action himself. He can be compared to a little boy who hides behind an old lady's skirts, and I find his actions quite abhorrent. All the recommendations that have been proposed are quite over the top. Fraser Island is a family paradise at the moment, and that is what it should be. It is the most interesting and diverse island in the world.

People who live on the island have been treated with contempt. When Tony Fitzgerald visited the island, did he consult with the people who live there? Can the Minister tell me the name of one person on whose door he knocked and said, "What do you think of this?" Tony Fitzgerald merely walked up and down the beach, and the only people he listened to were those who hung off his coat-tails all day, and they were all mates of the Minister. They made certain that they kept so close to Tony Fitzgerald that no-one else could have an opportunity to speak to him. I will not embarrass people by naming them, but I will meet privately with the Minister and give him the names and addresses of people who wanted to have a say, but felt totally constrained and were not able to do so. They do not support most of the recommendations that have been made. The Minister and his mates are riding roughshod over the rights of these people, and the whole process has been totally undemocratic. I find it quite abhorrent that the Minister can come into the Chamber today, move a motion without notice and give the Opposition no opportunity to research the motion and debate it properly. The Minister will go down in the history of this State as being hated and despised for the things that he has done right across this State and for what he is trying to perpetrate on the people of Queensland, in particular, the residents of Fraser Island. He is not respecting their rights. He is not looking after them in any way, shape or form.

Time expired.

Mr DUNWORTH (Sherwood) (12.30 p.m.): The Liberal Party supports the motion, but to set the parameters for the debate, I will firstly read from *Moonbi 76*. Moonbi is the name given by the Butchalla Aboriginal tribe to the central part of Fraser Island, which they knew as Kgari, and *Moonbi 76* is the newsletter of the Fraser Island Defenders Organisation. The newsletter of 15 February 1991 states—

> "Fortunately the Liberal Party, which appears to be the only party to accept One Vote-One Value in Queensland is also becoming much more environmentally aware.
>
> On 27 November, Liberal Environment Spokesperson, David Dunworth, told Parliament: The Goss Government has poor regard for the environment as it does for the veracity of its promises. What has happened to the other famous promise to stop logging on Fraser Island? Although there is ample evidence in numerous reports on Fraser Island prepared since the start of the sandmining controversy for any Government with guts to govern to make a decision, it has flick passed to Mr Fitzgerald."

Shades of daylight-saving, I would say. The Government lacks the guts to govern. We should also put the debate in perspective by considering the next Bill on the notice paper—the Valuation of Land Amendment Bill. I note that no Government member is going to speak to that Bill. The Valuation of Land Amendment Bill relates to resumptions of land throughout Queensland for national parks, such as Riversleigh and possibly the north shore. Although people are drastically affected by its provisions, which relate to actions that will be taken by his department, the Minister will not even speak in the debate. Their rights have been trodden on and crushed into the ground. Neither the Minister nor anyone else on the Government side wants to talk about land tax, rates, resumptions——

Mr COMBEN: I rise to a point of order. I object to the allegations being made because, if the honourable member had been a member of this Parliament for a longer time, he would know that it is a convention that Ministers do not normally speak to other Minister's Bills.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Palaszczuk): Order! I uphold the point of order. The member will return to the subject matter of the debate.

Mr DUNWORTH: Well, nobody else from the Labor Party is going to speak at all. I know that all members have read my maiden speech, because it was outstanding. I posted out 15 000 copies of it. People clamoured for more, but I could not supply copies in the quantity required. Members will note that, in that first speech that I made in the Parliament, I stated that my position and the position of the Liberal Party was to stop logging on Fraser Island. That was well before the Labor Government did anything about the matter. At that stage, the Government was still saying, "Maybe we should have another inquiry." This week, Mr Goss had the audacity to say that he is sick of inquiries. What a laugh! What a joke! Under this Government, inquiries have been the growth industry.

What did the Minister do about Fraser Island? He sat there and was run over, just as he was with the Queensland Heritage Bill. That Bill has holes in it that are large enough to drive a semitrailer with three dogs behind straight through the middle. On the issue of Fraser Island, the Minister sat back and was steamrolled again. He did not have the guts to get up and push for Fraser Island. The Minister let Mr Goss throw the issue over to another inquiry, then came out with a smirk on his face and pretended that he had done something. The Minister has done nothing. He is a disgrace. The only thing that the Minister has been good at is stamping people's rights in Queensland. Why has the Minister not said one word about Myora? What is the position of the Minister on Myora or Byfield? Today, honourable members are talking about the World Heritage listing of Fraser Island. The position in north Queensland should also be considered. The Minister is the joint chairman of the ministerial council. What has happened there? Absolutely zilch. What happened last week? The farcical situation arose in which the chairman of a small local shire—the Douglas Shire—whose roads are used by hundreds of thousands of tourists annually—and I notice that the "mouse" from Barron River says nothing about it——

Dr CLARK: I rise to a point of order. I find those remarks offensive. I spoke on that issue in the Adjournment debate last night. Unfortunately, the member was not in the Chamber to hear me.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I uphold the point of order and I ask the honourable member for Sherwood to withdraw the remarks that were offensive to the member for Barron River.

Mr DUNWORTH: I withdraw the offensive remarks. We have a queue of developments in the Wet Tropics. One of the main reasons why that region was nominated for World Heritage listing was to promote it as a tourist destination. One of the smallest local authorities in Queensland is right in the heart of the Wet Tropics, but what has the Minister's department done? It has done nothing—absolutely nothing! What did the Minister say? The Premier agreed with—or was going to think about—taxing tourists. Yet, at the same time, when the Federal Government came up with the suggestion that, to help maintain the amenities on the reef, people could pay a

dollar a day for a trip to the Great Barrier Reef—another World Heritage region—the State Government jumped up and down and said, "No new taxes." What is the difference between that and the Wet Tropics? What happened to $3m? Last year, the administration budget for the Minister's department increased by $10m. Does the Minister know how many extra people are on the ground to supervise places such as the Wet Tropics?

Mr Comben: Yes.

Mr DUNWORTH: Twelve in the Minister's department. I have just been to north-west Queensland, where there will be set aside a park of 250 000 hectares. Does the Minister know how many people will look after that? Six! I refer also to Lakefield park, which is the same size as Kakadu. Kakadu is World Heritage listed. Does the Minister know how many people look after Kakadu? One hundred and twenty! Today, this Minister is proclaiming this magnificent treasure of Fraser Island and the Great Sandy Region, and what will he do about it? I will tell him what he will do about it. He will do the same as he did in relation to the Wet Tropics. He will sit on his hands and do nothing. All that has happened in relation to the Wet Tropics is that a number of meetings have been held, developments have stagnated and there has been no decision-making. The same thing will happen in relation to Fraser Island. The forestry workers have been taken away.

Mr Nunn: Tell us about the forestry workers.

Mr DUNWORTH: The honourable member should listen. This is informative. It is in his area. I am an authority, so he should listen. I will tell the House what will happen in relation to Fraser Island. The forestry workers have been taken out. How many forestry workers were taken out? Who has replaced them? Who will maintain the roads? Who will cut the fire breaks? If in the last financial year the Minister could increase the number of rangers in his department by only 12, what will he do about Fraser Island? Under his administration, it will become degraded—totally degraded. Nothing happens.

Let me refer to a few other issues. What about the Noosa north shore? People have lived there for up to 100 years. They have raised cattle there, and quarries are still there. They mine there. Those people have been included in the World Heritage area. Do honourable members know what consultation took place? Of course we know. The champion of consultation—ask the Seymours at Riversleigh—stamped over the people on the north shore again. They asked for a meeting with the Minister, but what did he do? Nothing! He sat in Ann Street, surrounded by thousands of bureaucrats. He did not even have the courtesy to head up to the north shore and talk to those people. I did it and Joan Sheldon did it. Those people did not even know who the Minister was. They did not even know what he looked like.

Mr Comben interjected.

Mr DUNWORTH: That will give the Minister food for thought. Maybe in his summing-up he will comment on a few things. Those people have never had their rights explained to them. They still do not know what they can do. The people in Teewah do not know what they can do. They do not know how long it will take to have developments undertaken there. They do not know whether they can build a new home on a block of land.

Mr Barber: Of course they can.

Mr DUNWORTH: They do not know. Obviously, the honourable member has not spoken to them. He was not at any meeting, either. I think he backslid as well. The situation is that there is an area that Mr Fitzgerald did not find worthy of listing as a World Heritage area. The Minister has listed it. Those people sit there—and they know that I am a champion of Fraser Island and the Great Sandy Region—and they ring me daily.

Mr Nunn: A champion what?

Mr DUNWORTH: A champion for their cause. It is spelt "c-h-a-m-p-i-o-n". It means a leader. Does the honourable member understand it now? I am the champion for their cause.

Mr Comben interjected.

Mr DUNWORTH: Keep it up. I am enjoying it. The shadow Minister for the Environment and the Liberal spokesman on the environment can stand in this place and speak about this issue. We do not have to stand there like an absolute dunce and read out a prepared speech. I must admit that I do believe that the Minister is compassionate and caring about the environment and heritage, but he just cannot perform. He is a total let-down. Let us see what will happen in relation to World Heritage listing and the Aboriginal land legislation. There will be a World Heritage area, an Australian treasure, and do honourable members know by whom it will be owned?

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Palaszczuk): Order! The House will come to order. The member for Sherwood will continue with his speech.

Mr DUNWORTH: The total area of Fraser Island will be the subject of an Aboriginal land claim. This listed area will not be owned by the people of Australia but by the Aboriginal people of Australia. It will be an exclusive Aboriginal preserve. Under the Queensland Heritage Bill that passed through this place on Tuesday night, protection will not be given to Fraser Island. As a result, areas such as Central Station, where there are heritage buildings, will not be protected because they will be Aboriginal land.

Mr Elliott: That's right.

Mr DUNWORTH: I am right.

Mrs Bird: Aborigines are Australians, too.

Mr DUNWORTH: Of course they are Australians, but I am an Australian. Why should a particular group of Australians own a national park? Why do we not say that all English migrants should own it, or that all of Jim Elder's football team can own it? As Australians, are we not all the same? We are all the same! I would like to see adequate consultation with the people on Fraser Island so that those who are generally concerned about their rights know how they will be affected—and there are a lot of them, as the member for Cooroora would know. They do not know how this listing will affect their properties. They do believe some propaganda. I believe that they should have those rights explained fully to them. The last time that I was speaking to them, they had not received any information whatsoever. The Minister has to start directing some of his budget funds away from bloated bureaucracies into on-the-ground staff. People have to be provided so that national parks such as Fraser Island do not turn into areas that are infested with feral pigs, feral cats, foxes and exotic plants. That is happening throughout Queensland because there is no budget to combat it.

I do not have much more to say on this. I do not have to put forward my credentials or the Liberal Party's credentials, because they have been up there in lights for all to see. Since joining the Wilderness Society in 1983 after taking an interest in environmental issues like this one, I have travelled to Kakadu, the Daintree, down the Franklin, walked around in the south west and visited the Carnarvon Gorge. I inspected these places at first-hand.

Mr T. B. Sullivan: Another log for the Wilderness Society!

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr DUNWORTH: My feeling for these national parks is straight from the heart, and I will defend them from the heart. The Liberal Party supports the motion.

Mr DOLLIN (Maryborough) (12.47 p.m.): It gives me a great deal of pleasure to speak to this motion for the World Heritage listing of Fraser Island and the Great Sandy Region. World Heritage listing of Fraser Island will put the icing on the cake of the Queensland Government's growth and development package, which is securing the

future of the Great Sandy Region and, in particular, the economies of Maryborough and Hervey Bay. Heritage listing of Fraser Island is attracting tourists like honey attracts bees, and the tourist industry is rapidly building up its infrastructures to meet this larger demand. Between 1990 and 1994, in excess of $200m will be invested in tourism in the Maryborough, Hervey Bay and Fraser Island regions. This can only be explained as an explosion in the industry, due to a large extent to the anticipated World Heritage listing of the Great Sandy Region and Fraser Island, which will now be a reality.

A quick summary of employees working in the hospitality industry on Fraser island alone—not counting Hervey Bay or Maryborough—is as follows: Orchid Beach, 27; the Cathedrals, 8; Eurong Resort, 70, plus a further 70 when expansion that is currently under way is completed within a month or so; Happy Valley, 11; and Dilli Village, 2. The overall cost of the Kingfisher Bay development is $150m. At present, there are 120 construction workers on the site. An estimated 150 permanent staff will be employed on completion of that project. This first stage is due to open in May. In addition, Williams and Company are constructing a resort comprising 29 villas for an investment of $10m, but the number of permanent staff is not yet known. These figures do not include the day tour buses operating on the island or the many pleasure craft that operate in the Great Sandy Strait taking tourists on whale-watching and fishing excursions and which also visit the island. There are presently approximately 150 construction workers on the island, plus 110 hospitality staff. It is predicted by the Fraser Coast South Burnett Regional Tourism Board that, by the end of this year, there will be in excess of 300 employees on Fraser island alone. When the whole region is taken into consideration, one is talking about at least 500 additional jobs, and World Heritage listing will be the catalyst for this huge investment.

I am delighted to be able to report to the members of this House that what was termed a "disaster" for Maryborough and Hervey Bay by the doom and gloom merchants of the Nationals and Liberals has turned out to be a bonanza for Fraser Island. The leading article in the *Maryborough Chronicle* of 19 December 1991 states—

> "If Maryborough was on the open stockmarket, its share prices would have rocketed yesterday. In the space of an hour the city learned that an awaited woodchip mill would create 80 instead of the expected 30 jobs and that Walkers Limited's future in the city had been ensured with a $6.4m investment. 'Christmas has come early', was a repeated comment as the good news sped around Maryborough.
>
> The city's firm of Hyne and Son won the coveted woodchip mill put up for tender by the State Government as part of the Fraser Island logging compensation package.
>
> The announcement was made at Hynes by Premier Wayne Goss at 8.20 a.m. yesterday. The $100m export woodchip industry will be developed in the Tuan Forest at Owanyilla by Hyne and Son and its Japanese consortium Sumitomo.
>
> The woodchip will be taken by rail to Gladstone, creating 30 railway jobs to handle the expected daily train load. Hyne managing director, Warren Hyne, said he was delighted to win the contract against stiff competition. He indicated there would also be an expansion at the Tuan timber mill . . ."

That will amount to $3.6m this year. The article continues—

> "Less than an hour after the Hyne's announcement, Mr Goss was at Walkers to hear Evans Deakin Industries' managing director Dennis O'Neill tell gathered workers that the parent company planned to invest $6.4m in the Bowen Street plant in the next two years.
>
> The spending was approved by EDI after workers agreed to an enterprise bargaining package, the first metals industry enterprise agreement approved in Queensland, and the second in Australia.
>
> The capital expenditure program and installation of state-of-the-art machinery will allow work now subcontracted out to be kept on site.

> 'We're really going places. Maryborough is becoming the hub of the Wide Bay again'—Bob Dollin, member for Maryborough.
>
> 'Walkers is in Maryborough to stay—this $6.4m investment is EDI's highest single commitment in 10 years'—EDI managing director Dennis O'Neill.
>
> 'It's two shots in the arm that the town needed—a great Christmas present for Maryborough'—Lloyd Maddern, president of the Maryborough Chamber of Commerce"—

a very, very devout National Party fellow—

> "'EDI's investment is evidence of Walkers' promising future . . . Maryborough's workers, families and economy will benefit from this $100m export woodchip industry'—Wayne Goss, Premier of Queensland.
>
> 'It shows people have faith in our community'—mayor Alan Brown.
>
> 'We are delighted—this has given us a great deal of satisfaction'—Warren Hyne, managing director of Hyne and Son."

No doubt many honourable members will be interested to know how the displaced workers from the timber industry in Maryborough and Hervey Bay have fared. The latest report that I have from the Fraser implementation team, which is stationed at Maryborough administering the Queensland growth and development package, is as follows: of the 55 persons to be retrenched from the timber industry, 29 have accepted package jobs; seven have gone to the Forest Service; 22 have jobs in the National Parks and Wildlife Service—they joined that service when the forestry fellows left; six have found their own employment; two are setting up their own businesses; four are receiving training in new skills to enable them to gain employment or to go into their own businesses; four will take the workers' adjustment package and retire; five have been employed by councils; one will be paid a special income supplement; and four are being assessed for work ability. As I said, 55 persons have been, or will be, displaced by 31 March this year due to the cessation of logging on Fraser Island and World Heritage listing.

I point out to honourable members that all workers affected by the cessation of logging and heritage listing of Fraser Island have been looked after by this Government, as our Premier promised at the outset that they would be. The timber workers of the Maryborough/Hervey Bay region are hard-working, positive people who can recognise an opportunity when they see one. This was illustrated when the Hyne and Son sawmill asked for 19 volunteers to take Government packages. The response was far above the number of jobs to be lost. In fact, I was approached by several of the people who did not lose their jobs seeking advice as to how they could get the company to pay them off so that they would have an opportunity to take up the package. This speaks volumes for the Government's growth and development package and the trust that people have in our Government.

Mr DUNWORTH: I rise to a point of order. I believe that the member is misleading the House, because he was elected on a pro-logging platform.

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

Mr DOLLIN: A media release states—

> "The First Timber worker retrenched in the wake of the Fraser Island logging ban thinks his sacking is the best thing that ever happened to him. A former labourer at the Hyne & Son sawmill at Maryborough Mr Dean Ogden 22 has been re-employed by the Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Services in the Cooloola National Park.
>
> The Mill management made the decision about who would be retrenched and when, Mr Ogden said. I was the first but about 26 of us will be gone by December 20 will go by next September. The mill will keep going, but it will scale down and its logs will come from other areas.

> It was traumatic worrying about what would happen, but I've definitely landed on my feet. I'd far rather be out here than labouring in the mill. I have different things to do each day, whereas at the mill you do the same things all the time.
>
> If I had stayed at the mill I would still have been doing the same thing in 20 years. There was no future, all I had was pay from week to week. But now I have a chance to build a career and move up levels. My pay is about the same."

And I am extremely happy. Another article in the *Sunday Mail* of 23 February 1992, which refers to another former timber worker, Mr Stephen Dumbleton, states—

> "A life member of the National Party, a veteran world traveller, the sponsor of 12 overseas children, a former council candidate, a Justice of the Peace, a qualified boiler attendant, Mr Dumbleton 29, has a burning ambition to become a politician."

He cannot make up his mind whether he wants to be a National Party politician or not. The article continues—

> "A timber worker for nearly 11 years, he lost his job at a Maryborough sawmill in the wake of the Fraser Island logging ban and was offered a second chance at the school he left 12 years ago by the Fraser Implementation Centre. Only when his father died, Mr Dumbleton dropped out at 17 because the work he did to help support his widowed mother and brother left no time for study.
>
> Politics aside, Mr Dumbleton said the Fraser Implementation Team was very encouraging after he passed an aptitude test showing he could succeed in school. In addition to a $15,000 Government payout and a $7,000 redundancy package which he used to buy new equipment for the icecream van he has operated for four years, the Government is paying him one year's wage and it has ordered specially made school uniforms (he is 154 kg) so he could dress like other students."

These comments from workers indicate the stark difference between how a State Labor Government looked after the workers in comparison with the pathetic treatment that 500 sand-miners had dished out to them when the Nationals and the Liberals shut down sand-mining. Gilbert Alison, the local member at the time—a Liberal—did not go in to bat for the workers. Neither did the National/Liberal Party State Government or the Liberal/National Federal Government. They did not care a hoot about the 500 workers who were thrown on the rubbish heap. They received not one cent. The sand-mining company received $4m. Some businesspeople received a few dollars, but the workers received nothing.

Mr ELLIOTT: I rise to a point of order. The honourable member has just told an untruth. It is untrue to say that the National Party did not go in to bat for the sand-mining workers.

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

Mr DOLLIN: Fraser Island, the Great Sandy Region and World Heritage listing—what does it mean? It does not mean that the island will be taken over by Brazilians, governed by Idi Amin, or any of the nonsense the Opposition tried to use to scare the people of Maryborough and the surrounding area. They scaremongered for all they were worth. They did not give a damn about how they worried people unnecessarily. The people in Maryborough remember that. They think that members of the Opposition are a mob of liars.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Maryborough must withdraw the word.

Mr DOLLIN: I will withdraw that. There are now 315 properties on the World Heritage List, and of those properties, 233 are cultural properties and 82 are natural properties. Some properties have met both natural and cultural criteria for inclusion. Included in the listing are the pyramids of Egypt, the Grand Canyon of the United States, the Taj Mahal of India, Westminster Abbey, Sagarmatha National Park—containing Mount Everest—in Nepal, and the Great Wall of China. Other areas in Australia that are on the World Heritage List include the Great Barrier Reef—the listing of

which, I believe, was assisted by Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen—the Queensland Wet Tropics, Kakadu National Park, and Uluru National Park. World Heritage listing has helped promote each of these as a major tourist destination. Tourism for both Australia and overseas has grown substantially in each area. World Heritage listing is the single largest national and international advertisement for a region. Increased tourism can result in increased income and employment for the local community, as has happened on Fraser Island. I support the motion.

Hon. P. COMBEN (Windsor—Minister for Environment and Heritage) (12.59 p.m.), in reply: That was a very good speech. In response to Mr Dollin and the interjection from the member for Sherwood that Mr Dollin had been elected on his pro-logging stance, I pay a great tribute to Mr Dollin for being a statesman and for being able to see that at times there is a different way to go. Mr Dollin is now representing his constituency with a $38m package to make sure that Maryborough goes ahead. I thank Dr Clark for seconding the motion and for her support.

I still do not understand why Mr Elliott is on such a high horse concerning the notice given about this motion. I gave the honourable member notice. On 25 August 1987, the honourable member gave me no notice whatsoever. The Government still does not know where the honourable member stands on World Heritage listing of Fraser Island. It heard nothing about World Heritage listing or the National Party's policy on World Heritage. World Heritage listing is a good housekeeping seal of approval for the environment. It is the Nobel Prize of environmental protection. As to the Liberal spokesperson for Environment and Heritage—the best thing that I can say is that today he made the bully's accusations and contributions, but the adjudicators are out on the debate, and the adjudicators are the voting public of Queensland. I will willingly see him at the end of November this year.

I remind the members that there is a $38m growth and development package in the Maryborough area. For the first time in recent decades, Maryborough can look to the future. Jobs are increasing. The family heritage centre is now approved and up and running. The Wharf Street precinct is going ahead. For the first time, the heritage town knows its direction. I commend the motion to the House.

Motion agreed to.

Sitting suspended from 1 to 2.30 p.m.

PRIVILEGE

Telephone System, Parliament House

Mr GILMORE (Tablelands) (2.30 p.m.): I rise on a matter of privilege. For some six months, the telephone system in Parliament House has been quite appalling. At 7.45 this morning, it became impossible to make a trunk call from this building.

Mr Livingstone: Seven o'clock.

Mr GILMORE: My colleague assures me that it was 7 o'clock. That condition persisted until lunch-time, or later. Apparently, there is no shortage of telephone lines, because members were able to make local calls but not trunk calls. My point of privilege is that the lack of access to trunk calls for most of the members who serve in this place is indeed an impingement on the privileges of the Parliament. Therefore, I place on record that this matter must be addressed, and I believe that it should be addressed as soon as possible.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hollis): Order! Apparently, the switchboard at Parliament House broke down this morning, and that was the reason for the problem. I note the member's matter of privilege.

VALUATION OF LAND AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 10 March (see p. 4020).

Hon. N. J. HARPER (Auburn) (2.31 p.m.): On the surface, this is a fairly simple piece of legislation—and so it is. Unfortunately, it has sinister connotations that are certainly not acknowledged in the Minister's second-reading speech.

Mr Livingstone: It is all in your mind.

Mr HARPER: The member for Ipswich West says that it is all in my mind. The fact is that it is all in black and white in the Bill presently before this House. I know that the member for Ipswich West is a fair person, and I ask him to listen to my proposition.

Mr Beattie interjected.

Mr HARPER: I hear the member for Brisbane Central interjecting. According to the seating plan of the House, which was circulated by the Speaker, that member is not sitting in his correct seat.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Brisbane Central is sitting in his correct seat.

Mr HARPER: Be that as it may——

Mr Booth interjected.

Mr HARPER: The member for Warwick is interjecting. I realise that the member for Bundaberg and the member for Brisbane Central have swapped places; and considering their make-up, I understand why. I return to the Bill. I repeat that it has sinister connotations that have not been acknowledged by the Minister. With due respect to the Minister, I suggest that he does not understand those connotations. Previously, this Government—through another Minister—has tickled the public till when it took funds from the Auctioneers and Agents Fidelity Trust Fund and robbed the people of Queensland to shore up a lack of funds in Consolidated Revenue. A sum of $100m was taken out of the kitty of a fidelity trust fund that previous Governments had built up over the years to provide security. Now we see that very same Victorian pattern of depleting sound trust accounts of their assets and imposing additional taxes without actually admitting that they are taxes—imposing additional costs on the people of Queensland in a manner that is suggestive of an underhanded intent. This Government is giving itself a blank cheque to be signed by an unsuspecting public.

The member for Ipswich West, the member for Brisbane Central and other fair-minded members on the Government benches should examine what the Minister terms in his second-reading speech as the present "traditional products". I point out to those members that a print-out is available from the Valuer-General but not a floppy disk, which is perhaps one of the additional products to which the Minister referred in his second-reading speech. A floppy disc would certainly be of assistance, and perhaps that facility will be made available in the not-too-distant future. At present, a print-out is available at 50c per listing. That reduces to 25c—or exactly half—if the annual account of the person or firm seeking to obtain that information reaches an account fee on an annual basis in the order of $2,000. That discount, which is surely massive, applies to the large players in the field of land valuation. Obviously, this works against the smaller independent valuer or businessperson, whose costs are significantly increased, whereas larger firms or professional people receive a massive discount, which certainly reduces their costs.

An individual search, which can be made over the counter, costs $6. A similar search over the telephone costs $10. Once again, metropolitan firms and valuers or those who have access to the Valuer-General's files in larger provincial cities are given a considerable advantage over rural valuers. Not only does a person who does not have ready access to records in Brisbane or major provincial cities have to pay an additional $4 for a telephone search but also that person or valuer who has a particular interest must meet Telecom charges to obtain the very same information. Again, we see discounting and cost benefits being given to the metropolitan and larger city valuers or

persons who have a particular interest to the disadvantage of people who are working in a decentralised fashion in country areas.

In his second-reading speech, the Minister stated—

> "Clients who resell the information will pay no more for their supply while the Government will receive a fair return on its investment through the commercial application of the data. The traditional products will continue to be available at the prescribed fees and this will not change. The final result will be that those using the information will find that the availability remains the same, and will possibly increase, while the costs remain the same."

I might be thick in the head, but I have a great deal of difficulty in reconciling what the Minister is saying. Perhaps he understands what it means. On the one hand, he is saying that clients who resell the information will pay no more for its supply—in other words, he will not increase the costs of the information which is available to the public—and, on the other hand, he is saying that the Government will receive a fair return on its investment through the commercial application of the data. That seems to be a contradiction in terms to me. He said that the traditional products will continue to be available at the prescribed fees. I note that he did not say "at the same prescribed fees", so he is leaving himself room to increase the prescribed fees. He went on to say—

". . . and this will not change."

Again, there is a contradiction in terms. He stated—

> "The traditional products will continue to be available at the prescribed fees and this will not change."

It seems that, in addressing this House, the Minister has said that he will not increase the fees that are prescribed for this information, which would be fine. He then went on to say—

> "The final result will be that those using the information will find that the availability remains the same, and will possibly increase . . ."

Perhaps he referred to floppy disks. I would like the Minister to tell the House what he intends when he says that he will possibly increase the availability of material. He finished that sentence by saying—

". . . while the costs remain the same."

I hope that the Minister takes the opportunity to try to clarify in black and white what is obviously a contradiction in terms. I hope that he will explain what is intended; whether the costs will or will not increase, whether additional material will be made available, or whether it will be made available in print-out or floppy disk form. If that is the case, I would like to know at what cost it will be made available. I cannot imagine floppy disk material being provided at a minimal charge, although the Minister said that the costs will not increase.

In this House, it has been suggested on more than one occasion that these days, when interpreting legislation, the courts have regard to what the Minister has said in the House. That is quite reasonable. However, because what the Minister has been saying is not reflected in black and white in the Bill, the courts would have some difficulty in interpreting what he has said. The Bill does not give any indication of a ceiling being placed on the prescribed fees, nor does it suggest that costs will remain the same. I ask the Minister to repeat the undertaking that he gave in his second-reading speech that costs will not increase.

The Bill states that the Valuer-General may enter into an arrangement with a person to supply information on the terms agreed by them. However, what if they do not agree? The Bill contains no provision to resolve such a difficulty. If the person seeking information cannot come to an agreement with the Valuer-General, how is the matter resolved? Does the Valuer-General simply say, "Too bad. It is public information—it is on a public record—but you will not come to an agreement with me as to the terms on which it can be supplied, so I am not going to supply it"? Is that what happens? Is there a provision for arbitration? The Attorney-General would love this. Is there some way to

have a mediation process between the Valuer-General and the person who wants the information but is being denied it because he cannot reach agreement as to the terms on which it will be supplied by the Valuer-General?

As I have suggested, the Valuer-General's data is, of necessity, monopolistic. We are not talking about a normal commercial arrangement. I would be the last one to suggest that the Valuer-General's Department should be privatised or even corporatised. This Bill merely provides that the arrangement between a person and the Valuer-General may—and I stress "may"—provide for fees and charges to be paid to the Valuer-General for information, the method of calculation and the way of payment. What a situation! There are one or two members, as well as the Minister, on the Government benches listening to what I am saying. I am trying to engage in reasonable and reasoned debate, and I do not believe that this Bill has been thought through. Every clause that one looks at—and there are only half a dozen—contains errors because it has not been thought through. One can look at a clause and say that it is quite reasonable and then when one reads it closely, one finds that there are shades of grey.

The Valuer-General's Department is in a monopoly situation. This Bill provides that the Valuer-General has the whip hand in determining the fees and charges that are to be paid for public information, the method of calculation and the way of payment. If it was privatised or corporatised, it would be a wonderful position to be in. Such an organisation would have complete control—a monopoly—over information and would be the only organisation in the State that would have all the information. The law would require that the organisation be given this mass of information. If it was a private concern, what a wonderful time it would have because, under this Bill, the organisation with a monopoly could set all the fees and charges and decide how it is going to be disseminated and who is going to have access to it. As I have stated, it is a monopoly situation and I accept that it has to be monopolistic, but I do not accept that the Valuer-General must have the whip hand. Furthermore, it would seem that he or she—at some time in the future the Valuer-General may be a lady—could differentiate between individuals and firms. The Valuer-General has the whip hand. It is the Valuer-General who sets the fees and charges, determines the method of their calculation, has the information, and determines the way in which those fees are to be paid. Therefore, there is nothing to stop differentiation between individuals and firms. At present, larger firms are receiving the 50 per cent discount to which I have referred.

I wish to make it clear that I am not suggesting that the present Valuer-General is anything but a person of the highest integrity. I have the highest regard for him and his senior officers. However, the Minister would know that within both the Department of Lands and the Valuer-General's Department, there are officers who do not have that degree of integrity. Unfortunately, decisions are often made well down the line and are not made by the Valuer-General or his senior officers. These matters must weigh heavily with the Minister in his considerations. Indeed, there is nothing in the Bill to prevent differentiation or discrimination against individuals. Discrimination against individuals is given a legislative blessing by this Bill in its present wording; there cannot be any argument about that.

The Bill leaves room for blatant, surreptitious or accidental discrimination. I have heard officers in the Minister's department, or officers from the Department of Lands or the Valuer-General's Department—they are becoming mixed, and I do not disagree with that as a basic philosophy—say, "We will not give anyone that information. You can go to court and we will give it to you in court." When one goes to court, one gets the information as one is walking through the door. There is no point in the Minister saying that it will not happen, because any valuer who has practised in court work knows that it has happened. This Bill sanctions it. It gives a legislative blessing to that form of discrimination. It goes even further by providing that the arrangement with the Valuer-General—that is what it is called in the Bill—may provide for the use to which the information supplied may be put. I hope that at least one or two members on the Government benches are listening because this is quite a serious matter. Under this Bill, the Valuer-General may provide for the use to which the information supplied may be put.

It is the right of every land-holder to challenge a valuation made by the Valuer-General or by the Department of Lands inspectors. That is how it has been for aeons, and that is how it should be. In order to satisfactorily prepare a case to even take to a without-prejudice conference or to take to a court of appeal—for example, the Land Court, the Land Appeal Court or the Planning and Environment Court—it is absolutely essential that the land-holder have access to the public records held by the Valuer-General. However, the Bill states that the Valuer-General will determine how that information is to be used and, as a result, discrimination is being blessed by this legislation. When a person says, "I want some information to enable me to dissect sales and determine relativity or to challenge a valuation made by the Valuer-General", some smart officer will say, "There's no way in the world we will give you that because you will use it to fight us and try to prove that we are wrong. Why should we give you the information?"

Mr Beattie: Oh!

Mr HARPER: I do not know which seat the member for Brisbane Central is occupying now, but I will take the interjection, anyway.

An honourable member: He is moving forward.

Mr HARPER: He is moving forward, but he went a long way back, though. The provisions of the Bill are in black and white and they are very clear. I know that the Minister and his officers will say, "No, they will not do that", but the member for Rockhampton North is nodding because he knows that there are people who will say, "The Act states what I can do, and that is what I am going to do." I am sure that each member of this Parliament has come across those types of people—little people who have been given a little bit of authority and who suddenly become very big. They will say, "That is what the Act says, and that is the way it is."

Mr Livingstone: You are putting everyone to sleep.

Mr HARPER: I suggest that Government members consider the subclause to which I have referred in an open-minded fashion. If they do so, I am sure that they will come to the same conclusion as the one I arrived at, and will be just as horrified as I am. The provisions of the Bill can be used to prevent a land-holder from using information from the Valuer-General's records, which are public records, against the Valuer-General. Why should that be allowed to happen? If members of this Parliament are talking about fairness, attempts to resolve issues without involving court costs, and attempts to resolve issues in without-prejudice conferences, the land-holder must have unfettered access to the information that is compulsorily accumulated by the Valuer-General.

I reiterate that it is no good saying that it will not happen. For years, I have seen the attitude I have described come to the fore from officers within the Valuer-General's Department and the Department of Lands. A land-holder who wants to contest a valuation can be denied information from a public record or at least can be told, as a result of the provisions in this Bill—if it is passed in its present form—the purpose to which the information provided can be applied. This legislation sets that out in black and white. This Bill is presented in plain English, and it does not contain any legalese. Any Government member would be capable of reading the Bill and recognising the truth of what I am suggesting. The situation is totally intolerable, and any fair-minded person would have to agree with that. It is unconscionable for this meek and gentlemanly Minister to put his name to legislation that imposes that type of penalty and brings about that type of discrimination against the land-holder. This Bill offers nothing to the general public. It will increase costs of valuations—that is, if the Bill is right, and the Minister's second-reading speech is wrong, of course. The Minister has admitted that, as a result of this legislation, the Government will receive what it considers to be a fair return.

It is essential for this Bill to correctly interpret the intention of this Parliament, because that is the whole purpose of Parliament. This is an issue that is apolitical and it does not evolve from Labor Party philosophy, Liberal Party philosophy or National Party philosophy. The Parliament can deal with this Bill in a truly non-party political atmosphere, with the benefit of non-party political thinking. I hope that the Minister and

members of the Government are prepared to recognise the fact that there is nothing party-political in the criticisms that I make of the Bill. As I said earlier, it is most important for the Bill to correctly interpret the intention of the Parliament, the intention of the Government and, I hope, the real intention of the Minister. Let me reiterate that the Bill offers nothing to the general public. It gives officers of the Valuer-General's Department the whip hand. It strengthens the monopoly that already exists and will undoubtedly increase costs to the public.

In short, this House should reject the Bill in its present form. At the very least, the Bill must be amended. At the Committee stage, I will deal with the aspect of amendment. As I said at the outset, the Bill is fairly simple and it can be amended quite simply to reflect fairness and to indicate to the people of Queensland that the Government is prepared to accept valid criticism and to incorporate in legislation amendments put by the Opposition that provide fairness to the people of Queensland, to the whole community, and not just to one Government department which, under the present Bill, has the whip hand.

Mr BEANLAND (Toowong) (3 p.m.): The Liberal Party supports the legislation in principle. The Bill is primarily for the provision of additional information, some of which is already supplied by the Valuer-General's Department, which is now known as the Department of Lands. Many people may say that it is a mechanical piece of legislation. In some respects, it might be. However, some aspects of the Bill are of concern to me and to the Liberal Party. I turn to the Minister's second-reading speech, in which he said—

> "This legislation will result in additional products becoming available at reasonable prices. Clients who resell the information will pay no more for their supply while the Government will receive a fair return on its investment through the commercial application of the data."

There seems to be some conflict in that sentence. The Minister is saying that the Valuer-General will sell the information, so a new charge will be introduced. The Minister uses the term "reasonable prices", but no indication is given of what those prices might be. I look forward to the Minister, in his reply, giving some indication to the Parliament of exactly what prices the Government is considering. Despite the Government's oft-repeated pre-election promises and its statements since then that it will keep taxes and charges at or below the rate of inflation and will not introduce any new taxes and charges, that is not the case. In this instance, the Government will certainly introduce a new charge that the public of Queensland will have to bear, and that charge may be quite considerable. In addition to that, the Minister stated—

> "Clients who resell the information will pay no more for their supply while the Government will receive a fair return on its investment through the commercial application of the data."

I cannot see how that can be. If the Government is not going to impose any additional fees or charges to clients who will on-sell it, that clearly means that the clients who are not going to on-sell the information will pay the same amount of money and the Government will receive some fair return for that commercial application. However, that is not what the sentence says. The sentence reads—

> ". . . the Government will receive a fair return on its investment through the commercial application of the data."

I do not know who wrote that sentence for the Minister, but it is a bit of gobbledegook. I would like the Minister to clarify exactly what he means.

Apart from taxes, which I will return to shortly, the legislation raises another issue, that is, the issue of privacy. Last week, I received a telephone call in my electoral office from a constituent who was most irate after finding out that various pieces of information about that person's property had been supplied from no less than the Valuer-General's Department. I am not sure whether it had been supplied by that department or whether other people had acquired the information from the Valuer-General's Department. That person was most irate that that had occurred. I pointed out that not only the Valuer-General's Department but also various other State Government departments, Federal

Government departments and local authorities sell a good deal of information relating to building applications, changes of ownership, and so on.

A huge amount of information that the community believes is private is in fact not private. The days of one enjoying privacy are long gone. Today, one can expect that information about any dealings one has with Government will at some stage be made public. I am reminded of a person who wrote to the Prime Minister many, many years ago and, this week, found that that letter was displayed on the front page of a newspaper. A large article was written about it in the daily press. That person's letter has been leaked to the media by the current Prime Minister. In this place, we see people who have written to Government Ministers suddenly finding that their correspondence is tabled in the Parliament without their having any say in the matter whatsoever.

I warn the community of that matter, because it is overlooked. I know that, despite what we might think, it is not common knowledge in the community that when one has any correspondence with Government—and I am not having a go at the Minister's department in particular; I mean at any of the three levels of Government—or any dealings with Government on an official basis, a great deal of that information is made available to the public. Today, we are seeing a selling of information. I know that many local authorities sell lists of people who have made building applications. The Bill is going a step further with the Valuer-General's Department in providing for the on-selling of additional information relating to valuations and, no doubt, titles. When dealing with Government departments, the community must keep in mind constantly that such information can be supplied—not leaked, but supplied—on a very commercial basis. With new technology, that will happen more and more. The Bill was introduced because of technological changes that are now taking place within the department. Information will now be more freely available to the community on a commercial basis, particularly to those who have some commercial interest in an area. I can think of a whole range of people.

As the Valuation of Land Act is being dealt with, I want to speak about other matters that pertain to it. New technology has been introduced, and opportunities now abound for the Government to make compulsory the sending of notices to people whose properties are valued on an annual basis. On many occasions, I have called for this to be done and I would have thought that the Government would have introduced it, but that has not happened. Today, I call again for its introduction. Although new technology allows for the storage of information relating to what happens in the marketplace, individual property-owners are still not supplied with notice of changes to their valuations, something that had been provided to them by Governments for decades. In more recent years, that notice of change of valuation has been cut out because valuations are now conducted on an annual basis.

Mr Coomber: Some local authorities do.

Mr BEANLAND: I move on now to make the point, having been reminded by my honourable colleague from Currumbin, that in most cases the first that property-owners find out about a valuation having taken place is when they receive their rates notice and see that there has been a change to their rates and a change to the valuation that appears on the rate notice. That is usually when they first become aware that something has happened. Some of them are not even aware then of what is taking place. They believe that it is just an increase in rates by the local authority. In many cases, that is not the case at all. It may be, but it may not be, as the Minister would well know. I believe that it is incumbent upon the Government, when it makes significant changes that affect property-owners, to advise them on an annual basis of those changes.

The real basis for the move to annual valuations was so that State Governments could help themselves to hefty increases in land tax. I said that at the time annual valuations were introduced—it is on the parliamentary record. It is just as applicable today as it was when I said it back in 1987. It has certainly all come to pass. There have been horrific increases in valuations. On the Gold Coast, over the years, valuations have increased by 167 per cent, 80 per cent, 16 per cent and 70 per cent. Similar valuation increases have occurred in Brisbane. They have also occurred in the tourist towns of

coastal Queensland. I refer to areas such as the Sunshine Coast, the Gold Coast, Hervey Bay, the Whitsunday resorts, Cairns and Port Douglas. Significant increases in valuations have occurred in all of those places. Because of the direct relationship between valuations and land tax, that has meant a windfall for State Governments. During that time, State Governments have seen their land tax receipts skyrocket. It is estimated that, this year, $215m will be raised from land tax. In 1986-87, it was only $47m. It has gone up by several hundred per cent. This Government has broken its pre-election commitment. Each year, land tax has increased significantly more than the inflation rate, which has been brought about largely because of the effects that valuations have on land tax.

The importance of annual valuations to this Government cannot be underestimated. The importance of annual valuations to local authorities is not quite as significant, even though Ministers say continually that it is. We know the relationship between valuations and rates. However, local authorities can increase or reduce rates regardless of the valuations. The direct link with the State Government through land tax speaks for itself. Consequently, I believe that the current system of advising individual property-owners, whether they have commercial or private property, is nowhere near good enough. It certainly will not do. At present, one or two advertisements appear in the daily press informing people that valuations have been conducted. We thank the Minister for that. That is very nice for the handful of people who bother to buy newspapers today and the smaller number, of course, who bother to read them. More and more people are turning away from newspapers to television, radio and other media outlets. Advertising in newspapers is simply not good enough. It simply will not do. I appreciate that the Valuer-General's Department has a big display. That is very nice for the people who know about it—people such as the Minister and I who trundle in to check out what our valuations are. That is only a very small minority of people. I appreciate that similar displays can be found at local authority offices and courthouses. However, I think the Minister would have to agree that that is totally insufficient. I appreciate that some cost might be incurred in advising people of their annual valuations. But if the Government wants to go down that track, I believe it is only the people's democratic rights and the Government's responsibility to do justice to this and to advise them accordingly of the changes in valuations.

Similar comments can be made about site conferences. Many people write in and object to their valuations, but they go no further than that. They are not aware that, if they harass the Valuer-General or the Minister a little more, someone will come out and have an onsite conference with them. If a person wants his valuation reconsidered properly, someone from the department should go to his property and have a look at the situation first-hand. I appreciate that that can be done. I know that people who avail themselves of that service are more likely to receive a lesser valuation than those who do not. In fact, it is pretty well nigh on useless for a person to write in and object unless he asks for and is given an onsite conference. At an onsite conference, a worthwhile argument can be put forward. Perhaps a person could receive some assistance at an onsite conference so that he can conduct it at such a level that he is able to argue forcefully with the representatives of the Valuer-General's Department. If a person wants proper consideration of his valuation, he should do that. The relationship between valuations and not only land tax, which affects so many people now, but also local authority rates, is very important.

These valuations, whether we like it or not, are now having an effect on jobs. One in three young people is unemployed. There has been more than a 50 per cent increase in the unemployment rates since this Labor Government came to office just over two years ago. Bankruptcies were up by 41.5 per cent in the last calendar year. Much of that can be attributed to the horrific increases that occurred in land tax because of the significant increases in valuations, particularly in the tourist spots along the Queensland coast. That is having a dramatic effect on small businesses as we know them today. There was a 41.5 per cent increase in bankruptcies last year—something that no Government can be proud of. A lot of that can be directly attributed to the increases in valuations in areas along the coast. The tenants of properties were simply unaware of

the increases that were occurring. The landlords may have protested, but the tenants certainly were not in a position to protest to save themselves. Suddenly, they were confronted with huge increases in land tax bills which, in many cases, were far greater than the amount of rent they were paying. Under this system, there is a failure to advise people who ought to be advised, and then a failure to ensure that people know that they have the ability to seek an on-site conference so that these problems can be tackled in a forthright manner.

Mr Coomber interjected.

Mr BEANLAND: I am reminded by the honourable member for Currumbin about Brisbane not being revalued last year. That is a sore point that sticks in many people's minds today—it certainly sticks in their gut. Last year, we experienced the recession brought on by the Labor Government. The central business district of Brisbane has been badly affected by that recession, yet there were no new valuations carried out. The very cynical people in the community are thinking, "Well, of course the valuations were not done in some of these areas, the areas affected most by the significant rises over recent years, because the Government did not want to lose land tax receipts." People cannot be blamed for thinking that, because, quite frankly, that is how it appears. I believe people have every justification for believing that that is the case. I think that speaks for itself when one looks at the fall in prices in certain areas.

There is also the effect of land tax on the tourist industry, an industry which we are doing so much to develop in this State. I am not being political when I say that all Governments have done all they can to develop the tourist industry, because it is a major industry in Queensland. The previous Government and the coalition Government before that did an enormous amount for the tourist industry in this State, but that industry is now being pummelled daily because of the increases in land tax which it has to pay as a result of the significant increases in valuations. The importance of valuations to our everyday life cannot be overestimated. The effect of land tax is being felt right throughout the community. I appeal to the Government and the Minister to sit down and rethink exactly where they are heading in relation to this matter so that people are not being burdened by these very significant increases in land tax. In some cases, people have faced increases in land tax of hundreds of per cent—up to more than 1 000 per cent—in the last two or three years. The Minister would be well aware of a couple of examples that I highlighted last year in this Chamber. While the Liberal Party supports the legislation in principle, I hope that the Minister will take on board the points that I have raised, and in particular clear up some of the misunderstandings in relation to some of the amendments that are currently before the Chamber.

Hon. A. G. EATON (Mourilyan—Minister for Land Management) (3.19 p.m.), in reply: I wish to thank the two members who have spoken in this debate for their contributions. I believe that I can answer the questions raised by both of them. Although some of the points were relevant, I felt that in most cases they were trying to split hairs. Reference was made to the fact that it was difficult to interpret some parts of the Bill. I believe that in many instances one sees only what one wants to see. I remind honourable members that the Acts Interpretation Act can be used to interpret some matters, and other matters will be covered by the Freedom of Information Act. I fail to see the relevance in some of the points that were made. I felt that the honourable members were rather trying to score points and split hairs.

The honourable member for Auburn said that rural people would be penalised when they sought information. I remind him that last year the Government was approached by various representatives of the searchers organisation which had assisted the legal fraternity in country centres with conveyancing matters. They claimed that because of our technology and the reductions in cost and the speed at which we were able to provide the services required, they could not compete and searchers in some areas were being put out of business. That destroys the suggestion that we were in there wholly and solely to make money and to send everybody broke, or to put ourselves out of business. That is far from what this Bill is all about. This Bill is all about facing up to our responsibility as a responsible Government to service the needs of the

community. This amendment to the Act is just part of the Government's policy, and I would like to emphasise that. One of the honourable members questioned the fact that there will be no further costs. Again, I think that he is trying to misinterpret what I said in my second-reading speech. There will be added costs in the future by way of increased wages and so on, but, in the immediate implementation of this amendment, there will be no increases in the present costs. This amendment is being introduced so that we can provide a better service and a service which is not provided at present because one cannot buy all that information on a wholesale magnetic tape. This Government is adding to the service that it is providing. It will set the standard through the service that is provided and the cost will be fixed through negotiation.

Because of the introduction of technology such as computerisation, one of the cheapest Government services which is provided is that of land information services, whether they are valuations, titles or surveying. In my second-reading speech, I failed to mention many things which could have been mentioned. This Government is going to improve services, but at whatever speed improvements are introduced, we will get them right the first time. That is why the Government consulted with valuers about this legislation. They knew what was going on, and there was no objection from them. Although I accept the knowledge that the honourable member for Auburn has of the valuing industry, I think that he has to go further than he did. This legislation has been put together by the many experts the Valuer-General's Department. Information held in the larger centres can be sent to country areas by facsimile. Very few post offices in small country towns in Queensland do not have a fax machine. All one has to do is make a phone call, give one's fax number, and the information will be faxed, in most cases in less than two hours. I think that the honourable member for Auburn is trying to split hairs by raising some of the issues that he did.

I turn now to the sending out of valuation notices. Because of the cost, this practice was stopped by the previous Government. The Government acknowledges that it was expensive. Quite a few years ago, the previous Government's figures showed that it was costing just over $1.5m to send out notices. If one takes account of the cost involved in sending out a notice to each individual land-holder, including the cost of the stamp, the envelope, the wages and the time that is taken to package that notice and send it out, whatever Government was in power would only have increased the cost of carrying out the valuation to the local authorities, or the increased cost would have had to be borne by people somewhere along the line. This Government has received deputations on this issue. It has consulted with local authorities. The Government will now pay local authorities a commission to put on their rate notices the old and the new valuations. That will draw to the attention of the land-owner who is paying rates the fact that there is a difference in his valuation.

Because the boom in land sales has finished, I believe that valuations have now started to stabilise. The only sales that are now going ahead occur when people believe they are receiving value for money. Queensland went through a boom period when real estate people were going to Government sales and buying residential blocks and other land. They were using Government services which were provided to help the new home-owner and the family man to get started in residential areas. They paid a small deposit and a low interest rate, but that sort of activity was defeating the purpose of the Government's scheme. The fast buck merchants and the entrepreneurs were using a facility that was provided to enable poorer people to buy blocks. The entrepreneurs were holding on to the blocks and then selling them two, three, and sometimes 12 months later for twice the price that they had paid for them, although they had only paid one-tenth deposit. Their money was not tied up at all, because they would pay the balance just before the sale. They were using a system that was provided to help the needy. In many cases, all the system was doing was providing a service for the greedy.

The Government will have to consider that sort of action when it is drafting legislation so that needy people are not penalised. The Government tries to squeeze out the greedy, but I know of no Act of Parliament which has not been manipulated somewhere along the line. That is the simple reason why Parliament has the power to amend legislation, because no matter what one does, there will always be somebody

who will try to manipulate it, or find a way around it to his own advantage. I have covered most of the points that were raised.

Motion agreed to.

Committee

Hon. A. G. Eaton (Mourilyan—Minister for Land Management) in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 3, as read, agreed to.

Clause 4—

Mr HARPER (3.27 p.m.): Clause 4 provides for the insertion of new section 28A—Supply of information, and states—

> "Despite section 28 (1) and (3), but subject to section 28 (2) and (2A), the Valuer-General may enter into an arrangement with a person to supply any information in—
>
> (a) a valuation roll; or
>
> (b) a notice under section 31;
>
> on the terms agreed by them."

I have no difficulty with that, but under clause 4, proposed new section 28A (2) states—

> "Without limiting subsection (1), the arrangement may—
>
> (a) provide for the fees and charges to be paid to the Valuer-General for the information, the method of their calculation and the way of their payment; and
>
> (b) provide for the use to which the information supplied may be put."

The amendment to this clause that I foreshadow is simply to omit proposed new section 28A (2) (b). I propose the omission of proposed new subsection (2) and the insertion of—

> "(2) Without limiting subsection (1), the arrangement may provide for the fees and charges to be paid to the Valuer-General for the information, the method of their calculation and the way of their payment."

I am sure that the Minister will say that there were valid reasons for including within this clause a provision that enables the Valuer-General to provide for the use to which the information supplied may be put. However, with the greatest of respect to the Minister, it seems to me that his reply to the debate on the second reading of the Bill indicated that he really does not understand the nub of what I have been saying and what is of great concern. The Minister said that the Bill was put together after consultation with valuers. I challenge the Minister to tell this House that, after the Bill was put together, it was discussed in detail with representatives of the Real Estate Institute or the institute of valuers. It is no good talking about the Acts Interpretation Act in relation to finer interpretations, because it is irrelevant. The fact is that provision exists for the Valuer-General to decide how the information shall be used. I accept that some substantive reasons exist for including this type of provision in the legislation, but we should not adopt such a broad-brush approach. If the Government wants to stop firms of valuers, individuals or other persons obtaining lists of names for mail-outs or another purpose that is really unrelated to valuation, there are ways to do that without including such a broad-ranging clause of this nature. Accordingly, I move the following amendment—

> "At page 2, omit lines 21 to 26 and insert—
>
> '(2) Without limiting subsection (1) the arrangement may provide for the fees and charges to be paid to the Valuer-General for the information, the method of their calculation and the way of their payment.' "

Mr EATON: I cannot accept this amendment. The member referred to proposed new section 28A (2) (b) and the "information" referred to in proposed new section 28A (1). That information will still be available at the same cost. We are talking about new

technology. That is the reason for this Bill. We must keep control of privacy and the implications of direct marketing. The member said that this Bill leaves people open to abuse. I assure him that the department has responsible officers who are working with the community. Some of the member's statements could not be further from the truth. The public has been asking for this service for a very long time. We are now in a position to provide that service, and that is the reason for this legislation.

Mr HARPER: With the greatest of respect, the Minister has missed the point. I do not know whether he is missing it deliberately or whether he just does not understand it.

Mr Veivers: It is probably because he doesn't understand it.

Mr HARPER: The Minister does have a bit of a problem, but he is a nice fellow. This clause gives the Valuer-General the ability to dictate how the information is provided. I am not talking about information that is presently available or new information that is becoming available. This Bill indicates that the Valuer-General will be able to dictate to the user how that information—whether it be the "traditional product" or the new product—is to be used. That is not good enough. I have already provided examples of that, and I do not intend to waste the time of the Committee by going over them again. One does not have to be very bright to envisage some of the implications of this legislation. I am not talking about the Valuer-General, his senior officers or district valuers; I am talking about junior officers within the department. When one gives small people a little bit of power, they suddenly want to use it. This Bill, which opens the door to blatant discrimination, really should not be acceptable.

Mr EATON: Again, I cannot accept the member's amendment. He spoke about the power or authority of the Valuer-General to set the price or determine what can be done with the information. Any Government must be responsible for that. There is no doubt that at times delicate information—if not administered correctly—could be provided through computerisation. There has been a lapse of only one year when valuations were not released. When valuations are released, they are displayed in a public place to which anybody can go. A person can go there and say, "I am Tom Jones. My block is at 30 Smith Street, Cannonvale. I want to see that information." That person can then obtain any information that he wants. I cannot see how this Bill will change that situation. If people want information, we have a legal fraternity that knows how to get that information. I cannot envisage any abuse or misuse of privilege or authority on the part of the Valuer-General. Therefore, the amendment is unacceptable.

Mr HARPER: I repeat, so that it is clearly on the record, that it is not the genuine intent of the Minister with which I disagree, it is the broad-brush approach which is being taken and which opens the door much wider than anything that has been suggested by the Minister. By opening the door in the terms that the Minister has outlined, he has really opened the doors to blatant discrimination. It is no good saying that it will not happen, because anyone who has dealt with these matters over the years knows that this type of discrimination has happened in the past and it will happen in the future. I repeat that it is not the intent. I recognise the need for the Valuer-General to have the ability to curb, but I do not accept that it should be done with such a broad-brush approach.

Amendment negatived.

Mr HARPER: I move the following further amendment—

"At page 2, after line 26, insert—

'(3) The Valuer-General must—

(a) record the terms of all arrangements made under subsection (1) in a register kept for the purpose; and

(b) permit any person to inspect the register during normal business hours

at the office where the register is kept.' "

I do not believe that any member of this Chamber could object to that amendment. As members of Parliament, we have already put in place legislation which requires us to

provide private, personal information to be recorded on a register in this place and we have allowed it to be available for public scrutiny. At the last election, the Government went to the people on a platform of openness in government, accountability, an end to cronyism—of course, all those promises have been broken—and no more corruption. This Bill provides for the Valuer-General to enter into an arrangement with individuals in a commercial way which will be unknown to anyone else. There is no question that it is opening the door very wide to allow discrimination between valuers, individuals and agents in the area of land marketing and valuing. The wording in the Bill allows for any deal to be done between the Valuer-General and any person who is interested, because it is public information. If the Government wants to try to live up to its claim before the last election of openness in government; if it wants to try to live up to being an accountable Government; if it wants to try to convince the people of Queensland that there will no longer be cronyism; and if it wants to try to convince the people of Queensland that it will not accept corruption, it cannot possibly reject this amendment. There is nothing sinister in it; it is very clear. It means that anyone who has an interest can see what deal has been done between the Minister's officers and someone else in the community. There is nothing sinister in it unless the Government has something to hide.

If the Government rejects this amendment, I suggest that it knows that it is going to have something to hide and that it is going to put pressure on its officers to do deals with individuals—a different deal with Bill Smith to the one it does with Tom Jones; a deal that is different for the person who lives in a Labor electorate from the deal with the person who lives in a conservative electorate. It will leave the door open to all those charges and it will be valid for people to make those charges. If they are not made publicly, they will certainly be made privately within the real estate industry, the valuation industry, the development industry—any facet of our commercial operations which involves land transactions. Because there is presently no accountability to the public, those claims will be made. The Minister can talk about the Acts Interpretation Act, split hairs and so on, but his leader went to the people on a platform of accountability, and this amendment calls for accountability. I challenge the Minister to reject the amendment. If he does, he will be admitting that he is one Minister in the Goss Government who is not prepared to accept a standard of accountability; he is not prepared to accept openness in government; and he is not prepared to ensure that cronyism does not take place. We all know that it is still taking place, but he has an opportunity here to put those arrangements on the public record so that people who have concerns can peruse the public record during normal business hours and make sure that their fears are unfounded. If they do not have that opportunity, they will not be able to satisfy themselves that their fears are unfounded. To the contrary, they will know perfectly well that deals have been done.

I have said all that I need to say. Accountability of that type is what the members of this Parliament accepted for themselves. If it is good enough for us to accept that the public can scrutinise a register that records our private affairs, it is surely good enough that the public can scrutinise a register that records the arrangements that have been made—and, if the Bill is not amended, that are intended to be made—in a back room between the Valuer-General and people who have an interest in the area. Again, I challenge the Minister to reject the amendment. Then we will see where his Government stands on accountability.

Mr EATON: I will take up the challenge of the honourable member for Auburn and reject the amendment on the same grounds as I outlined in answer to his other accusations. We were brought to Government on our leader's promise of accountability and credibility. At present, the freedom of information legislation is on the table of the Parliament. Under that legislation, I do not believe that anybody would be silly enough to refuse to provide the information to a land-holder.

Mr BEANLAND: I rise to speak on this important matter because the Minister has now brought in the subject of freedom of information. Whether that relates to this issue or not is another story altogether, and I have grave doubts that it does. I think that the spokesman for the National Party made it quite clear what this is all about. It is about

ensuring that there is going to be a level playing field and that there are no deals done behind closed doors. We are not talking about freedom of information and people being able to gain access to various pieces of information. This amendment relates to information in relation to competitors so that there is not an arrangement entered into by the department or by the Government with one group that is vastly different from an arrangement with someone else. I think that the proposal put forward is fair and is reasonable. I do not think the Minister has indicated any way in which it is not reasonable or fair. By quoting the freedom of information legislation, the Minister is really moving off the track altogether. The amendment is quite clear in that the terms of all arrangements made under this proposed new subsection require a register to be kept for that purpose and permit any person to inspect the register during normal business hours. I can see allegations being made that there are some differing arrangements, differing fees and differing prices. There has been no indication that the Government is going to charge the same price to the same people or that we will see the fees gazetted in any shape or fashion. We do not know how they are going to be charged at all. To get over that problem—a problem that should be of concern to the Minister—we must be able to ensure that there is proper accountability and that there cannot be allegations that could be made along these lines. I think the proposal is a very fair and reasonable one. The Minister should consider it further. If he cannot accept it, I would like to hear his reason in succinct terms, because we certainly have not heard it to date.

Mr EATON: I thought I had done that. Any land-holder is entitled to information about his own block. The Opposition wants to make the information more public and it wants to set the hours during which an inspection can be made of that information in a register. I am not worried that there is anybody in the department who would do a deal through the back door. Should it happen, I can just imagine members of the Opposition sitting there and saying nothing! I mentioned the freedom of information legislation because it will be compulsory to supply the information under that legislation. If there is any wrong-doing, it will be brought out into the open by the Government, the Opposition or a court. It will be there for everybody to see, and people will have to justify their decisions or their actions.

Mr HARPER: I find it distasteful to have to say that that response by the Minister again clearly demonstrates that he does not understand what we are talking about. He said that every land-holder has a right to get information about his block. We are not talking about that; we are talking about the provision in the Bill that the Valuer-General can enter into an arrangement with people who have an interest. It might be a valuer, a land-holder, a real estate agent or a firm of valuers. Under the Bill as it stands, the Valuer-General has an ability and a requirement to enter into an arrangement as to the fees and charges that will be paid, the type of information that will be provided and how it will be used. We are only asking the Minister to disclose on a public register what that arrangement is so that there can be no suggestion that the Valuer-General or any other officer within the department has made some sort of secret deal.

If the Minister is not prepared to provide this accountability, as sure as the sun is going to rise tomorrow morning there will always be people involved in the industry claiming that Bill Smith received a special deal, Tom Jones received a special deal, or someone else received a special deal. It is no good the Minister saying that it will not happen and that he has confidence in his officers. I am glad that he has confidence in his officers. The fact is that we have seen it in this House and we see it all the time. Rumours spread and there does not have to be any substance to them. The Minister can be sure that the industry will be talking about how this firm received a special deal and its fees and charges are different from those of another firm. This can be avoided if the Government is prepared to accept the same standard for the Valuer-General, and for the people who have a need for his information, as the Government has been prepared to accept for members of this Parliament by putting those facts on a register that is available for inspection by the public during business hours. Not many people will bother to inspect it because they will know the very fact that it has to be recorded provides security and provides an avoidance of any suggestion of cronyism. As Mr Beanland said, it is a reasonable and reasoned proposition and, again, I challenge the

Minister to reject it. If he does, as I have said before, it is going to indicate that he is one Minister in the Goss Government who is not fair dinkum and that he is not concerned with accountability or ensuring that cronyism does not develop, or he is not concerned to stamp out any possibility of corruption in this area.

Mr EATON: I cannot understand the honourable member persevering, because I heard him quote a figure of $7 for information that a person can obtain from the department. It is the same for everybody. The charges have not yet been set. When that has been done, a person will be able to ask whether certain information is available and then find out the charge for it. That person can get somebody else to provide the information, so there is no way in the world it could be kept secret. If the information was kept secret, I can assure the honourable member that it would not be secret for very long.

Mr BEANLAND: I take it from the Minister's statement that he will publish fees in the *Government Gazette* and that, instead of a whole range of fees, a standard fee will apply. If that is the case, that is different from the proposition that members have been led to believe from a reading of the Bill and the Minister's second-reading speech. We are not referring to individuals who wish to check up on their own land valuations. We are talking about commercial operators such as real estate agents, valuers and—more often these days—building material suppliers, who seem to be making the majority of inquiries so that they can have the opportunity of selling their materials directly to the property-owner. The Minister is saying that there will be one standard fee and that he will not negotiate with commercial operators. A standard fee will apply across-the-board and it will apply to each person seeking information. Is my understanding correct?

Mr EATON: The Government will not give a franchise to one company. A fee will be payable. If the person seeking the information wants to on-sell it, the Government will obtain a royalty. Does that answer the honourable member's question?

Mr BEANLAND: No. In fact, it opens up the issue even more. The Minister mentioned royalties. I am not talking about the Government giving a franchise to one commercial operator. I am talking about a whole series of operators. This is the point that the member for Auburn and I keep making. The Minister has now mentioned royalties, which opens up the issue even more. A question arises in respect of what the royalties will be and what will be the rate of the standard fee upon which the royalties will be based. I come back to the point that the Government will be dealing with myriad operators comprising real estate agents, valuers and building material suppliers. I think the Minister has indicated clearly that a range of fees will apply. Whether the Minister is intending to negotiate a fee within a range of fees with each commercial operator is becoming less clear as the debate goes on. Will the fees be published in the gazette? How will they apply? The Minister has now raised the issue of royalties, which has added to the complexity of the issue. This makes the essence of this amendment even more critical, because it must be made clear to everyone exactly what fees the various operators are paying for this commercial information. I ask the Minister to rethink the whole matter, because it is clearly a very important part of this legislation. The amendment has taken on a whole new meaning since the Minister mentioned royalties. I cannot emphasise enough the importance of this amendment.

Mr HARPER: I could not agree more wholeheartedly with the member for Toowong. Earlier in the debate, I said that the Minister's second-reading speech was contradictory in its terms. The Minister has now mentioned the Government's receipt of royalties. The Minister's second-reading speech states—

> "Clients who resell the information will pay no more for their supply . . ."

If that is the case, how can the Government obtain royalties? However, the Minister has just said that the Government will receive royalties. I do not know whether the Minister read and digested his second-reading speech, but because it is so contradictory, whoever wrote it for him certainly led him up the garden path. It reads—

> "Clients who resell the information will pay no more for their supply while the Government will receive a fair return on its investment . . ."

The Minister cannot run away from a very simple amendment which will ensure that there can be no allegations of cronyism against any of his officers, himself or any other member of the Government. All I am asking him to do is put on a register, which is available for public scrutiny, any arrangement that is entered into between the Valuer-General and an individual. This is authorised in the legislation. For the benefit of the Minister—the legislation states—

". . . the arrangement may . . ."

This is the arrangement made between the Valuer-General and the person who is seeking the information. The legislation does not say anything about prescribed fees; it simply refers to an "arrangement", which is quite contradictory to what was stated by the Minister. The clause states—

". . . the arrangement may—

(a) provide for the fees and charges to be paid to the Valuer-General for the information, the method of their calculation and the way of their payment."

The Bill does not state anything about gazetted fees, prescribed fees or anything else. The opposition parties are saying to the Government, "Okay, if you want that arrangement to be entered into, at least put it on the record so that other people can inspect it to see that they are getting the same deal as their competitors in the commercial world."

Mr EATON: This is the last time I will respond to this clause. As things presently stand, people can buy the information from the Valuer-General for $7. They can make 100 photostats and sell them for $5 or $6 each, and the Government gets nothing. The arrangement and the prescribed fees will be set by consultation, which is the process that is being undertaken at this time. That is why I cannot inform the honourable member what the price will be. However, I can assure him that it will not be a high fee and that it will be based on an individual item. If a person wants updates—which the department is doing all the time—to on-sell the information, the Government will obtain a royalty. It is not the intention of the Government to produce information so that every Tom, Dick and Harry around the countryside can on-sell it. Real estate agents, valuers and even Government departments are interested in this information. The information will still be made available to Government departments.

Question—That the words proposed to be inserted be so inserted—put; and the Committee divided—

AYES, 26		NOES, 45	
Beanland		Ardill	McElligott
Borbidge		Barber	McGrady
Connor		Beattie	Mackenroth
Coomber		Bird	Milliner
Dunworth		Braddy	Palaszczuk
Elliott		Bredhauer	Pearce
FitzGerald		Briskey	Power
Gilmore		Burns	Robson
Goss J. N.		Campbell	Schwarten
Harper		Casey	Smith
Horan		Comben	Smyth
Lingard		D'Arcy	Spence
Littleproud		Davies	Sullivan J. H.
McCauley		Dollin	Szczerbanik
Perrett		Eaton	Vaughan
Rowell		Edmond	Warburton
Santoro		Elder	Welford
Slack		Fenlon	Wells
Springborg		Flynn	Woodgate
Stephan		Foley	
Stoneman		Hamill	
Turner	*Tellers:*	Hayward	*Tellers:*
Veivers	Neal	Hollis	Prest
Watson	Quinn	Livingstone	P i t t

Resolved in the negative.

Clause 4, as read, agreed to.

Clause 5, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

Third Reading

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

LOCAL GOVERNMENT GRANTS COMMISSION AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 10 March (see p. 4013).

Mr LINGARD (Fassifern) (4.10 p.m.): Mr Deputy Speaker, the honourable member for Mirani and shadow Minister for Housing and Local Government has had to return to his electorate. Therefore, I present these thoughts from him. In his speech notes, the honourable member for Mirani says—

> "I rise to speak on the Local Government Grants Commission Amendment Bill and, at the outset, I would just like to assure the Minister that we will not be opposing this Bill.
>
> I think it is a step in the right direction and the Minister certainly has my support for this action. I also believe, from the consultations I have had with Local Government people, that they also have no objection to it.
>
> So you can be assured, Mr Minister, that you have the support of the Opposition.
>
> There are a couple of little things that I would like to bring up in my very brief remarks, and I quote from your second-reading speech—
>
> > 'Firstly, because of the diversity in size, location and composition of Local Authorities throughout Queensland, it is not possible to ensure that all

are adequately represented on the Commission. As I see it, it is clearly desirable that there be representation from at least—a large urban council, a mixed urban/rural local authority and a rural local authority.'

What sector of the Local Authorities throughout Queensland would you see the new appointment being made to represent?

Of course, there is the other question as to how and by whom will such a representative be appointed.

I know, Mr Minister, that you, yourself, will confer with representatives of the Local Government before you make such an appointment.

I think it is essential for good relations between the Local Government and State Government, that an appointment be approved by the Local Government Association.

In the past, there has always been very close consultation with the L.G.A. on such an appointment, and I trust that you can assure us that this can be continued.

Mr Minister, there is no doubt that you appreciate the very difficult task that the Grants Commission performs and, when I had your position as Minister for Local Government, I realised the very good job that people like Mr Charlie Palmer, Sir Albert Abbott and Don Young did, under probably difficult circumstances."

I am sure that, if the member for Mirani were here, he would expand on his comments about those three people. The notes continue—

"Mr Speaker, not only do you have to make sure that your methodology and distribution is fair, but an appointee has to be able to talk to Local Government and explain the methodology used and there is no doubt that the complex nature of the method being used makes it extremely difficult.

Probably one thing that you should be looking at is in line with other States.

I believe the Commission could do with more resources, more staff and possibly more finance to allow them to do the very important job that is required.

It is essential that members travel throughout this vast State and learn of difficulties that Local Authorities operate under and the problems they have.

I understand, from my enquiries, that the Grants Commission will have their first inspection on 30 March, and here we have 3 months of the year already gone.

That is probably not good enough, and I do not lay any blame at the feet of the Commission but, considering the vast State of Queensland, it is essential that these people go out and look at every sector and every area of this vast State of ours in regard to Local Authority.

No doubt the Minister will reply to the questions I have asked today, and I look forward to him doing that in his reply.

Once again, we support this Bill and just plead for those extra resources to be made available to these people, and that ongoing consultation be carried out between Local and State Government."

Mrs WOODGATE (Pine Rivers) (4.14 p.m.): The Local Government Grants Commission is a subject which can always be relied on to generate lively discussion within most Queensland local authorities. At any local government conference or regional conference that one may attend, the matter of the fairness or otherwise of the system and the make-up of the commissioners can be expected to come up for discussion whenever two or more local authority elected representatives and/or shire clerks gather together.

The Minister is to be congratulated on having the foresight to make changes to the make-up of the representatives on the commission. In the case of my local authority of Pine Rivers, representing some 90 000 persons, one would expect that a representative from a mixed urban/rural local authority would more than adequately understand their

problems, whereas smaller local authorities such as Burke, Widgee and Woocoo would be better served by a person representing a rural local authority.

Although this Bill increases the membership of the commission by just one member—from four to five—it is a much-needed change, and one, I am sure, that will be welcomed by all Queensland local authorities, whether large or small. One other reason why my support for the proposed alteration to the consistency of the membership to the Queensland Local Government Grants Commission is wholeheartedly given is that I believe the new make-up of the commission will provide the opportunity for the methodology of the grants to be reviewed. The grant principles have a significant detrimental effect on the local authority which I represent, and on many of the local authorities in Queensland which are under immense pressure due to population increases and subsequent demands from new residents. The grant has an objective of "horizontal equalisation of the average standard", which requires each State to form principles under which the grant will be distributed among the State's local government bodies. The principles must comply with the objectives of the Commonwealth and be approved by the Commonwealth Minister for Local Government. The independent State Government Grants Commission makes recommendations to the responsible State Minister on the allocation of grants among councils within the State concerned.

The principles adopted by the Queensland Grants Commission are a most complex mixture trying to address difficult situations. However, I believe that one of the most detrimental principles which faces fast developing local authorities is the component that relates to the rating capacity of the local authority. There are opposing schools of thought on this issue. One could say that the tax base—that is, the rateable value of the land—is the measure of relative rating capacity. Alternatively, it could be said that the ability of ratepayers to pay rates is the measure of a council's capacity to raise rates. Some States, particularly those which use improved capital value as the rate base, rely solely on land values as the measure of rating capacity. In Queensland, unimproved capital values, UCVs, are used to determine the rateable value of land. UCV is generally not considered to be a good indicator of capacity to pay. UCV and personal income are not necessarily correlated. Accordingly, Queensland uses indicators such as the personal income of residents, the net value of agricultural production, and a derivative of retail sales turn-over in conjunction with land valuations to derive by statistical analysis a formula which represents the average rating "effort"—that is, the average standard—of all councils. The formula is then applied to each council to give a figure which represents what that council would raise in rates if it taxed at the average standard. This figure is used as part of the assessment of each council's need for a grant. However, the calculation does not take into account the disposable income of residents.

My electorate, in common with many others, has a high percentage of first home owners and people who are endeavouring to meet financial commitments in their pursuit of home-ownership. Most progressive local authorities are acutely aware of this situation when formulating their budgets, and to be further penalised for their community awareness by a possible reduction in the Grants Commission allocation seems to be grossly unfair. For example, there are only two "city" governments in Australia—Brisbane and Canberra. Canberra receives a direct grant, but the Brisbane City Council is treated in the same manner as a small rural shire council is treated. If I could just draw the attention of the House to the wide disparity in the level of grants to local authorities—the Queensland average is $42 per person; Canberra is $42 per person; Brisbane is $14.40 per person; in my electorate the Pine Rivers Shire Council is $17.25 per person; yet Diamantina is $2,604 per person. A very simplistic solution advanced is that greater weightage be put on population, but I do not necessarily agree with that. However, I admit that this is not the answer to a very complex question. I am confident that the proposed alterations to the membership of the Queensland Local Government Grants Commission will be able to address issues such as I have raised, together with a number of other issues of concern expressed over a long period by local authorities. I am happy to support the Bill

Mr COOMBER (Currumbin) (4.20 p.m.): The Queensland Liberal Party supports this piece of legislation to amend the Local Government Grants Commission Act. The main thrust of the legislation is to increase the number of commissioners from four to five. We support this, and acknowledge the difficulty of having three commissioners in one place. Because the State is so large and 134 local authorities have to be serviced, there is a need for an additional commissioner. I would like to take a couple of minutes to express the concern of many local authorities about how the grant is calculated. The 1986 Commonwealth Act prescribes the general kind of distribution approach to be followed by each State Grants Commission. A combined system of specific grants is paid to the States which are then paid as general revenue grants to local authorities in each State, where the principles on which the grants in each case are assessed are different. With respect to the States, the grants are uniform payments per head of population. A person generates the same grant irrespective of where he or she resides. With respect to local authorities, the grants are based mainly on fiscal equalisation principles, and the grants per head of population vary widely.

The total grant to Queensland in 1990-91 was about $42 per head of population. However, the grant made to Brisbane City amounted to an equivalent $21 per head of population, whereas the grant to Diamantina Shire amounted to $2,604 per head of population. The main problem with the Queensland system—and for that matter with the system in all States which must all conform to the 1986 Act—is that it appears too demanding of time and effort for the funds involved. If the full costs of the existing system were calculated, which would include not only the costs of the commission, but also the costs of the individual councils, then it is reasonable to argue that these costs are unacceptably high for a total 1990-91 grant to Queensland of $120m. A simpler, less demanding, and more readily understandable set of principles for determining grants to local authorities in the State is required.

Without being critical of the State Grants Commission, which has to carry out its statutory duties, the principles that are followed appear to generate procedures whereby the derivation of the principles and the calculations of various kinds of distributional equations become more important than the actual distribution of grants that emerge. Moreover, there is no evaluation of the grants made to see if they achieve some type of fiscal equalisation in practice. Again, the State Grants Commission does not have the resources to do this type of valuation work. With the approach now adopted, the Grants Commission, as it were, begins anew each year and carries out once more the whole range of calculations and estimations based on financial and other data for the next year. In a real sense, last year's work is not relevant. This is a common complaint from local authorities. There is an inconsistency year to year on the data that is required. The councils in my area do not have any clear ruling that the Grants Commission recognises any disability claims. For example, the Gold Coast City Council would claim tourism-related disabilities caused by beach erosion, extra traffic, and so on. There is a difficulty in quantifying the disability and the time taken by council officers to provide this information is considerable.

A system is required that is cost-effective and readily provides the distributional pattern of grants in a way that local authorities understand. A system based on the following procedures would illustrate such a concept. The grants recommended for the initial year are converted to a per capita relativity for each local authority, or the factor by which its actual population is multiplied to give its distributional population. Grants can then be seen as being distributed as an equal amount per head of distributional population. Over the next three years, which ideally would correspond with the electoral period for a local government council, each local authority would maintain its initial per capita relativity, but in each of the last two years the distributional population would be recalculated by use of the actual population in each of those two years. In this way, the new incoming council would be better able to plan its finances over its term of office. In the intervening period, therefore, the Grants Commission could carry out the task of reviewing the distributional pattern for the next three-year period which, in effect, would mean revisions to the per capita relativities.

However, for such a system to operate, the initial distributional pattern must be generally acceptable to all local authorities. The new principles which are now being phased in by the Queensland Grants Commission will lead to significant redistributions in grants over the next few years. I have found no evidence to support the conclusion that this redistribution represents one which redresses previous miscalculations based on the application of new fiscal equalisation principles. Rather, the redistributions are the outcome of the application of new, and as yet untested, ideas and principles. I do not believe that it is too late to obtain a stay in this phasing-in period and review the outcomes of the new methodology, since it is the outcomes which are the vital criteria for judging the acceptability of the new set of principles. A more stable system is needed which promotes efficient financial planning by the local authority councils.

The Liberal Party supports the Bill before the House. I understand, after speaking to the Minister, that the person to be selected to fill the position of commissioner will have the support of the Local Government Association. I believe that that is very much in the interest of local authorities, particularly those in south-east Queensland, which are subjected to rapidly increased but controlled growth.

Mr HORAN (Toowoomba South) (4.26 p.m.): This Bill seeks to expand the membership of the Local Government Grants Commission from four to five. This will be of benefit in providing a broader representation of councils and shire councils. The Opposition supports the Bill. In the Minister's second-reading speech, he gave reasons for increasing the numbers so that there will be representation on the Grants Commission of a large urban council, a mixed urban/rural local authority, and a rural local authority. Local government bodies have been classified by the Advisory Council for Inter-government Relations into the following seven broad categories: developed metropolitan; fringe metropolitan; provincial cities; small cities; rural towns; other rural areas; and community councils. The community councils govern the defined Aboriginal council areas. The number of Queensland local authorities within each of these classes are as follows: developed metropolitan has one only, which is Brisbane City; Class 2, which is fringe metropolitan, has seven; Class 3, which is provincial cities and includes Toowoomba, has 14; Class 4, which is small cities, has 8; Class 5, which is rural towns, has 58; and Class 6 has 46.

In view of the Minister's stated aim in his second-reading speech, it would seem reasonable that the Minister could make remarks during this debate about the basis of representation on the Grants Commission. The Bill does not actually state just what form that representation will take. It is really taken on good faith. I ask the Minister whether the regulations will contain any stipulations, for example, one member to represent the Brisbane City Council, one member to represent Classes 2 to 4 and one member to represent Classes 5 to 6, so it is actually spelt out in the regulations.

The previous two speakers have spoken to some extent about the Local Government Grants Commission allocations. This is of great concern to a number of cities and shires throughout Queensland. In particular, because of its location at 2 000 feet on top of the Great Dividing Range, the Toowoomba City Council has some very special needs. The council feels that it is disadvantaged by the formula or the methodology that is used by the Grants Commission in determining the allocations. For example, the 1991 allocation showed a decrease for Toowoomba of 8.8 per cent, or $186,608, in comparison with the grant for the previous year. This occurred as a result of a change in the methodology used by the Grants Commission. This methodology is being phased in.

Although other cities receive a smaller allocation than that provided to Toowoomba, the amount allocated to Toowoomba is declining each year. It is estimated that, in 1991-92, Toowoomba's grant is expected to decrease by a further $119,500, or 6.2 per cent. That would be equivalent to a loss to the Toowoomba City Council of $300,000 over a two-year period, or approximately $10 per rateable property. As a result, 14 of the State's local authorities engaged the services of the Centre for Applied Economic Research and Analysis of the James Cook University, which recommended in its report—

> "That the phasing in process for full implementation of the new principles first introduced in 1989/90 be discontinued, and that the Grants for 1991/92 be determined on the basis of the average share of the total received by each Local Authority over the past three years, 1988/89 to 1990/91."

As to some of the variations that occur in the grants formulas—although Toowoomba and Townsville have roughly the same population and area, in 1991-92, Townsville will receive approximately $1.5m more than Toowoomba. The Pine Rivers Shire, which was mentioned previously, has a larger population than that of Toowoomba, yet it will receive approximately $340,000 less. Ipswich, which has a smaller population than that of Toowoomba and is closer to the Brisbane metropolitan area, will receive approximately $250,000 more than Toowoomba. These are a few examples of the strange results from the methodology used for the allocation of funds.

I turn now to the particular needs of Toowoomba and the reason why those needs must be taken into account in the allocation and the determination of methodology. Sitting on top of a range, Toowoomba is probably the only city of its size in Australia that has to lift water such a height to the city. Toowoomba City has three dams: Cressbrook, which is 1 800 feet below the range, holds 81 000 megalitres; Perseverance, which is 1 000 feet below the range, holds 27 000 megalitres; and Cooby, which sits further up towards the top of the range, holds 21 000 megalitres. Cressbrook Dam alone requires six 2 400-horsepower motors and two 600-horsepower motors in the system that lifts that water in various stages up to the top of the range so that it can then run by gravity to the city. This has meant enormous capital expense and repayments together with huge power costs in providing water to the city.

Another example of Toowoomba's unique costs relates to sewage treatment. Toowoomba is not located near a major river or ocean outflow, so the sewage must be treated to a very high degree because it runs into a very small creek known as Gowrie Creek, which is the commencement of the Murray/Darling system. That water eventually flows into South Australia. Recently, Toowoomba was identified as the largest point source of nutrient contribution to the Murray/Darling system during the scare about the concentration of bloom algae in that system. The council is quite concerned that there could be a measure of overkill in trying to introduce regulations to treat that sewage. As I said, the sewage is treated to a very high degree and conforms with all regulations. But that is one of the additional costs that the council must bear because Toowoomba is located beside a small creek on top of a mountain range.

As to the council's budget of $71m for 1991-92, compared with $68m for the previous year—$36m of that sum comes from rates, while the balance is made up of loans, grants and other income. The council's repayments on water have represented a substantial proportion of its annual budget. At the moment, the council's debt is in the order of $50m, of which some $31m is water related. The council has a short-term plan to be rid of its debt by the year 2003.

I know that other members wish to take part in this debate, so at this stage I shall reinforce the important points of my speech. I understand that, through the Queensland University of Technology, the Minister has undertaken a review of the methodology of allocation of grants. I reiterate how important it is for the Toowoomba City Council—with its unique water and sewerage problems, and with Toowoomba being located on top of a mountain range—to receive a fair allocation under this system. I conclude by repeating that this Bill is favoured by the Opposition and we will support it.

Hon. T. J. BURNS (Lytton—Deputy Premier, Minister for Housing and Local Government) (4.35 p.m.), in reply: I thank honourable members for their contributions to this debate. I thank particularly the member for Fassifern for his support of the Bill. I am sorry that the shadow Minister is not in the Chamber. Late last night, we tried to make arrangements, but time prevented us from doing so. I want this Bill to be passed today. With a four-person committee deciding an issue as important as the distribution of $120m to local authorities throughout the State, it is important to include a growth urban area.

As the honourable member for Currumbin said—and the secretary of my local government committee, Margaret Woodgate, made the point—there is never a satisfactory solution to the distribution of that money. Each year there are some winners and some losers. The winners say nothing and the losers go crook. This year, the Government has spent a considerable amount of time and money on trying to address this problem. A few years ago, the Commonwealth Government would not accept the previous Government's recommendations. I ask members to remember that it is Commonwealth money that is handed to us. If we wish to alter the guidelines, we have to obtain Commonwealth approval. We even have to obtain approval for the distribution. The advice is always late in getting to council, because we have to wait for the Federal Budget. We cannot announce what we will receive until the Budget papers are released. This is always difficult for councils, and no-one is ever really satisfied with it. The winners do not believe that they have received enough, and the losers believe that they have lost too much.

I would like to draw the attention of members to the retirement of Don Young, who has done a very good job in recent years. The methodology of distribution of grants has not been changed, even though efforts have been made to improve it. Recently, I received a report on the matter which cost a substantial amount. As the recommendations do not appear to be any different from previous recommendations on the matter, it seems that that money might have been wasted. Don Young did a great job in travelling around the State explaining the formula to councils. The biggest problem is that most councillors do not understand the methodology of distribution of grants. I must admit that, after the members of the commission had explained the distribution formula to me, I felt like a stunned mullet. However, a more simple method is being sought. Alec McIntosh, who was with the commission for a number of years and who did a very good job, stood down this year at my request because I wanted to change the focus by bringing in Margaret Henn from the Belyando Shire Council, which is a large country shire, and because I wanted a woman on the commission. Don Young was replaced by Bill Rahmann, who is a former Main Roads engineer and former Maryborough City Council engineer. Because it will be local authority money, all those people have been placed on the committee after consultation with the Local Government Association.

I keep saying to Jim Pennell, the President of the Local Government Association, "If you want to take over the distribution of the money, there is no trouble with me." The Federal Government gives the State $120m and we just pass it on. We are not allowed to siphon some of it off as it goes past. All we ever get out of it is hassles. Everybody argues about the distribution and no-one is ever happy. I have always said that, if the Local Government Association wanted to take over the distribution of money, I would hand over the task, but the association has declined gracefully. In fact, "declined rapidly" would be a better expression. Because roads play a major part in the business of most councils and because of his experience as a Main Roads engineer and as a Maryborough City Council engineer, Bill Rahmann was appointed to the commission. Gordon White, the Chairman of the Pioneer Shire Council, continues as a member. I have already mentioned Margaret Henn from the Belyando Shire Council. Another member is Peter Woolley, who is a departmental officer. On the recommendation of the Local Government Association, I intend to put an elected official of the Logan City Council on to the commission as the additional member.

At present, the Federal Government provides $120m to be distributed by the Grants Commission. It is currently talking about the allocation of an additional $60m for roads. If that occurs, there will be hell to pay among the councils. We argue that road money should remain in a separate fund and should be distributed under the old main roads formula. We put forward that argument because we have enough troubles without adding another one. The shadow Minister suggested that the Grants Commission had staffing problems. I have received no request from the Local Government Grants Commission for extra money or extra staffing. That money comes out of our budget. This year, the Grants Commission has conducted a number of seminars throughout the State. It is now starting to conduct inspections. As I said earlier, we have spent a

substantial amount of money trying to improve the formula or methodology by making it simpler. Arrangements are being made to put a model of the formula on the computer system so that everyone can predict future grants. When that occurs, I suggest that we will fight about not only this year's distribution but also the allocations for the next four or five years. That arrangement should change the ground rules of the debate and make it very interesting. I thank members for their support. I thank especially Margaret Woodgate, John Flynn and a number of other members who have helped me try to improve the system of distribution of grants.

Motion agreed to.

Committee

Clauses 1 to 10, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

Third Reading

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

GURULMUNDI SECURE LANDFILL AGREEMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 10 March (see p. 4012).

Mr ELLIOTT (Cunningham) (4.42 p.m.): The Opposition has a number of comments to make about the Bill. Prior to the last election, when the Labor Party aspired to become the Government, it indicated that it would have open and accountable government and would not ride roughshod over people. It instanced things that had happened in the past three to six years, saying that the former Government had ridden roughshod over various local authorities and communities and it gave an undertaking to the people of Queensland that that would not happen in the future. This is another example of the ALP, despite those pre-election promises, riding roughshod over a small community, namely the people in close proximity to Gurulmundi in the Murilla Shire. It does not matter how much flak is flying, the Premier always manages to distance himself from it. Because nothing sticks to him, it is no wonder that the press are calling him "Teflon". He does all sorts of dreadful things through his Ministers, who are the front men. The good old Minister for "Revenge" is in the Chamber. He will take the flak and abuse for this Bill. He will cop all the political flak, not the Premier. When the public abuse the Government over this issue, the Premier will be nowhere to be found. Before the last election, people heard a great spiel that there would never be any more ministerial rezonings—that a ministerial rezoning would never be seen again in Queensland. I would be very interested to hear any honourable member argue to the contrary. Clause 6 states—

> "Despite the *Health Act 1937* or any other enactment, consent, approval or authorisation is not required for a use of, or an activity on, the site under the agreement."

How does a ministerial rezoning differ from what the Government is doing here this afternoon? Basically, it is putting a ministerial rezoning through this House. It amazes me that the Government is hypocritical enough to still talk about what the National Party used to do, and yet it is in here today putting through a ministerial rezoning.

Mr Ardill: The National Party's ministerial rezonings were for personal profit.

Mr ELLIOTT: The fact of the matter is that it amounts to a ministerial rezoning. If this bentonite clay is so fantastic that there will be no problems with the site at Gurulmundi—a thousand years for material to move a metre through the soil—why has it not been loaded onto a train, brought to Brisbane and used in one of the disused

quarries? There are any number of sites in which this material could be stored, using the bentonite to line the quarry. The Government does not want to do that because the people in Brisbane do not want the dump any more than the people in Miles and Gurulmundi want it. The Government will impose the dump on the people in Miles and Gurulmundi against their will and cause huge ructions, friction and splits within the community. All sorts of havoc will be created. This will happen because the Government is not prepared to accept that this material should be stored in Brisbane while it works out a better technology with which to store it.

The Government is great on rhetoric. It talks about the environment, what it ought to be doing, and how it will do all these good things with the recycling of rubbish. What has the Government really done? It has been party to another landfill at Rochedale. It did nothing about that dump. When the council wanted to do something, the Government gave it no assistance and made no positive suggestions. All it did was abuse the existing council. The Government never puts its money where its mouth is. It had come out and said that it would support a recycling program and provide the shires to the north and south of Brisbane with assistance to get involved.

Mr T. B. Sullivan: Your coalition partner signed the contract just before the election.

Mr ELLIOTT: What happened to Jim Soorley's promises and grandiose ideas? The answer to these problems is waste minimisation. The Government should be legislating in this place to ensure that industry reduces its waste. I saw at first-hand what the corporate sector is doing in America. I spent over a week in Washington talking to the environment protection agency and the corporate people who are involved in the program in that country. If the Government wants an example of what can be done, it should look at the latest Volvo that has been released, the 940 series. Every part in that Volvo is colour-coded and letter-numbered so that it can be recycled. When the owner is finished with that car, it will be totally recyclable. I also visited IBM in America and met a lady who basically overrode the corporate structure of IBM in respect of what would happen and what would not happen with the processes and materials used in both the manufacture and packaging of computers. The research and development people came up with an idea that they first put to this woman who had the expertise in that area. In many instances, she would veto materials, saying that they would not work because of problems with disposal. That is what this Government should be doing.

The Government should have pro-active legislation which ensures that we do something worth while, practical and in the long-term interests of this State and the people of this State, rather than coming into this Chamber and forcing its ideologies and attitudes and saying, "We do not want this stuff down here, but we are going to inflict it on your lot up there." What is more, the Government will cart toxic substances and waste through my area, through the area of the member for Toowoomba South and through all the various electorates. We have already had a virtual emergency in Miles when an LPG tanker turned over. People had to be evacuated at 2 a.m. This has got everything to do with the Bill. I am explaining to honourable members that this is the sort of thing that will go on in the headwaters of the Murray Darling system.

I suggest that the site is by no means ideal. California has a great deal of expertise in respect of seismology and the problems with faults. Whether the Minister likes it or not, a fault line runs underneath the site. It stretches from St George to Mundubbera. Only 100 miles from Mundubbera, an earthquake registering 2.3 on the Richter scale was recorded. I have spoken to many people in California who will tell the Minister that there is no way they would have a landfill dump in an area with a known fault underneath because if an earthquake occurs the landfill will fracture. The Minister can talk as much as he wishes about liners because I have seen liners at landfill sites right across the United States, and I can tell the Minister that they leak.

Mr Littleproud: The important point is that this one's only got one liner. In the USA, they have got two liners.

Mr ELLIOTT: As I understand it, the Government is talking about a liner. Is the Minister going to have a liner at this landfill site, or not?

Mr Littleproud: A single liner.

Mr ELLIOTT: I will ask the Minister again at the Committee stage. It is interesting to examine the site because not only does it have a fault line running underneath it but also the area has a history of floods running right over its surface. A large number of floods have been recorded in the area. The 1932 flood was the biggest one, as I understand it. I suppose it could be suggested that a wall be constructed around the dump, but when I was an agricultural consultant in the Wee Waa area during the 1971 floods, I saw people put banks around all kinds of structures. However, the banks cracked and the water broke through. Not only did inundation occur but also the people were stranded in what amounted to a dam. They had to wait until the water receded before they could get their machinery out and get into their sheds and houses. They were worse off than the people who did not have banks around their properties. The Minister should not think that he can solve the problem by constructing a wall around the site, unless he is considering the construction of the greatest wall anyone has ever seen—one that would rival a dam wall.

Mr Littleproud interjected.

Mr ELLIOTT: The Minister should have a look at the cover of that report which shows the volume and velocity of the water. The Minister should not think for one moment that there is no problem with floods. The headwaters of the Murray/Darling system are nearby. In one direction, there is the Dawson River, and in the other direction there is the Murray/Darling system that flows into South Australia. In addition, the site is over the top of the Great Artesian Basin. How many other problems have to be highlighted before the Minister looks seriously at the choice of this site?

It really amazes me that no-one has been prepared to take advice from the foremost authority on landfills in the world, namely, the USEPA. That organisation sets the standards that should be achieved in the construction of a landfill site. I cannot understand why the Minister did not consult an official of the United States Environmental Protection Agency and seek advice and assistance. When I visited the United States, I became aware that those types of agencies are prepared to tell people about the good, the bad and the ugly problems that they have experienced in the disposal of toxic waste and garbage. It is absolutely amazing that this agency was not consulted and that the Minister is still not prepared to do so. It is really the agreement that ought to be amended, but as all honourable members would know, that cannot be done. Perhaps an amendment can be moved to clause 7.

In my opinion, there should be two prescriptions in this Bill. In the first place, there should be a requirement to have an independent authority monitoring the proposed use of the site. It must be remembered that the Brisbane City Council and the State Government have a vested interest in disposing of solvent wastes from the south-east area of Queensland, and they do not have to live with the consequences to the same degree that local people and local authorities do. The Brisbane City Council has an interest in the disposal of waste. It does not want to take the waste up to Mount Coot-tha and dump it in a quarry or a similar site. The Brisbane City Council wants the people who live in the west to cop it.

Mr Ardill: We've lived with it for over 20 years.

Mr ELLIOTT: Yes, I know that. Why is the Government suddenly deciding——

Mr Ardill: Because it is no longer viable.

Mr ELLIOTT: I understand that, but why did not the Government bring the bentonite down to Brisbane instead of carting the waste at great cost to the Murilla Shire? How much additional cost will this impose on the people of Queensland, industry, the local authorities, and so on? How much more would it cost to dispose of waste and cart it up to Gurulmundi after it has been treated at Willawong? As I understand it, that is the process, and I can be corrected if I am wrong.

Mr Ardill: That's what it says in the Bill.

Mr ELLIOTT: That is right, so I presume that that is what will occur. There are three parties to the agreement—the Queensland Government, the Brisbane City Council and the Murilla Shire Council. Let me place on the record that—perhaps quite unfairly—the Murilla Shire Council Chairman is copping a lot of flak because he signed the agreement. The Government put a gun to his head and he could do nothing except sign it. The Government is in a position to put the landfill site in the Gurulmundi area anyway, and gave the local authority no say in the proposal. It was an example of gangster tactics, and if the chairman had not signed the agreement, the Government would have gone ahead with the proposal, anyway. I do not blame the chairman one little bit for signing the agreement because I do not believe he had any other way around it at all. He really had to put up with the agreement.

Mr T. B. Sullivan: Are you saying that country folk are so weak that they cannot make up their own minds? That is what you are saying about your fellow rural councillors, are you?

Mr ELLIOTT: No. The honourable member is on the record as having said that.

Mr T. B. Sullivan: That is what you have just told us.

Mr ELLIOTT: I did not. I said that he had no alternative because the Government has the power to override the wishes of the shire council and the people who live in the area. The Government has done exactly that, and the honourable member should not think that they are prepared to go along with it because it is a nice, reasonable agreement and because of the miserable $40,000 a year that the Government will pay.

Mr Dollin: Now we are getting down to it.

Mr ELLIOTT: No, we are not. I am just asking: does the Minister think for one minute that the $40,000 has induced the council to sign the agreement? That is absolute nonsense. The whole idea is absolutely preposterous. The agreement is for a term of 25 years, or until 97 500 tonnes of waste has been disposed of, whichever comes first. Then what happens? Is the site large enough? Will dumping continue alongside the bentonite mine? I find it quite incredible that the landfill should be located so close to the bentonite mine. As anyone who has done any research in that field knows, bentonite is used in many agricultural processes. As such, with whirlwinds and storm winds, regardless of how well the site is looked after, the human element will come into it and contamination of the site will occur via windborne dust and so on. I cite the example of the problems we have had with contamination of our beef products that we export to America. When we did our homework, the DPI discovered that a lot of the contamination was brought about by windborne dust that came, for example, from the treating of posts alongside hay sheds, so the hay was contaminated. The stages can be traced back.

If the Minister thinks that the landfill will be any different, he is not being practical. That brings us to the nub of the problem. We are talking about a pack of socialists who do not want to have a nasty thing in their own electorates. They want to put the landfill somewhere else. They do not understand the local conditions or the problems involved with all of those things. Government members do not care. All they want to do is get the landfill out of their own backyard. They adopt the NIMBY principle—not in my backyard. I find great interest in drawing an analogy between what the Government requires of the Landfill Management Committee and what it requires of the Heritage Committee under the Queensland Heritage Bill that was passed on Tuesday. This Bill provides that 14 days' notice must be given of a meeting of the Landfill Management Committee. Under the heritage legislation, committee members are not required to be given notice of a meeting. If the Minister is to receive any brownie points for anything, he should get them for being a bit more democratic in drawing up the agreement so that at least 14 days' notice is to be given before a meeting can be held. As I said, under the heritage legislation, no notice is required. If a member does not live in Brisbane, that is too bad. He or she will not get to the meeting. I find that quite amazing. We then come to the nub of the problem. A quorum of the committee is two. The committee shall have three members, or six, if each authority chooses to be represented by two members.

Mr J. H. Sullivan: Three voting.

Mr ELLIOTT: Three voting, yes. One member is from the Brisbane City Council, one is from the State Government and one is from the Murilla Shire Council. A quorum is two. If agreement cannot be reached, the matter comes straight back to the Minister. Let us be quite honest: the Minister will make the decision. That is why I want to know what happens when the 97 500 tonnes or 25 years is reached, whichever is the first.

Mr Warburton: I won't be around.

Mr ELLIOTT: No, I do not think the Minister will be, either. I agree with that. I do not have any desire to be in this place at that stage, so I probably will not be here, either. It will come down to whatever the Minister wants to do. With all of the other arguments, we are only dealing with semantics because the Minister will make the decision.

Mr Warburton: You'll see that in certain matters there have to be unanimous decisions.

Mr ELLIOTT: Right.

Mr Neal: If it's not unanimous, you've got the final say. That's what it says.

Mr ELLIOTT: That is what I am saying. At the Committee stage, the Opposition will speak at greater length to the clauses that relate to the agreement. We will question those clauses. I do not want to get too technical or go into too much detail now. Regardless of the fact that the Bill refers to a report and indicates that reference shall be had to the report as to which wastes will and will not be accepted, I put it to the Minister that the people's House is right here. This House of Parliament is where the legislation is being debated. For my money, the Minister should table information on exactly what wastes will and will not be accepted at the landfill. My understanding is that solvent wastes and pesticide wastes will be accepted, but what about 2,4,5-T, for argument's sake? In the past, that was controversial because of the possible effects of dioxin. Will people be allowed to dispose of 2,4,5-T in the landfill? As I understand it, PVCs will be allowed, but not PCBs. I do not know whether I am correct. Usually, PCBs are encapsulated in concrete. I would like to know where they would go.

I would also like to know what sort of arrangements the Minister is making for the rest of the State. Obviously, the names of the shires that can use the landfill are detailed in the Bill. Those shires extend right out to the coast and, as I understand it, include all shires between those mentioned in the Bill and the southern border of the State. That provision in the Bill defines which areas will and will not be allowed to use the landfill. I would like the Minister to address what happens in the rest of Queensland and how we handle the other regions. The other matter about which I am concerned—and I touched on it before—is whether the Minister has an estimate from anyone in the Roads Division of the Department of Transport as to what extra wear and tear, problems and costs will be involved with the transports taking the material to the Gurulmundi site and whether the Minister thinks that the $40,000 payment is adequate to compensate the Murilla Shire Council for the extra costs that it will incur in maintaining roads, tracks and so on.

By virtue of what is contained in the agreement, the Murilla Shire is being gagged in respect of what it can and cannot say to its own constituents. It is almost like saying that Bill Prest cannot make explanations to his constituents unless he first receives advice from some committee. I find that quite anti-democratic. I would have thought that an elected body, which after all is elected democratically by a shire process——

Mr Warburton: Where does it say that?

Mr ELLIOTT: It is in the agreement.

Mr Warburton: No, it isn't.

Mr ELLIOTT: Yes, it does so. Of course it does.

Mr Warburton: Anyway, we will talk about that later.

Mr ELLIOTT: We will go into it. There is no question about whether it says that or not, because I read it only a minute ago.

Mr Warburton: I think you read it all just a minute ago.

Mr ELLIOTT: No. Because of the way in which this place has been run today, the Government has got what it richly deserves. It wasted over an hour on the Fraser Island debate. Now time is short and people are wanting to go home. The Government has only its own incompetence to blame for the way in which it has gone about running this Parliament today and for the trouble in which it now finds itself. Just to clarify what I was saying before, I point out that if the Minister reads section 8 of the agreement, which is headed "Public Query", he will see that what I am saying is correct about the Murilla Shire being required to answer only certain questions from members of the public, irrespective of their concerns.

The other matter on which I want to touch relates to the way in which the Opposition believes the whole toxic waste issue should be handled, how toxic waste should be contained and so on. Firstly, the Government should enact legislation which from today would require corporations and individuals to look at all of the processes of industry and reduce waste. Such legislation should not be retrospective legislation, which is what the Government so often seems to implement. An example of that will be seen in the Daydream Island legislation. The whole process has to be one of waste minimisation. Other countries are doing that. Quite frankly, we in Australia still think that we have an endless dump to which everything can be taken. We are the most wasteful society in the world. I think we are probably reaching the stage at which we are worse than the Americans. The Americans are starting to wake up to themselves, but we are not. Most other countries are starting to implement waste minimisation processes.

In his role as spokesman on this matter, my predecessor the Honourable Neil Turner, together with the deputy shadow Minister, Marc Rowell, saw the plasma-arc process on which the CSIRO is working in Melbourne. I suggest to all honourable members opposite that if they have an interest in this subject, they should go and have a look at what the CSIRO is doing. My deputy shadow Minister, Lawrence Springborg, and I went to Canberra and met for a day with the CSIRO. We spoke about a range of environmental subjects. This was one of the subjects in which we were vitally interested. As Neil Turner did, I certainly plan to go and have a good look for myself at the plasma-arc technology.

The CSIRO indicated that it would be able to take the plasma-arc operation to the site of the problem. Rather than carting the waste all over the place and treating it, a portable plant could be taken to the site where the waste is located and all of the solvents could be disposed of. Anything that would ordinarily have to be disposed of in a high-temperature furnace could be zapped there and then on the site. If the quantities of waste are too large to enable that to be done, other technology exists to dispose of it. It is totally dishonest to suggest that there are no alternatives anywhere in this State. At one stage of the game, I used to operate right near the cement works at Darra. I know something about that place. I have been there. The kiln has the capacity to achieve a temperature of 2 000 degrees Centigrade—far in excess of what is needed to burn most of the problem chemicals that need to be disposed of. Quite frankly, it is a mischief and dishonest to suggest that there are no alternatives and no other ways of doing this. If the Government had the desire and the overall interest in doing something——

Mrs Edmond: They are not up and running now. That was a prototype. It was not a properly set up venture. There is nothing up and running at the moment.

Mr ELLIOTT: No, but that does not stop the Government from doing something. After all, the Government can put our money where its mouth is and do something about the problem. But it would prefer the people of the Gurulmundi area to put up with what it is doing. I find that quite abhorrent. This is outdated technology. It just shows Government members up for the troglodytes they are.

Mrs Edmond: And your performance in this place is pathetic—absolutely pathetic.

Mr ELLIOTT: The honourable member should not talk. I have not seen her do anything very constructive lately.

Mrs Edmond: Anything I have got to say is valuable. What you have said in this place today is hopeless.

Mr ELLIOTT: Why?

Mrs Edmond: Because you have never said anything of any consistency or of any value.

Mr ELLIOTT: Such as?

Mrs Edmond: You are a boring, hopeless man.

Mr ELLIOTT: The honourable member is very good on rhetoric, but when it really comes down to it she does not have any constructive suggestions to make. She will not support anything.

Mrs Edmond: It is much better than yours.

Mr ELLIOTT: Abuse is very easy to hurl. One can stand up in this place and say abusive things to people. I suggest that the honourable member support those measures that are practical, that can be done, and that she work together with the Minister. If the honourable member is on the Minister's committee, I suggest that she puts some pressure on him to do something. This is 1992. Right down through history, all the countries around the world—America in particular—have had a reputation for conspicuous consumption. They are learning from their problems. The members on the other side of the House have been elected. They forget that they have been elected to Government. They should not keep harking into the past and saying——

Mr Elder: You have a very short, selective, hypocritical memory. That's what you've got.

Mr ELLIOTT: Not at all. The honourable member forgets that I was not a Minister at that time. Therefore, I was not in a position to do much about it. I am saying that it is this Government that has the responsibility. The technologies are available. Other countries have the will to address problems of this sort. In this country there is a need to address these problems, instead of which this Government chooses to bury its head in the sand and say that proposed method of disposal is quite acceptable. I am saying to the honourable member that it is not an acceptable method of disposal. It is outmoded and, quite frankly, there is much better technology around. This Government should be working towards its use. This Government should be giving assistance to people working on the plasma-arc. What is the Government doing about it? What is being done about the use of a cement kiln? Why is technology of that sort not being used? This Government is not doing anything constructive about introducing new technology. All it is doing is what has been going on for the last umpteen years, burying rubbish somewhere out in the country where its own constituents cannot see it. Because that does not harm Government members politically—because they know damned well they cannot win the seat in which the dump is situated, anyway—they are not concerned about it. Government members have no interest in the environment. They are all a mob of posers. When it comes down to the nitty-gritty, they really are found wanting, because, quite frankly, they are not prepared to put their money where their mouth is. As I said, Opposition members will examine in more detail these various points both in the agreement and in the clauses as they relate to the agreement when we get to the Committee stage.

Mr ELDER (Manly) (5.18 p.m.): I am pleased to be able to participate in this debate on what is very important and unprecedented legislation, but, having heard the effort of the member for Cunningham I am afraid that informed debate will not eventuate in this House today. He has just delivered some of the most irresponsible, ill-informed and irrelevant positions on a number of issues that I have ever heard. Quite frankly, I agree with the Minister. I do not think the member for Cunningham picked up the Bill until about half an hour ago, and I have grave doubts that he has ever looked at the assessment report, let alone gone over the final impact study. I doubt that the member for Cunningham has actually looked at it, and that disappoints me, because if he had done so, the debate, at least at this stage, would have been somewhat better informed on a number of the points which were raised.

I also think the member for Cunningham has sold the Murilla Shire short. I will be sending a copy of his speech to Roderick Gilmore and the rest of the Murilla Shire

Council, because I think he has sold them extremely short. As I said, I am pleased to be able to participate in the debate because it formally gives——

Mr ELLIOTT: I rise to a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker. The honourable member has not even got his name right. That is how well he knows the situation.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Palaszczuk): Order! There is no point of order.

Mr ELLIOTT: I quite clearly indicated that I understood the position the Murilla Shire was in. It was in a no-win situation.

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

Mr ELDER: The legislation formally approves, and gives effect to, an agreement between the State Government, the Brisbane City Council, and the Murilla Shire Council, within whose boundaries the landfill is to be located, on the establishment and the operation of that site. I would like to concentrate my comments on the unique consultative approach undertaken by the Government towards this issue. The member for Cunningham did not give us any credit for that, but I will touch on the National Party contribution to the debate a little later, as I will on some of the key aspects of the legislation and the original agreement, and the reasons why such a facility was needed in the first place. In short, the action by this State Government is an important environmental protection initiative for the most densely populated part of Queensland. As such, it forms an integral and long overdue part of an integrated waste management strategy which, by necessity, includes waste minimisation and recycling. We agree on that aspect.

The member for Cunningham may not have been the responsible Minister, but for many years his Government attempted unsuccessfully to locate a suitable site in south-east Queensland for the safe disposal of treated hazardous wastes. The previous Government did not address the problems, although it was well aware of them and knew that the search for a solution was of paramount concern. On many occasions, those concerns were put to the honourable member by both Labor and Liberal city council administrations, but they were not addressed. To those new-found experts who conveniently forget, and now argue just for pure political expediency that a secure landfill is not needed, I remind the House that it was the Bjelke-Petersen Government which first initiated moves in this area in 1985. That was in response to a request from the then Liberal Brisbane City Council administration to locate a hazardous waste disposal facility. It was the Cooper National Party Government which specifically charged the CHEM Unit with the responsibility of identifying a secure landfill site. Does the honourable member accept that it was the previous Government's responsibility.

After being defeated at the 1989 election, the National and Liberal Parties took a cheap and expedient U-turn on this particular issue. In attacking the Labor Government on the issue, both parties, particularly the National Party, have deceived their constituents and sought to ignore their own original involvement in the problem. The need for a secure landfill facility to serve the needs of industry, local authorities and the community in south-east Queensland cannot be denied. In fact, as I indicated earlier, successive administrations of the Brisbane City Council, both Liberal and Labor, have sought assistance from and action by the State Government in order to locate a suitable site. A secure landfill is needed to augment the industrial waste treatment facility at Willawong, and has been needed for some time. As all members would be aware, this facility services the needs of local industry and local authorities throughout south-east Queensland. Of the hazardous wastes entering Willawong for treatment, approximately 90 per cent are reduced to non-hazardous material after treatment and are disposed of on site. It is the remaining 10 per cent which require a secure landfill.

Mr Neal interjected.

Mr ELDER: I happen to have lived at Inala. I was brought up at Inala. If the honourable member knew anything about that particular region, he would know that Willawong is right on the boundary of the Inala district. In future, the honourable member might make the effort to be a little more informed. The remaining 10 per cent of

wastes require secure landfill burial. The area available for the secure burial of solid wastes at Willawong is exhausted; it is not there. The site is needed, and the Opposition knows it, yet it plays politics on this issue in this House. The wastes requiring a secure landfill burial are principally the aqueous paint residues, pesticides and solvents. The classifications are in the Bill, and I will not repeat them. Coincidentally, they are the type of wastes that need not be disposed of in a high-temperature incinerator. They are best disposed of by burial. In recent years, this group of wastes has fallen—and this is another point that I would like to raise as the honourable member was talking about industry and Government involvement in recycling—by 50 per cent in volume. So, industry and Government are playing their part. There is not a head-in-the-sand mentality. Everyone knows the type of involvement that is necessary. As I said, if the honourable member had looked through the assessment, he would have seen that over the last four or five years, those wastes have been reduced in volume by some 50 per cent. Obviously, the honourable member has not checked the facts. The reduction was in response to cooperative efforts between Government and industry to reduce, re-use and recycle their waste. Where has the honourable member been for the last five years?

At this point I would like to emphasise a number of matters in relation to the landfill site. It will not replace the Willawong liquid waste treatment plant. Willawong will continue to receive and treat waste, as well as dispose of 90 per cent of the waste on that site. The Gurulmundi landfill will not accept radioactive, PCB, or intractable waste. The Opposition dragged a red herring over the trail about some chemicals that were used—2,4-D and a number of others.

Mr Elliott: Don't confuse 2,4-D with 2,4,5-T.

Mr ELDER: As I said, the Opposition dragged the red herring over the trail. The Bill is fairly explicit about what wastes will be disposed of on the site. If the honourable member had read the Bill, he would understand that. As I said, the wastes intended for burial are residues from the manufacture of paints, pesticides and solvents. The wastes transported to Gurulmundi will be treated and, as everyone is aware, through a process of chemical fixation using flash and cement dust, at the end of the day it will be solidified in a soil-like substance before transport. Of course, this greatly reduces the risk and it ensures that transport procedures can be easily managed. I repeat that the wastes in question are not liquid wastes but, rather, solidified wastes that look very much like rock and soil.

Put simply, the alternative to finding a secure landfill is the possibility of illegal dumping and unsafe practices, as well as denying industry and local authorities proper and safe waste disposal facilities. That is the alternative. The Government's announcement in October of last year of the Gurulmundi site as a secure landfill for the disposal of these wastes followed several months of unprecedented site assessment and checking. An unprecedented and, I believe, pioneering public information, consultation and participation program associated with that secure landfill accompanied the scientific and technical assessments. It is in the Bill. It is obvious that honourable members opposite have not read it. The Gurulmundi site was the subject of a six-month impact assessment study which was conducted by a firm of independent geotechnical, geological and hydrological consultants.

Mr Rowell: Who were they?

Mr ELDER: AGC Woodward-Clyde.

Mr Rowell: And what did they say?

Mr ELDER: If the honourable member had read the report, he would have known what they said. A little later in the debate, for the benefit of the honourable member, I will outline what those consultants said. The final IAS report confirmed the suitability of the site for a secure landfill. This confirmation was as a result of the work undertaken by those consultants and by both State and Federal agencies. As the Minister stated last week, important findings from the final impact assessment study report released in October concluded that the site is located near the top of the Great Dividing Range with limited upstream catchment. Again, the site is well above reported extreme flood levels.

The site is not a major intake area for the Great Artesian Basin. No major aquifers outcrop there.

An Opposition member interjected.

Mr ELDER: The Opposition still puts forward this irresponsible argument. The substantial thickness of the suitable clay bed that exists will seal any solidified wastes that might come from the site. The local groundwater table is at least 40 metres below the lowest operating level of the proposed landfill.

Mr Neal: You don't know what you are talking about.

Mr ELDER: I do. The fact is that the honourable member is ill-informed. He should read the assessment study and take a bit of time to educate himself. He has been here for too long. The closest resident is 2 kilometres away and the site is screened by 1 kilometre of bushland. The Burunga-Leichhardt Fault, which is 8 kilometres from the site, has been stable since the jurassic period. That is some 170 million years. I am not sure that that type of stability exists between the honourable member's ears, but 170 million years ago was the last time there was a problem in that fault area. I do not see that it poses a major threat to the landfill site.

It is particularly important to point out that the preliminary finding of the independent consultants with respect to the hydrogeology of the site were again checked by the Commonwealth Government's Bureau of Mineral Resources. That was in direct response to requests from sections of the local community, the local protest group and rural organisations. At that time, the findings confirming the security of the site were no different from the findings of the assessment study. In other words, some of the outrageous claims that the landfill posed a threat to the Great Artesian Basin were totally without foundation.

I realise that time is running out, so I will try to limit my comments to a few points. Initially, I want to talk about the involvement of the CHEM Unit because from day one of the Government's initial announcement in April of last year of a preferred site at Gurulmundi, the CHEM Unit has been stationed in Miles. Over that six-month period, the questions and concerns of the local people have been addressed. I would like to thank the director, Mr Michael Kinnane, Miss Fiona McKersie, who is the public education officer, Mr Greg O'Brien, who was seconded from the Brisbane City Council, and Mr Bruce Fleming, who was seconded from the Queensland University of Technology. I congratulate them all on showing the professionalism that was required in dealing with an issue of this type. They should all be commended for the work that they have done.

This was never a Queen Street cosmetic exercise; rather, it was a genuine attempt to empower the people in that area to seek answers to questions and to meet with the technical people involved in the particular process. The aim of the public consultation program was never to gain 100 per cent of support across-the-board—because everyone knew that that was an impossible goal—rather, it was to ensure that the people out there at least understood why that site was under consideration. At this point, I pay tribute to the achievements and fine work carried out by the former Minister and member for Chatsworth, Mr Terry Mackenroth. It is true that he succeeded where many others have failed in the past. Mr Mackenroth's determination, his commitment to an independent and thorough scientific assessment and the genuine consultation process with local government, dozens of other organisations and the local community were principal reasons behind the successful siting, after so many years of inaction or failure by previous administrations.

From the day of the Government's announcement in April 1991 that an independent assessment would be carried out at that site, Mr Mackenroth made himself available to any organisation that had an interest or concern about the issue. In particular, on several occasions he met with the Murilla Shire Council in an endeavour to hear its concerns. Through the CHEM Unit in his department, he ensured that the local community was well aware of whatever was happening at any stage of the assessment process. Indeed, Mr Mackenroth could have taken the easy way out—which on many occasions was taken by the previous Government—and proceeded without regard to

local concerns. He did not do that. Instead, he demonstrated a willingness to pursue a six-month independent assessment of the site, coupled with a unique public consultation program. Mr Mackenroth never shied away from the unpopularity of the issue or, at times, the absurd claims aimed at scaremongering.

On several occasions, Mr Mackenroth displayed a command of even the most detailed technical aspects of the secure landfill topic. I believe that his natural drive, down-to-earth approach and genuine interest ensured that the Murilla Shire Council and other organisations had easy access to him as and when required. In fact, as Minister, Mr Mackenroth visited the site to receive deputations from the local shire council, other local groups, including Landcare, and the PATCH protest group. The Queensland community, and certainly this Parliament, owe the member for Chatsworth a great deal of gratitude for having the strength and determination to pursue this matter to such a successful conclusion.

This Bill provides for a management structure for the design, construction and operation of the secure landfill site at Gurulmundi. For the first time, the Queensland Government and local governments have entered into an agreement for a regional hazardous waste disposal facility. I have the honour of representing the Minister for Police and Emergency Services on the Landfill Management Committee and look forward to actively participating. The committee held its inaugural meeting on 6 February. Unfortunately, I was unable to attend that meeting, but I understand from those present that there was an enormous amount of goodwill and good intent from all concerned about the development of the site and its ongoing management. I had the pleasure of travelling to Miles to observe the signing of the agreement, inspecting the site and meeting members of the Murilla Shire Council. I welcomed the opportunity to visit Miles, which is an attractive and friendly town. This legislation honours a commitment sought last year and provided to the people of the Murilla Shire for legislation to enshrine the tripartite agreement. As such, the Bill should be supported by every member of the House. The Bill embodies the principles of partnership and cooperative working relationships between local government and the State, as strongly supported by the Goss Government. I commend the Minister for introducing this Bill to the House.

Mr COOMBER (Currumbin) (5.34 p.m.): The Gurulmundi Secure Landfill Agreement Bill does represent a first for the State of Queensland. This is the first tripartite agreement between two local authorities and the State Government. An agreement was negotiated by the Murilla Shire with the State Government after the decision was made to site a hazardous waste facility at Gurulmundi. From reading this Bill, one would think that everybody supports the siting of such a facility at Gurulmundi. But I want to make it painfully clear that the Murilla Shire does not support the installation and functioning of a hazardous landfill at Gurulmundi. The shire chairman and his council have fought long and hard on behalf of the people of Miles who object to this Government transferring all hazardous waste from south-east Queensland to Gurulmundi. Because this is the reality of this legislation, all hazardous waste from south-east Queensland, after treatment and concentration at Willawong, will end up at Gurulmundi—all 97 500 tonnes in time, with the option to increase this amount further.

The name of the legislation would lead one to believe that the Murilla Shire agrees to the installation of the landfill, but in reality the legislation reflects tough negotiating on the part of the Murilla Shire Council, which approached this matter in a most professional way. But Murilla Shire is not the only local authority to be told where hazardous waste landfills will be sited. In the near future, the people of Gladstone and Townsville can also look forward to landfill sites for hazardous wastes. Gurulmundi is the model—the way in which the Government will, in the future, approach the selling of the landfill proposal to local authorities and residents. The environmental impact statement undertaken by this Government had a sense of overkill. The statement and its scope of works are immense. The local community, and even the council, could not compete with the Government to challenge information provided by the Government. The problem is perpetuated because I understand that the EIS fundamentals used at Gurulmundi are to form the model for other sites in Queensland.

The need for a secure landfill to dispose of solid treated hazardous wastes for southern Queensland has been well established. Two previous studies before this study failed to find a site. This Government found a site, forced its location on the community, wanted total control of the facility and, today, insults the people of Miles with talk of a management structure that provides for ongoing consultation with the local community. There would not have been any ongoing consulting without the professional approach that was adopted by the Murilla Shire Council. There is no doubt that there has to be a strategy for hazardous waste management in southern Queensland. Local authorities with industries producing waste have not had procedures in place for the treatment or storage of wastes. Willawong, which is operated by the Brisbane City Council, has been the only site for the treatment or reduction of waste. Willawong has treated paint residues, pesticides and solvents, but it is not a secure landfill site. We in society must come to grips with the sometimes uncaring disposal technologies of the past.

The former Police Minister gleefully promoted the spending of $11m to rectify past mistakes at Kingston, which in all instances equates to what this Government is doing at Gurulmundi—digging a hole and burying the waste. Our children deserve the best consideration we can give them and I do not think this Government has pursued the latest technology to dispose of these wastes. I do not profess that this is someone else's problem, but I have not seen sufficient evidence to blithely say that landfill is the only option. Even this Bill incorporates the need for the landfill committee to review the treatment and disposal methods used every five years. It is a shame that the local authority had to fight tooth and nail to have this consideration included in this legislation. When are we going to learn from our past mistakes when pollution of our country was a way of life?

Gurulmundi is the site. It will receive all the hazardous waste from south-east Queensland. The Gurulmundi landfill site became the solution to Brisbane's problem. The environmental impact statement looks great but, unfortunately, one becomes a little cynical when the EIS is conducted after the site has been selected. As well, if one is politically paranoid, the placement of the landfill site in one of the safest National Party seats comes as no surprise. Hazardous waste is to Miles as radioactive waste is to Esk, as Labor is to caring about Queenslanders.

Murilla Shire has really drawn the short straw—a $40,000 a year fee, subject to variations in the consumer price index, to receive waste from south-east Queensland. Hardly pieces of silver! That will barely pay for technical advice needed by the Murilla Shire to adequately present the views of its people. A technical subcommittee is to be formed to provide information to the three respective parties—the State Government, the Brisbane City Council and the Murilla Shire. Let us look at their relative resources. The State Government has unlimited resources through the CHEM Unit; Brisbane has the largest local authority budget in Australia; and the Murilla Shire has $40,000. If there is a major problem, that poor shire does not stand a chance.

I must say that the people of Miles should thank the council because, without its presence, I doubt that the surrounding populous would be told if there was in fact a leak from the landfill site. I would have thought that the Government would have provided some economic benefits to Miles as well as Gurulmundi. Small towns such as Miles depend on the local community for work and security. No matter what this Government says, a stigma attaches to Miles with this facility at Gurulmundi. The locals wanted a referendum on the issue; this Government refused. This question could have been canvassed along with the issue of daylight-saving. Why did the Government not ask the people about Gurulmundi and let the majority rule?

A significant number of questions have been raised about the safety of the site. Just how secure is the facility? The CHEM Unit has indicated that part of the design should include devices to monitor leakage from the site. With all the advice available to the CHEM Unit, I would have thought that interest groups such as the United Graziers Association would have had questions answered. When questioned about the real threat of contamination of the Great Artesian Basin, the CHEM Unit could only guarantee minimum risk. The proposed landfill does not have a synthetic lining and it worries me

that this Government, when faced with cleaning up a failed toxic waste dump, chose to use out-of-date technology to fix the problem. In the case of Kingston, two options were available: remove and treat the waste or cover the toxic waste with fill and make the area into a park. It would have cost $1.2m to clean and detoxify the site, but the Government chose the out-of-sight, out-of-mind solution and imported fill to further bury the problem, at an all-up cost of $11m.

No wonder the United Graziers Association is concerned about the risk of pollution, because it places at risk the $1.3 billion Queensland beef industry. Since 1987, the beef industry has spent $40m on residue testing to assure consumers worldwide that Australian beef is the purest in the world. Other issues concerning flooding, earthquakes and transporting waste some 390 kilometres from Willawong to Gurulmundi have not been addressed completely and, quite frankly, I do not know that they can be. Now every local authority from Brisbane to Miles has to contend with trucks laden with waste travelling on highways and local roads. Whether the waste is transported by road or rail, the public record of safety is not high.

I do not believe that this Government has looked at waste disposal on a regional basis. There is no reason why incineration could not be used for disposal of garbage, hazardous waste, sewage sludge and other matters. For garbage disposal, incineration is a preferred method to landfill. Even the residues may have a use. The technology is not new, with a tender considered for the Rochedale dump. If processing Brisbane waste by incineration was cost effective, then including waste from nearby local authorities would guarantee the cost benefit of the process. The technology would be suitable for the disposal of aqueous wastes. Added to this, the Government must encourage recycling.

All Queenslanders are looking at how this Government handles Gurulmundi. The Landfill Management Committee constituted under this agreement will be the avenue for public assessment. The first meeting of the Landfill Management Committee was held on 6 February, and it is interesting to note that one of the two Government appointees—Mr Elder—was absent from the most important first meeting. That is an example of how concerned this Government is about minimising the impact of Gurulmundi. I certainly hope that Mr Elder shows more interest in attending the four meetings scheduled for April, July, September and February 1993, because those meetings will be critical meetings in the development program for Gurulmundi.

This Government is well known for going back on its promises. The former Minister, Mr Mackenroth, made a promise to the people of Miles along the lines, “If they don’t want the dump, they won’t get it”. What has changed? We have heard “No tolls for the Sunshine Coast Motorway”, and the road has tolls. We have heard “No new taxes”, and we see new taxes being introduced. We have heard “Daylight-saving will be instituted”, and the promise was broken. So when the former Minister said that the dump was not going to Gurulmundi, the people of Miles were doomed.

The Queensland Liberal Party is offering an alternative to Gurulmundi. We are not saying, “Don’t put it there” without offering another way of disposing of waste. Many cities in the world face the dilemma of how to safely dispose of their hazardous wastes. The problem can be easily solved in an environmentally sound and safe way if we are willing to employ all the technological and social solutions available to us. Unfortunately, one by one, each technology is condemned vigorously and violently by one group or another, leaving us with no solution that is acceptable.The technology is available and in use in other countries that have very strict environmental regulations. Society is consumed by fear that is frequently not based on scientific findings and is often ill-founded. Hazardous wastes should be designated and separated at the source by the waste management authorities into inflammable and non-inflammable fractions. Most inflammable hazardous wastes can be safely incinerated in cement kilns. The energy value of this waste would be recovered and the burning of a non-renewable imported fuel, either coal or oil, would be reduced. The social and economic benefits of this action should be obvious. Non-inflammable hazardous wastes could either be recovered or rendered inert by chemical or physical methods. One example is vitrification, turning it

into a glass-based or non-leachable, non-decomposable material. Some inflammable hazardous wastes may be waterborne and of such a low concentration that incineration is either impossible or not practical. Such wastes can be, and in some cases are, solidified. Once they are solidified with some cementitious material, they can easily be fed into a high-temperature device to totally destroy the hydrocarbon content. Such devices do not need to be built, because they already exist in most urban centres. The cement kilns, and to some extent, blast furnaces, are available, operational and well suited to the task. Unfortunately, cement kiln technology is seriously under-utilised.

Intractable wastes are materials which contain hazardous substances strongly resistant to natural decomposition. Secure landfilling of hazardous wastes is not a final disposal of these wastes but merely temporary storage. High temperature is one of the most promising options presently available for destroying intractable wastes in an environmentally safe manner. High temperature can destroy virtually all types of wastes, reducing complex organic compounds to relatively harmless substances such as pure water vapour and carbon dioxide. In other parts of the world, both commercial high-temperature rotary kiln incinerators and industrial furnaces are used to destroy intractable wastes. Cement kilns offer several distinct environmental and economic advantages. Cement kilns already exist in most urban areas and thus require little capital for burning wastes compared to the cost of building a new incinerator facility. There is virtually no additional operational cost to adapt cement kilns to waste incinerators. Due to the large size of the kiln, it is also possible to dispose of large amounts of waste materials.

The cement kiln allows for the recovery of energy present in the waste materials, thereby replacing non-renewable fuel such as coal. Fuel costs in cement manufacturing can run as high as 65 per cent of the operating cost, thus primary fuel savings can increase the profitability of the cement industry. The combustion gas temperatures in the cement kiln reach 2000^{o}C at the flame, which is almost double that required to completely destroy wastes. The gas residence times in the combustion chamber are more than three times those necessary for complete destruction of wastes. In addition, strong turbulence conditions inside the kiln assures complete mixing and, therefore, complete destruction of organic compounds. The alkaline conditions in the cement kiln absorbs and neutralises any hydrogen chloride gases formed during the combustion of chlorinated wastes. Ash, resulting from incombustible material such as metals in the waste, becomes incorporated in the clinker, eliminating ash disposal problems.

To date in the United States, incineration of liquid organic waste is being successfully conducted at more than 20 cement plants. The types of wastes that are presently incinerated include—

spent halogenated and non-halogenated solvents generated by a wide variety of manufacturing processes, including metalworking, degreasing, paints and printing;

still bottoms from solvent recovery;

a number of used and off-specification organic chemicals;

petroleum industry wastes; and

waste oils.

I seek leave to table a document listing 20 operational plants in the United States.

Leave granted.

Mr COOMBER: Trial burns have clearly demonstrated that the cement kilns have the capability of destroying greater than 99.9 per cent of even the most difficult to incinerate organic substances, such as polychlorinated biphenyls, or PCBs. Thus, concentrations of unburnt waste in stack gases from a properly operating cement kiln are at trivial or non-detectable levels. Waste oil and many intractable wastes contain metallic constituents, such as lead. However, test burns completed to date have resulted in either no increase or only a slight increase in air emissions of lead or other metals. It has been shown that 99 per cent of the lead contained in waste fuels is either incorporated in an inert form in the cement clinker or is absorbed into kiln dust particles

that are removed by air pollution control devices. Because the conditions within the kiln are highly alkaline, virtually all of the chlorine entering the kiln is neutralised by alkalis to form non-acidic chloride salts, such as calcium chloride.

Providing a landfill dump at Gurulmundi is not the answer to the treatment of waste in Queensland. No longer can we continue with an out-of-sight, out-of-mind mentality. A responsible attitude to the treatment and recycling of waste has to be adopted, and providing a landfill dump at Gurulmundi is not the responsible answer. The Government has to institute a State waste management plan. It has to clean up Queensland, and the only way to do that is to form a partnership with industry. Give industry a time scale in which to operate—perhaps a three to five year strategy with given objectives to meet. Industry has to become responsible for its waste from the production stage to the treatment stage. There is no doubt that a State management plan incorporating a waste audit, analysis and disposal strategy would result in an immediate reduction in the quantity of waste produced. Local authorities have to play their part. Trade waste by-laws would enable each litre of waste to be monitored from production to treatment. This would ensure that generated waste is actually treated and not disposed of in an unacceptable or illegal manner.

In conclusion, let me say that hazardous waste management in Queensland has been ignored in the past, and is still being ignored. Today, this legislation creates another landfill dump. Willawong needs to be cleaned up. Groundwater leakage is still contained onsite, but for how long? The landfill dump at Gurulmundi is not the answer to hazardous waste management and should be replaced with the strategies suggested by the Queensland Liberals.

Ms SPENCE (Mount Gravatt) (5.54 p.m.): Listening to members of the opposition parties this afternoon, one could assume that everyone in the Murilla Shire is against the Gurulmundi landfill dump being in their shire, but in fact this is an agreement between the Brisbane City Council, the State Government and the Murilla Shire Council.

Opposition members interjected.

Ms SPENCE: I understand that not everyone in that shire is happy about having a secure landfill site in his or her area, but I also understand that, through the process of consultation and education engaged in by the Government, the department and the CHEM Unit, more people who live in the Murilla Shire are prepared to accept the Gurulmundi landfill dump and, indeed, are prepared not only to accept it, but also to work on its management. This landfill waste disposal site is obviously needed. Since 1985, the Brisbane City Council has been asking successive Governments to find a waste disposal site, because Willawong has been exhausted for a long time. This year, the Government has made the hard decision and a site has been found to secure hazardous waste. The site happens to be at Gurulmundi.

The member for Currumbin favours the incinerated disposal of wastes over a secure landfill site as a technological method of disposing of hazardous wastes. However, he fails to understand that the types of waste that will be sent to the Gurulmundi landfill site are inappropriate for high-temperature incineration. In fact, because of their aqueous form, they would put out the flame. Although the member quite rightly said that intractable wastes are suitable for incineration, the wastes that will be sent to Gurulmundi are not intractable wastes and therefore cannot be incinerated. By allowing people to believe that incineration is a viable alternative and by saying that radioactive wastes will be sent to Gurulmundi, the opposition parties are misleading the community. No intractable wastes and no radioactive wastes will be sent to the Gurulmundi site.

Mr ELLIOTT: I rise to a point of order. I am not trying to interfere with the member's speech, but I think I should put on the record that never at any stage have we said that there will be any radioactive waste there.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Palaszczuk): Order! I will accept the point of order if the honourable member refers specifically to himself. He cannot speak for other people.

Mr ELLIOTT: All right. I am affected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I accept the point of order.

Ms SPENCE: I wish to briefly address the reasons why secure landfill technology is necessary. I have mentioned that the member for Currumbin still thinks we should be using high-temperature incinerator technology, although the wastes are unsuitable for that type of disposal. He believes only in waste minimisation as a solution to all waste disposal problems in Queensland. He fails to mention that over the past five years the amount of hazardous waste requiring burial has been reduced by 50 per cent at Willawong and that the reduction has largely been achieved as a result of cooperative efforts between Government and industry to reuse and reduce waste products. In fact, a great deal of waste minimisation has occurred over the last five years, but it has not been reduced enough to enable Willawong to continue to handle the quantities. Thus the Gurulmundi landfill site is really necessary for this State.

The agreement is significant because it is a first for Queensland. This State will lead the way for the other States. Interest has already been shown by some of this State's southern counterparts that are confronted with the difficulties of locating a secure landfill site. The Gurulmundi Secure Landfill Agreement Bill is unique in Australia because it involves the State Government and local government—including the local authority in the area in which the site is to be located—entering into an agreement to cooperatively manage hazardous waste disposal. This is a unique achievement in Australia. A range of different types of landfill sites are currently in operation worldwide. Landfill sites obviously vary in design, in the types of waste that they receive, and in the degree to which they have been treated. Secure landfill sites are a special type of landfill which are designed to provide secure burial for wastes without causing harm to the environment or to human health.

Mr Elliott: For how long?

Ms SPENCE: I wish to inform the House of some statistics that are relevant to the debate. The anti-republicans of the Opposition should be very interested in these figures. In England, over 90 per cent of commercial, industrial and domestic wastes go directly to landfill sites. The remaining wastes are treated, and residues are disposed of at landfill sites. The United States has a large number of hazardous waste landfill sites currently in operation. One of the most recent secure landfills to be opened in the US was in Colorado in 1990. In correspondence received by the CHEM Unit from the United States Office of Solid Wastes in Washington in June 1991, the following details were outlined. The United States facilities for the disposal of hazardous waste have been protective of human health and the environment, and a number of permits for the disposal of hazardous wastes have already been issued in that country. Even with the great stress placed upon waste minimisation and recycling, land disposal of solid waste will remain a vital part of the United States' waste management program. When those factors are borne in mind, the member for Cunningham cannot be believed when he says that waste minimisation programs will mean that, both now or in the future, secure landfill sites will never be required for the disposal of hazardous wastes.

Sitting suspended from 6 to 7.30 p.m.

Ms SPENCE: Before the dinner recess, we heard from the National Party that its policy on the issue is basically one of waste minimisation. However, although that policy is ideologically very nice, it is not appropriate for the present when we have not been able to achieve levels of waste minimisation for the hazardous wastes in this country. As I was explaining, other developed countries in the world—Britain and the United States are the two examples that I have mentioned—are siting secure landfills for the disposal of their hazardous wastes. Currently, the United States has 130 hazardous waste landfills in operation, with plans in progress for an additional 10 to 15 new hazardous waste landfills. Through the use of the current secure landfills which are operating and the new proposed facilities, sufficient facilities will be available to meet future hazardous waste management needs. Other developed countries, such as Sweden, West Germany and the Netherlands, use landfills for the disposal of hazardous wastes, with the most recent being constructed at the end of 1990 by the Rotterdam public works. In Australia also, other States are looking to secure landfills for hazardous wastes. At present,

Western Australia, South Australia and Tasmania are going through the process of siting a secure landfill for the disposal of their hazardous wastes, and New South Wales and Victoria are reviewing their current situation and the need for future secure landfills. The National Party should then see that a secure landfill is needed in this State for the disposal of our hazardous wastes. I will now mention a few facts about the design concept of the secure landfill, as both the National Party and the Liberal Party spokesmen on the issue said that the landfill will have no liner. In fact, a synthetic liner and a monitoring system will be located under the engineered clays.

Mr Elliott: I said there would be a liner. Someone else up here said there wouldn't be.

Mr Coomber: I did.

Ms SPENCE: It was the Liberal Party spokesman. The member for Currumbin was mistaken in saying that the landfill had no liner, but the member for Cunningham assures us that he knows the landfill will have a liner. That is one of the safety features for the secure landfill. The secure landfill design also contains a number of other safety barriers to prevent the contamination of ground water or surface water. The design concept for that type of landfill incorporates the best international practices for that type of facility. The final impact assessment study report details the standards for security. The first safety barrier is the level of treatment that the waste receives before disposal. That treatment will take place at Willawong. The waste is treated with fly ash and cement kiln powder to fix or encapsulate the waste in a cement-like material. The waste is solidified material before it is disposed of in a secure landfill. The second safety feature is the natural clays, which are a part of the Gurulmundi site, and they can be engineered to form a barrier of very low permeability. The third safety feature is a synthetic liner. The engineered clay and natural clays form the fourth safety barrier and are located under the synthetic liner and monitoring system. The Government recognises that the protection of our water supply is of paramount importance. The risk of surface water and groundwater contamination has been thoroughly investigated as part of the impact assessment study.

The Gurulmundi Secure Landfill Agreement Bill honours the Government's commitment to the people of Queensland to provide ongoing consultation on matters of such environmental importance. Before concluding, I commend the former Minister for Police, Mr Terry Mackenroth, and the CHEM Unit for their long and careful negotiations in securing that landfill agreement. People do not want a dump in their backyard. I have much sympathy for the Rochedale anti-dump protesters because that landfill—the largest one in Australia—was poorly sited. This landfill at Gurulmundi is not poorly sited. The impact assessment study confirmed the security of the site from a hydrogeological perspective. Every effort has been made by the Government to assist and organise community consultation in an attempt to allay the community's concerns about the environmental impact of the landfill. Residents have access to full reports, to the Minister and to staff of the CHEM Unit for that purpose. The Government's commitment to consultation does not end today. Community input into the management, use or misuse of the site will be ongoing. The legislation ensures the accountability and responsibility of the three management bodies, that is, the State Government, the Brisbane City Council and the shire council. I support the Bill.

Mr ROWELL (Hinchinbrook) (7.35 p.m.): In speaking to the Bill, I register my disapproval of the Gurulmundi landfill concept. It is fraught with problems. During my speech, I will refer to some of my concerns. In many countries, waste management is becoming an increasingly challenging responsibility. Governments are becoming more aware of the impact that waste can have on the environment. Countries that are more densely populated than Australia is must be extremely vigilant and more responsive to the problem. As a consequence, they are rapidly developing technology that can, in some cases, make use of waste through recycling and other processes or render it in a safe form to avoid land and water contamination. With their large manufacturing base, Europe, the Scandinavian countries, the US, Japan and other countries are well advanced in utilising the best available technology to minimise the effect of domestic

and factory back-end products. In many of those countries, incineration is a widely accepted form of getting rid of that waste. They consider an emission rating of 99.999999 to be an acceptable level of emissions from many of those chimneys. Controls are very stringent, as many of those high-tech facilities are located in the midst of prime agricultural land. In those countries, one can see those high-temperature incinerators working in areas in which crops are grown. With the controls on the emission systems, those countries are quite able to guarantee that the scrubbing system will take out all of the chemicals, toxins and so on that could be detrimental to crops and, of course, to the population in the area.

Throughout the world, there is a tremendous interest in bioremedial control. No doubt in the future even further advances will be made in this field of waste management. In that regard, I cite the Exxon Valdez experience of using bioremedial control to mop up an oil slick. Although Australia does not have the high density of population that other countries have, some interesting advances have been made here. The neutralysis process for the disposal of normal garbage into useable lightweight aggregate should have received better support. I was interested to see that the Government might have intended to do something about that, because an article in *Business Queensland* of 2 March 1992 states—

> "A working group to report on the retention, development and commercialisation of the technology in Queensland was initiated in May by Environment and Heritage minister Pat Comben and presented its final report to government in January."

So it is getting past the point. The article goes on to say that the receivers are looking for expressions of interest, which are to close on 30 March. Of course, that will certainly put the Government under considerable pressure as to what it might do concerning involvement with the neutralysis process.

The CSIRO and a private company are engaged in a joint venture regarding the plasma-arc—a device that could overcome the disposal of a range of back-end factory effluents. I have been to Melbourne and seen that process. Admittedly, it was in its infancy, but there is little doubt that at some time in the future, with the effort that is being put in by the two groups, the problem will be solved. I believe that will be a viable process for getting rid of many of the wastes that come out of factories. They are really the types of waste that will be deposited in the Gurulmundi landfill site. The 25-year planning for Gurulmundi is a clear indication of the Government's unpreparedness to take on board the best available technology. In other words, the Government is saying that the site will continue to operate for 25 years. I think that anybody who is in Government should be looking very closely at winding up Gurulmundi—or any other landfill site—as quickly as possible and using the best available technology to get rid of those hazardous, toxic and intractable wastes. While the Labor Party runs around posturing on the environment, there is a very clear lack of determination to come to grips with alternatives to landfill operations.

Mr T. B. Sullivan: What do you think this Bill is doing?

Mr ROWELL: It is about landfill operations. The honourable member must be deaf. Did he not hear me speak about landfill operations? That has been the case with Rochedale and Miles. Despite the sensitivity and dubious aspects of these landfill operations, there is a dogged determination to carry on regardless.

The soil type at Gurulmundi can in no way be said to be a true bentonite clay. None of the reports contain any proof that the earth type is of such a nature that it has great qualities with regard to the non-permeability of water. The profile consists of a combination of clay and sandstone, which will conduct aqueous products. Approximately 25 holes were drilled by the Queensland Water Resources Commission, the majority of which were from 36 metres to 30 metres deep, and one went down to 296 metres. Ground water was encountered at 116 metres, which rose to a depth of 66 metres. Although when drilling the hole no moisture was recorded until 80 metres, it is highly likely that seams that could conduct water may have dried up and may have been considered to be just another area of sandy material. This often happens when drilling a

bore, as it depends on the watertable levels at the time. A minor aquifer could have been passed without being recognised. This is highly likely when sandy seams are intermingled with clay. Because of the sandstone components, the site is totally unsuitable for mining bentonite clay. I understand that, at some stage, there was a mine there and an attempt was made to mine bentonite but it proved unsuccessful.

The Bureau of Mineral Resources clearly identifies the Gurulmundi toxic waste dump proposal as being over the J aquifer. On page 30 of the draft IAS report on ground water, the report states—

> "The geological and hydrogeological conditions of the site indicate it is not an intake zone of the Great Artesian Basin."

The next sentence states—

> "The Water Resources Commission states, 'the area cannot be a major intake area of the Great Artesian Basin when major aquifers do not outcrop there'."

That appears in Appendix VI of the report. In an approach to the Queensland Water Resources Commission requesting clarification on whether the area lies in a major aquifer or any type of aquifer whatsoever, the following response was received—

> "For greater clarity, the report might have stated—
>
> > 'The geological and hydrogeological conditions of the site indicate that it is not an intake zone of the Great Artesian Basin since no Basin aquifers outcrop at the site.' "

The question that must be asked is: when is an aquifer not an aquifer, irrespective of whether it is a minor or major one? Certainly, during periods of heavy soaking rain, minor aquifers can conduct a lot of water into underground repositories, such as the Great Artesian Basin, through sandstone seams the likes of which have been identified at Gurulmundi. The whole basis of the concept gets down to the risk factor. Is it worth flirting with the ramifications of contaminating such an important asset to Australia by transporting up to 94 000 tonnes of partially treated hazardous waste compounds some 400 kilometres and burying it in a site which might, in time, be subject to infiltration into Australia's greatest underground water supply?

While the combination of clay and high density polyethylene covered by a geotextile liner should ensure that leakage of leachate should not occur, the history of liners around the world is that at some stage the majority of them do eventually break down, and as a consequence leakage of leachate occurs. From all reports, the bentonite material at Gurulmundi would not be suitable for use as the basal layer, despite the fact that the layer is to be recompacted to fill above the in situ clay floor. The clay layer is the last line of defence if the synthetic layer is breached, and would be relied upon to contain the leachate should it escape. It is also the layer at which the monitoring of any leachates that may escape through the synthetic liner is carried out. Even the best clays breathe and, by so doing, would transmit some aqueous compounds. To make even the highest grade clays impermeable, it would be necessary to put them through a fire process such as glazing.

There is an old saying, "When in doubt, get out." Because the risks are too great, that is what the Government should be doing with Gurulmundi. Have this Government and the Brisbane City Council fully considered the consequences of this proposal regarding the overall cost to the ratepayers of Brisbane? A cost assessment by an independent economist, Mr Mark McGovern, of the Queensland University of Technology, indicates that the losses and overruns will cost Brisbane ratepayers $2m per annum and over $50m for the 25-year period of the dump. I will read from an article in the *Courier-Mail* of 15 August 1991, in which Mr McGovern states—

> "The stage is set for substantial cost over-runs, over-capitalisation and cost inefficiency . . .
>
> It is evident that the proposed landfill at Gurulmundi goes nowhere near meeting the highest health and environmental standards."

Monitoring of the surface water that supplies the Miles town water supply from the gullies that water from the site and flow into L Tree Creek needs attention. We have heard about whether they flood or not and, as the records of the area in flood-time cannot be fully substantiated, there is an unknown factor with the impact of severe floods and what might happen to Miles town water supply in the event of heavy rain at the site. The project is really like playing with fire. The people who are directly affected want no part of it. The community consultation process was a one-way street. The Government was absolutely determined about which way it was going to go. The basis on which this consultation was carried out with the people of Miles and the surrounding districts was to tell the people why they were wrong in opposing the dump.

The Minister at the time, Mr Mackenroth, fobbed off the community with disdain in regard to the 120 questions asked about the dump and its operation by saying they had all been answered by the CHEM Unit or in the environmental impact report. The information centre set up in the Murilla Shire Council chambers was aimed at brainwashing the residents of Miles about the clean wholesome aspects of how the CHEM Unit was going to ram the Gurulmundi dump down their throats. The Government report states that the use of emergency, hospital and related services from the toxic dump would be a small net benefit to the community. In a distorted way, the Government is claiming that through health and emergency services a growth industry for Miles will be created. This is a bit like Hitler saying to the people of Auschwitz that the gas chambers would increase the population and that they might get some benefit from them. How can a Government try to exploit such opportunities and tell a community to be grateful for establishing a facility that might, because of its nature, lead to increases in health and emergency services? This is about as sensitive as Saddam Hussein's dealings with the Kurds.

At page 30, the Government's environmental impact statement, it states that the risk to public health and the environment by accident in transit is low. Great stuff! Has there been any quantitative risk assessment of transport accidents or spills? Is there any scientific basis for saying there is a low risk because no proper assessment has been done? There is an assumption that only people within 1.95 kilometres of the dump might be affected. The facts are that if there is a leakage into the Great Artesian Basin, most of the inland population and many primary industries could be seriously affected. Monitoring of the dust level has had some attention but, with the high temperatures and low humidity, even minimal wind movement could carry the contaminated particles considerable distances, and if due care is not taken in dampening down the work area very quickly, even with the treated material dust could be a problem. Greater determination is required with the monitoring than has been demonstrated in the report.

In regard to transport—the site is to receive some 150 tonnes per fortnight, which will entail six semitrailer loads carrying 25 tonnes each over a 400-kilometre route. The worst section of the route is the common section connecting the Bunya and Moonie Highways to the Warrego Highway at Dalby, with the next worst being the Toll Bar section of the Warrego Highway. The James Street/Anzac Avenue intersection at Toowoomba is best described as a bottleneck. Of course, as additional transport goes through there, the problem will be exacerbated. All the statistical information collected was in the past, and no forward projections have been made. There were no projections as to just what might happen with the additional trucks and the increased flow of traffic on the road in future years. This factor should have received attention, as increased use of the highway is inevitable. The growing number of people who will reside along the route should also have been considered.

It is difficult to understand, if the Government is hell-bent on a landfill operation, why a site could not be found closer to Brisbane. Of course, the shadow Minister has spoken about this aspect. Why could not clay be taken to a suitable site that was closer to Brisbane? Of course, locating the landfill operation closer to Brisbane would have saved the cost of the additional freight costs that will be incurred in transporting the material to Gurulmundi. It would have been an easier project to monitor. It would have been right in the Government's backyard. Also, of course, the Government could have looked at the operation and monitored it in the manner that it thought fit.

Surely there are suitable impervious clays that are not over aquifers or underground water reserves. I would like to know how much attention was paid to this matter. How thoroughly did the CHEM Unit and the consultants look for other areas that may have been suitable? The sheer cost of transport would make the site unattractive. Does it really come down to politics? I believe that the politics surrounding this dump is the big question. There is a very small population in Gurulmundi. Of course, it is easier to sway those people, or push them in a certain direction. I think that is exactly what has happened. Was it easier for the Government to pick on people in a small, distant community and ram the dump down their necks than to look within the confines of Brisbane City? Was the "Our loss is your gain—cop it" principle adopted?

Rubbish dumps are extremely controversial. A hazardous waste dump is even more so. It appears that the Government has sought the least line of resistance by going to a sparsely populated area and, with the sheer weight of Government resources, steamrolling the Miles community into submission. The Murilla Shire approached the then Minister, Mr Mackenroth, and said that the site should be monitored by the council to ensure that the integrity of the area was preserved. The then Minister would have no part of the council being provided with the $100,000 funding that it requested for an independent report and scientific study. The door was closed on providing information as to why the Government had selected the site at Gurulmundi. If the Government and the Brisbane City Council had nothing to hide, why did they refuse the local community, through its elected shire council, the right and the funds to carry out the monitoring of the site? There should have been no question as to the people's concern to ensure that a body, other than the dump's operators, carry out an assessment on levels of airborne particles, and surface and groundwater contamination levels. The present agreement compromised the Murilla Shire. It was forced into accepting $40,000 to be a part of a tripartite management committee for the landfill site. This is absolutely ludicrous.

Time expired.

Mr T. B. SULLIVAN (Nundah) (7.56 p.m.): I rise to support the Bill. We have experienced some great achievements in our modern society. We have experienced the results of medical advances, manufacturing processes, power-generating techniques and a variety of modes of travel. We have a wide choice of products for food and leisure, and we have a wide choice in the workplace, and all of that can contribute to our well-being and enjoyment. But, there is another side to the advances—the other side of the coin of progress. We have waste products from the production of the goods, and the problem of the disposal of these goods after they have been used. This Bill helps to address the long-present problem of the disposal of solid, treated hazardous waste. I support the Minister in the introduction of this Bill. I congratulate him and his predecessor on their foresight, courage and determination in tackling a difficult problem of the twentieth century—a problem largely ignored by some members opposite who are most vocal in their criticism. One would think, from listening to the member for Cunningham, that this problem arose into our society in December 1989.

I will comment on two aspects of the Bill—the geographic security of the site and the continuing use of Willawong as a treatment and disposal centre. The impact assessment study took six months. It followed a very detailed regional study conducted by independent geological consultants. Specific information on this study can be found in Appendix XI of the final impact assessment study. Basically, this regional study involved a group of independent consultant geologists systematically eliminating rock formations which did not meet the site selection criteria which had been developed over an eight-month period involving wide consultation.

A couple of important things that the Opposition did not pick up, or refused to pick up were that there is consultation, there is a set of criteria, and there are independent consultants to look at sites and match them to those criteria. The process of eliminating rock formation began at the regional level and gradually focussed on the local level, detailing potential areas. Site investigations were then carried out on potential areas. Site evaluations were conducted by another group of independent geotechnical consultants. I emphasise that two groups of independent consultants were

involved in looking at these potential sites. Favourable areas were evaluated against the site selection criteria in terms of their overall suitability, size, distance from existing infrastructure, degree of confidence in the quality of clay reserves and in situ permeability—some reservations which members opposite have raised tonight.

On the basis of the recommendations of the studies carried out by both groups of geological and technical consultants, the preferred site for the secure landfill was identified as Gurulmundi. This was subsequently announced by the Minister for Police and Emergency Services. This regional study was modelled on the work of K. S. Johnson with the Oklahoma geological survey methodology which was detailed in the reference "Hazardous waste disposal in Oklahoma". I might add that both groups of independent consultants attended the symposium in Brisbane on hazardous waste disposal in Oklahoma.

The site was selected on the basis of the following characteristics—and some of the members opposite who raised objections might be interested, if they have not already done so, in checking this out in the final report. A substantial thickness of low permeability clay material exists at the site suitable for a landfill. It is not a major intake area for the ground waters of the Great Artesian Basin. Major aquifers do not outcrop there. The local groundwater table is at least 40 metres below the lowest operating level of the proposed landfill. The site is remote from major centres of population and is located in a sparsely populated area. The site is located near the top of the Great Dividing Range, with limited upstream catchment. That goes against what at least two members opposite were trying to say, that is, that there would be a major problem to the surface and underground water supplies. The site also has gently sloping terrain with minor, limited levels of erosion. The average evaporation exceeds precipitation, which will greatly assist water disposal by evaporation.

From a conservation point of view—no rare or endangered species of flora or fauna were detected on the site during the study. The site is close to major transport routes. It is also well screened from wildflower viewing areas. Finally, the site is 8 kilometres from the nearest—and, it should be stressed, the inferred and inactive—fault, and is located in a low-risk zone for earthquakes. That risk is estimated at 1 in 1 000 years. I would like to see the Opposition find a site that has security of that magnitude. An analysis of seismic activity on the landfill has confirmed the security of the design and site.

The evidence presented in the final impact assessment study confirms the suitability of the site for a secure landfill. It destroys the unsubstantiated fears proposed by members opposite. The members for Cunningham and Currumbin want to burn the waste at Darra. The fact that this waste is unsuitable for incineration does not enter their thinking. The member for Cunningham would not want to burn that waste in remote areas; he would prefer to do it in the centre of Brisbane. The member raised a very important point—the NIMBY principle: not in my backyard. All members face that problem. We do not want major roads, dumps, gaols and hostels in our own backyards, but we all have them. I would prefer not to have major aircraft flying over my home. I realise that I live somewhere near the airport, and I have put up with that, realising that it is one of the benefits that we have in our society. Perhaps the member for Cunningham and his fellow members opposite would agree that everyone has to put up with some of those things; that they have to be located somewhere. This Government—unlike members opposite—has taken action after consultation and has done something about it. I contrast that with the proposed incineration program, of which there have been at least 10 failed attempts in a number of States around Australia. Members opposite would follow a method that has not been taken up by anyone and has not succeeded. But when this Government gets on with the job, those members belly-ache about it. That shows what they are made of—bluff, blunder and nothing substantial.

Mr COOMBER: I rise to a point of order. I tabled a list of 20 current plants operating in the United States. That just proves to the member opposite that technology does work.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Palaszczuk): Order! There is no point of order.

Mr T. B. SULLIVAN: I wish that the member for Currumbin had had the ability to be part of a Government—although he does not even have any of his party members in the Chamber with him at the moment—and part of a philosophy and action in Government that would have done something. If the technology was there, and if it was available, he could get his tories to take some action. What did he do? Nothing! He should not talk about great achievements and ask, "Why haven't you done it?" The previous Government had the chance, and it did nothing.

The initial study completed by the first group of consultant geologists concluded that there is a high degree of confidence that a favourable disposal site could be located in the Orallo formation in the Gurulmundi district. As mentioned earlier, this initial study used the modified Oklahoma geological survey methodology to adopt the site selection criteria in the Australian context. As well, the Water Resources Commission report concluded that the significant shale layers which occur at the site would impede vertical and horizontal movement and that the sandstone layers are poor aquifers. Again, that destroys some of the scaremongering from the member opposite.

Mr Rowell: They are aquifiers, aren't they?

Mr T. B. SULLIVAN: To start with, the word is "aquifer". They are partial, and it is low probability.

Mr Rowell: What happens if you get very heavy rainfall on them?

Mr T. B. SULLIVAN: If the member had listened and had read the report, he would know the answer to that. If he listens carefully, he will find out.

Mr Rowell: Do you know much about them?

Mr T. B. SULLIVAN: Yes, from my reading, I do. I am glad that the bore drilled to 296 metres was mentioned. That bore has permitted the actual stratigraphy at the Gurulmundi site to be determined. One must admit that 296 metres is a long way down. Major aquifers do not occur beneath the site to the depth drill. The area cannot be a major intake area of the Great Artesian Basin when major aquifers do not outcrop there.

Mr Littleproud interjected.

Mr T. B. SULLIVAN: I do not care if the member interjects from his incorrect seat, I will still take his interjection, because he is normally a reasonable person. If he is looking for a perfect solution that says there is going to be absolutely no risk of earthquake, no risk of any leaching and no risk of any environmental problem, he is looking for an impossible solution.

Mr Littleproud interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Condamine! I have been very tolerant.

Mr Coomber: There is no risk?

Mr T. B. SULLIVAN: Of course there is a risk. What would the member have the Government do? Continue what it is doing at Willawong and have nowhere to put the waste? Or is the member suggesting that it be burnt in the middle of Darra? There is no risk for members opposite, of course, but they did not make decisions in Government, so they would not know.

Mr Coomber: There is no risk?

Mr T. B. SULLIVAN: Of course there is a risk. There is definitely a risk. The whole point is: what is the level of that risk? There is a risk when a road is put in. There is a risk when a dam is built. There is a risk when any action is taken. It is the low level of that risk and the suitability of the site which members opposite refuse to acknowledge. It is not considered that the location of the site at Gurulmundi and its relationship to the Great Artesian Basin geological sequence in any way affects the site's suitability as a secure landfill site. The second Water Resources Commission report concluded that this is a satisfactory site and that this is an extremely important conclusion, given that the waste material is solid, treated waste. The Commonwealth Government's Bureau of

Mineral Resources Geology and Geophysics supports the final conclusions in the report of the Water Resources Commission.

Only hazardous waste from classes 3B, 5 and parts of 7 under the Brisbane City Council waste classification system will be disposed of in the secure landfill after treatment and solidification at Willawong on Brisbane's southern outskirts. If members opposite are so keen on not having the landfill where it is proposed, perhaps they would like to treat their own hazardous waste in their towns? I suggest that they would not want to do that. They do not have the expertise and they would not want the sites all over the place. In Brisbane, we are prepared to wear some of the risk, but other areas are not prepared to share their part of the responsibility of this complex society in which we live.

Mr Coomber: What rot!

Mr T. B. SULLIVAN: The honourable member said that he did not want to dispose of the waste in his electorate. The fact that the facility is a regional facility for southern Queensland means that all local authorities defined within the boundaries set out in the Schedule of the Bill may develop hazardous waste management plans in the knowledge that appropriately managed and environmentally safe waste treatment and disposal facilities are available. Under this Government, the Minister and his predecessor, for the first time the small communities of south-east Queensland can plan for waste management. What is happening in the west now? What is happening at Balonne? Is the waste being thrown in the backyard and being left there? What studies have been carried out in those areas? None! Yet when the Government comes up with a substantial plan, which is safe and has very low risk, Opposition members want to reject it.

The increase in hazardous waste at the Willawong plant will not be significant, as most hazardous wastes are generated in and around Brisbane. The Brisbane City Council is anticipating that the increase will be, at most, 10 per cent. The people of Brisbane are prepared to wear that. As well, because of the expertise of the people running Willawong, we are able to allay the fears of the people of Brisbane. Importantly, Brisbane City Council staff will be working with local authorities in southern Queensland to manage the wastes within their jurisdiction through an examination of waste reduction strategies and in situ treatment. Brisbane City Council trade waste control officers will be assisting the local authorities to rationalise their waste streams, and that is an important advance in hazardous waste management for southern Queensland. The expertise of Brisbane City Council treatment personnel is to the forefront of world standards. They maintain very high standards and they will share their expertise with the communities of southern Queensland. The conclusions of the final impact assessment study support the Minister's plan to introduce the site at Gurulmundi. This is a responsible, carefully worked out Bill. During its formation, a great deal of community consultation occurred. I support the Bill.

Mr NEAL (Balonne) (8.10 p.m.): I rise to support the National Party's opposition to this Bill. When introducing the Bill, the Minister spoke of the need for a secure landfill, and talked in glowing terms about the processes of site selection, community consultations, and an impact assessment study and report. From his remarks, one could be led to believe that everything is fine and people in the area are happy. Nothing could be further from the truth. The whole sorry affair has been nothing less than a blatant party political decision—a decision based not upon the best method of disposal but on votes. Having found a site well away from areas with a Labor population, the Government then set about making the guidelines fit. The wishes of the local shire council and the residents were ignored. The consultation and information process was simply a massive exercise in deceit and duplicity.

Some highly qualified and easily recognisable people raised valid points not only about the unsuitability of Gurulmundi as the site for a secure landfill but also about more appropriate and cleaner methods of toxic waste disposal. Those questions were raised at an evaluation summit held in Miles over two days in August last year. In his second-reading speech, the Minister claimed that the CHEM Unit staff attended the meeting to

field any questions on the issue. That would have to be the joke of all time. CHEM Unit staff attended the meeting, but they were unable to answer the questions that were raised by those eminent people. In addition to the meeting that was held in Miles, several months ago in the Parliamentary Annexe, the National Party organised a hazardous waste seminar at which better solutions for the toxic waste problem than those proposed by the Government were outlined by independent experts, but no Government member was interested enough to attend that seminar. The real solutions to the problem of toxic waste as outlined at that seminar begin with waste minimisation, which is the way that we should be going. We should start at factories by minimising unnecessary packaging, which provides much of the waste. We should look also at the use of alternative materials which do not generate waste. We should consider the use of small, onsite storage so that the waste producer has to deal efficiently with waste and so that there is an incentive to minimise its production. We should consider also smaller dumps with a limited life-time, say five years or so. Much more work must be done on the recycling of waste products. All those measures, and others, should be put together in an overall waste minimisation package. That should be the job of this Government—not creating life-time dumps such as Gurulmundi, Rochedale and Esk.

As I indicated earlier, the Government selected the site on blatant political grounds and then embarked upon the greatest snow job on a local community that I have ever witnessed. That the local residents do not want the toxic waste dump was made abundantly clear. However, their views were not considered, notwithstanding the community consultative committee. There is no doubt that the CHEM Unit informed the shire and the residents what was happening—no doubt at all. However, it could hardly be called consultation; rather, they were told what was to happen and that it was too bad if they objected. It was a one-way street. Why the Government bothered with the public relations exercise remains a mystery. The cost of that exercise may well have been saved. The site, having been selected on political grounds, was highly unlikely to be changed, regardless of local opinion. Alternative technology for disposal of waste is now available. The Minister made the ridiculous claim that the wastes proposed to be disposed of in the Gurulmundi dump are 98 per cent to 99 per cent water and could not be incinerated in a high-temperature incinerator as they would put the flame out. That is utter rubbish and a farcical statement. Overseas countries with living standards similar to those of Australia operate high-temperature incinerators. In West Germany, laws governing the disposal of toxic wastes clearly state that any toxic waste that can be incinerated must be incinerated. Apparently, these countries have discovered the secret of incineration without putting the flame out. Perhaps they use something more substantial than a candle to fire up their incinerators.

There is an old adage that states, “Where there’s a will, there’s a way.” There is a better way to dispose of toxic wastes, but insofar as this Government is concerned, the will is lacking. The CSIRO has designed an incinerator which is currently operating in Victoria and, as has been indicated earlier, it has a further eight under construction. The Government chose to ignore completely the great volume of information, analysis, facts and figures that were made available through the impact evaluation summit held in Miles and the seminar in the Parliamentary Annexe. Alternative methods of disposal were thoroughly canvassed, including the incineration in cement kilns of wastes such as those destined for Gurulmundi. Landfill should be used only until cleaner and safer methods can be implemented. However, the Government is going down the wrong track. The Government has not even attempted to seriously investigate alternative methods. The Minister, in his second-reading speech, made the point that high-temperature incineration is much less acceptable to the community than a secure landfill. He further added that nine failed attempts to site a high-temperature incinerator in Australia over the past 10 to 15 years provides evidence of this. This statement indicates either a complete cop-out by the Minister or an admission that he has been snowed by his departmental officers. There is plenty of evidence available, both here and overseas, that shows conclusively that incineration of these wastes is far safer than landfill. The evidence is also available to show that, whatever the method of disposal, people do not want it near them—in other words, the NIMBY syndrome—whether it is thousands of

tonnes of cement and fly ash treated waste and landfill or an incinerator with only a hatful of residual ash.

The failure to find a site for an incinerator is no indication that people prefer landfill to incineration. Governments have to bite the bullet on waste disposal and, having acknowledged that fact, would be best advised to select the best disposal measures and then select the site. The Government did not do that; it did it in reverse. It selected the site on political grounds only. The CHEM Unit's information brochures testify to that fact. In one that was distributed in the area titled *What are the facts. Why Gurulmundi*, the claim is made that—

> "Remoteness of the Gurulmundi site from population centres and low population density in the surrounding area will ensure that there is minimal impact on the community".

What that brochure really means is that there is minimal community on which it will have an impact. That there are fewer people to live in fear of an underground time bomb ticking away at Gurulmundi makes it okay, as far as the Government is concerned—and far better when it is situated in a safe National Party seat.

The Government can give no guarantee now, or in the future, that the dump will not leak. Overseas experiences, already outlined in this Chamber, show that they invariably do leak. The liners fail and, furthermore, there is the human element that comes into it in all stages of its operation. If the treated waste is so safe, why is there a need to transport it all the way out to Gurulmundi—400 kilometres—with all the inherent traffic risk? It is far safer to transport the bentonite—which happens to be a stock feed additive—to Brisbane and bury the waste in Brisbane in some disused quarry. The truth is that these toxic wastes are dangerous and any accidental spill poses a far greater threat to the community and environment than does the spilling of bentonite. I want to draw to honourable members' attention what we can expect to happen in relation to the human element and the realities. The criteria for site selection under the guidelines are that—

> "The site should be as close as possible to where wastes are generated or treated to reduce transport costs, traffic congestion and the risk of accidents."

To give an indication of what we can expect—on 6 March 1992, the Warrego Highway and Leichhardt Highway were blocked by a Bureau of Emergency Services response to an LP gas tanker in the township of Miles. The accident occurred at 2.30 a.m. and the emergency response did not begin until 7 a.m. They are the realities of life. If one has an accident or a spill coming up the Toowoomba range in the middle of a storm, it will not be picked up, and that is the simple fact of the matter. It is clear that there are problems—two wrongs have never made a right. Burying the problem does not make it go away, as has been found to the dismay of authorities in overseas countries, including the USA, where landfill dumps have proved to be anything but secure and are now not used for toxic wastes such as those that are to be buried at Gurulmundi.

This legislation provides for an agreement between the State, the Brisbane City Council and the Murilla Shire and is to continue for 25 years, or until 97 500 tonnes of waste have been deposited at the site. It is quite clear that the Government, on securing the site and the agreement, now has no need to pursue other more appropriate forms of disposal. On current yearly tonnage generated, the Government can now forget about toxic waste well into the foreseeable future and let our children worry about the problem. Furthermore, there is far more land at the Gurulmundi site which is in the lease and which can be utilised when the term of the present agreement expires. Disposal of waste at Gurulmundi can be virtually carried out for a lifetime. There is absolutely no question that the Murilla Shire Council and the residents of the area were implacably opposed to the Gurulmundi site. However, once the Government had completed its public relations charade of consultation and secured the site, the Murilla Shire Council was placed in the position in which it believed it should become involved in the Landfill Management Committee. It was the meat in the sandwich. The Murilla Shire Council was between a rock and a hard place. On the one hand, its constituency was totally opposed to the Gurulmundi toxic waste dump; and, on the other hand, it was faced with

a Government decision that imposed the toxic waste dump on the area. Notwithstanding consultation with the community and public relations work that the Government undertook, the people were certainly not convinced. If the member for Manly believes that the Government has convinced the people of Queensland that everything with the landfill site is fine, he is mistaken.

The Government has its toxic waste dump. However, it has demonstrated a total lack of respect for the views of the people of the Murilla Shire. The manner in which the Government approached its task of circulating information and answering questions in the local community can be described only as condescending while the re-education of the residents program, which was designed to have people accept that the CHEM Unit was the font of all knowledge on toxic waste disposal, was nothing short of overkill that failed dismally. The people of Miles and the surrounding district are very friendly and trusting folk, but they are also endowed with a great deal of common sense. The day that the Government hit the town with its CHEM Unit and started its consultation and information dissemination, the people knew that they were in for the greatest con job of their lives. The Labor Government's idea of community consultation is now well known. It is as subtle as a Scud missile. No doubt the CHEM Unit personnel have received some very good lessons in public relations since the day they turned up in Miles and as a result of the work that they have done in Gurulmundi. In deference to them, I acknowledge that they would have had more success selling a polecat at a ladies' afternoon tea party than a toxic waste dump at any place.

In conclusion, let me say that this is the agreement upon which the future of the dump hinges. I certainly have a number of concerns about the site. I will be listening intently to the Minister's comments on the agreement because I believe that there are numerous loopholes in it through which one could well drive a D10 bulldozer. One of those matters is the veto right of the Murilla Shire Council. I do not believe that it really exists. When it comes down to the nitty-gritty of this issue, I do not believe that the people have a hope in hell of exercising a veto, because the Minister has the final say, regardless of the opinions of the community. They are the cold, hard facts of the situation. I will be interested to hear the Minister's comments and the long-term guarantees that he gives. I do not believe that the long-term guarantees that the people of the area require and expect are contained in the agreement.

Ms ROBSON (Springwood) (8.26 p.m.): Tonight, I wish to briefly address the procedures and processes of the landfill management agreement. I was fortunate to be asked by the Minister to fill in for the member for Manly, Mr Elder. The member for Currumbin might be interested to know that the member for Manly was actually on a family holiday, to which he is entitled——

Mr Coomber: That's no excuse.

Ms ROBSON: Of course, it would not be an excuse in the opinion of the member for Currumbin. The Minister asked me to fill in for the member for Manly, in spite of the fact that the Government had nominated only one member to be part of the committee.

Mr Hayward: He doesn't have holidays.

Ms ROBSON: It shows that the member for Currumbin, Mr Coomber, does not have holidays. The Minister knows that I take an interest in this issue, which is why he asked me to stand in for Mr Elder. At this point, I congratulate the CHEM Unit for the excellent briefing that I was given at very short notice. Officers from the unit spent quite a lot of time with me at my electorate office. They informed me on issues and allowed me to ask questions so that I felt that I had been completely briefed and would know exactly what was expected of me at the Landfill Management committee's inaugural meeting. I also congratulate the very professional way in which the Minister has picked up this issue.

The committee is a rather impressive one. Alderman Pat Vaughan from the Brisbane City Council chairs the committee, and the other Brisbane City Council representative is Alderman Kevin Bianchi. There are two representatives from the Murilla Shire Council, one of whom is the chairman of that shire. I was very pleased to be able

to speak to them about the issues that have been raised by members of the Opposition. I feel comfortable in the knowledge—particularly after having spoken to the shire chairman—that the local council has accepted the landfill site. The council has not been beaten into submission—contrary to the suggestions that have been made during this debate—and is now willingly participating in the establishment of the site, regardless of what the Opposition says. The words of the representatives are that they are willingly participating and are eager to get on with the job; to settle down the debate; to install the landfill site, and get on with it. The only problems I could ascertain that the council was having with local people were those that had been raised by the distribution of misinformation by opposing political forces. I have quite a bit of documentation in my possession to substantiate what I am saying. Apart from that, the shire representatives seemed to be quite comfortable with the issue. They asked some important questions and raised some good issues which I took back to the CHEM Unit for examination. The management committee is considering those matters.

Overall, the committee is very impressive, but I was most impressed by the spirit of cooperation that was evident at the meeting. I admit that I anticipated more opposition than I actually encountered on that day. The shire representatives were well briefed and were accompanied by legal advisers so that they could check on any issues raised at the meeting. They were given plenty of time to do that, and it was a very amicable meeting. I am making this short statement because I think it is very offensive of the member for Currumbin to state that the Government was not even interested enough to send two representatives to the meeting when the Minister had chosen to have only one Government representative on the committee. He was concerned to ensure that there was good representation, which is probably why he asked me to go along. Of course, I say that with great modesty! Mr Elder, the member for Manly, is certainly very interested in the issue. After that meeting, I gave him a very thorough debriefing. He had a written brief from me and all of the papers that I was given at that meeting and in preparation for it. I congratulate the Minister and the CHEM Unit on the way in which they are handling the issue, and I thank the Minister for the opportunity to be involved.

Hon. N. J. HARPER (Auburn) (8.30 p.m.): This Bill is the culmination of a charade in which the Goss/Mackenroth/Warburton Government has attempted to convince the community that its selection of Gurulmundi as the site for a so-called secure landfill was not politically motivated. Try as the Government may, the community will not be convinced that the fundamental issue was anything other than to select a site that was outside the Labor Party's area of tenure, one might say, in a non-Labor electorate. Many times during the months that have passed since it first became apparent that the Government was hell-bent, whatever the argument, on going ahead with its proposal that Gurulmundi should be used for the toxic waste dump, I called for a truly independent study to be undertaken by an authority within the New South Wales Government or the Commonwealth Government. However, any call of that nature simply fell on deaf ears.

Mr Neal: The Murilla Shire called for an independent report.

Mr HARPER: The member for Balonne is the member in whose electorate the waste dump is situated, although the dump is very close to the boundary between our electorates. As he quite rightly says, the Murilla Shire likewise called for a truly independent report to be prepared by an authority with the capacity, with the ability, and with a neutral attitude—although the New South Wales Government, of course, had an interest and has an interest in ensuring that a toxic waste dump in that area is truly safe. The fact is that the toxic waste dump will have the capacity to pollute not only the Murray/Darling River system, as was indicated by the member for Cunningham, but also other surface waters, including the Dawson/Fitzroy River system and, of course, the Great Artesian Basin. It might be said that that possibility is remote, but, nevertheless, it is a possibility and the capacity exists for that pollution to occur at some time in the future.

If we look at the Bill, it becomes apparent that the Government is quite determined to drive the project. We see that no consent is necessary in regard to land-use. We hear

so much talk from the Government side of the House about the need for land use studies and the like, but the Bill quite clearly indicates that no consent, approval or authorisation is necessary.

Mr Elliott: It is a ministerial rezoning; that's what it is.

Mr HARPER: As the member for Cunningham says, it is a ministerial rezoning. Under the agreement that has been entered into, no approval or authorisation is required for any use of or activity on the site. If we look further at the Bill, we see that the Brisbane City Council is authorised to receive waste material from other than its own sources. Of course, the Bill makes provision that all local authorities in south-east Queensland will be able to use that so-called secure landfill site for toxic waste disposal. I call on the Minister to give the House an assurance that no imported waste will be treated at Willawong or sent to Gurulmundi, because I can see nothing in the legislation that would prevent the Brisbane City Council from receiving imported material, treating it and sending it to Gurulmundi. The Minister must at least assure the House that Queensland will not become the dumping site for toxic waste from overseas or from anywhere else.

Again, if we look at the provisions in the Bill, we find that, although the agreement is for a limited term of 25 years or until a capacity of some 97 500 tonnes is reached, provision is made for the parties to enter into negotiations for additional use of the site. The Bill is saying that the site will not be used for only 25 years or until it is filled with a quantity of some 97 500 tonnes. Because it makes provision for additional usage, the Bill is saying that the site could be used for the next 100 years as a toxic waste dump. The fact is that there is no need for a secure landfill site in Queensland or elsewhere. If this Government and its colleagues in the Commonwealth Government were prepared to expend the money to install superhigh-temperature furnaces of the types that exist overseas and with more modern technology than has been used previously in other places, such as the site in Wales, it would be possible for the State Government and the Commonwealth Government to develop what is really needed in Australia and what is really needed in Queensland, that is, a true method of disposing of that toxic waste material in a non-hazardous way.

It concerns me that the Landfill Management Committee will include only one voting representative from the Murilla Shire Council. It seems to me that this is a case in which there is a need for an independent chairman—a truly independent chairperson, to put it in the language that would be better appreciated by some members on the Government side—and two representatives from the Murilla Shire Council, as well as one from the Brisbane City Council and from the Government. The Bill makes provision for a quorum which need not include a representative from the Murilla Shire Council. It provides that a quorum of this Landfill Management Committee will comprise two members. Of course, that means that a meeting can be held here in Brisbane, the requirement of a two-member quorum can be fulfilled, and the Murilla Shire representative need not be there. I appreciate that it would be a waste of the Parliament's time to even ask the Minister to amend that clause to allow for an independent chairman and for four other members on the committee. However, I suggest to him that, in fairness, that is the type of committee that indeed should be put in place.

Previous speakers have mentioned the $40,000 all-up that is to be provided annually to the Murilla Shire Council. When it is considered that the Murilla Shire Council is required to nominate and take advice from technical officers, one realises what a mere pittance the $40,000 is. The amount is quite inadequate. It should have been much more substantial. This Bill contains no provision for compensation to be paid to the owners of adjoining land. I do not know whether the Minister and the Government truly believe that the establishment of a toxic waste dump on a property will not affect the value of the adjoining properties. Obviously, the whole of the area will be affected.

Mr Neal: People won't sell their property.

Mr HARPER: As the member for Balonne said—and he knows the area probably as well as I do—there is no question that owners in the vicinity, not just those

immediately adjoining the site, will have great difficulty in disposing of their properties. This Government makes no provision to compensate for the fact that it is putting in a facility that will decrease the value of the properties of land-holders who have been in the area for so many years.

Government members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Palaszczuk): Order! I point out to all honourable members that the member for Auburn is not taking interjections.

Mr HARPER: Not inane interjections, in any case. There is no suggestion of compensation if natural disasters cause contamination to the land or to the water. As I said earlier, that may be a remote possibility but, nevertheless, it is a possibility that does exist. So, it would seem that if this Bill is to fulfil its function, it should at least provide some sort of compensation for affected land-holders, wherever they may be—whether they are somewhere between Willawong and Gurulmundi, or whether they are at Gurulmundi. Clearly, compensation should be available if natural disasters or accidents cause contamination to land or water. There is nothing of that nature in the Bill. All in all, it has been purely a political exercise. A decision was obviously taken at the outset to find a site that was in a non-Labor electorate. Once having found a site in this area, the Government proceeded—and damn those who may criticise it.

I have heard speakers in this House refer to the bentonite deposits, to the mining which has occurred in that area over the last decade or two, and to the possibility of the area being contaminated. I think the member for Cunningham referred to dust contamination of the bentonite area. Bentonite is there because of volcanic activity. That is how the bentonite comes to be there—because of volcanic activity in the area many, many years ago.

Mr Barber: Very many years ago.

Mr HARPER: Yes, very many years ago. But the fact is that that is how the bentonite came to be there; it is of volcanic origin. We are saying that this site will be there for many, many years. Once toxic waste is put in the ground, it is there forever. It is a nonsense for this Government to suggest that it is a secure landfill area. It is as secure as nature will allow it to be. I do not doubt that, under the management committee and the technical expertise available to it, the Government intends to make the area as secure as possible. But the fact is that it will be only as secure as nature allows it. So it really would have been much more prudent for this Government to look ahead and to be prepared to spend money, in the interests of the whole community, on providing a superhigh-temperature furnace facility or facilities than to rely on landfill measures for the disposal of toxic waste.

Mr ARDILL (Salisbury) (8.45 p.m.): This Bill represents the end of a sorry saga of deceit, incompetence and procrastination that has gone on for over 20 years in the matter of the disposal of hazardous wastes in Queensland. The previous National Party Government knew 20 years ago that there was a problem with Willawong, and despite all the requests of the Brisbane City Council to do something about it, nothing actually happened. It took another decade before people really came to understand that there was a problem with the residues from industries in Australia and throughout the world, and the battle has gone on all that time to do something about the problem of hazardous waste chemicals which are the residues of our industrial life. For all that time the people of the area which previously was known as the Blunder, now known as Willawong, have suffered the indignity of having all this waste poured into their area. Back in the early 1970s, as the present Minister knows, it was even intended that the area would become an area zoned for noxious and hazardous industries and that the population would have to move out. That did not occur. They did not move out, but they have had put up with all of this noxious fluid and waste from all over south Queensland and even northern New South Wales and interstate being dumped in their area.

I can understand the concern of the people of the Murilla Shire, Gurulmundi and the Dogwood Creek catchment about this, because the same sort of concern is evidenced in my own area. This is not a case of NIMBY, as everyone is saying, because

that waste will continue to be treated just across the back fence from my area. It will continue to be treated at Willawong, and 90 per cent of it will stay there. Only 10 per cent will be transferred to the Gurulmundi site on the Great Dividing Range. Twenty years ago, the Brisbane City Council was misled by its consultants, even by some of its staff, and certainly by its contractors. They denied that there was any problem, and it took considerable investigation by the council before it was discovered just what was in Willawong dump, and steps were taken to separate the waste. Instead of just pouring it into a sandy area with absolutely no protection whatever by way of a clay base or anything like that, at Willawong it went straight into the sand and leached out into Blunder Creek, which eventually finds its way through Oxley Creek into the Brisbane River and Moreton Bay. Before it was discovered that there were great problems there, not only did the types of wastes we are talking about here—and that is classes 5, 6 and 7, solvents, pesticides and other toxic wastes—I have no doubt that items such as PCBs and even radioactive materials were placed in that area.

We have had the problem for nearly 30 years, and we are not transferring the same problem to the Murilla Shire. It is wrong for any member of the Opposition to cause concern, and even panic, in that area by trying to tell the residents that that is what is being transferred to their area. It is not. Under this Bill, what will go to the Murilla Shire is the treated waste from Willawong, the 10 per cent which cannot be dealt with on the site because of the type of sandy soil, and also the fact that it is severely overloaded and waterlogged. What is going is only the amount of toxic waste which can be completely dried out and encased in concrete or other material, and which will be transported to a site where it can be safely interred.

Mr Neal: Would you believe that if the people in the Miles area had not objected to it, they could well have copped all those sorts of chemicals?

Mr ARDILL: No, that was never intended. The simple reason why I say it was never intended is that for the first time we have a professional approach to the disposal of toxic waste. The National Party took no steps whatsoever towards the treatment of this waste, despite some wordy efforts to placate the people of Willawong. It did nothing at all. That cannot be denied.

Mr Neal interjected.

Mr ARDILL: No, it was being treated. It was being separated by the Brisbane City Council at Willawong, but there was no effort made to find a secure land area where it could be disposed of. That is the failure of the previous Government. It took no steps to properly investigate disposal, nor to set up a fully professional team to do so. That is exactly what the previous Minister did. At long last, he set up a fully professional team to handle this hazardous situation that still existed in the Brisbane area. The previous Minister also set up a team to properly manage the problem at Kingston, where a similar situation existed. People were disposing of waste although they had no knowledge about its implications—none whatsoever. A fully professional team has employed consultants with skills in geology, hydrology and so forth to find a proper and safe site where the waste can be held in the ground without leaching into the surrounding streams. It is about time that the Opposition admitted that, stopped scaring the people of the Murilla Shire and those who rely on water from the Murray/Darling River system in general. They should stop spreading alarm that this waste will leach into one of Australia's major river systems.

Mr Rowell: Who set up the committee?

Mr ARDILL: The CHEM Unit was set up by the previous Government, but it was not a fully professional unit until Mr Mackenroth took charge of the operation.

Mr Rowell: Would you go outside and say that?

Mr ARDILL: There is no need to. Everybody knows it. Have a look at Kingston. The member for Fassifern would know about the situation down there as it was on his electorate border. Nothing was done professionally until Mr Mackenroth set up a proper professional team to handle the problem. No radioactive material will go into this area. In fact, no radioactive material will be treated at Willawong, nor will any PCBs. The

Brisbane City Council has the most highly professional chemists to ensure that the material that goes out to Willawong does not contain PCBs, that it does not contain radioactive material; nor will it contain material which cannot be treated. The council will separate the recyclable materials and make a profit on it. The council will then treat the other three categories of materials that I have mentioned, which will then be solidified and transported to safe housing on the Dividing Range in the Murilla Shire.

I believe that there is every reason to sympathise with the people who understand the deceit of the past, the procrastination that went on, and the incompetence of not only members of the National Party but also other people who were involved, including the industrialists of Queensland and other parts of Australia. I can understand the concern of people, but members on the Opposition side of the House should not contribute to that concern and should not be raising alarm in the community. The members on the Opposition side of the House should be looking to see whether or not the best that can be achieved is being achieved. If it is not being achieved, they should monitor it, as I, knowing the problems, will certainly be doing in the future. As members of Parliament, it is up to us as to make sure that the public is protected.

Mr Elliott: Do you think that it is worth while working on the high temperature side of things?

Mr ARDILL: The problem is that nobody will accept a high temperature disposal unit anywhere in Australia.

Mr Neal: You can impose it.

Mr ARDILL: One can impose it on Gurulmundi. An isolated area would have to be chosen. People down south tried numerous places and nobody would accept it.

Mr Harper interjected.

Mr ARDILL: It is not. It is a fact and the honourable member knows it. The National Party in the Riverina——

Mr Harper interjected.

Mr ARDILL: The honourable member did not accept any interjections while he was speaking. The National Party in the Riverina were leaders in the protest movement to make sure that no high level incinerators would be built in the area. What happens with PCBs which do need to be incinerated? The problem is so great that they have to be exported. Australia exports its PCBs because there is no way of disposing of PCBs in Australia which would satisfy the population. If honourable members opposite suggest that that is the answer to the question of how to dispose of this type of material, they are wrong. First of all, there is a huge problem in rendering the waste into a form in which it can be treated by incineration. One would then find that nobody would want to accept it. It is generally accepted in America and some other countries. I will not mention Europe, because Europe has been disposing of its waste in the River Rhine for so long now that the river is nothing but a cesspit. Europe has high-temperature incinerators and it has problems with them. The smog problem in north-western Europe is so great that the population there is demanding that changes be made.

Mr Harper interjected.

Mr ARDILL: That is right, and other problems with smog. This is the only feasible way of dealing with the products of Queensland's industrial era. It is not just a problem in Brisbane, it is a problem in Toowoomba, in Maroochydore, on the Gold Coast—everywhere solvents are used. It is a problem in rural areas where pesticides are used. It is a problem in south Queensland, not only in Brisbane. There is no reason why waste should continue to be poured into unsuitable ground. It can be disposed of nowhere in Brisbane. Another alternative is a shire closer to Brisbane than the Murilla Shire. Murilla Shire has been found by the CHEM unit, which has checked this, to be the safest possible site. I believe that this is the only way to go.

Mr LITTLEPROUD (Condamine—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (8.59 p.m.): This issue has been on my mind ever since it was first announced by the Government. I

was sitting in this House one night, in fact, when the member for Brisbane Central was speaking. He was being very sincere about the disruption caused to some people by Expo. I want to quote the words that the member for Brisbane Central used on that night. He was very sincere in what he was saying, but I believe that what he had to say then has some relevance to what members are debating tonight. His words were, "My view is very simple. Someone's joy should not be another person's sorrow." I am sure that honourable members would appreciate that those words are very relevant to this legislation.

Some very fine speeches have been made tonight in this House. I do not doubt the sincerity of members on both sides of the House in the way that they have presented their facts. However, I happen to live in that part of Queensland that will be affected, and I have been reading the local newspapers and talking to the local people. In common with the member for Balonne, I have attended public meetings in the area. I can gauge the feeling of the local people. I admire the way in which they have gathered resources and gone to the trouble of organising seminars, producing a well-documented book, and getting in contact with experts in all sorts of fields right around Australia because they wanted alternative opinions. They are not convinced that what is being proposed in this legislation is right for them or right for Queensland. One cannot blame them for feeling that it is their backyard, because they have a vested interest in it. The member for Auburn summed things up perfectly when he said that a site was chosen and the Government then had to create a reason for putting the waste dump there. I ask those Government members who spoke with sincerity: did they put their arguments together from the information available to them from the department, the CHEM Unit and the Minister, or did they go further afield and take note of the opinions expressed by some other eminent people? That is what the people of Miles did, and I respect them for that.

When this Bill was introduced into the House about 10 days ago, in common with the member for Balonne I took the trouble to send copies of the Bill and the second-reading speech to people in Miles. Some of them belong to PATCH, and some of them are regarded as being rather extreme. I also sent copies of the Bill and the second-reading speech to members of the shire council and to other ordinary citizens whom I believe are level-headed, well-educated people who are taking a very keen interest in this issue. I am reminded of some of the comments made when I attended the seminar at which there was a gathering of experts. It seems to me—and I agree with the people of Miles—that we have not exhausted the alternatives. A man named Vincent Serventy, evidently a well-known environmentalist, said, "Why bury it? Rubbish can be a resource. Technology is going to improve, and we may get to the stage at which we can change the chemical structure of these things and end up with some sort of a product that is worth money." Mr Ardill spoke about the money that is being made at Willawong through the use of a particular process. The possibility exists to make money from this waste. It seemed to me that Mr Serventy was making a fair sort of comment.

Another statement that comes to mind is that if one has a problem, one buries it and it is out of sight. That is a pretty simplistic way of putting it, because even though something is buried there are still risks. The member for Nundah admitted that there is a risk. After listening to people speak at the seminar at Miles, it stuck in my mind that some risks remain. The member for Auburn said that the site is only as safe as nature wants to make it. That made me think that we should consider other alternatives. In the interim, until we talk about the plasma-arc and cement kilns and get them up and running, and we talk to people in the United States who have more expertise than we have because they have already faced these problems, why do we not store the waste above ground? A material called bentonite can be put on the ground, the waste can be piled on top, and if it is one metre deep nothing will penetrate it in the next 1 000 years. We already pile up thousands of tons of wheat above ground and put some bunding around it. Technology will probably come along and save us the expense of removing it.

Mr D'Arcy interjected.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: This is not a stupid proposition. In his second-reading speech, the Minister listed some reasons why we have to bury the waste. He spoke about aqueous waste, which is 98 per cent water. He said something along the lines of, "This will put the flame out." I did not prompt the people from Miles, but I sent them a copy of that second-reading speech. They wrote back and said, "What a lot of rot." As I understand it, all sorts of things can be done to that waste. If there is enough heat, it can be mixed with cement and burned and the gases that come off it can be captured. Those dangerous gases can be reburned, and that makes the process much safer. I appreciate Mr Ardill's point that we still have to find a place where the waste can be burned. Perhaps it is possible to find a place where it can be burned rather than buried. Perhaps that will have to be in a place away from urban areas that is a little isolated. I wonder if the people of Miles would regard that as a better alternative than burying it.

A Government member: Of course they do.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: Of course they do. In his second-reading speech, the Minister stated that the site is not a major recharge area for the Great Artesian Basin. I emphasise the word "major". The Minister does not deny that it is an area in which the Great Artesian Basin is recharged. According to the history of the settlement of the great pastoral areas of Queensland, the original settlers were limited to living close to where the water supply was above ground. Vast areas of land were virtually unused until someone found that, by boring into the ground and tapping the waters of the Great Artesian Basin, bore drains could be installed throughout the area and the land made productive. There is a very genuine fear in the UGA, the Cattlemen's Union and the local people who do not belong to those industry bodies——

Dr Flynn: Have you talked to Water Resources in Toowoomba?

Mr LITTLEPROUD: Yes, and I have talked to other people from universities. I will mention their names later. If there is any sort of risk in the storage of this waste, those people realise how horrendous that could be to an industry that produces so much income for Australia—something like 30 per cent of Australia's wealth. Those people are not prepared to take the risk while they believe that there is another alternative. I will now discuss what has happened so far to the people of Miles. The public meeting which the honourable member for Nicklin, the honourable member for Balonne and I attended was the first protest meeting held about this issue. At that meeting, people took up every seat and they were standing around the walls, out in the foyer and outside the doors. One person made a very relevant comment.

Mr Schwarten: How big was the hall?

Mr LITTLEPROUD: It could hold about 600 or 700 people, and there were only 1 500 people in the town. It was a good representation from the district. All sorts of people were there, including people who were extremely hostile and had a closed vision and people with open minds. However, one person said, "This Government has closed our courthouses; it has taken away the freight centre that we were supposed to get, which was a downgrading of the railway service; we have had to endure daylight-saving; and now we have got to cop its rubbish." That person received a rousing round of applause, because he expressed the feelings of those people. The Government should have some consideration for their thoughts. I return to Mr Beattie's quote: "Someone's joy should not be another person's sorrow." That sums up the situation that those people are in. It is all very well for members to say that we have problems in society, but they should understand that it is in the minds and hearts of the people in that district that they are going to cop it.

Gurulmundi is about 30 kilometres upstream from Miles, which is on Dogwood Creek; and L Tree Creek flows from Dogwood Creek, through Miles and into the Condamine River. Those people take a fair percentage of their water from Dogwood Creek and, understandably, they are concerned. Many people in that area have listened attentively to statements put out by the CHEM Unit, which spent much money and sent many officers to the area. As the member for Auburn said, it was an overkill, because it was an unfair match. I have a copy of an article that points out that the decision to site the landfill at Gurulmundi was made one day, the next day the Government saw the

council and the next day glossy documents were being presented around town. It was all premeditated. When Government members mention the word “consultation”, the people of Miles say that it was a sham, that the dice was loaded. They say, “It was all premeditated and worked out and we have had to endure it.” I summed up the situation very early in the piece. I said, “The decision has been made. No matter what you people do or however brave an effort you put up, you are going to cop it.” And I was not wrong. It was a cruel hoax. Much money was spent and many well-intentioned statements were made by people with some sort of academic qualifications about putting the landfill in place, but the people of Miles had enough gumption and drive to seek independent advice from other experts.

I have already mentioned Mr Vincent Serventy. At the seminar that was held, Mr George Gibson talked about—the member for Cunningham mentioned it—the Burunga-Leichhardt Fault. He mentioned also the fault that runs from St George through to Mundubbera and he produced transparencies on an overhead projector. He was prepared to back up what he said. He left us sure in our minds that there was a risk factor. The next person to speak was Dr John Ryan, who is a seismologist. He spoke about earthquakes and where they had occurred throughout Queensland. In fact, I handed the Minister a copy of a book in which that material is set out. No-one has denied what Dr Ryan said. He spoke about the frequency of earthquakes and stated that no-one can guarantee that there will not be another earthquake in that area again. I return to what the honourable member for Auburn said, that is, “It’s as safe as nature wants to make it.”

Mrs Edmond: No-one can guarantee anything.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: The honourable member has lived in the Gayndah district, so she knows about those occurrences. Another speaker at the seminar was Mr Mark McGovern from the University of Queensland who carries out cost-benefit and economic studies. He pointed out that, although the Government and the CHEM Unit are putting up a case to defend this site, nowhere have they made a comparison between the cost-benefits of the site at Gurulmundi and another site that could be used in Queensland. All of a sudden we come back to the fact that Gurulmundi was chosen and the Government has put up a case to make it sound good. No comparison has been made with other possible sites. They are not my words; they are the words of Mark McGovern from the University of Queensland.

Having listened on that day to people with expertise in various areas, I then listened to what the local people had to say. Bill Burnside has lived his entire life on the Dawson side of the range on Juandah Creek. He lives off the land and he knows where the springs flow in the wet season. They water many cattle. He said that, over the years, they have found it difficult to muster brumbies. Because there were so many springs in that country, they could never get the horses to isolated watering places where they could round them up and yard them.

Mr Pearce: Just before it rains, they open up again, don’t they?

Mr LITTLEPROUD: Yes, that is a good sign.

Mr Pearce: I used to live on the land.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: Right. I took notice of that man. He seemed to be a genuine person who had lived there all his life. He has seen what happens to the land and the watertable underneath. He expressed concern. He does not profess to have any great academic knowledge, but he lives there and has observed what has occurred. His comments were backed up by a Mrs Archinal, whom I know to be a salt-of-the-earth sort of lady. She has lived in the Gurulmundi area and knows all about the district and the quality of life that it offers. She stated that the country gets so wet and the topsoil is such that in the wet season even the kangaroos bog down to their necks because the ground becomes like quicksand.

An Opposition member: Spewie.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: The local term is “spewie”. I then spoke to a Mr Eddie Cann. The Cann family is notorious for stock and rodeo work and they know all about the land.

However, Eddie Cann was a little different. He also worked for one of the seismic groups that operated in that area testing for coal. Eddie Cann's job, as a semiskilled labourer, was to go along behind the seismic truck and fill in the holes. It was a requirement of the Mines Department that, for safety reasons, the holes be filled in. Eddie used to drop a stone in the holes and listen. He told me that almost every hole contained water. It did not take very long for him to put the stone in a tin, drop it in the hole and measure how deep the water was.

Mr Pearce: Wouldn't they have water when they were drilling the hole?

Mr LITTLEPROUD: No, not to that extent. They used a water drill, but there was more water than that. I compared Eddie Cann's statements with those of Mr Burnside. They told me that in the wet season the watertable rises to the extent that all the springs might flow for six or seven months. Their statements can be compared with the information that has come from the Water Resources Commission and also from the CHEM team, which has sent a team out to that area to do the drilling. It worries me that these people say that the whole profile of the ground can be so saturated that the water spews out through springs. People cannot work on this ground for three, four and five weeks at a time until it gets a crust on it.

Mr Ardill: It's through clay.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: It is not clay on top. The layer of clay the honourable member is talking about is down below. There is a man there named Mr Newton who has been a well-borer for years and he has a knowledge of the geology and the strata of the land. He has said that it is interlaced with pieces of sandstone—honourable members have seen that in diagrams in the book that has been put out—and he has grave doubts since the drilling was done there. I am not trying to prove that anyone is right or wrong. However, after listening to a life-time of local knowledge—and honourable members should take notice of those people who have expressed concern about the choice by the Government for that site—I formed the opinion that we have reason to be worried. I am also responsible enough to know that members of society have a problem with disposing of our waste, especially those types of waste that are difficult to discard. As the member for Cunningham said, we have taken some measures to make industries produce less waste and to use processes to put waste in a form that can be stored or carried so that it is not dangerous. I appreciate that putting wastes into a solid form is the way to go. I am sure the people of Miles agree with me that there is too much risk in what the Government is proposing to do.

The other alternative, as I have said before, is to store waste above the ground on a mat made of suitable clay until such time as technology catches up and high-temperature incinerators come on stream. The consequences of having waste in the ground is a difficult problem to overcome. I agree completely with the people of Miles, and it is my intention to oppose this Bill. As a member of the National Party, if we win Government I will be endeavouring to find ways to have it closed down as soon as possible. I am not going to make a rash promise, as Jim Soorley did, to win votes. I am just saying that I will be investigating all the ways I can to close it down. The legislation before us refers to a performance check. I was excited about that until I read the reference in the legislation to an audit of on-site technology. I would appreciate it if the Minister altered that reference to an audit of on-site technology or alternatives that are not on site. If alternatives become available, the Government, the Brisbane City Council and certainly the Murilla Shire Council would like to adopt those alternatives, bearing in mind the fear that those people have.

Mr Warburton: Do you think the committee is crazy, or something?

Mr LITTLEPROUD: The legislation refers only to an audit of the technology on the site. I am asking for the legislation to be broadened for other things that come on stream.

Mr Warburton: It doesn't stop them looking at it.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: It is not mentioned in the Bill. I want to make a comment about the Murilla Shire Council. There is, unfortunately, a lot of heat out at the present

time because there are some people who are determined to fight on regardless, and they will not accept anything the Government is offering. The Murilla Shire Council consists of people who are very aware of their responsibilities to the residents of the Murilla Shire. Those people have realised that it was a fait accompli—that the Government will have its way. They have said that they will have to make the best of the situation and that they have lost. They are determined to play some sort of role on behalf of the local people and they have agonised for weeks and are still under fire in some quarters. I support them publicly because I think they have the interests of the whole community at heart. I am told that the Local Government Association of Queensland was legally represented in all the negotiations. The members of the council have said that they must make the best they can of the situation. I support the stance they had to take in a situation they could not win. It was a matter of saving as much ground as they could. I would like honourable members to think of it as being in their backyard with a risk factor involved. Why put it in the ground?

Time expired.

Mr SCHWARTEN (Rockhampton North) (9.20 p.m.): It was not my intention to speak in this debate——

An Opposition member: You don't have to.

Mr SCHWARTEN: I understand that I do not have to, but, having listened to the debate thus far from members opposite, I am reminded of something that happened when I was a member of the Rockhampton City Council. One of the greatest debates that occurred in that council concerned the need for a bus service in certain areas. Everybody said that a bus service was needed in the area. What could never be resolved was the question of where the bus seat should be located, because nobody wanted it in front of his or her house; it could be in front of somebody else's house. But everybody agreed that a bus should service the area. In the Rockhampton City Council, there were more disputes over bus seats than anything else. Tonight, we are hearing the bus seat argument all over again. It did not matter who one approached in the south-east corner, nobody wanted the problem.

Mr Neal: Those seats have got National Party names on them.

Mr SCHWARTEN: The honourable member should not talk about those sorts of matters. He should come to Rockhampton North sometime and I will show him what the previous Government did to Labor people in Labor electorates. The previous Government knew that it had no chance of ever getting a vote from these people, so it put all the Housing Commission homes in those areas. It put the worst developments in those areas. So I ask the honourable member not to preach that sort of nonsense to me.

Mr Welford interjected.

Mr SCHWARTEN: I accept that interjection. The previous Government did push people into slums in Labor electorates. However, tonight, I am not here to discuss that issue. Let us not lose sight of the fact that this is a community problem. It is not, as members opposite would have us believe, the problem of Brisbane alone. We are talking about the disposal of industrial and agricultural waste. This problem is not created just in the backyards and the workshops of Brisbane. I understand that the PATCH group, which has been a very effective lobby group, when discussing the matter with the previous Minister, Terry Mackenroth, put forward the option—and I have noticed that the option has been discussed here tonight—of a high-temperature furnace as the answer to the problem of getting rid of this waste.The following proposition was put to the people: "If we developed that, would you have it in your area?" Honourable members will be able to guess what the answer was.

Mrs Woodgate: "No".

Mr SCHWARTEN: The answer was, "No", which was fairly predictable. If every member of this Parliament was honest, he or she would admit that nobody wants it in his or her electorate because of the pressure, cynicism, anxiety and upset that it would create politically. If honourable members were honest about it, they would acknowledge

that no politician wants that to happen. The objection displayed tonight by members of the Opposition to the Bill is a political reaction.

Mr Pearce: Mr Lester might put it in Peak Downs now he's giving it away.

Mr SCHWARTEN: He well may do that. I notice that he is absent tonight, but he may well be the only member who would accept it in his electorate.

Mr McGrady: Absent all week!

Mr SCHWARTEN: Absolutely. Much has been said during the debate, but the bottom line is that no-one wants the site in his or her electorate. The attempt made by the Opposition to politicise the issue flies in the face of the extensive consultative process that has been undertaken. For eight years, members of the opposition parties ducked the issue, and I understand why they did that. It was because of the very problem that is being faced by the Government following its presentation of this Bill. The problem is: where should the dump go? That is the very issue that members of the opposition parties ducked, and I can understand why they ran away from it. Members of the Labor Party are not going to run away from the problem or sweep it under the carpet. Members of the opposition parties knew in 1985 that the problem was an ongoing one, but they did nothing about obtaining a secure landfill site to ensure that the problem would be properly addressed.

Mr T. B. Sullivan: They probably knew it would have to be in a remote area, too.

Mr SCHWARTEN: I dare say they did. It would be common sense to draw that conclusion. The extensive consultative process involved 19 groups. The former Minister also held discussions with the local council. He visited the area, and members of the council came to Brisbane. Terry Mackenroth literally worked his insides out when he was handling this issue to ensure that the viewpoints of the maximum number of groups were considered. I believe that substantial credit should be given to the people involved in that process because it was not as though the issue sprang up overnight. There was no midnight sitting of Parliament to inflict the site on members opposite, which contrasts markedly with the style of the previous Government—the old legislative sausage machine that rammed legislation through this Parliament in the middle of the night. This issue has dragged on for months. Media briefings were being given as far back as 1990, and the issue has been out in the open since December of that year. The Government has laid its cards on the table, and there has been no sleight of hand. There have been no underhanded deals and no brown paper bags full of cash.

The Government has met with people who are understandably upset and anxious, and has met the issue up-front. We have spoken from a Government perspective to the people concerned, and I do not believe that anything more than that can be done. At the end of the day, the dump has to go somewhere. If members of the opposition parties examine their consciences, they will agree with me on that. They can argue the toss about high-temperature incinerators, etc., but the fact is that the problem exists and it needs a solution today. It should have been resolved eight years ago. The opposition parties had the opportunity to do so, but they passed that opportunity to this Government. This Government has acted. Members opposite can criticise as much as they want to, but we will solve the problem. I support the Bill.

Mrs McCAULEY (Callide) (9.27 p.m.): Previous Opposition speakers have canvassed very well the reasons for the opposition to the proposal that is being put forward tonight. I believe that there is obviously no meeting point between the views of this Government and the views of the Opposition in relation to this matter, which is unfortunate. However, it is certainly a misnomer to refer to the site as "secure"—the Gurulmundi Secure Landfill Agreement Bill—because there is no such thing as a secure landfill site. Even the suggestion of using a liner is similar to the suggestion that if a person uses a condom, he will not get AIDS. Anyone who puts his faith in those adages is sure to come unstuck. Even if a liner is used at this particular landfill site, there can be no guarantee of security. As the Opposition spokesman said, a fault line runs underneath the site from St George to Mundubbera. Last year, Mundubbera experienced two significant earth tremors. Moreover, sodium bentonite is contained in the water-soluble

clay at the site, and many other problems are associated with the area. The district is a recharge area for the Dawson/Fitzroy and the Murray/Darling river systems. It seems that it was only after the Government put a pin on the map and decided that Gurulmundi would be the site for the disposal of toxic waste that the area was inspected, and that the problems were discovered. The Government has tried very hard to gloss over those problems. Earlier in the debate, I heard the member for Isis describe the area as "goanna country". On behalf of the people who live in the area, I take great offence to that term because it is certainly not goanna country. That comment epitomises the derogatory attitude adopted by the member for Isis.

Mr Borbidge: That is typical of the type of comments he makes in this place.

Mrs McCAULEY: It is typical, not only of the member for Isis but also of many Labor members who never go beyond city boundaries. I understand the difficulties encountered by the Murilla Shire Chairman, Rod Gilmour, and his councillors. As a former shire councillor, I sympathise with them. I understand the difficulties they faced when confronted with a proposal that they were dead-set against but were going to get, anyway. They really had no choice but to join the Brisbane City Council and the State Government in forming the management committee. If they had not, they would have had no avenue of input at all. Because of my involvement in the off-site environmental monitoring process in the Boyne smelter area and also in the Mount Larcom area, I query the sufficiency of the $40,000 compensation. I am concerned that it may not be enough to enable essential off-site environmental monitoring to be carried out in the area, but I suppose that that will become evident when disposal gets under way.

The Opposition spokesman, the member for Cunningham, talked about the various alternatives to a landfill site for the disposal of toxic waste, so I will not canvass those. During his trips overseas he has gained a lot of knowledge on that subject. Suffice to say that it is quite astounding that the Government that calls itself a progressive Government should choose such a regressive mode of dealing with toxic waste as putting it in a landfill. It is obvious that it is a political solution to the problem that the Government should put the site in the middle of what is obviously a strong National Party area. It is not really the NIMBY principle so much as the NIALE principle—not in any Labor electorate.

I commend Jim and Carmel Richards and the PATCH group for their consistent opposition to the proposal and their remarkable feat in publishing a book, which the member for Condamine mentioned earlier, entitled *The National Impact Evaluation Summit on the Proposed Gurulmundi Landfill*. It is a tremendous book. I have read it. Such consistent opposition is indicative of the concerns raised by the people. As the member for Condamine said, 600-odd people attended that first meeting. Quite often, when something is first proposed that sort of intense reaction will occur, and then the opposition will dwindle away. Obviously, those people have not dwindled away. They are still there, and they are obviously leading the charge as strongly as they did in the very beginning. I commend them for that.

The whole project is a good example of local knowledge being ignored and the CHEM Unit trying to do a public relations job on the locals rather than seeking to address seriously the concerns that were raised by them. It is a typical example of consultation Labor style, with which I am very familiar in the health field. This is how they do it. They decide the way that they will act and then pretend to consult, all the time having their agenda virtually set in concrete. They try to appease the locals slightly but do not really worry about it because they know where they are going and what they are doing. Whatever the locals say does not really matter. The locals do not really have any input at all.

Mainly for the edification of Labor members, I will quote briefly a few examples of what I believe are very sensible and logical observations from local people. They may not have degrees in science and so on, but most of them have lived in the area all their lives. Mr Bill Burnside, who was mentioned by the member for Condamine, was born and raised in the Gurulmundi district. He had quite a deal to say about the area. These are commonsense considerations that are well worthy of putting forward so that

Government members are aware of them. Mr Burnside concluded his submission by saying—

> "I consider that the whole surface, sub-artesian and artesian water systems of Eastern Australia are at great risk of contamination if a hazardous waste dump is established here at Gurulmundi—not to mention the danger to flora and fauna and people depending upon these water systems."

He talked about the springs and the fact that they found it so difficult to muster the brumbies because there were so many springs around. He has been familiar with the area for all of his long life and is obviously a person worth listening to.

Another person whose opinion would have to be respected is David Hinds, who is a land-owner and was the bentonite mine supervisor for some 10 years. He would know that area very well, and what he had to say was also quite interesting. Mr Hinds said—

> "For such a critical facility the possibility of flooding and the variability of the clay must be fully investigated. The Draft report seems to have glossed over if not ignored these issues.
>
> The constraints of weather in day to day operation of the landfill pit have been overlooked. The residents of Murilla Shire cannot afford the luxury of out of sight-out of mind attitudes. These problems raised must be fully and comprehensively addressed."

Those are local people whose opinions I would respect a great deal. It is unfortunate that the Minister has not seen fit to respect them, too.

Finally, I will quote an observation made by Kerry Donohue from the School of Economics and Public Policy at the Queensland University of Technology. He said—

> "It would be interesting to know how the CHEM Unit dealt with the variability caused by uncertainty about transport, the cost of clay, future demand and the impact on the environment, other than assuming that it will be zero."

They are very good points, which I believe have not been well addressed.

The Opposition is against the proposal and we are supportive of those who have worked strongly to prevent the dump being sited in their area. They have not used the NIMBY principle of, "We do not want it in our area because we would rather see it somewhere else." None of the people in that area to whom I have spoken have accepted the attitude, "No, we do not want it in our area. Tell us you will put it somewhere else and we will be happy with that." None of them have that attitude. Those people say that there must be an alternative. The landfill method is not appropriate to our forward thinking and to our coming into the twenty-first century. It is not appropriate at all. They are not saying, "Put it in someone else's electorate and we will be happy." They are saying to the Government: find a different solution to the problem.

Mr HORAN (Toowoomba South) (9.36 p.m.): I rise to join my colleagues in the National Party Opposition and oppose the Bill. I feel a great sympathy for the people of Miles who have had the issue forced upon them. I will briefly go through the process of what will be prepared and sent out to Miles. The material includes paints, pesticides and solvents. Approximately 60 tonnes a day of waste product is sent to Willawong. Of that 60 tonnes, about 6 tonnes a day needs secure burial and consists mainly of those pesticides, herbicides, paints and solvents.

The problem with them and the reason that they need secure burial is that over a period they have the capacity to leach into the environment. The CHEM Unit says that the total volume of these materials coming to Willawong is gradually decreasing, but it has probably just about reached the baseline now. It is about 1.4 million litres annually. It is mixed with fly ash and a cement powder to produce a large crumble, and this crumble rolls, which I will speak about later on. It is also necessary for testing to take place to determine which part of that 60 tonnes that comes in each day is actually the 6 tonne component. At the moment, these treated toxic wastes are being stored in concrete bunkers. Once the waste has been treated and is ready for storage or, in the future, as it will be, ready for transport, 2 per cent of the contaminant is in the solid waste. It is

estimated that there will be 150 tonnes per fortnight transported in six trucks. That equates to about 25 tonnes per truck. They are obviously very big trucks. At a contaminant rate of 2 per cent, there is some 500 kilograms of concentrated PPS in every truck.

I have listened to the arguments throughout the night, and to me it appears that everyone has admitted that nobody wants to have such a facility in his or her district or town. It is very easy for the members on the Government side who are not faced with one of these facilities in their district to argue with great passion about the safety aspects of this facility and not to recognise the large numbers of experts and the populace who to a man and to a woman have campaigned against it and are totally and absolutely opposed to it. Despite the fact that the CHEM Unit has many eminent people, there have been just as many eminent people saying the exact opposite, which is that there are problems with dust; that the material has to be transported 400 kilometres, an enormous distance; that there are floods; that there are threats to the aquifer; that over 25 years there are possibilities of failed storage pits; and that some 500 bores are located within the 25 square kilometres surrounding the site.

I would like to read from the conclusions that were drawn by Dr George Hutton, who presented an article at the summit meeting. He said—

> ". . . by virtue of its location within the recharge area for the Great Artesian Basin, Gurulmundi would be classified as a zone 3 area if it were"—

located in the internationally recognised system of site selection—

> "in Oklahoma. As such the area would be considered to be amongst the least favourable of sites. An unfavourable rating for the proposed site at Gurulmundi also emerges from comparisons drawn between figure 5 and the vertical section by AGC-Clyde for the Gurulmundi site. Compared to Oklahoma State where authorities require a significant thickness of shale and clay between the waste disposal facility and any permeable layer or aquifer, only 1-2 m separate the base of the proposed Gurulmundi pit from an underlying, and potentially permeable, sandstone layer."

In his conclusions, Dr Hutton, who is a senior lecturer at the University of Southern Queensland, said, regarding the potential risk to the aquifers—

> "Of much more serious concern is the potential risk of contamination to the aquifers of the Surat and Eromanga sedimentary basins. By the standards set overseas, particularly in Oklahoma State where staff have developed considerable expertise in matters of waste disposal, Gurulmundi would be classified amongst the least favourable of sites . . . In other words, by international standards the risk to groundwater supplies at Gurulmundi would probably be considered unacceptably high."

That is just one more contrary expert opinion.

Tonight, I want to speak also on the problems of transport. This toxic waste material has to be carted the incredible distance of 400 kilometres. One wonders how many other sites were studied, and where, that would have been within a reasonable distance of the toxic waste dump at Willawong. Transporting the waste will probably be one of the riskiest parts of the exercise. Toowoomba is well served by emergency services, but elsewhere along the route there are very few. As another speaker said tonight, it took some four and a half hours for emergency services to handle the tanker that capsized recently in Miles.

I would like to quote some figures on accidents that have occurred through the Toowoomba area during the last financial year. I am talking now about the area from the bottom of the range to the western side of Toowoomba. In the Cohoe Street area on the top of the range, there were 15 accidents; in James Street, which is the main east/west road of Toowoomba, there were 67 accidents; in Anzac Avenue, there were 13; in Tor Street, on the western side of the city, there were 22; and in Bridge Street, on the western side, there were 8. That was a total of 125 accidents. In addition, 28 accidents occurred between the top and bottom of the range. There is no doubt that

probably the most dangerous section of the route will be the James Street and the range sections. The range, with a 2 000 feet rise, is probably the steepest and busiest highway in Queensland. The top of the range is often subject to fog. Probably the worst scenario that could occur—and it is not a matter of being alarmist, it is just a matter of stating what is probable—would be that a truck coming down the steep incline of James Street from east to west in wet weather could capsize and this material could spill out, roll down the hill, down East Street into the Murray/Darling River system. That is an unlikely probability, but it is a possibility. When it is considered that according to the initial report the transport was to be in tip-trucks, with the waste stored in plastic sacrificial containers with a tarpaulin over the top, there is no doubt that if a truck turned over, that entire load would be spilt. I understand that the decision as to the means by which this material will be transported will be made by the tripartite management committee that has been formed. I believe there is only one safe means of transport, and that is to have this toxic waste residue stored in steel containers and transported by rail.

At this stage the Department of Transport estimates that the range highway will be filled to capacity—that is the two up lanes and the two down lanes—between the year 2005 and the year 2010, only some 12 or 13 years away, and half-way through the agreement period for this dump. It might be only six trucks a fortnight, but anybody who uses James Street regularly and sees the congestion that occurs with semitrailers in that main street through the city will realise that every additional semitrailer on that road adds to the congestion of the city.

Another point raised in the initial report about transport was the alternate route. I could not believe that an alternate route was suggested which went through the suburbs of the city—through the housing areas on the eastern side, through the southern suburbs, almost right through the centre of the university, and then out through the housing areas on the western side of the city. I think that alternative route was determined by looking at a map and not by driving through those areas. If this Bill is passed, there is only one way to transport this material, and that is by rail in sealed steel containers. The problem with this material—and it has been said over and over again—is that it leaches in water. If it is to be stored in pits, the bottom of the pits would have to be constructed with a sloping base—again in case water gets into the pits—because the material leaches out of the crumble. The pits would also have to have plastic all around them, again because of the leaching. A truck may capsize on its 400-kilometre journey, so there can be absolutely no possibility of this material being able to escape into water or being soaked by rain.

I would like to make some comments about the Murilla Shire Council, which has been mentioned at some length during the course of the debate. Within a very short time, and with an extreme lack of funds, that council had to prepare a submission to this proposal when it was first put forward. It was an extremely difficult task, and the council sought funds from the Government to do that, but it was not given such funds. When it came time to enter into negotiations for a tripartite agreement, the council was really placed in the situation in which the Brisbane City Council had the money, the State Government had the power and the Crown land, and there was nothing else it could do. The council had to be responsible to the local people. It could not just sit back and watch the trucks trundle through and have no say in what was happening at the site, no say in any testing of the site. For a lousy $40,000 the Murilla Shire Council has now been included in this tripartite management arrangement. That $40,000 has to be used by the shire not only to attend the various meetings that take place but also, most importantly, to employ a technician to assist it and give it proper technical information. The technician that the council has employed is from Waste Solutions, Australia. The responsible attitude of that shire council is revealed in its preparedness to take legal advisers and technicians to these meetings and to monitor this whole process right through.

The council has gone through an enormous amount of stress in getting to this stage. I remember meeting last year with a number of the shire councillors and the chairman. At that stage they were going through an enormous amount of stress in determining what they should do, weighing up their responsibilities to the district

against the opposition to this proposal that had been evident right from the outset. Finally, they have entered into the agreement responsibly and taken care of their own people. I think that the Murilla Shire Council should be supported by members on both sides of this House for what it has done. That council certainly should receive adequate compensation for the costs that it will incur and the effort that will be involved in monitoring this process.

For the next 25 years, some 97 000 tonnes of residue is proposed to be put into this area. The Murilla Shire Council has written into the agreement a five-year review period, and I think that is a very important clause within the agreement. If it has any commitment, any decency, and is prepared to be responsible in terms of investigating any alternate means of getting rid of this toxic waste, the Government will take the opportunity now, while this dump is being used, to urgently investigate other ways of disposing of this material.

The people of Miles have suffered, and they will continue to suffer, from the stigma and the risk that are associated with this dump. No matter what the percentage of the risk, the material is in the ground, and the risk is there. Therefore, it behoves this Government to urgently address this problem and to instigate immediately a form of research that can come up with an alternate method of doing away with this waste. It is well known that there will be requirements for dumps in other areas. There has been talk of two more dumps being required in north Queensland. This dump is only for southern Queensland. There is obviously going to be a need for one elsewhere. Where is it going to go? I guess if it is in the Rockhampton North electorate we will certainly have some impassioned debate in this place. With this five-year review, now is the time for the Government to be fair dinkum and instigate something straight away so that the suggestions that have been made tonight can be considered. There have been suggestions of recycling. Tonight, honourable members have made suggestions, provided information and stated facts regarding the various processes used in the highly industrialised nations which result in total elimination of these toxic wastes rather than leaving it in the ground forever. I would like to see this Government provide some tangible evidence of what research it is prepared to undertake in the next five years.

In conclusion, the people of Miles and the Murilla Shire have to accept this waste which has been produced by the factories of south-east Queensland, and processed by the Brisbane City Council. The 3 000 people who live in this small country community will have to bear the burden of having 97 500 tonnes of waste from one million Queenslanders buried in their backyards. Their opposition must be recognised, their disappointment must be recognised, and the multitude of informed opinion which has been presented in opposition to this proposal for toxic waste disposal must be recognised. Once again, I reiterate that I am pleased to join with my National Party colleagues in totally opposing this Bill.

Hon. N. J. TURNER (Nicklin) (9.53 p.m.): I believe that most of the issues have been canvassed adequately by members from both sides of the House. We have been throwing our rubbish into the sea, the rivers, and holes in the ground for the last two hundred years, yet Australia is supposed to be the lucky and clever country! I do not believe that other technologies for the disposal of this waste have been adequately investigated. The Minister stated in his second-reading speech that the Gurulmundi Secure Landfill Agreement Bill represents a first for the State of Queensland, which has created a blueprint for other States to emulate in the establishment of a hazardous waste disposal facility and the management structure for that facility. It has been stated by other speakers that it is well documented that the record of landfill sites leaves much to be desired. It has been shown in America that over time the landfill sites do fail. Although it has been said that this dump will have a life of 25 years, I know, and the people of Miles know, that it will not be 25 years, but 250 years. How long will those liners hold up? That is the problem with which we are confronted. The member for Condamine mentioned storing the waste although we already have the technology to dispose of it in other, better ways. I believe that putting the waste in the ground is creating a monster.

The Minister stated that the management structure provides for ongoing consultation with the local community. Let me say that there has been more confrontation than consultation. We have seen the adoption of the old American wild west philosophy, with the judge saying, "Let us give him a fair trial and then we will take him out and hang him." I have been to meetings with the member for Balonne and the member for Condamine and I have heard the concerns of the people in the area. They are real concerns that are not being addressed in this Bill. The Minister stated further that the agreement between the State Government, the Brisbane City Council and the Murilla Shire Council has the force of law. It will enable the Landfill Management Committee to make by-laws, subject to the approval of the Governor in Council, to guarantee the security of the site. The member for Nundah admitted the risk that was involved, but that risk is being taken by country areas. There is the possibility of contamination of the subartesian and artesian basin and the Murray/Darling River system—and we all know of its delicate environmental balance and the recent problems it has with the blue/green algae.

The Government pretends to be concerned about heritage and environment. Who will ever forget—and I am glad that he is here—the Minister for Environment and Heritage, Mr Comben, on the beach at Peregian crying when a whale was beached. He was saying, "We have to return this magnificent creature to the wild." I do not object to that happening, but it cost some $80,000. Bulldozers were working in four feet of salt water trying to get that whale back to sea. Within two weeks of that event, Mr Comben was approached to allow 500 dying cows and calves on to Denyvor Lakes, which had not then been gazetted as a national park, to save their lives. Farmers had nowhere else to take them. The Minister refused to do that. He said that it was not on. There were no TV cameras out there. So much for the Minister's concern for country areas! What the Minister is doing to Miles through this dump amounts to environmental vandalism of the worst kind. He is putting at risk the greatest primary production area in Australia, through the Great Artesian Basin and the Murray/Darling River system——

Mr Elder: Read the assessments before you get up to speak.

Mr TURNER: The Government is putting the area at risk. The honourable member does not understand that. I cannot help it if he has never been off a concrete footpath. He does not know what he is talking about. No-one on this side of the House is disputing the fact that Queensland needs somewhere for this facility or that it has to consider other technology, but it is the risk factor that is concerning these people and that is concerning the Opposition. The Minister said that it should be pointed out that the community has been misled by claims that with a high-temperature incinerator there would be no need for a secure landfill, and that the fact is that the waste targeted for disposal is principally aqueous waste which is 98 to 99 per cent water that has been treated and solidified. Put simply, these wastes are inappropriate for high-temperature incineration because they would put the flame out. What rot! In fact, had the Minister read the final impact assessment study report, paragraph AA 4.2 refers to a treatment process for reducing water level. At Willawong, moisture levels are reduced to such an extent that the processed material has to be dampened down to avoid dust. The New South Wales Waste Management Authority has an aqueous waste plant operating at Lidcombe. Perhaps the Minister should look at that operation before he makes further statements with regard to aqueous waste and how water levels can be reduced in an environmentally safe manner.

I have personally looked at the plasma-arc technology and I know a little bit about the high-temperature incineration method. The New South Wales and Victorian Governments, in conjunction with the Federal Government, are looking at sites for such an operation. They have written to the Queensland Government asking what hazardous waste could be destroyed in a high-temperature incinerator if one was constructed, but they have not received an answer. The Government rightly says that nobody wants a high-temperature incinerator in his area. Has the Government considered the use of technology so that a ship could burn the waste out at sea beyond the limit where it would affect people? What about the plasma-arc technology, by which this excess waste can be treated on site? The Minister is never going to encourage industry to

minimise waste while he provides a hole in the ground in which it can throw its rubbish. The Minister also stated that the site was located near the top of the Great Dividing Range and that the site is well above the reported extreme local flood level. What about extreme floods, such as those that occurred in Charleville? If such a flood were to happen at Miles, it would wipe the dump out.

In his second-reading speech, the Minister stated that, according to the final impact assessment study report, the site is not a major intake area for the Great Artesian Basin. That is a blatant misrepresentation of the facts. The report states also that a substantial thickness of suitable clay materials exists at the site to seal the solidified wastes. The CHEM Unit has stated that the clay is so fantastic that it takes 1 000 years for water to permeate one metre through it. Some members have asked, "Why worry about carting the waste out?" The member for Toowoomba South mentioned the transport problems associated with the Toowoomba range. Why not send out trucks or railway wagons and bring back some of that clay? Why not line Mount Coot-tha, put all the material in there and cover it with one metre of clay? That would make it secure forever. The Minister should not shake his head, I am stating a fact. If that clay is so good, why not do that? Why run risks? But no, that would be too intelligent.

The report states further that the local groundwater table is at least 40 metres below the lowest operating level of the proposed landfill and would not be affected. Other members have stated how it will be affected. The closest resident to the proposed site is 1.95 kilometres away, and the site is screened by 1 kilometre of bushland. Big deal! Have members not seen the dust storms that come in from central Queensland? One can smell the gidgee dust that has blown in with the winds. When droughts occur out west and the land becomes dry and dusty, do members not believe that wind will blow that dust to Brisbane and other coastal regions? Residents near the site will be affected. The fact that they live one or two kilometres away does not mean a thing. The earthquake fault in that area has also been mentioned. There have been plenty of tremors in Queensland. The honourable member for Toowoomba South mentioned the transport problems and the risks involved. If a truck were to tip over on the Toowoomba range when it is raining, your waste could end up back in Brisbane.

Mr Ardill: It's your waste, it's not Brisbane waste. It's your waste, it's everybody's waste.

Mr TURNER: Does the member claim that it is not waste from Brisbane? I am not talking about the waste, I am talking about the risks involved with it, but the member seems unable to grasp, acknowledge or accept the risk that future generations are facing. The Government is putting forward proposals instead of considering other technology. In his second-reading speech, the Minister stated that the great public consultation and information program that has been developed to support the impact assessment study was unprecedented in Queensland. The Minister also mentioned the tremendous community debate and the balanced judgments that have been made. He stated that the public consultation program was responsive and recognised the need to maintain open dialogue with the local community. The Minister stated further that the formation of the Community Consultative Committee formed the basis of a conflict management strategy which was put in place by the CHEM Unit to ensure that there was open dialogue. That is a joke. The Minister should tell the residents of Miles about the dialogue that he has had.

There is one further matter that I wish to put to the Minister, and perhaps he will reply to it at the Committee stage. Is this dump outside or within the provisions of legislation covering contaminated land? Will responsibility or the onus go back to the land-holder or the contaminator if a fine has to be paid? No concern has been expressed for the people of Miles or the surrounding country areas. That is typical of this Government, and I express my opposition to the Bill.

Hon. N. G. WARBURTON (Sandgate—Minister for Police and Emergency Services) (10.05 p.m.), in reply: I do not intend to be lengthy in my reply, because in my second-reading speech I paid particular attention to being explicit and covering the matter very thoroughly. Frankly, most of the questions raised by Opposition members

have already been answered. I thank all honourable members for their contributions. It was evident that PATCH had played a prominent part in the speeches of Opposition members. I notice that the honourable member for Hinchinbrook is nodding. It was very evident, because of references to Nazi Germany, and so forth. One of the people who provided papers for the meeting said exactly the same thing. Obviously, their contributions came directly from PATCH.

At this stage, I make reference to the Murilla Shire Council. On only one occasion, I have had the pleasure of meeting its chairman and a number of the councillors. The ones whom I met are indeed gentlemen. They have approached this matter like gentlemen, and they certainly have not been involved in emotional scaremongering nonsense such as I have seen from some members of the Opposition tonight. I had what I will call very responsible discussions with those people. Unquestionably, they have suffered considerably as a result of opposition from particular sections of the community. However, it is my firm belief—contrary to what has been said by Opposition members—that that council has very solid and majority support from the people of Miles. I was pleased to hear Mr Littleproud say that he supported it.

I do not know the gentleman named Bruce Uebergang, but I believe that he sums up the current unfortunate situation that has been reached as far as some people involved in PATCH are concerned. In a very recent letter to the editor, Mr Uebergang said—

> "I have just finished reading the first (and hopefully) the last thinly-veiled attempt by PATCH to once again offend the sensibilities of Murilla shire ratepayers.
>
> Words almost fail to explain my disgust as to the level of debate to which PATCH and the 'Murilla Advocate' stoop.
>
> The fact that PATCH must now engage in a personal attack is a sure indication that they have lost their way in this debate."

That sums up the position as I have detected it in recent times. It is unfortunate, because many of the people who formed PATCH originally were very sincere. However, recently the debate has degenerated considerably, to the point at which they are saying things that should not be said.

In answer to Mr Elliott, I point out that, had he read the Gurulmundi report—which I do not believe he has—he would know that the United States Environmental Protection Agency to which he referred and the regulations relating to the management of hazardous waste were very much considered.

Mr Elliott: I spoke with one of your advisers and I accept what you say.

Mr WARBURTON: I am just letting everybody in this House know that the principal speaker for the Opposition tonight did not know what he was talking about. That is important. In fact, the Government corresponded with that agency on this matter. I point out that, contrary to what has been said by members of the Opposition—Mr Sullivan made reference to this—at present in the US the agency has approximately 130 secure landfills operating and has between 10 and 15 in the pipeline. Furthermore, Mr Coomber needs to understand a couple of points. Aqueous wastes are definitely unsuitable for cement kilns. The author of the paper to which Mr Coomber referred, Professor Phillip Jones, agrees with that comment. As was pointed out clearly by a Government member, the Gurulmundi landfill site has a double synthetic liner. The honourable member indicated that it did not have any lining.

Having said that, I have already pointed out that my second-reading speech and the contributions that were made by Government members, particularly members of my committee, which clearly outlined the arguments in favour of this landfill site, show clearly that it is the way to go. I heard Opposition members arguing that Gurulmundi was not the place to put the landfill. At least Mr Turner said that he understood that it had to go somewhere. But where? Where would the Opposition put it, when the report said that this was the best site available in the State? The experts said that it was the best site.

Mr Littleproud: Where are the other sites?

Mr WARBURTON: I understand that a person who rode a horse through the district 30 years ago would know a lot about the land, but the professional recommendation was that Gurulmundi was the best place in Queensland for the landfill to be sited. This Government takes professional advice. I reject completely the honourable member's insinuation that it was a political decision. It was not a political decision. It never was intended to be a political decision. All Opposition members who spoke in this debate made that statement. They all ought to be ashamed of themselves, because it is incorrect.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: I rise to a point of order. I did not say that it was a political decision. I commented that the Government made up its mind where it was going to put the landfill and then it made excuses about why it chose to put it there. I did not say that it was a political decision. In fact, the word "political" was used by some Government members.

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

Question—That the Bill be now read a second time—put; and the House divided—

AYES, 39		NOES, 25	
Barber	Milliner	Beanland	Veivers
Beattie	Nunn	Borbidge	Watson
Bird	Palaszczuk	Coomber	
Braddy	Pearce	Dunworth	
Briskey	Power	Elliott	
Burns	Robson	FitzGerald	
Comben	Schwarten	Gilmore	
D'Arcy	Spence	Goss J. N.	
Dollin	Sullivan J. H.	Harper	
Eaton	Sullivan T. B.	Horan	
Edmond	Szczerbanik	Lingard	
Elder	Vaughan	Littleproud	
Fenlon	Warburton	McCauley	
Flynn	Welford	Perrett	
Foley	Wells	Rowell	
Hamill	Woodgate	Santoro	
Hayward		Slack	
Hollis		Springborg	
Livingstone	*Tellers:*	Stephan	*Tellers:*
Mackenroth	Prest	Stoneman	Neal
McGrady	Ardill	Turner	Quinn

Resolved in the affirmative.

Committee

Hon. N. G. Warburton (Sandgate—Minister for Police and Emergency Services) in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1, as read, agreed to.

Clause 2—

Mr ELLIOTT (10.20 p.m.): I seek clarification, as does everyone on this side of the Chamber, as to how we can handle the agreement. This clause contains the agreement, and we cannot amend the agreement because it is an agreement between the tripartite group. We wish to make some comments and ask questions of the Minister in respect of the meanings. I have asked a few questions, which the Minister has not answered. First of all, I ask the Minister where he intends to have the rest of the State's toxic waste disposed of, and what is the long-term strategy for the rest of the State? I would also like to know why, in the agreement, under the heading "The parties agree as follows", the definition of "the Site" refers to acres, roods and perches. As I understand it, when we want to put an advertisement in the newspaper, we are compelled to use metric terms. Why is it that the Government does not adhere to its own Acts or to the

Federal Government's Acts in respect of the writing of the Bill? I find it quite amazing. In referring to the Landfill Management Committee, which is clause 4.2——

Mr Warburton: Which clause are we talking about?

Mr ELLIOTT: We are talking about clause 2, the agreement. We cannot amend or change the agreement. The agreement can be discussed only in respect of clause 2 or clause 4.

Mr Warburton: What about the Bill?

Mr ELLIOTT: When I first rose to speak, I asked for clarification of whether or not we can go through the agreement. If everyone would be quiet for a moment, it would give me a chance to ask a question.

Mr Warburton: No.

The CHAIRMAN: Yes.

Mr ELLIOTT: The Chairman says "Yes", and I think even he overrules the Minister in this case.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I have sought advice. The honourable member can speak three times to the Schedule.

Mr ELLIOTT: That being the case, I will reserve my comments until we get to the Schedule.

Clause 2, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 3 to 5, as read, agreed to.

Clause 6—

Mr ELLIOTT (10.24 p.m.): As far as I am concerned, this clause amounts to a ministerial rezoning. In the light of promises he made to the people of Queensland that there would be no more ministerial rezonings, I find it completely hypocritical for the Minister to come into the Chamber and present this clause.

Mr Welford: You said that three hours ago.

Mr ELLIOTT: This is the time for us to oppose it, and I am now opposing it. If the member for Stafford minded his own business and attended to his speeches, he would do much better.

Mr FitzGerald: He is not even in his right place.

Mr ELLIOTT: That is right. The member is not even in his correct seat. Clause 6 basically amounts to a ministerial rezoning. This clause flies in the face of what was said by the Minister prior to the last election and the promises he gave to the people of this State. Therefore, we will oppose it.

Mr COOMBER: I rise to support the comments made by the member for Cunningham. There is no town plan for Miles, but this clause abrogates the rights of the local authority. The clause reads in part—

"Despite the Health Act 1937 or any other enactment, consent . . ."

In relation to land that is not zoned, an application would still have to be made to the council for consent for the use of that land, but that has now been removed from the Murilla Shire Council, and with that authority goes the right of any person who lives in Miles to comment on the application that is before the council. If the applicant was the usual type of applicant—that is, a private individual—who sought approval from the council to use the land for a dump site, that would generate a significant number of objections which would have to be considered by the council and then be heard by the Planning and Environment Court. Throughout that process, people would have the right to object and to take court action, and they would have the right to fund actions taken against the applicant. By virtue of this clause, all of those rights are removed because the applicant is the Government.

In essence, the member for Cunningham is right when he says that this clause is, in effect, a ministerial rezoning. In reality, the Government is removing the rights of the individual to object. The Minister for Local Government is in the Chamber. I make the point that very early in the life of this Parliament, one of the planks in the Labor Party's platform was the introduction of the Local Government (Planning and Environment) Act. In those days, one of the issues that was canvassed very heartily by members of the Government was the right of the individual to object. In this case, 1 500 people at Miles will be denied the right to comment on a development that is being foisted upon them in their own local authority area.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: I seek clarification of the clause. I support the comments made by the member for Cunningham and the member for Currumbin. I notice that the provisions of clause 6 state that the Health Act provisions no longer apply and that people have lost their rights under that Act, yet the Schedule refers to "any breach of public health or environmental standards applicable to the Site". If the Minister is disregarding the Health Act, where will the regulations pertaining to public health and environmental standards come from?

Mr WARBURTON: I think that members opposite have somewhat misunderstood what the provision means. I refer to what was said originally and recognised by one member of the Opposition. When discussions regarding the Act and the agreement were held, legal representation on behalf of the local authority was always present. I make that point because the clause was inserted at the request of the Murilla Shire Council.

Mr Littleproud interjected.

Mr WARBURTON: I am attempting to explain the position. The shire council wanted a safety clause because, under the Health Act, the operator would be responsible. In this case, that would be the Brisbane City Council, and the Murilla Shire Council wanted that clause inserted. The clause has been included in the Bill primarily to ensure that the local authority will not have to give approval or seek approval for the operation of the secure landfill site at Gurulmundi. I reiterate that the local authority—that is, the Murilla Shire Council—asked the Government to ensure that that particular requirement not be imposed upon it, and that is what the provision is all about.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: I do not completely understand that yet. The Minister has said that the Health Act does not apply, yet the Schedule reflects a concern for any breach of regulations pertaining to public health. If the Health Act is being disregarded, which Act will enforce compliance with public health and environmental standards? I am talking about clause 5.3 of the Schedule.

Mr Warburton: Well, I am on clause 6.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: There is a comparison. Clause 6 of the Bill refers to the Health Act being disregarded, but clause 5.3 of the agreement refers to any breach of public health or environmental standards.

Mr WARBURTON: I do not know whether the member is purposely——

Mr Littleproud: I am not trying to be difficult.

Mr WARBURTON: The member should read the clause of the Bill. It states simply, "Despite the Health Act". Those words were placed deliberately in the clause

because Murilla wanted that safety provision. Under the Health Act, it would be the operator, who in this case will be the Brisbane City Council——

Mr Littleproud: The Health Act will still apply to the Brisbane City Council?

Mr WARBURTON: Despite the Health Act requirements, it will be the Murilla Shire Council that will be responsible and not the Brisbane City Council.

Mr ELLIOTT: I accept and understand what the Minister is saying. If I have it right, he is saying that the Murilla Shire Council would not want the Brisbane City Council to be responsible for controlling the public health aspect but the Murilla Shire Council health inspector. If that is the case and if that is what it wants, the Opposition accepts it. However, that does not alter the fact that the Opposition still says—and it was well explained by the member for Currumbin—that this Bill amounts to a ministerial rezoning. It has nothing to do with the application of the Health Act. It still amounts to a ministerial rezoning, and the Opposition will therefore divide the Committee on the clause. It has nothing to do with what we are saying about the Health Act, and I do not want it interpreted that we are flying in the face of what the Murilla Shire wants. Having had that explained to us, and if that is what the Murilla Shire wanted, the Opposition accepts it. However, the Opposition will divide the Committee on the principle that Government members when in Opposition said that no more ministerial rezonings would take place. As was outlined fully by someone who has been very involved with local authorities over the years—the member for Currumbin—this amounts to a ministerial rezoning. The Opposition will divide the Committee.

Mr COOMBER: The issue at stake is the inclusion in the clause of the words "or any other enactment". If it was the wish of the Murilla Shire to have the Government remove the application of the Health Act 1937, so be it. If the shire wants that, that is fine. No doubt, on legal advice, it would be in the shire's best interests not to have that Act apply. However, the words "or any other enactment" remove the force of any other legislation that would apply to the placing of that facility at Miles. That provision removes the application of the Local Government Act and any other Act. That does not improve the morality of the argument, even using this Government's past philosophy of how it would normally apply the Local Government (Planning and Environment) Act. Returning to the point made by the member for Cunningham—the Government is imposing some form of Claytons ministerial rezoning.

Mr Littleproud: Am I entitled to speak again, Mr Chairman?

The CHAIRMAN: Order! It is the honourable member's last opportunity.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: The Brisbane City Council will be the operator of the dump. Is it still bound by the Health Act in terms of any breach of that Act and, similarly, any authority that takes control of environmental matters?

Mr WARBURTON: I can understand that it can be interpreted by some as not operating a secure landfill within recognised standards. I think that is the point that is being made. However, that is definitely not so. The agreement states clearly that the secure landfill will be operated to the appropriate standards. I refer honourable members to clause 5 (2) and (3) of the Schedule. Any breach of the standard will result in an immediate cessation of operations and the required rectification and remedial work would be undertaken. That is the situation.

Question—That clause 6, as read, stand part of the Bill—put; and the Committee divided—

AYES, 38		NOES, 25	
Barber	McGrady	Beanland	Turner
Beattie	Milliner	Borbidge	Veivers
Bird	Nunn	Coomber	Watson
Braddy	Pearce	Dunworth	
Briskey	Power	Elliott	
Burns	Robson	FitzGerald	
Comben	Schwarten	Gilmore	
D'Arcy	Spence	Goss J. N.	
Dollin	Sullivan J. H.	Harper	
Eaton	Sullivan T. B.	Horan	
Edmond	Szczerbanik	Lingard	
Elder	Vaughan	Littleproud	
Fenlon	Warburton	McCauley	
Flynn	Welford	Perrett	
Foley	Wells	Rowell	
Hamill	Woodgate	Santoro	
Hayward		Slack	
Hollis	*Tellers:*	Springborg	*Tellers:*
Livingstone	Prest	Stephan	Neal
Mackenroth	Ardill	Stoneman	Q u i n n

Resolved in the affirmative.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! For all future divisions, the bells will be of two minutes' duration.

Clause 7—

Mr ELLIOTT (10.42 p.m.): In respect of the Landfill Management Committee, the Opposition says that there ought to be——

The CHAIRMAN: Order! There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber.

Mr ELLIOTT: I wish to thank the Minister's adviser because I spent some time with him earlier discussing this. Although I appreciate and accept that the Bill intends that the Murilla Shire have the ability to be able to employ someone to give it advice—and I understand that it has already employed someone to do that—and that there is an attempt to build the landfill to the standards of the United States EPA, I believe that, in the interests of the people of Queensland, that should be spelt out in the Bill. If I have received one letter, I have received at least a dozen, and probably seven or more phone calls, from people who say that this landfill should be built to the USA EPA standards which, as far as most people are concerned, are the highest standards in existence. That body believes that independent advice should be sought by the committee on an ongoing basis so that an independent assessment can be given of what is going on and whether any problems exist. If that is exactly what will happen, but only through the agreement, we accept that. However, I think the people of Queensland want to see that spelt out in the legislation, because somewhere down the line not too many people will understand that it is contained in some agreement—an agreement to which they do not have any access and which they perhaps do not fully understand. We can only go by the contents of the Bill that is before the Parliament. Therefore, I move the following amendment—

"At page 3, line 13, after 'site' insert—

'utilizing independent technical advice and having regard to the United States E.P.A. standards'."

Mr WARBURTON: I will not accept the amendment. I would refer all honourable members to the agreement and to clauses 4.10, 4.5 and 7.1 thereof. Clause 4.10 of the agreement provides that the committee shall take technical advice as required.

Mr Elliott: It doesn't say from an independent body, does it?

Mr WARBURTON: Wait a minute. It shall take the best technical advice available to it. Each party is able to nominate one or two technical officers. That was inserted into

that clause by agreement. Clause 7.3 of the agreement refers to that Community Consultation and Development Fund.

Mr Elliott: They have now appointed this fellow.

Mr WARBURTON: Right. Clause 4.5 of the agreement states—

> "The Committee shall determine the objectives to be met by the design, development and operation of the Site in accordance with the Report and such other data and reports as the Committee shall obtain . . ."

Members opposite really do need to read that final IAS report, particularly the appendix that refers to the US Environmental Protection Agency.

Mr Elliott: Are you talking about the one that I have or the big one that your officers have got?

Mr WARBURTON: I am talking about the big one. That might be a bit more difficult to read, but, quite frankly, the honourable member ought to read it. That is the reason, anyway, why this amendment cannot be accepted.

Question—That the words proposed to be inserted be so inserted—put; and the Committee divided—

AYES, 24		NOES, 37	
Beanland	Veivers	Barber	Milliner
Borbidge	Watson	Beattie	Nunn
Coomber		Bird	Pearce
Dunworth		Braddy	Power
Elliott		Briskey	Robson
FitzGerald		Burns	Schwarten
Gilmore		D'Arcy	Spence
Goss J. N.		Dollin	Sullivan J. H.
Harper		Eaton	Sullivan T. B.
Horan		Edmond	Szczerbanik
Lingard		Elder	Vaughan
Littleproud		Fenlon	Warburton
Perrett		Flynn	Welford
Rowell		Foley	Wells
Santoro		Hamill	Woodgate
Slack		Hayward	
Springborg		Hollis	
Stephan	*Tellers:*	Livingstone	*Tellers:*
Stoneman	Neal	McGrady	Prest
Turner	Quinn	Mackenroth	Ardill

Resolved in the negative.

Mr COOMBER: I move the following amendment—

> "At page 3, after line 14, insert—
>
> > '(f) to give the Murilla Shire Council the right of veto to the storage of treated waste considered inappropriate in the opinion of the Murilla Shire Council.' "

Speaking to the amendment—a veto along the lines of that in the amendment that I have moved was promised by the previous Minister to the Murilla Shire people, and in fact was part of the total scenario painted for those people when the Gurulmundi landfill site was first mooted. The people of the Murilla Shire were promised a referendum to enable them to discuss the matter. In fact, they were told that if the majority did not agree, the dump was not to go there. Mr Mackenroth stated, "If you don't want the dump, you won't get the dump". Just to follow that up—in the *Courier-Mail* on 22 October 1991, a resident of Miles, Mr Hinds, was reported as follows—

> "Mr Hinds said that he would like to see the Emergency Services Minister, Mr Mackenroth, honour his promise to the people of Miles and that 'if they don't want the dump they won't get it.' "

The veto was given in the beginning to ensure that what was incorporated in the agreement is not, in fact, carried out. Clause 4.7 of the Schedule states—

"Any decision of the Committee that requires a quorum of three (3) parties shall require a unanimous vote."

The clause continues to state that if a unanimous vote is not obtained after two successive meetings, the matter is referred to the Minister and that a determination of the Minister is final. The agreement further states that one of the functions of the committee is to determine the types of treated waste that may be disposed in the site. In the beginning, when Gurulmundi was on the drawing board, the shire was promised the right of veto as to the type of material that was to be stored. That is now overridden by the agreement in which the Minister has the right to overrule the decisions of the committee. Somewhere down the track, this Government is going to say to the people of Queensland, "Gurulmundi has worked. The site is secure. There is now no need for a radioactive waste at Esk. We can now use Gurulmundi for the disposal of radioactive material." Of course, the argument then exists that the people of Miles would not have had the right to object to a change in the use of the existing secure landfill site at Gurulmundi as to the types of wastes that could be deposited there. By an amendment of the Act by this Parliament, it would be very easy to allow radioactive materials to be stored at Gurulmundi. That is why I have moved that the shire have the right of veto to determine the types of wastes that are going to be stored at Gurulmundi. If the shire considers that it is inappropriate to store radioactive waste, or any other type of waste, at the site, that right and that opinion should be honoured. In the beginning, that right was offered to the shire by the Minister of the day. It has not been followed through with this legislation. I think that that is most probably the key to the approval by the Murilla Shire to be part of this agreement.

Mr ELLIOTT: The Opposition supports this amendment. I can definitely recall seeing Mr Mackenroth on TV or hearing him on radio say that if the people of Miles did not want the dump, then they would not have the dump. This amendment really seeks to give the people of Miles the right to say "Yes" or "No" to it. Some members who spoke on the Bill would almost give one the feeling that they thought that this dump is the best thing since sliced bread.

Mr T. B. Sullivan: You didn't listen, did you?

Mr ELLIOTT: I would not talk too much if I was the honourable member. I think that if one listened to the honourable member, one would really think that the people were really very keen about this landfill and that it was a great asset to the town. Obviously, it is not.

Mr ROWELL: I wish to speak on this matter because I think that it is important that the terms of reference are not broadened to include PPSs. In his second-reading speech, the Minister referred to organochlorins. I believe that there are some other chemicals such as lead arsenate that are certainly not in the group of organochlorins, but they are pesticides that could be buried in the dump. I think that that is a classic example of the need for some constraint on allowing that type of chemical or pesticide into a dump such as this. If the terms of reference are broadened, a whole range of intractable wastes could be allowed in. Maybe the PCBs could be allowed as well. If that were to occur, it would be against the basic principle of this dump. Within the constraints of the PPSs, if the elements about which there is some concern about entering the Great Artesian Basin are restricted, I am sure that it would soften the blow of placing the dump in this position. I ask the Minister to comment on that.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: Mention has been made in the discussion on this clause about an assurance given by the previous Minister. I want to back that up. An article by Peter Morley—and I rate Peter Morley as a pretty eminent reporter and an able sort of bloke—in the *Courier-Mail* of 24 April quite clearly gives the impression that at that time Mr Mackenroth said that the project would proceed only after a satisfactory impact assessment study and if the local community approved. Giving the people of Miles the assurance that was given by the Minister in the first instance is vital.

Mr NEAL: I am interested in the Landfill Management Committee. Clause 2.1 of the Schedule to the Bill sets out the term of the agreement, which relates directly to what

the committee is all about. The term of the agreement is quite clear. However, it states also—

". . . the parties shall enter into negotiations for additional usage of the Site."

We are legislating now for something that may happen in 25 years' time. I find it rather strange that we should be writing into legislation now something to bind parties in perhaps 25 years' time. Another matter that concerns me greatly is clause 4.7 of the Schedule, which relates to quorums at meetings of the Landfill Management Committee. It states quite clearly—

> "In respect of any matter where the Committee cannot reach a majority or unanimous decision as required, or any matter where the Committee cannot after two (2) successive meetings achieve a quorum, any party may refer the matter to the Minister who shall determine the matter. A determination of the Minister shall be binding on the Committee."

In actual fact, if the Landfill Management Committee cannot agree, then the Minister can make his own decision. The Schedule also provides for particular indemnities, which are listed under the heading "Payments and Indemnities". As to the Murilla Shire Council—will those indemnities continue?

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I understand that the member for Balonne is speaking to the Schedule rather than to clause 7 of the Bill.

Mr NEAL: I believe that this clause of the Bill deals with the by-laws and the Landfill Management Committee. However, I will ask these questions at a later stage, if I have that opportunity.

Mr WARBURTON: The honourable member for Currumbin said that a referendum on this issue had been promised. That is not right. Who promised a referendum?

Mr Coomber: Mr Mackenroth.

Mr WARBURTON: The member seems to have a habit of plucking anything out of the air and saying it. He said also that Mr Mackenroth promised the power of veto. That is not correct at all. As to the member for Hinchinbrook—for heaven's sake, he should read the agreement, because polychlorinated biphenyls are specifically excluded by virtue of clause 6.2 of the agreement. Probably for the purpose of trying to frighten the life out of people, the member stated——

Mr Rowell interjected.

Mr WARBURTON: Why say it? If the member knows that it is in the agreement, why does he say that in the future polychlorinated biphenyls might be dumped under this provision? He knows quite well that that is impossible under the current agreement. Let us stop trying to frighten the life out of people unnecessarily. As I said, the agreement was reached in good faith between the parties. It is true that this amendment seeks to remove from the Minister the final say in the event of three parties being unable to agree unanimously where unanimous agreement is required. I suppose that at least one good thing will come from that, that is, the Opposition does not want me to have that final say. That means it has given up any hope of winning the next election, because it would not mind its own Minister having that final say. I believe that the provision is reasonable. When one takes into consideration the form of the agreement, the technical advice available to these people and the fact that they are proceeding in absolute good faith to bring about the best possible arrangement as far as this agreement is concerned, quite frankly, no Minister—regardless of what Government is in power—is going to make a decision that is detrimental to the parties to an agreement of this kind.

Mr ROWELL: I am not adopting scare tactics. Clause 4.8 of the agreement states—

> "The Committee shall determine, but not be limited to, the following matters of policy:
>
> the types of treated waste that may be disposed in the site . . ."

There seems to be a contradiction in that. Could the Minister iron that out for me?

Question—That the words proposed to be inserted be so inserted—put; and the Committee divided—

AYES, 24		NOES, 37	
Beanland	Veivers	Barber	Milliner
Borbidge	Watson	Beattie	Nunn
Coomber		Bird	Pearce
Dunworth		Braddy	Power
Elliott		Briskey	Robson
FitzGerald		Burns	Schwarten
Gilmore		D'Arcy	Spence
Goss J. N.		Dollin	Sullivan J. H.
Harper		Eaton	Sullivan T. B.
Horan		Edmond	Szczerbanik
Lingard		Elder	Vaughan
Littleproud		Fenlon	Warburton
Perrett		Flynn	Welford
Rowell		Foley	Wells
Santoro		Hamill	Woodgate
Slack		Hayward	
Springborg		Hollis	
Stephan	*Tellers:*	Livingstone	*Tellers:*
Stoneman	Neal	Mackenroth	Ardill
Turner	Quinn	McGrady	P r e s t

Resolved in the negative.

Clause 7, as read, agreed to.

Clause 8, as read, agreed to.

Clause 9—

Mr COOMBER (11.13 p.m.): I ask the Minister to explain this clause to me. Firstly, I take the opportunity to thank the officers from the CHEM Unit to whom I spoke yesterday. If land has been reserved and set aside for local government functions, what functions is the land proposed to be used for? What losses will be caused to the local authority by this clause being in place?

Mr WARBURTON: This clause specifies that Crown land reserved for local government functions or purposes is in fact termed Crown land for the purposes of this agreement only. This clause was inserted so that, in future, the land may be reserved for local government functions or purposes. That is the principal reason. However, for the purposes of the agreement, while it is in place, the land will be termed Crown land.

Clause 9, as read, agreed to.

Clause 10, as read, agreed to.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Before we move on to the Schedule, I explain to honourable members that the Schedule is treated as a clause and each member is entitled to speak to it three times.

Schedule—

Mr ELLIOTT (11.15 p.m.): Because I have a number of questions on the Schedule, the Minister might like to take some notes. Firstly, has a costing been done on the additional amount that people will pay to have their toxic waste taken to Gurulmundi? What is the position with regard to other areas of Queensland? The agreement details shires which extend to the coast and then it states that toxic waste will be accepted from all of those shires contained from there to the border. Could the Minister indicate what the position is now for shires outside that area and what the long-term strategy is for those areas? Secondly, measurements have been set out in acres, roods and perches. I understand that, when advertising, metric measurements must be used. Is there a reason for that? Does the Minister not feel that that is a bit inconsistent with what other people in the community have to do?

Under paragraph 4.7 of the Schedule, what is the process when the parties to the tripartite agreement discuss what the position is regarding a quorum? When there is a

quorum of two or three and no decision can be reached, the Minister has the overriding power. The Minister indicated that, if we were in power, we might feel differently about it. I would be interested to know what the rationale was and whether the Minister had thought of referring it to a court of some sort. He was always fairly big on that sort of thing when he was in Opposition. The Minister has indicated that some members on this side of the Chamber did not understand that PCBs would not go into this landfill. I am asking the Minister what sort of policy he has as far as PCBs and dioxins are concerned in the future——

Mr Hollis: That has nothing to do with the Bill.

Mr ELLIOTT: Why does the member not go on and do what he is doing?

Mr Elder: We are.

Mr ELLIOTT: The honourable member is obviously not keen to go to bed. Those are the areas of interest to the Opposition as far as the Schedule is concerned.

Mr COOMBER: Clauses 5.6 and 5.7 of the agreement list the local authority areas from which waste can be generated, collected and treated at Willawong and then stored at Gurulmundi. This matter was raised during the second-reading debate—I do not remember which member addressed it—as to whether this agreement is limited only to waste collected in Queensland, or if there is a possibility that in the future it could be extended to receive and treat waste generated from other States in Australia.

Mr WARBURTON: In response to the questions from the member for Cunningham—there is absolutely no intention of introducing waste from interstate. I think Mr Elliott, or some other member of the Opposition, made a statement about the introduction of overseas waste. There is national legislation that prevents that. The cost is primarily a matter for the Brisbane City Council, and the only advice I have on that is that the council believes that the costs are well within the reach of the users. I do not have any figures.

Mr Elliott: There will be an increase, though?

Mr WARBURTON: An increase?

Mr Elliott: An increase over and above what it is costing to take over to Willawong now.

Mr WARBURTON: That is entirely up to the Brisbane City Council. It seems to think that the costs are well within the reach of the users. The Government's responsibility was to draft the agreement and the legislation. As far as acres, roods and perches are concerned——

Mr Elliott: Where does the rest of the State actually dispose of their toxic waste?

Mr WARBURTON: This agreement primarily concerns the Brisbane City Council and provision has been made in the agreement, as the honourable member will appreciate, for areas outside its jurisdiction. The whole process is designed to encourage those people to develop waste management programs, and so forth. The Government hopes that in this way authorities in those areas will be encouraged to obtain advice offered by the experts. I cannot help the honourable member with regard to acres, roods and perches. I still refer to my piece of dirt as 32 perches, and I would not know how many square metres that is.

Mr Elliott: I would be very happy with that sort of exercise.

Mr WARBURTON: I will not say that it is a technical error. I must admit that I do not know how that got in the Bill. There must be a reason, but it will not cause any great difficulties. With regard to the matter raised by Mr Elliott in relation to clause 4—the Opposition moved an amendment to that. I thought we had sufficient debate in respect of that matter.

I cannot speak highly enough of the work being done by the CHEM Unit at the moment. I assure the Committee that as far as future policy is concerned, the unit is in

the process of conducting seminars right throughout the State. Recently, I attended a conference on emergency services at QUT, and similar types of activities are being conducted by the CHEM Unit to discuss the hazards of chemicals. All those problems are being addressed, and that is as much as I am prepared to say because my main concern tonight is the Bill. I believe I have answered all the questions that have been asked.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: I have two queries that I wish to raise. Firstly, clause 2.1 of the Schedule refers to the agreement lasting for 25 years and it then provides that the parties "shall enter into negotiations for additional usage of the Site" before that period expires. I ask the Minister whether it is proper to force a party to enter into an agreement. Secondly, clause 4.2 states—

> "Each of the State and BCC shall be entitled to be represented by one (1) or two (2) persons elected to public office . . ."

I take that to mean that the State Government will be represented by two members of this Parliament. Can the Minister tell me who those representatives will be?

Mr WARBURTON: Clause 2.1 of the Schedule refers to 97 500 tonnes of treated waste. I make the point that that figure was inserted at the request of the Murilla Shire Council to ensure that no more than the original design figure for the facility is disposed of over a 25-year period. It was also specified that additional usage of the site over and above the agreed use is to be negotiated prior to expiration of the agreement. There is nothing sinister about that.

Mr Littleproud: That does not mean that it will be brought in under contract, does it?

Mr WARBURTON: No, absolutely not. It has been decided in relation to clause 4.2 of the Schedule that the State Government will have one representative, who is the honourable member for Manly, Mr Elder. The Brisbane City Council has decided to have one representative, who is Alderman Vaughan. The Murilla Shire Council has indicated clearly that it will have two representatives. The chairman will be one and there will be one other representative. Each party is entitled to one vote, which means there will be three votes.

Mr HORAN: I refer to clause 4.8, which states—

> "The Committee shall determine . . . required practices and procedures for the transport and storage of treated waste . . ."

Members of the committee may not necessarily be aware of some of the problems associated with the areas through which the material will be transported. Will there be some system whereby the committee will be able to take advice? As I see it, the Department of Transport would be the best qualified to make decisions on whether transportation should be by road or rail, on the type of container to be used and on the various means of identification.

Mr WARBURTON: I recognise the honourable member's interest in ensuring that the material is transported as safely as possible. The committee has absolute access to technical advice on all matters. I can assure the honourable member that if members of that committee think that there is some difficulty with transportation, they will call in transportation experts to advise them.

Mr ELDER: The member for Condamine, Mr Littleproud, should pay more attention to the debate, because earlier I mentioned the matter to which he referred.

Mr Littleproud: I wasn't in the Chamber.

Mr ELDER: The honourable member was earlier, because he picked me up on a point in relation to Rod Gilmour. In relation to clause 4.2 of the Schedule, I wish to refer to the position that I will hold on the Landfill Management Committee. Tonight, I have been somewhat distressed and disappointed that the member for Currumbin chose to

cast most uncharitable aspersions on me with regard to a family holiday I had taken, thereby, unfortunately, missing the first meeting. I was aware of it, and the Government was aware of it. As a matter of fact, the member for Springwood most capably and most ably fulfilled that role. I look forward to playing a very fulfilling role on the committee and to acting in a very responsible, active and professional way. Let me say to the member for Currumbin that in future he should consider his position when casting aspersions in the Parliament because when he was given the choice of fulfilling a very important role as a member of a select committee or fulfilling a role on behalf of his local council, he chose the latter. I am sure that he will recall that.

Mr ROWELL: I wish to raise a couple of matters that are not necessarily clearly expressed in the Bill. In some ways, these matters are referred to in the Bill, but not in express terms. I wish to raise the matter of subsidisation of the Brisbane City Council in the event that the site becomes unaffordable. As indicated by Mark McGovern from the QUT, this could well happen. Would the Government consider subsidising the Brisbane City Council and the Murilla Shire Council—more particularly, the Brisbane City Council, which will have to pay the bills for the dump?

The other matter I wish to raise is the reference in clause 4.8 of the Schedule to appropriate technology to be employed at the dump site. This matter was raised with the Minister earlier in the debate and it was suggested that the Government has an obligation to examine other sources of technology. I wonder how strong the Government's commitment to technology is. At some stage, the Minister indicated that he took an interest in the neutralysis plant, which has many attributes. Unfortunately, they need refinement. Exactly where does the Government stand in relation to improvements in technology and moving away from the dump site alternative? My principal interest in the debate is to find some alternative, some better available technology, to what the Government will use at Murilla.

Mr WARBURTON: Taking the last question first—the commitment is very strong indeed, except that it would be most inappropriate—in fact, wrong—to suggest that at this stage an alternative is available to what the Government is doing with the Gurulmundi site. The Government is well aware of incinerators and other forms of technology that are being considered. I am very, very hopeful that the Government can work together with private enterprise to bring about some end results. In respect of the first question about subsidisation—very definitely, the answer is, "No".

Schedule, as read, agreed to.

Reporting of Bill

Hon. N. G. WARBURTON (Sandgate—Minister for Police and Emergency Services) (11.32 p.m.): Mr Chairman, I move—

> "That you do now leave the chair and report the Bill without amendment to the House."

Question put: and the Committee divided—

AYES, 37		NOES, 23	
Barber	Milliner	Beanland	Watson
Beattie	Nunn	Borbidge	
Bird	Pearce	Coomber	
Braddy	Power	Dunworth	
Briskey	Robson	Elliott	
Burns	Schwarten	FitzGerald	
D'Arcy	Spence	Gilmore	
Dollin	Sullivan J. H.	Goss J. N.	
Eaton	Sullivan T. B.	Harper	
Edmond	Szczerbanik	Horan	
Elder	Vaughan	Lingard	
Fenlon	Warburton	Littleproud	
Flynn	Welford	Perrett	
Foley	Wells	Rowell	
Hamill	Woodgate	Santoro	
Hayward		Slack	
Hollis		Springborg	
Livingstone	*Tellers:*	Stoneman	*Tellers:*
Mackenroth	Prest	Turner	Neal
McGrady	Ardill	Veivers	Quinn

Resolved in the affirmative.

Third Reading

Hon. N. G. WARBURTON (Sandgate—Minister for Police and Emergency Services) (11.35 p.m.), by leave: I move—

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

Question put; and the House divided—

AYES, 38		NOES, 23	
Barber	Milliner	Beanland	Watson
Beattie	Nunn	Borbidge	
Bird	Palaszczuk	Coomber	
Braddy	Pearce	Dunworth	
Briskey	Power	Elliott	
Burns	Robson	FitzGerald	
D'Arcy	Schwarten	Gilmore	
Dollin	Spence	Goss J. N.	
Eaton	Sullivan J. H.	Harper	
Edmond	Sullivan T. B.	Horan	
Elder	Szczerbanik	Lingard	
Fenlon	Vaughan	Littleproud	
Flynn	Warburton	Perrett	
Foley	Welford	Rowell	
Hamill	Wells	Santoro	
Hayward	Woodgate	Slack	
Hollis		Springborg	
Livingstone	*Tellers:*	Stoneman	*Tellers:*
Mackenroth	Prest	Turner	Neal
McGrady	Ardill	Veivers	Quinn

Resolved in the affirmative.

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

Hon. P. J. BRADDY (Rockhampton—Leader of the House) (11.41 p.m.): I move—

"That the House, at its rising, do adjourn to a date and at a time to be fixed by Mr Speaker in consultation with the Government of the State."

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 11.42 p.m.