

TUESDAY, 23 FEBRUARY 1993

Under the provisions of the motion for special adjournment agreed to by the House on 27 November 1992, the House met at 10 a.m.

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

ASSENT TO BILLS

Mr SPEAKER: I inform honourable members that I have received from Her Excellency the Governor two letters in respect of assent to certain Bills, the contents of which will be incorporated in the record of Parliament.

25th November 1992

Dear Mr Speaker,

I hereby acquaint the Legislative Assembly that the following Bills, having been passed by the Legislative Assembly and having been presented for the Royal Assent, were assented to in the name of Her Majesty on 24th November, 1992:

“A Bill for an Act authorising amounts to be issued and applied for supply services, and to appropriate certain of the amounts to particular services for the financial years that started on 1 July 1991 and 1 July 1992 and the financial year that starts on 1 July 1993”

“A Bill for an Act to consolidate and amend the law relating to sentencing of offenders”.

I hereby transmit the Bills to the Legislative Assembly, to be numbered and forwarded to the proper Officer for enrolment, in the manner required by law.

Yours sincerely,
(Signed) Leneen Forde
Governor

9th December, 1992

Dear Mr Speaker,

I hereby acquaint the Legislative Assembly that, in the period in which Parliament has stood adjourned, the following Bills, having been passed by the Legislative Assembly and having been presented for the Royal Assent, were assented to in the name of Her Majesty on the dates indicated:-

	Date of Assent
“A Bill for an Act to provide for the registration and enrolment of nurses, the practice of nursing and the education of nurses, and related purposes”	30th November, 1992
“A Bill for an Act to amend the Pay-roll Tax Act 1971”	30th November, 1992
“A Bill for an Act to amend the Tobacco Products (Licensing) Act 1988”	30th November, 1992
“A Bill for an Act to authorise the entering into of an agreement for the development and operation of the Brisbane Casino, and for related purposes”	30th November, 1992
“A Bill for an Act to amend the City of Brisbane Act 1924 and the Local Government Act 1936”	30th November, 1992
“A Bill for an Act to amend the Liquor Act 1992”	30th November, 1992
“A Bill for an Act to amend the Local Government Superannuation Act 1985”	30th November, 1992
“A Bill for an Act to provide for the approval of an agreement	7th December, 1992

relating to the planning and development of certain land at Robina in the Shire of Albert, and for other purposes"	
"A Bill for an Act to amend certain Acts in relation to the administration of land, and for other purposes"	7th December, 1992
"A Bill for an Act to make various amendments of the statute law of Queensland, to repeal certain Acts and to declare certain matters"	7th December, 1992
"A Bill for an Act to amend the Pollution of Waters by Oil Act 1973"	7th December, 1992
"A Bill for an Act to provide for industry placement of students in structured vocational education and training programs, and for related purposes"	7th December, 1992
"A Bill for an Act to repeal the Bread Industry Authority Act 1990 and for related purposes"	7th December, 1992
"A Bill for an Act to amend the Anti-Discrimination Act 1991"	7th December, 1992
"A Bill for an Act for the settlement of claims in relation to damage to houses at Palm Beach in the City of the Gold Coast"	7th December, 1992
"A Bill for an Act to amend the Professional Engineers Act 1988"	7th December, 1992
"A Bill for an Act to amend the Industrial Relations Act 1990"	7th December, 1992
"A Bill for an Act to amend laws relating to prostitution, and for other purposes"	7th December, 1992
"A Bill for an Act to amend certain Acts administered by the Minister for Health"	7th December, 1992
"A Bill for an Act to enable the enactment of legislation applying uniformly throughout Australia for the recognition of regulatory standards adopted in Australia regarding goods and occupations"	7th December, 1992

I hereby transmit the Bills to the Legislative Assembly, to be numbered and forwarded to the proper Officer for enrolment, in the manner required by law.

Yours sincerely,
(Signed) Leneen Forde
Governor

PAPERS PRINTED OR CIRCULATED DURING RECESS

Mr SPEAKER: I advise the House that papers were tabled during the recess in accordance with the list circulated to members in the Chamber.

3 December 1992

Criminal Justice Commission "Report on the investigation into the complaints of Kelvin Ronald Condren and others"

Ordered to be printed.

The Clerk of the Parliament—

In accordance with section 46N of the Financial Administration and Audit Act 1977—

16 December 1992—

Annual Reports for the year ended 30 June 1992—

Queensland Treasury Corporation—Capital Market Operations

Queensland Principal Club

Trustees of the Bowen Racecourse Reserve

Trustees of the Eagle Farm Racecourse

Trustees Willows Paceway

17 December 1992—

Addendum to an Annual Report for the year ended 30 June 1992—

Queensland Harness Racing Board. Report initially tabled on 12 November 1992.

Annual Report for the year ended 30 June 1992—

Police Superannuation Board

18 December 1992—

Annual Reports for the year ended 30 June 1992—

Darling Downs Moreton Rabbit Board

Emerald Rural Training School Board

Surveyors Board of Queensland

21 December 1992—

Annual Reports for the year ended 30 June 1992—

Golden Casket Art Union Office

Queensland Government Superannuation Schemes

Queensland Treasury Corporation-Consolidated Accounts and Controlled Entities

23 December 1992—

Annual Report for the year ended 30 June 1992—

National Trust of Queensland

6 January 1993—

Annual Report for the year ended 30 June 1992—

Darling Downs Health Services Foundation

11 January 1993

Annual Report for the year ended 31 March 1992—

Queensland Dairyfarmers' Organisation

Annual Report for the year ended 31 May 1992—

Atherton Tableland Maize Marketing Board

Annual Reports for 1991-92—

Department of Primary Industries—Director of Marketing (revised version)

Dumaresq-Barwon Border Rivers Commission

Library Board of Queensland

Lower Burdekin Rice Producers Co-Operative Association Limited

Queensland Fish Management Authority

Queensland Museum Board of Trustees

Queensland Performing Arts Trust

Sugar Experiment Stations Board

Supreme Court Library Committee

Townsville/Thuringowa Water Supply Board

13 January 1993—

Annual Report for the year ended 28 June 1992—

Mount Isa Water Board

Annual Reports for the year ended 30 June 1992—

Commissioner for Consumer Affairs on the Travel Agents Act 1988

Council of Agriculture
 Dispute Resolution Centres Council
 Gladstone Area Water Board
 Perpetual Trustees Australia Limited
 Perpetual Trustees Queensland Limited
 Queensland Art Gallery Board of Trustees
 Annual Report for the year ended 7 December 1992—
 Bread Industry Authority
 14 January 1993—
 Annual Reports for the year ended 30 June 1992—
 Registrar of Retirement Villages under the Retirement Villages Act 1988
 Rural Lands Protection Board
 18 January 1993—
 Annual Report for the year ended 30 June 1991—
 Department of Primary Industries—Director of Marketing (revised version)
 22 January 1993—
 Extensions of time for the tabling of annual reports for the year ended 30 June
 1992—
 Livestock and Meat Authority
 South Queensland Commercial Egg Producers' Organisation.

PRIVILEGE

Comments by Member for Callide

Mr SPEAKER: In a column entitled "Callide Comment" in the *Central and North Burnett Times* dated 17 December 1992 the honourable member for Callide, Mrs McCauley, wrote—

"During the last week of Parliament the deputy leader of the Coalition, Mrs Joan Sheldon moved a motion without notice, 'that this House calls upon the public works parliamentary committee to urgently investigate all aspects of the Brisbane Casino tender process.' "

The Treasurer, Mr De Lacy, amended the motion to read after the word "that"—

"the current code of conduct for public officials as it relates to potential conflict of interest situations in the evaluation of casino and similar expressions of interest processes, be referred to the Parliamentary EARC committee for consideration in their review of the EARC report on the review of codes of conduct for public officials."

Mr Lingard interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I ask the member to cease interjecting. The article continues—

"The Speaker, with a straight face, ruled the amendment in order and the Treasurer, also with a straight face, debated the issue.

However, Blind Freddy can see the Treasurer's amendment bears no relationship whatsoever to the deputy Coalition leader's motion."

Mrs McCauley goes on to say—

“It should not have been allowed as an amendment and certainly should not have been debated as such.

‘Them that’s got the numbers’ ”—

Mr FitzGerald interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I warn the member for Lockyer under Standing Order 123A for interjecting. Mrs McCauley continues—

“ ‘Them that’s got the numbers’ makes the rules in Parliament, but that doesn’t mean they are right.”

Honourable members, the rule regarding relevancy is covered by the principle that, in this context, the amendment to the question before the Chair must be relevant to such question. The House has also accepted the general parliamentary rule that an amendment that is a direct or expanded negative is not acceptable. The proper way to express the opposite opinion is to vote against the motion. The rule of thumb for determining whether an amendment is a direct negative is to pose the question whether the proposed amendment would have the same effect as voting against the motion. If it would, it is regarded as a direct negative.

A means of circumventing the direct negative rule is to express an alternative proposition by way of amendment to the main question. This can be achieved by omitting all of the words after the word “that” and inserting instead an alternative, which must of course be relevant to the subject of the original motion—in this particular case the investigation by a parliamentary committee of a casino tendering process.

Mr Lingard interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I ask the member for Fassifern to cease interjecting. I am making a statement to the House. I am saying that an amendment must be relevant to the question and it cannot be a direct negative. I am saying also that one can add something that is relevant to an amendment and it is a proper process. I say to the member for Fassifern that Speaker Nicholson actually ruled a direct negative as legal in this House, arguing that the House itself had the option of choosing between the two propositions.

We have an original proposition which can be debated. We have an amendment providing an alternative proposition which is relevant and which can also be debated. It is for the House to decide. I challenge the member for Fassifern to check with any other Presiding Officer.

Mr Lingard: Give us an example.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I warn the honourable member for Fassifern to cease interjecting. I warn him under Standing Order 124.

What happens, of course, is that we have two motions. One is the countermotion. Ultimately, the House has the right to decide between those two motions. Mrs McCauley’s comments are a clear breach of privilege and a contempt of the Parliament. In such circumstances it is usual to name the member and move that he or she be suspended from the service of the House. However, I am now giving the member for Callide the opportunity to acknowledge her breach of privilege and apologise to the House.

Mrs McCAULEY: Mr Speaker, as I informed you in an earlier letter, my intention was in no way to denigrate the office of Speaker. However, I am afraid that I cannot resile from those opinions. I will not apologise.

Mr SPEAKER: I am obliged to warn the member for Callide under Standing Order 124.

Mr Lingard interjected.

NAMING OF MEMBER

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I have warned the member for Fassifern under Standing Order 124. I now name the member for Fassifern under Standing Order 124.

SUSPENSION OF MEMBER

Hon. T. M. MACKENROTH (Chatsworth—Leader of the House) (10.07 a.m.): I move—

“That the member be suspended from the service of the House for 24 hours.”

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The question is that that motion be agreed to. Ring the bells.

The bells having been rung—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Before calling the Whips as tellers for the “Ayes” and tellers for the “Noes”, I point out that I actually called the member for Beaudesert “the member for Fassifern”, which was his previous title. The motion still stands in that the member for Beaudesert—

Mr BORBIDGE: A point of order, Mr Speaker. The motion is out of order. Mr Speaker, you should fix up the names because the motion is out of order.

Mr SPEAKER: I am happy to do that. I am happy to submit to the House the question, “That the member for Beaudesert be suspended from the service of the House for 24 hours.”

Mr LINGARD: A point of order, Mr Speaker. The member for Beaudesert has not been warned previously.

Mr Mackenroth: Yes, he has.

Mr LINGARD: The warning has to be given to the member for Beaudesert.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Having not warned the member for Beaudesert, I cannot apply Standing Order 124.

NAMING OF MEMBER

Mr SPEAKER: Order! So that we can get it right, I now ask the member for Callide whether she wishes to apologise to the House for her breach of privilege.

Mrs McCAULEY: No.

Mr SPEAKER: I therefore now name the member for Callide.

SUSPENSION OF MEMBER

Hon. T. M. MACKENROTH (Chatsworth—Leader of the House) (10.12 a.m.): I move—

“That the member for Callide be suspended from the service of the House for 24 hours.”

Question put; and the House divided—

AYES, 52		NOES, 35	
Ardill	McElligott	Beanland	Slack
Barton	McGrady	Borbidge	Stephan
Beattie	Milliner	Connor	Stoneman
Bennett	Nunn	Cooper	Turner
Bird	Nuttall	Davidson	Veivers
Braddy	Palaszczuk	Elliott	Watson
Bredhauer	Pearce	FitzGerald	
Briskey	Power	Gamin	
Budd	Purcell	Gilmore	
Burns	Pyke	Goss J. N.	
Campbell	Robertson	Grice	
Casey	Robson	Healy	
Clark	Rose	Hobbs	
Comben	Smith	Horan	
D'Arcy	Spence	Johnson	
Davies	Sullivan J. H.	Lester	
De Lacy	Sullivan T. B.	Lingard	
Dollin	Szczerbanik	Littleproud	
Edmond	Vaughan	McCauley	
Elder	Warner	Mitchell	
Fenlon	Welford	Perrett	
Foley	Wells	Quinn	
Gibbs	Woodgate	Randell	
Goss W. K.		Rowell	
Hayward	<i>Tellers:</i>	Santoro	<i>Tellers:</i>
Hollis	Pitt	Sheldon	Springborg
Mackenroth	Livingstone	Simpson	Laming

Resolved in the affirmative.

Whereupon the honourable member for Callide withdrew from the Chamber.

PETITIONS

The Clerk announced the receipt of the following petitions—

TAB Agency, Springsure

From **Mr Johnson** (225 signatories) praying that TAB agency in Springsure be retained.

Fortitude Valley Junior Rugby League Football Club

From **Mr Comben** (273 signatories) praying that application be not approved for a club licence with trading hours from 10 a.m.—midnight Monday to Sunday for the Fortitude Valley Junior Rugby League Football Club.

Representation in Legal Matters

From **Dr Watson** (67 signatories) praying that the Parliament of Queensland will change or repeal the Queensland Law Society Act section 39 and subsequent Rule 117 (4) to enable citizens to conduct their own legal matters with the right to use or employ a person to act on their behalf.

Child Molesters

From **Mr Mitchell** (75 signatories) praying that the parole period be removed when sentencing child molesters, that offenders are given and serve maximum sentences and that their names be released for publication.

Similar petitions were received from **Mr Stephan** (2 398 signatories) and **Miss Simpson** (6 966 signatories).

Child Molesters

From **Mr Healy** (5 595 signatories) praying that the parole period be removed when sentencing child molesters and that the full period of sentence is served, that rehabilitation is provided together with a compulsory follow up period after release and that their names be released for publication.

A similar petition was received from **Mr Horan** (5 612 signatories)

Petitions received.

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

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

Agricultural Bank (Loans) Act—

Agricultural Bank (Loans) Order 1992, No. 419

Art Unions and Public Amusements Act—

Art Unions and Public Amusements Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 1992, No. 420

Auctioneers and Agents Act—

Auctioneers and Agents Committee (Appointment of Acting Deputy Chairman) Order (No. 1) 1993

Breakwater Island Casino Agreement Act—

Breakwater Island Casino Agreement Variation Order 1992, No. 395

Canals Act—

Canals (Birtinya Waters Estate Stages 8-19—Final Approval) Order s1992

Classification of Films Act—

Classification of Films Regulation 1992, No. 375

Proclamation—Certain provisions of the Act commence on 27 November 1992, No. 373

Classification of Publications Act—

Classification of Publications (Approval of Codes of Conduct) Order 1992, No. 415

Classification of Publications Regulation 1992, No. 376

Proclamation—Certain provisions of the Act commence on 27 November 1992, No. 374

Coal Mining Act—

Coal Mining Exemption Amendment Order (No. 1) 1992, No. 388

Credit Act—

Credit (Building Societies Exemption) Order 1992, No. 365

Dairy Industry Act—

Dairy Industry Pasteurisation Plants (Miscellaneous Amendments) Order (No. 3) 1992, No. 380

Education (Senior Secondary School Studies) Act—

Board of Senior Secondary School Studies Amendment By-law (No. 2) 1992, No. 382

Fauna Conservation Act—

Fauna Conservation (Open Season-Macropods) Order 1992, No. 418

Financial Transaction Reports Act—

Proclamation—Certain provisions of the Act commence on 6 December 1992, No. 392

Fishing Industry Organization and Marketing Act—

Fishing Industry (Closed Waters—Fish or Marine Products) Amendment Order (No. 2) 1992, No. 379

Fishing Industry (Closed Waters—Fish or Marine Products) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1992, No. 425

Fishing Industry Organization and Marketing Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 1992, No. 401

Fishing Industry (Use of Nets) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1992, No. 426

Forestry Act—

Forestry (Reserves and Management Areas) Order 1992, No. 381

Fruit Marketing Organisation Act—

Fruit Marketing (Committee of Direction Levies) Regulation 1992, No. 424

Gurulmundi Secure Landfill Agreement Act—

Gurulmundi Secure Landfill By-law 1992, No. 433

Harbours Act—

Abbot Point Harbour Amendment By-law (No. 4) 1992, No. 364

Gladstone Port Authority Amendment By-law (No. 1) 1992, No. 422

Harbour of Hay Point Amendment By-law (No. 3) 1992, No. 363

Harbours (Mackay Port Authority) Amendment By-law (No. 1) 1992, No. 398

Harbours Order 1992, No. 362

Health Services Act—

Health Services (Public Sector) Fees Regulation 1992, No. 386

Hen Quotas Act—

Hen Quotas Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1992, No. 427

Justice Legislation (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1992—

Proclamation—Provisions of Part 4 of the Act commence on 4 December 1992, No. 384

Liquor Act—

Liquor Amendment Regulation (No. 3) 1992, No. 421

Local Government Act—

Local Government (Correction of Errors) Order 1992, No. 383

Local Government (Engineers and Overseers of Works) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1992, No. 406

Mineral Resources Act—

Mineral Resources (Restricted Area 240) Order 1992, No. 387

Mineral Resources (Restricted Areas) Amendment Order (No. 1) 1992, No. 366

Motor Vehicles Securities Act—

Motor Vehicles Securities Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1992, No. 385

National Parks and Wildlife Act—

National Park 267 County of Derby (Declaration) Order 1992, No. 367

National Park 335 County of Denison (Declaration) Order 1992, No. 368

National Park 135 County of Salisbury (Extension) Order 1992, No. 389

National Park 602 County of Carlisle (Extension) Order 1992, No. 416

National Park 629 County of Cavendish (Extension) Order 1992, No. 417

National Park 835 County of Churchill (Extension) Order 1992, No. 369

National Park 846 County of Livingstone (Extension) Order 1992, No. 370

National Park 1356 County of Nares (Extension) Order 1992, No. 391

National Park 1445 County of Nares (Extension) Order 1992, No. 390

Penalties and Sentences Act—

Penalties and Sentences Regulation 1992, No. 394

Proclamation—Provisions of sections 3 to 15, 44 to 51, 143 to 206 and section 207 commence on 27 November 1992, No. 377

Proclamation—Provisions of Part 3 of the Act commence on 27 November 1992, No. 378

Proclamation—Provisions of sections 52 to 110, 120 to 142, and 207 commence on 18 December 1992, No. 393

Police Service Administration Act—

Police Service Administration (Police Services Charges) Order 1992, No. 402

Police Superannuation Act—

Police Superannuation (Member) Order 1992, No. 403

Police Superannuation (Scheme Election) Regulation 1992, No. 404

Primary Producers' Organisation and Marketing Act—

Primary Producers' Organisation and Marketing (Egg Marketing Boards Extension) Order 1992, No. 371

Queensland Marine Act—

Queensland Marine (Prevention of Collisions) Regulation 1992, No. 399

River Improvement Trust Act—

River Improvement Trust Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1992, No. 432

Rural Training Schools Act—

Emerald Rural Training School Amendment Rule (No. 1) 1992, No. 407

Longreach Rural Training School Amendment Rule (No. 1) 1992, No. 408

Lower Burdekin Rural Training School Amendment Rule (No. 1) 1992, No. 409

South Queensland Rural Training School Amendment Rule (No. 1) 1992, No. 410

State Housing Act—

State Housing Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1992, No. 405

Superannuation (State Public Sector) Act—

Superannuation (State Public Sector-Membership) Amendment Order (No. 3) 1992, No. 396

Superannuation (State Public Sector) Variation of Deed Order (No. 3) 1992, No. 397

Supreme Court Act—

Supreme Court Act Arrangements Order (No. 6) 1992

Traffic Act—

Traffic Amendment Regulation (No. 6) 1992, No. 400

Traffic Amendment Regulation (No. 7) 1992, No. 423

Transport Infrastructure (Roads) Act—

Notification—Access to land be limited, Pacific Highway (Helensvale-Coolangatta, Albert Shire), Dawson Highway (Gladstone-Biloela, Calliope Shire)

Notification—Access to land be limited, Warrego Highway (Toowoomba-Dalby, Jondaryan Shire)

Vocational Education, Training and Employment Act—

Vocational Education, Training and Employment Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1992, No. 411

Vocational Education, Training and Employment Commission Rule 1992, No. 412

Water Resources Act—

Water Resources (Eton Irrigation Area) Amendment Order (No. 1) 1992, No. 428

Water Resources (Gordonstone Water Supply Agreement) Order 1992, No. 430

Water Resources (Lower Balonne Advisory Committee) Regulation 1992, No. 431

Water Resources (Mareeba-Dimbulah Irrigation Area) Amendment Order (No. 1) 1992, No. 429

Water Resources (Subartesian Localities) Order (No. 1) 1992, No. 372

Workplace Health and Safety Act—

Workplace Health and Safety (Recreational Diving) Code of Practice Approval Notice 1992, No. 414

Workplace Health and Safety Amendment Regulation (No. 5) 1992, No. 413.

PAPERS

The following papers were laid upon the table of the House—

(a) Premier and Minister for Economic and Trade Development (Mr W. Goss)—

Commission of Inquiry Continuation Act—

Order in Council appointing Robin Stanley O'Regan QC as Chairman of the Commission

(b) Minister for Primary Industries (Mr Casey)—

Annual Reports for 1991-92—

Bore Water Boards, Drainage Boards and Water Boards

River Improvement Trusts

South Queensland Commercial Egg Producers Organisation.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Overseas Visit by Deputy Premier, Minister for Administrative Services and Minister for Rural Communities

Hon. T. J. BURNS (Lytton—Deputy Premier, Minister for Administrative Services and Minister for Rural Communities) (10.19 a.m.), by leave: I table for the information of honourable members the report on the delegation that I led on a ministerial visit to China and Hong Kong in December last year. The visit was part of the Queensland Government's efforts to consolidate existing commercial relations with China, especially in the areas of investment and export. The major purpose of this visit by me, together with representatives of the Queensland-China Council and the Government's China Secretariat, was to maintain and enhance Queensland's business profile within China. The visit resulted in the identification of a principal point of contact for Chinese Government representatives in major trading centres—a move which will facilitate the development of trade and investment by Queensland companies. The visit also confirmed Queensland's desire to strengthen its commercial relationship with the business community in China.

A number of initiatives are detailed in the report, including potential Chinese investment in coal projects. The visit also helped to identify possible projects to be included in the third memorandum of understanding under the Sister State Agreement between Queensland and Shanghai for 1993-94. Queensland's Sister State Agreement with Shanghai has also resulted in numerous cultural exchanges as well as exchange visits by Queensland students and teachers. Whilst the Queensland Government wants to see this contact continue to grow, it is also keen to put more attention and effort into developing trade and economic links. This approach was stressed at all meetings with Chinese Government and business leaders. I am pleased to report that it is a view mirrored by Chinese officials—a situation which points to considerable scope for the expansion of Queensland trade and investment ties with China.

DAYS ALLOTTED TO ADDRESS IN REPLY

Sessional Order

Hon. T. M. MACKENROTH (Chatsworth—Leader of the House) (10.20 a.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

“That for this session—

- (1) On days allotted for Address in Reply a 'single day' shall comprise that period from one hour after the commencement of the sitting day or, if on a Tuesday after a discussion on Matters of Public Interest and until (a) not more than four hours of debate have elapsed; at the discretion of the Leader of the House 'double days' may apply to the debate, in which case each 'double day' shall comprise (b) not more than eight hours' debate. A 'double day' shall begin one hour after the commencement of the sitting day or if on a Tuesday, after a discussion on Matters of Public Interest. Each period in (a) shall be accounted an allotted day and each period in (b) shall be accounted as two allotted days under the provisions of Standing Order 17.
- (2) For the purpose of this debate all members' speeches will be of 30 minutes duration.
- (3) The provisions of Standing Order 305 be suspended in relation to Committees of Supply and Ways and Means.
- (4) All other provisions of the Standing Orders shall mutatis mutandis continue to apply.”

Motion agreed to.

**ADDITIONAL SITTING DAYS; PRECEDENCE OF GOVERNMENT BUSINESS
ON FRIDAYS****Sessional Order**

Hon. T. M. MACKENROTH (Chatsworth—Leader of the House) (10.21 a.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

“That pursuant to Standing Order 26, the House shall meet for the dispatch of business, in addition to the days agreed to pursuant to the Sessional Order of 5 November, at 10 a.m. on the Friday of each sitting week, on which days Government business shall take precedence of all other business.”

Motion agreed to.

MOTION OF CONDOLENCE**Deaths of Colonel Sir Henry Abel Smith and Hon. V. B. Sullivan**

Hon. W. K. GOSS (Logan—Premier and Minister for Economic and Trade Development) (10.22 a.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

“(1) That this House desires to place on record its appreciation of the services rendered to this State by the late Colonel Sir Henry Abel Smith, KCMG, KCVO, DSO, a former Governor of Queensland and its dependencies, in the Commonwealth of Australia; and the late Honourable Victor Bruce Sullivan, a former member of the Parliament of Queensland and Minister of the Crown.

(2) That Mr Speaker be requested to convey to the families of the deceased gentlemen the above resolution, together with an expression of the sympathy and sorrow of the members of the Parliament of Queensland, in the loss they have sustained.”

Sir Henry Abel Smith was born in London on 8 March 1900. He was educated at Sandhurst before joining the Royal Horse Guards in 1919. From 1928 to 1930, he served as aide-de-camp to the Earl of Athlone, the Governor-General of South Africa, whose daughter, May, he married in 1931. Sir Henry rose through the ranks of captain, major and lieutenant-colonel, reaching the rank of colonel in the Corps of the Household Cavalry in 1946. He served throughout World War II in Palestine, Iraq, France and Germany, and in 1946 was awarded a Companion of the Distinguished Service Order for his meritorious war service in France.

Sir Henry retired from the armed forces in 1950 and received his second honour, that of Knight Commander of the Royal Victorian Order. In November 1957, Sir Henry was appointed the seventeenth Governor of Queensland and was the last of the English-born Governors. He was one of Queensland's most admired and respected Governors, possessing a keen interest in the State and its people. Sir Henry has been described as a man of tremendous energy and a “man of the people” who came to know this State better than most Queenslanders. In 1961, Sir Henry was awarded the honour of Knight Commander of the Most Distinguished Order of St Michael and St George—KCMG. The following year, he received an honorary Doctor of Laws degree from the University of Queensland, where a lecture theatre has also been named after him. Sir Henry's deep commitment to the State of Queensland and its people was demonstrated by his keen interest and enthusiasm in the affairs of the State. He was particularly concerned about education, conservation and the plight of farming communities. Sir Henry completed his term as Governor in 1966 and returned to England. In the late seventies, he revisited Queensland with his wife to renew old friendships and to travel again around the State he served with so much enthusiasm.

In respect of the late Honourable Victor Bruce Sullivan, a former member of this Parliament and a Minister of the Crown but known generally as Vic—he was born in Launceston, Tasmania, on 7 December 1918. At the age of five he moved to Jandowae near Dalby with his family and later settled there with his wife, Gwenneth, after their marriage in 1948. Mr Sullivan had two sons and a daughter. Sadly, his daughter died in a motor vehicle accident in 1970.

Vic Sullivan was educated at Downlands College, Toowoomba, and left to become a grain, beef, lamb and pork farmer. In World War II, Mr Sullivan was attached to the United States armed forces and was engaged in the movement of troops and supplies in New Guinea. He was a commissioned lieutenant and served from 1940 to 1946. Since that time, he had served on the committee of his local RSL club.

In May 1960, Vic Sullivan was elected as a representative of the National Party to the seat of Condamine, which then covered the area from Roma to Dalby. He served for 15 years as a Minister under the Premiership of Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen, holding the portfolios of Lands and Forestry from 1968 to 1972, Primary Industries from 1972 to 1980, Mines and Energy in 1980, and Commerce and Industry from 1980 to 1982. Vic Sullivan acted as Premier of Queensland in June and November of 1982, and also led a number of trade delegations to the Middle East, Japan, Korea, Malaysia and Singapore.

Mr Sullivan had wide experience in the State's rural industry and had negotiated on world markets for the sale of the State's sugar, meat and grain. Coming from a farming background himself, he could identify with the problems of the rural sector and was particularly involved in areas such as rural finance. Vic Sullivan was also extremely popular in his electorate of Condamine, which includes the rich agricultural and farming areas of the Darling Downs, and was a well respected politician generally. Mr Sullivan retired from politics in 1982 and settled on the Sunshine Coast, where he died on 29 January this year.

On behalf of the Queensland Government, I extend sincere condolences to the families of the late Sir Henry Abel Smith and the late Vic Sullivan.

Mr BORBIDGE (Surfers Paradise—Leader of the Opposition) (10.28 a.m.): On behalf of the Opposition, I rise to second the condolence motion for Sir Henry Abel Smith, who passed away last month at the age of 92, and also my former National Party colleague Vic Sullivan.

Sir Henry Abel Smith lived an incredibly full life, and his governorship of this State from 1958 to 1966 was only part of a remarkable career and a remarkable life. Sir Henry was of true British lineage, the descendent of one of England's oldest banking families and a relative, by marriage, of the Queen. He had a long history of military service dating back to 1919, when he joined the Royal Horse Guards at the age of just 19. He served in World War II in Iraq, France and Germany. He was a much decorated officer and reached the rank of colonel. He received his Companion of the Distinguished Service Order in 1945 and his Knight Commander of the Royal Victorian Order in 1950, the year that he retired. I can imagine that, for a man who had been so active in the military for 30 years, he would have been restless retiring at the age of 50 whilst living on his property near Windsor. As it turned out, Sir Henry Abel Smith's work was not yet done.

In 1958, Sir Henry was called back to duty to become the seventeenth Governor of Queensland. However, he admitted to being somewhat nervous, wanting desperately to do the job well. He was a humble man, believing he had few qualifications for the job. As it so happened, he had nothing to worry about. Sir Henry Abel Smith has been described as a man with tremendous energy and one of our most popular Governors. In his first two weeks in Queensland, he visited cyclone-devastated Bowen and talked to many of the locals to provide them with support in a time of crisis, to listen to their stories and to inspect the damage first-hand.

That was the start of many travels to towns and cities throughout Queensland. It was well known that each time Sir Henry—dubbed at the time as "Queensland's most mobile Governor"—visited a town, he marked it with a pin on his map of Queensland in

his study at Government House. By the end of his second term in 1966, that map was blanketed with hundreds of pins from Thursday Island to Betoota. During one of his whirlwind travels, he showed up in his white Jag at both Normanton and Burketown. No country show was too small for a vice-regal visit. Sir Henry enjoyed equally picnic races and corroborees. He was a man who liked to keep in touch. He was equally at ease yarning with blue-collar workers and Cabinet Ministers; comfortable with holding official functions at Government House and sightseeing on a coal barge on the Bremer River.

Sir Henry was described by one station owner as an exhausting guest. Whether or not one was tired, Sir Henry would want to play tennis or billiards, or saddle up a station horse and go for a ride. He earned the respect of the ordinary person by his willingness to have a go at anything. There is one famous photograph of him waterskiing on a stretch of the Brisbane River at Indooroopilly. Indeed, it was with interest that I noted that, four years into his term, he was described in the media as "a jolly good bloke". Yet Sir Henry was a man also distinguished by his strong interest in the economic life of the State as well as its welfare and development.

Sir Henry Abel Smith has been described as having possessed a wide insight, knowledge and practical experience of farmers and primary producers, which most likely helped him identify with those thousands of rural and regional Queenslanders whom he visited. As the Premier indicated, Sir Henry was the last of Queensland's British-born Governors. He returned to England after completing his term. I understand that over the last few years of his life he kept up a healthy interest in racing and shared the title of Patron of the Royal Windsor Racecourse, which is the oldest racecourse in Britain.

Although Sir Henry Abel Smith served as Governor long before I entered politics, he set an example that all honourable members should follow: to put the people first and to listen to their problems. On behalf of the Opposition, I pass on our condolences to his wife, Lady May Abel Smith, his relatives and his friends.

It is with great sadness that I also note the passing of Vic Sullivan. He was a man of the old school who contributed so much to the State of Queensland, and not just as a Minister of the Crown. Long before he was elected to this place representing the seat of Condamine, he served alongside many other Queenslanders in the armed forces during World War II. He was engaged in planning the movement of troops and supplies in New Guinea and was attached to the United States Army, when he was commissioned as a lieutenant. That period of service gave him a strong respect for and trust of his colleagues. He was of the old school, in which a man's word is his bond.

On his return from World War II, he continued his support of the armed forces through his service on the committee of the RSL. Post-war, he became active in politics. As he was a grain grower, it was natural that his leanings were towards the then Country Party. In May 1960, he was elected to the seat of Condamine. He brought to this House 30 years' experience in farming and an invaluable knowledge of primary industries. He said that his responsibility was to the people of the primary industries. He said that they knew the problems and the pitfalls, and it was to them that he would go for his advice. That knowledge and experience was well recognised, and Vic was eventually appointed to the Lands portfolio in 1968 and to the Primary Industries portfolio in June 1972. Vic said that he really enjoyed his eight years as Minister for Primary Industries, a portfolio with which he could really identify. In that role, he had the opportunity to mix with people in towns right across Queensland. He very much enjoyed speaking to the average person. That was easily one of his greatest attributes.

I remember being told of an incident which occurred when Vic and Ron Camm were walking past a pub in the northern part in Mackay. Cammy advised Vic not to go into the pub because it was frequented by wharfies, who are not generally known to be partial to the conservative persuasion. Vic went into the pub and announced straight out to all assembled that he was Vic Sullivan, the National Party Minister for Primary Industries. He said, "You can either have a beer with me or have a fight with me." By the end of the session, they were having beers with him, not fights. Everyone present on

that occasion reported that it was a great example of Vic's ability to mix, to meet and to share with Queenslanders, whatever their background or their vocation in life.

He was very approachable to members on both sides of the House. He enjoyed grassroots campaigning, and he enjoyed life. Throughout his years as a politician, Vic never lost touch. There were five turf clubs in his electorate, so he welcomed the opportunity to spend some time at the races. During the 1980 election campaign, while the then Premier held the media headlines, Vic was assigned to slog through the bush. He was an experienced and active member of Parliament, and very popular with his constituents. At the last election he contested in 1980, he achieved 68 per cent of the vote.

Vic had a strong loyalty to his party. In 1980, he became Deputy Leader of the National Party and took over a new portfolio, Commerce and Industry. When elected to the position of Deputy Leader of the National Party, he defeated another legendary figure, the late Russell Hinze, by only one vote. That position became vacant on the retirement from politics of Ron Camm. At that time, Sully was second only to Joh as the longest-serving National Party Minister. Vic had the chance to be only Acting Premier. As the Premier indicated when he moved this motion, Vic sat in Sir Joh's chair for 10 days when the then Premier was away on a trade mission with Sir Llew Edwards. At the beginning of December 1982, Vic resigned as Deputy Leader of the National Party. He retired as a Minister and as a member this place at the 1983 election.

At the end of his term, Vic had compiled an impressive resume. He had been a parliamentarian for 23 years and for 15 years a Minister in the Lands, Primary Industries, Fisheries, Mines and Energy, and Commerce and Industry portfolios. On the world scene, he had negotiated on world markets for the sale of this State's sugar, meat and grain. He was the leader of delegations to Geneva, Japan, PNG, Korea, Singapore, Malaysia and the Middle East. As the Premier indicated, Vic had earned great respect among the community.

After his retirement to the Sunshine Coast, I understand that he could still be seen walking briskly along the beach in the morning. The fact that, at the age of 73 years, he passed away after surfing shows that he enjoyed life to the very fullest. Vic Sullivan will be a much-missed Queensland. He was a great gentleman of the old style. On behalf of the parliamentary National Party, I extend our condolences to Vic's wife, Gwen, and to his family.

Hon. T. J. BURNS (Lytton—Deputy Premier, Minister for Administrative Services and Minister for Rural Communities) (10.37 a.m.): I join with the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition in the motion of condolence for Sir Henry Abel Smith and Vic Sullivan, or "Sully". In regard to Henry Abel Smith—when I was a union organiser in Longreach, I remember asking, "What is that commotion up at the pub?" I was told that it was Abel Smith having a drink with the boys—which he did. He travelled the country extensively. He worked very hard to try to gain recognition. He was appointed Governor during a difficult time, which was straight after the split. The Gair Government had sent to England a list of names of Australians who could be appointed Governor. When the Nicklin Government took over, it cancelled that list of names, and Abel Smith was selected. Because he was a pommy—and there is another word to describe him—a British gentlemen—and he was a gentleman—there was great opposition to the appointment. When Sir Henry Abel Smith arrived in Queensland, he expressed trepidation about coming here under those circumstances. The Leader of the Opposition and the Premier have both said that Sir Henry Abel Smith worked very, very hard and travelled widely. He became well known. In fact, I believe that he should have received another knighthood because he used to travel by rail in that damned Governor's carriage. People talk about a junket. If members had travelled in that Governor's carriage, they would deserve a medal. In those days, and I am talking about 1960, the Governor's carriage was attached to the back of freight trains and sometimes to the back of cattle trains. The Governor was not being given a great service if he was travelling at the back of a cattle train.

Sir Henry Abel Smith was the last of the British Governors. He succeeded the first Australian-born Governor, Governor Lavarack, who had served for 12 years. The Lavarack Barracks in Townsville are named after him. On the retirement of Sir Henry Abel Smith, the *Courier-Mail* wrote an editorial that referred to him as a jolly good bloke. I use those words today. To the people who knocked around the bush in those days in country towns, he was a jolly good bloke. He expressed concern for people in rural areas. He was concerned about farmers, and he mixed well with them.

I turn now to Vic Sullivan. I would like to tell a lot of yarns about Sully. I said to Sully that I believed that the way in which he lost his job in this place was terrible. I do not think that anyone should lose his or her job over going fishing. We should right that rule straightaway. I had talked to Sully about that matter. As honourable members would be aware, Sully and Ken Tomkins were in the Torres Strait on a boat called the *Melbidir*. It was one of the worst boats ever. It was a tub. It is now sailing around the Falkland Islands. If the Argentinians declared war and the British used the *Melbidir*, then it would have a great chance of losing the war. It is the greatest tub that I have ever been in. Vic Sullivan went fishing after a day's work. He said that a plane flew over the boat. He believed that some locals were in the plane, so he and Ken Tomkins waved. However, it was a *Courier-Mail* photographer. Consequently, Sully appeared on the front page of the *Courier-Mail*. Of course, six months later they finally got rid of him. Sully told me that it was not a member of Parliament who doxed on him. However, he had a long-time enemy in the party, who was another knight of the realm, and who was out to get him. He believed that that person had got him finally.

Vic Sullivan was a grain grower. To me, he was an old Country Party style of fellow. He was a bloke you could talk to. During the early days of Sully's term in Parliament, this place was different. When members came into this place, they could have a decent barney, go outside and then have a drink about it. I have said before that Joh Bjelke-Petersen changed that. He said that members of different parties could not eat at the same table. The rooms were divided off. However, Sully was a good mixer. I should tell a couple of yarns about him. When he became a member of Parliament, with Pat McGetrick, his press secretary, he arrived in Townsville. When they got into their rooms, Sully told him to bring out the bottles. His press secretary said, "I do not have any bottles." Sully said, "When you travel with me, you always bring two bottles of scotch in your port." This incident occurred during the days when bars which held \$2 bottles, for which there was a \$5 charge, were first introduced into motel rooms. Sully and his press secretary believed that the big bottle of scotch in the bar was complimentary. That night, they give it a big run. The next morning, when they were told that the hotel wanted to charge them \$60 or \$80 for the scotch, for some time after Sully told the story and said, "They are not complimentary." One day, at a show in his area, he told me that I had to watch going to church functions. At one such function, he arrived with his press secretary, Pat McGetrick. It was a revival meeting. Sully said, "This will be a pretty dry show. We have to have a few drinks beforehand." Sully liked a drink on a hot day and he and his press secretary had a few to fortify themselves. After an hour or two, they arrived at the church. As they entered the church, the preacher said, "The devil is here tonight." Sully turned to Pat McGetrick and said, "Is it you or me?"

A few members here would remember Sully in this place. He used to have a few parties with Ken Tomkins and come back late. On one occasion, the Leader of the House did the wrong thing by Sully. Sully was dressed up in his monkey suit, and when he arrived back in this place—very late, at approximately 1 o'clock in the morning—he found himself on his feet introducing a Bill. Leaders of the House always want Ministers to introduce Bills, because in three days' time the Government may not have any business to deal with. At approximately 1 o'clock in the morning, Sully got up. He stumbled a bit during his second-reading speech. He then stopped. There was not a noise in the House. The Speaker said, "Order!", then Sully began to snore. I have nearly gone to sleep reading my own speeches and I have gone to sleep listening to other people. I used to say to Sully that he was the only bloke I knew who went to sleep reading his own second-reading speech.

Sully was a great bloke. As I said, he was an old-fashioned National Party member whom one could relate to. Once, I was invited to open the Jandowae show. Sully and his driver, Jack Glancy, who drove him for many years, welcomed me with open arms. They were a good pair. The other fellow who got rid of Sully was looking at me with daggers. However, in 1978, I was welcomed in Sully's electorate, which was a very strong National Party area, to open the Jandowae show. Sully made it very clear that politics was not a factor. We were interested in shows, and we ought to take it that way. We will miss him. I believe that the people who will miss him most are those from the bowling fraternity on the Sunshine Coast. He did a lot for them when he was fighting about their lease. I will not go into the details of those leases, because they are now part of history. I believe that the matter has been solved by the Lands Department. As the president of our parliamentary bowls club, he was incensed when the CJC got stuck into the parliamentary bowlers over the interstate carnivals. He was the one who really set us on our way in the early days of the club itself, and he battled for us right through. He was one of those blokes who will be missed by most people. I do not believe that he had an enemy in this place. I cannot remember anyone saying an unkind word about him; but if some members did that during a parliamentary debate, they would make up for it later. We will not have the opportunity to make up for that again. We will all miss him.

Hon. N. J. TURNER (Nicklin) (10.46 a.m.): We engage again in this seemingly endless ritual of extending condolences to the family of some departed eminent person—on this occasion, Sir Henry Abel Smith and Vic Sullivan. I extend my condolences to the relatives and friends of Sir Henry Abel Smith, a former Governor of Queensland, who served this State with dignity and distinction. On occasions such as this, members often tell stories about the departed, and I will tell one story about Sir Henry Abel Smith and his visit to Ted Hill's property, Rosevale, at Wyandra. Ted used to entertain many Ministers, Governors and other people. When trams were removed from Brisbane's streets, Ted acquired one of the trams and had it set up as an outstation at the back of his property. To get there, one had to drive along a road and go around a lot of bushes. Ted said to Sir Henry Abel Smith during his visit to the property, "I have got something that will interest you as we drive along here, Sir Henry." Sir Henry asked, "What is it, Ted?" Ted said, "Just wait a minute, and see what you think when you see it." Ted tells it this way: "We just drove around the corner and the tram was right there in front of us. Sir Henry Abel said, 'Shit, a tram!' " That just goes to show that he was human.

I shall devote most of my speech to Vic Sullivan. I first got to know Vic Sullivan when he campaigned for me in Warrego in 1974. I can describe him only as a top campaigner; one of the old school. Vic Sullivan was a true man of the people. As other members have said, he loved people, he loved the land, he loved sport, and he lived life to the fullest. If one were to ask me what is the greatest attribute that anyone could have, I would say that it is a desire to serve one's fellow man. Vic Sullivan did this in so many ways: through rural organisations, through Parliament, and as a Minister of the Crown for many years. However, he had the added distinction of serving his country in the theatre of war, seeing active service in New Guinea. As were many before him and since, he was prepared to lay down his life for the country that he loved. I thank God that I live in this free country in which the freedoms that we enjoy have been given to us as a free gift by our forebears and people such as Vic Sullivan.

Vic Sullivan served this Parliament in what I can describe only as the golden years when seasons were reasonable. From a land point of view, returns were reasonably good. Unemployment at the national level and the national debt were nearly nonexistent. Ministers of Parliament were prepared to make decisions and to pay the price that difficult decisions demanded. I will never forget the flak that Vic Sullivan received over the pig swill Bill, which was designed to act against the threat of the entry of foot-and-mouth disease into our primary industries and the effect that that would have on Australia as a whole, or the conflict that Vic faced in implementing the much-needed upgrading of slaughterhouses in Queensland. This State and nation is a better place for Vic Sullivan having passed this way.

I remember the big floods along the Warrego River many years ago when I was the member for Warrego. A lot of sheep were marooned on islands. People could not get to them. They had no feed. The flies were into them, and they were dying in their thousands. Vic was then the Minister for Primary Industries. I approached him and said, "Vic, we have to do something. We must try to get a helicopter or something else in there to try and help those people." He said, "It will be right. I will fix it, Neil. I will get in touch with Jim Killen." Jim Killen was the Minister for Defence at that time. Vic told me later that he got in touch with Jim Killen to try to get Army helicopters to fly in some hay and plants to save those sheep. Jim Killen mentioned the matter to his Army chief, who said, "It cannot be done, and we will not do it." Jim Killen is supposed to have said, "It can be done. It will be done. Now go and do it." That was the attitude of Ministers in those days. They could make those decisions, instead of some committee making the decision for them. That very action saved thousands of sheep and many primary producers as well. Many people owe a debt of gratitude to Vic.

I would not say that, in his latter years, Vic was bitter over the treatment that was meted out to him by some sections of the media and some people, as Mr Burns said, from outside the media and even from within the National Party itself. I would rather say that he was disappointed by the weakness that was displayed by some people. Both Vic and Ken Tomkins were subjected to a lengthy and concerted attack for travelling to the Torres Strait whilst Ken Tomkins was Minister for Aboriginal and Islander Affairs. They had every right to be there, and did not deserve the treatment that was meted out to them by the grubs who chose to be their judge, jury and executioner. To those who conducted that campaign—I hope that they can live with their consciences.

If, on an odd occasion, Vic Sullivan drank a little too much, I believe that members should know and appreciate that it helped to hide some of the pain that Vic was suffering. As the Premier said, Vic Sullivan lost his 17-year-old daughter as a result of a car accident in 1970. Understandably, a part of Vic Sullivan died on that occasion. When he was buried on 3 February 1993 at Jandowae during a big funeral at which I was present, Vic was buried alongside his little daughter. I felt for his wife Gwen and family, and I extend my sincere condolences to them.

Victor Bruce Sullivan was a big man with a big heart. He drew his character and substance from the great unseens in life. Those great unseens in life are the great strengths of life, such as love, affection, comradeship, loyalty, tolerance and compassion. Vic Sullivan had plenty of those attributes. We cannot weigh them or parcel them up. We cannot describe them with perfection. Yet they are there. Vic was a lot like a young soldier in World War I about whom I heard a story. He was in the trenches, and he wanted to go out into no-man's-land to try to rescue his wounded friend. The commanding officer said, "No, you cannot go out, because it will be a waste of time. You will probably lose your life." The young soldier persisted. Finally, the commanding officer said, "Right, you can go, but it will be a waste of time." The soldier was away for about two hours. When he returned, he had his mate over his shoulder. He laid him down in the trench. He was dead. The commanding officer said, "There you are. I told you it would be a waste of time." He said, "No, sir, it wasn't a waste of time. He was alive when I got there and I held him in my arms before he died. He said five words: 'I knew you would come.' " Vic would always come if anyone wanted him. He will be long remembered by those who knew him. To his family, I can only say that to live on in the hearts of those we love is not to die.

Hon. E. D. CASEY (Mackay—Minister for Primary Industries) (10.52 a.m.): I join in speaking to the condolence motion moved by the Premier. I met Colonel Sir Henry Abel Smith on only one occasion prior to my entry into local government and Parliament. He was everything that has been described of him today. He was a gentleman and a person who was interested in Queensland and the people of Queensland. As the Deputy Premier said, wherever he went, he could be found mixing with the people of Queensland, which was surprising when one considers his background and the conduct of a number of other former Governors of this State who were of the old English aristocratic mould. He did not mind sharing a joke. I recall an occasion in Mackay when

he was driving to a display that was being put on by a number of schools at Queen's Park. On the route to the park, they passed a fascinating little building with English castle turrets on it. The design of the building was probably the result of a grandiose plan by an engineer of the Mackay City Council. The town clerk was in the front seat of the car and Colonel Sir Henry Abel Smith and his wife were in the back seat. They were fascinated by the building and inquired whether they could inspect it. The town clerk had to inform them that because it was a sewerage pumping station it might not be of much interest to them. That indicates that Colonel Sir Henry Abel Smith displayed a down-to-earth interest in the lifestyle of the people of Queensland.

Vic Sullivan was a colleague of mine in this place for 14 years. I remember him as a friend. In fact, he was a friend of all members who served with him, because he was that sort of bloke. As Minister for Primary Industries, I pay tribute to the work that Vic did in that portfolio from 1972 to 1980. He is still revered by many officers of that department who served under him. While he was Minister for Primary Industries, I was either shadow Minister for Primary Industries or Leader of the Opposition. Even when I was not the shadow Minister, as Tommy would recall, in the days when the Labor Party was reduced to a cricket team, I worked hard to help him in the Primary Industries portfolio. On many occasions, I debated matters with Vic in this Chamber. Although the debate might have been heated, as soon as we stepped outside the Chamber, we were friends again. He was certainly of the old school. Throughout the Primary Industries Department, many people still speak of Vic with great respect. People were happy to deal with him.

Prior to entering Parliament, I knew Vic through various avenues, but mainly through politics. On occasions, he visited my electorate of Mackay. Although I was on the opposite side of the political fence, I regarded him as a good bloke. One cannot say anything better of a person after he has died. There was no bad in Vic Sullivan. He would never set out to harm or to hurt anybody. The Deputy Premier and the Leader of the Opposition described Vic as of the old school. He was a human sort of person. The humanness showed out in him away from the Chamber rather than in the Chamber. He was a tough fighter and understood the Primary Industries portfolio. Prior to his holding that portfolio, he administered the Lands portfolio and also the Mines and Energy portfolio. He gave his best in whatever he did.

I shared many nights with Vic singing Irish songs. He was one of the few people whom I saw come through this Parliament who always got on well with Miss Glennie. They never fought. In fact, usually they would end up sitting around the bar sharing a few drinks from the bottle. Miss Glennie also enjoyed an Irish song.

I will not add further to the comments made about the Melbidir incident. At the time, I was in the unfortunate position of being Leader of the Opposition—I say “unfortunate” because, on occasions, people in such a position have to do things that they do not like to do. The present Leader of the Opposition would understand what I am talking about. The thing that stood out during the Melbidir incident was that, when the television camera from the helicopter focused on Vic sitting in the boat fishing, he was waving and smiling to say “G'day” to people. That was the type of man he was. He was happy no matter in what circumstances he found himself. He always displayed his humanness to everybody.

After Vic's retirement from Parliament, I was pleased to meet him on occasions. On one occasion when I, as Minister, attended the Caloundra region for a conference, Vic walked down the road just to say “G'day” and to share some memories with a person who had served with him in Parliament. Vic had great respect for and great love and understanding of the Parliament. More than anything else, he displayed great humanness to the people with whom he served.

Mrs SHELDON (Caloundra—Leader of the Liberal Party) (11 a.m.): I rise today to speak about a man who was well loved and extremely well travelled during his time as Governor of Queensland. Sir Henry Abel Smith was Queensland's 17th Governor who was sworn in in March 1955 after coming from England. He remained in the position for two four-year terms before heading back to England.

His term as Governor is remarkable in that he travelled to every corner of the State, meeting Queenslanders from all walks of life and taking an active part in the day-to-day life of our great State. Sir Henry was one of the State's most popular Governors and a man who left an impact on thousands of Queenslanders. Whether it was his flying to cyclone-ravaged Bowen two weeks after his appointment, about which we have heard today, or driving hundreds of kilometres to remote townships in the Gulf country, Sir Henry went out of his way to meet the people of his adopted State. From bowler hat to water skis is quite a transition, and Sir Henry made a massive but rapid transition to life in Queensland. That is hardly surprising, considering his pedigree. Sir Henry was the eldest son of the Sheriff of Nottingham and a descendant of one of Britain's oldest banking families. He was also Queen Victoria's last surviving grandson. He was married to Lady May Cambridge, a cousin of the Queen.

Sir Henry was Queensland's last English-born Governor. He was a keen horseman and marksman, qualities which are probably not as essential for a State Governor these days, although some recent Governors may have wished to have had at least one of those skills during trying political times. Perhaps what explained Sir Henry's time as Queensland Governor most graphically was the map of the State in his office. For each place in Queensland that the Governor visited, a pin was placed in the map. By the time he left, there were 161 pins in the map of Queensland, covering the entire State. His love affair with Queensland brought him much affection from the people of this State, and the normal rivalry between Aussies and poms was largely put aside when Sir Henry was around. He was keen on the development of the beef industry, and did much to promote the development of the industry through crop and lot feeding, harking back to his time in England as a gentleman farmer.

There is no doubt that Sir Henry came from an age different from the one in which we live today, but he was a man of great resources, yet humble demeanour. When he was offered the job of Governor, he proclaimed that his qualifications seemed so few. When he arrived in Brisbane to take on the role, he stated, "I only pray that, in however humble a way, I may be of some service to you all"—a motto that we could all adopt. Sir Henry need not have worried, and his family and friends have every reason to be proud of his achievements. He was of great service to Queensland, and he will go down in history as one of the State's most popular Governors.

I wish also to speak of a man who served Queensland for more than 22 years and retired to an area of the State which I know well, the Sunshine Coast. For 14 years, Vic Sullivan was a Minister in the former Queensland coalition Government, and a man popular with his peers. Honourable members would have seen that from the speech by the Deputy Premier when he was speaking of Vic Sullivan. I think that the speeches by the Deputy Premier on condolence motions are the best that I have ever heard. As he has known the people who have been members of this House, he speaks with knowledge and wit. I think that is rather great to have in a speech on a condolence motion.

A large and jocular man, Vic Sullivan tackled life head-on and made no secret of his desire to one day be Premier. He served as Minister for Primary Industries, Lands, Mines and Energy and Deputy National Party Leader. He retired in 1983. While his ambition to be Premier may have been thwarted, during his time in Parliament, Vic Sullivan worked hard for the people for whom he particularly cared—those on the land and those involved in mines and energy. As a farmer on the rich Darling Downs, Vic Sullivan knew the needs of the people of Queensland's rural and mineral belt well, and represented those people at the highest levels of government.

I came to know Vic Sullivan better after his retirement to the Sunshine Coast. I knew him because he lived in Caloundra. He was a member of my church, Our Lady of the Rosary Catholic Church in Caloundra, and made many friends within the church. I thought it was a sign of Vic Sullivan's humility that, as a former Deputy National Party Leader and Minister of the Crown, he was prepared to take up the plate every Sunday at Mass. He was a pillar of the Catholic community, and in the years after his retirement, he

did a lot of good work for the people of Caloundra. He was always a community-minded person, and since my election as member for Caloundra he came to see me several times on community matters.

I know that Vic Sullivan will be remembered for the gentleman he was and for the amount of work he did for the people of Queensland. On behalf of the many friends Vic Sullivan made in Caloundra since his retirement, I offer my condolences to Mrs Gwen Sullivan and sons Geoff and Paul. I know that Queensland will be a poorer place for his passing.

Mr CAMPBELL (Bundaberg) (11.05 a.m.): I join with other honourable members to offer my condolences and deepest sympathy to the families of both Sir Henry Abel Smith and Vic Sullivan. I acknowledge the efforts that Vic made for two special groups in Bundaberg, the Across the Waves Sports Club and the Bundaberg Brothers Club. He was instrumental in getting land for those organisations to enable them to become what they are today. They are clubs that provide a lot of happiness to a lot of people, and I know that that is what Vic would have wanted. He was a true gentleman who will be remembered quite often by people in those clubs for the work he did.

Vic Sullivan was a schoolmate of my father at Downlands College. When he attended various functions, he would often relive some of those Downlands days. It was a joy to hear some of the fun that he and my father had together as schoolboys. I acknowledge Vic Sullivan for the work he did, and I know that both the Across the Waves Sports Club and especially the Bundaberg Brothers Club respect him as a gentleman and a person who did a lot for those clubs.

Mr LINGARD (Beaudesert—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (11.07 a.m.): I support the condolence motion for Sir Henry Abel Smith and the Honourable Vic Sullivan, two men who served this State ably and well. Clearly, as many members have said today, Sir Henry Abel Smith was a man who became enormously popular with the people of Queensland through his tireless energy, his devotion to the people of this State and his love of Queensland. I will not repeat all the comments that have been so ably presented; however, I extend my sincerest condolences to Sir Henry's wife, Lady May Abel Smith, to all his friends and to those who came to admire and like him.

Previous speakers have outlined the history of the Honourable Vic Sullivan. It was always a pleasure to meet and talk with Vic Sullivan. Many times he would tell the stories of returning to his electorate after a parliamentary sitting. Those trips seemed to include every hotel between Brisbane and Jandowae, whether it be via Warwick, Toowoomba or Crow's Nest. His portfolios of Lands and Primary Industries gave Vic the opportunity to mix with people throughout Queensland. He mixed with a warm and affable style, and it was this ability that made him admired and liked throughout the State. Last month, Vic travelled with Sel Muller, the previous member for Fassifern, to the bowls carnival in Tasmania. After the carnival, they both toured Tasmania for nine days, visiting Vic's relatives and friends. They purchased an epergne from an antique store for Alison and me and it was given to us two days before Vic passed away. On the last day of that trip around Tasmania, Vic said to Sel Muller, "When my number's up, this would be a great way to go." Several days later, he died while surfing—a man who lived life to the full and enjoyed every minute of it. To his wife, Gwen, and sons, Geoff and Paul, I and my colleagues pass on our sincerest condolences.

Mr LITTLEPROUD (Western Downs) (11.08 a.m.): I join in speaking to this motion of condolence for the late Sir Henry Abel Smith and Vic Sullivan to acknowledge the great work of both gentlemen. But my special role today is to pay a tribute to Vic Sullivan on behalf of the people whom he loved so much, the people of Condamine—a place he represented for 21 years. As indicated by previous speakers, Vic Sullivan had a high profile in State politics. He was a man who on various occasions walked the world stage representing Queensland, and yet he was a man who never lost touch with the people of his Condamine electorate and especially with the people of the Jandowae area, which he called God's own country. He made friends at all levels of society. More importantly, he kept his friends. No-one was too important; no-one was unimportant.

When I travelled with Vic a few times on election campaigns, I was amazed that he could always find time to call in on some person and have a cup of tea, even though that person had no relevance whatsoever to the business of the day. It was just a matter of being an old friend. He would call in to a hospital and talk to an old friend who was suffering badly. He made time in his busy schedule to do that, and because of that, he was loved. People have spoken about his love of social events, and I have recollections of his coming to all sorts of social events around the electorate. Generally he would arrive a little bit late because he had been working as a Minister in Brisbane. He was always accompanied by his driver Jack Glancy. They were quite a pair. They worked out between themselves that if it was going to be a good night, neither would look at the other. But if Vic had a big day ahead the next day, he had it worked out that Jack would come and give him the nod at about midnight and they would do the *Cinderella* act and leave. That was a rather rare occurrence. Usually, they played on pretty heavily. I was always amazed at Vic Sullivan's constitution, which allowed him to enjoy himself so late into the night and yet the next day be up and about, performing at the top level.

My personal association with Vic goes back a long way. In 1960 when he first entered Parliament, he contested a plebiscite against my father. Of course, Vic was the victor and he went on to build a distinguished parliamentary career. In 1977 and 1980, I helped Vic's campaign committee and I learned more about politics. Without Vic telling me, I learned a lot about the way to serve an electorate. When Vic finally bowed out of politics in 1983, there was some disappointment. However, he never let that become a grudge. It was a disappointment, and he put it aside. When I gained preselection for the then electorate of Condamine, I put it to Vic that perhaps he would be my campaign director. For a man who had spent 20-odd years in State Parliament to suddenly have to again go around the traps to introduce someone new showed the kind of great gesture he was capable of. He agreed willingly to do that, which paid off handsomely for me. Wherever we went, Vic was able to tell me all about the local issues. We met the local people. By the time that campaign was over, I felt that I knew a lot about the electorate of Condamine.

The member for Nicklin, Neil Turner, spoke earlier about the tribute paid to Vic Sullivan at his funeral. Local people from all walks of life, his former Cabinet colleagues and members of the Opposition attended to pay tribute to Vic. I am sure that his family really appreciated that because they are very proud of what Vic did. But more than anything else, I believe that the tribute paid to Vic Sullivan on that occasion by Father Doblin of the Caloundra parish was the most powerful eulogy I had ever heard and was a fitting tribute to a great Queenslander. When the service was over, everyone retired to the Jandowae Bowls Club. Recently, I was talking to someone about that occasion which finished at about half past six that night and told them of the statement made by Vic's son, Geoff, that "Vic would have liked this."

I conclude my remarks with one final comment on the disappointment expressed by a few people in my electorate who knew Vic well over the way his death was acknowledged in the *Sunday Mail*. For a man of such stature and as a man who had given so much, the nature of the article published by the *Sunday Mail* to inform the people of Queensland of Vic's death was not worthy of that newspaper. I do not make that comment lightly. I personally was disappointed and I intend to do something about the matter by writing to the paper. I had previously decided not to, but since then I have been contacted by many people who felt that the article was not worthy of the *Sunday Mail*. It certainly was not worthy of Vic Sullivan. I join with my colleagues, and especially on behalf of the people who live in the former electorate of Condamine, in paying a tribute to Vic Sullivan. I offer my condolences to Gwen, Geoff and his family, and Paul and his wife.

Motion agreed to, honourable members standing in silence.

MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

State Taxes

Mr BORBIDGE (Surfers Paradise—Leader of the Opposition) (11.13 a.m.): This Government is prepared to slug the people of Queensland for hundreds of millions of dollars in new or increased taxes this year. And that is not an allegation—it is a statement of fact. Its authority is none other than the Treasurer.

On 11 November last year, in a press statement attached to a report on the impact of Fightback policies on Queensland, the Treasurer said—

“The Treasury report shows there is no escaping the fact that a Hewson coalition Government would force the States to introduce new, or increase existing, taxes and charges, and possibly also implement massive job cuts.”

What a buck pass! What a desperate scramble to get out from under his own responsibilities! After the Treasurer had dropped this novel tactic on the media, he said he would ask the Treasury to provide him with a list of tax options. I invite the Treasurer to show us the list, and to do it today. He should tell us all just how he is going to tax the people of this State hundreds of millions of dollars more in his next Budget on the novel basis of blaming someone else. Are we going to get the 10c a litre fuel tax that the Deputy Premier talked about on the ABC last Friday? Let us see some real answers as to why the Treasurer is going to do it.

John Hewson is not going to make the Treasurer increase taxes. It is time that this Government told the truth. The Government is trying to put up a smokescreen for its own economic incompetence. The Treasurer should tell us how the Government is nearly broke because it has indulged in massive increases in spending during the deepest recession since the Great Depression. The Treasurer should tell us about his mini-budget that is coming up just after the election. He should try to explain to the people how he has managed to have massive increases in spending during the recession without—and this is the Treasurer's claim—increasing taxes and charges above the CPI. What does the Treasurer have out the back—a printing press? I do not believe so. I believe that, in one term, this Government has sucked the coffers of this State dry even faster than Cain managed and that now the Government has to find a scapegoat, and the scapegoat is John Hewson.

Taxes and charges will go through the roof in this Government's next Budget and perhaps substantially earlier, whoever wins the election on 13 March. It has nothing whatsoever to do with the election of a Hewson Government. The document that purports to establish the basis for this new round of tax increases in Queensland is a disgrace. It is a disgrace to the Treasurer and it is a disgrace to the Treasury. It is a hotchpotch of deliberate misinterpretation and deliberate misinformation about the impact of Fightback on the Treasury—not Queensland, the Treasury—to provide the Treasurer with an excuse to raise hundreds of millions of dollars in extra taxes this year. That document claims that the negative impact on the Treasurer's empty pocket is a gross \$422.1m. That is, quite simply, a deliberate lie. One of six claims in this document—just one—is correct. The Queensland Treasury—not, as the Premier and Treasurer keep repeating, Queensland—will receive 5 per cent less next year in financial assistance grants from the Commonwealth. That is \$147m, and \$147m represents only 1.5 per cent of total revenues in a \$9,581m Queensland Budget in 1992-93. That is a 1.5 per cent cutback. The Treasurer is saying that he cannot budget his way around a 1.5 per cent decline in revenue and that he will have to raise taxes.

Under John Hewson, the Commonwealth will cut its outlays by 10 per cent. It will cut its outlays because it knows that Australians know just where all this money comes from. It comes out of our pockets. One way or another, every penny that the Treasurer covets comes out of the pockets of Queenslanders. So what the Treasurer is saying when he moans about the loss of 5 per cent in financial assistance grants is, “To hell with that idea. Tax, and tax hard, because I need the money.” What he is saying to Queenslanders now based on this shonky and disgraceful Treasury report is, “If Dr Hewson will not tax you to keep me in the manner to which I have become accustomed, then I will.” So there is no escape from Treasurer De Lacy. He is determined to have his

ever-increasing slice of the pie, however much it may cost us all, and never mind the sacrifices Queenslanders have had to make in their own finances over the past three years.

The extent to which the Treasurer is prepared to misrepresent Fightback in order to justify his own appetite for the cash of Queenslanders needs to be straightened out. The Treasurer's statement of 11 November, as well as citing the \$147.2m cut in financial assistance grants, lists a number of other areas in which he claimed that the Treasury would face such a shortfall that tax increases would be forced on him. None of them stand up. The second figure mentioned in the statement is the \$150m shortfall in compensation alleged to the State from the Commonwealth for the abolition of payroll tax. That figure has simply been plucked out of the air. There is absolutely no scientific explanation given for it whatsoever. The document seems to imply that this is the best Treasury can do as a vague guesstimate. Treasury seems to be arguing that, because the proposed formula for compensation is based on averaging collections over the past three years, Queensland will miss out on \$150m because that is the extra funds that the Government would have raised over that period if the economy had been better or if it had charged payroll tax at the same rate as that of the other States. What a bizarre assessment!

The fact is that it is a novel concept to expect any Government to compensate us for revenue that we have not collected. Under the previous Government, there was a deliberate move to establish a low rate of payroll tax. It paid off. Low payroll tax was, without doubt, one of several key factors which helped to fuel strong growth in the Queensland economy. The claim of a \$150m shortfall simply does not add up. Fightback promises a revenue neutral compensation package, and neither the Treasury nor the Treasurer has any basis whatsoever in claiming differently. In fact, the level of compensation over time could be significantly better than revenue neutral for Queensland because the amount of compensation will be indexed as a percentage of GST revenue. If the Treasurer is looking for a scapegoat for the fact that he has not been able to raise as much payroll tax as he would have liked over the past three years, he can hardly blame John Hewson.

Then we go on. There is the alleged \$25.4m loss in housing funds as a result of the coalition's view that the Commonwealth/State Housing Agreement should go. The fact is simply that the system of rental assistance proposed by the coalition in place of the construction-based agreement now in place will be far more efficient. There will be a loss of funds to Queensland only if the State Government is not prepared to accept that, under the current scheme, \$1m spent on building helps nine families into a home, whereas, under the coalition plan, every \$1m spent will help more than 300 families. If this Government really believes in efficient delivery of service, it would support that housing policy. It gets better. Equally, we have the alleged \$20m loss through the coalition's decision not to continue the Urban Public Transport Program or the \$49.5m Better Cities Program. It is a silly furphy: lame bids to get the total up. The Federal coalition has given a commitment that existing commitments under both programs will be continued. Better Cities funding will be honoured by the coalition in every instance in which State Governments have entered into firm contracts for works. The Treasurer need not lose a cent of promised Better Cities funding if he fulfils those very reasonable criteria. Under Fightback, \$3 billion will be allocated for real infrastructure funds. On a population basis, Queensland's share of that money should be about \$600m, which just dwarfs all of the Treasurer's claims of losses.

Finally, the claim that the Treasury might lose \$30m because it might have to pay for responsibilities that might be transferred to it by the Commonwealth is nothing less than an admission that the Premier and the Treasurer could not hold their own in negotiations with a Hewson Government. If responsibilities are to be transferred, there will be negotiations. All the Premier and the Treasurer will have to do is their job to ensure that compensation to the Treasury is adequate. So this \$422.1m claim is just a furphy—a total, discredited smokescreen.

Time expired.

Goods and Services Tax

Mr PITT (Mulgrave) (11.24 a.m.): Today, I wish to speak about an issue which should be one of deep concern to the small-business community of this State. I refer to the effect that a goods and services tax, should it ever be imposed, will have on small business. There is no doubt that small business in Queensland has suffered as part of the worldwide recession.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I remind members that the previous speaker was heard with some degree of silence. I suggest that the same courtesy be extended to the member for Mulgrave.

Mr PITT: However, we can draw some consolation from the fact that small business in this State is in a far better position than small business elsewhere in Australia. It is still growing at the rate of 5.6 per cent, which more than favourably compares with the 4 per cent average in other States. Real small business, as opposed to vested interests who purport to represent small business, is a lot more optimistic about the future than members of the Opposition would have us believe. To illustrate this point, I refer to an independent survey of Small Business Corporation clients which was carried out during the latter half of 1992. The results of this survey were quite encouraging. Far from painting a picture of gloom, a picture of hopelessness, which the proponents of Fightback peddle, the results illustrated that over 75 per cent of small businesses surveyed expected their turnover to increase in 6 to 12 months. In addition, over half of those surveyed thought their businesses were growing, while a third thought they were remaining the same. Further to this, 22 per cent of respondents had increased their staffing levels in the previous six months, which is a healthy sign indeed. Quite clearly, small businesses in this State are confident about the future. They can see that the worst is behind us and that, given positive encouragement, small business in Queensland will prosper.

Just what have members opposite done over the past 18 months to give small businesses the encouragement they need? Nothing! As a matter of fact, they have actually done the opposite. They have done everything possible to talk the economy down. They have done everything possible to damage small business confidence because it suited their political purpose. The Opposition is less concerned about the needs of small business than it is with achieving political power at any cost. Worse still, members opposite have been guilty of misrepresenting Dr Hewson's Fightback package with its insidious GST as some sort of panacea for the difficulties being experienced by small business. They would have us believe that a goods and services tax would not impact negatively on small business. The Federal coalition seems to have designed its plans for the Australian economy without any recognition of the unique nature of that important part of the economy—small business. The Opposition has embarked on a redistribution of wealth in this country, the likes of which the most ardent communist would have been proud. The difference is that, under Dr Hewson, those who can least afford to bear the burden will be called upon to increase their taxation contribution, while at the same time the well off will be paying far less. The GST is the mechanism by which this will be achieved, and small businesses will unwittingly be the vehicle used to a large extent by being conscripted as unpaid tax collectors.

Let us look at the real-life experience of a small-business operator who suffered under the GST in New Zealand. I will quote from a letter to the editor by Mrs Shirley Rynd of Townsville. She wrote—

"I ran a small business for a time and begrudged the extra hours I had to spend on (a) restocking and having to work out and add the GST to every item; (b) stocktaking and having to work out and deduct the GST on every item; and (c) spending hours after work filling in the dreaded returns, so complex for the

ordinary person who can't afford an accountant for the day-to-day running of the business that everyone had to go to classes of instruction first.

Large firms had to employ extra staff to deal with the greater accounting workloads—resulting in higher costs to the end product. And then there were the spot checks by the tax department for evasion of the tax and even the most meticulous often found that they had a shortfall to make up, for reasons so complex that it was easier to take the tax officer's word for it!"

We need to take careful note of just how the application of the GST has changed overseas and, probably more to the point, how quickly the coalition was able to alter it last December when faced with poor opinion polls. The good doctor has already broken his promise not to alter the GST component of Fightback at any price. As I recall it, he said that he would resign first. If the temptation to change was too great for him after a few less-than-favourable polls, what will be the reaction if a coalition Government sees itself short of funds? The answer is simple: increase the GST.

The track record of those Governments which have applied a GST or a VAT—value added tax—is certainly not a good one. The evidence bears this out. The International Monetary Fund has recorded how Governments throughout the world have succumbed to the temptations to alter the exemptions, the zero ratings and the overall rates on VAT. Let us not bother to dwell on the myriad cases in which fiscally weak Governments in peripheral Europe and Latin America have resorted to such measures. Let us instead look for a moment at how some of those major economies of western Europe have altered their VAT rates. In Britain, the rate went from 10 per cent to 17.5 per cent; in France, from 13.6 per cent up to 18.6 per cent; in Germany, from 10 per cent to 14 per cent; and in Sweden, from 11 per cent to 25 per cent. We are to start at 15 per cent. Where will we end up?

There is a claim by the proponents of the Fightback package that GST will actually produce some sort of payroll tax relief. The Opposition proposes to offset the GST by removing payroll tax. However, it is estimated that fewer than 1 per cent of Queensland's 124 000 small businesses pay payroll tax. The Fightback proposals give medium and large businesses a significant advantage over small business. Big business now pays payroll tax and small business does not. Under Fightback, neither will pay payroll tax but both will pay GST. Surely, no-one needs to be a genius to work out that small business will be placed at a competitive disadvantage to the much bigger operations. What we have is a lifting of the tax liability from big business, yet at the same time the introduction of new taxes to small business, which already has some difficulty competing. It is obvious that the coalition does not really care about small business operators. Its selling of the GST as a boon to small business is nothing but a sham. Once again, Dr Hewson and members opposite are cosyng up to the so-called captains of industry. They have deserted small business, but they are still prepared to use it for their own ends—to collect tax and to push the GST.

I turn now to the effect on cash flow. GST will be payable after the issue of an invoice for the sale of a good or service, not on receipt of payment. This means that small businesses that provide credit will have to remit tax and carry the cost themselves until credit accounts are paid. This will result in a cash flow bonanza for some industries, notably large retailers such as Coles Myer, Woolworths and Franklins. The GST system is more complicated for credit businesses such as manufacturers and wholesalers, and especially for those which have irregular cash flows. Some small businesses are in just that position. I do not believe that members opposite really care about small business. They are more interested in their big-business mates.

An unfair compliance burden will result for small businesspeople. The cost of compliance is higher for small businesses than it is for large businesses. A United Kingdom study has found that for every 1,000 pounds of goods sold by small business, the compliance cost of the VAT was, on average, 7 pounds and 80 pence. However, for big business the compliance costs were only three pence—three measly pence! In other

words, at the margins, the compliance costs of the smallest were, proportionately, 260 times greater than those of big business.

What about the free time of people who operate small businesses? Small businesspeople will have a lot less time to spend on themselves and will have to spend a lot more time on compliance and collecting tax for the Hewson Government, if ever it is elected. John Morine, an Auckland-based chartered accountant, wrote an article for the January issue of *Australian Small Business and Investing*, in which he stated—

“Sunday at the beach with the family will be a thing of the past, as you spend your leisure time grappling with GST returns and trying to unscramble your accounting records from taxation complications you do not understand.”

What about the expense for small business of these administrative details? Small businesses may have to change accounting systems and they may have to amend their existing computer software programs, at a cost of 10 per cent to 15 per cent of original software program costs, according to one estimate. Outside expertise may have to be brought in to handle GST administration. At present, only 70 000 or so businesses pay the existing wholesale sales tax, but under Dr Hewson's GST proposal, more than 750 000 businesses would become reporting entities. That would mean a lot more paperwork and the need to develop new and more comprehensive accounting systems for the majority of small and medium-sized businesses. Paperwork will grow. Small business will need to keep records on every item or service purchased as well as sold in order to claim credits on GST paid on business inputs.

As I stated earlier, small businesses will become the unpaid tax collectors of a Hewson Government. It is estimated that in New Zealand the cost to business of collecting the GST has been more than 25 per cent of total revenue collected. I point out that all members opposite who have interjected during my speech will be looking over their shoulders if a Hewson Government is elected and small businesspeople come to their doors, dropping on them the results of this devastating tax. Small business can do without it.

Time expired.

Goods and Services Tax

Mrs SHELDON (Caloundra—Leader of the Liberal Party) (11.35 a.m.): After that diatribe of tripe and misinformation from Labor members, it is no wonder that their Federal colleagues will be sitting on the Opposition benches after 13 March. John Hewson has said many times during this election campaign that the Liberal/National coalition has a plan for Australia, and Mr Keating does not. As John Hewson has stated, “Mate, you have got a past; we have got a plan.” That plan is about jobs, jobs and jobs.

Mr McGrady interjected.

Mrs SHELDON: If the Honourable the Minister listens, he will find out.

An Opposition member interjected.

Mrs Sheldon: No, he will not, because he is in the business of spreading misinformation, too. The Federal Labor Government has a past which includes reckless spending, deals for its mates and union bosses and more than a million conscripts to Labor's army of unemployed. The Queensland Labor Government has a reputation. It makes up facts and figures to suit any occasion. The honourable member for Mulgrave has just provided a classic example of that. Since Queensland Labor substitutes fantasy for its own economic record, it will not allow voters to judge the coalition's Fightback package on its merits. The Government has adopted the big lie as a matter of policy.

In the case of the De Lacy document, on which Labor has based its recent misinformation campaign about State funding, we should hope that an incoming coalition Government in Canberra simply dismisses it as a tissue of lies. If Mr De Lacy and his figures were taken seriously by the Federal Treasury, that document could cost

Queenslanders a lot of money. Over the past few days, a procession of Ministers have claimed how we will all be ruined in Queensland under the coalition formula for reimbursing the States for the abolition of payroll tax, otherwise known—

Government members interjected.

Mrs SHELDON: My Labor friends should listen. The payroll tax is known as Labor's tax on jobs, and Government members support it. The honourable member for Mulgrave certainly supported it. This financial year, Queensland Treasury expects to pick up \$817m from this nastiest of all taxes. It is the largest revenue windfall levied by this Labor Government. On 10 February, the Premier quoted from the De Lacy document to explain how a replacement grants formula, based on the past three years of payroll tax collections, would diddle Queenslanders out of \$150m each year. According to Labor, it seems that collections are assumed to be down by that amount, because of the recession we had to have. Remember how Mr Keating coined this as the recession we had to have? This \$150m shortfall is a major component of the \$367m budgetary black hole which Labor uses to threaten Queenslanders for when the coalition wins Government in Canberra. Mr De Lacy must think we are all as stupid as he is! The De Lacy document is all about getting Queensland ready for a petrol tax, no matter what happens in Canberra. For starters, the Premier is using the wrong formula. That same day, 10 February, Rob Borbidge and I joined other coalition leaders, including the majority of State Premiers, in signing a jobs communique with John Hewson. A central plank of the communique is a Federal grant to compensate each State for the total abolition of payroll tax. Yes, Mr Treasurer, the compensation formula is totally different from the three-year average of collections mentioned in the original Fightback package. It was changed because Labor's recession has given us record unemployment and depressing payroll tax collections right across Australia.

To ensure that there is no excuse for the rubbish which Government members' ministerial colleagues have been trotting out over the past few weeks, I will read the new formula into *Hansard*. It states—

"The payroll tax refund will be sourced from GST revenue, thereby providing the States with a more stable revenue base. The amount of each State's grant so calculated would be expressed as a percentage of the GST base. This process would ensure that payroll tax abolition grants grow automatically with the economy, and will be distributed equitably."

However, that is not the end of the story. According to the Australian Chamber of Manufacturers, at least 175 000 new jobs would result from the abolition of payroll tax in Australia, with State by State compensation according to that formula. Simple arithmetic demonstrates that Queensland companies could afford immediately to take on 27 300 workers at \$30,000 each, paying wages instead of tax, which is a novel idea for Labor, without the Government losing a single cent. We can now assume that the Treasurer's \$150m trick on the people of Queensland has been shown for what it always was—a cheap trick. We can also assume that a coalition Government will not only compensate Queensland fully for the abolition of jobs tax—which is currently \$817m—but also will tie future compensation to the expanding financial base of GST.

There is then the \$228m that this Government levies in payroll tax on its own employees. Fully 28 per cent of the \$817m from payroll tax this year is levied on Government departments and statutory authorities. Mr De Lacy will find that it is contained in the Budget papers—if he can follow them. That pea and thimble trick adds \$228m to the payroll tax revenue. Currently, it is only a book entry. However, under a job creating coalition Government instead of the current tax-mad Labor regime, it becomes something else altogether.

If the Treasurer is half bright—much brighter than his document indicates—the Queensland Treasury could turn a tidy profit from the coalition's Fightback package and another 27 300 Queenslanders can look forward to working for a living. So much for Labor's scaremongering over the past few weeks! With the \$150m furphy out of the way and the \$228m tax on public servants transformed from a book entry to additional State

income, the Treasury is \$370m up on the new payroll tax arrangements alone. That is the truth instead of the fiction. Where is the Treasurer's \$367m black hole? Currently, Fightback puts Queenslanders \$11m ahead, and I have covered only one of the 12 revenue implications that are dealt with in the Treasurer's document. Mr Borbidge dealt with the others and showed them to be the furphies that they are.

It would be easy to dismiss this document as a financial joke. However, among the sloppy arithmetic, stupid assumptions and straight-out lies, there is a very sinister message. It is called petrol tax. Queensland taxpayers cannot keep up the money to match this Government's spending spree. Despite a 13 per cent increase in the State Budget in just three years, Queensland is showing all the signs of another Labor basket case. The once proud health system is a life-threatening shambles. The state of the tertiary education system speaks for itself. One only has to read the sorry headlines that heralded the winners and the losers in the higher education lottery that was held last month. An underfunded and undermanned police force has all but given up on the current crime wave that has been fuelled by Labor's unemployment and a failing economy which denies work to job seekers.

Last night, on television, the Premier said that the health system was sound but was under a bit of strain. However, he did not tell us why. He did not tell the surgeon who approached him yesterday outside the Princess Alexandra Hospital why medical staff were excluded from Keating's campaign speech on the health system. Was he scared that medical staff would laugh at the wrong times? The fact is that Labor has blown the health budget on non-medical bureaucracy and sweetheart deals with unions right across-the-board. Somebody has to pay for it. According to the time-honoured traditions of the ALP machine, that person is the taxpayer. Ever since the coalition announced that Fightback would mean that petrol prices would fall by 19 cents a litre for the family car and 26 cents a litre for business vehicles, this Labor Government has been planning to rip off the Queensland motorist. It is the only way it can claw back the Budget figures. The Premier has been ever so delicately hinting at a petrol tax. The De Lacy document, which was released last November, was an attempt to give it the official seal of approval. The document, which is supposed to have been prepared by responsible, politically impartial Treasury officers, returns repeatedly to the petrol tax theme. It is held out as the price Queenslanders must pay if the coalition wins the election. I have shown already that that is a load of codswallop. However, the petrol tax threat remains.

The De Lacy document was supposed to soften the ground by blaming anyone other than the inept Treasurer for Queensland's budgetary blues because it is the clear intention of the Government to introduce a petrol tax in this State irrespective of which party wins the election in Canberra. Labor needs the extra money to balance the Budget, to take the strain out of the health system and to restore enough Government services to allow it to be re-elected in 1995. However, on Friday, during an interview on ABC radio, the Deputy Premier pre-empted the petrol tax strategy when he nominated the figure of 10c a litre. The Government's Media Unit must have gone into overdrive to kill off that story until after the election. The reality is that the money is going to come from a petrol tax of 10c a litre. It does not matter that the Government should be able to achieve a better level of service under Fightback proposals; it does not matter that Queensland taxpayers will share an income tax break of approximately \$1.6 billion under the coalition tax reform package. This Government will continue to lie about the consequences of Fightback while it plans a petrol tax on Queensland motorists. Of course, there will soon be a Federal election. As I said last weekend, one can judge Labor's election depression by the size of the lies told by the Goss Ministry.

Goods and Services Tax

Mr NUTTALL (Sandgate) (11.45 a.m.) As an active sportsman and as the GST is such a popular topic, I will talk about the GST and its effect on sport and recreation in this country. Labor's positive encouragement and funding of sport has enabled Australian sport to improve at both the elite and the community levels. Obviously, the

Barcelona Olympics illustrated the success of the Labor Government's current policy. However, Dr Hewson's consumption tax would hurt sport on two fronts. The first is sports participation. The increased cost of sport for players and spectators would lead to decreasing participation as sporting clubs and their members have to pay the tax. Of course, the second is sports administration. The cost and complexity of administering any sporting body would increase tremendously. On sports policy, Labor and the coalition are poles apart.

As to participation in sport—playing sport is more than running around on a football field, playing netball, or running in a race. Sport also helps people to develop social skills, physical confidence, and friendships, and to relax. In that sense, sport is central to many community activities. Sport is a discretionary expense for most families. If the cost goes up, many people could choose not to participate. A GST would increase the cost of sport to all participants and supporters. That means that participants from lower income households, particularly large families, could find it more expensive to participate and may have to drop out.

I shall give some examples of costs that would increase with the GST. Firstly, in relation to registration fees—the GST would apply to all levels of competition. For example, under Dr Hewson's policy a current fee of \$80 would increase to about \$90. As to any entry fees—all team entry fees would be subject to GST. That would include touch football, indoor cricket, and other similar types of sports. As to admission charges—all participants and spectators would pay more for entry to the football, swimming pools, basketball stadiums and racecourses. In relation to uniforms—an extra 11 per cent would apply to the cost of items such as tracksuits, shorts, jumpers, socks and boots.

Because coaching courses are not regarded by the Opposition as education, the GST would also apply to them. This would include junior coaching camps, swimming squads, tennis coaching, aerobics and self-defence classes. Also, coaches and referees attending accredited coaching courses would be required to pay the GST. As to the cost of travelling to tournaments and championships—domestic air travel and accommodation would be subject to the GST and would increase by over 8 per cent. Sporting clubs in Brisbane, such as the Broncos, the Bullets and the Bandits, would be required to pay the GST on any of their interstate travels.

Mr FitzGerald: Cheaper fuel, cheaper travel.

Mr NUTTALL: I will get to that. As to travel by road—the Opposition has claimed that sports people would benefit from the removal of the fuel excise. However, it has also admitted that the excise would be replaced with the GST and an undefined road-user charge—whatever that might mean. Until road-user charges are spelled out, any benefit from cuts to fuel excise are nothing but an illusion.

The Opposition has said openly that the GST would pass on costs to users, including participants in non-professional sports. The Opposition has also attempted to argue that by removing some existing taxes the overall cost of participation would be reduced. This is simply not correct. The impact of payroll tax and wholesale tax on sports clubs is negligible. The impact of the GST, however, would be devastating. Increased costs would hit all participants in sport, regardless of their income and ability. Instead of promoting sport to boost national fitness and a healthier lifestyle, the GST would penalise people who participate in sport.

In relation to sports administration—a GST would make life much tougher for sporting organisations. Dr Hewson would place an enormous administrative burden on Australia's 30 000 sports clubs. Those clubs are the backbone of Australian sport. Most of them are small, non-profit organisations which depend for survival on volunteer administrators, coaches and managers. Each of those clubs would become a tax collector and have to register to obtain a GST number. Under the GST, non-profit sporting clubs and volunteer club administrators would have to calculate the tax on all their club's income—apart from donations—including subscriptions, canteen profits and gate receipts, and send a return to the Government. The club would be able to claim a

rebate on the GST paid on purchases such as equipment and printing but, again, the work involved in assessing the rebates would be quite substantial.

Dr Hewson plays down the problem by saying that administrative burdens would apply only to clubs with an annual turnover above \$50,000. With the trend for smaller clubs to amalgamate in order to achieve administrative efficiency, many clubs would exceed that threshold. However, clubs below the threshold which do not register for GST would not be able to claim a refund of GST on goods and services. Those clubs would also have to pay GST on affiliation fees to parent organisations, hire fees for venues and costs for supplies, but they could not claim a refund. This would leave the organisation only one option, that is, to pass on the cost to its members. Donations would not be subject to GST, but clubs cannot plan ahead on the basis of ad hoc donations alone. The coalition has ruled out clubs setting a registration fee and calling it a donation in order to avoid the GST. Therefore, how could clubs plan income and expenditure on the basis of donations?

In relation to accounting—organisations that register for the GST would have to keep detailed records of all transactions. Receipts must be issued and documents kept to justify the amount charged and the GST levied. Receipts would have to be supplied on all sales, including registration fees, admission charges, clothing and equipment sales. Sporting groups would need to adopt new accounting systems and keep far more complex accounts. In most cases, specifically designed computer software would be required. There would be penalties for failure to lodge GST paperwork. The administrative cost of the GST for clubs would be enormous and a major stress on amateur and voluntary organisations. Club treasurers would be responsible for calculating the total amount of GST paid and received for each period and submitting a return to the tax office. The standard period would be probably once every six months. That significant extra administrative work would make the job of the club treasurer in a voluntary organisation much harder. The GST administration would be complex and time consuming. Many smaller clubs would find it impossible to rely on voluntary workers to carry out those complex administrative tasks. If a club paid an accountant to look after its bookkeeping, it would even have to pay GST on the accountant's bill.

With a GST, the administration of all sporting groups would become significantly more time consuming, expensive and complicated. Sports would face loss of volunteers, increased burden on treasurers and/or paid employees, increased administration costs and far more complex administrative and accounting processes. Those new factors would put an intolerable burden on many small sporting clubs and their members. Many would not survive. All would have to use a far higher proportion of their resources on administration, reducing the amount of time and effort they are able to put into junior development, competition, promotion and coaching. Inevitably, those activities would suffer.

Dr Hewson would cut \$17m from the Australian Sports Commission, which runs the Australian Institute of Sport and most other sports programs; \$7m from the AIS; and \$10m from the Community Cultural, Recreation and Sporting Facilities Program. Mr Steve Arnaudon, Director of Sports Development at the Australian Institute of Sport, said that \$7m would have to come off the AIS budget, and scholarships such as those allowed to our Olympic representatives to attain excellence would be at risk. In the *Sydney Morning Herald* of 4 August 1992, he stated—

“The board would have to look across all programs and scholarships . . . ”

Time expired.

Debate interrupted.

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Before calling the honourable member for Barambah, I advise the House that His Excellency Mr Peter Niederberger, the Ambassador of

Switzerland, and his wife are present in the Speaker's Gallery, as is the Consul-General of Switzerland, Mr Hans Meier.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Debate resumed.

Fightback

Mr PERRETT (Barambah) (11.54 a.m.): The people of provincial Queensland are ready to deliver a message to Paul Keating. It is a message that this Government—and especially the Minister for Primary Industries—would do well to heed. The message is very simple. Labor's policies have done untold harm to regional Australia. We have had enough. We are ready to fight back. There is an essential and very close link between the fortunes of farmers and those of hundreds of cities and towns in Queensland. It was once considered that, if General Motors coughed, the United States got a cold. That sort of relationship is true of farms and the communities which they support, and which support them. When sugar booms, the same is true of towns such as Mackay, Bundaberg and Innisfail. When grain booms, it is towns such as Toowoomba, Dalby, Warwick and Goondiwindi that boom along with it. The prosperity or otherwise of the cattle industry is mirrored in centres such as Rockhampton and Roma. That is why provincial Queensland cannot wait for polling day. The people of provincial Queensland know that a coalition Government in Canberra will make a real start on restoring prosperity to the farming sector and the provincial community. The grain depot worker in Toowoomba, the slaughterman in Rockhampton and the mill worker in Mackay know that they will share in the prosperity gains for farmers. The mechanic repairing grain trucks in Emerald or Toowoomba knows a prosperous grain industry ensures his job and the real level of his wages. Fightback will do that through policies aimed specifically at the real problems of regional Australia.

Only yesterday, the next Minister for Primary Industries, Bruce Lloyd, gave farmers the best news they have had in the past few years. The coalition Government will restore "severe drought" to the natural disaster list. The member for Mackay, the member for Bundaberg and the Federal member for Hinkler can howl with impotent fury—but, once again, farmers battling nature's worst will not be fighting alone. Justice will once more be done. One of the farmers' traditional weapons against drought was always income equalisation deposits. Under Labor, they became less than attractive. But the coalition has pledged to restore IEDs. In future, 85 per cent of the deposit will attract interest, and the same provision will apply to farm management bonds. Farmers have always placed great store on self-reliance. The coalition policy will help them achieve that. Where severe drought exists, help is necessary, and it will be forthcoming. Fightback will directly improve the profit and loss equation for every farm in Queensland. It will also add directly to farm household budgets through real increases in family allowance. It will help farm families keep food on the table as they struggle to overcome the rural cash crisis that everyone now admits has reached disaster levels.

From 1 July this year, the coalition Government will increase the family allowance by 50 per cent for farm families battling with incomes less than \$30,000 and by 25 per cent for those with incomes between \$30,000 and \$40,000. The family allowance supplement will increase by 3 per cent. Those increases will be repeated on 1 October next year—clear recognition by the coalition that farm families need a helping hand through the worst crisis they have faced for decades. The average net benefit to farm families from the family allowance changes and the exclusion of basic food from the GST is \$43.22 per week. The coalition will modify the farm household support for farm families in desperate financial trouble. Under Labor, that payment is treated as a loan unless the family agrees to leave the farm. That is an outrageous demand. Imagine the outcry if city people had to give up everything to qualify for the unemployment benefit.

Under the new coalition Government, farm household support will be given for 12 months with no strings attached. Farm families will be treated like other Australians who are in desperate financial trouble through no fault of their own. The money used to help farm families survive is money that will be spent in local butcher shops and supermarkets. It is money that will circulate in the local economy, spreading the benefit from the farm to the local community. That is the sort of thing that Fightback will do for rural and regional Queensland.

Of course, that is just the tip of the iceberg. Fightback will benefit every farm and regional business in Queensland. The National Farmers Federation commissioned a study of Fightback by the independent consultants ACIL Australia. ACIL studied the whole of Fightback, not merely the GST element which Labor politicians like to talk about. The whole of Fightback was applied to the real business transactions of real farms, and the study reached conclusions which Labor likes to turn its back on. The study found that farmers would benefit to the tune of more than \$1 billion a year from the cuts in indirect taxes under Fightback. ACIL concluded that farm business incomes would rise between at least 8 per cent and 29 per cent. It concluded that a mixed grain and wool enterprise in southern New South Wales would benefit to the tune of \$9,218 a year, or 15 per cent; a dry land dairy farm in Victoria would have a boost to farm business income of \$5,241, or 9 per cent; and the figure for a merino wool producer in southern New South Wales would be \$4,443, a rise of 8 per cent. ACIL found that a north Queensland cattle producer would benefit from Fightback to the tune of \$20,665 per year, a rise in business income of 29 per cent. The sugar industry organisation Canegrowers has applied the ACIL model and come up with an annual benefit of \$2,100 for the average cane farmer. Fightback benefits for Queensland will be greater than they will be for most parts of Australia because of the role transport plays in moving people and goods over vast distances. A reduction of 26c per litre in the cost of diesel or petrol used commercially will have a huge impact, as will the reduction of 19c a litre in the cost of fuel used in private vehicles. A commercial traveller driving a Commodore or a Falcon from Townsville to Mount Isa would save \$18.10 on each trip. If he drove from Townsville to Rockhampton, he would save \$4.80.

Rises and falls in fuel costs flow right through our economy since the cost of everything each of us uses each day has a cost component which can be traced directly to transportation. Abolition of fuel excise and the elimination of sales tax on trucks, spare parts and tyres will mean a saving of \$44,000 per year, per truck. That saving will be reflected in lower transport costs for food, clothing, household goods, machinery, livestock, wool, grain and mining production. But Labor never tells us about that!

We can be precise about savings for farm businesses. Farmers already receive a rebate on diesel used on-farm, but that is only about half their usage of diesel, petrol and other fuels. Under Fightback, the average farmer will be relieved of the current fuel tax burden of \$5,540 per year. Farmers will benefit from the end of sales tax. Currently, they pay sales tax on all vehicles and spares, with the exception of some four-wheel drives. They pay sales tax indirectly every time they use a service with a road transport component. Figures prepared by the Federal Treasury show that wholesale sales tax costs the average farmer \$2,290 per year. That input cost will be eliminated by Fightback. Labor politicians try to deceive us that farmers will get no benefit from the elimination of payroll tax. After 10 years in the hands of a Labor Government, the Federal Treasury estimates that indirect payroll tax costs the average farmer \$1,320 per year.

Mr Pearce: How?

Mr PERRETT: The honourable member should just listen. That occurs because farmers do a lot of business with companies which do pay payroll tax directly. They deal with very large companies which supply items such as fencing and packaging materials, agricultural chemicals and transport services. The effect of payroll tax on those companies is passed on to their farmer customers. The same impost is faced by every rural business, including those in the regional towns and cities. When the Premier and the Treasurer take the Keating line on those indirect tax effects, every Queensland

should worry. It shows that they are happy to spread patently false information, or else they have no understanding at all of economics. Whichever is the case, they are unfit for the high offices that they hold.

Fightback promises major savings in input costs through the abolition of fuel excise, wholesale sales tax and payroll tax. A GST will be payable in some circumstances, but that will be fully rebatable when an item is used in the course of production. The net result will be huge savings in input costs for every primary producer in this State and for every business in rural and regional Queensland. That is money which will be spent in the local community. It will keep the mechanics, driveway attendants, pharmacists, shop assistants, bank clerks and electricians in their jobs in profitable businesses.

Mr T. B. Sullivan interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Chermerside.

Mr PERRETT: Rural Queenslanders and all other Queenslanders will, due to Fightback, be the big winners after 13 March. They have their chance to vote for a positive policy and rid Australia of Labor and Keating, and they will not squander their opportunity!

Queensland's Health Services

Mr BEATTIE (Brisbane Central) (12.04 p.m.): Queenslanders need to be acutely aware that Queensland's health services would be seriously eroded by Dr Hewson's health policy as set out in the Fightback document.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: I can see members opposite squirming. The National Party supporting the GST—what a joke! There will even be a 15 per cent tax on water—imposed on all the water-carters and all the people on the land—and yet members of the National Party in this House are supporting the GST. What a disgrace!

Dr Hewson's Fightback policy would erode the Medicare system and that will have particular, serious effects on Queensland. Because of our free hospital system, no-one should be under any illusion about the impact of Dr Hewson's Fightback policy on Queensland's health system. To begin with, under Fightback, Queensland's public hospital system would lose \$220m. That equals 1 730 beds.

Mr FitzGerald: How?

Mr BEATTIE: If the honourable member listened instead of sitting there with a vacant look, he would find out. Under a Hewson Government, the \$220m would be lost to the Queensland hospital system to fund tax rebates on payments to private insurance companies. Dr Hewson is offering tax credits of up to \$800 a year to low income earners with private insurance, while at the same time penalising the middle to high income earners if they do not buy private health insurance. In that case, all a Hewson Government would be doing is paying a massive direct subsidy to the private health insurance industry. This coalition plan would see \$1.4 billion of taxpayers' funds being paid to the private insurance industry.

But the most alarming and distressing aspect of all this is that there would be absolutely no gain in health services for the Queensland community—absolutely no gain! All that would happen is that the Queensland hospital system would lose \$220m which, as I said, would go to the private insurance industry—a case of Dr Hewson looking after his AMA mates. For Dr Hewson, profits would be put ahead of health services. As Paul Keating pointed out yesterday, Dr Hewson is the sort of person who supports a payment of \$3 an hour for youth wages and \$3 a minute for doctors. In addition, the rebates for low income earners under the Hewson plan would not even pay for the most basic health insurance cover. It certainly would not cover the cost of a private hospital stay. People will still use the public hospital system in this State, from

which Dr Hewson would take \$220m. The Commonwealth Department of Health, Housing and Community Services estimates that the extra cost of basic table hospital insurance, plus gap insurance for out-of-hospital medical services, would add \$1,140 to the annual health bill for a family with two children. A figure of \$510 per year would be added for singles, and that is after the net tax credits have been taken into account. Queensland families would be paying \$1,140 a year more for health care under Mr Hewson's policies.

Mr Nuttall: Plus 15 per cent.

Mr BEATTIE: Yes, plus 15 per cent. For families, that cost will be made up of \$10 a week to pay the full cost of basic insurance, \$6 a week for gap insurance and approximately \$5.75 a week for the associated costs of medical services, including compulsory co-payments. Any family who could not, or chose not to, purchase private insurance would face significant out-of-pocket costs. They would also have difficulty obtaining access to public hospitals which would be forced to chase the private patient dollar to compensate for the massive cuts to Commonwealth spending on public hospitals. Dr Hewson's scheme would also mean that when an average Queenslanders visits his or her doctor, the up-front cost for most people will be increased from zero to \$31. People are going to be paying \$31 more for an average visit to a doctor. But that is not all. The "great" Fightback policy means that bulk billing will be retained only for pensioners, the unemployed, low income earners, disabled people and health-care card-holders. This means that most people will have to pay their medical bills up front, not as they do under the present system. If that is not enough, the Medicare rebate will be reduced to 75 per cent of the Medical Benefits Schedule, which means that, on average, people will be paying 10 per cent more for medical services. Sure, it will remain at 85 per cent for those who are bulk billed, but those who are not will lose 10 per cent. The only people who will be bulk billed will be the low income earners, so the average Australian who is not in the low income bracket will be paying 10 per cent more than he or she is now. In addition to all that, of course, everyone would still be paying a Medicare levy of 1.25 per cent.

I do not think any of us can forget that in 1971 and, indeed, especially in 1981, many Australians had no health cover at all. In 1981 under the Fraser Federal Government, two million Australians were without any health cover because they could not afford private health insurance with which the Liberal Party and its mates in the AMA hit them.

Mr Pearce: What about all those people who went to gaol?

Mr BEATTIE: I am coming to that. In fact, one of the biggest reasons why people went to gaol for non-payment of debts was for unpaid health bills. That is what Hewson is all about—sending people to gaol because they cannot pay their health bills! In contrast to that, Medicare is simple and it is fair, and it will not be sending people to gaol. The ALP is about keeping the "care" in Medicare. We are all about quality of health care for all Australians, not just for the rich, which is what Dr Hewson is all about. People should not lose sight of the benefits of the current Medicare system, which are basically these: bulk billing is available to everyone, regardless of income; an 85 per cent rebate of the Medical Benefits Schedule fee for services outside hospital is available, and public hospital treatment is free for public in-patients; although no incentives are provided for private insurance, people can choose to take out private cover if they wish; gap insurance is not allowed except for in-patient medical services; the Medicare levy is paid by Australians to fund the scheme; and Medicare guarantees every Australian equal access to health services. It is impossible to imagine anything more basic or more equitable in the provision of health services than Medicare. If health services benefit the rich, as would occur under Fightback, then average Australians are being discriminated against. The stark difference in health policies that has emerged during this Federal election campaign between, on the one hand, the Liberal/National Party and, on the other hand, the Labor Party is that the Labor Party supports the Medicare agreement as an uncompromising declaration of a Government's commitment to free health care for all

people, whatever their financial resources. As I said earlier, it would not be possible to get anything more basic or more important than health care for the average Queenslander and the average Australian, which is why the Goss Government has maintained such a strong commitment to the Medicare funding scheme.

Queensland has a proud tradition of providing free public hospital care. Medicare is the safeguard for protecting and enhancing that system which has served the people of Queensland well for half a century. The Medicare agreement provides public health services, and it is not about pandering to the vested interests who want private health insurance made easier. My electorate of Brisbane Central covers the Royal Brisbane Hospital and the people who work there. It is important to the Royal Brisbane Hospital and the sick people who go there, particularly the large number of senior citizens who live in my electorate and elsewhere, that the Medicare agreement be maintained. The dishonesty hidden in the Hewson plan is that the coalition's superficial promise of tax concessions for people with private health insurance fails to declare that those concessions will be paid for through a reduced level of funding to the public health system, and that it will make the private insurers fat and wealthy. Under Hewson, hospitals such as the RBH will suffer. The effect of the Hewson plan would be to reward those people who already have private health insurance while punishing two-thirds of Queensland's population who do not have private health insurance and who currently rely on the free public hospital system. I reiterate that two-thirds of the total number of Queenslanders do not have private health insurance. They will be devastated by Hewson's attack on the free public hospital system in Queensland. In this State, Fightback will have a greater impact because of the two-thirds of the total number of people in Queensland who do not have private health insurance.

Fightback represents a fundamental shift from the provision of a free public hospital system in Queensland towards forcing people to take out private health insurance. It will end this State's universal free public hospital system and deny the traditional right of all Queenslanders to free public hospital treatment. Queenslanders need to be acutely aware that a vote for the Liberal Party and a vote for John Hewson's Fightback package is a vote against Queensland's free hospital system.

I conclude my remarks by pointing out that the Cole committee, which was set up by Mr Hewson, has stated that the GST may apply to health items and services also. Mr Hewson is supportive of the Cole committee, except when he has to try to run away from the embarrassing matters it raises. If the Cole committee recommendations are adopted by the Liberal Party, it will mean that the GST will apply to basic items such as walking sticks, hearing aids, back braces—you name it. Nothing will be exempt from the rape of the Fightback package.

Time expired.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The time allotted for the Matters of Public Interest debate has expired.

GOVERNOR'S OPENING SPEECH

Mr SPEAKER: I have to report that Her Excellency the Governor, on Tuesday, 4 November 1992, delivered to Parliament an Opening Speech of which, for greater accuracy, I have obtained a copy. I presume honourable members will take the Speech as read?

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

ADDRESS IN REPLY

Mrs ROSE (Currumbin) (12.15 p.m.), who was received with Government "Hear, hears!", said: I move—

“That the following address be presented to the Governor in reply to the Speech delivered by Her Excellency in opening this, the first session of the Forti-seventh Parliament of Queensland—

‘May it please Your Excellency:—

We, Her Majesty’s loyal and dutiful subjects, the members of the Legislative Assembly of Queensland, wish to assure Your Excellency of our continued loyalty and affection towards the throne and person of our most gracious sovereign and to tender our thanks to Your Excellency for the speech with which you opened the first session. The various measures to which Your Excellency has referred and all other matters that may be brought before us will receive our careful consideration and we shall strive to deal with them so that our endeavours may contribute to the advancement and the prosperity of the State.’ ”

Since 19 September of last year, the second Goss Government has moved quickly to implement its package for continued reform and increased social and economic stability in Queensland. The people of Queensland convincingly re-elected the Labor Government because of its commitment to continued reform. A number of the measures mentioned by Her Excellency the Governor in the Speech with which she opened the first session of Parliament are now well under way. They have not been delayed by extensive and useless administrative procedure and are now beginning to achieve their objective—to benefit Queensland communities at the regional and local level. Speaking locally, I would have to say that the Currumbin electorate is already feeling the impact of such measures. Business in the Currumbin electorate now benefits from the first stage of a two-stage increase in the payroll tax threshold. There are already healthy indicators that this will stimulate employment growth across-the-board. Most significantly, it offers incentive and encouragement to the southern Gold Coast’s most significant alternative industry to tourism and building—manufacturing. This suits my assertion that the Gold Coast economy must begin to diversify.

I will outline some of the other measures that are already being implemented and benefiting Currumbin. In combination with the first increase in the payroll tax threshold, payroll tax rebates have been introduced to encourage local businesses to employ 15 to 24 year olds who have been out of work for more than nine months. The number of places offered at the Coolangatta campus of the Gold Coast Institute of TAFE has been increased substantially this semester. The regular monitoring of water quality on beaches and in creeks has begun. Consequently, moves have been initiated to establish local clean water standards and to raise community awareness about pollution and pollutants.

In the relatively short period between last September’s election and now, the Minister for Environment and Heritage has come to Currumbin and taken an active role in lengthy discussions with local environmental groups regarding future directions for environmental management and conservation on the Gold Coast. There has been continued capital works to upgrade and improve local schools. The new Elanora State High School, situated in one of the fastest growing residential areas on the Gold Coast, now nears completion. The renal dialysis unit at the Gold Coast Hospital has received \$142,000 of additional funding. A new \$6.5m psychiatric unit was opened just last Thursday by the Minister for Health. This initiative is designed to offer new and improved facilities for the care of the mentally ill on the Gold Coast. Furthermore, over \$2m of special Commonwealth funding has been allocated by the Minister to the Gold Coast Hospital, and a commitment has been made to the new Medicare agreement which provides a reimbursement of the costs incurred by out-of-State patients. This is of particular significance to the Gold Coast Hospital, which has a large proportion of admissions emanating from northern New South Wales.

The Governor’s Opening Speech embodied this Government’s second-term promise to continue its 1989 commitment to the Queensland people—long-term and sustainable economic and social reform. I am pleased to say that the Currumbin

electorate now benefits from the Government's strategy to target its policies regionally and benefit people locally. In just 18 days, Queenslanders will go back to the polls for the second time in under a year. The terrifying policies of the Federal coalition lead me to say this: on 13 March, Queenslanders face their most significant decision since the 1989 State election. My primary concern in all instances is for the people of the Currumbin electorate. It is their wellbeing and their interests that I stand here in this place to represent. I fear that, regardless of this Government's commitment to the implementation of continued stability and reform, the policies of the Federal coalition would have a devastating effect on the Currumbin electorate.

On many occasions, I have intimated to all honourable members just how vital the tourism industry is to the Currumbin electorate and the Gold Coast. On this point, I am sure that I am in complete agreeance with and have the full support of my parliamentary colleagues representing the other six seats on the Gold Coast strip. Tourism is the single biggest export earner in this country. Fightback would cruel the tourism industry on the Gold Coast. Neither the Federal coalition nor the State coalition has been able to deny this. Attacking tourism is as good as knocking the wind out of the Gold Coast's, and indeed Queensland's, steady progression towards economic recovery. It is foolish and has become the source of much indignation amongst tourism operators on the Gold Coast.

The most lethal component of Fightback to the tourism industry is the proposed goods and services tax or GST. In Canada, it is unaffectionately known as the "go south tax" because of the huge exodus of people leaving for the United States in its wake. Another variation on the term GST sums up the effect that such a tax would have on our tourism industry—"go somewhere else tax". Tourism is a highly complex and interactive service industry. Many tourists prefer to take the complexity out of travel arrangements and so utilise all-inclusive holiday packages arranged by travel agents and the like. Either way, the multiple effect of the GST on tourism cannot be evaded. The costs incurred by the average domestic tourist include air fares, bus fares, hotel tariffs, motel tariffs, restaurants, tourist guide charges, ferries, taxis, tourist attractions such as the Currumbin Sanctuary, Sea World, Dreamworld and Movie World and hire cars. The list goes on and on. It all adds up. Packaged holidays are a successful tool for the tourism industry and offer positive alternatives to the tourist who has neither the time nor the inclination to plan every step of a holiday. However, under a GST, the provision of packaged domestic holidays would just mean another service upon which an extra 15 per cent would be incurred. Suddenly, holidays will become a dull prospect.

Tourists on the Gold Coast will be slugged at every turn and at every stage 15 per cent extra on things from sunscreen to surfboard hire, from sightseeing at Surfers to riding a boogie board at Burleigh. For the domestic tourism industry, the GST will be the death of a thousand cuts. Bleeding and out-of-cash average wage earners wanting to just get away would start looking for cheaper and hassle-free alternatives. And Dr Hewson has got one in mind—Bali. Dr Hewson will not subject overseas holidays to the GST. This is appalling news for the Gold Coast as it stands to lose its most prized source of the tourist dollar, the domestic tourist. Suddenly, it will become comparatively much less expensive and far more convenient to jump on a plane to Bali than to take what once used to be a less expensive trip to the Gold Coast. The Federal Minister for Tourism and Resources, the Honourable Alan Griffiths, says that tourist operators on the Gold Coast will be standing alone on the beach watching 707s with their bellies full of Australians making for places such as Bali where being a tourist does not mean being slugged with a 15 per cent tax at every turn. Seventy-five per cent of Australia's tourism dollars come from Australian tourists. Under Fightback, the GST would increase the cost of accommodation to the domestic tourist by as much as 13 per cent, restaurant meals by as much as 14 per cent, and holiday packages by between 10 per cent and 12 per cent. On the other hand, overseas holidays would be tax free. In essence, Dr Hewson is giving would-be domestic tourists incentive to take a holiday overseas.

Of course, the ramifications are severe. In the Currumbin electorate and on the southern Gold Coast, large tourism operators would not be the only ones to suffer. Just

about every other viable commercial activity would feel the reduction in tourism income. Subsequently, the massive number of tourism and related industry workers would face less-than-favourable job security. Dr Hewson's blade for tourism is double edged. The GST would cause tourism operators vying for a share of the international market to lose a competitive edge. Subsequently, when assessing comparative costs, international tourists might decide to take a trip to the west coast of the United States and California rather than come to Australia and the Gold Coast. Together, tourism operators on the Gold Coast offer visitors a well-rounded and vital array of services. Under Fightback and the GST, each would have to impose an extra cost on every tourist for every service and product they provide. Each would have to carry out this grim task on Dr Hewson's behalf and each would bear the brunt of an inevitable slackening in the domestic and international market.

Taking a pro-active stance in supporting tourism has to be the priority of any Australian State or Federal Government. Recently, the Commonwealth Government announced a \$15m funding allocation for the construction of a new passenger terminal at the Coolangatta Airport in the Currumbin electorate. The Coolangatta Airport underwrites the tourism industry on the Gold Coast. The new federally funded passenger terminal has been welcomed with cheers by local tourism operators. The Federal Government has also allocated \$76m to the Australian Tourist Commission for promotion. These initiatives represent the Federal Government's recognition of the Gold Coast's significance as Australia's most dynamic and fastest-growing tourist destination. As a member who represents an electorate on the Gold Coast, I appreciate and understand the great significance of such support. It represents the general understanding of the important role that tourism will play in our economy in the next decade. The Federal coalition has not displayed such understanding, and I think I have made that abundantly clear today.

This Government has also shown its commitment to tourism on the Gold Coast by assisting Compass Mark II to get off the ground and, of course, back into a regular flight schedule to and from the Coolangatta Airport. The Goss Government has also increased its tourism marketing on the Gold Coast alone by 13 per cent in the 1992-93 Budget period. Perhaps the most significant achievement by the Queensland Government is the process of careful consultation with tourism industry operators and experts. The QTTC is an expert operation given the task of promoting Queensland tourism for the Government. It has achieved worthy results. Tourism marketing must be conducted by experts in consultation with industry leaders. Last year, the result was a bold and colourful campaign with which we are all familiar. "Yo! Way to go" had its knockers, most of whom sit opposite me now. Figures for the sale of the QTTC's Sunlover holiday packages for the December 1992 period showed an increase of 25.17 per cent over the same period the previous year. Tourism leaders across the border in Tweed Heads have attributed increases in tourist numbers on the Gold Coast to the "Yo! Way to go" campaign and have at the same time suggested to the New South Wales Government that it might adopt a similar approach to tourism promotion in the wake of the expensive "New South Wow" campaign flop. Leave it to the experts. The figures show that this is the case. I would hate to see the Tourism portfolio in the hands of some of the honourable members across this Chamber who knocked "Yo! Way to go" without realising that it was well researched, well targeted and well presented. To coin a phrase, it was certainly the way to go. I commend the Honourable Minister for Tourism, Sport and Racing on his stance over that issue and assure him that we welcome its benefits on the southern Gold Coast.

I would also hate to see the responsibility for the tourism industry in the hands of the Federal coalition. The Federal National Party candidate for Kennedy has revealed the coalition's plans to pillage the industry. He said—

"People ask me how we are going to pay for our promises, and I say we're going to rip a billion dollars off the tourists . . ."

Mr Katter is right. The GST will rip a billion dollars and more off the tourists. But at what price to the tourism industry? This quite rightly ignites terrible fear on the Gold Coast. We rely on the tourism industry for our bread and butter. Our tourism industry will be crippled and many local jobs will be lost. For this reason, I oppose Fightback and the GST most passionately. Part of the attraction that makes the Gold Coast such a popular destination for international and interstate visitors is the general perception that it has an active and vigorous community. Those perceptions are not without substance. The Gold Coast has a higher concentration of organised sports and recreational activity taking place than any other region in Australia. Whether it be the Coolangatta Gold Ironman event, the Gold Coast Triathlon or a regional or State netball championship, each weekend all over the Gold Coast organised sporting events are taking place. It is all part of the attraction and it is a major component of the unique character that the community exudes.

The Queensland Government has placed a priority on the development of sports and recreation in regional areas such as the Gold Coast. Both the Queensland and Federal Governments have worked together on successful projects such as the Aussie Sports program for junior sports development, which is coordinated through the Federal Department of Arts, Sport, the Environment and Territories, the Australian Sports Commission and the Queensland Department of Tourism, Sport and Racing. The Queensland Department of Tourism, Sport and Racing offers a large amount of support to sporting clubs and associations through community development programs, which include general needs-based subsidies for local clubs and associations and the junior coaching program; and a Statewide sports development funding program which assists Statewide representative sporting bodies, such as the Queensland Surf Lifesaving Association, with administration, coaching, the staging of events and team travel. The department maintains also an Equity Unit (Sport and Recreation), which deals with issues such as gender participation. Those programs represent the Queensland Government's determination to play a major role in the development of sport and recreation in local communities.

A shadow hangs over the Government's considerable efforts in those respects, and it is of growing concern to the multitude of sporting clubs and associations on the Gold Coast. It should not be a surprise to any honourable member to find that that shadow is Fightback. A GST would increase the cost of sport for all participants and supporters. Participating in sport, whether it be as a competitor or as a spectator, is not the interest of only the well-to-do. Consequently, the extra cost burden that a GST would impose would force many middle to low-income participants to drop out. For the participant, registration fees would be subject to the GST; entry fees would be subject to the GST; uniforms and equipment hire or purchase would be subject to the GST; professional coaching would be subject to the GST; and travel to and from events would be subject to the GST.

That is the bad news for the participants, but what of the clubs and associations? Suddenly, the administration of a sporting club or association will become a much more difficult task. The majority of Australia's 30 000 sporting clubs are small, non-profit organisations which depend on volunteers. Each of those clubs would become a tax collector for Dr Hewson's GST. Although the clubs would be able to claim a rebate on the GST that they would pay on some purchases, the administrators of the clubs would spend most of their weekends locked in their clubhouses calculating the GST rebate, and would spend the rest of the week determining how much GST they have had to charge on Dr Hewson's behalf. Small clubs below Dr Hewson's \$50,000 threshold which do not register a GST number would not be able to claim a GST rebate and subsequently would be forced to pay GST on everything from affiliation fees to equipment costs. Under Fightback, what was once the relatively simple task of administering a local sporting club or association would become an administrative and financial trap.

The Currumbin electorate is perhaps the fastest growing area in the Gold Coast region. Families are attracted to stay on the Gold Coast for a number of reasons.

Perhaps the most significant factor which encourages people to settle on the southern Gold Coast is the availability of affordable housing. A healthy social fabric relies on a majority of local people having a roof over their heads. That provides families with basic and vital security. Affordable homes and rentals are essential to enable middle to low-income families to have enough disposable income to enjoy a reasonable standard of living. Current growth on the southern Gold Coast comes largely from relatively young middle to low-income families, who see an opportunity to own or to rent a reasonably priced home and to enjoy a reasonable standard of living in one of this country's most beautiful regions. I am disheartened to discover that, under Fightback, more families would not be able to afford a home on the southern Gold Coast. The GST would increase the price of homes and make it far more difficult for middle to low-income families to ever own their own home.

Under Fightback, the GST would apply to all building materials. However, builders would not be able to claim a rebate on the tax and so would be forced to pass on the extra cost to customers. Dr Hewson has offered first home buyers some token relief, but people who were not first home buyers would have to foot all of the increased cost. In addition to this, the GST would apply to most other costs associated with buying a house—for example, legal fees, valuations and real estate agent fees. Maintaining a house would become a more costly proposition, with a GST applying to everyday costs such as telephone and electricity bills, and general maintenance or refurbishment costs such as plumbing services, carpentry services, lawn mowing and pest control. It has now been revealed that council commercial rates may also be subjected to the GST. As a result, the average home owner would face an increase in water, sewerage and garbage collection rates.

The southern Gold Coast thrives on growth. It is a dynamic place. Under Fightback, homes would be less affordable, and existing home owners would find it increasingly harder to make ends meet. As a matter of course, property owners renting out homes, flats and units would be forced to pass the burden of a GST on ongoing maintenance costs and real estate agents' fees onto the renter or leaseholder. Rents would increase. Those choosing to reside in boarding houses and private hotels, where no lease arrangements exist, would be forced to pay the GST, effectively increasing their rent by 15 per cent. Attacking the problem of homelessness is a responsibility of any Government. By increasing the cost of having a roof over one's head, the Federal coalition does not offer a bright future for young and lower-income families. The Currumbin electorate and the southern Gold Coast require policy from Government that maintains local stability rather than causing social dislocation and economic upheaval. Recently, I have called upon the leaders of business and industry on the Gold Coast to recognise the necessity for the diversification of the local economy. A strong and vibrant local economy is one that does not rely on the fluctuations of one market alone.

A third significant industry that has displayed positive growth on the Gold Coast is manufacturing. Tourism and building remain the two largest industries. However, there is every reason to encourage the growth of a third. Manufacturers in the Currumbin electorate have proven that they have the capacity to employ local people and to generate wealth within the local community. In Currumbin, manufacturers such as the Neumann group and Tubemakers Foundry employ over 600 local people. During the last two years, there has been a 30 per cent increase in the number of people employed in manufacturing on the Gold Coast. Recently, the Minister for Business, Industry and Regional Development presented local industry development bodies on the Gold Coast with a package of grants amounting to over \$27,000. Those grants were provided by the Government to promote the expansion of various forms of manufacturing on the Gold Coast. They included the plastics, boat building and surf industries. Those industries show a more than promising growth potential on the Gold Coast.

In attempting to promote the growth of manufacturing on the Gold Coast, one faces the important issue of a strong local requirement that any new industry must be clean and non-polluting. Of course, that is not too much to ask. The Queensland Government has led the way in identifying and taking steps to promote such an industry

in the Gold Coast region. Information technology fits the bill as a clean and non-polluting industry, and has the potential to provide a lucrative alternative industry to assist in the diversification of the Gold Coast economy. Recently, the State Government provided grants amounting to approximately \$33,000 to assist in the expansion and development of information technology on the Gold Coast. Those grants are to aid research into future business alternatives available to the information technology industry, part of which will involve recommendations regarding the various strategies available to the Government in its efforts to support and promote the industry.

The Government's initiative in choosing to encourage the promotion of this industry on the Gold Coast is based on revealing figures. International Date Corporation statistics indicate that during 1990-1991 in Queensland, \$1.4 billion was spent on information technology and \$1.5 billion on telecommunications. Of that amount, only \$250m was produced in Queensland. Local demand has outstripped the local industry's output capacity. Subsequently, a deficit exists that must be exploited. The Government's decision to encourage the growth of this industry is arguably one of the most sensible implementations of regional development policy in the recent economic history of the Gold Coast. It reflects an enlightened and dynamic approach to regional development and this Government's recurring theme, which is policy designed to benefit the State regionally and locally. Effective regional development policy is vital to the Gold Coast, which displays the potential to harbour the growth of diverse and lucrative local industry.

The National Industry Extension Service, which is a joint Federal and State Government initiative, has been successful on the Gold Coast in offering 85 local companies a chance to boost productivity. The scheme provides subsidies for those companies to employ specialists in quality management, strategic and market planning, human resource management and advanced manufacturing technology. It appears as though regional development is not a priority of the Federal coalition. Dr Hewson has promised to withdraw Commonwealth funds from the National Industry Extension Service. The Minister for Business, Industry and Regional Development has said that he will continue the scheme regardless, but without Commonwealth assistance he would be forced to cut the number of companies benefiting from the subsidies. That has been met with disappointment from many local industries on the Gold Coast that benefit from the scheme and have shown real productivity gains since its inception. Lending support to regional development with a view to addressing specific local requirements has been an emphasis of both Queensland and Federal Governments.

Today, I have outlined four ways in which the Federal coalition's Fightback package and GST will damage irrevocably social and economic stability in the Currumbin electorate. Fightback will attack tourism; Fightback will attack sport and recreation; Fightback will attack affordable housing; and Fightback will attack business and industry, which are the foundations of the local community that I stand in this place to represent. I urge all honourable members to assess the damage that Dr Hewson's misguided collection of policies could cause to their local communities, to put aside partisan loyalties and to inform their constituents of the harm that a Federal coalition Government would inevitably cause the people of Queensland.

Mr BARTON (Waterford) (12.45 p.m.): It is with great pleasure that I second the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply, which was so effectively moved by the member for Currumbin. The Address in Reply expresses the desire of the members of this House to assure Her Excellency of our continued loyalty and affection to the Sovereign and our thanks to Her Excellency for the thoughtful contents of her Speech when opening this Forty-seventh Parliament. In doing so, we not only recognise important traditions but also address the most important contemporary issues. In this motion, we express our commitment to give the most careful consideration to matters brought before us and to do our best to ensure the advancement and prosperity of this State. They are all noble goals. I am confident that they are the goals of all members of this Parliament and confident that they are goals to which all members of this Parliament will be able to provide their wholehearted support. No doubt all members of this House

have a strong commitment to the ideals of parliamentary democracy and all, in their own way, are seeking to advance the prosperity of this State and, most importantly, its people.

It was important that Her Excellency stressed the importance to us of the need to uphold the dignity and the authority of Parliament as the basic institution in our democratic system of government. There is no doubt that from time to time we will all have serious differences in our respective objectives or our methods of attaining similar or the same objectives. All of us must ensure that we debate those differences in a manner that maintains and enhances the respect of the community to this Parliament and its members. Her Excellency's address provided a great deal of detail of the Government's program for this Forty-seventh Parliament. The Government's program was wholeheartedly endorsed by the people of Queensland at the September 1992 election. This Government has a strong mandate to pursue that program. The program details this Government's vision of what is required for Queensland for the mid 1990s. What we do now will determine whether Queensland will be the strong State that we all desire it to be in the late 1990s and into next century.

Queensland is the leading State as a result of this Government's capacity to promote economic growth; manage the State in a prudent, cost-effective manner; achieve a fair balance between development and the environment; maintain an industrial relations system which is progressive and virtually dispute-free; provide educational and training facilities second to none; and maintain a free State hospitals system with rapidly improving facilities. None of this is easy to achieve, particularly in a time of world economic downturn, which we have been experiencing in the past few years. This has meant and continues to mean that new, additional, desirable services have not been able to be provided.

Significant aspects of the program detailed by Her Excellency have already been put into place. These include legislation to significantly reduce payroll tax. This Government has not just talked about this issue—as the Opposition and the Federal coalition have done. This Government has actually taken steps to significantly reduce payroll tax in this State. Amendments to the Industrial Relations Act have been passed to enhance enterprise bargaining. Again, this Government has acted to ensure that there is more focus on enterprise bargaining and to improve what is already an excellent industrial relations environment in Queensland.

Enactment of the tobacco tax legislation has already begun to translate into refurbishment of our schools. This has been very well received in my electorate of Waterford, where p. and c. associations are now seeing completed projects that have been important to them for some time but for which funding did not exist. It was also helpful that many of them had the program explained to them by the old master himself, namely, Tom Burns. People in my electorate love him. I assure members that if Mr Burns keeps coming back with programs such as he has announced in recent months, he will certainly be welcome in my electorate at any time.

Many of the additional youth employment coordinators have now taken up their positions, including those at the Beenleigh and Logan TAFE, where they are assisting young people with vocational guidance skills and providing support services for the long-term unemployed. Similarly, the initial funding from the \$7m plan to provide employment and training for disadvantaged young people has been provided. This has been well received in my electorate and in the broader community. These are only examples of the program already at work, but they summarise this Government's commitment to support business and job creation; enhance our already excellent industrial relations system; improve community facilities and services; and provide opportunities for disadvantaged and unemployed young people.

Consultation and cooperation with the community are also central to this Government's strong performance. This Government has a strong working relationship with business, this State's great trade union movement and other important community organisations. The pinnacle of that community consultation is the Premier's Council for

the Economic Development of Queensland. This State's most significant business leaders and trade union leaders come together with the Government in a genuine partnership to ensure that this State's economic development takes place in the most effective manner. As a result of that openness by this Government in that forum and its working subcommittees, this State's business community is able to plan its investments and actions with confidence. As a genuine partner, the trade union movement is able to work closely with business and Government to ensure that these developments have the most appropriate industrial relations, training and employment conditions applied to them.

The important planning document *Leading State* came largely from the deliberations of CEDOQ and further deeper consultation between this Government and the business community and trade union movement. Important consultative committees exist in all other departments. This ensures that Government is providing the support and services that business and the community need. This Government does not pay lip-service to business; it works closely with the business community, as it does with the union movement and all other important community groups.

Continued strong economic development remains the cornerstone for improving this State's prosperity and living standards. By building on what we already do well, we will provide many new and important job opportunities. This State's mining and agricultural industries are world leaders. Queensland is the only State that has a fully integrated aluminium industry, including bauxite mining, alumina refining and aluminium smelting, with some aluminium fabrication. Queensland's aluminium industry is a world leader in efficiency and costs. This State's other mining industries, namely, metalliferous mining predominantly carried out by the MIM group, coal, gold and nickel are among the world's most efficient producers. Agricultural production in Queensland is among the world's best quality and most cost effective. Our ports that handle those exports are among Australia's most efficient and, in some cases, are up with the best in the world in terms of their efficiency.

This major reform of our ports has not generally received the recognition that it is due. Work practices have changed significantly, and these efficiencies have been achieved despite the ports in the main being reliant on old technology and equipment and suffering from a lack of capital. Our future economic development will be dependent not merely on our ability to open more mines or increase agricultural production, but on how well we add value to our existing production. That is well recognised by this Government and the State's business and union leaders. It is difficult to gain new markets or obtain venture capital during a world economic recession but, as the world's economy improves, this State is well placed to increase our value adding. Selling final branded products to the world must be our objective. We must expand further that market. We now sell significant quantities of metal, but few final manufactured goods.

Our strong integrated aluminium industry, along with the exotic minerals produced from sandmining and abundant supplies of cheap electricity, gives us the potential to be a major world supplier of automotive components. Similarly, we export large quantities of meat, grain and dairy products in their raw form. We have to move quickly to packaged, branded final products in those areas, and in fruit and vegetables. We need to reproduce the methods that made Dr Tony O'Reilly a national hero in Ireland with *Eringold Dairy Products*. These are not pipedreams. We live in the world's fastest growing market, the Pacific basin. We too often think about most Asian nations as being too poor and their markets too small. Indonesia has 180 million people, of whom 10 per cent, or 18 million people, have a living standard as high as, or higher than, Australia's. In other words, a market as large as Australia's is there right now, with those on a lower standard of living—another 164 million people—having a rapidly rising standard of living even though it is coming from a low base. This is repeated right across Asia. The opportunities are there, and this Government places emphasis on building more trade and export markets in Asia and developing these value adding manufacturing industries.

To assist small business to meet today's challenges, funding to the Queensland Small Business Corporation was increased by 50 per cent. Business in this State is also benefiting from the \$3.3 billion Capital Works Program. By investing in major capital projects, the Government is taking up some of the slack caused by the difficult business environment. That is enhancing the private business sector, as they are the builders, providers or suppliers to those major projects. It includes major improvements to our transport system, including the Gold Coast railway line that will greatly enhance transport for the citizens of my electorate of Waterford and the tilt train—a recently announced commitment. We need to do even more. With provision of capital being tight but with the largest real area of any State in Australia to service—genuinely being the most decentralised State—we can be proud of what has been achieved to date with our rail, road and port system.

As a result of the development policies of this Government, great business opportunities exist in my electorate of Waterford. Waterford sits at the very top of the Albert corridor. The region is the fastest growing in Australia. Rapid growth provides great opportunities, but brings many challenges. The region has traditional agricultural industries such as sugar, and a magnificent natural environment, particularly its rivers and mountain rainforests. New industry is developing rapidly, and housing levels are increasing at a rate that is difficult to comprehend. This rapid development is putting pressure on the Government's capacity to provide most services, and puts pressure on existing industries and the environment and our capacity to provide suitable serviced industrial land at the required rate. Alternatively, due to the ever-increasing market for manufactured goods, it provides almost unparalleled business opportunities. We are absolutely determined to ensure that we attain the right balance between development, the environment and the needs of the ever-expanding population. The Beenleigh Chamber of Commerce business achievement awards will be held on 2 April at Dreamworld and again will showcase the region's best businesses, large and small. We have some large businesses that are world leaders in export markets and some new small innovative businesses that will be the future of job creation in that region.

When we consider economic development, we should not overlook the role played by the Government-owned enterprises. In particular, Queensland has three major Government-owned financial institutions which are providing great service to the public and, importantly, profits to Government. At a time when some of the nation's major financial institutions are experiencing great difficulties—I am thinking specifically of Westpac, National Mutual and others—this State's financial institutions are among the nation's leaders. Those institutions are the Queensland Investment Corporation, Suncorp and the Queensland Industry Development Corporation. Those corporations have shown that being Government owned does not necessarily equate to poor performance. Since its formation, the Queensland Investment Corporation has been amongst the top earners in Australia's investment houses. The fact that they are investing all of the Government's superannuation funds, and other major funds such as the Workers Compensation Fund, means that this Government is achieving substantial savings on what would otherwise be paid as fees to private sector investment houses. There are also substantial tax incentives associated with being Government owned that would not be available if the money was invested in that way.

Sitting suspended from 1 to 2.30 p.m.

Mr BARTON: The factors that I mentioned previously mean that the Government is required to put in less funding to meet the actuarial requirements of the various Government employees defined superannuation funds and for the Workers Compensation Board commitments. In addition, the corporation is paying a tidy profit to the Government on its capital. The QIC Chairman, Jim Kennedy, and his board, and the chief executive, Ian Macoun, and his team have every reason to be proud of their achievements to date. Suncorp has achieved similar outcomes. It is among the best earners in financial markets. Its expertise has also allowed it to develop administration systems for Queensland's largest private sector, multi-industry superannuation fund

SunSuper, with over 200 000 members, and other major superannuation funds such as AustSafe. Suncorp is also providing a good return to clients and to the Government.

The Queensland Industry Development Corporation is providing investment resources to Queensland business. It is no longer seen as an investor of last resort, but as a major development bank. Those Government-owned corporations are providing good models for other appropriate Government bodies which may be corporatised or commercialised in the future. I stress that, most importantly, they show that Government-owned business enterprises can be more efficient than the private sector.

Her Excellency's address stressed the strong commitment to the financial discipline of this Government. The maintenance of the lowest possible State taxes is a major priority. The Government is committed to no borrowing for social infrastructure; borrowings for economic infrastructure must be capable of servicing the debt with earnings; and all future liabilities will be fully funded. This State's superannuation schemes are the only State schemes in this country which are fully funded. This usually results in disbelief by the other States, which believe that they are the masters of financial wisdom. It also allows us to have the important financial clout of one of Australia's largest financial institutions in QIC, which brings business leaders to Queensland and achieves the attention of the world's leading finance markets and players. I want to speak a little on industrial relations reform. Over the past three years, there has been a revolution in industrial relations reform in this State. It is greatly assisting industry development. We have moved from the absolute confrontations of the Bjelke-Petersen era, through the uneasy truce period of the Ahern and Cooper Governments, to the positive reform of the past three years. The industrial relations legislation of the Goss Government is recognised as the best in Australia, with it being further strengthened in November 1992 as part of the program announced by Her Excellency. It is supported by the trade union movement and the State's major employers and employee organisations.

The trade union movement in this State is innovative and responsible. Early enterprise agreements and awards such as the World Expo 88 Agreement and the Sanctuary Cove Award set new standards and were recognised nationally and internationally as models. These were taken to new levels in agreements, such as the Movieworld Agreement and the Off-Shore Islands Agreement. Others currently being negotiated for new projects in this State will reach even greater heights. The union movement and thinking employers are committed to single union sites; maximum cross-skilling; wage structures based on skills; penalty rates incorporated into wage rates for ease of administration; maximum flexibility; and maximum flexibility that most importantly generates career paths and training programs which support those career paths. It does provide, particularly in the tourist and hospitality industries, permanency of employment instead of casual employment.

There are some rednecks on both sides out there, including some members of the Opposition, who want to lower the incomes of wage and salary earners. But they are in the absolute minority in Queensland and they are irrelevant. But what does the Federal Opposition have planned for us? Where does this State Opposition stand? While this Government has improved on an already excellent industrial relations system with the November 1992 amendments, which ensure more focus on effective enterprise bargaining, the new State coalition Governments have been poisoning their industrial relations environments by enacting laws which grossly disadvantage wage and salary earners. I find it incredible that the Federal coalition is campaigning on similar industrial relations policies, particularly as they will interfere with this State's sovereign rights and dismantle a system that is working well in everybody's interests.

We must be very aware and very concerned that John Howard is now saying that he is unable to detail what will be in his industrial relations Bill because it will not be finalised until several days before the election. How very convenient! But it was a different story on 14 May last year when he addressed a major legal seminar in Brisbane sponsored by the legal firm Henderson Trout. It was a seminar at which I shared the

platform with him but where he believed that he was predominantly surrounded by friends. At that time, eight months ago, he said that the new industrial relations Bill was complete; that it would be the first piece of legislation enacted by a Hewson Government; that it would dismantle all awards, both Federal and State; and that it would dismantle all industrial relations commissions, both Federal and State.

He boasted that he would use the corporation powers of the Constitution to remove all State powers on industrial relations. He stated that his legal advice was impeccable, and that his legislation would withstand a High Court challenge by people such as myself and my friends. He stated that we should not in any case challenge his legislation as he would have a mandate, about which we had already been told. I stress that that was back on 14 May 1992. I ask the question: why will he not tell us now? Why will he not tell the public what he intends to do? Will he do a Jeff Kennett? I suggest that he will. We know what his legislation means in Queensland, because we went through the experience in Queensland of the voluntary employment agreements, each and every one of which lowered the wages and conditions for the employees who were affected by them.

I put it to members of the Opposition that in two ways wage and salary earners would feel the impact of the industrial relations policy of their Federal counterparts, in the unlikely event of their winning office coming to pass. Firstly, they would take money out of the pockets of the workers with one hand by their industrial relations policy and, secondly, they would rip it out of their other pocket with the other hand by their goods and services tax. On top of that, there would be the reduction in services that are provided presently. I ask members of the Opposition: what is their position on the secret legislation that would be brought out at the first sitting of the Federal Parliament, if Hewson and Howard win? Would they support legislation that would severely disadvantage Queensland workers' pay packets and strip away existing State powers. I would be very interested to know the details of what members of the Opposition are prepared to put on the table.

Social infrastructure is also very important to a Labor Government. Health and education are the most basic community needs. The tobacco tax is already out there working. Those of us who like to have the occasional cigarette or cigar are doing magical things in renewing our public hospitals and refurbishing our schools. I was going to give them up altogether, but my social conscience tells me that the State needs my money. The free hospital system in Queensland is historically one of the most important social issues. It is symbolic of all a Labor Government stands for. There can be no more basic need than a place to which a person who is ill or injured can go for assistance. High wage earners and the privileged can never fully understand how important this is to a low wage earner with a family, or to a single parent. The \$1.5 billion plan to rebuild and renew Queensland's public hospital and health-care system over the next 10 years is under way. But the Federal coalition's Fightback health provisions are of great concern and could put this at risk. If members of the coalition win—although that is a most unlikely outcome—the funds available to health in Queensland will be greatly reduced as the coalition slashes national health spending by \$2.4 billion.

Fightback's health provisions will disadvantage the people who live in my electorate of Waterford in two ways. Although members of the coalition say that low wage earners will be looked after, their definition of "low wage earner" is pretty frightening. Low wage earners and social security recipients are very dependent on bulk billing. The removal of this service for most people and the application of a minimum payment for every patient will put health care out of the reach of many of these hard-working, ordinary Queenslanders. Fightback also encourages the privatisation of hospitals. Newer hospitals such as Logan will be prime targets. With the ever-increasing tying of Federal Government funding to specific requirements, this becomes a real threat and, if that hospital were forced into privatisation, it would be even more difficult for residents of the Waterford electorate to obtain adequate health care. Anybody who supports such a reduction in public health spending should hang his or her head in shame.

The program on social issues, as detailed by Her Excellency, clearly demonstrates this Government's commitment to social and community issues. Education spending continues to be greatly increased, with higher teacher numbers, lower student numbers per teacher, greater resources for schools, and improved support for parents. For the first time, non-Government schools are also being treated fairly, with the continued development of needs-based funding. TAFE has continued to respond to the needs of industry in relation to programs for young people leaving school and existing employees to help them gain qualifications needed by our improving and developing industries.

Crime continues to be a major concern. The economic downturn and high unemployment, and the sense of hopelessness and despair that this causes to many people, has added to crime levels. The reform of the Police Service continues and new efficiencies are being attained. Police numbers will continue to rise, having been increased by 1 200 in the first three years of the Goss Government, with the projected number of additional police being 1 600 by 1995.

The past three years have seen unparalleled reform of government in this State. The Fitzgerald reform process continues, and remains a high priority of this Government. If ever we had lost sight of how important that reform process is and how desperately it was required, we had only to watch *Joh's Jury* last week on television.

This Government has the strongest possible commitment to—

managing the State prudently;

ensuring strong economic development and support for business, both large and small;

providing excellent industrial relations and improved living standards;

maintaining our magnificent natural environment; and

regenerating and improving our health, education, training and community support facilities.

This Government's priority is to strengthen Queensland's most important asset, its people.

In conclusion, let me state that I am very proud to have been provided with the opportunity to second this motion. Her Excellency's Speech not only detailed the Government's program, but also, importantly, gave some insight into Her Excellency's personal commitment to economic development, social change, and improving living standards for all Queenslanders. I support the motion.

Mr BORBIDGE (Surfers Paradise—Leader of the Opposition) (2.45 p.m.): In speaking in the Address in Reply debate, I again on behalf of the electorate of Surfers Paradise acknowledge loyalty to Her Majesty the Queen, to her representative, the Governor, and to the democratic institutions of the State of Queensland. I make the point that, on this side of the House, we make no apologies for supporting the Crown, the office of Governor, our flag or our system of Government, unlike some of the hypocrites whom we see sitting on the Government side in this place and their colleagues at a Federal level who are doing whatever they can to bring down what this Address in Reply debate is supposed to support. I thank the people of Surfers Paradise, who have asked me to represent them in this Parliament for the fifth time, and I give them a commitment that I will reflect their aspirations and raise their concerns in this place, just as I have attempted to do in previous Parliaments.

Since 19 September last year, the people of Queensland have witnessed one of the laziest Governments in post-war Queensland. They have witnessed a Government lacking leadership, lacking drive and lacking direction, a Government content in a recessed economic climate to sit back and to enjoy the trappings of electoral success, a Government which at best has been lacklustre and ineffective in everything that it has touched since the Premier arrogantly claimed victory on election night. If the Labor Party won in 1989 on the record of the National Party and if in 1992 it won on its own record, in 1995 it runs the risk of having nothing on which to campaign. With the majority

of the Fitzgerald-inspired reforms having been completed, this Government is struggling to find an agenda. When one takes time to consider the performance of Labor across the three key portfolios of health, education and law and order since 19 September, that fact becomes all too clear.

We have a crisis in our public health system. Hospitals have effectively been wound back to accommodate the misdirected priorities of a new middle management. For the first time in Queensland's history, hospitals have been effectively closed down over a two-week Easter period—and in some hospitals, close to three weeks—in an attempt to reduce expenditure. The tale of health misery is a sad indictment on the record of this Government. It is no good blaming the previous National Party Government or John Hewson or the Federal coalition. The Government has no-one to blame but itself. The Government cannot blame Fightback. It cannot blame GST. This is the Government's health system. These are the Government's reforms, and it has to wear the criticism.

From the Blood Bank to the major teaching hospitals in Brisbane, the story has been the same—massive financial mismanagement and scarce resources being sucked up by a burgeoning middle-level bureaucracy. Closures of wards, closures of hospitals, the downgrading of psychiatric facilities, budget reviews, audits and the imposition of continental breakfasts have all been part of the Goss health system in 1993. If a person is recovering from heart surgery, he or she cannot even get a boiled egg for breakfast. The Minister for Health and his senior executives have clearly lost control of their portfolio. They no longer have the confidence of the health workers of this State, who again are being made to suffer because of the mismanagement of their political and administrative masters.

Mr Stoneman: I think Mr McElligott is agreeing with what you are saying.

Mr BORBIDGE: I would be very surprised if Mr McElligott were not agreeing with what I am saying, because it is time for the Health Minister to move on. We have a Health Minister who, to save his own political neck, callously doublecrossed and misrepresented the position of the Red Cross. Let us talk about what the Minister tried to do to the Red Cross. I have a confidential memo here, which is headlined "General advice to staff in response to media comment by the Minister for Health about the Blood Transfusion Service". The memo states—

"Issue:

It was not the Government that ordered the sacking of the staff."

There were 27 staff. It continues—

"It was Red Cross."

In reply the Blood Bank states—

"This is simply a distortion of the facts. I quote below from a letter from the Chief Health Officer of the Department of Health dated the 27th of January 1993:

'If not already, the Red Cross Blood Transfusion Service should proceed without delay to the temporary suspension of the second mobile collection service and all other cost saving/efficiency measures identified.'

Over the page, the memo states—

"Issue:

Blood Bank management practices are inefficient."

The Minister tried to say that the Blood Bank was inefficient and that—

"The Blood Bank point blank has said 'No we are not interested in having a review of our management practices.'

The BTS has not refused a review of management practices. In 1992, the Health Department commissioned a review of Blood Transfusion Service management. The review was undertaken by Ernst and Young. I quote from the final report—

"We have considerable evidence of effective financial management practices.

We are impressed by the BTS in regard to its commitment to evaluating options for a more cost efficient service delivery, testing these opportunities and implementing them according to cost benefit study.

Our investigations suggest that the BTS complies effectively with auditors recommendations and within its current scope, conducts its financial management practices in a thorough and professional fashion."

The Minister says that the Blood Transfusion Service is incompetent. Over the page, the memo states—

"Issue:

Mr Hayward has indicated he personally went to the Blood Bank and personally offered to have a Government review team of all management practices. He indicates that the BTS refused this."

The response of the Blood Bank states—

"BTS management is simply unaware of any such approach by Mr Hayward."

What sort of Health Minister do we have in Queensland who is prepared to lie and to denigrate the Red Cross to save his own political neck? Whom do the people of Queensland believe—the Red Cross or the Minister for Health? Who has more credibility from one end of Queensland to the other? We are seeing lie after lie after lie by a Minister who is out of his depth, a Minister who has to go. It is time that the Health Minister moved on.

Our education system continues to struggle under record numbers of school leavers. What has become patently clear over the past couple of months is that the Government's plan to improve the prospects for school leavers has been fatally flawed. In conjunction with the tertiary admissions centre, students have been the guineapigs in a new system which is no better than the one it replaced and which is certainly not providing the results that the Labor Party claimed it would in an expensive pre-election advertising campaign funded by the taxpayers of this State. Last month, we discovered that the Education Minister disagreed with Labor Party policy on fee-paying students and agreed, temporarily at least, with suggestions put forward by the Opposition, only to be shouted down by the Premier when it was realised that the suggestion might have been sensible. Meanwhile, the young people of this State are hanging precariously on the withered branch of a rotten employment vine. In Queensland, youth unemployment has now topped 30 per cent, with worse still to come as school leavers flow into the work force. I say to the Labor Party: watch the unemployment figures in March. Watch the unemployment figures as the school leavers come into the statistics. The situation has reached crisis point in the mind of everyone, it seems, except the Goss Government. Take the situation in far-north Queensland. According to recent ABS figures, 47 per cent of that region's 15 to 19 year olds are unemployed—47 per cent in the Treasurer's own backyard! And what has the Treasurer done in terms of major new youth programs in Queensland? What incentives has he built into the system? What programs has he got up and running when in his own electorate youth unemployment has exceeded 47 per cent?

Mr Littleproud: Leading State.

Mr BORBIDGE: Leading State it once was, and leading State it can be again. But this Government has to shake off the cloak of complacency that has consumed it since the election on 19 September. Without doubt, these figures not only are putting the community at strain but are having a flow-on effect to other areas of Government responsibility such as support agencies. Job opportunities for young Queenslanders need to come on line urgently if we are not to see a lost generation of youth unable to find work and to gain tertiary entrance. I take issue with the trade union hack who preceded me in this debate. If that means a youth wage, so be it. If that means a restructuring of the tax system so that we do away with payroll tax, which is a jobs tax,

so be it. But what we are seeing are problems from the Labor Party. We are not seeing a blueprint. We are not seeing solutions. That is the difference between the Labor side of politics and the conservative side of politics. Government programs, much lauded prior to the last election, have done little, if anything, to address Queensland's chronic youth unemployment problem. What is required in the first instance is a commitment to the creation of jobs. Although I believe that all parties share this commitment, they differ in their solutions. The Government would be taking steps in the right direction if, as suggested by the Opposition, it were to open up universities to fee-paying students and free up the labour market to improve opportunities for the young and build in that flexibility we need if we are to compete not with Victoria, New South Wales or South Australia but with countries in the region in which we live, such as Singapore, Thailand and Japan, and all of those other growing areas. However, when we compare ourselves with them, we see that we are slipping further behind.

Law and order is still a festering sore in Queensland, with the Police Service and other areas of the Emergency Services portfolio continually being starved of funds. Again, the proof of the pudding is in the eating, and the Government has failed miserably. Prior to the last election, the Government lauded the provision of an additional 1 200 police. But the crime wave continued unabated. One has to look behind the facade and the fraud of the people opposite to discover the root cause of the problem. Overtime and budgetary restrictions—which, may I add, are still in place—reduce the effectiveness of each and every additional police man or woman employed by the Government. It points once again to a misdirection of scarce public resources and an inability on the part of this Government to deal with substantial problems.

Our corrective services institutions seem to be unable to meet public expectations of effectiveness in the detention of offenders. Again, public funds are not being properly targeted. It has been interesting to examine the Government's response to the many problems which face the people of Queensland. The Government decided initially that the best way to tackle the problem was to take a holiday, and we had the Attorney-General and the Minister for Education running Queensland—what a team!—in the hope that either Mr Comben or Mr Wells would fix all the problems, or that the problems would go away by the time the Premier and most of the members of his Cabinet got back to work. Well, the problems have not been sorted out; they remain unresolved and they will not be solved until the Premier and the members of his Cabinet get on with the job they were elected to carry out.

This Government needs an agenda and a plan for the 1990s. It does not have one. The only agenda that it has had up until now has been the one laid down by Commissioner Fitzgerald. Now that the Fitzgerald reforms are nearing completion, the Government must develop a new plan for Queensland. That plan must update and refresh the fundamental arms of Queensland's economic performance. It must address micro-economic reform issues, such as labour market reform, to which up until now the Government has paid but scant lip-service. I warn the Government that the scene in Australia will change dramatically. The Government cannot rest on the laurels of what it inherited. In two or three years' time when Governments in other parts of Australia, which by necessity have had to tackle labour market deregulation and micro-economic reform, get on top of it, this Government should not believe that business will automatically come to Queensland. It should not believe that. In two or three years' time, it will be a far more competitive Commonwealth.

The Government must reduce the taxation burden on small and medium sized business to take full advantage of the Federal coalition's plan to abolish payroll tax. Labor is the pro payroll tax party. In this place, it defends payroll tax as an excuse not to support Fightback. It must commit itself to maintaining Queensland's low-tax status and rule out the introduction of a State-based fuel tax after the Federal coalition attains office. There must be a conscious effort to reduce the size of Queensland's public sector spending, which over the past three years has gone up 13 per cent, the highest of any State Government in Australia, in the middle of the worst recession in 60 years.

This Government is the biggest-spending Government in Australia. For 32 years, Queensland thrived on the basis of an "as small as possible" share of total outlays being directed to the public sector. Unfortunately, under this Government, all that has now been reversed, as the public sector continues to grow at a time when the private sector is shrinking through the Labor-induced recession. The Government has fostered and encouraged pay deals through its cosy little industrial relations club, Tom Barton and the union hacks. When all those pay deals go through the system, the total pay bill for Queensland's public service will be up \$1.5 billion since the Goss Government won power in 1989. That is the record of this Government in the middle of the worst recession in 60 years.

The net effect has been an increasing strain on the expenditure side of the Budget, while revenues have fallen considerably. The trend will have a terminal effect on Queensland's budgetary position. This massive increase in the size of the public sector has now been built into Queensland's economic future, and urgent action is required by the Government to address the problem.

Mr Stoneman: Up go taxes.

Mr BORBIDGE: As my colleague reminds me, up go taxes; in comes the fuel tax, which was already metered at 10c a litre on radio last week by the Deputy Premier. As I have stated on numerous occasions, increases in public sector expenditure need to be directed to the point of service delivery—at the coalface—instead of propping up faceless bureaucrats whose sole purpose is telling everyone else what to do. Consider the surgeon in western Queensland who has been told to cut back on his operations by bureaucrats sitting in a regional office which has custom-made furniture. That is the record of this Government in terms of massive abuse and maladministration.

Mr Johnson: That is their excuse to cut the service right out.

Mr BORBIDGE: As the honourable member for Gregory stated, that is the justification for cutting the service out, for taking that surgeon away from that community. There is evidence to suggest that the Government will address the election of a Hewson coalition Government by increasing State taxes and charges, with the introduction of a State fuel tax likely. The Government's flawed and desperate assessment of Fightback will be used to justify these Goss-inspired tax hikes. What a cheap piece of political hyperbole it is for the Premier to criticise a 5 per cent reduction in financial assistance grants to the State Government under Fightback. Yet, it is the Labor Government which has expanded spending by \$650m—or 13 per cent—and the Government has the nerve to tell us that it cannot find savings which amount to 1.4 per cent of the total State Budget! The Government sees fit to increase public sector pay by \$1.5 billion, yet it says that it cannot absorb a drop in the financial assistance grant that equates to 1.47 per cent of this year's Budget. It is little more than a cheap excuse designed to prop up the electoral prospects of the Federal Keating Government.

If Mr Goss and honourable members opposite were fair dinkum, they would be working on a list of projects to be submitted under the Federal coalition's \$3 billion Rebuild Australia Fund. On current assessments, it is likely that Queensland will be the beneficiary of in excess of \$600m of that fund. However, the Premier should not leave it too long to put forward those projects. The Northern Territory Government and other Governments have been active in pushing projects before the Federal coalition. Government members complain that a reduction in the financial assistance grants will occur, yet they are doing nothing at all to capitalise on \$600m potential funding for major infrastructure projects in Queensland. A number of projects which are in the pipeline, such as the Cape York space port, need to be fast-tracked before they are lost forever. Under this Government, such projects will be lost forever. The Tully/Millstream hydro-electric scheme will come under close scrutiny by the Federal coalition.

Mr Bredhauer interjected.

Mr BORBIDGE: The honourable member for Cook has placed on record his opposition to the Tully/Millstream project. The Premier should have a special interest in placing such projects before an incoming Hewson Government.

Mr Randell: Mr Casey said he wanted \$78m for the sugar industry.

Mr BORBIDGE: As the member for Mirani reminds me—in regard to the sugar policy to be enacted by the incoming coalition Government, the Minister for Primary Industries stated that he did not want it. I predict now that if the Minister for Primary Industries is not on a plane to Canberra within the first week after 13 March to make sure that Queensland is involved in a package that has been endorsed overwhelmingly by the sugar industry, he will be the smelliest piece of dead meat in this Parliament for a long time.

Mr Grice: The unions will send him down to Canberra.

Mr BORBIDGE: As the member for Broadwater reminds me, the unions will send him down to Canberra. The Premier should be working in a constructive way with the Federal coalition to advance those projects in the national interest. Another potential impediment to development which demands the urgent consideration of this Government, along with other Governments around Australia, revolves around the findings of the High Court in the Mabo case. The Premier should have a special interest in the Mabo case, given the fact that he has been its champion, both inside and outside this Parliament. A resolution must be forthcoming in respect of security of land tenure in Queensland and across Australia. That is why the Opposition supports very strongly the proposal by Tim Fischer that an incoming Federal coalition Government will seek discussions with the various interest groups, including the various Aboriginal groups, to try and resolve the implications and to find out the interpretation of the Mabo decision. Consultation will take place, but that consultation will not be indefinite. It will not be another one of Labor's 110 committees that take 12 or 18 months to review anything. There should be a limited period for consultation. If that limited period for consultation cannot be resolved and agreed to, Governments have to legislate. Why would anyone spend a buck in Queensland? Why would anyone spend a cent in Queensland on a major new development project if there are major uncertainties in land tenure as a result of the High Court ruling in the Mabo case? It is all very well for the Deputy Premier or the Premier to hop up and say that we have our own legislation in Queensland. However, the Government's legislation has been overtaken by the Mabo decision. The very sound legal opinion is that as a result of the Federal Race Discrimination Act (1975) leases and agreements entered into after 1975 may be in doubt.

Mr Bredhauer interjected.

Mr BORBIDGE: I say to the honourable member for Cook that if he disputes what I am saying and that land tenure in Queensland is secure for major mining projects and investment purposes, then he should get the Premier to hop up and say that. The Premier will not. After encouraging Mabo in his land rights claim and after supporting the Mabo case both inside and outside Parliament, the Premier now says that he does not yet know what it means.

Mr Bredhauer: Who brought in the islands protection Act in 1985?

Mr BORBIDGE: The honourable member for Cook is getting very excited. His ignorance appals me. Queensland should look for major new investments if it is to remain the leading State. Why would investors come to Queensland if they can go to Indonesia, Brazil, Thailand or a dozen other countries and receive virtually overnight approvals, and security, in respect of land tenure? The Government cannot even agree to form a committee. The lack of sensitivity and understanding of Government members that is so evident is a recipe for disaster. That type of mentality is squandering the legacy that they inherited from 32 years of the most successful conservative Government anywhere in the Western World.

The Government member who spoke before me referred to the superannuation fund being actuarially sound. Why did that happen? The Government did not achieve

that; it inherited it. When the Government came to power in 1989, it inherited the only public service superannuation fund in the country that enabled a public servant who retired at 5 o'clock on one day to receive a cheque the following morning without the Government having to draw on one cent from consolidated revenue. The Government inherited the only workers' compensation scheme in the country that was in the black, the only compulsory third-party insurance scheme in the country that was in the black and the only Treasury in the country that had money in the bank. Yet the Government has squandered it. During the Budget debate, the Treasurer stated proudly that the Government was the biggest spending State Government in Australia. Mr De Lacy stated that he was proud that he presided over it.

The Government has launched an absolutely pitiful attack on Fightback through a shonky Treasury document that does the Treasury and this Treasurer no credit whatsoever. It is a document that is so riddled with inaccuracies, misinterpretations and misinformation that it deserves to be consigned to the rubbish tin. I say to the Government that this may be its last chance to accept the reality that difficult times are ahead for Queensland, and the fact that Queensland will not necessarily remain the leading State. The simple fact of life is that business investment will become more attractive in Western Australia, Victoria and New South Wales. However, the Government has no plan or strategy. Instead, all it offers is more of the same attitude of, "It will be right. We will sit back and form another committee or two to resolve the problems that confront us. It will all be all right." It will not be all right! Because of this Government's apathy, laziness, indifference and arrogance that we witness during the few days that this Parliament sits, Queensland risks slipping back to the middle of the pack.

Mr BRISKEY (Cleveland) (3.12 p.m.): I am very pleased to participate in this debate. It is gratifying that the people of Queensland chose to elect another Goss Labor Government. They showed excellent commonsense in re-electing this Government.

Mr Welford: And you.

Mr BRISKEY: I take that interjection and thank the honourable member very much. Because the people of Queensland had not forgotten the disaster of the 32 years preceding 1989 when they were governed by successive coalition and National Party Governments, they knew that it would be a retrograde step to elect the coalition. All Queenslanders know what that meant. Recently, they were reminded of that when the ABC replayed the *Moonlight State* program. Even more recently, they were reminded about the way in which the National Party did business by the dramatisation of the Joh jury program. That program showed that to do business in Queensland, one had to make \$100,000 brown paper bag donations to the National Party. Queensland was ruled by a corrupt Government and policed by a police force that had corrupt officers in charge. Thankfully for Queensland, all that is behind us. Queensland is now led by an honest and accountable Government.

Honourable members interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Power): Order! Members will cease interjecting from other than their correct seats.

Mr BRISKEY: It is a Government that cares about people and not about enriching its Cabinet Ministers and high-profile friends. Until recently, rorted electoral boundaries were a fact of life in Queensland. Queenslanders were not given an opportunity to change the Government of the day even if they wanted to. With fair electoral boundaries, Queenslanders can now be assured that their votes are equal and that they can throw out a Government that they believe is not working in their best interests. Following the redistribution of all State seats, because of the rapidly growing population of the Redland Shire, two seats were created out of my previous seat of Redlands. The new seat of Cleveland was created from North Stradbroke Island, Cleveland, Ormiston and Wellington Point, which were all part of my old seat of Redlands, and Thorneside and most of Birkdale, which were part of the old seat of Capalaba. Although I am happy to represent the new seat of Cleveland, I was sad to lose the other areas that I had

represented for three years. During that period, I made many friends. It was indeed sad that I could no longer be their representative in this House. That is not to say that I have lost their friendship. I still hear from and see many of them as I move around the Redland Shire. Many of them still drop into my office, which is centrally located in the main street of Cleveland. This makes it an ideal location for those who wish to see me about electorate issues or other matters of concern. I take this opportunity to thank the electors of the new seat of Cleveland for electing me as their representative in this place.

Mr Welford: A very wise choice.

Mr BRISKEY: I thank the honourable member for that interjection. By electing me as their representative, those people have indicated to me that they were happy with the representation that I gave them in my former seat of Redlands. I take this opportunity to thank all those who worked tirelessly to see me re-elected. In particular, I thank Gordon and Shirley O'Neill, who gave up countless hours to assist me. I know that you, Madam Deputy Speaker, know Gordon and Shirley very well. Many people worked extremely hard and gave up their own time to ensure that I was re-elected. My special thanks go also to Ava Jones, Elsie Gibson, Glynn Jones, Gary and Pat Bradshaw, and Adrian and Yvonne Culhane.

Having an island within my electorate means that I must rely on some extremely hardworking and dedicated supporters. I take this opportunity to thank Jack Geran and all the North Stradbroke Island branch members who worked for me and continue to do so. It is difficult to name all those who helped me during the election campaign. Many friends and family members gave up much of their time to help me to be re-elected. By so doing, they ensured that another member of the Goss Labor Government was returned for a second term. I thank them all most sincerely for what they have done for me, the Cleveland electorate and Queensland. There are four more people whom I take this opportunity to thank. The first is my father, Bob Briskey, who worked day after day to ensure my re-election. The second person whom I wish to thank is my wife, Cathy, who supported me and helped in many ways, and who continues to understand when I cannot be home when she would like me to be there. Four weeks prior to the election date, Cathy gave birth to our third daughter, Alison. It was indeed a trying time for her during the election campaign. I also thank my other daughters, Joanna and Kathleen, of whom I am immensely proud, for their understanding when daddy was not able to be at home to play with them.

In our first three years of Government, many millions of dollars were spent on upgrading Government services. This Government increased the wages of teachers, nurses and police officers. Those three sectors, namely, education, health and law and order, had been neglected for many years. Our teachers, nurses and police officers were poorly paid for the work that they were performing for all Queenslanders. Morale was low because they saw that the pay that they were getting was lower than that of their interstate colleagues, yet they were doing the very same jobs. Teachers now have a better career structure. The more experienced teachers are being paid more so that they will stay in the classroom rather than seek promotion to non-teaching positions. This can only enhance our children's education.

In my maiden speech, I mentioned that children deserve to be taught in buildings and school environments of which they can be proud. If we provide this for them, they will be able to see clearly that we, as adults, respect them and their education. The people whom we hold in high regard in our society are housed in expensive and well-presented office accommodation. For many years under the previous coalition and National Party Governments, the children of Queensland knew that those Governments had no respect for them or their education, because their schools were falling down around them. School maintenance was not a priority. The little amount of money that was expended went to capital works in marginal National Party electorates. Many schools were built in areas in which they were not required, merely to prop up some National Party member, while schools in other parts of the State were falling down

through lack of repair. Queensland children knew that they and their education were not important to the previous National Party and coalition Governments. They knew that education was never a priority for those Governments. Thankfully, things have changed. Queensland now has a Government which, for every Budget since it was elected, has made education a priority—and so it should be. Schools within my electorate were in an extremely poor state of repair. The Cleveland State High School was a mess. I could not believe the state that it was in: unpainted buildings, no carpet in some classrooms, guttering that was rusted away, windows in the manual arts block that would not open, science rooms that had outdated or broken equipment, and much more.

Mr Livingstone: Ipswich was the same.

Mr BRISKEY: I am sure that it was before we were elected. The manual arts block was falling down around the students and staff. Two brick walls of that building were falling down. That school was typical of most schools in my electorate, with the only exception being the Wellington Point State High School, which was newly built as a vote grabber for the previous National Party member.

Mr Budd: It didn't work.

Mr BRISKEY: No, it did not work. I was disgusted by the state of disrepair of those schools, and even more so when the electorate had two National Party Government Ministers as its representatives before me. They obviously cared little about the education of the children within their electorates. It has taken a lot of money and, because of the years of neglect, it will need considerably more money to fix all the problems at those schools. But I am proud to say that much has been achieved. The Cleveland State High School now has a new manual arts block and the walls of the old one have been repaired. It also has a new science block and carpet on the floors of classrooms, which it never had in the past. As well, all rusted guttering has been replaced and buildings have been painted and continue to be repainted. As a result of Commonwealth Government funds which the Federal member for Bowman, the Honourable Con Sciacca, was pleased to announce recently, \$600,000 will be spent this year on upgrading the home economics block.

Mrs Woodgate: A good member.

Mr BRISKEY: I take that interjection. In the three years during which I have been a member, that school has had \$860,756 spent on capital works and \$513,548 spent on maintenance. As a result of the Goss Government's special school refurbishment scheme, it will have another \$176,000 spent on maintenance. All the schools in my electorate have benefited by having the Goss Labor Government in government over the last three and a half years. As education will continue to be a priority, they will continue to benefit. As I said, school maintenance was certainly neglected by previous Governments. The introduction of an increased tobacco tax will mean that \$60m will be injected into schools all over Queensland to help overcome the lack of maintenance in schools. That money will not solve all the problems but it will go a long way to ensuring that our children are taught in schools that reflect the importance that we place on their education. Not only will that \$60m fix many of the longstanding maintenance problems of our schools, it will also provide about 1 200 jobs for people who are currently registered with the Commonwealth Employment Service. As a direct result of the school refurbishment program, school children in my electorate will see vast changes to their school environments, and that will affect their performances and their belief in themselves as important members of society.

The \$176,000 which the school refurbishment program will provide for the Cleveland State High School will provide, apart from general repairs around the school, \$20,000 worth of carpet to cover concrete floors, external and internal repainting of buildings which require painting, replacement of furniture and work benches, the connection of stormwater drains, \$13,000 worth of repairs to the community hall, a \$45,000 upgrade to the kiln room, and a \$14,700 upgrade to the art room. The school refurbishment program will provide \$2,881 to paint the exterior of unit A of the Birkdale Preschool and provide security bars over the louvres. The amount of \$60,800 will be

spent from the program on Birkdale State School. Work will include replacing a concrete path in the pool complex, replacing guttering, painting teaching and toilet blocks, installation of vinyl flooring, providing better security for the tuckshop and replacing some of the Year 1 furniture. Money is also being provided to make an unsafe set of stairs safe for children. Birkdale South State School will have \$87,113 spent on it under the refurbishment program. Work includes the external painting of nine blocks, the replacement of rusted guttering, the provision of concrete paths linking the modular buildings, painting of the covered walkways and covered play area, \$5,000 worth of shelving in classrooms, repairs and maintenance to a number of buildings and an \$8,500 electronic security system for the tuckshop. The Birkdale South Preschool will also receive replacement furniture under the program.

The program will further provide \$61,790 for the Wellington Point State School. The fence around the grounds will be repaired and replaced where necessary, worn carpet will be replaced, roofing will be provided to weatherproof a verandah on block D, rusted guttering and downpipes will be replaced, teaching and amenities blocks will be painted and the covered walkways and covered play area will be painted. From the program, \$4,000 will be provided to paint the exterior of the Wellington Point Preschool and to provide new carpet. As well, \$63,000 will be provided for the Wellington Point State High School from the program. Work will include the provision of blinds to the staff room, the external repainting of eight blocks, and the external repainting of the covered walkways and the multipurpose open assembly hall.

Repairs worth \$6,500 will be carried out at the Cleveland State School. Concrete drinking troughs and windows will be repaired with those funds. The Cleveland Preschool will have \$11,100 spent from the program on general repairs. Ormiston State School will receive \$25,760 from the program. Three buildings will be painted externally and block B will be repainted internally. The covered walkway will also be repainted and rusted gutters will be replaced. Under the program, \$8,554 will be expended at Dunwich State School. Those funds will be used to replace carpet, guttering and downpipes.

Another important education initiative of the Goss Government that will be of great benefit to the children in my electorate is the decision to spend more than \$90m improving schools' computer education as well as supplying basic equipment for schools. The amount of \$52m will be spent on supplying basic equipment to schools and \$40m will be spent to improve computer education. This year, \$4m will be spent on school basics and \$3m on computers. That funding has been made available due to the increased tobacco licence fee. Importantly, those extra funds which are being made available for school basics will ensure that p. and c. associations will be able to use their hard-earned funds on providing extras for their schools and thus enhance the education of their children. The funds for computers will ensure that students will be better able to use them. The ability to use computers has become a necessity, and providing more computers to schools and also appropriate learning programs will provide students with skills that will be to their advantage as well as to the long-term advantage of Queensland and Australia. There can be no doubt about this Government's commitment to the education of Queensland children. In three years, funding to education has increased by \$357m.

Crime is a problem which is of concern to all in my electorate. It is a Government's responsibility to provide a safe and secure environment for all. Three police stations cover areas in my electorate. I take this opportunity to commend the work done by John Peterson and his staff at the Cleveland Police Station, John Flannagan and his staff at the Capalaba Police Station and Gary Beattie and his staff at the Dunwich Police Station. As a result of their work, crime rates dropped 6 per cent in the Wynnum police district in 1991-92. My electorate has a large number of retired people living in it. Although statistics show clearly that they, as a group, are not the victims of the majority of crime, they are, however, extremely concerned about crime. It is therefore extremely pleasing that crimes against persons have fallen by 9.5 per cent, and crimes against property have fallen by 6 per cent in the district. Crime in Queensland increased by 17 per cent in 1990-91 and by 4 per cent in 1991-92, but it has decreased by 6 per cent in

the Wynnum district. We do not know what it was before this Government came to office because the previous Government did not bother to keep statistics on crime within Queensland. At least now we know and we have a gauge of what is happening. This 6 per cent drop in crime in the Wynnum district is an excellent result for the residents of my electorate, and is proof that the reforms that have been introduced in the Police Service by the Goss Labor Government are working.

We are fortunate to have hardworking and dedicated police officers at the Cleveland, Capalaba and Dunwich Police Stations. In the past three years, the Goss Labor Government has increased the number of operational police in Queensland by 1 200. That is a great achievement in such a short time. The new Police Commissioner, Jim O'Sullivan, has made a commitment to put police back on the beat. I commend him for this because an alarmingly high percentage of police have been working in jobs which have kept them away from doing the job that the community pays them to do, that is, the protection of person and property. Community policing has had a positive effect on crime rates and it is important that this be continued and extended. The introduction of shopfronts for police will increase police presence, especially in shopping centres, and it is an important initiative which will reduce crime. Over the next three years, police numbers will be increased in line with population growth. That will mean that Queensland will never again be in the position that it was in before the Goss Labor Government came to power in 1989, that is, a State that was so underpoliced that this Government had to increase the number of operational police by 1 200 in three years.

Apart from providing extra police, the Government has introduced legislation to protect the community from violent criminals. The Penalties and Sentences Act provides the courts with consistent and comprehensive sentencing options. As well, those offenders whom the courts judge to be violent and a serious danger to the community can be kept behind bars forever. This will ensure that violent criminals, including rapists and murderers, will not be able to be released to seriously hurt or murder other innocent Queenslanders. That indefinite sentencing option, which is now available to judges, is essential to ensure the safety of all Queenslanders. It is a tough law, but the Government makes no apology for that. It is essential that the innocent are protected from those extremely violent offenders.

Last Saturday's *Australian Magazine* labelled Queensland "The Chosen Land". The magazine stated—

"As the country approaches the 21st century and its second century of nationhood, the State which for so long has been the butt of southerners' jokes is coming into its own.

Interstate migration is booming, business investment is rising . . . It's the second biggest State in physical size, it's now chasing that position in the economic sense."

Why has the magazine labelled Queensland "The Chosen Land"? A number of people have suggested to me that it is because Joh Bjelke-Petersen has decided to move to Tasmania. I think that that is quite probable, but it is a certainty that we are no longer the laughing stock of Australia or 50 years behind the rest of Australia because the Joh era—and with it the coalition and National Party Governments—is finished. As the article states, after three and a half years of the Goss Labor Government, Queensland is now "Paradise Found". Queensland is the leading State. Every week more and more people are realising this fact and, importantly, more and more businesses are realising that they will do better in "The Chosen Land". Queensland continues to attract businesses across the border because of the Goss Government's responsible financial management and low taxation. As the article in the *Australian Magazine* states—

"Low-debt and low taxes in Queensland continue to attract business; some among the senior echelons of business muse openly whether the State would be better off seceding."

Queensland has also continued to be the State with the lowest unemployment rate despite the high level of interstate migration. The Goss Labor Government continues to ensure the strongest jobs growth in Australia, but with an interstate migration of more than 1 000 per week lowering the unemployment rate becomes all that much more difficult. During the National Party Government's reign, new business enterprises and unemployment in the manufacturing sector decreased. Now, under this Government, economic commentators from around Australia and overseas have recognised the strengths of Queensland's economy and, more importantly, the sound economic management of the Goss Labor Government.

International credit rating agencies S and P—Australian Ratings and Moody's have affirmed Queensland's AAA long-term rating. S and P has stated that Queensland outperformed all other Australian States over a range of economic measures. Access Economics confirms that Queensland is the leading State. In its recently released 1993 forecasts, it states that Queensland, together with Western Australia, is forecast to have the fastest growth rate in 1993 and throughout the 1990s. The Committee for Economic Development of Australia, or CEDA, confirms that forecast. In his article in the *Australian Magazine* Roy Eccleston quotes the committee's findings—

“ ‘Eventually, during the 21st century’, trumpeted the cautious Committee for Economic Development of Australia (CEDA) in a recent analysis, ‘Queensland will fulfil its destiny of becoming the California of Australia—that is, the State with the largest population and largest economy.’ ”

Why are economic analysts praising Queensland? Why are businesses moving to Queensland? Why are people moving to this State in droves? Why does Queensland consistently have the highest jobs growth, the highest rate of new homes growth and retail sales that are growing at twice the national average? The answer is, of course, three and a half years of this Government—the Goss Labor Government.

Through low taxes and sound economic management, this Government has provided the right atmosphere and the right climate for all of these achievements to occur. As Geoff Reeves, the managing director of William Cook and Company, the world's biggest manufacturer of in-vitro fertilisation equipment, said in the *Australian Magazine* about moving his company which employs 90 staff from Melbourne to Queensland—

“There is a mood of optimism here which I found was not available in Victoria. People were prepared to have a go, to say yes, I'll try that. It's a state of mind, a can-do mentality.”

It appears that everyone is praising Queensland, except members of the Opposition. Members of the National Party and the Liberal Party in this State continue to knock Queensland. Their Federal “colleagues in crime” want to destroy the many advances that have been achieved in the last three and a half years.

The members of the National Party and Liberal Party in this House continue to support Hewson's policies for disaster—policies which will result in a \$370m shortfall in this State's Budget. Members of the Queensland Opposition should fight this madness, but instead they are silent. Such a shortfall will result in State taxes and charges having to be increased dramatically, or there will have to be cutbacks in services to all Queenslanders. It is time that the National Party and Liberal Party members of this House stood up to their Federal colleagues and told them unequivocally that a massive cutback to our Budget is totally unacceptable. A shortfall of the size I have mentioned for Queensland's Budget would mean either huge increases in taxes and charges, or the sacking of 4 355 teachers, 2 766 nurses and 563 police officers. All members of Parliament are elected to work for their constituents and represent them in this place. If members opposite fail to fight this massive cutback, then they have failed their constituents. Members of the Australian Labor Party joined that great party because of their belief in social justice. Our policies are based on equal opportunity for all and

caring for those in the community who are not able, for whatever reason, to look after themselves.

All honourable members in this place should have grave concerns about the policies of the Federal Opposition. Those policies will mean that people who are poor or who are on low or fixed incomes will be much worse off. The cost of living will go up for everyone. The problem is that this cost of living increase will affect a great deal more those in our community who can least afford it. Australians have prided themselves on being fair. There is nothing fair about a GST—nothing at all. There are many people in the community who now spend most of their income on goods and services, and they are the ones who will be hardest hit by a goods and services tax. Under a coalition Federal Government, the wholesale sales tax will go. This is a tax which is higher for luxury goods. In its place will be put the goods and services tax. Therefore, luxury items will be taxed at the same rate as essential, everyday items. Those people on low wages, fixed incomes or benefits will be hit the hardest and will pay proportionally more tax. The GST is a regressive tax. It will widen the gap between the rich and the poor. The GST is un-Australian. It is not fair. It is an unfair tax. As *Choice* has put it—

“Introducing a GST and cutting public spending on the scale proposed in Fightback to finance reductions in income tax will undoubtedly hurt the poorest members of the community.”

The Hewson plan is divisive. It should be rejected by all Australians as being unfair and un-Australian.

Mr LITTLEPROUD (Western Downs) (3.41 p.m.): As I rise to take part in this debate on the motion before the House, I am reminded that for the past nine years—since 1983—I have represented the people of the former electorate of Condamine and, since 4 November 1992, the people in the new electorate of Western Downs. It is my responsibility and privilege to continue representation of those people who have voted, in consecutive elections since 1983, for me to be a member of this House, and those new members of my much larger new electorate. On their behalf, I pledge loyalty to Her Majesty the Queen and to Her Excellency, the Governor of Queensland. I look forward to the challenge of serving the larger electorate of Western Downs, but I am very much aware of the opinions expressed by people in my electorate who know that it is now much more difficult to have face-to-face contact with their elected member of Parliament.

Mr Beattie: Particularly the new local member.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: I thank the member for Brisbane Central very much, but I inform him that the new local member is around in the electorate all the time. People realise that when Western Downs is going through severe economic times, their voice in Parliament and the voice of all people in rural Queensland is being diminished because of the voting strength in Queensland being shifted to the south-east part of the State.

Mr Comben: One vote, one value.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: One vote, one value?

Mr Lingard: We didn't even have that.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: We did not even have that. As the Minister for Education has been travelling around the State a bit, he might now understand the standard of services with which rural people are being provided, but he likes to come back to Brisbane and wallow in all the good things that have been made available by the Goss Government over the last three years. It is very obvious that the voting strength of the Goss Government lies in the south-east corner of Queensland. It is understandable that the people of rural Queensland perceive that all the goodies are being provided in south-east Queensland because services have not been cut in south-east Queensland, whereas people in rural areas have lost not only representation but also many of the services they used to have.

Mr Livingstone: That is not true.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: I cite the closure of court houses. More than 60 of them were closed. Of course, it was soon recognised that that was a mistake and the Government put 13 Government agencies in their place, with a promise that the number of services would double next year. Nevertheless, that will still leave 40 centres without those types of services. It is worth mentioning that one of the towns which missed out on court services and services of a clerk of the court was Jandowae. I wrote to the Deputy Premier and pointed out that people were being severely disadvantaged because they had to travel to Dalby to obtain access to those services. In particular, pensioners who did not own a car had to travel quite a distance. The Deputy Premier was good enough to write back to me and say that he would raise the matter with the Attorney-General and ask whether a departmental officer could, on one day a week, be made available to render the type of services that the people of Jandowae so desperately need. To date, the Attorney-General has taken no action. Recently, I wrote to him to remind him of the direction from the Deputy Premier, and I am keen to see what comes from it.

I mentioned the economic plight of rural Queensland. Poor seasons have made it worse than ever. Poor international markets for our commodities have a big impact. It is at times such as this that people are seeing their inheritance, or in other cases what they have worked hard for and built up from nothing, at risk. It is pretty difficult to work in an electorate office, to have people coming to me to talk about their financial problems and to know that they cannot be saved. It is understandable that those people are extremely angry at what they see as the lack of social justice in the country. The other day, I listened intently to the debate on the forthcoming election. A promise was made that people with an income of up to \$60,000 would be given some sort of subsidy for child care, yet some families—for example, those in which both mother and father work extremely hard in a small business or on a property and are in a negative income situation—do not qualify. One can understand why they feel that sense of lack of equity.

I want to make some comments on the Speech given by the Governor at the opening of Parliament. She had not progressed too far into that address when comments were made about what had been done in the past three years of the Goss Government and what was intended to be done in the next three years. I would like to quote from that Speech—

“In its first term the Government concentrated its efforts on:

- pursuing the highest standards of economic and financial management, to promote business confidence and generate employment . . .
- improving public sector efficiency and productivity, to give taxpayers better value for their contribution to the running of the State;
- upgrading long-neglected Government services in the essential areas of education, health and law and order.”

The Speech continued—

“HONOURABLE MEMBERS,

On 19th September my Government was elected on a platform of:

- continuing to provide responsible economic management directed towards the promotion of economic growth and the generation of employment;
- further improving the educational and health facilities for the people of Queensland . . .

The Government will renew and redouble its efforts in all these areas.”

And so forth and so on.

I thought that it might be appropriate today, rather than to talk in general terms, to talk in specifics from my own experience during the past three years with some of the departments and some of the services that were mentioned in that Speech at the opening of Parliament. I will start with health. I acknowledge that, later today, the

shadow Minister for Health, the member for Toowoomba South, will give a detailed criticism of what has happened. I want to talk about the sorts of things that have happened in my electorate. Not long after the present Minister took up his ministerial responsibilities, a review was taking place and there was a veiled threat that health services in small country hospitals could be at risk. Under extreme pressure in this House, the Minister gave a promise that there would be no reduction in rural health services. I can well remember it, and the people of Queensland heard it all. There was some sense of relief felt by people in places such as Jandowae and Inglewood.

Mr FitzGerald: And Laidley.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: And Laidley. That relief was felt right across the State in all those small centres with a population of about 1 000. Since then, I have been following what has been happening inside the Darling Downs Regional Health Authority. I will speak only about that body. I know that its people are undertaking investigations into what they call quality assurance. I think that quality assurance is a backdoor way of getting around the Minister's promise. I suspect that they will specify that certain things cannot be done in certain small hospitals and, by doing that, they will be able to get the Minister off the hook. However, the Minister should note that strong opposition will come from the people who will be affected. They are alert to the threat.

I spoke to the Regional Director of the Darling Downs Regional Health Authority. He always raises the worst case scenario, and talks about the sorts of things that might happen in a small hospital which result in the loss of a patient. Those small hospitals have an excellent record. They have not lost patients. The other point I made was that inland Queensland would never have been settled if people were afraid to go away from the very best of medical and other services. It was the pioneering spirit. We would never have moved away from the coasts and the major cities if it were not for the people who were prepared to go out there and to take those risks. When they get really crook, they will take the advice of the local GP, who will tell them whether he or she can treat them or whether they should go to Toowoomba or Brisbane. We are happy to do it that way, but we do not want the Government to dictate to us what will happen.

I want to talk about the X-ray facilities at Dalby Hospital, which is a rather large hospital. Dalby is a town of 10 000 people in a district of nearly 20 000 people. In November 1992, I learned that the X-ray machine had broken down. It is unfortunate, but it can happen. However, even though the hospital had a mobile machine, that machine did not have the same capacity as the other machine for certain high definition X-rays, especially those of the spine and the head. People had to be transported by ambulance from Dalby to Toowoomba for those sorts of X-rays. I can understand that, in the short term, that has to happen. What annoys me is that the machine broke down in November 1992. A decision to replace that machine or to fix it was not made until about the end of January or early February this year. Tenders will not close until 17 March this year, and then we have to wait until the new machine is delivered. In the meantime, people have the inconvenience of having to travel from Dalby to Toowoomba.

I am sure that the previous Minister would say that it is not good management, that at the authority level the regional director should have made a decision much earlier than that, and that something needs to be done for a town of that size. The problem was made worse and brought to my attention when a child had a diving accident and suffered a spinal injury. There was a chance that the child could have been turned into a quadriplegic. The child was taken to hospital, where a diagnosis was made. It was decided that the patient would have to go to Toowoomba for an X-ray. Honourable members could understand the anxiety of the parents when they found that they had to put the child, who was in a precarious state of health, into an ambulance to be very carefully transported to Toowoomba to ensure that no damage was done to the spinal cord. Luckily, that did not occur, but the possibility existed.

The next example that I want to talk about is a specialist service at the Toowoomba General Hospital. A person from Chinchilla had to travel to Toowoomba for

a special test. That person arrived at Toowoomba only to find that the specialist was on holidays and that no-one else at the Toowoomba General Hospital was able to carry out the test. We are talking about a city of 80 000 people and a regional population of about 150 000 people. That particular test could not be performed, although it was not particularly difficult, because the only man in the area who could do it was on holidays. So the patient was asked, or directed, to go to Brisbane. The patient resented that request, and I do not blame that person. Those are three examples of the experiences of people who have endured the loss of services. That is why I take exception to some of the claims made in the Governor's Speech.

The other thing that galls the people out in rural Queensland is the Government's statement that the hospitals boards are an anachronism, a waste of money and cost too much. The Government said that it would replace such boards with just a few regional directors. It said that a regional director and a secretary would be appointed to handle a whole region. One thing that really annoys the health workers out in the Darling Downs area and in the south-west area is the growth of the bureaucracy. In the Roma Hospital, beds have actually been taken out of rooms and the rooms have been converted to offices for the regional staff. Chinchilla Hospital used to have two administration staff, now there are five. There used to be a non-nursing matron and the rest were hands-on nursing staff. Now a non-nursing staff of three perform the administration. All of those things are symptomatic of the new style of administration brought on by Peter Coaldrake's model, which is all about setting up career structures for people in administration, chewing up the public dollars in administration, and having fewer and fewer dollars left to deliver the service.

I turn now to the Ambulance Service. It was reorganised, and some good things came out of that. However, I want to speak about some things that have been brought to my attention. First of all, in July 1991 all of the assets of the individual ambulance centres were handed across to the Queensland Ambulance Service. I believe that \$400,000 worth of assets at the Dalby centre was handed across. In the case of Chinchilla, the figure was \$120,000. The people of Chinchilla were annoyed at that because that money was there to build a new centre. An application was submitted for improvements to be carried out to the centre, and an allocation of \$12,000 was made. Originally, that centre had \$120,000 available, but it could not get that amount. Instead, it got \$12,000 back. The people of Dalby became concerned. The Lions Club of Dalby had supplied all of the money to provide a brand-new ambulance vehicle with a plaque on the side. I was told, "It is not in town any more, Brian, it is out at Meandarra." Those sorts of things are putting the local people off side. In fact, one senior ambulance man in the south-west area said, "The people regard us in the same way as they regard the railways—we are just another Government service. We used to be highly regarded and supported and people always identified with us, but now we are just another Government service." Even the staff people are worried about the sorts of things that have happened in that regard. One can understand why the public at large are rather disenchanted. Not long ago, people were alarmed when they read in the paper that the Ambulance Service is in debt and that there was an argument over whether the debt was \$9m or \$18m. Although millions of dollars were transferred from the local centres into the consolidated revenue of the Queensland Ambulance Service, it is now in debt.

There is one plus for the Government concerning the Ambulance Service in my area over the last three years. That is that the town of Jandowae got an ambulance centre. The Minister at the time, Terry Mackenroth, came out and performed suitably. He was obviously proud to see a nice, fine building there. It was a fine building. However, let me tell the House a little about the situation. The proposition put to the people of Jandowae was, "If you want an ambulance centre, you have got to raise \$30,000." They did it in a fortnight. They slipped in and they helped build it with voluntary labour. Then out came the Minister and said he was very proud that the Queensland Ambulance Service and the Queensland Government had provided this new ambulance centre in Jandowae. The truth was that the Minister simply said to the Dalby ambulance centre,

"You will provide the funding for the centre at Jandowae." The Government did nothing about it. It was all done by the people of Dalby and Jandowae, yet the Minister came out and purported that it was a Government initiative.

Mr McElligott: Was that the total funding, \$30,000?

Mr LITTLEPROUD: No, \$30,000 was for the building itself. I turn now to education. It is pleasing to see the present Minister in the Chamber. I listened to the comments that the member for Cleveland made about education. Most members would be aware that I had more than a passing interest in education from 1987 to 1989. I was very much aware of what was inherited when there was a change of Government. I want to list some of those things. The retention level to Year 12 stood at about 80 per cent, beaten only by the Australian Capital Territory. Of all businesses in Australia, we were the fifth-largest users of computers. The only organisations to beat us were Telecom and the major banks. The computer software that we developed in Queensland was not only technically correct but also had educational qualities, something that was not always the case in the other States. We had made a brave start on foreign language studies, so much so that there were more students learning and speaking Japanese in Queensland than there were in the rest of Australia. In the 1989 Budget, funding was made available to improve teachers' salaries to make them equal to the best—or perhaps the best—in Australia. The Minister knows that. I was pleased to see that implemented after the change of Government. In that Budget, there was a promise of \$25m for the remote area allowance scheme to try to overcome the problems of transient teachers in western Queensland and to look after the disadvantages suffered by teachers who go to remote areas. The present Government, under the previous Minister, botched it up. It was not exactly what was wanted, and it is still a great disappointment. The figure is something like \$15m rather than \$25m. In the 1989 Budget, grants to schools were doubled. Since then, it has flowed on. Madam Deputy Speaker, you would know that the instrumental music course in Queensland schools was the envy of the rest of Australia. That was the situation that the Government inherited in 1989, not the sorts of things that were spoken of by the previous speaker.

I appreciate that, by the end of 1992, things had changed, and that there is now a new Minister. I am sure that he acknowledges he has a major task on his hands, because there was a major purge of the senior personnel of the Education Department. Many others, if they were not pushed, chose to leave because they were dissatisfied. The staff still remains demoralised. I have many friends in the education field and they talk to me about their own particular problems. The Education Department has lost an inspectorate. There have been all sorts of problems with the tertiary entrance scheme. I feel for the Minister, because he inherited a system that was not thought through properly. All sorts of hiccups occurred. He has had to wear it, because the previous incumbent botched things up. He took advice from the wrong sorts of people and got rid of a lot of able people. The p. and c. associations are still raising money. They were led to believe that they would no longer have to raise money. As we start this school year, I can say to the present Minister that, as at about a week or so ago, 53 schools still do not have permanently appointed principals.

Mr Quinn: Sixty.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: I thank the honourable member. Sixty schools do not have permanently appointed principals. The reason for that is the problems associated with the selection process and the fear of principals that when they go to those schools they will be forgotten. This Government threw out a system which had served Queensland well for many, many years. That system was based on merit and it was fair. People who were appointed to country areas could still come back to the city. However, this Government brought in a new system that does not work, as a result of which people will not apply for appointments to some places. The teachers who are assigned to good schools are putting out the sandbags. They will not move, because they know that a person can be assigned to a certain place and may never return.

During the past three years, the Government's education policy has had some positive aspects. It funded some university places, and I applaud that. It started school support centres, and I applaud that, although I still believe that the right people are not in charge. I believe that the inspectors should be in charge of such centres. The Government has advanced the Languages Other Than English program, and for that I give it credit. Certainly, in each year an increase in education funding has occurred, and I applaud that. The present Minister should make sure that he receives value for money. I have heard him make some comments in that regard.

I return to the Governor's Opening Speech. It stated—

"The Government recognises the need to continue strong fiscal discipline and maintenance of a low-tax regime."

When I read that remark, I am reminded of some statistics released by the Parliamentary Library just before Christmas, which referred to the various sources of funding for the State. One aspect which stuck in my mind was the income derived by this Government from Government licences and permits. In 1989, that revenue was less than \$200m a year. In 1992, that figure was \$750m a year. That is proof of the criticism by my constituents about this Government charging more and more for licenses and permits. I will cite an example. Recently, a fellow rang my office. Because he works in the bush on his own, he wants a concealable firearm. He stated that three years ago, a permit cost him \$56 for three years. When he reapplied for a permit recently, he discovered that it will now cost \$160. I can tell honourable members that that man is irate.

A Government member interjected.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: He needs to have a firearm. He is out in the bush on his own. However, I take the point that the member has made. I turn to the registration fee on farm vehicles. A concession was provided when it was realised that many people drive only a few hundred kilometres a year in their vehicles to deliver grain or stock. However, registration fees on farm vehicles have increased from \$100 to \$1,000. That has an enormous impact on primary producers, who are almost financially destroyed. Nevertheless, the Government keeps demanding more money, all for sectional interests. It seems determined to penalise the fellows who live in the west because they vote for the National Party. However, the Government will never take anything away from the people in the city. It will look after them. The people in the west are hurting and they are angry. They showed their attitude during the last election campaign. At two booths in my electorate, Chinchilla and Jandowae, not one person turned up to hand out a Labor Party ticket. That is the standing of the Labor Party in the west.

I turn now to law and order, which was mentioned in the Governor's Opening Speech. Government members have referred to the public's alarm over rising crime levels, violence in the streets, escapes from prisons, the early release of violent criminals and deaths in custody. The public certainly is concerned about those issues. At the last election, law and order was a major issue. I am pleased that the Penalties and Sentences Bill has finally been passed. About a week ago, a certain prisoner was released from prison after serving 17 years. For most of that time, he had been kept in solitary confinement because he was assaulting and raping fellow prisoners. Finally, he had served all the sentences handed out to him, and the system had no choice other than to let him loose. I understand that he has gone to live at Woorabinda. It is a pity that the Penalties and Sentences Act was not in force earlier so that his case could have been reviewed. I believe that he is a potential re-offender. When he was in Opposition, the present Minister for Corrective Services referred to the revolving doors of Queensland's prisons. He was scathing in his criticism of Queensland's prisons. Now that he is a Minister, he is breaking all sorts of records. In one year, more than 100 escapes from lawful custody occurred.

Mr Quinn: A century.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: Now the Minister has made his maiden century. I do not know how he will perform this year, but he has started off pretty well. The Minister

inherited a prison system which had upgraded facilities, in accordance with the recommendations of the Kennedy report. That upgrading occurred not before time, but Queensland now has good quality prisons. I have inspected most of Queensland's prisons and some interstate prisons. The Queensland prison system is pretty good. However, it is not being run as well as it can. The Minister must further upgrade prison facilities and the procedures used to ensure that the public is not worried about violence in the street and does not have to be protected from escaped prisoners or prisoners on early release. Just before this Parliament rose for the Christmas break, some questions were asked about a prisoner at one of the Western Outreach camps at Charleville. That prisoner apparently was visiting Brisbane in the company of a solicitor and accountant, was travelling in an open sports car and was negotiating to buy businesses worth \$1.5m to \$2m, only to return on Monday to the prison camp. Honourable members may laugh about that; it seems to be outrageous. However, such a case is symptomatic of a system that is not being run properly. The public has a right to be angry. The highlight of the Milliner administration was the road sign erected at Wacol which stated, "Caution—Prisoners cross here at night."

I turn now to family services. When in Opposition, the present Minister for Family Services, Mrs Warner, made promises and more promises. She stated that Labor would be a caring Government. She said, "We will look after people." During the Budget debate, I made the comment that demand for welfare services had grown and that the Government was not keeping up with that demand. When in Opposition, the Minister was very critical of the National Party for giving funds to community organisations such as Lifeline so that they could do the job. The Minister is now doing the same thing and claiming that it is the best use of a dollar. I agree with the Minister, but why did she criticise similar actions by the National Party when she was in Opposition?

In the last Budget, much was made of the introduction of a new domestic violence service, which is a good idea. A lot of press was given to that service, how it would cover the State and how it would protect those unfortunate women—and, in some cases, men—who are subjected to domestic violence. I will inform the House of the reality. I believe that the example I am about to cite is indicative of what is happening in the rest of the State. The South-west Queensland Domestic Violence Service is based at Toowoomba. That one centre covers an area from Inala to the South Australian border, and as far north as Blackall and Taroom. That is an enormous area of Queensland, and it probably involves a million people. That centre employs only three professionals and a couple of part-time, back-up staff. To make matters worse, those three professionals who cover that area have only one car. Although the Minister spoke about it being a terrific new service, it is nothing but a cheap facade. I have written to the Minister and asked her to provide those people with more resources. I have attended a seminar at which those needs were discussed. Those people will set up a network to help overcome the problem. However, they need the resources. The Minister is guilty of talking up a solution, but not delivering it.

The same situation exists with regard to disability services. I understand that funding for disability services once came direct from the Federal Government to centres in Queensland. However, a new arrangement was made wherein funding was given to the Family Services Department which was then allocated by Mrs Warner. Places such as the spastic welfare centres in Maryborough and Toowoomba and the Menukah Day Care Centre in Toowoomba are in financial crisis. Under the previous arrangement, those centres could appeal to the Federal Minister and say, "If we do not get more money we will fold. Can you give us some top-up funding?", and the funding was made available. Although the money now goes straight to the Family Services Department, the Minister refuses to help those centres. They are in financial crisis. The Minister's charter is to look after people in crisis, yet she is turning her back on them. As events unfold in Parliament, I am sure that the members for Toowoomba North and Toowoomba South will have something to say about the matter. As to juvenile aid—a young chap in my town had been in trouble with the law and had been in Westbrook. The boy's grandmother was approached by officers of the Department of Family Services to look

after him. His father had gone, his mother was not going to look after him, and as any good grandmother would do, she said that she would try to look after him. However, the young fellow became uncontrollable and moved out. That child was put under the control of the Department of Family Services by virtue of a care and protection order that was imposed by a court. Officers of the Department of Family Services, which is based in Toowoomba, have not come anywhere near Chinchilla. The grandmother has appealed for help, yet no help has been forthcoming. The local police have come to me and told me that the young fellow is on a one-way street, that it is going to be all downhill for him, yet the Department of Family Services have been of no assistance. I make the point that the Governor's Opening Speech referred to how the Government was going to look after essential services. That was rot. In reality, the Government is not delivering on its promises.

Much has been said about the GST and Fightback. It is interesting to note that people home in on only one aspect of Fightback and do not refer to the total package, which contains reductions in income tax, increases in employment opportunities and the removal of seven taxes. Instead, they conduct a scare campaign. It will be a pathetic exercise if for the next two or three weeks Government members talk about only one aspect of the package. We should concentrate on the whole package and consider the facts. We have had 10 years of the current Federal Government, and we are going downhill. I am sure that the people of Australia will not be fooled. The polls indicate that we have to change. In fact, even the well-meaning members of the Trades and Labor Council in Victoria are beginning to realise that enterprise agreements are the way to go. Things are going to improve. However, we will certainly go nowhere if we go over the pedantic debates that have taken place over the past three or four months.

Mr ROBERTSON (Sunnybank) (4.13 p.m.): It is with great pleasure that I rise to speak in this Address in Reply debate. In doing so, I wish to highlight that part of the Governor's Opening Speech dedicated to this Government's commitment to provide responsible economic management directed towards the promotion of economic growth and the generation of employment. The economic reforms outlined in the Governor's Opening Speech are, of course, in direct contrast to the Liberal and National Parties' deliberate and calculated rape of the Australian economy and our society, should they win the Federal election.

A most extraordinary sight on the Pacific Highway at Beenleigh is a billboard at the side of the highway that claims "Jull equals jobs". This billboard must be one of the most misleading and deceitful advertisements ever to be unleashed on the general public. No doubt, honourable members will find it as incredible as I do that the Federal member for Fadden and Opposition spokesperson on Tourism, David Jull, would have the gall to make such a false and deceitful public statement. He has made a joke of his leader's commitment to a "no lies" election campaign. If David Jull had any sense of honesty in his representations to the people of Fadden, he would hang his head in shame at this blatant example of false advertising. By his own admission, David Jull has clearly failed to protect the jobs of his constituents in Fadden from the Liberals' proposed goods and services tax on the hospitality and tourism industry. David Jull's inability to stand up for his constituents and his disgraceful about-face on the effect of the GST on the tourism industry should be condemned roundly by all electors in Springwood, Mansfield, Upper Mount Gravatt, Rochedale, Eagleby and other areas of the Fadden electorate. By virtue of David Jull's ineptness, lack of conviction and compassion in his Opposition portfolio, he will destroy jobs, not create them.

David Jull has allowed himself to be steamrolled by Dr John Hewson over his earlier support of the Australian Tourism Industry Association claim for an exemption from the GST of Australian tour packages sold overseas. The claims by the ATIA were rejected by Dr Hewson, who described them as "The most blatant case of vested interest arguments that we have seen in a long time." In reply, the director of the ATIA, Geoff McGeary, stated that Queensland would suffer under Dr Hewson's refusal to treat packages bought overseas as exports. The tourism industry leader expected the inbound tourist market to slump for approximately two years as potential tourists would

be turned away by higher holiday prices. Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation general manager, Ken Rosenberry, stated that the 15 per cent GST on inbound packages would make tourism less appealing than cheaper international destinations. The ATIA chief, Sir Frank Moore, had this to say about the Liberals tourism policy—

“It is absolutely foolish to load false costs on to the price of our product as it would appear in a travel agent’s window anywhere in the northern hemisphere—we are the only export industry singled out to have the GST applied to our foreign sales.”

It is no wonder that, on 17 October 1992 in the *Australian*, Glenn Milne wrote—

“Under apparent pressure from the office of John Hewson, David Jull executed a policy back flip that amounts to a personal and political debacle.”

What is the effect of this debacle upon the people of Fadden? Thanks to David Jull, the major tourist attractions in Fadden will bear the brunt of the Liberals’ destructive policies towards the tourism industry. He is condemning tourist attraction operators to increase their accommodation costs by up to 13 per cent and travel costs by up to 12 per cent—not to mention increases in admission prices. He is also condemning to bankruptcy restaurant owners and takeaway food outlet operators in his own electorate by increasing their food prices by between 10 per cent and 14 per cent and alcohol prices by up to 8 per cent if the Liberals win the forthcoming Federal election.

Mr Davidson interjected.

Mr ROBERTSON: I am glad that the member for Noosa has interjected. As a small-business person, he should know better than anyone else the effect of the GST. He should know that the Liberals are going to tax his worms and his flies, and that they will tax him out of business. These are not pie in the sky calculations but figures provided by Ernst and Young, the leading independent accountancy firm, and Treasury analysts. These figures also reflect projected increases calculated by none other than the Queensland Hoteliers Association. In a confidential internal analysis of the effect of the GST on that industry, the executive summary of the Hoteliers Association stated—

“Assuming the industry seeks to maintain profitability as a percentage of cost, and not in fixed dollar terms, it is estimated that prices (for accommodation, food and beverages) would increase on average by 10 per cent for four to five star hotels and resorts, by 12 per cent to 13 per cent for three star motels and by 4 per cent to 7 per cent for establishments relying predominantly upon alcohol sales.

This significant increase arises because there is little benefit to be derived by the industry from the removal of sales tax, payroll tax and customs duty. Business will seek to entertain more in house and the competitiveness of Australia as a tourist destination (both domestic and inbound) will be damaged.”

How silent members on the other side of the House are now! Even when David Jull was able to have a second bite of the cherry before the release of Fightback II, he again failed miserably to represent successfully the very real concerns of the tourism and hospitality industry. All that changed in the Fightback II document was a commitment to provide extra funds for overseas tourism promotion. The Liberals claim that this funding will result in nearly 10 million tourists visiting Australia by the year 2000. This is in spite of predictions by the tourism industry, which claims that there will be an increase in overseas tourists to 6.4 million by the same year. It would appear that Dr Hewson is one who never lets advice from an industry association get in the way of yet another outrageous claim that is designed to deflect criticism of his antisocial econometric model.

But let me deal with real figures from the people who should know. Following the release of Fightback II, according to an article in the *Weekend Australian* dated 19/20 December last year, this is what the takeaway food industry had to say—

“A spokesperson for Macdonalds family restaurants, Mr Charlie Bell said jobs would be lost because of the coalition’s decision to exempt food but not fast food

from the GST. Obviously we are very disappointed by the decision, Mr Bell said. When you consider 84 per cent of Australians eat at our quick service restaurants every four weeks, it is going to affect the majority of Australians."

In the very same report, the chief executive of the National Restaurant Association said that the Liberals, revised GST policy would—

“. . . have an impact on employment. Our estimates are still showing a negative impact of around 10 to 14 per cent."

We can only wonder whether David Jull will have the honesty to inform his electorate of his own personal failures in his Opposition portfolio prior to the Federal election.

Ms Spence interjected.

Mr ROBERTSON: Indeed. He is never seen. It should not be difficult for Mr Jull to do this if he ever did turn up in his electorate. There are at least five restaurants and a motor inn within walking distance of his own electorate office at Upper Mount Gravatt. We can only assume that he does not have the courage to explain to the patrons of those restaurants that cost increases of between 10 per cent and 14 per cent will have to be passed on to them, adding another \$10 to \$30 to their bill for their modest night out with their friends, partners or families. As the constituents of Fadden find it more expensive to have a night out, and restaurant patronage falls, will Mr Jull admit that the first casualty of the Liberals' unfair policy will be the jobs of restaurant workers, both casual and permanent? Has he explained to restaurant owners that, as a consequence, they will have to work even longer hours than they do currently in order to keep their doors open? Has he been honest enough to explain to those restaurant owners that they will not be compensated for those increased costs, because the promised reductions in payroll tax by and large will not apply to them, just as they would not apply to the honourable member for Noosa in his worm shop? Has Mr Jull been up front and admitted to restaurant owners and patrons that the exemption of the GST on food does not apply to food served in restaurants, hotels or motels?

Ms Spence: Has he told them they have got to do a lot more paperwork?

Mr ROBERTSON: I shall get to that issue. Surely David Jull must stand by his earlier comments that "it is critical that the Australian tourism product does not price itself out of international markets by the imposition of additional taxes". Sadly, this is not the case, or David Jull would not have the audacity to seek to represent the electors of Fadden for the Liberal Party at this year's Federal election. Mr Jull must be one of the most miserable and irresponsible politicians in Australia today, and one of many Liberal politicians who will impose great misery not just on the people of Fadden but upon the whole of Australia. David Jull is anti-fun, anti-enjoyment and anti-tourism. If David Jull and the Liberal Party have their way, they will tax Queenslanders not only when they go to a restaurant, but also when we go to the cinema complex at the Logan Hyperdome in the heart of his own electorate, to the video store and to see the Broncos at QEII stadium. And, importantly for the families of Fadden and those who work in the area, he will tax us when we go to Dreamworld, the rum distillery at Beenleigh, the cinema complex at the Logan Hyperdome, Koala Town, the Wet 'N' Wild Water Park, or Movie World—all major tourist attractions enjoyed by both overseas and interstate tourists and other ordinary Australians who have the misfortune to be located in Mr Jull's electorate. But David Jull does not just want to tax ticket sales when we enter the gates. He and Dr Hewson want to tax us when we buy a soft drink, a hamburger, a souvenir and photographs. And, at the end of the day, they want to tax us when we leave the car park or get on the bus to go home. If the Liberals have their way, there will be no business called show business.

Therefore, it is no wonder that tourism leaders such as the secretary of the Victorian branch of the Motor Inn and Motels Association wrote in March last year—

"The general consensus in the tourism industry is that the proposed GST would be disaster . . ."

It is no wonder that the Northern Territory commissioned a report from Professor John Freebairn, who stated in February 1992—

“The 15 per cent GST would increase the cost of air fares, accommodation, meals, entry to national parks, fun parks, tourist attractions, telephone calls, mail etc. This major industry would suffer as the value of tourist dollars went down.”

Consider for a moment the effect of the GST upon Dreamworld, in the heart of the electorate of Fadden. Dreamworld, as we know, is the winner of an award as Queensland's best major tourist attraction. Approximately 450 people are employed on site. It is a tourist attraction that caters for international tourists, interstate tourists and Queenslanders looking to give their family a special day out. Currently it costs a family of four nearly \$100 to enter Dreamworld for the day. Thanks to Mr Jull, GST will be added to the price of the tickets. When a family goes to hire a stroller—add GST! When they store some belongings in the cloak room—add GST! When they go to the on-site one hour film processing facility—add GST. But the blow-out in the cost of a family day out does not stop there. From Dreamworld's fact file we learn that, each year, Dreamworld patrons consume 91 000 metres of hot dogs, every metre of which would attract GST; 109 500 pies which, in future, may attract GST; 300 000 buckets of chips, which would attract GST; 250 000 donuts, which would attract GST; 50 000 bags of fairy floss, which would attract GST; 480 000 litres of soft drink, which would attract GST; and 78 600 metres of licorice, every metre of which would also attract GST. All of those items would increase in price—increases that would, thanks to David Jull, have to met by ordinary Australians.

Guests of Dreamworld would have the opportunity to thank David Jull again when they visit the pizza restaurant, the candy shop, McFarm's hot nut shop, Kenny's ice-cream parlour, the sandwich bar and all the other food outlets at Dreamworld—outlets which would not benefit from Hewson's exemption of basic food items from the GST. And when ordinary Australians and international tourists go to Dreamworld's main street to buy a souvenir of their increasingly expensive day, if David Jull had his way, they would get the opportunity to think of Jull again as the GST was added to their toys, photographs, sunglasses, gifts, and even postcards. And to add insult to injury to Australia's textile clothing and footwear industry, which would be devastated by Hewson's zero tariff policy, the GST would also be added to clothing such as T-shirts, hats and swimwear. However, small businesspeople, such as restaurant owners in Fadden, need not worry about the additional costs that they would incur if they wanted to take their families for the odd day out, because the Liberals would simply abolish their recreation time. Even if restaurant owners could still find some free time after covering for the inevitable reduction in staff, whatever free time was left would be taken up complying with the administrative nightmare that would be the GST. Is it any wonder that our own Minister for Business, Industry and Regional Development, the member for Capalaba, described the GST as the “goodbye Sunday tax”. The estimated eight hours per week necessary to comply with the requirements of the GST would surely put an end to any thoughts of time off for small businesspeople.

There can be no greater demonstration of a politician out of touch with his own electorate than David Jull in Fadden. Jull's performance over the GST and the hospitality and tourism industry should be reason enough for the electors of Fadden to punish him by providing him with the time to take that long GST-free overseas holiday. For the sake of Fadden, let us all hope that he will be given a one-way ticket. There is an alternative to the David Julls of this world. The alternative lies in Australians supporting the Australian Labor Party at the forthcoming Federal election and, in particular, Peter Elden in the seat of Fadden.

Mr BEANLAND (Indooroopilly) (4.29 p.m.): I congratulate Her Excellency the Governor on the enthusiasm with which she has gone about her vice-regal duties since her appointment. She has already travelled extensively throughout the State and associated herself with very many worthy community causes. The House has already paid warm tribute to Sir Henry Abel Smith, Governor of Queensland from 1958 to 1966.

When I was a student, I recall the great affection in which he and Lady May were held during their long period of service to Queensland. In fact, when Sir Henry retired, school children from throughout Brisbane gathered to give him a tremendous public farewell—a unique experience in the history of Queensland. I want also to take this opportunity to thank the people of the Indooroopilly electorate for electing me as the member for the new seat following the redistribution of seats throughout the State. I want to place on record my thanks to the volunteers and supporters who so ably helped me throughout the recent State election campaign.

One could almost be excused for thinking that the Goss Government has taken early long service leave since the election almost six months ago. Virtually the whole of the Cabinet took January as a holiday month, as well as much of December. We all remember that only two Ministers were on duty for much of that time. Given the difficulties facing our State—record unemployment, a crisis in health and education and an alarming escalation in violent crime, the laid-back approach the Cabinet has taken to the Government of the State is to be deplored. We find that the Premier can spend two hours a day riding a pushbike to work. I notice that he has already fallen off. He should have learned from Leo McLeay how politically hazardous this can be. I am told by my friends in City Hall that if the Premier sees one of Lord Mayor Soorley's buses headed for him, he had better have another voluntary fall because, given the poor relations between City Hall and George Street, I doubt that a collision with a council bus would fall into the accident category. The Premier has also found time to travel to Western Australia to campaign for Dr Lawrence. We know that she lost, and lost remarkably well. He went to Victoria to campaign for Mrs Kirner, another loser if there ever was one. On Monday, the Premier was campaigning with Paul Keating. On 13 March, the Premier will bring up an unenviable trifecta, backing three losers in a row. Just six months ago, the Premier was begging Paul Keating not to take part in the State election campaign. How quickly the wheel turns!

When this Government came to office just over three years ago, whenever something went wrong it blamed the former National Party Government. Whenever something went right, it took the credit itself. But the passage of time has forced even this Government to stop blaming the former Government. Today, the Goss Labor Government has a new bogymen, and he has never been in Government. I refer of course to Dr John Hewson, the next Prime Minister of Australia. Even before he gets the keys to the Lodge, which he surely will on 13 March, Dr Hewson is getting the blame in advance for the massive problems this Government is going to face in 1993.

At the weekend, the Minister for Education made an absolute fool of himself by claiming that under a Hewson Government 2 000 teachers in Queensland schools will lose their jobs. He forgot to mention that under the Keating and Goss Governments, more than half of last year's teacher graduates have not even been able to gain a position in the teaching service—a tragic and shameful position. He forgot also his own statement of a few months back when, in a fleeting moment of honesty, he said that when he took over the Education Ministry from Mr Braddy it was a shambles, and it certainly was. With friends such as that, the Police Minister hardly needs any enemies! Over recent weeks, we have seen the collapse of the legal aid system. Today, we find even more problems with the system. It is falling apart more and more, day by day. On Monday, the Premier lined up with Mr Keating to boast about the success of the Queensland hospital service. On the very same day, the Leader of the Opposition was able to release letters confirming that because of a State Government funding crisis, all major hospitals in Brisbane will virtually close down for two weeks over Easter—an event without precedent in the history of Queensland. I fully expect Dr Hewson will get the blame for that as well. Now we find both the Premier and the Deputy Premier threatening to rob the motorists of Queensland of the cut in petrol prices a Hewson Government will implement. The Goss Government will use the massive cut in the price of petrol Dr Hewson will implement to impose its own State petrol tax, something the Premier promised in the last election campaign he would not do. In other words, the \$11 per tank of petrol saving our colleagues in Canberra will implement after 13 March will be

stolen by this greedy Goss Labor Government, covering up for its own financial mismanagement of Queensland.

When Mr Keating comes to Queensland making claims about hidden Opposition taxes, this Government must blush with embarrassment given the fact that the Premier is poised to impose a State petrol tax on the motorists, small businesses, industries and farmers of Queensland. Queenslanders are rapidly realising that this is a do-nothing Government blaming everyone else for its problems, and either unwilling to or incapable of doing anything about it. Having done nothing to strengthen the State's economic base, the Government is revving up a giant scare campaign to blame Dr Hewson for the State's current and future ills.

The record of the Government is a sad one in several key areas, none more so than unemployment. Since the election of the Government in 1989, unemployment in this State has risen by a tragic 74 per cent. Since December 1989, only some 36 200 additional jobs have been created in Queensland. The unemployment rate has risen by 6.6 per cent to 10.7 per cent. There are over 163 000 Queenslanders out of work at a time when there are more than one million Australians unemployed. As Labor members are so fond of saying, it is certainly very un-Australian and very unfair. It is unfair and un-Australian that we have Labor Governments that do nothing about the unemployed in this State or in this nation. While the figures are up one month and down the next, the trends are not favourable because job growth—once Queensland's great achievement—is well below what is needed to provide for our own school leavers, let alone migrants to this State. The Government blames migration from other States for our unemployment problem. Before this Government came to office, this State had the same migration from interstate as it has now, and lower unemployment. The Government must face up fairly and squarely to its responsibilities to boost economic development and to provide jobs. It must stop blaming everyone else, including someone who is not even in Government yet. We have heard enough about phantom projects, false job-creation schemes and political rhetoric. The people of Queensland, especially young Queenslanders, want jobs, not talk; results, not promises.

On 17 January this year, a report in the *Sunday Mail* stated that another firm was pulling out of Queensland. The headline reads "Truck firm pulls out, Jobs go as plant shuts". The article states—

"Western Star Trucks will close its Australian heavy truck assembly operation at Wacol at the end of March."

This Government should be endeavouring to ensure that Queensland retains these types of operations and that Queensland gets more job-creation activities. Instead, that closure cost up to 50 assembly line jobs from a total work force of approximately 100. The article goes on to state—

"Production of four trucks a week will continue until the closure . . . This will be the second blow to Queensland's truck industry in less than a year—last May, Toyota ended more than a decade of truck assembly at Acacia Ridge."

I had not intended to speak about John Hewson's Liberal Fightback package, which is the Liberal/National Party plan for the future of Australia. However, having listened to several Labor members, I have no alternative but to take time to correct the nonsense, blatant lies and misinformation campaign that members of the Labor Party in this Chamber are waging, which reflect the Keating lies and misinformation campaign. Of course, all honourable members know that the friend of Labor members in this House is Paul Keating—a politician who has done more to denigrate the institution of Parliament and the role of parliamentarians than anyone else in the history of this country. That is a very sad reflection on the Federal Leader of the Australian Labor Party.

The Hewson Fightback plan is about fairness and jobs, which is something that seems to have escaped Labor in recent years. On the one hand, we have the coalition plan which is about ending the recession and creating jobs—particularly for young Australians—by lowering the tax burden on business. The policy is designed to create

two million jobs by the end of this decade. It is also designed to improve living standards; to ensure that the needy are cared for; to deliver more help to families; and to provide better access to quality health care, with Medicare and bulk billing to stay. It is also designed to boost national savings by providing a better superannuation deal for lower and middle income earners; to improve incentives for individuals and business by cutting taxes; to raise the standard of education and training; to restart the economy by increasing national productivity and reducing the foreign debt; to promote international competitiveness so that Australia can match the best in the world once again; and to match a commitment to economic growth to a commitment to high environmental standards. I will say more about these matters later on. On the other hand, Labor is all about the past, not the future. I take this opportunity to look at the record of Labor's past. I look back to 1983 when the foreign debt was only \$23 billion. Mr Keating said—

“Obviously, the economic policies of the previous (Fraser) government have failed to come to terms with Australia's deep-seated problems. 1983-84 holds promise of a considerable improvement in economic performance.”

In his 1984 Budget Speech, when foreign debt was \$27.9 billion, Mr Keating said—

“I am proud to be able to tell the Australian people that we now have strong economic growth, many more jobs, a substantial fall in inflation and declining interest rates.”

By 1985, when foreign debt had reached \$51.2 billion, Mr Keating claimed in his Budget Speech—

“The Government's strategy for the new financial year . . . builds upon our very significant successes and puts further behind us the despair and economic failure of the previous Government.”

In 1986, foreign debt had risen to \$75 billion. In his 1986-87 Budget Speech, Mr Keating then said—

“The . . . budget . . . rings the changes for a more robust, aggressive Australian economy.”

In 1987, when the foreign debt was \$82.9 billion, Mr Keating claimed in his Budget Speech—

“Notwithstanding the enormity of the trade difficulties we faced, our strategy is now bearing fruit.”

In the 1988 Budget, foreign debt was \$92.8 billion, and Mr Keating said—

“The nation is successfully emerging from its most severe economic crisis in a generation . . . this is the one that brings home the bacon.”

How well I remember that statement. He went on to state—

“Our foreign debt burden has already stabilised and begun to fall.”

At the time of his 1989 Budget Speech, the foreign debt was \$100 billion, yet Mr Keating claimed—

“As a result of the Government's economic policies, Australia will emerge from the recent level of spending without a recession and with its economic and social structure improving.”

By 1990, the foreign debt had reached \$124 billion. In Mr Keating's 1990 Budget Speech, we heard about inflation falling further, the current account deficit markedly improving, and employment picking up. At present, the foreign debt has reached \$163 billion and unemployment is more than 11 per cent—a record, if ever there was one. So much for Labor's record!

Mr Goss has created his own record. In September 1989, before he was elected as Premier of Queensland, he supported a GST. An article in the *Business Review Weekly* states—

"I supported the consumption tax at the tax summit because it is so efficient. That sort of tax could sweep away a number of inefficient and expensive ways to collect taxes, such as the fire services levy (applied to commercial buildings)."

I will not take up the time of the House while I read the rest of the article. However, it shows that Mr Goss is on the record as supporting a consumption tax or a GST. In 1985, Mr Keating supported it, too.

I wish to spend a few minutes looking at a couple of the areas that the GST will affect and some of the benefits that will be brought to those areas. The Fightback plan for sporting clubs is significant because it will mean the provision of more funds for sport and sporting clubs. Fightback is aimed at making Australian businesses more competitive by cutting their costs, and it will bring similar benefits to sporting organisations. By removing taxes on production and by significantly reducing taxes on income, the Fightback package will bring about a large reduction in the cost of running not only businesses but also sporting organisations. In addition to restoring the capacity of business to employ two million more Australians, so increasing their ability to afford to participate in sport, replacing seven unfair discriminatory taxes with one fair and equitable 15 per cent goods and services tax, accompanied by a 30 per cent cut in personal tax, along with major reforms to Australia's industrial relations, tariff, health and welfare systems, the Hewson Government will considerably reduce Australia's overall tax burden.

For sports bodies, there are both direct and indirect benefits from the removal of sales tax, fuel tax, tariffs, payroll tax and the training levy. Even small sporting clubs in the organisations are hit by the Keating Government's tax system. Most of their sporting equipment, such as footballs, cricket bats and tennis racquets, are subject to the present sales tax at a rate of 20 per cent. That tax alone costs sports people \$240m a year and will be totally removed under Fightback. I want to take a moment to list some of the items on which the Keating Government currently charges wholesale sales tax. With respect to canteen equipment, the rates are as follows: dishwashers, 10 per cent; free-standing cupboards, 10 per cent; freezers, 10 per cent; stoves, 10 per cent; and washing-up powder, 20 per cent. With respect to canteen sales, the wholesale sales tax rates are as follows: biscuits, 10 per cent; soft drinks, 20 per cent; chocolates, 10 per cent; chocolate biscuits, 10 per cent; flavoured milk, 10 per cent; foil, 20 per cent; fruit juice, 10 per cent; ice-cream, 10 per cent; life savers, 10 per cent; muesli bars, 10 per cent; paper bags, 20 per cent; pencils, 20 per cent; plastic film, 20 per cent; and savoury snacks ready to eat, 10 per cent.

With respect to club rooms, the rates are as follows: blinds, 10 per cent; colour televisions, 30 per cent; disinfectants and cleaning agents, 20 per cent; floor coverings with commercial characteristics, 20 per cent; linen, such as towels, 10 per cent; office furniture, 20 per cent; soaps, 20 per cent; tableware, 10 per cent; toilet paper—yes, every time we go to the toilet—20 per cent; and wall clocks, 30 per cent. The club secretary is hit, too. The rates are as follows: ballpoint pens and pencils, 20 per cent; briefcases, 20 per cent; computers, 20 per cent; envelopes, 20 per cent; fast print shop photocopying, 20 per cent; office chairs, 10 per cent; and writing pads—people cannot even write without paying the tax—20 per cent. The Keating Government taxes first aid at the following rates: antiseptics, 20 per cent; dencorub, 20 per cent; disinfectant, 20 per cent; petroleum jelly, 20 per cent; sponges, 20 per cent; and vitamins, 20 per cent. The Labor Government even hits the vitamin pills. With respect to ground maintenance, the rates are as follows: buckets, 20 per cent; garbage cans, 10 per cent; hand tools, 10 per cent; hoses, 20 per cent; insecticide, 20 per cent; mowers, oils, greases and lubricants, 20 per cent; paintbrushes, power tools, rollers, tool boxes and tractors, 20 per cent.

Members should consider presentation nights. Goods from balloons to boxed chocolates to cards are all taxed at 20 per cent. Members should also consider the rates on the following: crystal, 10 per cent; dried flowers, 20 per cent; printed invitations and entree cards, 20 per cent; jewellery and imitation jewellery, 30 per cent; medallions and

trophies, 10 per cent; ribbons, 10 per cent; silverware, 10 per cent; and watches, 30 per cent. With respect to sport equipment, the rates are as follows: bicycles, 20 per cent; cameras and accessories, 30 per cent; cricket balls, 20 per cent; and cricket bats, 20 per cent. Government members carry on, but they are very quiet when they hear the figures. Field glasses are taxed at 30 per cent; fishing rods, 20 per cent; footballs, 20 per cent; hockey sticks, 20 per cent; rifles, 20 per cent; tennis balls, 20 per cent; and tennis racquets, 20 per cent. Of course, there is no tax on antique clocks, caviar or gold bullion. There is no wholesale sales tax on luxury imported Italian suits, which the Prime Minister wears. There is no tax on his luxury limousine hire, or on pornographic literature.

Let us consider how this affects people. Often, the 20 per cent wholesale sales tax works out at 30 per cent at the end of the day. Business pays wholesale sales tax. Sporting groups pay it. It is being paid on more than just their stock. The tax is being paid on the items that they use and those costs are passed on in a very big way. The sporting groups have to carry the cost of the wholesale sales tax, and it has to be passed on. That means that people probably have to pay more to get into the grounds because the tax is passed on. The GST, which replaces all of those taxes, will not adversely affect sporting organisations. Any GST that is introduced in a club's purchase will be either totally refunded as soon as the sporting organisation or club puts in its next return to the Taxation Office or immediately deducted from whatever GST it collects. It will be cheaper to run sporting clubs. I know that the Government does not like that. Nevertheless, it is true. It may be a little dearer to belong to sporting clubs because the GST will apply to spectator and participator fees, but that will be more than offset by Australians having significantly increased disposable income resulting from Fightback's lower taxes. Because clubs will be cheaper to run, some may wish to pass on those savings. We have now once and for all identified the fact that sporting clubs will be much cheaper to run and that the GST will not adversely affect them. The GST is a simple and largely self-regulating tax, unlike the present wholesale sales tax which is complex and imposes a high cost on all activities, particularly those of sport. It kills incentive and requires a huge regulatory workload by the Taxation Office.

In the short time available, I want to talk about how sporting clubs will handle the GST. Sporting organisations with an annual turnover of less than \$50,000—many will be in that category—need not register under the GST or collect any GST. However, many may choose to do so in order to obtain the benefits of the GST refunds in their purchases of goods such as sport equipment. I can see why clubs will register even though they are under the \$50,000 limit, because it will be in their interests to register. Clubs with a turnover of between \$50,000 and \$250,000 must register with the Taxation Office and will need to lodge returns only once every six months. Clubs with higher turnovers up to \$2m will make returns every three months, or monthly above that. The GST will be paid by clubs on purchases such as sporting equipment and utilities such as gas, electricity, water, office equipment and supplies but will be refunded in full. GST will be collected by the club on the gate money and other receipts, including playing fees, memberships, affiliation fees and merchandising but not on donations or Government grants.

The GST collected will be set against GST paid by the club during the reporting period. If more is paid than collected, the Taxation Office will issue the club with a refund cheque. If more GST is collected than paid, the cheque will be forwarded to the Taxation Office. Minimal bookkeeping work is involved beyond the usual requirements of club treasurer keeping his usual records of total spending and total income. That must be emphasised over and over again. In relation to sponsorship—sponsorship agreements will not be adversely affected. Although they may be subject to the GST, as will the value of any contra agreements or bartering which will be value inputted and GST charged, any GST will be fully refundable. So there is no net GST cost either way. The same goes for the sale of advertising, or media or catering rights. There will be no net GST. For the benefit of members opposite, I have already indicated the detail of that. It will be done on a very regular basis, and the Taxation Office will be refunding

those moneys. If the Taxation Office does not refund it within 14 days, it will be required to pay interest to the sporting organisation. It is most important to keep that in mind.

I turn now to travel undertaken by sporting clubs. Costs for those clubs that travel long distances to participate will be considerably lower with the abolition of the fuel excise, which adds about 26c a litre to petrol prices. A tank of fuel for the average car will be \$11 cheaper. I have already indicated what this Government is thinking in relation to petrol taxes. Bus and charter companies would also be able to charge less because of their lower fuel costs and lower operating costs caused by the abolition of the other taxes, such as the present 20 per cent sales tax on vehicles which seat fewer than 12 passengers, the 20 per cent tax on parts, and payroll tax. The GST will be good to sport, and sport will benefit. It will help sporting organisations. That has been found to be the case overseas in places such as New Zealand.

I turn now to the effect of the GST on racing. Labor members like to tell blatant lies and misinform people about the GST on racing. There will be no GST on prize money and there will be no GST on betting. Race clubs will have more funds to pay out in prize money. It is a good deal for the punters and a good deal for racing clubs. Before I move on to outline the details, I will refer to what has happened under Labor. The February 1993 edition of *Walk & Talk*, published by the greyhound industry, refers to a 20 per cent sales tax on greyhound food. One letter written by a lady to the editor of that newsletter and headed "20% sales tax" states—

"As a loyal supporter of the Labor Party for many years I have been confused and disappointed by the introduction of the 20% sales tax on greyhound food."

The Federal Labor member for Bowman wrote to the Federal Treasurer complaining about this sales tax, which Labor has introduced and which affects the mums and dads who support the greyhound racing industry and the mums and dads who support the thoroughbred racing industry. A wholesale sales tax has now been imposed on fodder and pet food. So much for the Labor Party looking after the thoroughbred racing industry, the greyhound racing industry and the harness racing industry! Because of the imposition of wholesale sales tax, there have been considerable increases in food costs.

I refer now to the GST and racing. Fightback is good for the racing industry. The coalition recognises it is a major employer with big potential as an exporter, and the coalition is keen to see it grow and prosper. In deciding the Fightback package, the coalition has had representations from the racing industry and has agreed to requests that gambling be exempt from the GST. The effect of this is that punters will not pay GST on either their bets or their winnings. In addition, the prize winnings from racing will not be affected by the GST. Winners will not pay 15 per cent GST on their prize money. The GST design adopted by the coalition largely reflects the design of the GST in New Zealand as it relates to the racing industry in that country. In New Zealand, the introduction of the GST was not accompanied by the abolition of a wide range of indirect taxes, to which I have already referred. Therefore, New Zealanders did not benefit from the cost reductions that will flow to Australians from Fightback. Nevertheless, the New Zealand racing industry was unaffected by the introduction of the GST. In fact, the largest yearly jump in TAB turnover in a decade was in the year following the introduction of the GST. Between 1986 and 1987, when the GST was introduced, the increase in the TAB turnover was \$107m. The Chairman of the New Zealand Racing Industry Board, Mr Tom Williams, whose board has responsibility for harness racing, greyhounds, galloping and the TAB said—

"The impact of the GST has been minimal on racing in New Zealand. It does not represent an impediment to the industry's development."

The Australian racing industry has suffered as a result of the worst recession in 60 years under this Keating Labor Government. The coalition's policies are the best news in a long time for the racing industry.

If we look at it in some detail, we will see that the statements in relation to New Zealand are quite false and that in fact in Australia, which presently has no GST on racehorses, the breeding industry is not better off than in countries that do. Countries such as England and Ireland do not have the benefit of TAB-subsidised stake money. The statement that the GST in New Zealand has "had a disastrous effect" is not supported by the facts. In fact, Canada's GST was introduced just prior to the international recession and the circumstances there must be considered in that context. In fact, when one looks at countries throughout the world, one will see that claims that the GST has had a major detrimental effect on the racing industry are not true.

Finally, I will quote from a letter written by Wilson Tuckey to the editor of the *Sporting Globe* on 7 July in which he highlighted a number of very important aspects which will be of great benefit to members of the Labor Party who do not understand this at all, who like to peddle lies, as their Federal leader does, and who have not tried to come to grips with the benefits of the GST to Australia, to the racing industry, to sporting organisations and how it will start to get people into employment again. Wilson Tuckey wrote—

"I refer to your June 30 front page article 'Industry Fears GST Costs', and would like to correct a few misconceptions.

Firstly let me say that there are a number of Federal Liberals . . . who understand a lot about racing. I am a Committeeman of the Western Australian Turf Club, breed race horses (including Grand National winner Connorvila), race a team of approx. 15 at any one time, and for 25 years held a trainer's licence."

He also said that, unfortunately, when one is confronted by so many points, in most cases they are untrue. He continued—

"The racing industry is well represented in Liberal Party forums, as evidenced by the decision to exempt gambling from GST.

Put simply, Race Clubs will collect GST on the things they sell, including admission."

Time expired.

Mr ARDILL (Archerfield) (5 p.m.): I support the Governor's Opening Speech. It was a blueprint which gave hope for a great future for Queensland. Until Dr Hewson with his GST and his way-out economic theories appeared on the horizon, the future was something to which Queensland could look with great expectation. Unfortunately, if Dr Hewson wins the forthcoming election, the future of Queensland will not be so great. He will transfer funding away from the public sector, away from Queensland and into the pockets of the greediest trade unionists in Australia, the medical specialists, the speculators who have ruined this country—not the Government, but the speculators who have ruined this country—and overseas interests. That is what Hewson is about. It has been claimed that Australia is at the crossroads. However, I do not believe that it is at the crossroads at all. Australia is at a fork in the road. It can either continue the difficult uphill climb in which it has been engaged for some years, or it can take the fork to the Right and descend into the abyss.

Nobody can deny that, since the 1950s, Australia has been living on borrowed time and borrowed money. Those halcyon days of Menzies when everyone had a job and had money to spend were great times for Australians. However, we paid no heed to the future. Australia was a country of hewing and quarrying and selling off its birthright. Its people were living on borrowing from the present and the future. Unfortunately, Australians never came to terms with the fact that we had to build a strong Australia; that we had to conduct our own research and development and establish our own industries. Unfortunately, we accepted without question the myths of those days and the overseas control. Even though a storm was approaching, there was total inaction. The future looked so rosy that nobody was able or willing to recognise the storm's approach.

Right up to the recent past, the mistakes have continued. Australians have lived as though there were no tomorrow. Because Keating took the unpleasant but necessary steps to guide Australia away from its past mistakes, he has been denigrated by the Liberal Party. It has claimed that Keating was the person who caused Australia's problems. Nothing is further from the truth! The servile attitudes of those days to overseas interests were symptomatic of our problems. Whitlam changed those servile attitudes and the absurd reliance on overseas experts. He created a fairer Australia in which ordinary people had some say in the processes of Government. Through all the plans that were introduced in those days, Whitlam created a fairer Australia and a proud Australia—one which stood on its own two feet. However, the economic problems were not solved.

Mr FitzGerald: Now we're flat on our backs.

Mr ARDILL: The honourable member is flat on his back because he has allowed speculators to take charge of the agenda.

Mr FitzGerald: Bond was Hawke's mate. Run through them. All your little mates.

Mr ARDILL: None of those speculators are Keating's mates. This election involves a choice: proceed with the agenda to make Australia a competitive country and a clever country or return to the quagmire of nineteenth century thinking which has been espoused by the Liberal Party right through its history and which continues today. In the days of Menzies and other Liberal leaders, right up to Fraser, to question was to be deemed disloyal and resulted in denigration. The philosophy of the Liberal Party is to establish a hierarchy which exercises thought control and control over the spirit of the ordinary Australian. Economic rationalists know the price of everything but the value of nothing. If Hewson is elected, all braking power will be taken from the hands of ordinary people and will be placed under the control of the so-called important people in the community. I do not want to live in a nineteenth century Australia in the 1990s. Because I have a three-year contract in this place, I can survive Hewson. No way would he last longer than three years! However, my friends, my constituents and my own family cannot survive under Hewson and his disastrous philosophies. It is very difficult to watch members of the Liberal Party such as Dr Hewson telling blatant lies with great smiles on their faces. Dr Hewson is not the only one! His debating style is typical of the Liberal Party: tell a lie, repeat it and laugh when anyone disputes it. Luckily, despite the backing of many sections of the media, people are beginning to question the concept of change for the sake of change. People are beginning to question the blatant lie by the media that Mr Keating caused the high unemployment rate and the recession. Does Keating have control of the overseas economies in which the unemployment rate is twice Australia's unemployment rate and ordinary people sleep in the streets? Two years ago, I saw that situation in countries that were controlled by people such as Hewson, Thatcher and Reagan. In America, even people who had employment were sleeping in the streets after a day's work, because they could not afford housing. That is the type of society that the Liberal Party wants to impose on us. Keating did not cause the worldwide recession. Keating did not cause unemployment.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Bredhauer): Order! Honourable members will cease interjecting.

Mr ARDILL: Tell the same lie often enough and some people will believe it.

Dr WATSON: I rise to a point of order. On a number of occasions the member has used the word "lie", which I believe is unparliamentary. Mr Deputy Speaker, I ask you to address that matter.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: That word has been used repeatedly during this debate by members from both sides of the House. There is no point of order.

Mr ARDILL: Tell the same lie often enough and some people will believe it: the media will repeat it as if it is the truth.

Mr Stephan interjected.

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

Mr Stephan interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I asked the member for Gympie to cease interjecting. I now warn him under Standing Order 123A.

Mr ARDILL: The recession was solely the result of the greed of the 1980s worldwide, and the speculation that occurred in Australia under deregulation, exactly as it occurred overseas. The speculators ran riot in this country, as they did overseas. The financial institutions, which Opposition members praise all the time, fell for it hook, line and sinker. They believed the stories that were told by Bond, Skase and Elliott.

Mr Cooper: Who deregulated the banks?

Mr ARDILL: The financial institutions allowed those people to borrow money that could never be repaid. Those people produced nothing except paper. The financial institutions fell for it hook, line and sinker. They knew that to foreclose on Bond, Skase, Elliott and 1 000 other speculators would bring down their own business houses and associated finance and insurance companies. They were not game to do that. Consequently, everyone who borrowed money paid high interest rates. That has occurred not because of Keating, but because of the speculators who conned those financial institutions. Everyone had to pay. The speculators and tycoons are not Keating's mates; they are the mates, supporters and financiers of the Liberal Party. They provide funds for the Liberal Party and would be the principal beneficiaries of Hewson's policies as well as that greedy section of the community that would continue to take advantage of the loopholes in the system.

Over the past two decades, everyone would have seen the result of automation, mechanisation and technology. People who were removed from their employment because of automation have increased the unused labour pool in this country. If they retrain for another job, they replace someone who is less qualified. Unskilled migrants have been hit the hardest. However, migration helped to soak up much unemployment by expanding the domestic market. Unfortunately, every time the economy improved, the volume of imports increased. That has added to our problems. Until the Hawke/Keating Government took office, nothing was done to increase Australia's competitiveness in any field that would enable us to export. The only brake on unemployment was a reduction in working hours and the sharing of part-time work. However, they are only stopgap solutions. Hewson's real agenda is to reduce Australian wages to coolie wages to allow his multinational masters to compete with coolie wages overseas. This is not the future for Australia. Hewson's great plan for Australia is one, deregulate; two, destroy the industrial relations system; three, denigrate unions; four, divide the community; five, depress the workers; six, deplete community services; seven, deny education; and eight, deride anyone who argues. That is all carried out with a smile on his face.

The 15 per cent GST on almost everything except the Ferrari is said to replace a number of taxes. It will take away the State's right to raise taxes in exchange for a handout from Canberra. It is planned already to reduce Queensland's State revenue by \$370m. That would mean the sacking of 4 355 teachers, 563 police and 2 766 nurses. I wonder how many of those people thought that they could be on the chopping block if Hewson takes away the Government's wherewithal to pay them.

Mr Gilmore: You've already got them in the gun sights, so it doesn't matter.

Mr ARDILL: Hewson has them in his gun sights. Straightaway, there will an attack on education. National Party areas will suffer most from such an attack because schools in those areas would have to close. How many schools will close in the honourable member's area if there is a reduction of 4 355 teachers? Certainly, class sizes in city schools will increase. However, in the country schools will disappear. Under Fightback, at a time when crime will escalate owing to bitterness and higher unemployment, there

will be an attack on community security. There will also be an attack on Queensland's public hospital services. Hewson's attitude to public health services is typical of the man and his ilk. They do not need it or use it, except in times of emergency, such as when Kerry Packer suffered his heart attack, when that service must be given without question. The Liberals support the greedy owners of private facilities who can claim incomes similar to that received by Hewson. He received nearly half a million dollars in one year when he minimised his tax to 15 per cent.

Some private hospitals have facilities that are equal to the best equipment to be found in our public health system. They are mostly church hospitals but some private hospitals are hellholes, such as the nursing homes where young, untrained kids with no understanding of old people are the staff in contact with the patients. The owners are the people whom Hewson supports with his attack on our health services. He wants to transfer funding from the public system to the private insurance system and the disgustingly rich, private specialists and owners of those hellholes. There are many of them in Queensland.

Mr Veivers interjected.

Mr ARDILL: For the benefit of the member for Southport, I point out that some of them are located on the Gold Coast. What about health research? Until the ALP and Whitlam came to power, there was no such thing in Australia. Australia's greatest defect was a lack of funds for research. Under Hewson, not only will research cease to exist because of public sector funding cuts, but research and development will be relegated to history. Hewson's rigid adherence to tariff cuts will see to that. To cure Australia's ills, more funding—not less—must be put into the public sector, including research.

The inflationary effect of GST must reduce the purchasing power of the meagre funds which Hewson will provide once Queensland is denied access to its own revenue. No-one likes payroll tax. Unless a small business has a payroll of over \$650,000, it pays no payroll tax. Unless it has at least 30 people on its payroll, it pays no payroll tax. But under Hewson, everyone will be faced with the payment of GST. Every time an electrician or plumber visits a person's house with an apprentice, that person will be paying 15 per cent on top of the cost of the equipment. He or she will be paying 15 per cent for the services of both those people. That does not reduce payroll tax one iota, because those people do not pay payroll tax. About 85 per cent or 87 per cent of small businesses do not pay payroll tax. One of the lies that the Liberals keep telling is that the GST will reduce the payroll tax which everyone pays. Not everyone pays it. Anyone who replaces a 5 per cent payroll tax—that is what it is—with a 15 per cent GST has a strange system of priorities.

Not only is GST a tax on almost every item that we buy, it is also a tax on services. That means that every time tradesmen visit a person's house to do anything, or every time somebody in a small business does some work on any implement, not only must they add 15 per cent to the cost of the item but they must also charge 15 per cent for the work that they perform on that item. The 15 minutes minimum service call that a serviceman charges when he visits someone's house together with his travelling time would all be subject to 15 per cent GST. Legal services, advertising, plumbing, all sorts of electrical repairs, admission to sports centres and other forms of entertainment would all be subject to a 15 per cent GST. All those various jobs will be reflected in the final cost of the item. The 20 per cent sales tax imposed on some imported goods and many luxury items is based on the wholesale price. It does not include the cost of any work that is done to upgrade them. It is not included in the cost structure that is put on top of that for servicing and selling.

Not only will there be a tax on services; there will also be a tax on water. Hewson said that there would be no change to the GST, but he has already made some changes because of severe community pressure on him. Once he is in power, he will have nothing to lose. Without a shadow of a doubt, that GST will rise, just as it has risen in America. It started off with a Federal tax. The States could not exist on that, so they added their own tax. In cities such as New York, a further tax is imposed. If one buys a

small can of Coke in New York, and the price is listed as \$1, one ends up paying a dollar and a quarter, or \$1.30, because of the various taxes that are added onto the price. Hewson said that there will be no tax on rates—

Mr FitzGerald: One of your previous speakers spoke about a GST or a VAT in Canada but said the United States was benefiting. Now you're telling us the United States has got a VAT or a GST.

Mr ARDILL: It has.

Mr FitzGerald: You are disagreeing with one of your earlier speakers.

Mr ARDILL: That is not true.

Mr FitzGerald: The "go south tax" is what the Canadians call it. That's what one of your previous speakers said. That indicated there was no tax in the United States.

Mr ARDILL: All of those overseas countries have GST, but not at the rate that has been proposed in Australia. Once the GST is applied, it will escalate. Governments will not be able to retain it at its original level. Honourable members would be aware that the new President of America has allowed taxes to increase. That is the way it works. Hewson says that he will reduce services, but there will be so much pressure on him to continue those services that he will have to retain the existing taxes. The only tax that is likely to disappear is sales tax; other taxes will continue.

Hewson said that there would be no tax on rates. Honourable members should consider what will happen in Brisbane, where the city council provides water. A GST of 15 per cent will be imposed on the use of water. As well, a GST of 15 per cent will be imposed on bus fares, on taxi fares, on school tuckshops, on canteens at sporting venues and on books. A 15 per cent tax will be imposed on books that we purchase to increase our knowledge and our enjoyment of life. Hewson said, "There will be no 15 per cent tax on books; there is a sales tax on books." That is nonsense. At present in Australia, no sales tax is imposed on books, but under Hewson, if he is elected, a 15 per cent tax will be imposed on all reading matter.

The GST will cause inflation. Nobody has been able to deny that. At a time of zero inflation, the GST will cause inflation which we cannot afford. That inflation will produce two results. It will reduce the purchasing power of the money available to the public sector and reduce the services which are available to businesses and the general public. The other result from the inflation will be an increase in interest rates. Small business will again feel the pinch. Under Hewson, interest rates will increase because of the inflation which will be brought on by the GST. The Queensland Government has carried out wonderful work in reforming the State. I do not wish to see that work stymied by a Hewson Government in Canberra. Queensland relies on Federal income tax and State taxes to carry out its public works. But Hewson will reduce funding to the State. It is clear that he intends to reduce funding by \$370m, and that is only the start.

I mentioned three areas of funding that will be cut. I turn now to transport, which interests me particularly. What will happen to our road maintenance services? The Government has increased the percentage of funding available for maintenance? It is well known that 41 per cent of roads in Australia are in a deplorable condition, yet Hewson says we can stand a funding cut.

An Opposition member: Ten years of Labor fixed that.

Mr ARDILL: No, it did not. If Australia is to continue to progress, that funding must continue. The Queensland Government is investigating the introduction of the tilt train which has been proposed by David Hamill.

Mr Randell: They're closing all the railway stations down.

Mr ARDILL: I ask the honourable member how many were closed down during his time in Government. Initially, the tilt train will travel between Brisbane and Rockhampton. It is an electric train which has been proved overseas. However, it must be further developed into a diesel tilt train which will be able to travel as far as Cairns. Because of

shocking rail alignments and levels throughout Australia, that new technology will have widespread application throughout Australia and also overseas. I would like some funding to go into my electorate of Archerfield where factories used to turn out vehicles, trains and road coaches of an excellent standard.

I am concerned also at Hewson's attitude to the environment, which he has clearly ignored. He has taken it off the agenda. He refuses to even discuss it. During this election campaign, when Australia is at the crossroads from an environment point of view, the coalition does not have a policy on the environment. Why is that? Why is the Liberal Party refusing to acknowledge that the environment is an important item to be considered? What we do today will affect the world for generations to follow, and perhaps forever. The importance of preserving the environment is now becoming evident.

The net result of Hewson's policies will mean a return to the past. Under Hewson, this country will not continue the uphill climb on which we have embarked and which will eventually see us reach great heights. Under Hewson, we will descend into the abyss; we will return to nineteenth-century thinking; Australians cannot expect to achieve their expectations of a better standard of living in future.

Mr HORAN (Toowoomba South) (5.30 p.m.): In speaking in this Address in Reply debate, I pledge my loyalty and that of the constituents of Toowoomba South to Her Excellency the Governor of Queensland as representative of Her Majesty the Queen, and to the democratic institutions of our State of Queensland. I thank the people of Toowoomba South for electing me to a second term, and pledge to them my wholehearted efforts to represent the electorate and the great City of Toowoomba. The Governor's Opening Speech to Parliament spoke of ensuring improved access to public hospitals and a high standard of care. What a disaster that Government promise has proved to be! The Goss Labor Government and Health Minister Hayward must be brought to account soon for the massive financial bungle and cutbacks that have been imposed on Queensland's public hospitals and the Blood Bank. We have seen Queensland's once proud public hospital system reduced to a blubbering mess, in common with the Minister. Even the Health Department staff hate going to work—it has become that bad.

Let us start by looking at our capital City of Brisbane—the only capital in Australia in which public hospitals will go into hibernation for three weeks during April/May of this year. In addition to the wards that have already closed at the Royal Brisbane Hospital, the Royal Women's Hospital and the Prince Charles Hospital at Cherside, all elective surgery will be cancelled for three weeks at Queensland's biggest hospital, the Royal Brisbane Hospital, 40 per cent of whose patients come from outside the Brisbane North Regional Health Authority areas. An additional six wards at the RBH—Wards 3B, 7IE, 7FS, 3C and two orthopaedic wards—will close during that period. I table proof of that.

An honourable member interjected.

Mr HORAN: The interjection was, "What has happened to all that extra money for health?" We do wonder! Some \$400m has disappeared down a great, big hole. The document that I have tabled proves that it is not just a two-week closure of hospitals; in the case of the RBH, it is three weeks. Imagine the time needed to set up the theatres to have them ready to start again after all those closures. Specialist Outpatients at the RBH will close for one week. At the Mater Hospital, the Mater Children's Hospital and the Princess Alexandra Hospital elective surgery will shut down for two weeks, wards will be closed during that period and Specialist Outpatients will close for one week. Staff at those hospitals are being urged to take their leave at that time. But what happens to the hundreds of patients in the long queues waiting for elective surgery? Many of them are old and in pain or discomfort, and cursing the cruel hoax of the Medicare waiting lists. What happens to all the nursing and support staff? Are they also being forced to go on leave, or is that just another blunder and waste of public money? What happens when specialists are on leave and are not replaced by locums, as directed by the Health Department, and trainees then cannot see the new patients? How many thousands of

people will not be able to access the Specialist Outpatients in that week of cancellation at the four major hospitals?

It is a classic case of Victorian Labor Government financial mismanagement, only it is happening here in Queensland. The once proud and famous Queensland public hospital system is now leading the nation in providing reduced services with two major close-down periods each year—not just Christmas/New Year, but now another two to three weeks during April/May. It is an absolute disgrace, and the Goss Labor Government and Minister Hayward will be forever condemned and remembered for the 1993 health fiasco.

The Minister lamely bleats that it is all about management. I will tell honourable members what it is all about. It is about mismanagement on a grand scale; it is about crushing Queensland Health under the increased burden of middle-level bureaucracy; it is about the administration of Queensland Health spiralling out of control—up \$133m, or 37 per cent in three years; and it is about a wages hike from \$1 billion in 1989-90 to \$1.3 billion in 1991-92, or a 28 per cent leap. But most importantly, it is about a Minister and a Health Department that totally miscalculated the effects of the classification/remuneration system of pay rises. In an unprecedented move, Treasury refused to fund those rises, which were approved by the Industrial Relations Commission. An 11th hour appeal to the Premier again met with a blunt “No”.

So what happened? Some \$50m shortfall of Health funds was dumped onto the public hospitals, the psychiatric hospitals and the Blood Bank. It is not the fault of the doctors, nurses, hospital staff or patients who bear the brunt of those cuts. It is simply the fault of an incompetent Minister with lead in his saddle bags—the lead of a bloated, ballooning bureaucracy, of southerners with little or no experience of the health industry in Queensland and the needs of the people. It is the fault of people who are more interested in building new offices, painting them the corporate colours of grey and pink and installing new furniture, people more interested in calling more meetings, producing glossy brochures over and over again, employing more administrative staff, converting wards to offices, and engaging public relations staff—anything other than basic hospital care that Queenslanders once expected.

We now have the Minister belatedly calling for an audit of all 33 000 positions in Queensland Health—something he should have done immediately he took over his portfolio. There are already reports of discoveries of unapproved administrative positions and of urgent moves to cover them up. That audit will be a cover-up from start to finish. It will be a cover-up of the Minister and his advisers. They are the ones who have short-changed Queensland's hospitals and they, not the hospital workers and the patients, should be the ones to bear the hurt. It is time for the rot to stop. The Minister must accept the blame and go.

Mr Cooper: Would you say it would be a pretty good service provided we didn't have any patients?

Mr HORAN: Exactly. That is what everyone is saying. It is like the old story of having the best hospital but no-one in it. Closed wards, staff freezes, natural attrition of staff, cutbacks in medical products, cutbacks in programs, cutbacks in refurbishments, close-down of theatres, close-down of Specialist Outpatients—that is the supposed improved access to health care that Queenslanders get from Labor.

The hospital cutbacks are bad enough, but worst of all is the strangulation of the absolutely essential Blood Bank services. Through the financial bungling of the Minister and the Health Department, the Blood Bank is \$1m short in its budget for wage and salary increases imposed upon the Blood Bank. So what happens? Blood collections are reduced by 10 per cent to 15 per cent; 27 staff are sacked; the mobile collection service is closed; there is a shutdown of particular testing services; and there are directions to hospitals to use less blood. Meanwhile, the Minister attacks the Blood Bank with vicious remarks about management standards when he knows full well that last year his own department instigated an independent management review which showed the Blood Bank to be thorough and professional. Queenslanders must wonder

at the Labor Government's priorities when it can let the essential services of the Blood Bank be cut to its present level, yet introduces a \$1.5m program for prostitution reforms in the same Budget.

The cutbacks are not just occurring in Brisbane hospitals. The Hayward disease has spread all over the State. The Wolston Park psychiatric centre has a \$1m shortfall and is in the midst of industrial turmoil over sackings, ward closures, rearranged escort arrangements and managerial policies. Wards are being closed and replaced by refurbished offices. Middle management positions are being created all over this State. The coy answers that are given at all hospitals and health authorities are, "Well, we'll just have to manage our way out of the problem." But the facts of life are that to accommodate shortfalls in budget funding for wages, funding has to be cut somehow, and the only way to do that is by reducing wages, which make up 70 per cent of the operational costs, or by reducing spending on consumable items such as surgical hardware, dressings, drugs, and even food. That can mean only one thing—reducing job numbers and reducing services in Queensland's hospitals. The answer is the same right throughout the State as it is in Brisbane, that is, shed casual positions, freeze all permanent positions, lose jobs by natural attrition, consider no replacements at least until July 1993, provide no locum or relief staff for people on sick leave or holidays. Nurses are turning up for work although they are sick because they fear that there will be no-one to replace them and care for their patients. Despite applying for only part of their overtime, nurses are being harassed with continual computer print-outs of overtime taken and sick leave.

Programs are being deferred; new facilities just do not open up; empty multimillion-dollar psychiatric wards, day surgical units and new hospitals are scattered around the State because the Government simply cannot fill them with staff; refurbishment is deferred; and equipment purchases are being stopped. As recently as this afternoon, honourable members heard about the X-ray machine which has not been purchased for Dalby and which will probably have to wait until next financial year. Hospitals such as Cairns, Townsville, Mackay, Ipswich and Toowoomba are all short a half a million dollars or more. Mackay will close elective surgery around Easter, and so, too, will the Brisbane hospitals. I wonder how many other country hospitals will do the same? The Nambour health services district is \$1m out in its budget, and Bundaberg and Maryborough have been told to cut their budgets by at least \$300,000 each. The closure of wards is threatened at Bundaberg, Redcliffe and Laidley. There is industrial unrest among nurses at Gladstone, and the list of problems goes on and on. Staff at hospitals visited by members of the Opposition are told by the hierarchy not to talk to the Opposition about money, and it is no wonder.

The Government talks about injecting \$150m a year in capital works into the health system, beginning at the start of the next financial year. I can tell honourable members that it had better be to replace existing facilities or provide new equipment because this Government cannot even keep open the facilities that it has now. I cite as an example the second stage of Logan City Hospital. The Government is not able to open that hospital because it cannot afford the staff or the resources. So what does this Government do? It tries to shut down the QEII Hospital at Sunnybank and force the staff to work down at Logan City and, just to make it all legitimate, it tries to force the Mater Children's Hospital to move from the site it presently shares with the Mater Public and Private Hospitals, with all their infrastructure and associated facilities, to the more expensive option of a stand-alone operation at the QEII Hospital which was, at that time, empty. What dismal financial planning! It is no wonder that the Minister failed financially in this budget. Recently, the Deputy Prime Minister and the Health Minister announced the new Medicare agreement and the \$320m a year of new funds which will go to the States in the new financial year. Queensland's share will be in the order of \$50m, which would be just enough to cover the cutbacks caused this year by the wage and salary increases that the Minister could not fund. But those increases will go on and on. They will continue for at least three or four years, as staff move up the automatic levels within each broad-banded salary classification. Unless Treasury can be persuaded to bail out

the drowning health system, this new money will be of absolutely no use. It will be wasted on covering up the Minister's financial bungle.

The cruel and truthful fact is that before the election on 19 September 1992, this Minister and the Goss Labor Government let the hospitals operate on their indicative budgets. It was only after the election that this Government trotted out the sour medicine of providing no funds for legitimate wage rises and cutting back services. Not only is this Minister a bungling disaster; he is also a cover-up merchant. There was not one mention of this great financial fiasco in the Budget Estimates debate of 12 November 1992 and not one mention of the massive cutbacks that the Minister knew were coming. The Minister betrayed his hospitals and his staff, and he should not hold office. The staff of the Queensland public hospitals system are fed up with continual reviews and meetings and promises, only to find another series of cutbacks every year. They look with envy and anger at the burgeoning, well-paid bureaucracy and wonder what on earth is the top priority of the Goss Government. They now all know that it is not public hospitals. The patients wonder just where it will all end, and when the huge waiting lists will come back to an acceptable level.

While Queensland hospitals are saddled with the problem of an incompetent Minister, bungling bureaucracy and budget shortfalls, they have the common problem of all Australian hospitals, namely, long waiting lists for elective surgery. Waiting lists vary from six months to seven years in the case of upper orthopaedic surgery on the Gold Coast, which is the worst example of which I have heard. At the very hospital where Mr Keating yesterday handed out his tired old health policy—Princess Alexandra Hospital—there are, at this point, 1 000 names on the waiting list for orthopaedic surgery, and the names of 250 people who are waiting for eye surgery. What a disgrace! What a hypocrite Mr Keating is!

Members of the Goss Labor Government secretly want a Hewson/Fischer win in the Federal election because they know that only the coalition has a plan to cut elective surgery waiting lists while still maintaining Medicare. They know that only a Hewson/Fischer Government can rescue them from three years of pre-election embarrassment from a public hospital system that is bursting at the seams, thereby denying immediate attention to those who cannot afford alternatives. Under the Federal coalition's policy, health services for Australians will improve. The coalition has the policy, the commitment and the belief that the delivery of health services should be fair, equitable and efficient.

Under 10 recession-plagued years of Labor, the result is public hospitals in crisis, up to 100 000 Australians on waiting lists, non-Government hospital beds lying empty, private health insurance declining and under threat and bulk-billing for the rich as well as for the poor. Under Labor, wealthy people are able to get the same free access to health services as people who are socially and economically disadvantaged. Under Labor's policy, the little Aussie battler is the loser and the wealthy people are the winners. A perfect example of Labor's health policy is this: in the *Courier-Mail* of 15 February, the Prime Minister of Australia, Mr Keating, skited that, with a salary of \$173,000-plus, he has four kids and no private health insurance. What he was trying to say was that he relies on the public hospital system if and when his family needs hospital care. However, that is not true. The Keatings have been known to use a non-Government hospital, St Vincents in Sydney, and obviously had the cash in the bank to pay the daily rate of \$350 a day for general surgery and all the other charges. As a family man on such a huge salary with four kids, he is taking a big gamble not to have private insurance. This is not the decision that Australians would expect from a person standing for Prime Minister.

On the other hand, there are many ordinary Australians with significantly lower pay packets than the Prime Minister who do not want to sponge on the public health system, who know that they will be placed on long waiting lists, who want to be independent and who scrimp and save to pay their private health insurance but receive no encouragement at all from a Labor Government. Some 600 000 pensioners scrape together the money for private health insurance while the Prime Minister does not. In

other words, under Labor, wealthy people are able to get the same free access to health services as people who are socially and economically disadvantaged but, when it comes to waiting lists, they can buy their way out. Under Labor's health policy, people are dying before they can have a life-saving operation. They are people who do not have the cash to pay for it in a public or private hospital. In 1992, 60 people died while waiting for heart surgery. That is Labor's standard of health care.

For every other benefit, there are cut-off levels or eligibility criteria, but for people needing elective surgery Labor's policy is: queue and wait. Almost 100 000 Australians are now on public hospital waiting lists, while private beds and public beds are lying empty. Labor's policy does not allow for hospital services to be evenly distributed. That does not encourage people to take private health insurance. In 1982, 70 per cent of our national population had private health insurance but, after 10 years under Labor, the percentage has dropped almost by half to 40.7 per cent. Here in Queensland, the level of private health insurance traditionally has been low. As at December 1983, it was 38.6 per cent, but as of March 1992, it was 32.3 per cent—the lowest level of any Australian State and well below the Australian average of 41.3 per cent.

Every 1 per cent drop in private health insurance costs our public hospital system millions of dollars. The low level of private health insurance results from the State's free hospital system. The decline in private health insurance over the past 10 years is due to the impact of the prolonged high interest rates and the Labor recession. I said earlier that 100 000 people are on public hospital waiting lists for surgery across Australia and people are dying waiting for heart surgery. In Queensland, patients are waiting five months to have brain tumours removed and three years to have their sinuses drained and, worse still, are being denied admission to a public hospital because of bed shortages when they have had a mild stroke. At the Princess Alexandra Hospital, 1 000 people are on the waiting list for orthopaedic surgery and 250 people are waiting for eye surgery.

As a further example of the failed Federal Labor Government health policy, the hospital system in Queensland is in crisis. No matter which hospital one examines, it is in crisis. The PA, the Mater, the Royal Brisbane Hospital and hospitals at Gladstone, Laidley, Ipswich, Townsville, Mackay, Cairns, Rockhampton and Townsville—big and small hospitals the length and breadth of the State—are in crisis, their managements are absolutely lacking in confidence and they have the lowest staff morale that one could ever imagine. Labor's answer is more tax money, but still no incentive for the private health options. As from 1 July, the Medicare levy will increase from 1.25 per cent to 1.4 per cent. As from 1 July, that represents an estimated increase in revenue of \$300m for the next financial year, or \$47 for each taxpayer.

The crisis in health is such that secretly this State Labor Government must be praying for a coalition win on 13 March and a Hewson/Fischer Government to get it out of its mess. Quite clearly, neither the Federal Labor Government nor the State Labor Government has an effective health policy. The only solution possible is a change of policy, which can come only from a change of Government. I say this to the Government: blaming the health staff will not be the answer. After all, it is the Government's policy—Labor policy—that the staff are implementing. The only way to change the policy is to change the Government. A change in policy will not come from the Keating ALP Government. It will come only from a change of Government—from a Hewson/Fischer led coalition Government.

There is a clear difference in the policies offered by this Government and those offered by the coalition. The coalition will significantly improve the Medicare system. What Labor does not explain to the people of Australia is that Medicare does not provide a comprehensive cover for medical fees. As a result, each year Australian patients pay more than \$660m in out-of-pocket expenses. That is why the Medicare levy is to jump \$300m, or \$47 for each taxpayer, to try to make up for the increasing burden on the system. In doing so, the Government is essentially failing to redress the fundamental problems of overusage of the system. Already, circulating through Labor

ranks in the Federal department are documents recommending that the Medicare levy rise to 2.25 per cent to pay for what is basically Labor's mismanagement of the nation's health system. The Federal Labor Government Whip, the member for Canning in Western Australia, said that the Medicare levy should be increased to 2.25 per cent. He then said that doctors' fees should be capped and private health insurance should be abolished in favour of one single national insurer.

Let us hope for Australia's sake that a change of Government on 13 March will save us all from such threats. However, what we do know is that, if the Keating Labor Government is returned on 13 March, the levy will have to rise again to support the escalating health costs. It would have to rise to between 6 per cent and 7 per cent to reflect the true costs of Commonwealth expenditure on health. Despite the crisis in the health system and in health funds, the Federal Labor Government had the front to attempt to run a \$3.5m Medicare campaign to try to tell Australians about the advantages of Medicare. At least the department had the decency to pull it off. The point is that \$3.5m of advertising money could have been spent on desperately needed health services. That \$3.5m would have removed a lot of cataracts from the eyes of our senior citizens. The \$3.5m would have provided bone marrow transplants to save the lives of recipients. Indeed, \$3.5m would have provided the funds that the Blood Bank in Queensland desperately needs for another four years. That sum of \$3.5m would have allowed for more hip replacement operations. But, no, Labor wanted to spend \$3.5m promoting its own failed policies which will be soundly rejected on 13 March. The very cruel hoax about this advertising campaign is that people think they can have an operation when it is required. They cannot understand how they must wait so long for surgery when patients with insurance or patients who can fork out the cash can have the operation immediately in a public or private hospital. They are unaware of the funding restrictions which seriously limit the number of public operations which can occur in a public hospital. To promote that in a Medicare advertisement is a total hoax and absolutely cruel.

Under the coalition's health policy, the Medicare levy will remain at 1.25 per cent. Medicare will not be dismantled, as the Labor liars try to say. In addition to existing Medicare offices, pharmacies will also act as Medicare agents, which is in contrast to Labor's policy of cutting back offices. And how good will that be for country people! There will be bulk-billing for those who need it most—the pensioners, the unemployed, the low income earners, the disabled and health care card holders. Other people will pay a co-payment which can be partially insured against. On the other hand, under Labor it is open slather—bulk-billing for everyone, irrespective of income. Private insurance will be actively encouraged. There will be a tax credit of up to \$800 per year for private health cover. The tax subsidies for age pensioners will effectively provide the cost of private health insurance, entitling them access to private hospital beds in a public hospital and the doctor of their choice. This is one of the outstanding parts of the policy when it is considered that 65 per cent of health treatments throughout Australia are for people aged over 60. Direct payments will be made to pensioners who have taken out private insurance but who do not lodge a tax return. Over 65 per cent of the population earn less than \$30,000 per year and will receive some financial subsidy to take out private health insurance. Under Labor, there are no incentives and in fact private health insurance is actively discouraged by perpetration of the myth that Medicare provides health care for all Australians. Private health insurance of any doctor's visitation fees over the bulk-billed amounts are now banned under the Keating Government.

The long-term effect of the coalition's measure to actively encourage private health insurance will increase the use of the currently empty private hospital beds and reduce the burden on the public sector. It will free up resources to be used elsewhere. It will mean shorter queues and quicker access for the average Australian who chooses Medicare's public hospitals. In addition, the extra private insurance will put at least \$1 billion into the public and private health system.

Mr Welford: Into the pockets of doctors.

Mr HORAN: Into the pockets of workers—the caterers, the warders, the staff, the nurses, the lot. The Prime Minister will not like this, but there will be a financial penalty of \$800 for couples who earn more than \$50,000 per year and fail to take out private health insurance. Private insurance packages will be more flexible to suit the needs of all Australians. Partial gap insurance will be allowed for individuals to protect themselves for all but 15 per cent of medical expenses up to an agreed schedule fee. There will be a greater use of private hospitals through private health insurance. The pharmaceutical concession card will be available to non-pensioners 65 years and over earning less than \$40,000 a year single and \$50,000 a family.

In terms of rural health, the coalition will allocate \$8m for the provision and staffing of mobile breast screening and densitometry units to visit rural and remote areas. Densitometry will be made available as a Medicare schedule benefit. A remote area nursing training scheme would become the target for training and support for remote area nurses at a cost of \$2m. Although the State Labor Minister is secretly praying for a Hewson/Fischer Government on 13 March to “bring home the bacon” and save the debt-trapped health system in this State, his colleagues are running “Mediscare”. The Federal Labor Government is saying that the coalition will take \$1.2 billion out of the nation’s public hospital system. This is garbage. On conservative estimates, if one million people take out private health insurance, more than \$1 billion will directly and indirectly flow into both the public and private sectors. This will allow hospitals to undertake the urgent capital investment they desperately need to do. In recent years, Commonwealth funding to the States for the public hospital system has decreased in real terms and this has contributed to bed closures, understaffing and antiquated equipment, and deterioration in the standards of health care delivered to Australians.

Under a coalition Government, the States will be encouraged to reform the operations of their public hospital systems. New facilities and beds will be able to be opened. The burden on the public hospital system will be lessened as people are encouraged to take out private health insurance and use the currently unused private hospital beds. Public hospital waiting lists for elective surgery such as hip replacements and cataract removals will be reduced. In addition, Fightback actually increases expenditure on health by more than \$63m over and above current Government expenditure. The coalition health policy is fully funded and the extra money identified by the Federal Labor Government will be matched by the coalition. I take the opportunity to remind the House and the State Labor Government that clause 28 (1) (f) of the Medicare Agreements Bill passed by both Houses of Parliament in December 1992 provides that the agreements cannot be varied, even if the States agree, unless “both Houses of the Commonwealth Parliament approve, by resolution, the variation of the agreement with effect from the specified day”. Whilst it was possible that the States, because of the deleterious effect on their financing, would not sign and the changes would therefore not be implemented, the position was clearly that once the States had signed, the Federal Labor Government’s own legislation locked the coalition into retaining the Medicare funding levels to all States. This has been the case since December. Australia’s health system needs a clear policy change, and this will only come from a change of Government, and that has to be a coalition Hewson/Fischer Government. To protect Queensland’s overburdened, beleaguered and crisis-ridden free hospital system from the ravages of a combination of Federal and State Labor Government policies and blatant mismanagement, there needs to be a coalition Hewson/Fischer Federal Government in Canberra.

Queensland Health is stumbling from one crisis to the next. Faced with a rapidly aging population, increasing technology and costs of medicine, increasing population, and now, on top of it all, a bungling administration and Minister, it desperately needs the lifeline of the Hewson/Fischer health policy. It is a policy that is practical, fair and makes sense. It is a policy that can make our private hospitals better utilised and thereby allow the public hospitals to finally get rid of the monkey on their back, namely, the eternal problem of waiting lists. For the sake of Queenslanders, their hospitals and their health, we need a Federal coalition Government right now.

Sitting suspended from 6 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr PEARCE (Fitzroy) (7.30 p.m.): As the elected member for Fitzroy, it is with great pleasure that I take this opportunity to support the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply moved by the member for Currumbin. In her Speech to the Legislative Assembly, Her Excellency spoke of the Government's intention to play a positive role during its term in securing a sound future for the State and its people. I am of the opinion that, for this State to continue to prosper, there must be continuing cooperation between Government, employers and employees. More particularly, there is a need for consultation and cooperation between the State's workers and their employers. I am very concerned that, if there is a change of Government in Canberra on 13 March, the developing spirit of cooperation between employers and employees will be swept away.

According to Dr Hewson, industrial relations is the most important component of the coalition's policy package. Any honourable member who has had any involvement with industrial relations knows that is true. The centrepiece of Fightback is industrial relations reform. Because he wants to introduce a GST on almost everything, Dr Hewson and his bushrangers want to stop workers from receiving wage rises to compensate for price rises. That is the only way in which Hewson's bandits can control inflation. Because the GST will result in an increase in inflation of between 4 per cent and 6 per cent, there will be enormous pressure for wage increases. That is why the coalition wants to abolish awards and attack the unions. Some people may say, "Great, let us get stuck into the unions." Those people should not be so hasty. I send this message to all workers in Queensland: they should remember that their conditions of employment, their rates of pay, leave loadings, penalty rates, etc., have all been set in line with conditions that apply to union-orientated workplaces. Anyone who believes that he or she is better off without unions is not living in the real world.

Dr Hewson's industrial relations policy means low wages, the loss of the protection provided by unions and industrial tribunals, and no Government help for workplace reform. A major shift will occur in the balance of power from the Industrial Relations Commission to employers. In an address to the Liberal Party at its national convention in July 1992, Dr Hewson stated—

"I know the focus has been on tax. Well, there is a 20-point plan in Fightback, and the most important is industrial relations and wage determination reform."

As a former coalminer, I have a genuine concern for the mineworkers and their families. My electorate makes a substantial contribution to the State's revenue. Thirteen per cent of the State's revenue is derived from the coal industry. For those reasons, I will concentrate on the impact of Dr Hewson's industrial relations policy on the coal industry.

Mr FitzGerald: Tell the whole truth.

Mr PEARCE: I intend to do so. Because I am just a simple coalminer, I do not know how to tell lies, but at least I will tell it as it is. That is what members opposite will not like. They should listen to me. I have dissected the coalition's coal industry policy. Members opposite may think that they understand that policy, but I am sure that they do not.

On page 4 of its energy policy, the coalition outlines its principal policies on the coal industry. Among them are the following: abolish the Coal Industry Tribunal; abolish the Joint Coal Board; and abolish export controls. The abolition of the Coal Industry Tribunal is another long and cherished ambition of the New Right. The very existence of the tribunal recognises that the coal industry is unique. Two Federal candidates are running around Rockhampton. One is from the Liberal Party and one is from the National Party. Mrs Goody represents the National Party and Dr Alroe represents the Liberal Party. Those two candidates are aided by an Independent plant, who will make sure that the preferences flow the right way.

An Opposition member interjected.

Mr PEARCE: Jim Rundle is that person's name. I intend to challenge those people. I want to see whether they have the intestinal fortitude to visit the coalfields and explain to the coalminers the advantages of abolishing the Coal Industry Tribunal. I do not think that they have the intestinal fortitude to do it.

Mr Nunn: Or the guts.

Mr PEARCE: I am not getting down to the fine detail. I am trying to be nice about this. Mineworkers must look closely at what happened in Victoria. Even those mineworkers who do not vote Labor should look closely at what will happen to them under a coalition Government. They should fear Dr Hewson and the iron-fisted approach of John Howard, who has an old score to settle with central Queensland coalminers. Those who know anything about the coal industry need only think back to 1980 and the housing tax dispute. After the reception that he received at that time, I am darn sure that Mr Howard is not too keen to front up to coalminers again.

Contrary to the impression being given by coal owners, coal mining unions have a record of agreeing to increased productivity and of reducing the level of industrial disputes in the industry. The percentage of shifts lost due to industrial disputes has dropped from 6.9 per cent in 1981-82 to 1.3 per cent in 1991-92. Over the same period, saleable coal production has increased from 34 million tonnes to 84 million tonnes. I think that the coalminers of central Queensland deserve credit for the way in which they have cooperated.

The Victorian legislation and the "surprise, not to be revealed before the election" legislation of Dr Hewson and John Howard represents a complete contrast to the consultative, cooperative industrial relations approach which has been developing in the coal industry. The coal industry has worked hard in recent times to improve and maintain coal production outputs. The work force has every right to be concerned about the impact of the coalition's legislation. Regular statements by the coal producers that the current work models in the coal industry would not be altered by the Federal coalition's industrial relations policy are grossly misleading. Coal industry awards are up for negotiation before the end of this year. Although the work models are incorporated into those awards, retention of those models under the coalition's proposals would require the agreement of every coal industry employer. If one employer wants to renege on those agreements, the whole agreement falls down. Mineworkers should not have to be reminded that, if the Federal coalition adopts the Victorian Government's dictatorial methods, we are hardly likely to see the spirit of cooperation that this would require. What would happen to the central Queensland economy under Hewson and Howard? Mineworkers' wages and conditions would come under attack. Why? Because coal producers complain continually that the largest component of production costs is wages. Penalty rates and leave loadings have always been considered an unnecessary cost burden. Those and more conditions have been built up over many years.

Under Hewson, mineworkers stand to lose leave loadings, shift allowances, mine site allowances, penalty rates, overtime and cumulative sick leave. That all boils down to one thing, and that is that miners will be working longer hours for less pay. Under Hewson, local authorities such as Broadsound, Peak Downs and Duarina will be required to increase rates on sewerage, water and garbage. That will cost coal owners, who contribute significantly to those towns, millions of dollars. To compensate for that additional cost, coal owners will have no option but to increase rents on housing and single person accommodation. I stress to the House that the figures that I am using are conservative figures. However, the pay dockets that I have looked at indicate to me that mineworkers could lose anything between \$100 a week and well over \$200 a week in allowances. Leave loading will go—which is a reduction in spending power for holiday makers—penalty rates will go and mine site allowances will go. Mineworkers need to look only at their pay packets to see what those reductions mean in dollar terms.

I come now to an interesting point. Every Queenslanders must take notice of what I am saying. I stress again that I am being conservative when quoting figures. I am speaking as a person from the coal industry who has a genuine concern for workers.

Currently, more than 7 000 coal industry employers in central Queensland live in coal towns such as Collinsville, Moranbah, Dysart, Tieri and Blackwater. If every one of those employees was to lose an average of \$100 a week in wages—and that figure could be higher—and pay an extra \$30 a week for housing, that would mean that effectively \$910,000 a week would be withdrawn from the central Queensland economy. Because miners would have less money to spend, the impact on business in places such as Bowen, Emerald, Rockhampton, Gladstone and the Capricorn Coast would be horrendous. Business in the coal towns, which are struggling already, would be even harder hit. Annually, approximately \$50m would go into the pockets of coal owners, and businesses throughout the region would have less turnover. Valuable jobs would be lost. There would be a negative effect on job creation. If the dollars are not going into the tills of local business people, they are not getting the turnover and they are putting people off. If miners' wages and conditions are cut, the business people in those mining towns will suffer. It would mean also that there would be less dollars in the coal towns to support education, sport, entertainment and charitable organisations. In those coal towns, the coal miners inject enormous amounts of money into those types of activities.

Mineworkers are constantly aware of the uncertainty of the coal industry. The possibility of retrenchment is a reality that they learn to live with each day that they go to work. Under Labor, mineworkers have had union protection to ensure that they are given every opportunity to return to the industry. Under the coalition's policy of giving power to the employers, that privilege will be gone. To rub salt into the wounds, under Fightback, all redundancy payments would need to be spent before unemployment benefits could be paid. A person who has been in the coal industry for 25 or 30 years and suddenly becomes redundant will not receive unemployment benefits until he has spent all his money. Currently, training is available for retrenched mineworkers. The maximum waiting period for unemployment benefits is four weeks. However, under Fightback, retrenched mineworkers would be forced to rely on and pay private job placement agencies for assistance in seeking work. As I have said, those people would have to spend all their retrenchment payouts before they could receive unemployment benefits.

Under Labor, superannuation retains the concessional tax rate of 15 per cent on fund earnings, which is effectively 7 per cent to 8 per cent after imputation credits. That matter is very important to mineworkers. Hewson would tax those mineworkers at 20 per cent, which is effectively twice as much. That increase would have a dramatic effect on the final evaluation of superannuation savings.

As I said previously, I have looked closely at what Mr Hewson and Mr Howard offer in regard to industrial relations. They say that they will not remove conditions unilaterally such as leave loadings, penalty rates and shift allowances. It is a fact that Jobsback is designed specifically to increase the power of employers to enable them to remove such payments. Jobsback may not remove conditions unilaterally, but it sure as hell facilitates their loss. Dr Hewson and Mr Howard say that an employee does not have to accept a contract. If they choose, employees may remain under the award. The fact is that that is a lie. Page 4 of the executive summary of the Liberals' policy states—

“Where an employer and employee cannot agree on either an award or a workplace agreement, then the award will terminate but the employee will continue to enjoy all the benefits of the award until further agreement between the parties.”

In other words, sooner or later, every employee will be forced to negotiate to hold on to the conditions that have existed for years. In fact, employees will be forced to trade for something that was gained through previous trade-offs. In addition, any over-award payment or conditions can be removed by the employer. The document is very specific in that only award conditions need to be preserved until employees are forced into a contract.

Mr Bredhauer: The coalminers will remember the last time John Howard was in Government and he tried to rip off their subsidised housing.

Mr PEARCE: The honourable member is correct. I mentioned that matter earlier in my speech. On a number of occasions during my visits to coalfields in recent weeks, I have had that matter drawn to my attention. To reinforce what I have said, page 12 of the policy document states—

“After a date to be proclaimed, each industrial award automatically will terminate on the next occurring anniversary of its commencement.”

This point is reinforced further on page 13—

“Although the award pay and conditions will continue, that relationship between the employer and the employee will not be legally governed by an award. Therefore, any future variation of that relationship will need to be negotiated between the employer and the employee.”

In other words, an employee who wishes to remain covered by an award cannot ever upgrade that award. He or she must negotiate a contract. That is when the problems start. What if an employer says, “Either you accept this contract or I will sack you”? What happens if the person is sacked? One might think that that person could go to arbitration and argue that he or she has been wrongly or unfairly dismissed. But that is not the case. Page 4 of the policy document states—

“. . . the policy will end compulsory arbitration because no party will be bound to accept a determination of an industrial tribunal unless it voluntarily submits to its jurisdiction.”

The choice is simple: accept the contract or accept the sack. That is what this policy is about. It places all industrial powers in the hands of the employer, while at the same time it removes the independent umpire. It is no wonder that John Howard has done a backflip and now refuses to release his legislation until after the election, despite his previous commitment to do so. It does not matter what the media says to Mr Howard about releasing his industrial relations legislation. He always has an excuse. He is hiding behind it. He does not have the intestinal fortitude or the guts to produce it so that we can have a look at it and see exactly where the workers of Australia will finish up.

Once an employee is forced onto a contract, he or she has Buckley's chance of changing that contract. If the employer will not agree to change, the existing contract remains in force forever. But no-one should even think about taking industrial action to try to change the contract, because that is not allowed. The coalition has covered that, too. It has done a great job. Page 20 of the Liberal Party's policy document is quite specific. It states that industrial action will be a breach of the agreement, in which case each employee will be liable to a fine of up to \$5,000. By this action the Liberals will remove the right to strike. That is what it is all about.

On about 19 February this year, John Howard said—

“The office of Employee Advocate will pursue cases of underpayment and wrongful dismissal of employees.”

That is nonsense. Employers will not be compelled even to talk to that advocate. In cases of underpayment, the only avenue open to an employee whose employer refuses to discuss the matter is to take the employer to a civil court. That is good, because at least that person has some avenue. But I ask honourable members to imagine how long that would take. If only a small percentage of those cases went to court, it would be only a very short period before the courts became choked.

Mr Livingstone: How many of the workers can afford to take the employer to court?

Mr PEARCE: That is the key. How many workers would be in a position in which they could afford to take the employer to court? If that system is not heavily weighted in favour of the employer, my name is not Jimbo. I turn to the issue of wrongful dismissal. This is very exciting. It is what the coal industry fellows will be really looking forward to. In the event of a wrongful dismissal, the employer not only does not have to discuss the matter with the advocate or anyone else, because the policy eliminates compulsory

arbitration, but is also secure in the knowledge that State and Federal courts do not have the power to order reinstatement. So the employee can actually win the case, and the employer can be found to have wrongfully dismissed an employee, but the employer will be under no obligation whatsoever to reinstate the employee. This is another aspect in which John Howard is guilty of deceit. He knows that the proposed advocate will be powerless to assist employees who, without the protection of industrial law and its precedents, will be entirely at the mercy of employers. Although there are some good employers out there, there are also a lot of grubs who will take advantage of any person who lacks the will to stand up and argue. Is it Howard's intention to place Australia's industrial relations in the hands of Canberra's public servants? It would be a brave employee who would be prepared to place his future in the hands of a Liberal/National Party appointed bureaucrat.

Mr Nunn: What a future!

Mr PEARCE: What a future! Workers in Queensland and in other parts of Australia must realise that under Hewson the end result will be that they will be earning less and paying for everyday items that are important to maintaining the quality of life that they now enjoy. For example, to compensate for the proposed abolition of fuel tax, Hewson will have to introduce road-user charges.

Mr FitzGerald: That is not coming in the first three years. That commitment has been given.

Mr PEARCE: The honourable member should not worry about when it will come in. I am not worried about that. I know that it will come in. It is just a matter of when. That is where the deceit lies. Members of the Liberal and National Parties wave their hands around, and with little smirks on their faces they say, "We will not do this. We do not intend to do that." But once they get into power, little Johnny Howard with his iron fist will come slamming down on the workers of Australia. The honourable member for Lockyer has a grin on his face because he does not like workers. He would not pay them if he did not have to do so. As to the introduction of road-user charges—it is most likely that this will mean that private motorists will face huge increases in car registration fees. For example, it now costs about \$150 to register a four-cylinder Laser in Queensland. Under Fightback, the cost will rise to \$370.

Mr FitzGerald: It is not in Fightback.

Mr PEARCE: It is there. I can read ahead with a lot of these issues. The Opposition is still trying to catch up. I am reading ahead. I know what will happen to us. We are only on contracts. One day, I will be back in the work force. I am scared stiff about what the coalition is going to do to me. In this State, it costs less than \$230 to register a six-cylinder car. Under Fightback, that cost would rise to \$570.

The next matter that I shall mention will interest people in rural electorates who are always talking about funding. In the past 12 months, the Federal Labor Government has increased road funding to an all-time high of \$2.1 billion, and is committed to continuing the One Nation statement program. In my electorate, four projects are under way on the Dingo-Mount Flora road and the Capricorn Highway. Those two roads are of vital importance to the people of central Queensland, and four major construction projects are occurring there now. One of those projects will benefit National Party people, namely, the farmers, producers and beef breeders of central Queensland, because they will be able to get double-decker transports and road trains all the way into Gracemere. That will help to cut their costs. I believe that the money which the Federal Government is putting into that measure is a credit. I certainly applaud its efforts, as do the people of central Queensland.

Hewson said that he would reduce road funding to 1991-92 levels, with a further review at a later stage. That is \$900m less than the Labor Government's current programs and means that future upgrading of those two important road links will grind to a halt. The coal industry people—it is the same with rural people—drive on the roads linking them to regional centres. They like to see new culverts being constructed and a

bit of gravel being graded onto the road. When that maintenance comes to an end and the roads start deteriorating, they will get upset. If a change of Government occurs on 13 March, I tip that the whingeing and the howling will start. I will be able to say, "They are your mates down in Canberra." However, from the effort that the Labor Party has been putting in in Capricornia, I am certain that it will win that seat and help to keep the Federal Labor Party in Government.

I have always been concerned about women in rural electorates and spoken up about the effects of Government policy, whether it be Labor, Liberal or whatever, on women living in rural areas. If a change of Government takes place, women will be left to carry the huge burden of the GST not only in the home, catering for the additional cost of raising a family, but also in the work place, where they will lose their working conditions and their wages will come under attack.

Ms Power: Lose their job.

Mr PEARCE: That is the end result. It depends how tough the boss is. If the boss is really tough and does not think a person is able to work the hours——

Mr Nunn: Till you drop.

Mr PEARCE: That is the phrase I was searching for. In those circumstances, the boss will soon sack the employee. The deplorable fact about the GST is that its success lies in the unfortunate position pertaining in Australia with high unemployment. Employers will be able to bargain with employees against people in the street waiting for a job. Unfortunately, many people will take a cut in wages and conditions merely to get a job. But their big mistake will be in 12 months or two years when they have to negotiate for their jobs against other people who are unemployed. That will occur, because a coalition Government in Canberra will put people out on the street. I have just demonstrated what can happen in central Queensland. With \$50m less going into the community, fewer dollars will be in the tills and fewer people will be employed. It will have a negative effect. People will be prepared to cut one another's throats to get jobs and we will return to the Dark Ages.

Women who manage household budgets will have to allow for increases in the price of just about everything they buy. Every service to our homes will be subject to GST—electricity, gas, water, postal services, Telecom charges, pest control, milk delivery and plumbing, to name a few. We may be able to use pest control services to get rid of a few of the pests whom we will have to put up with if a change of Government occurs. Budgeting to meet those additional costs has to be done with the knowledge that at some time the breadwinner may have to negotiate to keep the job that feeds and clothes the family. What will people have to give up just to keep a job? How many extra hours will they have to work to make up for the loss of penalty rates? And what about the working woman? The coalition's proposed industrial relations policy will be aimed at destroying unions and is meant to bring on individual workplace contracts for pay conditions. Women will be discriminated against in Australia in the same way as they are being discriminated against in New Zealand. I have a good friend in New Zealand who has had to take a 30 per cent cut in salary to keep her job. She said that on principle she would love to be able to give up the job because she would like to tell them what to do with it. However, because she has mortgage commitments, she cannot afford to give up the job. She knows that she will not obtain a job elsewhere.

Mr Bredhauer: They have got an axe over their heads.

Mr PEARCE: They have got an axe over their heads. They are concerned that they will lose their jobs. There are many strong women around, and I admire those people, but there are also many women who do not know how to handle those circumstances. They will take the pay cuts and the abuse so they can continue to pay off mortgages and feed their families. That is a sad situation. In New Zealand, people are working longer hours and more weeks a year, with fewer holidays and usually with no overtime penalty rates or other forms of compensation. Under Hewson, there is no guarantee of equal pay, penalty rates, shift loading, a career path or payment based on

skills. Without an award, women will be on their own and the boss will set the work agenda. If female employees do not like it, the boss will have the benefit of a large unemployed work force waiting to get a job at the expense of lower wages and reduced conditions. And we cannot forget that Hewson wants to introduce a youth wage of \$3 an hour. What a joke! I give my kids \$2 to go to school each day.

Mr Davidson: How many kids have you got?

Mr PEARCE: I have a stack of kids. I am also fairly tight with money. The idea of paying youths \$3 an hour to work under the conditions that they will be expected to work under is a joke. Although the young unemployed are not happy with what Labor has done for them, they are certainly not happy at the prospect of having to work for \$3 an hour. In Australia, 87 per cent of sole parents are women. Under Hewson, when their youngest child turns 12, they will lose the sole parent's benefit. They will be forced onto unemployment benefits and will be faced with the trauma of searching for a job. When their youngest child turns 12, women will have to go looking for a job. That is pretty tough. It is a hard job raising kids and trying to run a house.

Time expired.

Mr GILMORE (Tablelands) (8 p.m.): I take this opportunity to reaffirm my allegiance and the allegiance of my constituents to Her Majesty the Queen. I take this opportunity also to congratulate Her Excellency the Governor on her appointment to that ancient and very honourable position of Governor of this State.

I want to spend a few minutes speaking about the plans that this Government has for the corporatisation of the Queensland electricity industry. I have read the draft document, which is a discussion paper on the future structure of the Queensland electricity supply industry. It is a complex document and, having read it, I must raise a question in this Parliament. I ask: why did the paper not address one other option, which is to leave the electricity industry alone? I wonder why it is that this Government, which has managed to meddle in most aspects of Queensland's corporate life and certainly in its bureaucratic life, is insistent upon quite fundamental changes to the structure of the electricity industry which has been demonstrated many times after many reviews as being one of the most competent electricity industries in the world. I suppose the answer is simple. It is that the Government needs to balance its Budget and it needs to get its hands in the till.

Mr De Lacy: It is all about world's best practice.

Mr GILMORE: I will follow this world's best practice as I go. I ask why, and the answer that the Treasurer was kind enough to offer was that it is about world's best practice. I will talk about world's best practice for a moment, which is evident in this document to which I have just referred.

Currently, the electricity industry in Queensland has a very simple structure in that we have the Queensland Electricity Commission, which is responsible for the generation and transmission of electricity, and seven boards, which are responsible for the distribution of electricity. I pay tribute to the work that has been carried out by the QEC and by the boards over the many years that they have been in place because the planning, the long-term structural change that they have implemented and the efficiency that they have achieved has no peer—none at all. I refer again to this document, which indicates that mainland Australia's electricity industry is third best in the OECD—that is on the industrial average—and that Queensland is better than the rest of Australia. Therefore, it stands to reason that the Queensland electricity industry, as it stands today, is right up there with the best in the OECD. So when we talk about world's best practice, it appears not to have occurred to this Government that maybe we are meddling in something that has already been achieved at a very high level of practice, probably in the top couple of per cent in the world.

The QEC, fairly obviously, has done an extraordinary job in long-term planning for the development of the electricity industry in Queensland so that, as required, new generation capability came on-line and transmission lines and distribution complex came

on-line, so that for many years we have not had a problem with electricity supply in this State. I refer to some of the words in this document which reinforces the case that I am putting. The document states—

“The industry has performed well over the last several years . . .”

I take it that that was a bit tongue in cheek. It should have read “about 20 years”, but knowing that it was written by the current Government it had to be just “several years”. The document continues—

“. . . maintaining the reliability of supply while reducing prices in real terms, reducing debt levels and commissioning new generation, transmission and distribution facilities. Average electricity prices in Queensland have fallen by 24% in real terms since 1985, with price rises at all or below half the movement in the Consumer Price Index since 1986. International comparisons show that Australia now has the third-lowest electricity prices among OECD countries, and Queensland prices are on average the lowest of all the mainland States.”

That is the point that I made a few moments ago. It continues—

“In the same period, while the value of the industry’s fixed assets has risen by some \$3,200 million, debt has risen by only \$100 million.”

The document continues further—

“. . . ie. the industry has essentially met its own capital expenditure requirements over the period.”

And the Minister talks to me about world’s best practice! The document states further—

“Since 1985, total factor productivity (a combined measure of productivity of labour, capital, fuel and materials) has increased by over 20%. Further productivity improvements are forecast, particularly in the use of capital.”

The document goes on at some length to describe those improvements. The point that I am making is that this report, which was set up by the Government to justify changes to the electricity industry, in fact so highly praises the current structure of the electricity industry as to amount to a condemnation of the Government’s plans for the future. The document goes on—this is after an Industry Commission inquiry into energy generation and distribution—to say—

“The Industry Commission showed that the Queensland Electricity supply industry has the highest productivity levels of all of the State supply systems.”

That includes Tasmania. It continues—

“Projections indicate that the improvements in the industry’s productivity over the last five years can be continued into the future. The emphasis, of course, needs to be on reducing costs and prices while maintaining service standards”.

I will say a little more about that, particularly with respect to service standards in rural Queensland.

Mr De Lacy: That’s all we’re on about.

Mr GILMORE: I will pose some questions to the Treasurer later after I have set the stage. The document goes on to state, by way of justification of the actions of this Government—

“The efficiency and effectiveness of the QESI were reviewed in 1990 through an ‘External Strategic Audit’ performed for the Government by the merchant bank CS First Boston (formerly Jarden Morgan). The audit report recommended corporatisation of the QESI as a means of protecting the efficiency gains made in recent years and of providing incentives for further gains. The main benefits of corporatisation were seen to be clarity of objectives, management autonomy and accountability and the promotion of efficient resource allocation through application of similar conditions to QESI and its competitors . . .”

I wonder whether the Treasurer would like to explain to the Parliament at a later time—he will not take up my time to do it—who might be the QESI's competitors because, essentially, it is an industry that has no competitor at all. By following the Jarden Morgan rule, the Queensland electricity industry is being exposed to taxation.

Mr De Lacy interjected.

Mr GILMORE: I said that I would not let the Treasurer waste my time, so I will not stop for him. Exposure to taxation is something that this Government would avoid, if it had any sense. This was suggested on the ground that it might level the playing field with the industry's competitors, which is most extraordinary. I reiterate that the audit report recommended corporatisation as a means of "protecting the efficiency gains in recent years". I wonder what the authors of that report considered that those who have been responsible for the Queensland Electricity Commission and the distribution of power in this State were doing. Did the auditors think that those people had bent over backwards for the last 10 to 15 years in developing the most efficient electricity supply system in this country and one of the most efficient in the world, to now have this Treasurer come along and tell them how to lock in those efficiency gains and make more of them later? Insofar as the auditors' comments were applied to some of the most competent people that this State has ever seen in the corporate development of electricity standards and the electricity supply industry, they were despicable. The document goes on to state—

"The recommendation for corporatisation envisaged the establishment of a single corporation with a Board responsible to the shareholding Minister(s), having QEC and the seven Electricity Boards as corporatised subsidiaries."

I might add that that is one of the options. If the Government is to follow that line of folly, I believe that that is the only option that can possibly be followed. I say that simply because it leaves the existing structure virtually unchanged except for accounting changes and matters of that nature. It also opens the door to the prospect of private electricity generation in this State. I have no problem with the concept of private electricity generation, provided that the entry of private generation into the electricity grid is regulated by the QEC as part of a proper planning process and not on an ad hoc basis when, for example, some international firm decides that the generation of electricity in Queensland just might be a good venture, leading to this Government coming to the Parliament to do the Californian trick of insisting on access to the grid being facilitated by the passing of legislation.

Mr De Lacy: You should not jump at shadows, you know.

Mr GILMORE: I have seen the Treasurer operating before and I know that the things he does are quite stupid. I am merely laying the ground rules for the way I perceive the proposal developing, if it must proceed at all. In the United States—particularly in California—it would not matter whether one considered constructing power generating facilities of a specific type or co-generation by facilities that just happen to be in existence because, by law, electricity generators have access to the grid. There is nothing in the document to which I have referred which satisfies my curiosity about the proposal that is going to be put up. The legal framework for the proposal is not mentioned, nor is the issue of allowing people as of right to obtain access to the grid. They are the types of questions that are not covered in the document. Having studied at some length the three other options, none of which is terribly pretty, I believe that if any of them were undertaken—particularly option No. 4—that would undoubtedly result in a disaster of monumental proportions, brought about by this Treasurer and his Government.

The document goes on to state—

"The Determinants of Structure
Objectives . . ."

The objectives state what is attempted to be achieved. The document then states—

“The choice of industry structure should flow from the Government’s objectives.”

Of course, it should; and the Government’s objectives are to get its hand in the till. There is no question about that. That is the way in which this Treasurer and this Government will balance the Budget for the next couple of years. The Government will pull the Victorian stunt and bleed the gizzard out of the electricity industry, because that is where the money is, and that is where the funds will come from. I will refer to that in more detail at a later stage.

The document states that if this Government intends to adopt that course, it should pay careful attention to the following: improving efficiency, both technical—that is, productive—and allocative; increasing competition; increasing accountability for performance; and improving services to customers. Those ideals are very honourable and are ideals that all people would stand up for in this day and age. The document states that we must have accountability, increased competition, etc, but it does not say that the bottom line is that this Government should be allowed to dig deeply into the funds of the electricity industry, thereby taking away the competitive structure and capability of the electricity industry. The document also states that a presumption underlies the comments made in respect of the development of these options, whichever one is chosen. The presumption is that savings would be made through competition in generation, and that those savings would outweigh any organisational costs involved in having multiple generation organisations.

There will always be costs involved in the type of bureaucratic meddling for which this Government is so famous. The Health Department, about which honourable members heard so much tonight, is a good example of that. The development of regional health authorities has cost this State many millions of dollars and has drawn away all the funds from the provision of services at the coalface and put them towards building up a bureaucratic structure that the nurses and patients of this State are carrying. There is a cost involved in this proposal. It is recognised by the document, but it will not be recognised by this Government simply because this Government, with its myopic vision, cannot see the problems that have been wrought by the changes that have already been made and the problems that will be inflicted on the electricity industry in the future.

On page 9, the document refers to the nature of the electricity market. It continues for several pages and supports the proposition that currently everything is fine within the QEC structure and the distribution of power in Queensland. The document does not give any indication whatsoever that there is a problem. It supports the QEC quite clearly, which is, in my view, very interesting indeed. The document states—

“From an economic viewpoint, the electricity system should be operated to minimise the total costs of producing and distributing electricity.”

That is a wide statement. That is already done. That is what the QEC has been all about for the past 20 years. That is why it has developed the system that it has. The document states—

“This is done at present by system control committing and dispatching (selecting and loading) generating plant on the basis of its known costs of starting and its incremental operating costs (mainly fuel costs). The dispatch takes into account the fact that losses in transmission can alter the effective costs of particular generators.”

What that means, for those of us who are wise enough to read between the lines, is that, while we have the QEC as the planning and guiding light of that whole organisation and while we have that organisation which understands the structure, we can easily calculate the amount of power that is required. We are getting a balance within the generation and distribution. It is done quite properly within the existing structure. If we allow this Treasurer, his Minister and the Government to divide that organisation into several units, whether it be two, three or four as proposed by the

various options, confusion will be created between the various corporate structures. It simply must happen. We all know the bureaucracy well enough to understand that problems will arise. No longer will the proper economic choices be made moment by moment as the QEC brings power stations on and off the system, choosing which is the most appropriate for that particular moment, whether it is high-peak loads, base loads or whatever. Those are the choices that are made regularly, minute by minute, by the QEC because that is the structure that it has in place.

The document further states that problems will arise with accounting. With all of those options, major technical problems will arise in discovering who owns what; who put what power where; and who consumed it. Honourable members should look at one of the options, under which the seven distribution boards will be tendering and contracting to purchase power from individual generating facilities. What an appalling thing to do, to break up that structure so that there is no longer any certainty about what is happening. I note that the Minister is back in the House. If those kinds of things persist, we will have major problems in the far-western, northern and remote areas of the State, because we will simply suffer the disadvantages of distance once again. I will say a little more about that shortly.

An important characteristic of the electricity supply industry is its capital intensity and the long lead times involved in the construction of supply facilities. The document discusses the way in which the Government can guarantee or, indeed, induce people to invest in the industry. It states—

“These characteristics mean that there will be an element of market risk in investing in the industry and will have one or both of two results: potential investors may seek a higher return on investment to cover the risk, or they may seek to remove the risk through long term ‘take or pay’ contracts.”

What that simply means is that the cost to the consumer must rise. I will quote from a document that I received recently from the Ministry of Energy in New South Wales. When England broke up its electricity generating and distribution industry and the industry was privatised, there was a 10 per cent increase in electricity tariffs across the United Kingdom immediately. That came about because of nothing other than a change of accounting standards. The people in the homes, in the cities and in the industries of that nation paid the price. That is the kind of result that we are confronting here today.

This document reminds us that, at the same time, electricity is a fundamental necessity in our society and economy. That, of course, was readily demonstrated during the times of the electricity strikes. If we turn off the power, we turn off everything. We turn off the quality of life. We turn off the sewerage systems. We turn off the light and the refrigeration. Electricity is a fundamental necessity in our society and economy, and it is for that reason that we must not lose control of that fundamental necessity. Certainly, the Government could engage people to build and supply power stations on contract. I have no problem with that. However, the organisation of the supply and distribution of power supplies in this State must remain in the hands of the Government. That is where it is most likely to provide a proper outcome for the people of Queensland.

A further aspect of the long lead time and long life of electricity supply facilities is that it is necessary to provide investors with some certainty about the market that they are entering, or else face a requirement to pay a risk premium. Once again, the document is warning the Government that it should watch its step and that there will be a price hike in this if it is not very careful. It is essential to take a long-term view of industry structure and to recognise that it will be necessary to maintain for a period of years any structure adopted. In the Queensland context, the expected growth in electricity requirements will require new capacity to be put into place as early as 1998. It will be particularly important to select a structure which can stabilise quickly and bring forth new capacity in the relatively short term. The only time in recent memory that the QEC has failed to bring on line or to plan adequately for the future—and I am talking about 1998—was when this Government meddled in its planning process, that is, when the Government

stopped the construction of the Tully/Millstream hydro-electric scheme, which was approved by the previous Government and on which construction began by way of a tunnel at the Tully end. This Government meddled in that structure, and now the QEC is in a hell of a panic trying to work out how it will avoid power disruption in the winter of 1998 when the well-known commodity gets properly in the fan.

The document then refers at some length to the structure of the options. In the evaluation of the options, the document states the key issues, which, once again, are particularly flattering of the status quo. Those issues are—

“ . . . continuity of electricity supply now; and adequacy of capacity in the future.”

The document goes on to say that the “overriding goals in support of the key issues of accountability and responsibility when contemplating restructuring the Industry, should be to preserve the improvements in efficiency” already approved and “to provide an environment in which further improvements can be made and consolidated”. That is implicit in the current structure. Another overriding goal is “to continue to provide to the business, industry and general public of Queensland, an acceptable supply of electricity”. It states “to continue to provide”. This document is specific. It states—

“ . . . to maintain the lowest possible price.”

We are talking about what is happening now. These things are already in place, but this Government is going to meddle with what is probably the prime example of the way in which the electricity industry in this State should be organised.

Mr McGrady: That was a good submission you gave us for the restructuring of the industry.

Mr Gilmore: Yes, I am sure. It was in the policy document that I wrote. Under the present arrangements, the QEC has a planning and coordination role which, among other things, ensures the timely installation of new generating plant and augmentation of the transmission network. Evaluation of demand-side options and the end-use customer focus are facilitated by this role of the QEC. Nothing that I have said and nothing that I have read out of this document has done anything to convince me that there is any need to take the steps that this Government is going to take.

So what are my particular concerns about this issue? I have concerns for rural and industrial Queensland. For a start, I have serious concerns that this Government is going to legislate away its capacity to offer supplies at a premium or at a discount to emerging and high-use industries. I am concerned that this Government is going to legislate away the tariff equalisation scheme which has served this State so well and has served the people who live in the electorates of both the Honourable Treasurer, the member for Cairns, and the Honourable Minister, the member for Mount Isa. They are the people who will suffer if tariff equalisation is lost under the options that are provided in this document.

Mr McGrady: I rise to a point of order.

Mr Deputy Speaker (Mr Stephan): Order! The Minister is not in his correct seat.

Mr Gilmore: We also are going to suffer under this proposal. Prior to the election, the Minister's department considered a proposal to penalise the people of far-north Queensland 18 per cent for the losses incurred in transmitting electricity 944 kilometres from the nearest coal-fired station to Chalumbin. Under this structure, we are likely to suffer that as a penalty for living in far-north, far-west and regional Queensland. Let me refer to the rural extension subsidy scheme. How long has it been since any money was paid out under that scheme? What about the people at Georgetown? At present, the owners of five properties just west of Georgetown are being asked to pay \$56,000 each to get on to a SWER line—a single wire extension. They have been asked to pay \$56,000 a property, and they cannot afford it. Yet the Minister sits there and grins, because he is not prepared to provide power to the remote areas of this State.

What about the fellow who is growing mangoes at Georgetown and wants to put on a three-phase power supply for major pumping equipment? He cannot obtain that supply because the Minister is not prepared to provide him with any subsidy assistance whatsoever. What about the people in the dairy industry in Malanda? The Minister has been up there and said that he would not help them to extend three-phase power to the dairy industry on the tableland in spite of the inability of the SWER lines to cope with further growth. Those SWER lines have no further capacity to provide for a growing and expanding industry. It is an absolute indictment on the Minister's rule of his department and on the Treasurer because they have forgotten where they come from.

Let me talk about the existing subdivisions throughout this State that do not have any power. What will be done for people who have purchased blocks of land in those subdivisions and suddenly want power? Currently, an individual in a 20-block subdivision might have to pay the major proportion of the cost of power installation, but he never gets anything back. Let me talk about the dividend that will go to Treasury out of this organisation. During the last session of Parliament, there was a debate on the disallowance of an Order in Council in respect of \$15m that was taken out of the Minister's department by the Treasurer and about which the Minister had no say. That Order in Council had the effect of approving of the Treasurer having his sticky fingers in the till. Now he is setting up the structure so that he can be paid a dividend, as is the case in the southern States, and then take away the capacity of the electricity industry in this State to construct new facilities for power distribution or generation without borrowing. He will take the funds and they will go up against the proverbial wall. Then the Government will have to borrow to build our new power-generation facilities, and then, inevitably, in order to service that loan, the cost of power to consumers will have to rise.

As the Minister is in the House, I would like to take him to task over a press release which he put out recently in relation to the Tully/Millstream hydro-electric scheme. He bagged politicians from the conservative side for saying that they would construct the Tully/Millstream hydro-electric scheme if they got a swipe at it. He said that it is all too hard. He said that, as we were entering the silly season of politics, promises would be made that could not be fulfilled. He said that coalmining in Queensland supports 70 000 jobs and that entering into the Tully/Millstream hydro-electric scheme would place them in jeopardy.

Mr McGrady: I didn't say that at all.

Mr GILMORE: Of course the Minister did. That is exactly what he said. Let me tell the Minister for his own edification that any coal that is dug up for a 600 megawatt station will be new coal. It will not come out of the export coal industry; it will not come out of the domestic coal industry—it will create new jobs. We want to see the construction of the Tully/Millstream hydro-electric scheme so that far-north Queensland can have 1 000 jobs instead of having the Treasurer sitting there moaning as though someone had stunned him—and probably has. This is his part of the world.

Time expired.

Mr WELFORD (Everton) (8.30 p.m.): It is my great pleasure, honour and privilege to participate in the Address in Reply debate. I express my congratulations to Her Excellency the Governor of Queensland, Leneen Forde, on her appointment to that position. I knew the Governor when she worked as a lawyer. In my view, she was certainly a fine example of a professional who put the needs of and service to those whom she represented and for whom she worked above the more venal elements of some of her colleagues.

In 1989, I was elected to the electorate of Stafford. Following the redistribution of electorates during the last term of the Goss Government, in the 1992 September election, I stood for the electorate of Everton. The electorate of Everton takes in the suburbs of Albany Creek and Everton Hills in the Pine Rivers Shire, and the suburbs of McDowall, Everton Park, Grovely, Mitchelton and part of Enoggera in the Brisbane City Council area. The electorate of Everton contains a mixture of constituents. In that

sense, it is similar to the former electorate of Stafford. For example, the suburbs of Grovely and Mitchelton are old areas in which much of the housing was developed 50 to 60 years ago. At the other end of the electorate, McDowall and Albany Creek are relatively newly developed areas which contain many younger families. Albany Creek, in the Pine Rivers Shire, is a very rapidly developing area, and the needs for community services must be monitored carefully so that development does not occur haphazardly.

As the representative of the electorate of Everton, my challenge is to provide first-class professional representation and service for my constituents. I hope to achieve that in two ways. Firstly, at the local level, I endeavour to provide the advice, referral and counselling assistance that constituents need when they face difficulties. I can provide advice of a preliminary legal nature to assist my constituents in finding their way through the maze of Government bureaucracy. I can also express the views of my constituents in this Parliament. All members appreciate the role that they have in representing the views of constituents who have genuine concerns.

The second way in which I can serve my constituents is to participate in the Government's policy work. In the last Parliament, on behalf of the Minister for Tourism, Sport and Racing, I chaired a ministerial committee which investigated the funding of Queensland sport. As a result of the extensive inquiry which it undertook, the committee was able to present to the Minister a report on a much improved and much more sophisticated program for the development of sport in Queensland. That report was implemented at the beginning of this year. On behalf of the Minister for the former portfolio of Justice and Corrective Services, I chaired a joint Government and industry committee which reviewed the law relating to residential tenancies. Amongst other issues, the committee examined the fact that tenants of boarding houses and caravan parks are not given any protection under the law. The committee has now presented two reports to the Minister, the first relating to the general law of residential tenancies and the second relating to boarding houses and caravan parks. I believe that both of those reports provide a foundation for an extensive revamp of the law relating to residential tenancies. The implementation of those reports will not only provide greater certainty for lessors and tenants but will also provide protection for tenants who previously were not afforded any protection at all.

During this term, one of the policy issues on which I will be working is sport. One area in which local authorities and the State Government can work together, particularly in the Brisbane and Pine Rivers area, is the coordination of sports facilities, in particular swimming pools. Recently, the Brisbane City Council produced an extensive report on how it might deal with many existing council and Education Department swimming pools in the vicinity of and in the Brisbane area. As a member of a newly formed committee involving representatives of the Brisbane City Council and the State Government, I will be examining ways in which the use of swimming pools can be rationalised and ways in which existing pools can be upgraded. I will also be identifying schools whose facilities can be opened to the public to enable a more efficient use of those facilities.

In the Everton electorate, a number of key issues will need to be addressed in the coming years. Despite the fact that the Government has provided significant funding gains, schools are under continuing pressure in terms of resources and staff. The stress under which the education system is placed stems from two areas. For the first time in Queensland's history, a comprehensive audit has been undertaken by the Education Department to determine whether there is an equitable sharing of the State's educational resources. Because of the inequity in the distribution of those resources that existed prior to this Government attaining office, it has been necessary for some areas to shed some of the resources provided to them. That has occurred with some regret in my electorate and in other electorates across the north side of Brisbane in what is known as the metropolitan east region of the State education system. However, it was necessary because other regions of the State are growing very rapidly and are placing increased demands on the resources of the State education system. In addition, those other areas of the State have historically been underresourced. In order to share those resources more equitably, some areas, including mine, unfortunately, seem to be suffering some

disadvantage at present. Now that the levelling process has occurred, I hope that, with any future funding that the education system might receive, we can start to improve the level of coalface resources available to our schools, both in terms of the numbers of teachers and the resources available.

There have been significant increases in school grants throughout the State. Certainly, that has been evident in my area. By the same token, at the end of the day, what matters are the resources that are available to students in the classroom and the number of teachers who are available. I must say that, despite the massive boost in funding to approximately \$280m over the last three years, that has not been clearly evident in my electorate.

I take this opportunity to thank those principals in my area who have been most cooperative in informing me of the current situation regarding the schools in the Everton electorate. I refer to Peter Murphy, who is the principal of the Albany Creek High School, Mr Ken Large, who is the principal of the Albany Hills Primary School, and Nev Grayson, who is the principal of the Albany Creek Primary School. In my view, those principals are very committed to developing schools in the Albany Creek area, which is a very fast growing area, and which places great demands on schools. Those principals exercise excellent management skills in running those schools and developing them into first-class educational facilities in the Everton area. As to the State primary schools—I refer to the principal of McDowall Primary School, Mr David Buckle, and to Helen Lucas, who is the principal of Everton Park Primary School, where this year my daughter started Year 1. Mr Grahame Moore is the principal of Everton Park High School, which is a much underrated high school that has a wide range of excellent course options and facilities. However, in recent years, that school has not been used to its full capacity.

Another matter that is very important to the Everton electorate is transport. Albany Creek is at the Pine Rivers end of the electorate. To a large extent, it is separated from the rest of the Pine Rivers Shire by the South Pine River. In many ways it is starved of the resources that such a community should have. One of those resources is public transport. For many years, Albany Creek has been seen as an adjunct to the northern suburbs of Brisbane. It is a little bit out from Aspley, a little north of McDowall, Stafford Heights and Everton Park. However, because it is in the Pine Rivers electorate, it is not served by the Brisbane City Council bus service. There is no railway line through that area. The Petrie railway line goes through suburbs to the east, such as Geebung and Zillmere and Strathpine. Consequently, the Albany Creek area is deprived of public transport. That is a matter that should be tackled seriously over the coming years. It requires a degree of cooperation between the Brisbane City Council and the Pine Rivers Shire, which, regrettably, has not seen fit to comply.

The Ferny Grove railway line runs through Enoggera and Mitchelton, which are in the southern part of the electorate. Recently, train stations in those suburbs have been upgraded as part of the ongoing upgrading program of metropolitan railway stations. I congratulate the Minister for Transport, David Hamill, on the work that has been carried out in that regard. Enoggera and Mitchelton are important locations. They are close to the city and serve as nodes for not only the regional business community in the north-western suburbs of Brisbane but also provide access for many people from that area who travel to the city. It is very much a working people's area. The train stations in those areas also provide access for people to places such as Brookside Shopping Centre.

Over recent years, the development of the road network throughout the western and north-western suburbs of Brisbane has caused much agitation and anxiety. Members will recall the Brisbane City Council and previous State Government proposals in relation to Route 20 through the western suburbs of Brisbane. That project has technically, at least, been put on hold. I have some concerns about the continuing agenda which certain divisions of the Transport Department appear to have in relation to road development through those suburbs. We need to keep a careful eye on the social and environmental impacts that road planning and road development in near-city areas have on the communities that I represent in Everton. Certainly, there is a need to ensure

that road transport facilities are up to scratch and provide people with access to their places of work and school. However, the need also exists to ensure that road planning is carried out in a manner that is sensitive to the development of the environment in which people build their homes and create suburbs so that they are not disrupted by undue heavy traffic if other options, particularly public transport, may be available.

As to urban planning—as I mentioned earlier, Albany Creek is a fast-developing area of the Everton electorate. A large part of Albany Creek is available to the State Government. Currently, it is part of land that is under the control of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Planning. Under the previous Minister, Tom Burns, a proposal was formulated to develop the department's land in Albany Creek as a genuine quality development. Essentially, it is an experimental development to trial the AMCORD principals, that is the Australian Model Code of Residential Design, in Albany Creek. That project certainly has my support. I understand that if the Pine Rivers Shire Council lends support to the proposal to devise an urban community that provides a range of living options from the larger, traditional 40-perch blocks through to multiple dwellings, we can design a first-class suburban community that will serve the Albany Creek area into the next century. However, that proposal requires a commitment from the Pine Rivers Shire Council to genuinely support a new way of looking at residential design. If the council provides that support, the previous Minister, Tom Burns, undertook to make a contribution in the vicinity of \$750,000 in lieu of an open space provision in that development. That does not mean that there will not be any open space in the development. It is going to be a first-class development that recognises the need for balance between a reasonable level of housing density. At the same time, it will provide a reasonable level of open space and recreational areas. By designing that development in a sensitive manner, there will be sufficient area available to contribute \$750,000 to the development of sport and recreational facilities in the Albany Creek area. Already I am supporting the work of the Albany Creek and District Sport and Recreation Club in its quest through the Pine Rivers Shire Council to acquire land adjacent to the South Pine River to which that \$750,000 could be applied to develop a first-class district sport and recreation facility for the people of the Albany Creek and Eatons Hill area in the electorate of Kurwongbah.

A number of facilities in the area are important to the people of Everton. The Everton Plaza shopping centre, the Albany Creek shopping village, and the now well-known throughout the Brisbane area and well-established Brookside Shopping Centre at Mitchelton are all important facilities that make the area of Everton Park a relatively comfortable area for people to live in. Despite the limited access to public transport to some of the northern parts of the electorate, the access to facilities such as shopping and recreation generally is reasonably good. I pay tribute to the management of the Brookside Shopping Centre, in particular Mr Neil Judge and the promotions officer, Anna White, who have done a lot of work in recent years in redeveloping that shopping centre to make it one of the most pleasurable places in which to shop on the north side of Brisbane.

I turn now to the whole question of what constitutes the quality of life of the people in my electorate and other people throughout Queensland. It really comes down to the fundamental question of what community services the community as a whole provides. In modern jargon it is called the social wage, that is, the wage that each and every Queenslanders enjoys not just in terms of what they take home in their pay packets but in terms of the facilities to which they can have access and which are funded by the community as a whole. In my view, those facilities—that social wage—are much more important than the cash that we might take home individually in our pockets from our work or other sources.

I turn next to the fundamental principles that face us in the choices available at the Federal election on 13 March 1993. It has been said that Dr Hewson and the Opposition Liberals have a plan. As one caller to talkback radio said this morning, Hitler had a plan, and so did Mussolini. They both had plans. But the question is: just what does the plan entail? In my view, the fundamental feature of the Hewson plan is really this: it comes

down simply to the most massive redistribution of wealth that this country has ever seen. The most frightening feature of the Hewson plan is that for the first time in Australia's political history we have a purported conservative Opposition which plans—if it wins Government—to actually do something more than just get into Government and exercise its born-to-rule mentality and try to hold on to the reins of power. What it wants to do, in a way that it has never really attempted before, is to engage in the most vigorous and vicious redistribution of wealth that this country has ever seen. It would do that in two broad ways. On the one hand, it would tax the consumption spending of every Australian and every Queenslander, no matter how much they earn. From the poor to the rich, people would be taxed at the same rate. Whether they are widows, orphans or millionaires like Kerry Packer, the Hewson plan is to tax their consumption spending—the essentials—at the same rate as that paid by everyone else in the community. That is the first element of the injustice and the redistribution of wealth to which the Hewson plan really amounts.

The second element to which I will return in a little while is really the scuttling of the wage security of PAYE taxpayers throughout this country. I refer to scuttling through the abolition of the arbitration system, the abolition of award protection and the destruction of the independent umpire to which all Australians have had access to achieve wage justice ever since the turn of this century. It is the destruction of a tradition of Australian egalitarianism which, in my view, will see this country turn very much for the worst.

Let me consider some of the key elements of the GST which to me make it unbelievable that some members opposite can support it, particularly those members who have been associated with small business or have had experience in the operation of small family farms. How they can possibly regard the proposals of the Hewson plan to be in their interests and in the interests of people whom they represent is well and truly beyond me. They do so for the sole reason that they are tied by party lines to the politics of the New Right established in Canberra. It cannot be in their interests, but they are tied to it and they mouth the platitudes of support for it despite the fact that their very constituencies will be severely and adversely affected by it.

The fact is that, as everyone would appreciate, the 15 per cent consumption tax is a heavier tax on those on lower incomes, those on unemployment benefits or those on no income at all. On a week-to-week basis, people at the lower end of the income scale spend a much higher proportion of their income on the essentials of household expenditure. To the extent that they spend 100 per cent of their income solely on surviving week to week on their household expenditure, those people are taxed on 100 per cent of their income, whereas the millionaire who might spend 20 per cent, 30 per cent or 40 per cent of his or her income on essential weekly household expenditure will be taxed at the very same rate, but only on 20 per cent, 30 per cent or 40 per cent of his or her income. That is an outrageous distribution in favour of the rich. That regressive taxation system will not serve families. Obviously, those people with larger families of three or four children spend a much larger amount of their take-home pay on weekly living expenses than do people with no dependants, especially those on high incomes. So it is a tax on families that disadvantages families much more severely, for example, than it does wealthy yuppies. It is inflationary, as even Opposition members would realise. The only matter about which they argue is the extent to which it is inflationary. The extraordinary thing about this is that the coalition proposes a taxation measure which has an inflationary impact and increases inflation at a time when inflation, for the first time in years, has been brought to a low level. It also increases inflation at a time when we are just at the stage at which we can least afford an inflationary impact in terms of our capacity to get out of this recession. Even if it were the right policy, it is the wrong time to implement it. It is hard on families because it taxes things that were never taxed before. We must have a sales tax impact of something in the vicinity of 20 per cent for it to be equivalent to a 15 per cent GST on the retail value in respect of those commodities which are already subject to a wholesale sales tax.

What are some of the benefits that are purported to flow from this change in the taxation mix by the introduction of a consumption tax? Firstly, one of the proposals is to abolish sales tax. The reality is that there is no sales tax on many essential items now. In Fightback II, Mr Hewson has made the extraordinary concession that he will not put a consumption tax on food. How generous is that? There is no tax on food now. He comes out with a consumption tax that he says will tax everything; he says that he will resign rather than back down on his commitment; and then he backs down on the one area in which no sales tax exists now. He has made no concession at all by making what he pretends is a concession by providing for no GST on food. The other feature about sales tax, for all its anomalies, which makes it a fairer tax than the GST is that it operates on a sliding scale. Not only does it not apply to essentials; it also applies on a sliding scale so that the highest rates of sales tax apply to non-essential luxury items. No such concession to fairness is made in respect of the GST. With the GST, Ferraris come down in price and Commodores go up in price; luxury items such as jewellery and furs come down in price, and essential items go up in price.

The income tax concessions are regarded as another area in which the GST is said to provide an opportunity for people to save and which provides more money for ordinary people. Let us look at some of the tax concessions that are provided. Many previous speakers have pointed out how the abolition of payroll tax will not assist small business. The speaker who follows me should know better than anyone that not only does the abolition of payroll tax not provide any benefit at all to small business but also small business is put at a positive disadvantage by the abolition of payroll tax, because payroll tax on big business is what gives many small businesses their competitive edge. They are advantaged by not having to carry that tax impost. When payroll tax is abolished, small business will lose that comparative competitive advantage.

I turn now to the petrol excise that is going to be abolished. As many members would appreciate, and as those who have any experience in taxation law in the past will know, the first point to be made is that the cost of fuel is a tax deductible business input. Any concession in the consumption tax imposed on fuel will really save business only half of what Hewson says it will—half in the sense that they already gain from the deductibility of the cost of fuel in business inputs. The other factor about the fuel excise is that many farm fuel costs are already free of excise. So there is no gain for the farm community. That is what strikes me as extraordinary about the support that some of the members of the Queensland National Party provide for this Hewson plan. Of course, the multinationals who have bought up family farms might gain some benefits, but the small family farmers do not gain from payroll tax reductions, they do not gain from petrol excise reductions and they will not gain from the income tax reductions that Hewson proposes because they are already earning so little income. They are already telling us how little income they are earning. The consumption tax will scuttle their household expenditure, which is already higher in regional areas than it is in the cities because of the freight costs. They will pay consumption tax, but there will still be a freight cost, and they will pay consumption tax on the freight cost as well as the higher retail price of the goods in regional areas. Small farming families will be absolutely disadvantaged by the Hewson plan.

Another factor that is said to be an advantage of the Hewson plan is that the consumption tax, by limiting consumption or by acting as a disincentive to consumption, will encourage national savings. The national savings of the working people of this country will simply go in consumption tax. Anything that they might have saved from the reduction in income tax—the marginal reductions of income tax at lower levels which go to the higher taxpayers anyhow—and anything that they might have gained from the reductions in wholesale sales tax will almost invariably be lost through the higher levels of consumption tax that they will have to carry on every item of essential expenditure that low income earners incur. None of the advantages that are said to flow to individual households as a result of the GST in fact occur.

The real question is whether business will gain any advantage at all. Certainly, small business will not gain any advantage when one takes into account the compliance costs

that small business will incur. How can jobs be created if, by putting a disincentive on consumption and by reducing the demand for goods throughout the country, we send Australia into a further recession of demand? If there is no demand for goods, there is no demand to produce them. So why would employers employ more people to produce those goods?

Time expired.

Mr CONNOR (Nerang) (9 p.m.): I rise to speak on a matter that is of extreme importance and a very tragic issue. I refer to a disease known as Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease. This disease is similar to Alzheimers disease or senile dementia. However, the disease onset, unlike Alzheimers, is extremely fast and fatal. The median time for first symptom to death is three to six months. The disease normally hits people in their fifth and sixth decade of life. What is particularly worrying about this disease is that it has been found to have been passed on through the use of human growth hormone. A number of cases have been reported recently. There has been a small amount of publicity given to those cases as a result of the rarity.

Probably the most insidious side to the disease is the long incubation period of between four and 19 years. That means that there are people—possibly thousands, certainly hundreds of people—walking around Australia with this disease without knowing that they will eventually develop severe symptoms, eventually leading to coma and then to death within three to six months of first symptoms. Presently, the disease is incurable. The reported rate of the disease is one in a million, which means that approximately 17 or 18 cases per year are reported in Australia. However, this disease is not notifiable and is quite often misdiagnosed. There is no centralised bank of data of cases to be able to gauge exactly how this disease is progressing and the true extent of the disease, so the rate may be dramatically increasing. What is worrying is that, for the period up until 1985, there was a program of hormone treatment for women that included the extract of a cadaver pituitary gland and this has, in turn, passed on the disease to three women who have been reported in the last few months.

The disease attacks the central nervous system and hence brings on dementia. The disease has its concentration of its key agents in nerve tissue: the brain, spinal cord, nerve endings, etc. Recent studies by Professor Colin Masters in the *Australian Medical Journal* raise the possibility that this disease can also be passed on via blood transfusion, although at this stage no case has been reported, but this could be as a result of the long incubation period and the fact that blood screening is not possible. It has also been reported that a major outbreak of the same disease as it occurs in livestock, which is known as scrapie, occurred recently in Britain. There was a process used in feed production in Britain which, as a result of a lack of the use of a particularly strong disinfectant, caused the disease to be passed on and many thousands of animals died. So it has been shown to be able to be passed on through ingestion.

By far the most worrying aspect is the fact that the highest concentration of the agent that causes the disease is in nerve tissue. It has been found that electrodes and other surgical instruments that had been used in brain tests, even after they had been sterilised in the conventional way, were able to pass on the disease to a lab technician, which suggests that the conventional sterilising process at the time was insufficient in dealing with this particular disease. Since then, there has been an upgrading of the sterilisation method used in surgeries dealing with the brain, which involves the use of autoclaving and/or much higher concentrations of acidic or alkaline solutions. I bring the attention of honourable members to the fact that the Australian Dental Association has distributed new recommendations for disinfecting dental instruments, which include autoclaving, which, for the interest of honourable members, I point out is high pressure steam at high temperature. This has been shown to be one of the few ways that will kill the disease.

There is another question that is particularly worrying to the experts in this particular field and that is, to their knowledge, at this stage the dental profession is not fully aware—even though this has been distributed—of the dangers involved with this

particular disease. During telephone conversations with the ADA today, I brought its attention to this matter, and I believe that it is going to enter into a process of informing the respective parts of the profession.

As stated before, the highest concentration of this disease is in nerve tissue, and given that dental instruments are continually coming in contact with the nerves and teeth, this is thought to be another way in which the disease could be transmitted. For instance, dentist drills may not be sufficiently sterilised to the standard that surgical instruments are at present. One needs not to have much imagination to understand that these hundreds, perhaps thousands, of people who have the agent in their system have dental work carried out, and the dentist treats the next patient with dental instruments that have not been sufficiently sterilised.

The other worrying aspect of this disease is the type of infectious agent that produces the disease. Unlike a virus, this agent has no nucleic acid, which is considered to be the most basic building block of life. It is thought to be purely a protein, but a self-replicating protein. This newly discovered agent is known by a number of names, one of which is a slow virus, although it does not have the characteristic DNA or RNA genome of viruses. It is also known as a prion or a self-replicating protein. This is at the absolute forefront of medical science and something that is still contentious within the medical profession. But what is particularly worrying is that there is no way at present of screening blood for this disease. It has been laboratory proven that it can be passed on through the blood. At present, there is no method other than clinical diagnosis, once there is the onset of the symptoms, of determining whether someone is carrying this disease. We have all the hallmarks of a potential epidemic, as was the case with the scrapie virus in Britain. Scrapie is the same disease as CJD, but it is found in cattle.

We already know that a number of women have died recently as a result of this human growth hormone treatment. However, at this stage not all of the people who are involved in this program have been informed or tracked down. Approximately 2 500 women underwent this human growth hormone treatment over a period of 15 years. All of them are potential carriers of the disease, which is possibly fatal within a maximum period of 19 years. Usually, the symptoms appear at least six years after infection and death usually takes place within four or five months. Approximately half the women who received this treatment have been tracked down, but there are still approximately 1 300 who have not yet been found. It is important for people who have been involved in this particular program to be aware of the potential of CJD. It is also imperative that all dentists and doctors use the upgraded methods of sterilising medical and dental instruments. The public also should be aware of the terrifying and tragic implications of this disease when it finds its mark. There is a clear need for a national case register to be developed so that future trends in the occurrence of this disease can be monitored and any clues as to the method of transition can be found. It is believed by some people within the medical profession that the greatest potential for the spread of this disease, now that the human growth hormone issue has been dealt with, is the aspect of inadequately disinfecting instruments in both general medical and dental surgeries. It is suggested that regulatory authorities should review their current recommendations in the light of new knowledge about the properties of the agent which causes the disease.

I wish to cite a report in the *Australian Medical Journal* which contains sections that are quite frightening. The article states—

“Source of the Infection

The infectious CJD agent has been found in highest titre and with greatest regularity in brain and spinal cord. The disease has also been transmitted to animals from lymph nodes, liver, kidney, spleen, lung, cornea . . . although in far lower titres. Blood taken from patients with CJD has transmitted CJD after intracerebral inoculation into guinea pigs or mice, suggesting that there is a viraemic phase in the CJD, and that therefore CJD could be transmitted via blood transfusion.”

The document goes on to state—

“Human pituitary extracts have recently been identified as a source of the iatrogenic transmission of CJD.”

I seek leave to have incorporated in *Hansard* two pages from the *Australian Medical Journal*.

Leave granted.

Route of Transmission

The natural mode of acquisition of 'slow infections' is unknown. Animal experimentation has shown that whilst intracerebral inoculation of infected brain is the most efficient way to transmit the disease, infection can also be achieved via subcutaneous, intraperitoneal, intravenous, intramuscular and corneal routes. Scrapie, kuru and CJD have also been transmitted orally, and it is possible that ingestion of infected tissue is the natural mode of acquisition of infection. Intranasal, intradermal or conjunctival routes of transmission have not been documented. The disappearance of kuru when cannibalism stopped in New Guinea suggests that this was the only means of transmission. There is no evidence of transplacental infection, and no outsider in close contact with kuru patients has ever developed kuru.

Source of Infection

The infectious CJD agent has been found in highest titre and with greatest regularity in brain and spinal cord. The disease has also been transmitted to animals from lymph nodes, liver, kidney, spleen, lung, cornea, and CSF, although in far lower titres. Blood taken from patients with CJD has transmitted CJD after intracerebral inoculation into guinea pigs or mice, suggesting that there is a 'viraemic' phase in CJD, and that therefore CJD could be transmitted via blood transfusion. 'Viraemia' has been demonstrated in the guinea pig model of CJD, in mouse CJD, and in hamster scrapie.

The route of transmission of CJD has been identified with certainty in very few patients. Human to human transmission of CJD via a corneal transplant was reported in 1974. Subsequent animal experiments have confirmed that the eye does contain infectious material. Contaminated stereotactic EEG electrodes were incriminated as the source of infection in two cases, and neurosurgery with contaminated instruments was probably responsible for three further cases. Two cases of CJD apparently acquired via dura mater grafts have also been reported, and the potential infectivity of dura mater has been confirmed in the guinea pig scrapie model. Case control studies have shown ocular surgery, including tonometry, and neurosurgery are risk factors for the development of CJD.

Human pituitary extracts have recently been identified as a source of iatrogenic transmission of CJD. The first such case was reported in 1984 in a young adult with idiopathic hypopituitarism who had been treated with human cadaveric growth hormone. Since then at least seven cases have been reported. On the basis of population studies it appears that the epidemic may be much smaller than first thought, although new cases may yet appear, given the long incubation of four to 19 years already described. Hormone produced before 1970 has been implicated as the source of the infection in the USA.

CJD does not appear to be a readily 'contagious' disease. Individuals with either domestic or occupational close contact with CJD patients are not at increased risk of developing CJD compared with the general population. However, the reassuring statement that there are no documented cases of CJD among general pathologists, neuropathologists, neurologists, histopathology laboratory technicians, morticians or virologists is no longer true. To an atypical case in a neurosurgeon reported in 1981, must be added two cases in neuropathology technicians, one of whom was known to have handled CJD material, and one case in a histologist, all reported in the last year.

PATHOLOGY

The histological abnormalities in these diseases are confined to the central nervous system. There is vacuolation of neurons and their processes, together with widespread hypertrophy and proliferation of astrocytes. These changes may result in a finely porous appearance in the grey matter, particularly the cerebral cortex, hence the term spongiform encephalopathy. Whilst this is a specific feature, it may not be present in all cases. Prion-protein (vide infra) positive amyloid plaques have been observed in 5-20% of cases. The white matter is usually devoid of lesions.

In view of the data showing these diseases to be caused by a transmissible agent, perhaps the most striking feature of the neuropathology is the complete absence of any inflammatory changes. This suggests that the agent, whatever its nature, does not elicit any immune response.

THE CAUSATIVE AGENT

Molecular Biology

The most controversial aspect of the slow unconventional virus infections concerns the molecular nature of the transmissible agent. Sigurdsson's original observation that scrapie was transmitted by a filtrable agent led him to classify scrapie as a slow virus infection. However, the scrapie agent does not possess the properties of a conventional virus.

TABLE 7

Chemical Nature of the Causative Agent

Resistant to	Sensitive to
Nucleases	Proteases
UV Irradiation	Sodium dodecyl sulphate
Psoraien pholoinacilvation	Phenol
Divalent cation hydrolysis	
Hydroxylamina	
ie agents which modify nucleic acids	ie agents which modify proteins

All efforts, by many investigators, have failed to show positive evidence that the scrapie agent contains any nucleic acid (NA), either DNA or RNA. Thus, a variety of experimental procedures known to modify and inactivate NA containing particles have no effect on the infectivity of the scrapie agent (Table 7). Whilst such data do not prove that the agent does not contain NA, they do suggest that any NA present must be extremely small, of the order of 10-50 nucleotides, orders of magnitude smaller than the NA content of the smallest known viruses. Such a genome could only code for about a dozen amino acids at the most.

On the other hand, numerous processes which inactivate proteins have been shown to partially inactivate the scrapie agent, leading to the conclusion that a protein, or proteins, is required for infectivity. These latter observations led Prusiner to coin the term "prion" to describe the scrapie agent. This term has aroused much comment and has been interpreted to mean "infectious proteins". The concept that protein molecules may of themselves be infectious and cause their own replication, in the absence of any nucleic acid, runs contrary to a central dogma of molecular biology, viz that the flow of information in cells is always from nucleotides to proteins. Prusiner has recently been very careful to redefine his term as "small proteinaceous infectious particles which resist inactivation by processes that modify nucleic acids."

Whilst the exact nature of the scrapie agent is not resolved, analysis of the molecular composition of the agent continues (reviewed in ref.58). The protein content of purified infectious material from scrapie-infected brain has been shown to consist largely of a single glycoprotein, of molecular weight 27-30 kD. This molecule is referred to as PrP (prion protein) 27-30. Sequence analysis of this protein led to the development of cDNA probes for detection of the gene coding for the protein. Surprisingly, the use of such probes revealed a single copy gene in both normal and scrapie-infected hamster brains and also that PrP messenger RNA was found at similar levels in normal and infected brain.

The difference between the PrP content of normal as opposed to scrapie-infected brain lies in the structure of the PrP molecule itself. Antisera to PrP 27-30 recognise proteins of molecular weight 33-35kD, in both normal and infected brain, suggesting that PrP 27-30 is in fact an artefact resulting from partial protease digestion during laboratory separation. However, in healthy cells, the 33-35 kD product of the PrP gene, designated PrP, differs in properties from the scrapie isoform of the protein, PrP, found in scrapie infected brain. Proteinase K digestion of PrP, but not of PrP, yields the PrP 27-30 molecule referred to above. The biochemical differences between PrP and PrP have not been determined yet,

but presumably occur in one or more of the six identified post-translational modifications of the molecule. The similarity between PrP and PrP may explain why there is no immune response to the infectious agent; host tolerance to the naturally occurring isoform is extended to the scrapie isoform.

Ultrastructure

Controversy also surrounds the identification of the ultrastructural counterpart of the infectious agent. Electron microscopic studies of scrapie and CJD brains have revealed possible structures that may represent one form of the infectious agent. These include abnormal fibrils, termed scrapie-associated fibrils (SAF), consisting of filaments wound around each other in a helix, and rodlike structures, shown to be composed of the PrP 27-30 protein, and hence called prion rods. The rods and SAF are probably the same structure. Clusters of prion rods have been shown to have the properties of amyloid, staining with Congo red, and showing birefringence under polarised light. Thus the amyloid plaques found in the brains of CJD patients are composed of paracrystalline arrays of PrP. This raises the intriguing possibility that amyloid plaques are not simply accumulations of waste material formed as a result of some disease process, but may be a representation of an infectious agent. Analogies have been drawn between the amyloid plaques in CJD brain and those in brain affected by Alzheimer's disease, leading to the speculation that the latter may be some sort of slow unconventional virus infection. However, Alzheimer's disease, unlike CJD, has not been successfully transmitted to laboratory animals and the amyloid material in Alzheimer's disease is structurally distinct from that in CJD brain, and does not contain PrP 27-30.

Whether the SAF or the prion rods is the scrapie agent is uncertain. The argument is further complicated by proponents of a third structure, the so-called tubulovesicular particles.

INFECTION CONTROL

The transmissible pathogens responsible for the unconventional virus infections are remarkable in their ability to resist inactivation by a variety of methods. Recommended precautions to be observed in caring for patients with CJD and in handling their tissues, were first published in 1977. The availability of further experimental data, however, has modified many of these original suggestions. The current recommendations are summarised below.

Autoclaving

The recommended schedules of the Committee on Health Care Issues, American Neurological Association, and the Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS), United Kingdom, are shown in Table 8.

TABLE 8

Recommended Autoclaving Procedures

USA	—	Steam autoclaving for one hour at 132°C (gravity displacement machines)
UK	—	Single cycle 134°C (30 lbs psi) for 18 minutes HTAT (porous load machines)
		or
	—	six separate cycles 134°C (30 lbs psi) for three minutes HTAT (porous load machines)
HTAT	—	Hold time at temperature
NB	—	Ineffective if tissue is formal-fixed

It is important to note that the USA procedure relates to gravity-displacement machines, which are less efficient than the porous-load type of autoclave, upon which the UK standard is based. Both authorities now accept that earlier guidelines, utilising temperatures of 121 or 126°, were only partially effective. While the UK autoclaving standard will decontaminate whole mouse brains infected with scrapie, it has very little

effect on tissue fixed in 10% formol saline. The formaldehyde presumably increases the resistance of the CJD and scrapie agents to heat.

Chemical Disinfection

The two most effective chemical decontaminating agents are sodium hydroxide and sodium hypochlorite. Immersion in 1N sodium hydroxide for one hour at room temperature is recommended by the US Committee on Health Care Issues, and was found to provide a greater margin of potency than hypochlorite for inactivation of scrapie. 1N sodium hydroxide also has the advantage of being less corrosive to many fabrics, plastics and metal than hypochlorite. It may also be tolerated better on skin.

Hypochlorite was found to be a satisfactory decontaminant in experiments conducted in both the USA and UK. Maximal loss of infectivity occurred with solutions containing 1000 ppm available chlorine for four to 16 hours, or to solutions containing 10,000 ppm available chlorine for 30 minutes. A wide range of chemicals have been found to be ineffective against the scrapie and CJD agents (Table 9).

TABLE 9

Ineffective Disinfectant Procedures

Boiling; UV irradiation; Ethylene oxide sterilisation; ethanol; formalin; beta-propiolactone; detergents; quaternary ammonium compound; Lysol; alcoholic iodine; acetone; 0.2 % potassium permanganate; 5 % sodium dodecyl sulphate; 0.6 % chlorinated phenols (4 % Hycolin; 8M Urea

Currently, there is no disinfection procedure which can guarantee complete (100 %) sterilisation of high tited material. Prudence and commonsense dictate that reasonable precautions should be maintained at all stages when handling contaminated materials. A combination of autoclaving with chemical disinfection should be carried out whenever possible.

Mr CONNOR: I table a document circulated by the Australian Dental Association dealing with recommendations for the sterilisation of equipment.

I turn now to the way in which the GST and the Hewson Fightback plan will affect business. Before doing so, I wish to compare the business outlook of Australia with that of New Zealand. One does not have to look closely to see the big picture that is being painted for the business community in Australia. An article published by the *Gold Coast Bulletin* on 18 January 1993 stated—

“The National Australia Bank says its December quarter business survey shows no improvement in business conditions and signs of continual deterioration in coming months.”

The survey found that companies in the construction, wholesale, retail and mining sectors recorded the most difficult business conditions during the quarter. The article goes on to state—

“The survey contained little evidence of an improvement in the trading and profitability conditions in the December quarter’, says the National Australia Bank’s chief economist Alan Oster.”

I cite also an article in the *Courier-Mail* on 21 January this year under the headline “Business has to act—Goss”. The story was written by Peter Morley, and states—

“ ‘The private sector had to deliver if the unemployment rate is to come down’, Premier Wayne Goss said yesterday.

‘I think the private sector is holding back a bit because of uncertainty’, he said. ‘Sooner or later they will have to increase their confidence and get moving.’

‘Ultimately it is up to the economy to pick up and the private sector to generate the jobs if we are going to get employment’, he said.”

It is certainly a bleak outlook, as shown by the National Australia Bank, which is one of the most highly respected economic forecasters in Australia, and Labor’s own State Premier.

I now wish to compare that with the situation that exists in New Zealand. In the business section of the *Gold Coast Bulletin* on 26 January this year, an article with the headline "New Zealand Confidence Hits 20 Year High" states—

" 'Business confidence has climbed to its highest level for 20 years in New Zealand as profitability improves in all sectors of the economy', the latest opinion poll by the Institute of Economic Research has found.

The Institute says that this level of confidence is the highest since 1972.

'High levels of confidence are shown across all sectors, with the building industry and financial firms being the most optimistic', the Institute says."

One might ask why the market is so optimistic. In New Zealand, investment outlook is obviously very promising. That country recently introduced a goods and services tax and recently elected a conservative Government. One does not have to look far to find evidence of the reasons why New Zealanders are investing and why Australians are not. For a start, the equity market or the stock exchange paints a clear picture. If one invested \$A100 in the New Zealand stock market 12 months ago, that \$A100 would now be worth \$A107.80. If one had invested the same amount in the Australian market, according to the All Ordinaries Index, one would have lost \$A1.30. The investment would now be worth only \$A98.70. There is one thing that Labor Governments do not seem to understand, namely, if they want businesses to invest, those businesses have to obtain a return. It would seem that Labor Governments expect businesses to risk their money by investing in economies that are not viable simply out of the goodness of their hearts rather than on the basis of commercial reality, and that somehow, if the Premier of this State jumps up and down and goes to the media and says, "It is not my fault that the business community is not investing and that is why we have high levels of unemployment", people should rush out because the Premier says so. It is just too dangerous and too risky to invest under the present regulatory and taxation systems.

I wish to quote Gay Burton of the Australian Small Business Association, Queensland Branch, who wrote an open letter on 10 February this year. The letter states—

"More than half the time and money of a small business operator goes into servicing the bureaucracy."

She also went on to cite a *Bulletin* article, which states—

"Bankrupts look to Canberra."

She clearly and concisely pours the blame for this country's present economic malaise and business bankruptcies squarely into the Federal Government's lap because of its regulations and inappropriate taxation system.

Anyone who has had a manufacturing business would know that the wholesale sales tax would have to be the most unfair, arbitrary, clumsy, irresponsible, unwieldy, tragic and ad hoc tax that has ever been imposed in any country in the world. It is basically a tax at wholesale on the last wholesale sale of items specified as being manufactured. But the question is: what is a wholesale sale? When is the last wholesale sale? What happens when someone manufactures and retails? When is the wholesale sale? When is something not manufactured and when is something manufactured? If someone puts an accessory on a car, is that manufacturing or is it not? If the airconditioning is fitted by the car manufacturer, the fitting is sales taxable. If the airconditioning is installed as an after-market accessory by a third party, it is not taxable. Where is the equity and the fairness in that?

The whole system stinks. The quicker we get rid of it, the better. One needs only to talk to people in manufacturing industry and they will say that sales tax is an unknown because it comes down purely to an interpretation. To be able to fight the interpretation of the Taxation Office is beyond the means and capability of most small businesses, so they have to cop it. They have to cop it and, quite often, copping it means either paying out a great deal of money—tens of thousands of dollars, and even more in many

cases—or facing bankruptcy, which happens all too often. That is the legacy of a tax system that belongs in the last century. The goods and services tax has very few exemptions. It is on every value added through the system. It is on goods and services across-the-board, with a few minor exceptions. It is straightforward. It is all imposed at the same rate, not at four different rates as is the case with the present wholesale sales tax.

We then move on to the payroll tax. People with payrolls of approximately \$700,000 or \$800,000 may not consider themselves to be small businesses. However, in high-tech industries—hopefully, the future of Queensland—it is not unusual to have employees, when allowing for labour oncosts, being paid \$50,000, \$60,000 or \$70,000 a year. When we talk about a payroll of \$700,000, if we allow for the owners of the business, we are talking about only seven or eight employees. That is certainly not a large business. Anything over that size is subject to payroll tax—a tax directly on employment. It is an input tax and it is a tax that is not rebatable. It is not removed if a business is exporting or supplying to exempt bodies. That tax remains, but it is paid by—

Mr Bredhauer: It's not paid by 90 per cent of business.

Mr CONNOR: That tax falls on about 70 per cent of people who are employed. That tax remains, no matter what. The Fightback package removes that tax. However, this Government wants to support a tax system that keeps a tax on employment. It is an unemployment tax. All that it does is stop small employers putting on extra staff that will put them over the threshold. When a person has maybe 10 or 11 employees, does not have to fill in all the forms to pay payroll tax and does not have inspectors around, that person does not feel particularly inclined to put on that extra person who will force the business into that tax category and thus that extra paperwork. As we know, it would only take every small business in Australia to put on one extra staff member to get rid of our unemployment problem. But, in many cases, as a result of payroll tax that one extra staff member is not being put on.

We then move on to the training levy—another tax earmarked for the chop under the Fightback package. The Treasurer might be particularly interested in this. The training levy is a 2 per cent tax that is levied on businesses with payrolls of \$200,000 or more—certainly not big businesses. It is supposed to be a training guarantee scheme, but the Government's own journal, issued by the Queensland Small Business Corporation, headed "The State of Small Business 1992" states—

"It seems that the training scheme is providing little incentive for the majority of small businesses to make expenditure on training and is therefore an ineffective method of encouraging increased training implementation in the small business sector."

So here we have effectively a Federal payroll tax under another name—a 2 per cent tax based on payrolls at a much lower level. People are not doing the training. They are paying the tax. According to the Bureau of Industry Economics, 30 per cent of small business employees fall into that net. According to figures from the Australian Small Business Corporation, that means that more than 134 000 employees—I repeat, 134 000 employees—of small business in Queensland alone are subject to the training levy, and that does not include employees working in large businesses that employ more than 20 employees. According to the Australian Taxation Office, as reported in the QSBC journal, the majority of small businesses are opting to pay the tax rather than to spend the money on training. It means that quite small businesses are subject to the scheme, and many of them are paying it as a new tax—a new payroll-based tax. That 2 per cent on payrolls equates to a minimum of \$4,000 for each business, plus the paperwork to administer it. It is just one more reason that small business is not putting on that one extra employee.

The Federal Government has secretly introduced a Federal payroll tax under another name that picks up many small businesses and their employees. That multitude of taxes and charges compounds and weighs on the shoulders of every small

businessman in Australia, and that weight has reached the stage at which only a few very fit, very downtrodden small businesses can still handle it. They are quickly fading and wondering whether it is worth while carrying on under that burden of taxes and regulations. All we ever hear from this Government is more of the same—another excuse and another tax to put on business. The Fightback package is the only hope that business has. Until we get some of the regulatory and tax burden off business, we will not get our unemployment problem under control.

The proof that the GST does work is New Zealand. I might add that that tax was introduced by a Labor Government. In a little over 12 months, a conservative Government has turned around New Zealand's current account deficit. It is now running in surplus. New Zealand's currency is starting to harden up. Its stock market is booming. New Zealand is doing far better than Australia. The tough decisions had to be made. Until we make those tough decisions, it will be more of the same—more unemployment, more stagnation and more business and personal bankruptcies. If we really want to get Australia working again, the Fightback package is our only choice.

Mr DOLLIN (Maryborough) (9.22 p.m.): It is with pleasure that I rise to speak in the Address in Reply debate. I extend to Her Excellency my congratulations on her appointment to her high office. As other speakers have done, I pledge my loyalty and that of my constituents to Her Majesty and her representatives. I am honoured to be re-elected to represent the people of the Maryborough electorate. I pledge to my constituents that I will do all that is in my power to represent them in this House without fear or favour. I will do my best to maintain the phenomenal economic growth that has taken place in Maryborough and Wide Bay, and in particular in the electorate of Maryborough, over the last three years. It must come as a great surprise to Opposition members, who continually over the last three years predicted doom and gloom for this region, to hear that it is now leading Australia in job creation, with 13 300 new jobs being created since October 1991. This represents a massive 18.2 per cent jump in the region's employment. This has been achieved before the Budget stimulus of \$3.3 billion for capital works is taken into consideration, backed by the \$150m jobs plan financed by the tobacco tax which has not had time to filter fully into the economy of our region.

When the Government implemented the Fitzgerald recommendations to stop logging on Fraser Island a little over 12 months ago, the Nationals and the Liberals wore a track to Maryborough and Hervey Bay spreading their scaremongering and doom and gloom in a desperate bid to win back the Maryborough and Hervey Bay electorates. But what a slap in the face the citizens handed out to them. My margin increased by 150 per cent to the biggest margin held by any politician for Maryborough in the last 30 years. My good neighbour, the first member for Hervey Bay, Bill Nunn, increased his margin by a massive 600 per cent. This result proves that the citizens of the region saw through the half-truths and the scaremongering tactics employed by the Opposition and have put their faith in the Goss Labor Government, which goes to prove that they are intelligent people. Under the Nationals and Liberals, the Maryborough economy was slowly but surely diminishing. Growth was static, as was the population. Industries were sluggish and unemployment was amongst the highest in Australia at 12 per cent and at that time was double the national average.

The latest figures show that Maryborough's unemployment rate has fallen from 12 per cent in 1989 to 9.5 per cent today. Considering the tough economic climate which exists today, these are remarkable figures and prove that the good economic management applied by the Goss Labor Government has won out in spite of the concerted attack and scaremongering that the Opposition carried out in this region over the last three years. The Queensland Government's \$38m long-term growth and development package that was put into place to provide compensation to affected workers within the timber industry and the general economy of the Wide Bay/Maryborough district has been a resounding success. All workers have found alternative jobs and in most cases they are more interesting and financially rewarding than the positions they held previously. They have put their compensation money to

good use, either purchasing a home or paying off mortgages on their homes, or replacing their family car, and that has turned out to be another boost to local business.

By and large, these workers have been placed in a better financial job situation than is the case with the mates they left behind. About the only complaints that I receive from mill employees these days are, "Why can't I be paid off? The fellows who got paid off are the lucky ones. They have better pay, more interesting jobs, money to pay their houses off or enough to put a deposit on one. I am stuck at the mill doing the same old thing day in, day out. I could certainly use \$30,000 to get my own house. I had my name down to take Gossie's package but the mill didn't pick me. What can you do about that for me?" This speaks volumes for the Government's growth and development package.

In 1991, I predicted that the Maryborough region was heading for a good 1992, and by and large that was the case. Walkers has very healthy forward orders worth \$178m, a record for that company. Some \$85m of that is represented by Queensland Rail orders. This augers well for many of the smaller engineering companies that subcontract to Walkers. The timber industry enjoyed a good year of trading, with Hyne and Sons extending its Tuan complex with a further \$3m expansion. Dale and Meyers and Wades Sawmills have also invested large sums in extending and upgrading their operations. Dale and Meyers is now the largest firm of treaters of hardwood in Australia, a great achievement for a small firm in a short period. It now employs about 35 people. It is a firm that barely existed three years ago.

In spite of the droughts and floods, the sugar industry ended up with a bumper crop, 100 000 tonnes above last year's crop. World sugar prices are still too low to allow a reasonable return. The Federal Government's decision to maintain the \$55 per tonne tariff will give some heart to growers for the coming season. Cane farmers will mostly ignore Hewson's tariff promises as a bit of sugar coating on the bitter pill of GST and nil tariffs. Most agricultural pursuits in the region have enjoyed a reasonable year and, with good seasons and an end to corruption in world markets, have reasonable expectations for 1993.

Tiaro's \$1.7m aged persons' home, expected to be completed in about May 1994, is good news. Hervey Bay, Maryborough, Tiaro and Woocoo local authorities have all set record building figures this year, and I am confident that this will be carried on throughout 1993. The long-overdue coach terminal at the old Maryborough Railway Station is now a reality. The Nationals had talked about and promised that for 10 years. Maryborough now enjoys one of the lowest unemployment levels in Queensland, although it is still too high. That is something of which Maryborough can be very proud.

The \$32m Fraser Island growth and development package, involving compensation for the timber industry and the re-employment of workers, has been satisfactorily concluded, and when the \$100m chipping operation to be conducted by Hyne and Partner commences at Owanyilla, the region will be at least 200 jobs better off than it was prior to the cessation of logging on Fraser Island. Maryborough and district are well and truly on the move. Further evidence as to how the Maryborough and Wide Bay region is growing is available. These are not my words but the words of the media in the region.

Mr Deputy Speaker, allow me to tell honourable members of the type of headline that is common in the *Maryborough Chronicle* these days. On 7 August, the front-page headline read "Export bonanza". The article stated that the owner of Maryborough Pottery and Tiles, Curlie Tatnell, said—

" . . . the future looks very bright, we are exporting our products to Vanuatu, P.N.G., New Caledonia, New Zealand, NSW and most other states. The future has never looked brighter. We have expanded in big leaps and bounds, throughout the recession and it's a bit frightening to think how we might expand when the economy improves."

On 8 August, the front page read—

"The Premier said in Maryborough today a \$400,000 program of workplace reform is set to make Walkers Limited a world renowned leader in heavy engineering into the 21st century. Walker General Manager Mr Roy Hardy said the firm's consultative committee and unions worked hard to secure the \$400,000 grant for Walkers, one of only 25 handed out from a field of more than 230 contenders throughout Australia. Mr Hardy described the program as one of the most important steps in the history of Maryborough as it would assure the company's future.

The Premier said Walkers Limited, already one of Queensland's best heavy engineering operations, was now gearing up to take on the rest of the world. Their selection under this program as well as winning the \$80 million Queensland Rail contract, the \$20 million Thai Sugar Mill contract and their own \$6.2 million upgrading announced earlier this year."

This is good news for Maryborough. It means economic growth and it means jobs for workers and security for their families. The third page of the same newspaper had the headline, "Timber growth soaring". It stated—

"Phenomenal growth in Hyne and Son's timber operations has made Maryborough one of Australia's biggest timber producing areas. The city has shrugged off the loss of the Fraser Island logging industry and has emerged as a major production rival to the large timber towns in New South Wales and Victoria.

Mr Warren Hyne took the Premier through his company's massive state of the art operations at Tuan, which will provide direct employment at Tuan for about 100 people later this year, when Stage 3 comes on line. Another 80 jobs will be provided when a new chip mill plant at Owanyilla starts production.

Mr Hyne told the Premier that in 1984—its first year—his company processed 23 000 cubic metres of plantation pine. This has increased to 175 000 cubic metres this year, putting the company way ahead of its target for 1995 of 225 000 cubic metres. 'We used to take 11 000 cubic metres off Fraser Island a year.'

On 13 August 1992, the front page of the *Chronicle* stated—

"Eurong Resort owners Sid Melksham and Angela Burger are owners of the MV Islander, the biggest whale watching boat in the Hervey Bay fleet. The 30.5 metre oceangoing catamaran valued at \$1.5m has undergone a total refit and will carry 276 passengers for whale watching."

On August 17 1992, the front page of the *Chronicle* stated—

"Development company chairman Mr Michael Hackett fought back tears of pride and joy when Premier Wayne Goss opened the multi-million dollar resort and village on Fraser Island."

During its peak of construction, the Kingfisher resort employed 350 people and now has a permanent work force of 150 people. The \$60m first stage includes a 150-room hotel and 50 residential villages. The total completion cost of the project is \$150m. The project will generate 350 full-time jobs. I strongly recommend that resort to members of this House when they take their next holidays. The Maryborough/Hervey Bay region is not just on the move; it is bolting. The articles to which I have referred have appeared in the Maryborough *Chronicle* over a one-month period. This month's reported total project value was \$326m, and all the projects have ongoing developments planned which are worth many more millions.

My good neighbour the member for Hervey Bay, Bill Nunn, and myself, as member for Maryborough, have in conjunction with the Government and private enterprise put our region back on the map. There is only one dark cloud on the horizon—one guess for what that is. What will Dr Hewson and company do to our region if elected? I find it hard to understand how the Queensland National Party, which claims to support farmers and small business, could possibly support a policy such as Fightback, which literally kicks

the guts out of workers, family farmers, small business and pensioners. Allow me to point out what a sham this Fightback package is. The package boasts the following—

1. Wholesale sales tax abolished. Wholesale sales tax does not apply to most primary producer purchases. Most food lines are exempt.
2. Petroleum tax abolished. Farmers do not pay excise on diesel fuel now. A worker or a pensioner may save 20c in fuel costs driving to and from the supermarket, but would lose that amount on the first item purchased.
3. Payroll tax abolished. Workers and pensioners, the family-owned farm and small business do not pay payroll tax. Only employers which pay in excess of \$600,000 per annum pay this tax.
4. Lump sum superannuation tax abolished. This will save nothing for workers, pensioners, farmers and small business.
5. Training guarantee levy abolished. This will not assist farmers, small business or pensioners. However, it will bring about a less skilled work force.
6. Customs duties to be abolished. Fightback claims that Australian business will become more efficient and both local and imported goods will become cheaper, and that means more jobs.

I wonder how the farmers like that one. What a joke! We know quite well that this will ruin our primary producers and cost thousands of jobs in industry. I advise my constituents not to fall for the bit of sugar coating that Dr Hewson is putting on his GST. If he is elected, he will dish it out, just like he said he would at the beginning, and that goes for tariffs, too. The package also includes—

7. Coal export duty abolished. That will lose the Treasury about \$50m and will have to be replaced. It will not assist farmers, pensioners, workers or small business.

GST means that people pay 15 per cent on just about all goods and services they purchase, such as all but the most basic food, clothes, health services, car repairs, washing machines, fridges, holidays, sporting equipment, entertainment, beer and just about anything else one can imagine purchasing. It will all have a 15 per cent tax added.

The members of the National Party should hide their faces in shame for supporting such a policy. The Liberal Party has sold them a pup, and I think that they will soon find out that this pup is a mongrel. Within three months of Hewson being elected, if he is, that pup will turn and tear the heels off members opposite. Their voice in a Hewson Government will be about as loud as that of Minnie Mouse. It will not be heard. Dr Hewson will dish up the works once he is elected. Members opposite are helping him to be elected, and I believe that they are all a bit worried about it. I do not believe that one member opposite would really like to see the GST implemented. I think they all know in the back of their minds that this is probably the only hope that a coalition has of being elected. However, the GST will tear the backsides off members opposite and they will not be re-elected for another 10 years. We need this extra tax like we need a hole in the head. This is Robin Hood in reverse: robbing the battlers to help the rich.

In addition, under the Fightback package, the Liberal and National Parties will cut widow's support when the youngest child reaches 12 years of age. The result will be that Mum goes out to work and the child is left at home alone. Members opposite refer to people on the streets. What will happen to such children? Irrespective of Hewson's statements, after nine months unemployed people will be cut off unemployment benefits. If they do not attain a job, they will be forced to work for 10 per cent to 20 per cent less than the award rate. Members opposite look forward to having \$3 an hour servants. Everyone under 21 years of age will work for \$114 or \$133 per week. That is a slave wage. Unscrupulous employers will have a field day. They will turn staff over every month, and guess how many young people will be sacked the day they turn 21. What will happen to the 22, 23, 24 and 25-year-olds who have taken out mortgages? They will be sacked. The coalition will provide no age pension for women under 65 years of age.

This is turning the clock back 55 years. The Labor Government reduced the pension age in 1910, so that is winding the clock back a bit! Why pick on old women? The truth is that the Opposition is not game to pick on the young ones. That means that under the Opposition's policy, a 59-year old lady has to wait a further six years until she can retire. Remember, support for the coalition is support for the GST and the complete abolition of tariffs on imports. It is plain to see that the GST will cost the workers, the battling farmers and small business. It will benefit only the Mr Bigs and the multinational importers. They will make a fortune.

I would like to explain a few facts about the hardships that the average Aussie worker will have to endure as a result of Hewson's health policies. Under Fightback, doctors will do very well indeed; their pay will double. According to Australian National University senior lecturer Dr Deebie, approximately 70 per cent of ordinary Australians will pay more for health care. Under the Federal coalition's health policy, overall health costs will increase by \$1.42 billion, of which \$1 billion will go directly to doctors. Honourable members can now see why the AMA is supporting Hewson. This would leave the rich richer and the poor worse off. Dr Deebie described the health policy contained in Fightback as looking backward and being extraordinarily generous towards doctors. The \$1.42 billion increase would come from higher medical fees—\$750m; the shift to private insurance—\$300m; and administrative costs—\$360m.

An honourable member: Take from the needy and give to the greedy.

Mr DOLLIN: That is right. Under Fightback, bulk-billing will be abolished for all but health card holders. Medical benefits will be reduced from 85 per cent to 75 per cent of the schedule fee. It is worth noting that the AMA State President, Dr Graham Row, told an association of independent retirees meeting on the Sunshine Coast that doctors with an inflated sense of their own importance charged excessively for some services. I know that this is certainly the case in Maryborough. Dr Row stated that doctors in this category were an exception, and that the profession was working hard to improve its image by removing the bad apples from the health industry. All I can say is that I wish him good luck.

Hewson's Fightback will mean that there will be no restrictions on what doctors can charge. Doctors will be able to charge what they feel like charging instead of the AMA recommended fee, which for a visit to a GP is currently \$31. Under Medicare, the rebate on that fee is \$23.50. Most doctors in Maryborough already charge more than that amount, except in the case of health card holders. The rebate from Medicare would be cut from 85 per cent to 75 per cent. In the case of a consultation with a general practitioner costing \$31, Medicare would provide a rebate of only \$17.62, compared with no cost at all under the present system if the doctor bulk bills. Currently, gap insurance is available only for medical services for private patients in hospitals. Hewson's Fightback policy allows the purchase of extra insurance to cover the gap between the reduced Medicare rebate and 75 per cent of fees charged up to the AMA schedule for out-of-hospital services.

Under Fightback, families would have three choices. They could pay \$31 up front for each visit to a GP and receive a reduced rebate of only \$17.62 from Medicare. If they could afford it, families could pay extra gap insurance of approximately \$6 per week—\$300 a year—plus \$31 up front for each visit to a GP and receive only \$17.62 from Medicare and approximately \$8.70 in the form of gap insurance. The final choice for families would be to go without medical care. Unfortunately, I believe that is what many workers would have to do. Dr Hewson's Fightback policy would slash \$1.3 billion from health care, which would result in the closure of Queensland's free hospitals. Under Fightback, doctors would be wealthier, the rich would be healthier and the average Aussie battler would become sicker because he would not be able to afford the \$2,300 a year that health insurance would cost him.

We hear much about the waiting lists at public hospitals. Those waiting lists are connived and controlled by specialists. They simply keep putting public patients back down at the bottom of the list while they utilise the public facilities to make money from

private patients. Currently, the criteria that the specialists are applying to patients at Maryborough Base Hospital is that if they need an operation that is not life-threatening and they are public patients without health cover and have not got the financial resources to meet the cost of the care needed, they will have to wait between 6 and 18 months, or even longer. On the other hand, if patients have the money, they may be cared for within a few weeks, at the worst.

Does the member for Toowoomba North condone this type of practice? Does he realise that that is what is creating the elective surgery waiting lists? I know that that is the case in Maryborough, and I am very suspicious that it is probably the case throughout Queensland. I see this as the worst kind of discrimination, for it is discrimination without principle or moral. A decision is made for the treatment of a person on a cash basis. Surely this is not in the spirit of the hippocratic oath. I believe that specialists who act in this way would not be fit to walk on the same ground as the late Fred Hollows. I know for a fact that the specialists are the culprits. They are using people's pain and agony either for their own political agendas or to fatten their own purses.

Mr GRICE (Broadwater) (9.43 p.m.) The people of Queensland should be made aware of the real attitudes of leading State Labor figures towards the Prime Minister, Paul Keating. If Keating somehow survives his date with the executioner on 13 March, heaven help the State of Queensland. Every leading figure in the Labor movement in this State backed the wrong horse when Keating assassinated his leader for the top job. Keating will not forgive them for that. Queensland will pay dearly for Labor's faction troubles if Keating stays in the Lodge. The list of people who vilified Keating at that time reads like a who's who of Queensland Labor. There is Wayne Goss, the Premier, who was put into the leadership by the unholy alliance of the AWU and the Socialist Left. Since they helped him to do over the then Opposition Leader, Nev Warburton, he has not been game to make a move without checking with his masters. There is Wayne Swan, the AWU's choice to lead the State ALP organisation, and the current candidate for the Federal seat of Lilley. There is Ian McLean, the Socialist Left boss, ALP State president and Labor Senate candidate. There is Tom Burns, the Deputy Premier and former ALP Federal president. In 1970, he conducted a very interesting investigation and reported that Paul Keating had cheated his way to the ALP nomination for his seat. All four men are now begging Queenslanders to vote for Paul Keating. They are asking us to trust our destiny to a man whom they hated like sin just over a year ago.

Another top ALP player in this hypocritical group is the Australian Workers Union boss, Bill Ludwig. He is the standover artist whom the *Courier-Mail* profiled on 26 June 1991. The heading on that story read "Loyalty, According to 'Godfather' Ludwig". The union boss takes his role of ALP king-maker very seriously, according to the coverage he has had in the media over a couple of his comments during the Prime Ministerial bloodbath. I want the people of Queensland to understand that that man was not content with ruling Wayne Goss and the party's campaign director, Wayne Swan. He also figured that he was entitled to decide who would be Prime Minister of Australia. I got it wrong. I always thought that it was a matter for the people of Australia to decide that on election day.

When Ludwig decided that Keating might be getting a bit close to the top job, he stepped in in the only way that an old union heavy knows; he came the bounce. Jamie Walker reported on a dinner that Ludwig held in Canberra with five of the six ALP Federal members owing their political lives to Ludwig. On 26 October 1991, in the *Australian*, Walker reported the dinner this way—

"This is what Ludwig told them: anyone who thought they could get away with knocking off Hawke was wrong. Dead wrong. Keating, he said, was on the nose with Labor's rank and file in general and the AWU in particular. Neither would have him in the lodge."

He said that neither the ALP rank and file nor the AWU would have Paul Keating in the Lodge. Walker's story continued—

"It was no accident that Ludwig brought out the big stick when the ABC's Kerry O'Brien got into him at the end of the night. On his Lateline program, O'Brien quoted Ludwig as saying that Keating's supporters would expect no mercy. They would either 'die', be 'slaughtered by their own people' or face some 'personal visits'.

It was a crude, if instructive example of the influence Ludwig can exert from the AWU's northern stronghold, where he wears two hats as State Secretary and Federal Union President."

Of course, the Queensland Right kept the faith with Ludwig and Hawke, delivering eight crucial votes on the first occasion that Hawke turned back the challenge. Forgetting Ludwig's strongarm tactics for a moment, it is hard to fault his logic in opposing the Keating coup. After seeing both Hawke and Keating at the ALP centenary celebrations in Barcaldine in May 1992, Ludwig was quoted as saying—and I ask honourable members to listen to this—

"You know, people just queued up to get Hawke's photograph and autograph. His staff couldn't keep him to his schedule. The comparison with Keating is that people just sort of said 'hello Paul', and the meeting just sort of drifted; it just came to an end. With Hawke, you just take him anywhere and there's always a tremendous response. That says something to me."

Of course, Ludwig was saying that Paul Keating has to bear the blame for the current depression facing this country. He must bear the blame for one million unemployed people.

Mr Ardill: What rubbish! He didn't say that at all.

Mr GRICE: The honourable member is wrong.

Mrs Edmond: Hewson says Fraser's economic policy was to blame. You should read the *Business Review Weekly*. Hewson says Fraser and his economic policies are to blame.

Mr Lingard interjected.

Mr GRICE: I am interested to hear the interjection of the member for Beaudesert. His last comment was something about too many car fumes. I sit well to the right of the honourable member for Mount Coot-tha, and I assure members that any fumes around here are not from cars.

Mr Ludwig stated that Mr Keating must bear the major blame for Labor's actions in turning Australian industry into a wasteland. He was right. Few people would accept Keating. How strange that Ludwig's power base, the Australian Workers Union, now pours its members' money into trying yet again to foist Keating on Australia. We have to wonder how long Queensland can survive with a Premier taking his orders from a man who is prepared to switch sides just like that. He was prepared to back a Labor leader he regarded as unworthy of his backing such a short time ago.

A few minutes ago, I mentioned the attitude taken by the Deputy Premier to Keating. People might not remember this, but Mr Burns was once a big man in the Australian Labor Party. Back in the seventies, Mr Burns was the Federal president of that organisation. He played a big part in giving us another disastrous Prime Minister, Gough Whitlam, the man who started the rot in the Australian economy. Let us remember that Whitlam torpedoed Australia, Fraser would not save it, Hawke sunk it, and Keating is picking off the survivors who are swimming for the lifeboats. Some pretty unsavoury things happened in the ALP when the party came to select candidates for the 1969 Federal election. One of them was the selection of Paul Keating to stand for the seat of Blaxland, which he won at the October 1969 general election. The ALP was rocked by allegations of actions amounting to ballot rigging. It fell to the Federal president to investigate them on behalf of the ALP federal executive.

Mr Burns has the reputation of being pretty straight, and he could not hide his disgust at the way in which that and other preselections were conducted. He told the

federal executive that, contrary to the rules, 27 Keating supporters had been admitted to one branch. It is interesting to note that Keating won the preselection to that very safe ALP seat by the margin of just 21 votes. In his report, Mr Burns went on to talk about branch stacking and sacking, a contempt for proper financial procedures and a denial of members' rights. Mr Burns said—

“As some of these people are now Federal members of Parliament, these actions must assume importance in the eyes of the federal executive.”

He was dead right. In fact, they should assume importance in the eyes of every Australian. Here is a man who connived his way into a safe seat in the Federal Parliament, wrecked the Australian economy, knocked off his leader to become an unelected Prime Minister without a mandate, and then has the hide to demand loyalty from every ALP member and unionist to get a term of his own.

Mr Randell interjected.

Mr GRICE: Always a front for the ACTU. Give Mr Burns his due. He opposed Keating's knife in the back for Hawke. Late in 1991, Tom Burns spoke out strongly against the Keating challenge, warning the former Treasurer to back off or face discipline by the national executive. His call was backed strongly by Socialist Left State president, Ian McLean, getting in a lick on the old factional enemy, the New South Wales Right machine. Mr McLean said that Keating's numbers man, Senator Richardson, and the New South Wales Right were only interested in getting Mr Keating into the Lodge, which would be a disaster nationally for the ALP. On 7 November 1991, Mr Burns told the Brisbane *Sun* that Keating and his supporters were not interested in the good of the ALP, only their own ambitions. On the *AM* radio program that day, he had this to say—

“All those people rushing out to defend Keating now know that the New South Wales Right junta have made up their mind to destroy the Government if they can't get the leadership. It's about time someone told them straight we're sick of it.”

That was too much for Keating's numbers man, Graham Richardson, who bit back. Guess what Mr Tom Burns' response was? He pulled himself to the heights of his oratory powers and called Richardson “a slimy mongrel”—obviously taking lessons from Keating, who is renowned for the pleasant way in which he talks to his opponents. Then it got serious. We had a warning from the Deputy Premier that he could talk about what he called “cemetery votes” from a certain preselection. That worked. The Keating people backed off Burns. But the people of Queensland and Australia are still waiting for the revelations about the dirty deals that gave us our worst ever Prime Minister. I challenge the Deputy Premier to bring forward his evidence. Beyond that, I challenge him to dump Keating, the man he decided in 1970 should not even be in Parliament, let alone Prime Minister. If he is game to do that, I suggest he might like to leave town before Keating catches up with him. He should recall the words of Neville Wran, who described Keating this way to a biographer—

A Government member interjected.

Mr GRICE: I am talking about the history of the Labor Party. The honourable member should be interested in this. Wran described Keating this way—

“He is struck out of flintstone and he wants to succeed all the time and he doesn't like people to cross him, in the sense of impeding him in achieving his goals. Those who have had the misfortune to do so and be identified have always got to keep looking over their shoulder thereafter.”

The same warning should be heeded by any Queenslanders who might consider returning Keating to the Lodge. He has identified Burns, Goss, Swan, Ludwig and McLean. In the best New South Wales Right traditions, he will have his revenge.

Honourable members should ask Peter Baldwin what happens to anyone who crosses the New South Wales Right. I think he can talk again. I think his face has healed

and his head is right again. Keating knows that those people run Queensland for the time being, and we will all suffer. How foolish were they to get the odds so wrong a year ago and 18 months ago? Their silly factional games are set to rebound on every Queenslander if Keating gets his hands back on the leavers. How silly was young Mr Swan to throw one of his silliest one-liners at the ALP State conference in June 1991. He said there would be "no point in my being campaign director if we go to the next Federal election with Keating as leader". The same Mr Swan is now running around Lilley trying to be elected as one of Mr Keating's loyal backbenchers. The trouble is that he is ashamed to let the voters think he is Labor all the way. As the papers tell us, there is a bit of a shortage of red ink where he has his printing done—it is often blue. Can it be that Mr Swan still holds to his view that Mr Keating is unsaleable? He certainly backed McLean and Tom Burns when they made their November 1991 outbursts. He was happy then to say that there was no person in politics more qualified to make a statement concerning the party than Mr Tom Burns. He said, "Tom has put the national interest before any personal interests, and I back his responses." If he honestly believed in 1991 that Keating was the disaster he painted him to be, he should stand up now and promise the people of Lilley he would roll his leader if he got to Canberra.

Mr Swan's mate, the Premier, got caught up in the anti-Keating enthusiasm, too, and yelped with the rest of Bill Ludwig's pack. He took a bit of a back seat compared with his mentor, and must now regret he went even as far as he did. Now he has to stand up and tug the forelock of a man he despised only a few short months ago. Remember how desperate he was to keep the Prime Minister out of Queensland during the State election campaign. The Premier is so embarrassed about throwing in his lot with Keating that he had to use taxpayers' money to run off to the south to do his campaigning. He probably looked about as uncomfortable then as he did last night on the *7.30 Report* when he ducked and weaved about media manipulation.

The Premier has already had an indication of what Mr Keating thinks of Queensland's leading Labor figures. He realises they are easybeats. That is plain from the Ministry sworn in with him before Bob Hawke's blood had even dried on the caucus room carpet. What did Queensland get out of its caucus members jumping the fence? A seat in the inner Cabinet? A few token faces in the outer Ministry? Nothing! Keating knew he had the wood on the has-beens and the never-will-bes. He gave them nothing, and Goss genuflected. When the *Australian* tackled him about the State's treatment at Keating's hands, here is all the Premier could come up with—

"I want to make it plain that I think all this talk about payback or revenge is quite baseless . . ."

He followed that with a pitiful plea—

"It's something that we'd like to see resolved sooner rather than later."

Queenslanders deserve straight answers from the Premier and his henchmen on where they stand with Paul Keating. They deserve to be told why those people have jumped the fence after their hysterical attacks on Mr Keating in 1991. They deserve to be told why the State Labor Party is supporting a man they held in fear and loathed such a short time ago—a man they were convinced would be an electoral disaster for the Labor Party. Is it not ironic that the first thoughts of this Labor mob were correct, and Keating will lead them to a major defeat on 13 March?

Mrs WOODGATE (Kurwongbah) (9.59 p.m.): After that, the mind boggles. I, too, am grateful for the opportunity to participate in this Address in Reply debate as the first member to represent the new seat of Kurwongbah in this House. It is almost three years since I was privileged to speak in the Address in Reply debate when I delivered my maiden speech as the member for Pine Rivers. I believe it is opportune to look back over the last three years to see how we in Kurwongbah have travelled—to see, if you like, whether any of my hopes that I expressed in that maiden speech have been realised. Well, it is no news to honourable members in this place that we had a change of State boundaries with the redistribution. I did make particular reference to the State gerrymandered boundaries when I spoke for the first time on 7 March 1990, and we now

have in place in this State fair boundaries drawn up by EARC. My old electorate of Pine Rivers disappeared. A new electorate was formed, reduced in numbers and area. I was sad to lose areas such as Albany Creek, Mount Nebo, Mount Glorious and Samford, and the surrounding valleys, Closeburn, Highvale and Camp Mountain. I lost them to the electorates of Everton and Ferny Grove. The new seat of Kurwongbah gained the urban areas of Lawnton, Petrie and French's Forest and the semi-rural Kurwongbah from Murrumba and Caboolture, and I am more than pleased to be their new representative in this place.

I turn briefly to the name Kurwongbah. I find that most people not resident in my electorate not only ask me where it is, they also ask me what it is. Well, let me tell them. It takes its name from Lake Kurwongbah, which provides the people of the Pine Rivers Shire with water—soon to be a tax-gathering measure if the Opposition's hopes are realised, but I do not believe that will happen. Lake Kurwongbah is one of the most beautiful areas in Pine Rivers, and I recommend a Sunday drive for people from Brisbane to come along and see first hand the lake and its beautiful surrounds. It is situated along Dayboro Road between Petrie and Dayboro.

I remember speaking in my maiden speech about the need for an increased police presence in my electorate. I am happy to report that the new you-beaut police station at Petrie is nearing completion. Staff numbers have been increased at the Petrie Police Station, and we now have more police patrol cars around our suburbs during the night hours. I am also hopeful that a police shopfront will be established later this year in the Westfield Shoppingtown at Strathpine.

I am also happy to report that the lack of transport in my electorate, to which I made reference in my maiden speech, has been taken in hand by the Minister and the Department of Transport. The South-east Queensland Passenger Transport Study was commenced early in the Goss Government's first term, and we now have increased bus services to the city and connections to railway stations. Upon the election of a Labor Brisbane City Council in March 1991, Lord Mayor Jim Soorley, at my instigation, commissioned a study into the possibility of extending Brisbane City Council express bus services from Albany Creek to and from the city.

The schools in my electorate have not been neglected during my first term. Mr Paul Braddy, as the then Minister for Education, and Mr Ron McLean, as the Minister for Administrative Services, were regular visitors to my electorate and were always available to discuss with me any problems I had or answer any queries that arose from time to time. My schools still continue to reap the benefit of a Government that listens, a Government that cares. Just last week, the Deputy Premier and Minister for Administrative Services, Tom Burns, visited some schools in my electorate to see first hand just what improvements are planned at the schools with the funding that has been allocated to them from the receipts of the tobacco tax. Let me just give honourable members some examples of what schools in my electorate will be receiving this year under the schools refurbishment program: Bray Park High School is to receive \$15,000; Dayboro State School, \$50,000; Petrie State School, \$26,000; Kurwongbah State School, \$51,000; Strathpine West State School, \$17,000. These are just some of the funds coming the way of schools throughout Queensland under the schools refurbishment program.

I found it pleasing that, with the allocation of the funds to the schools, I was able to speak with the p. and c. associations of each school to see if they agreed with the works being undertaken with the funds provided, and if they were able to say that there were other priorities that they considered should take precedence over those outlined by the Minister and the department. In some cases, the p. and c. associations and the principals did suggest other areas of concern where they thought the money would be better expended. After the Minister's visit to Kurwongbah school and Dayboro State Primary School, the p. and c. associations have indicated to me their appreciation of the hands-on interest being shown by Minister Tom Burns, and I thank him most sincerely for that.

One other outcome of the State redistribution is that the Kurwongbah electorate now lies completely within the new Federal seat of Dickson, whereas previously my old electorate of Pine Rivers was represented federally by three MPs, with Gary Johns in Petrie, John Moore in Ryan and Michael Lavarch in Fisher. Whereas the most satisfying result in the September State election seemed to indicate that people were more than pleased with the way things were going and being handled by the Goss Labor Government in Queensland—and I hope also by their local State representative in Kurwongbah—I am happy to report that Mr Michael Lavarch, the present Australian Labor Party Federal member for Fisher and soon to be Federal member for Dickson, has given excellent Federal representation to my constituents over the past six years. When Michael Lavarch captured the seat of Fisher from the National Party's Peter Slipper in 1987—that is the same Peter Slipper who ratted and is now running for the Liberals up in Fisher—

Mr BEATTIE: That is the third time.

Mrs WOODGATE: It is the third time. The electorate of Fisher has the infamous record of being the only Federal electorate in Queensland without a social security office within its boundaries. Within weeks of Mr Lavarch becoming the member, he had made representations with the then Social Security Minister, Brian Howe, pointing out the neglect by the previous National Party member and the seriousness of the situation. Needless to say, it was not long before a social security office was established at Caboolture. Further good news is that an office has been approved to be built at Strathpine later this year. During Michael Lavarch's term, we have had massive increases in the number of child care places in Pine Rivers, in the family day care scheme administered by the Pine Rivers Shire Council. As well, there has been an increase in the number of private child care centres being built since fee relief was extended to private centres. The changes announced by Prime Minister Keating last week will encourage more private centres to be built.

We have seen over Michael Lavarch's time as our Federal member massive increases in outside school hours care. We have had the Life Be In It scheme at Petrie, and a new after school care scheme at Lawnton is flourishing. A total of over \$2m in sporting grants to sporting bodies in the electorate has been received over the past three years. There has been well over \$1m expended on the road funding program, the black spot program. A new regional office of the Department of Health, Housing and Community Services has been established at Strathpine and it will be officially opened later this year when Michael is the member for Dickson. Recently, we saw the establishment of a Marriage Guidance Queensland premise at Strathpine, fully funded by the Federal Government. We have also got two new aged hostels operating—Maranatha at Kallangur and Pine Woods at Strathpine. Yesterday, we were privileged to receive a visit from Prime Minister Keating to the aged hostel at Pine Woods at Strathpine and the residents gave him a rousing welcome. One of Michael's most satisfying achievements was the establishment of a new TAFE college at Caboolture. It cost \$12m, fully funded by the Feds, and we recently had our first graduates from this colleagues receiving their certificates from Michael Lavarch.

With a record of achievement like that, I am certain that Mr Michael Lavarch will be returned to office for another term on 13 March as the first member for Dickson. I am very pleased to have Michael Lavarch as one of my very close friends. We served together on the Pine Rivers Shire Council, and when Michael was successful in the 1987 Federal election, I became his electorate secretary. I can speak with first-hand experience of the dedication and hard work he brings to the job of Federal member. Michael and I have made a habit of meeting regularly over the last three years since I have been a State member to discuss issues of concern, both State and Federal, in a joint endeavour to give our constituents the best possible representation, State and Federal. Personally, I found it to be of great assistance to have a Federal member so readily available, enabling me to pass on concerns of a Federal nature that come my way from people visiting my office.

The main concern which appears to be coming across my desk lately, apart from massive concern about the effects of the GST, is people's dismay that the Federal coalition seems intent on wrecking Medicare as we know it. I have discussed this with Michael and I feel it is important to get the message across to those people out there in voter land who have not been made fully aware of the threat to our health system if the coalition happens to be successful on 13 March. The Australian Labor Party fought hard to finally establish Medicare—an affordable, universal health insurance system which treats all Australians equally. That is something unknown to people on the Opposition benches—equal treatment for all Australians. Medicare is now being threatened by the Federal coalition parties. The Fightback package promises to destroy Medicare purely for the benefit of vested interests such as private practitioners, private insurers and the private hospital industry. The health policy outlined in Fightback would undermine the social guarantees provided by Medicare. It would take Australia back to the days when access to health services was determined by ability to pay. Who can forget the Liberal years under Malcolm Fraser? I do not. Two million Australians simply could not afford private health insurance. All Australians now have health cover which Labor believes is their basic right. Fightback means the end of bulk-billing for more than 13 million Australians, a \$1.3 billion annual cut to the nation's public hospitals and a blow-out in the nation's health costs. Every Australian will pay significantly more for health care while losing many of the entitlements under Medicare.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Australia is one of the healthiest countries in the world. The health of Australians continues to improve, even though national spending on health has been maintained at around 8 per cent of GDP. These are not my figures; they are figures published according to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. The cornerstone of Australia's health-care system is Medicare—one of the most affordable and fairest health systems in the whole world. Every Australian is guaranteed access to fundamental medical and hospital services for no out-of-pocket costs, as well as necessary medicines under the pharmaceutical benefits scheme. Medicare has the support of more than 70 per cent of Australians. We saw in the last Federal Budget the improvement and strengthening of Medicare. The key is a guarantee of access to public hospitals on the basis of medical need, not insurance status or ability to pay.

The Keating Government is strongly committed to a strong and viable public hospital system and will invest an extra \$1.6 billion in that system over the next six years to improve the delivery of services. The Government is also committed to building strong community-based health services and will invest \$68m this financial year to enhance general practice. The Government wants to achieve a smooth transition from hospital to community-based care and also wants to improve linkages between health and aged-care services to better meet the needs of our ageing population. And all this can be achieved while controlling national expenditure on health through Medicare. The Liberal/Nationals, Fightback would shift the focus of health-care financing to the private sector and responsibility for health care to the individual. The coalition would subsidise private health insurance with a system of tax credits and penalties which will cost Australian taxpayers an extra \$1.4 billion each year. The Commonwealth already spends more than \$1.5 billion a year to subsidise private health insurance. That is something we do not hear a lot about from the people on the benches opposite. Medicare will be dismantled if they gain the Treasury benches. Bulk-billing will be abolished for all but 4 million pensioners, health-care card-holders and people with a disability. Even for them, there is no incentive for doctors to bulk bill. In fact, Fightback would introduce major financial incentives for doctors to refuse to bulk bill. Pensioners risk becoming the charity cases of the health system.

The proposed tax subsidies for older Australians will not pay for private hospital treatment without the patient incurring substantial out-of-pocket costs. Non-pensioner retirees would be hard hit by the abolition of bulk-billing, a compulsory co-payment for every GP visit, a cut in the Medicare rebate from 85 per cent to 75 per cent and the cost of private health insurance. As I said, more than 13 million Australians will be ineligible for bulk-billing. They will have to pay their doctors' bills up-front before claiming the rebate.

While doctors' fees are likely to rise to at least the floor price set by the AMA schedule, which is 30 per cent higher than the Medicare schedule, the Medicare rebate would be cut from 85 per cent to 75 per cent. Gap insurance would be allowed, but only to 85 per cent of the AMA schedule. Even with this gap insurance, a significant majority of Australians would face a compulsory co-payment of at least \$4.65 every time they visited their GP. Fightback will take Australia back to the days of a two-class health system—quality health care for the rich, and charity medicine for the welfare class. Fightback will remove the cost control mechanism and universal bulk-billing under Medicare, encouraging doctors to charge what they like. The main beneficiaries of Fightback will be doctors and specialists whose incomes will rise significantly. Australia would lose the convenience of low administration costs of Medicare to be replaced by reliance on the private health industry which has no ability to control health costs. Just as a by the bye, Mr Deputy Speaker, I am not speaking from a book or something put out by the Australian Labor Party. I am speaking from first-hand experience. I have a son who is a paediatrician. I speak constantly with him and his friends, and these are the thoughts coming through from the specialists with a heart and with a social justice conscience.

Fightback has the potential to blow out health costs by \$2 billion each year and add 0.7 per cent to the CPI as well as \$374m to the Federal deficit. It will move Australia closer to the market-driven American health-care system. Who wants that? They have got more than 100 million people who are underinsured and more than 37 million people who have no health insurance at all. People are out here at the moment studying our Medicare system. They think it is great. Why touch it?

Mr Ardill interjected.

Mrs WOODGATE: That is right, people in America are denied access to health services which all we Australians take for granted, and so we should. The more's the pity. Fightback's tax incentives would pay only for the purchase of basic cover, enough to change your status from a public to a private patient in a public hospital but not enough to pay for private hospital treatment without incurring substantial out-of-pocket expenses—something that the coalition has been very, very cagey not to bring out into the public arena. Fightback will fail in its stated aim of reducing waiting lists in public hospitals—no doubt about that whatsoever. It will cut at least \$1.3 billion in Commonwealth funding to public hospitals as well as 5 per cent from general revenue grants to the States. I will not have anyone telling me that is not going to hurt Queensland, because it is—there is no denying it. Public hospitals will face the uncertainty of greater reliance on private funding, while certainty of access to treatment would be sacrificed.

The Federal Labor Government has embraced a comprehensive agenda of structural reforms in hospitals to ensure a viable system into the next century. These reforms are being paid for by an increase in the Medicare levy of 80c a week for your average family. That is not a lot to pay. This same Fightback will add an extra \$20 each week to the health bill of that same family. We are talking about 80c on this side; \$20 that side—the cost of private health insurance, gap insurance and higher doctors' fees. That \$20 each week will not pay for any improvement in health services or structural reform in hospitals. I think that is a very important point. You know, people will be forced to pay this extra \$20 but it will be of no benefit to the hospital system whatsoever.

The rhetoric we are hearing about Fightback giving Australians more freedom of choice and control over their lives is rubbish; it is nonsense in the context of health. All Australians need to be able to respond to their health needs without being impeded by financial considerations. Medicare protects the right of access to health care in order to give each Australian more control over their own health. This Fightback idea of choice is the abolition of bulk-billing for more of the 13 million Australians and tax penalties to encourage people into private health insurance. What rot! Under Fightback, Australia will join the United States as the only other OECD country which does not guarantee all

citizens access to at least a basic level of health care. The choice is simple. It is a simple choice: the certainty and security of Medicare versus the cost and uncertainty of Fightback.

In 1984, I was employed in the office of the then Federal member for Petrie, Mr Dean Wells. That was the year that the Federal Labor Government introduced Medicare to give all Australians access to a fair and universal system of health insurance. Medicare is based on five principles—they have not changed: universality, access, equity, efficiency and simplicity.

Mr Nuttall: Well said.

Mrs WOODGATE: Almost. Medicare has extended health cover to all Australians in a simple and affordable way. Two million Australians who could not afford health insurance under the Fraser Liberal Government now have the health care cover that the Australian Labor Party believes is their basic right. Medicare ensures the fairest distribution of costs across our community, but it is far more than a health financing system. It is a national health care system which delivers hospital, primary health care and pharmaceutical services. It guarantees access to fundamental medical and hospital services through the promotion of bulk-billing. The third leg of Medicare, the pharmaceutical benefits scheme, provides access to essential medicines. More than 70 per cent of Australians support Medicare. That is up from the figure of 52 per cent who supported it in 1984, because it works. You cannot argue with that. As I said earlier, I believe that the Liberal/National Parties' Fightback would take Australia back to the days of the two-class health system: quality health for the rich and charity medicine for the poor. It robs Australians of their right to equal access to health care under Medicare.

Fightback says little of substance about women's health, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health, mental health and community health services, except it does say this: \$90m would be cut from spending on services for Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders. It is there in the book. Honourable members can read it. Fightback says that it will place greater responsibility on individuals and families for their own health care. What this means is that Australians would lose their right to equal access to health care under Medicare and would pay significantly more for hospital and medical services currently provided for no out-of-pocket cost. Mr Deputy Speaker, I hope those few words that I have said about Medicare have convinced you that Fightback really is bad for your health.

While I have the riveting attention of all the National Party members opposite, I ask them to consider very seriously—any who have a bit of a conscience should think about this—how very badly Fightback will effect on their country constituents in three very important areas: Austudy, rural students and assistance for isolated children. Let us talk about Austudy. The Keating Government provides \$1.3 billion for Austudy each year. Families suffering financial hardship, particularly in the rural sector, are offered income test concessions under the Austudy eligibility criteria. Where rural families affected by the recession are in receipt of social security support under the Rural Adjustment Scheme, the Austudy income test and the assets test are waived. That is a Keating Federal Government initiative. Fightback promises to waive only the assets test for families in extreme economic circumstances. They are halving it.

As to rural students—the Government's rural education and training strategy delivers \$600m in education services to rural students every year. Over the past three years, the Government spent \$7m on building and upgrading hostel accommodation for isolated rural school students. In 1991, the Keating Government provided a \$10m funding increase for the country areas program and increased funding under the Rural Adjustment Scheme from \$62m to \$194m. That is not a bad increase, but what do we find? Have a look at Fightback. Fightback makes no financial commitment to increase resources for rural education and training. Boarding school meals and extracurricular activities will be taxed at 15 per cent under the GST. That is something that members opposite ought to be thinking of.

Last but not least, let us think about the assistance for isolated children. Have a think about that. The Keating Government has increased the non-means tested and non-assets tested boarding allowance under the Assistance for Isolated Children Scheme to \$1,500 a year—an increase in total expenditure of 33 per cent. By abolishing the assets test in assessing eligibility for the Assistance for Isolated Children Scheme, the Opposition is wasting scarce resources which could be spent on targeting assistance to rural areas. National Party people ought to be ashamed of themselves for supporting this. They should wake up to themselves.

Mr Beattie: They are embarrassed.

Mrs WOODGATE: They are speechless. They are stunned mullets. As a woman, I am proud and appreciative of what the Federal Keating Labor Government has done for women. For example, 65 per cent of the 1.5 million new jobs created since 1983—since Labor came to power—have gone to women. The number of women at university has increased by 82 per cent between 1983 and 1991. The number of women in the work force receiving superannuation has increased from 24 per cent to almost 100 per cent with superannuation guarantee and award super.

In the area of equal pay, we have had increases in the ratio of women's to men's earnings from 90 per cent to 93.6 per cent of award wages, and from 82.3 per cent to 85.8 per cent of total earnings. I take pride in the fact that Australia now has one of the best pay equity records in the OECD. We have had proper evaluation of women's work. Child-care workers got big wage increases when their work was found to be undervalued. Pay rises have been specially targeted to women—flat dollar amounts and wage rises for people not receiving over-award payments. I believe that one of Labor's greatest achievements in the Federal Government has been in the area of child care. As the role of women and families in our society has changed, so the Federal Labor Government has responded with a comprehensive child-care policy to meet the needs of families with children.

Let me list some of Labor's achievements. It has quadrupled the number of child-care places from 46 000 in 1983 to almost 200 000 today. This year alone, Labor will fund an additional 27 000 child-care places. Labor has introduced a generous fee-relief system—child-care assistance—which now assists two-thirds of families using Commonwealth child-care centres. It has introduced a needs-based planning system to make sure new child-care places go where they are needed most, and initiatives to encourage employers to assist with the child-care needs of working families. It has introduced expanded services for children with special needs, whether they be from non-English speaking backgrounds, with disabilities or simply in remote or isolated areas. Labor has introduced child-care services for women out of the paid work force and training and resource agencies to support quality care.

Under the Keating Federal Labor Government, child care has grown from a small, welfare program with a budget of \$68m to a widespread service for hundreds of thousands of Australian families which will spend over \$500m this year. As a mother of two daughters who do use child care for their children, I am grateful for and appreciative of the initiatives of the Federal Government. The child-care policy launched by the Prime Minister a fortnight ago will be welcomed by my daughters in company with many other parents across Australia. The new cash rebate scheme worth up to \$1,466 a year for one child or \$3,182 a year for two or more children will benefit no fewer than 230 000 families across the nation. I congratulate Prime Minister Keating on this initiative.

Three years ago, I stood in this place and I spoke of the many challenges facing the newly elected Goss Labor Government. I said that I had a dream. That dream was to see Queensland restored to its rightful place as a role model for all other Australian States, free from the taint of corruption which had permeated the upper echelons of the Government and the public service, and free from ridicule by our co-States, because members of the previous National Party Government prided themselves on being different. I said in my speech that I wanted to see Queensland's education system on a par with other States in Government funding at State level. I wanted to see members of

Queensland's police force stand proud among members of the community as the respected guardians of law and order.

I am proud to say here in this place that that dream has been realised. Queensland has indeed become a role model for all other States. Look at the economic performance of the Goss Labor Government.

Mr De Lacy: Hear, hear!

Mrs WOODGATE: I take that interjection from the Treasurer sitting in his wrong place. I believe that morale in the Police Service is much higher than it was three years ago. I honestly believe that morale is up in the police stations. It is higher than it was when we took office in 1989. Our police officers are receiving the respect of the community at large. Sure, crime has not gone away; it never will. But we have a Police Service and we have finally got a Police Commissioner who are giving it their all, and Queenslanders generally have renewed confidence in the boys in blue.

Our education system is on a par with other Australian States. Our teachers have seen their wages and salaries raised to the level of their counterparts in other States, and the three decades of conservative Queensland Governments ignoring teachers' pleas for a fair go is just now a bad dream. The Queensland economy is quite healthy—"hear, hears" now, kisses later, thank you very much, Mr Treasurer—and as for that commitment to protecting our heritage and environment that I referred to on 7 March 1990 in my maiden speech, we now have in place legislation in this State to protect our heritage and our environment. I pay special tribute to the dedicated performance of Mr Pat Comben, the Minister for Environment and Heritage during the first term of the Goss Labor Government. He was in no small way responsible for the good, sensible laws we now have in place in Queensland in the environment and heritage area.

I completed my maiden speech three years ago with a call to the newly elected Goss Labor Government to turn those promises we had made during the campaign into reality, and I remember quoting an old jungle saying, which I will quote again for the benefit of Minister Foley—

"The gods do not favour those who wait for fruit to fall from the tree into their open mouths."

The Goss Labor Government has shaken the tree, it has met the challenge, and it has succeeded. Now I believe our greatest challenge is to ensure that our Queensland constituents are advised of the dangers and evils of Fightback, and as the member for Kurwongbah I shall be doing all in my power to ensure that my constituents are made fully aware of the untruths, the half-truths, the hidden truths and the distortions being peddled by the Federal coalition and their lackeys on the benches opposite.

Mr STEPHAN (Gympie) (10.28 p.m.): I could not help noticing some of the comments that have been made in this debate. At the outset, I pledge my allegiance and that of my constituents to the Queen and to the flag. We need to remind ourselves of that at this particular stage when the champion of members opposite, a person they are trying to protect at the present time, is doing his utmost to pull both of them down. I also take this opportunity to congratulate the Governor on her appointment. I wish her a happy stay in Government House. I wish her all the best and give her my full support. I made the point that we have seen members of the Government in this House trying to support and protect the Government in Canberra, which is running for cover so fast that it needs all the support it can get. Is that any wonder when one sees the Federal Government's record?

Mr Ardill: Trying to protect the public in Queensland from the lunatic that you want to promote.

Mr STEPHAN: I could not quite hear what the honourable member said. It is obvious that he is concerned, too. The Government in Canberra is running away from reality. Even members opposite and their leaders have said over the last couple of years,

"Who would be stupid enough to want to protect and get behind Keating if he were elected Prime Minister?" Now that he is Prime Minister, members opposite are doing their best to try to protect him, but they are not doing a very good job. For that reason, we cannot but hope that 13 March comes around as quickly as possible so that members opposite are put out of their misery, so that Mr Keating is put out of his misery and so that Australia can be steered back to the course for which the Opposition longs and for which it wants to work.

The member for Waterford claimed that the tobacco tax is doing magical things for hospitals. I just wonder whether that honourable member has been out in the real world and examined the hospital system. At present, the hospital system is a disaster. Many people are waiting for long periods just to receive regular treatment—the type of treatment with which they have been provided over the past 10 to 20 years. In the past, such treatment was taken for granted, but now it is something for which people must be very thankful. Such concerns about the hospital system are being expressed in all areas of Queensland. People are not being treated for regular complaints. They are certainly not being treated promptly.

Ambulance services are also suffering. Quite a number of letters have been written by members of the public about the Queensland Ambulance Service. On some occasions, people have had to find their own way to hospital. Other people have found that journeys by ambulance involve considerable delays. Both scenarios certainly do not help people's poor health. I intend to read one of a number of letters on this subject. The letter to which I refer was addressed to the Premier, but a copy of it was sent to me. The letter states—

"I am writing to express my utter disgust at the service (or should it be non-service) of the Queensland Ambulance Service. In doing this, I in no way attach any blame to the staff at the Gympie Centre who have always had a reputation of being most kind and considerate. My husband, a heart patient, was transported by ambulance from the Gympie Hospital . . . from ICU on 30th November to the Wesley Hospital . . .

On the orders of the specialist an ambulance was arranged to bring him home on December 3.

He left Wesley Hospital between 10.30 and 11 a.m., arrived in Gympie at 4.30 p.m., with nothing to eat or drink and no toilet stop. He sat up all the way, wedged between the driver and another patient.

Two patients were picked up from the Royal Brisbane, one from Prince Charles and two from Nambour. He was completely exhausted when he arrived home."

That is a sad story. Unfortunately, it is not the first time that such an incident has occurred. The letter stated further—

"On 9th December he was back in ICU . . . suffering another heart attack and passed away on December 11."

This is the sort of situation that cannot be condoned. It cannot be allowed to occur as often as it has. Certainly, no blame can be attached to the Queensland Ambulance Service. The policy under which it is operating is at fault. That policy is the result of the regionalisation program of this Government, which makes change for the sake of change. This Government seems to ignore the old statement, "If it is not broken, why try to fix it?" When the Government came to office, the health system certainly did not need fixing. The Government is not doing anything to fix the problems of the health system. In fact, it is making matters worse.

I would like to know what happened to the ambulance centres that this Government promised to build in country areas when it took office. What has happened to the plans that were drawn up and the money that was set aside for the construction of those ambulance centres? I believe that in the vicinity of half a million dollars was

transferred from Gympie to the Queensland Ambulance Service, and we are never likely to see that money again. Gympie was promised a new ambulance centre. Plans were drawn up and tenders had been called for its construction. That ambulance centre is no closer now than it was in 1988, 1989 or even before that. It is of concern to my constituents that the money that was raised by volunteer groups—by people who wanted to make a contribution to the ambulance service in their city—has disappeared. Now, interest and support for the project has gone, and so too has the money that was raised. It is not good enough to claim that the residents of Gympie will have to wait another two or three years for their new centre, when that period has already long passed. Rather than waiting, the residents of Gympie expected that they would have a new ambulance centre of which they could be proud and for which they had worked for some time. When one considers the shambles that is the hospital system and the inadequate ambulance system, it is no wonder that people are writing letters such as those to which I referred. It is no wonder that citizens are expressing concern about what hospital services are open to them and whether the required services will be available within a reasonable period.

That leads me to another emergency service, that is, the Fire Service. As a result of regionalisation, many disasters have occurred. People have made emergency calls requesting assistance in fighting a fire in a certain area. However, because regional operators are not sufficiently aware of the local geography, incorrect units have been dispatched to deal with the fire. In one instance, a delay of one hour occurred, and in another instance a delay of half an hour occurred. In yet another instance, units were sent to the wrong location. People from areas such as Nambour and Noosa do not know the geography of the area in which they are operating and from where the calls are coming. Is it any wonder that, under those conditions, mistakes occur?

I am also concerned about school bus transport. For approximately 30 years, school bus drivers have been transporting children. They are to be congratulated on not only their very good safety record but also their desire to maintain it. It must be borne in mind that there is no greater role that school bus drivers can play than to give safe travel to young school students. Parents place their trust in school bus operators to deliver their children safely. However, it has been stated in a press release that many school bus operators have been operating on the same wage rate that was established three years ago. When one considers cost increases and the fact that after a certain time buses must be replaced, that is not good enough. If they are not going to receive an increase in funding to enable them to maintain the buses, they will certainly not be able to replace them when the need arises. Those school buses travel over rough roads, and they will not last as long as buses that travel on bitumen. In some cases, they travel for long distances over gravel surfaces. Some bus operators have become frustrated with the situation and have called for a strike, which is self-defeating and certainly not to be encouraged. However, they are the concerns that are going through the minds of bus drivers. They are quite willing to take whatever action is needed to drive home their problems and to direct attention to the amount of money that they are paid. Recently, problems have occurred with buses that travel from Pomona to Cooroy. Parents, operators and students are very concerned about the safety of bus travel. In some instances, students have taken to the road and hitched a ride to school. One could imagine the problems that could arise if people pick up those students who are hitchhiking. Those children may arrive at school, but then again, they may not. Heaven help us if anything occurs because of this situation. For those reasons, bus drivers are concerned about the safety of buses and the number of children who travel on them. They are looking for action so that they can be secure in the knowledge that the students will be travelling safely.

I turn now to the capping of minefields. It has been the Government's priority to put in place a program to cap the old Gympie gold mines at a cost of approximately \$3.5m. Although the program was started, it is obvious that the Government has run out of money. However, it has run out of money in the middle of the mine shaft capping program. In some instances, gaping holes have been left in the ground. The people of

Gympie have been told that all work will be stopped until the next Budget, which may be in six months' time. Gaping holes have been found under private dwellings and, in one instance, under a public hall. One could imagine the concern of people who live in those dwellings or use that hall. The holes have been dug, and those people have been told that there is no money available to complete the job. Is it any wonder that they call the media to try to highlight their problems?

Mr Vaughan: What did your Government do about it?

Mr STEPHAN: The former National Party Government did not dig the holes and leave them open.

Mr Vaughan: For all those years, you did nothing.

Mr STEPHAN: The former National Party Government did not give the commitment that everything would be fixed. The Government started the program, but it is not prepared to finish it. For that reason, the local media and I have taken up the cudgels. The people expect the Government to finish the program that it started. It should cap the mines that it opened. In a letter to me, the Minister stated that he would make the mines safe. He gave that commitment, but now he is backing out, leaving great holes in the ground and under public buildings. It is not a matter about which the Minister can be proud. If he is concerned about the problem, he should finish off what he said he would do. An article in the *Gympie Times* states—

“News that funds have run out for Gympie's mine capping project comes as some disappointment to the residents of Gympie.

It is another example of poor budgeting by a State Government.”

Those are not my words; they are the words of the newspaper. The article continued—

“Now the mine capping project which was launched by the Government with much fanfare in 1991 has ground to a halt.

This means little to a bureaucrat in Brisbane, but in Gympie it means elderly people and other landowners have to put up with houses which cannot be lived in and untidy, dangerous yards.

The State Government should be asked to fulfil its obligation to Gympie people who have to put up with shafts on their property. Priority for work should have been given to people whose homes have been endangered rather than shafts on unoccupied and flood-prone land.”

This Government must remember that it saw its way clear to cap mines out in the field beside Six Mile Creek. It saw fit to close those mines, but has left a gaping hole right in the middle of a residential area where people are working and playing. If that is this Government's idea of administration—

Mr McGrady interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Minister for Minerals and Energy will cease interjecting.

Mr STEPHAN: I turn to this Government's policy in connection with the freeholding of miners' homestead perpetual leases in residential areas. The Government has stated that if those leases are not freeholded by the end of 1993, it will then determine that they will be special leases that will attract 3 per cent of the Valuer-General's valuation each year. The Government is saying that if those people who have paid the Crown for their leases do not take the further step of freeholding them by the end of 1993, the Government will say to them that the Crown shall be paid for them a second time. The Government cannot justify this proposal. It is simply a money-grabbing exercise. Government members go quiet when they are asked to provide a realistic answer, or any answer at all. I am looking for a bit of realism and commonsense, but I am not getting it from this Government. A great number of miners' homestead perpetual leases and miners' homestead leases are still to be freeholded. I do not imagine that applications to freehold all those leases will be made by the end of 1993, so the Government will have another problem on its hands.

As to education—I am aware that other members have commented on and expressed concern about this issue. At present, many of the graduates from 1991 are still looking for jobs, the great majority of graduates from 1992 have still not been placed, and perhaps more than 60 schools are without a principal. Where is the Government going with its education program? It is training teachers, but it has nowhere to place them, or is not prepared to place them at the end of their training. I am looking for a positive attitude from this Government that will ensure that if people undertake three-year and four-year training programs, the Government will give them an idea of when they will be placed or even whether they will be placed at all.

I also look to this Government for some support in relation to imports. The Government has made a big issue of sugarcane tariffs, but what about other primary industries that have no protection at all? The pineapple industry is a very good example. Grave concern is being expressed within our primary industries about the lack of support from the Government and about the number of imports that come to Queensland with the protection of subsidies or tax relief. Our primary industries cannot compete with those commodities on the so-called level playing field about which this Government speaks. We must consider what is happening in other countries with which we are endeavouring to compete. For that reason, last week I visited New Zealand. The attitude of the New Zealand Labor Party and the unions was interesting. It was completely different from the attitude adopted by this Government. Although they have the same party and the same unions in New Zealand, those members said that compulsory unionism is a thing of the past. That attitude, which was adopted by the Deputy Leader of the Labour Party in New Zealand, was supported by the union representatives in that country.

Mr Santoro: Would you agree with me that the unions in New Zealand are good unions?

Mr STEPHAN: They certainly gave me the impression that they have their feet on the ground and that they are looking to support and encourage the workers. They also gave me the impression that they were working towards something which they, the workers and the employers could live with so that they are able to look to the future and know that they are helping their budgeting and exports. Because of their ability to write contracts and their enterprise-based operations, they are able to compete with other countries far better than we in Australia can compete. According to the *Australian* newspaper, the recent Heinz purchase of Wattie industries was inspired by the better business climate in New Zealand. They are sending their product to New Zealand to be canned and brought back to Australia for sale. It is a pity that the Minister for Business will not recognise that fact. I suggest that he travel to New Zealand and talk with Ken Douglas, the well known union representative. It would be an interesting exercise for the Minister. He would return to Australia better informed on the issue.

The Minister has been saying how, under enterprise bargaining, membership will be screwed into the ground because of lower wages and tougher working conditions. The only people who have received a decrease in wages are those who have reached an agreement to work shorter hours. They are people who did not want to work 38 hours or 40 hours a week; because of their domestic situation, they wanted to work only 30 hours. After entering into agreements, approximately 40 per cent of the employees were working on the same salary and 60 per cent were receiving a larger salary than they had been receiving prior to entering into agreements. Yet Government members have been ridiculing what might occur in Canberra. They have also been ridiculing Mr Hewson. They are obviously running for cover. They are trying to escape from reality as quickly as they can.

I turn now to the so-called work stoppages that have occurred in New Zealand. Another table reveals that, from April 1990 to May 1991, 337 000 working days were lost, and that, from June 1991 to July 1992, 52 000 working days were lost. That is an enormous decrease in the number of working days lost.

Mr Livingstone: Tell us about Queensland. It has never been so good as under this Government.

Mr STEPHAN: The Government is supposed to be in control in Queensland. I wonder whether it is. I am pointing out what is occurring in a country that has enterprise bargaining and how satisfactorily that system is working. The Government is trying to use scare tactics to give a false impression that individuals and companies in New Zealand cannot work out their own agreements. They can and they have. The system is working well and creating fewer stoppages. As well, it is creating greater productivity. In many instances, productivity has increased fivefold, which makes a large difference to the overall return and improves the competitiveness of the country, enabling it to compete with other parts of the world. If Government members are not prepared to face up to reality and support those who want to do something for themselves, they are on the wrong track.

Many people think that the only way to increase investment and to promote economic recovery is through the public sector. They measure that by the number of kilometres of pavement laid on footpaths. However, that only creates artificial numbers of jobs. Australia needs to give encouragement to the private sector to improve economic wealth and growth. Private enterprise has indicated that it is willing to get the country going if we give it a go. I am asking the Government to stop taxing private enterprise out of existence and to provide the support that it urgently needs. If people are expected to invest huge amounts of money, they must believe that they will receive a return from that investment.

Debate, on motion of Mr Foley, adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. M. J. FOLEY (Yeronga—Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations) (10.58 p.m.): I move—

“That the House do now adjourn.”

Mr J. Cavanagh

Mr GILMORE (Tablelands) (10.59 p.m.): On 16 June 1992, I rose in this place to speak on the matter of John Cavanagh, a citizen of Cairns. I spoke about the miserable treatment that he had suffered at the hands of this Government. Regrettably, I have to rise again tonight to once again report to this Parliament on this matter. The report is, sadly, that the matter has not been settled, and in fact it is as far from resolution now as it was eight months ago. Let me reiterate for the House what I said previously.

The vessel, *Steven C*, was arrested on 18 December 1990 by the warden of the Supreme Court. That is now two years and two months ago. During the period of the arrest, the vessel was damaged by cyclone Joy. Subsequently, the owners of the vessel lost everything they owned, because the vessel could not be put to sea after release from arrest, and the loss of cash flow caused the failure of the company. Over the past two years, the Queensland Government has conspired to foil all attempts to gain compensation either by private treaty, by mediation or by order of the court. The Attorney-General, whilst proclaiming loudly the infamy of the cost of access to the law, has used every device available to him, including all of those which he has so loudly decried, to cause grief to John Cavanagh and to deny the man access to the proper resolution of the problem. Whilst this has been going on, Mr Cavanagh has had two offers, albeit without prejudice—one from a senior public servant for \$50,000 and one from the Treasurer of this State, the honourable Keith De Lacy, for, in his words, a little more than \$100,000. Two questions must be answered: on whose advice and on what authority were those offers made? Do those offers indicate that the Crown Solicitor believes that the Crown does have a liability?

I will address those matters one at a time. Firstly, if the Treasurer and a senior officer have made such offers, they must have had Cabinet sanction to so do. Or are they above accountability? If they had Cabinet approval, then the highest level of Government has recognised the Crown liability. If not, then they were either acting vexatiously and attempting to improperly gain advantage over a citizen or they were completely overcome with their own importance and acting outside their jurisdiction and powers of authority. Secondly, it is clear that advice given and received indicates an opinion that the Crown is liable. Surely, it is not too much to ask that the Government accept its responsibility and in good faith allow the matter to come to court. Or do we have to have a repeat performance of the Trinity Point fiasco, and more public funds wasted in futile attempts by the Government to arrogantly trample the legal rights of its citizens?

As I remarked eight months ago, the Government, by the improper and immoral use of legal devices, might be able to avoid the judicial scrutiny of the matter. However, the evidence is that Mr Cavanagh is correct in seeking redress and ultimately will be successful. The longer it goes on, the more it will cost the taxpayer. This is a case of shame. Only a Labor Government would pursue a citizen to this extent. Only a Labor Government and a Labor Treasurer would indulge in improper negotiations either with or without Cabinet permission. Only a Labor Attorney would cheat and mislead the Parliament and the people in such a blatant way. There seems to be no reason for it other than the fact that this Labor Government cannot admit that it made a mistake two years ago, and now it must go to extraordinary lengths to cover it up and to attempt to avoid its responsibility.

Effect of the Hewson Tax Package on Women

Mrs WOODGATE (Kurwongbah) (11.05 p.m.): Tonight I want to speak briefly about how the Hewson tax package will affect women. Women workers will be among the worst affected victims of the Hewson consumption tax package. As well as the extra burden it would impose on working people, the package proposes to cut out Government activities which have broad community support because they are especially designed to help women overcome the everyday problems they face at work. These programs include the Affirmative Action Agency and two special programs in the Department of Industrial Relations.

The Affirmative Action Agency was set up by the Keating Government to ensure that equal employment is a practical goal and not just another platitude. It polices and reports to Parliament on the equal employment performances of all workplaces in the private sector with more than 100 employees and all higher education institutions. Public sector operations other than higher education institutions have to report directly to the Government on their equal opportunity results. The agency plays an important role in advising business on how to implement best practice affirmative action policies, receiving more than 2 500 inquiries from business in the past year alone.

The Hewson consumption tax package proposes that the agency should be abolished but without any impact on the legislative guarantees of equal employment opportunity. This is rubbish! Legislation can guarantee nothing if it has no effective mechanisms such as the agency to police it. The coalition's cost-cutting proposals for the Department of Industrial Relations will have the effect of abolishing the equal pay and work and family units in the department. The equal pay unit carries out or commissions research on pay equity issues, contributes on pay equity to Government submissions in wage cases and provides advice on pay equity issues for the Government generally.

One politically significant effect of the Hewson proposal would be that there would be no expert departmental advice or recommendations on the significant damage to women's earnings if the coalition's enterprise bargaining policy were ever put into practice. The Hewson cuts would also eliminate the work and family unit. This program was set up to develop, oversee and help the Government report to the United Nations

International Labour Organisation on how it is implementing ILO Convention 156. This again would be devastating for the interests of women workers plus others who are trying to juggle the demands of a job with the responsibility of raising and looking after a family.

The consumption tax package shows a strong New Zealand influence in connection with women and other traditionally disadvantaged workers. Its basic point is to reduce wages by reducing the protection that workers have available to them through their unions and industrial tribunals. The Bolger Government in New Zealand already operates policies affecting these workers similar to those foreshadowed in the Hewson package. In the Hewson model, as in New Zealand, deregulation of the labour market is code for a return to the law of the jungle in the job market. Women workers in New Zealand, especially in the services sector, are suffering significant pay cuts—up to 30 per cent. They are working longer hours over longer weeks, usually with no overtime penalty rates or other forms of compensation. They cannot resist all that easily because the award system has been abolished and the capacity of their unions to help has been cut down by law. They cannot quit because anybody who voluntarily leaves a job cannot get the dole for six months. This is the system that Hewson wants to bring to Australia.

Women epitomise the employees in weak bargaining positions who would be coerced out of the protection of the award system and into the private contracts favoured by Hewson and Howard. They could be forced into a situation in which they have neither unions nor tribunals to protect them. They would not have the protection of national wage cases. Their only protection would be a minimum wage which would be lower than the current lowest award rate. This would be a tragedy for women in all walks of Australian working life. It would overturn all the work achieved over the past nine months under the Government/ACTU Accord. It is a fundamental tenet of the Accord that the maintenance of a strong award system, with minimum wages and conditions reviewed and adjusted over time in national wage cases, is absolutely necessary to justice for women and other disadvantaged workers. The past decade has seen the Labor Government achieve unprecedented reform for Australian women with Labor recognising that women from all ages and backgrounds must be given real choices and equal opportunity in a fair and compassionate society.

I leave honourable members finally with just two samples of the collected thoughts of the evil architect of Fightback, John Hewson, and I quote him—

“I look for three things (in a woman): good teeth, good health, good cookery.”

Another famous statement of his—

“I reckon I can understand women because I’ve worked out that most of them are just like us.”

Well, listen to me, Dr Hewson: there are quite a few women like myself out there in voter land who are not just like you and, thankfully, we will be marking a ballot-paper on 13 March. Here I call upon women everywhere, whether in the work force or working in their homes, to send a message to John Hewson on that day.

New Zealand Economy; Australia Post Franchises

Mr SANTORO (Clayfield—Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party) (11.08 p.m.): I depart momentarily from my prepared speech to inform the honourable member who preceded me in this debate and other members that the true position of the New Zealand experience will be put on the record of this Parliament. With two other members of the Opposition, I must have visited a totally different place from the one that has been described by the honourable member.

Mr Pearce: You only listened to what you wanted to listen to.

Mr SANTORO: I take that interjection. We spoke to the president of the union movement in New Zealand, the shadow Minister, people in the work place and people across the whole gamut of enterprise. I can tell honourable members that New Zealand is booming. I note that the honourable member who preceded me did not quote the source of her statistics which indicate a 30 per cent decrease. Members of the Opposition will provide information lock, stock and barrel. We will publish it, and the member will be damned because untruths that she has peddled cannot be sustained. I sincerely suggest that she should go to New Zealand and talk to her own people and learn from them herself. That is the best advice that I can give her.

Most small business people in Queensland are deeply concerned about their future, thanks to the recession Labor had to give us but which is about to be broken. But there is one group of business people, in particular, who are worried that they will be forced to the wall because of the actions of a Federal Government instrumentality. I refer to the agents who run post office agencies. I am sure that most people think all post offices are owned by Australia Post, but the truth is of the 4 400 post office outlets in Australia, over 3 000 are operated as franchised agencies. That means the postmaster or postmistress owns his or her business and invests in an Australia Post franchise.

Mr Bennett: That is a startling revelation, isn't it?

Mr SANTORO: Honourable members can talk about matters other than the GST and peddle rubbish about industrial relations, but I am talking about some of the people represented by the honourable member in small communities in his electorate. I have taken his interjection so that I can circulate it to them. In total, those investments amount to millions of dollars. Those people invested because they believe in the future of the postal service, and they have dedicated themselves to serving the people of their community. In common with the entire Australia Post organisation, these people put many long hours of hard work into ensuring that mail acceptance and processing is reliable, accurate and efficient. Australia Post and its agents play a vital role in communication within Australia, and they are to be commended on their fine work. Agencies are sometimes run in conjunction with other businesses in isolated areas—sometimes as part of a general store or a newsagency, but they are also found in all towns and cities.

Quite a number of suburban post offices in Brisbane are agencies, including the post office at Ascot in the Clayfield electorate. This agency is operated by Mrs Beryl Box, who provides top quality service and great efficiency. I would like to pay a tribute to Beryl and all the other agents who undertake this work. As part of a review of its operations, Australia Post now plans to restructure its agency network. Post office agencies will become licensed post offices, with the agent given a licence to run the business. That is of great concern to many of the current agents who believe that the contracts and conditions likely to be imposed on them by Australia Post will lead to the closure of their businesses. The attitude of Australia Post to the agents has left a lot to be desired. These talks have been under way for over two years.

Australia Post decided to release an amended form of the proposed package to the agents. This was opposed by the Post Office Agents Association, which found the move short-sighted, inflammatory and prejudicial to the negotiations. In releasing the package, Australia Post broke a commitment given to the association to keep the material confidential. Why it chose to do this, we can only speculate upon; but perhaps it was a way of seeking to put pressure on individual agents. Under the proposed package, many agencies—or licensed offices, as they would be known—will become unviable financially. The commission on the sale of stamps would be ridiculously low and would cause many smaller agencies—especially those in high rent areas—to go broke and to close down. But, apparently, Australia Post understands this because it has suggested that the agencies be run in conjunction with another business. In effect, of course, this means that Australia Post wants those other businesses to subsidise its agency operations. It is simply not a sensible business proposition for a small business

person to take on a post office agency licence when they will lose money on that part of their business.

This will cause the closure of many post offices—especially in high rent city and provincial regions—but Australia Post will be able to point the finger of blame at the agent, rather than at itself. It is all very neat. The problem with the proposed package is that it does not meet in any way the needs of the agents. It offers no protection to anyone accepting it. It has substantially reduced conditions in comparison with the original contract that was being negotiated through the association. It has no consultative mechanisms included for the reviewing of payment levels, and it does not offer terms and conditions sufficient to make the licensed agencies financially viable. I am also informed by some agents that the technology being proposed by Australia Post—supposedly required by some agents—is too costly and too complicated. On top of all of that, Australia Post says it will offer the agents an attractive package to get out of their agencies, if they decide not to accept the planned package. That rather sounds as though Australia Post's real objective is to reduce the number of post offices. Perhaps that is why the package being proposed for agents who want to continue is nowhere near as attractive as the one to entice them to get out.

State Opposition Leader's Comments on Business

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN (Caboolture) (11.13 p.m.): There are many things that one could say about former Premier Bjelke-Petersen. One could say, as was said in the courts during the defamation action brought by the late Sir Leslie Thiess, that he accepted regular bribes. One could say, as one commentator said publicly after viewing the TV program *Joh's Jury*, that there was something very shonky about that episode in the man's controversial career. But one could never, never say that old Joh was anti-Queensland. Newspapers published in the period 1975 to 1983 are littered with examples of Joh taking on the Canberra Government of Malcolm Fraser—taking on his mates over issues about which the old man felt that Queensland would suffer. He was putting Queensland first. Various Bjelke-Petersen administrations shaped this State so that in many substantial ways Queensland enjoyed a competitive advantage over other States, namely, a reputation as a low-tax State that has been refined and nurtured by the Goss Labor Government.

Mr Bjelke-Petersen has now announced that he will not return to Queensland to live. I am sure that the shameful events of 10 February last were the reasons for that decision, because on that day the forelock-tugging, boot-licking excuse for an Opposition Leader in this State did more to discredit the memory of Sir Johannes Bjelke-Petersen's contribution to this State than all of the commissions of inquiry, courts of law and television programs combined. On that day, "Knocker Bob" effectively signed away this State's competitive edge. For three years in this place, he has pursued his own political agenda—one which says that the way to the top of the pile is to tear down the pile. On 10 February, "Knocker Bob", along with all the other obsequious tory State leaders, backed John Hewson's plan to abolish payroll tax. That move wiped out an edge that Queensland developed carefully and deliberately as a means of attracting business to this State. It is easy to see how New South Wales, for example, could see this as a smart move. After all, the New South Wales Government charges payroll tax at a rate greater than that charged in Queensland and allows lower exemption thresholds than those applying in this State. Had Queensland, under both conservative and Labor Governments, not sought to use the vehicle of lower payroll tax rates and higher exemption thresholds as one of the means of ensuring that our State holds the competitive advantage that we currently enjoy, we might not be prospectively so disadvantaged. Had Queensland, for example, charged payroll tax at the New South Wales rates and thresholds, we would be in line for an extra \$260m as an additional payroll tax abolition grant in the unlikely event that a Federal conservative Government is put in place on 13 March. This State has valued the competitive advantage of lower

payroll tax relative to New South Wales at \$260m. So "Knocker Bob" wants to throw away that asset.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I suggest that the member refer to members of this Chamber by their proper title.

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN: I refer to the member for Surfers Paradise, who has sought to throw away an asset valued at \$260m a year. Not only that, Mr Speaker, not only that! Not only is he throwing it away, but also the payroll tax abolition grant will not compensate Queensland for that \$260m. Let Mr Borbidge, if he likes, stand up and say that this is not so. As I have said, Queensland will be brought back to the pack. No wonder the Faheys, the Kennetts, the Grooms and the Courts of the country are rubbing their hands in glee. Not only does Dr Hewson's so-called plan—one which ought to be subtitled, by the way, "Nightmare on Hewson Street"—attack Queensland and erode our carefully constructed economic advantages relative to other States but also it does so with the active assistance of the Queensland Opposition Leader.

Never in this State have we had a political leader so lacking in concern for ordinary Queenslanders or for the State itself. If this man—and I cannot use that other term—had any courage or an ounce of decency or a skerrick of concern for Queenslanders, he would take on his Federal mates in the way that Bjelke-Petersen was always prepared to do. We can only assume that he lacks the testosterone required for the job of leader. He should fall on his sword and give the job to a real Queenslanders. The member for Surfers Paradise is condemned by his own actions, but we should not lose sight of the fact that standing by his side during the commission of that crime of the century was none other than the Deputy Coalition Leader, the member for Caloundra. She obviously enjoys a temporary prominence in the Queensland Opposition because of the sorry circumstance that sees John Hewson, a Liberal, leading the Federal Opposition. The member for Caloundra stands similarly condemned with the member for Surfers Paradise. She too ought to resign her position and make it easy for the member for Clayfield. She ought to resign her position as a consequence of her misguided support for John Hewson's horror scheme—the scheme that would without any doubt lead to Queensland losing benefits that it has gained over a number of years.

Blood Bank

Mr HORAN (Toowoomba South) (11.18 p.m.): I speak tonight about the most important matter of the shortfall in funding of the Blood Bank. This is perhaps the most crucial and important service in the Health Department. I am sure that the people involved in the Blood Bank simply want to collect enough blood and to ensure that all the correct testing is carried out. They do not particularly want the issue to be political. They are there to perform a most crucial task. However, the clear facts are that the Blood Bank has been given an inadequate budget. It needs a proper injection of funds right now.

Earlier today, in the Address in Reply debate, I spoke on the financial bungle that the Minister for Health and his department have perpetrated upon Queensland, in which they have totally miscalculated the effects and costs of the classification remuneration system under which all staff other than doctors and nurses—that is, the professional staff, administrative staff, technical staff and support staff—have been reclassified into broad bands of wages and salaries. The result has been a \$50m or more cost to Queensland Health which has not been funded by Treasury, and the public hospitals have had to bear the brunt and the resultant savage cutbacks of that financial bungle.

The classification remuneration system has cost the Blood Bank at least \$1m in increased wages and salaries. It was not the fault or decision of the Blood Bank. It was imposed upon the Blood Bank by the Department of Health and the PSMC. The Blood Bank reported to the department on at least six occasions about the costs and effects of the classification remuneration system on the Blood Bank budget, but all to no avail.

The Blood Bank, in common with most Queensland public hospitals, did not receive its budget until late January. I believe that negotiations are still continuing. How can the Government neglect such an essential service as the Blood Bank? It has to be and should be in the eyes of all Queenslanders the No.1 priority in this State. The Blood Bank not only has to maintain quantity of supply; it also has to maintain the highest quality of blood supplies. New tests, such as the hepatitis C virus test and the CMV, cyclomegalovirus, test are important new tests in maintaining that quality, but they cost dollars.

The cutback in the Queensland Health Budget has seen a direction to the Blood Bank to cut staff by 27 and to cut out one mobile van collection service. A direction has been given to hospitals to use less blood. For example, they have been asked to use five bags instead of six bags in blood platelet transfusions during liver transplants and in major accident emergencies. Cutbacks in the testing of bone marrow transplant donors are occurring right across the State. In fact, they have been refused. There have been cutbacks in testing for CMV and cutbacks in field trips to major venues such as defence bases, factories and universities.

Overall, as a result of those cutbacks, Blood Bank donations will drop by 9 000 collections this year. Hospitals are being asked to undertake testing for CMV or to undertake filtration of blood themselves. However, that all costs money and the hospital budgets have been cut to the bone due to the shortfall in Government funding caused by the massive Health Department bungle over the funding of the wage rises. They do not have the money to do it. Health Minister Hayward has tried to blame mismanagement by the Blood Bank. However, it was his department alone that instituted an independent review of the Blood Bank last year which showed the Blood Bank to be absolutely thorough and professional.

The shortfall in the Blood Bank budget funding is equivalent to the increases in the wage and salary costs which have been imposed upon the Blood Bank. The Minister should admit that and fix up the Blood Bank with sufficient funds. It is just not good enough to shift the blame to others. The blame lies squarely on the shoulders of the Minister. This issue is beyond politics, and I am asking the Minister and the Premier to step in and do something about it. It is the most important issue in health today. It is not political. It is simply a matter that must be fixed up. It is up to the Minister to realise that and to simply provide the Blood Bank with sufficient funds to provide an adequate and safe service. That is all Queenslanders expect and that is all Queenslanders ask. It is up to the Minister for Health now to fix that problem.

Effect of GST on Local Authorities

Mr PITT (Mulgrave) (11.23 p.m.): I rise tonight to speak about our local authorities and the effect that the introduction of a GST would have upon them. I am sure that all members of this House would appreciate the important role that local authorities play in the lives of every single resident of this State. This morning, in the Matters of Public Interest debate, I mentioned the fact that a coalition Government would use small businesses to do its dirty work for it by acting as unpaid tax collectors. Similarly, Dr Hewson would enlist local government to fleece the general public by taxing goods and services which councils are required by law to provide—things such as water, sewerage and garbage.

If members opposite do not understand the degree of concern that exists regarding the GST within local authority areas, perhaps they should take note of recent comments made by Councillor Jim Pennell, President of the Local Government Association of Queensland. In a press release issued by that association, Councillor Pennell said that, although councils had seen some benefits in the GST for local government—

“ . . . we are opposed to the GST applying to water and sewerage. Since when have they been commercial activities. Councils are required to provide these services to the public under State legislation as community service obligations.”

Councillor Pennell went on to say—

“I am worried about the impact of GST on water and sewerage in urban areas within Councils. What about the situation where farmers take the town water supply for both domestic and agricultural production, how will we differentiate in that situation?”

Mr Pennell went on further and said—

“We have been asking for clear advice on exactly what the GST will apply to for some eight months now, and at the Australian Local Government Conference in Brisbane in November last year the Coalition promised we would know what's in and what's out before the start of the Federal election. It is still unclear what Council services the GST will apply to.”

Of course, the Local Government Association of Queensland cannot be 100 per cent sure that it has the right information in this respect. It is becoming patently obvious that even the coalition is not entirely sure just what Fightback will mean for local government. I put it to members that the proponents of the GST are purposely vague on these details. As I said before—

Mrs BIRD: I rise to a point of order. I am sorry, but I cannot hear the honourable member.

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

Mr PITT: As I said before—

Mr Horan interjected.

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

Mr PITT: As I said before, the coalition has deliberately kept this issue of local government charges and the GST's effect upon them in the vague basket. We may well ask why this is so. The answer is quite simple: the coalition is making policy on the run. It has not fully thought through the impact of the GST on local authorities. What it is doing, however, is nothing more than engaging in a con trick. It is leaving local authorities in the dark because by so doing, if the coalition becomes the Government, it will have much more room in which to manoeuvre. The coalition will leave the door open for its taxation options.

I want to make a brief reference to the Fightback document itself. On page 45, under the heading “Government Services”, the document states—

“No country (except New Zealand) imposes a Goods and Services Tax on non-commercial services provided by Government. Having a Government pay tax to itself simply involves unnecessary ‘churning’ and paperwork. Making the consumers of Government services pay tax on those services amounts to a ‘tax on a tax’. The Coalition has decided not to tax the provision of non-commercial activities by government. Therefore, the Goods and Services tax will not be imposed on top of local government rates.”

The point is that the coalition has a very loose and liberal interpretation—and I stress “liberal interpretation”—of what actually constitutes a non-commercial activity by local authorities.

The Australian Local Government Association President, Mr Peter Woods, said that councils had been concerned for several months about how the goods and services tax would affect their ability to service ratepayers. He also pointed out that, as far as he is concerned, time has run out for the Opposition to nominate how those services would be affected. He said that councils fear that the costs for the provision of water, sewage and garbage collection, with the effects of the GST, would be exorbitant. Mr Woods said—

“We want to know exactly what these commercial activities which will be subject to the tax are—it looks as though garbage, water and sewage are considered commercial activities and we regard that as quite outrageous.”

Councils have every right to do so. They are services which they are required to provide.

Time expired.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 11.28 p.m.