

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**WEDNESDAY, 10 APRIL 1985**

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**WEDNESDAY, 10 APRIL 1985**

Mr SPEAKER (Hon. J. H. Warner, Toowoomba South) read prayers and took the chair at 11 a.m.

**PAPERS**

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

**Reports—**

Public Service Board for the year ended 30 June 1984

Queensland Fish Board for the year ended 30 June 1984.

The following papers were laid on the table—

Order in Council under the Industrial Development Act 1963-1981 and the Local Government Act 1936-1984

Regulations under the Superannuation Trust Funds (Protection of Employee Entitlements) Act 1984

Statute under the Griffith University Act 1971-1984.

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS****Electric Train Collision, Beenleigh Line**

**Hon. D. F. LANE** (Merthyr—Minister for Transport) (11.3 a.m.), by leave: I have to report to Parliament that I have now received the report of the board of inquiry into the causes and circumstances surrounding the collision of electric train 1A07 and electric train 1706 on the Trinder Park to Kuraby section at approximately 6.45 a.m. on Saturday, 23 March 1985. The board of inquiry was chaired by Mr J. Paull, permanent way engineer, Brisbane.

The board, as a requirement of the Railways Act, consisted of three officers appointed by the Commissioner for Railways and three representatives elected by the employees. The board met continually from Monday, 25 March 1985, until 3 April 1985, and called 34 witnesses. They included the surviving crew members, passengers on the two trains, and technical officers attached to the Department of Railways.

As part of its inquiry the board inspected the site of the collision at Trinder Park and also inspected at Kuraby one of the trains involved in the collision and the control centre at Mayne. The members of the board took the opportunity to observe the performance of a train-driver and the operation of automatic warning-system equipment.

Unfortunately, a train-driver and a passenger lost their lives and 31 passengers and crew members were injured in this tragic accident.

The board of inquiry reported that, at the time of the accident, the permanent way or track was in good condition and there were no defects that would contribute to the accident. The two three-car units were in good working condition and had been subject to fortnightly mechanical and electrical inspections on 11 and 14 March 1985. Damage caused to the track in the accident was minor.

Honourable members are only too aware of the ultimate cost in life and injuries that resulted from this accident. They should be aware that the financial cost to the rolling-stock and other equipment will be \$788,403, which will include \$750,000 to repair the rolling-stock.

The report draws attention to the fact that, in conjunction with the interlocked signalling system, an automatic warning system is installed in the driver's cabin to give him audible and visual indications of the status of approaching signals. The system used on the Brisbane suburban network for the electric trains is virtually identical with that

used by British Rail, where trains run at up to 160 km per hour under the same system. The automatic warning system operates by placing magnets between the tracks approximately 80 metres from the signal. When the train passes over the magnet, a distinctive audible signal is given and a visual indication appears in the driver's cabin.

It was estimated in evidence given to the board that the impact speed at the point of collision was at least 80 km per hour. That was the combined speed of the two trains. According to the findings of the inquiry, visibility at the time of the accident was good and no evidence was found of the presence of alcohol or drugs.

Exhaustive testing of the signalling equipment, including the automatic warning system, was carried out immediately after the accident by qualified technical officers and no defect was found.

I draw the attention of the House to the fact that this matter is still subject to investigation by police and, in fact, a copy of all the depositions and the board of inquiry report has been passed on to investigating police. I have also given a copy of the board of inquiry report to the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General, who has ordered that a coronial inquiry be held.

The collision at Trinder Park was one of the most serious in the history of Queensland Railways. It would be remiss of me to fail to comment on the efforts at the accident site of not only railway employees but also local residents and emergency service organisations, including the Salvation Army, the fire brigade, ambulance services, police, State Emergency Service personnel and hospital staff.

Every attention was afforded to those injured in the collision and, through the efforts of the people I mentioned, train services were restored with a minimum of delay.

It is in the public interest for me to make this statement to the House today because there has been far too much uninformed comment. That must not be allowed to undermine the confidence of the public in the suburban rail system. That confidence is still well placed, and the findings of the board of inquiry reinforce all the assurances that have been given.

I gave a public undertaking that I would make the findings of the board of inquiry public as soon as possible. However, because of the serious nature of the findings and the general situation, as a matter of course, I sought the advice of the Acting Solicitor-General (Mr Roy Sammon) in order to make sure that the legal rights enjoyed by the people involved were not jeopardised in any way.

The advice given to me by him, upon which I am bound to act, was that tabling of the full findings in the House at this time may prejudice any future legal proceedings. Therefore, in fairness to all parties, I do not propose at this time to supply further information. The matter is in the hands of the appropriate authorities.

#### **APM and Pine Rivers Community Credit Union Limited**

**Hon. N. J. HARPER** (Auburn—Minister for Justice and Attorney-General) (11.8 a.m.), by leave: Recently, there have been various rumours concerning APM and Pine Rivers Community Credit Union Limited. Rightly, the matter was raised with me by the honourable member for Pine Rivers (Mrs Yvonne Chapman).

I have decided that it is desirable to reassure the House and, through it, those persons who have investments in this credit union in regard to any concern that these rumours may generate.

I confirm that inquiries are being made into an alleged misappropriation of approximately \$30,000 from the funds of the credit union. This matter has been referred to the CIB Fraud Squad and the auditors of the credit union are engaged in an extensive examination of its accounts to verify the extent of the shortfall.

Members of the credit union should not be concerned for the security of their investments, as the auditors have advised that all losses together with costs incurred are

covered by the fidelity insurance policy required to be maintained under section 89 of the Co-operative and Other Societies Act 1967-1978.

Investors may be further reassured by the existence of the savings protection fund administered by the Queensland Co-operative Credit Union League Limited. This fund was established for the purpose of ensuring that credit union members were protected against losses.

### AUSTRALIAN CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION

Hon. C. A. WHARTON (Burnett—Leader of the House): I move—

“That whereas by resolution of 20 October 1972 the Fortieth Parliament of Queensland acknowledged that it was expedient it should appoint delegates of that Parliament to attend a Convention to review the operation of the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Australia and that it should appoint 12 members of that Parliament as its delegates and provide for alternate representation from a further 12 named members; and whereas the intention of that resolution was reaffirmed by subsequent Parliaments; and whereas on 15 March 1985 the Executive Committee of the Australian Constitutional Convention resolved, inter alia, that the size of State Delegations to the Convention should be reduced by decreasing the number of delegates and alternate delegates; and whereas the Convention to review the operation of the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Australia has not concluded its business; therefore this Parliament now resolves—

- (1) That for the purposes of the Convention—
  - (a) Eight members of the Forty-fourth Parliament be appointed as delegates to the Convention to review the operation of the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Australia and to continue the work already undertaken in this regard;
  - (b) The eight members appointed by the Parliament of Queensland shall be the Honourable Sir Johannes Bjelke-Petersen, KCMG, MLA, the Honourable W. A. M. Gunn, MLA, the Honourable N. J. Harper, MLA, Mr G. Alison, FCA, ACIS, MLA, Mr T. J. Burns, MLA, Mr E. D. Casey, MLA, the Honourable Sir William Knox, MLA, Mr N. G. Warburton, MLA.
- (2) That each appointed member of the delegation continue as an appointed member whilst a member of this Parliament or until this Parliament otherwise determines.
- (3) That the Honourable Sir Johannes Bjelke-Petersen, KCMG, MLA, be leader of the delegation and that the Honourable W. A. M. Gunn, MLA, be deputy leader.
- (4) That for the purposes of the Convention—
  - (a) Four members of the Forty-fourth Parliament be appointed as alternate delegates.
  - (b) That where, because of illness or other cause, a delegate is unable to attend a meeting of the proposed convention, the leader may appoint an alternate member being either Mr D. Fouras, BSc, BEcon, MLA, Mr I. T. Henderson, BA, BEd, LittB, ATh, MEdSt, MLA, the Honourable W. D. Lickiss, QGM, FAIV, FAIC, Hon. FRAPI, MLA, Mr K. R. Lingard, BEdSt, BA, AEd, MLA, and the member so appointed shall be a member of the delegation for that meeting.
- (5) That the leader, from time to time, make a report to this Parliament of such information and matters arising out of the Convention as he thinks fit, such report and/or its supporting documents to be laid on the table of this House.
- (6) That the Honourable the Premier and Treasurer and the Honourable the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General provide such suitably qualified assistance for the delegation as it may require.

- (7) That the Honourable the Premier and Treasurer inform the Governments of other States and the Commonwealth of this resolution.”

Motion agreed to.

### PETITIONS

The Clerk announced the receipt of the following petitions—

#### Freezing of Human Embryos

From Mr Cahill (364 signatories) praying that the Parliament of Queensland will provide for a referendum and legislation on the process of freezing human embryos.

#### Pedestrian-activated Traffic Lights, Molloy/Richmond Roads Intersection, Cannon Hill

From Mr McLean (4 536 signatories) praying that the Parliament of Queensland will provide pedestrian lights or other safety features at the intersection of Molloy and Richmond Roads, Cannon Hill to serve the three schools in that vicinity.

Petitions received.

### QUESTIONS UPON NOTICE

**Mr WARBURTON:** I rise to a point of order. Mr Speaker, you will recall that yesterday I directed to the Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs, who was unable to answer it, a question similar to question No. 1 on the Notices of Questions paper. I referred the question without notice to the Minister for Mines and Energy, who asked that it be put on notice. I bring to your attention, Mr Speaker, and to the attention of the Minister that in my concluding remarks on that question I asked, “If so, what are the names of the tribunal members?” Somehow that has been left out of the question. I understand the Minister’s position, but if he is able to tell me the members of the tribunal, I would appreciate it.

Questions submitted on notice were answered as follows—

#### 1. Electricity Authorities Industrial Causes Act

Mr WARBURTON asked the Minister for Mines and Energy—

With reference to the tribunal to be set up under the Electricity Authorities Industrial Causes Act and the debate which took place on 21 March (almost three weeks ago) in which he said “the tribunal will handle all matters that relate to the electricity industry, including awards” and to the fact that, although the said Act has been assented to, there seems to be no evidence of the Act having been proclaimed—

- (1) Is it correct that the Act has not been proclaimed and, if not, what is the reason?
- (2) What is the situation in respect of applications for the 2.6 per cent wage flow-on?
- (3) Is it expected that the said tribunal will hear current applications affecting all Queensland electricity industry workers?

*Answer—*

(1 to 3) The Electricity Authorities Industrial Causes Act 1985 has not been proclaimed because the tribunal has not yet been appointed. The matter of wage flow-ons is currently within the province of the Queensland Industrial Commission.

#### 2. Mr L. Connell

Mr BURNS asked the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing—

With reference to Mr Laurie Connell, who I understand is the original founder of Rothwells Ltd merchant bank, is reported to be one of the biggest buyers at Trentham

(New Zealand) horse sales, and purchased nearly \$2m worth of stock at the sales in 1985—

Is this the same Laurie Connell who was allegedly warned off racecourses in Western Australia for a period of two years?

*Answer—*

Advice has been received from Mr Adams, Assistant Secretary and Racing Manager, Western Australia Turf Club, that Laurie R. Connell, merchant banker of Rothwells Ltd, was disqualified for two years under Australian Rule of Racing 175 (a) from 3 September 1975. The suspension period expired on 2 September 1977.

### 3. State Electricity Commission Steaming Coal Requirements

Mr LICKISS asked the Minister for Mines and Energy—

With reference to the announcement that a large quantity of steaming coal contracted to the State Electricity Commission is to be sold overseas as being in excess of requirements—

(1) Who is the vendor of the coal, the commission or the producing company and, if it is the company, which company or companies?

(2) What is the quantity of coal and what are the financial implications for the commission?

(3) How much coal in excess of requirements for electricity generation in Queensland is currently stockpiled and where is it stockpiled?

(4) What are the current estimates, in tonnes, for the amount of coal required for electricity generation in Queensland in each year from 1985 to 1995 inclusive?

(5) What are the amounts, in tonnes, presently contracted to be supplied to the commission in each year from 1985 to 1995 inclusive?

(6) Are other negotiations being undertaken for the sale of excess coal and, if so, what is the amount of coal and what is the present state of negotiations?

(7) What effect will sales of excess coal have on ordinary sales of steaming coal by producers?

*Answer—*

(1) The tonnage referred to is a forecast surplus occurring over a period commencing in late 1985; thus no contracts have yet been entered into other than for the small quantity sold to the Shell Company of Australia Limited by the Queensland Electricity Commission.

(2) The quantity sold to the Shell Company between December 1984 and February 1985 totalled some 137 000 tonnes. No financial disadvantage was caused to the commission.

(3) None.

(4) Total estimated demand from 1985 to 1995 is 116 230 000 tonnes.

(5) Deliveries under fixed long-term contracts are—

	Million tonnes
1985 . . . . .	8.092
1986 . . . . .	8.751
1987 . . . . .	9.344
1988 . . . . .	11.188
1989 . . . . .	12.170
1990 . . . . .	12.117
1991 . . . . .	11.973

	Million tonnes
1992 . . . . .	11.873
1993 . . . . .	11.229
1994 . . . . .	10.945
1995 . . . . .	10.642

(6) The commission is presently engaged in surveying the marketability of surplus coal, but no specific quantities have been nominated.

(7) It is not believed that there will be any effect on producers' ordinary sales.

**4. Establishment of Pulp and Paper Mill**

Mr LICKISS asked the Minister for Lands, Forestry and Police—

(1) When were expressions of interest first invited from companies interested in establishing a pulp and paper mill in Queensland?

(2) What were the names of the companies that responded to that invitation?

(3) Which company was selected and invited to submit further proposals?

(4) What time limit was placed on lodging these proposals?

(5) How many extensions of time have been granted to that company?

(6) Where is it planned to establish the paper and pulp mill?

*Answer—*

(1) Proposals for the establishment of a pulp/paper mill in Queensland were first called in 1969.

(2) Following negotiations, an agreement was subsequently made with Woodland Limited that required the company to submit by the end of 1979 a firm proposal for the establishment by 31 December 1982 of a pulp mill. This agreement eventually lapsed.

(3) On 4 January 1982, further proposals were invited for the establishment of a pulp/paper mill in the Gympie/Maryborough area. A proposal was received from APM Pty Ltd. On 24 May 1982 Cabinet agreed to a request by APM that its proposal be deferred until economic conditions improved, but decided also that, if any further proposals for the establishment of a pulp/paper mill were received, consideration would be given to these proposals.

(4) On 24 August 1982, a proposal for the establishment of a pulp/paper mill was received from Ekono Oy of Finland, which was initially given until 14 April 1984 to conduct a feasibility study and make an investment decision.

(5) To allow it to conduct extensive paper-making trials in Finland, Ekono was first given an extension until 31 December 1984. The company has subsequently been granted two further extensions to 31 March 1985 and 30 June 1985 to allow it to complete negotiations and make its investment decision.

(6) Under the terms of the 1982 invitation for proposals, the pulp/paper mill is to be established in the Gympie/Maryborough region.

**5. Bikeway, Lawnton-Bald Hills**

Mrs CHAPMAN asked the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing—

Is there a possibility of establishing a bikeway from the Pine shire/Lawnton swimming-pool complex to St Paul's school at Bald Hills through Strathpine to ease the traffic problem?

*Answer—*

Bikeways are the responsibility of local shire councils and therefore do not come within the direct responsibility of the Main Roads Department. Local authorities would need to discuss with the Main Roads Department any proposal to carry portion of the bikeway along a declared road reserve.

**6. Bray Park Railway Station**

Mrs CHAPMAN asked the Minister for Transport—

Has any decision been made concerning a new Bray Park railway station between Lawnton and Strathpine stations as this will no doubt ease the traffic problem within the strip at Strathpine?

*Answer—*

A decision concerning the provision of a new railway station at Bray Park between Lawnton and Strathpine has not yet been made. I must inform the honourable member that the siting of such a station is favoured.

The matter has been the subject of a detailed investigation by officers of the Transport Department and the Railway Department, and I expect to be in a position to make an announcement in regard to this in the very near future. It is my intention to visit the site with the honourable member. If a source of funding can be found, an early announcement will be made.

**7. Development Leases**

Mr CAMPBELL asked the Minister for Lands, Forestry and Police—

With reference to his answer on 21 March to a question concerning development leases—

(1) In what newspapers or other media and on what dates were public applications called for development leases Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8 and 9?

(2) What are the names of the other companies or individuals who also applied for these leases?

(3) Why has the State Government not followed the accepted Government procedure of public applications being called for the granting of development leases Nos. 7 and 10?

(4) With regard to development lease No. 9 and the receipt by the Government of \$316,320 in commission, how many blocks of land were sold to receive this commission, and how many blocks are still to be sold under this development lease?

(5) With regard to the three development leases being issued: (a) were public applications called for these leases, (b) to whom are the leases to be granted, (c) what is the legal description of the land involved, its area, and the purpose for which the land is to be used and (d) what are the proposed commissions to be paid for the sale of this land?

*Answer—*

(1 & 2) This information is not readily available and requires detailed research. Manpower resources are presently not available for such detailed research for an early answer to these questions.

(3) The Land Act provides clearly that any development lease may be issued either after or without public advertisement inviting applications therefor. Each case is considered and dealt with on its individual merits.

Goondoo Pty Ltd was issued with development lease No. 7, as the land was best developed in conjunction with the company's adjoining land.



Lower Cost Homes Pty Ltd was issued with development lease No. 10 on the merits of the case, including, inter alia, that the land was best developed with the company's land, which is located on three sides of it, and the lands possess common drainage problems.

(4) To date, a total of \$348,833 has been received from the sale of 69 blocks in development lease No. 9. This represents only the initial 6 per cent payment to the Crown.

From the broad-approved design, a further yield of 880 blocks may be expected.

(5) With regard to the three development leases being issued, one has been recorded as development lease No. 11 and the other two have not yet been recorded.

The answers to the honourable member's questions regarding development lease No. 11 are as follows—

- (a) No.
- (b) Rainbow Shores Pty Ltd (a subsidiary of Murphyores Incorporated Pty Ltd).
- (c) Description: Lot 22 on plan MCH 4749; area: about 240 ha.; purpose: development and subdivision for business, residential, tourist and recreation purposes.
- (d) Commission: 17½ per cent of sale price.

The information regarding the proposed two further leases is as follows—

- (a) No.
- (b) Subsidiary companies of Mineral Deposits Limited.
- (c) Description: lots 21 and 23 on plan MCH 4749; areas: about 89.4 ha and about 12 ha, respectively; purpose: development and subdivision for business, tourist and recreation purposes.
- (d) Commission: 17½ per cent of sale price.

## 8. Aid to Bangladesh Sugar Industry

Mr CAMPBELL asked the Minister for Primary Industries—

With reference to an article in "The Sunday Mail" of 7 April entitled "Cane Grants Leave Bitter Taste" making unfounded but bitter criticism of Australian Government aid to Bangladesh—

(1) Was this project commenced in 1977 by the then Liberal-National Party Federal Government?

(2) Will the total cost of this project be \$20m rather than \$100m as claimed?

(3) Has the Queensland Government fully supported this project through the involvement of personnel from the Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations and the Sugar Research Institute at Mackay?

(4) Why does the State Government now condemn this self-help aid project for the starving people of Bangladesh in view of National Party support for it at a Federal level, when the project was begun, and also in view of the continued involvement of State Government staff and Queensland sugar industry experts?

Answer—

Upon my reading of the article in "The Sunday Mail", to which the honourable member refers, I can find no reference to this State's involvement in aid to Bangladesh. The article in question refers specifically to Federal Government aid, not Queensland Government aid. I would think that the honourable member, even in his wildest flights of fancy, could not be naive enough to suggest that Queensland has the money or resources to provide aid at the levels suggested in the article in question. He would have been much better advised to address his question to his Labor colleagues in Canberra.

In answer to the honourable member's specific questions—

(1) I am not aware of all the projects which the Federal Government may be funding as a means of aid to Bangladesh. The only project relating to the sugar industry of which I am aware is one being operated and funded by the Australian Development Assistance Bureau as part of Australia's bilateral aid program, which commenced in 1977. As far as I am aware, the only Queensland involvement in that program is that, at the request of the Australian Development Assistance Bureau, several officers from the Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations and one from the Sugar Research Institute were made available as consultants to assist in the project. Total costs involved in relation to those officers have been met by the Australian Development Assistance Bureau.

(2) Regarding cost of the project—since it is a Commonwealth Government project, this State would have no direct knowledge of the total costs involved and I suggest that the honourable member direct his question to the Commonwealth Government.

(3) See (1).

(4) As Minister for Primary Industries I have at no time condemned the project in question.

Whilst discussing the sugar industry, it may be pertinent for me to indicate that I have received a proposal from the Federal Minister for Primary Industries (Mr Kerin) in relation to the composition and terms of reference of the tripartite committee, which will determine the form of aid to be made available to the ailing sugar industry.

The proposal has been referred to the industry for consideration, and next week I hope to take a submission to State Cabinet for approval. Today I have released a press statement to that effect.

#### 9. Queensland Housing Commission Houses, Fassifern Electorate

Mr LINGARD asked the Minister for Works and Housing—

With reference to my previous requests for urgent consideration to be given for the Queensland Housing Commission to provide housing in the north-eastern section of the State electorate of Fassifern—

As this housing is required by the many people who have difficulty in obtaining suitable accommodation in that area, what are the details of recent developments and plans for future projects in the area?

*Answer—*

As a result of the honourable member's representations emphasising the need for increased public housing in the north-eastern sector of the Fassifern electorate, construction programs for the area were increased. Programs for 1983-84 and 1984-85 provided detached houses in the following areas—

	1983-84	1984-85
Loganlea/Loganholme . . . . .	26	2
Bethania . . . . .	—	5
Browns Plains . . . . .	—	22
Kingston . . . . .	32	43
Marsden . . . . .	50	53
	—	—
Total . . . . .	108	125
	—	—

The proposed program for 1985-86 includes 21 detached houses at Kingston. Also included in the overall program is a tender calling for 250 house/land packages, and a number of them will be accepted for construction in the areas mentioned. In addition,

the commission will consider purchasing any suitable houses and/or apartments that are for sale.

The commission will continue to provide housing to meet the demand, and I thank the honourable member for his concern and interest in providing housing for low-income families in need of assistance.

**10. Booklet, "Losing Ground"**

Mr De LACY asked the Minister for Primary Industries—

(1) Did the Department of Primary Industries publish a soil conservation booklet called "Losing Ground" in 1984?

(2) Was this publication withdrawn from distribution?

(3) If so, on whose authority was it withdrawn and what was the reason for its withdrawal?

*Answer—*

(1) Yes.

(2) No. The booklet "Losing Ground" was designed for use in schools throughout Queensland. In September 1984 one copy was forwarded to each primary and secondary school in Queensland. The distribution list included both State and non-State schools, and the total number of copies distributed was close to 1 700.

There has been some demand from the public at large for copies of "Losing Ground" However, that booklet was not designed with a view to meeting the needs of adults on the subject. A further booklet is being produced to meet that need and it should be available for distribution by the end of June this year.

(3) See (2).

## QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

### Deregistration Proceedings Against Electrical Trades Union

Mr **WARBURTON**: In directing a question without notice to the Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs, I refer to the Government's deregistration proceedings against the Electrical Trades Union which today begin before the State Industrial Court. Is the Minister aware that, if his Government's vendetta against the union is successful to the full extent that it desires, thousands of electrical workers in the general section of industry in Queensland will be left without proper and legal union protection?

**Government Members** interjected.

Mr **WARBURTON**: Obviously, the Government considers that to be a good thing.

I now ask the Minister: That being so, and with his Government's recent industrial legislation very firmly in place, could he explain what he and his Government hope to gain by pursuing the deregistration proceedings today?

Mr **LESTER**: I make it very clear that under no circumstances will the Government back down, pull out or anything else. I make it abundantly clear also that the Electrical Trades Union has defied the Industrial Commission on nine occasions. The Leader of the Opposition seems to think that the unions may break the laws whilst everybody else has to abide by them.

Mr **Warburton**: I asked, "What do you hope to gain?"

Mr **LESTER**: I will deal with the ETU for the moment. It supported SEQEB employees but not its members working for private companies. What does the Leader of the Opposition have to say about that? It is for that reason that, when the SEQEB

workers walked out of their jobs, they were so easily replaced. The ETU hierarchy made it clear that it supported only those in the bigger organisations, not its members working for private groups. The Government is correct in its attitude and it will pursue it.

### **Financial Accountability of the Government and Unions**

**Mr WARBURTON:** Unfortunately, my second question, which is directed to the Premier and Treasurer, is rather long. I refer to this morning's "Courier-Mail" front-page report detailing the sudden deep interest by him and the Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs (Mr Lester) in the financial affairs of trade unions and draw his attention to what he has failed to say, namely, that all Queensland trade unions presently are totally accountable for their financial affairs under the provisions of the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act.

In view of his sudden interest in public accountability of trade unions, I now ask: Will he show the same concern for the financial dealings of his Government by initiating an effective and long overdue all-party public accounts committee, as operates Federally and in all States other than Queensland? Will he, as a further result of his lust for accountability, introduce a system for the registration of the pecuniary interests of all members of this Parliament and their immediate families, again as applies Federally? Will he, in addition, announce an open, independent inquiry into the finances of the Totalisator Administration Board where, according to information released by his own Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing yesterday, there are disturbing signs of serious financial irregularities?

**Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN:** Obviously, the Leader of the Opposition is very concerned about the line of action that the Government is contemplating to require accountability of unions.

**Mr Warburton:** They are more accountable than your Government.

**Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN:** Does the Leader of the Opposition support it? It is interesting, Mr Speaker, that the Leader of the Opposition——

**Mr Warburton** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The Leader of the Opposition has asked his question. He will listen to the Premier and Treasurer.

**Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN:** My goodness me, I have touched the Leader of the Opposition on a sore point today. I see the member for Murrumba (Mr Kruger), who is sitting behind him, looking very sour and furious at the Leader of the Opposition's talking about giving an account of his holdings.

**Mr Kruger:** What are you saying about me?

**Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN:** The member for Murrumba must have been sleeping if he did not hear it.

**Mr Kruger** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Murrumba will not comment.

**Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN:** The Leader of the Opposition reflects on the Parliament, to which the Government is accountable. On many occasions, he has an opportunity for debate, especially about our accounts and finances as contained in the Budget.

**Mr Warburton:** The ones you show us.

**Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN:** All of the commitments and responsibilities of the Government are made known to the House. Apart from that, every department——every

part of government—has an accounts section of which a very responsible officer is in charge, and he checks the accounts and controls the expenditure. Again, members of the Opposition cast a reflection on these people when they talk in the manner in which they have spoken.

Further to that, I draw the attention of honourable members to the role of the Auditor-General. Everything that the Government spends or any action that the Government takes relative to finance is audited by the Auditor-General's Department. That department is a very big organisation and is a very reputable organisation. Officers of the department are very jealous of the department's reputation for control of expenditure and the department's accounting for Government spending. The role of the department is to oversee everything that the Government does. Obviously, the members of the Opposition——

**Mr Fouras:** The Auditor-General has already said that he does not like the way in which the Premier and Treasurer gives him the figures in single-line items.

**Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN:** The honourable member for South Brisbane is rather excited, and I cannot catch on to what he is saying.

The plain, cold, hard facts are that, for far too long, union leaders have not been accountable for the way in which they collect funds on behalf of other unions. At the Tarong Power House site, unionists arrived and said, "You've all got to give \$10. We are taking our commission out of it, and passing the rest on to the Electrical Trades Union people." That is the way in which trade unions operate, and I can provide any amount of evidence to support that statement.

The threats and intimidation that are used to get money out of people are unbelievable. The Government of Queensland will now make trade unions accountable, and the Opposition does not like that. However, whether or not the Opposition likes it, it will be done.

#### Meeting of Queensland Senators

**Mr NEAL:** I ask the Premier and Treasurer: Is he aware of a meeting that was held yesterday among Queensland senators at which a resolution that was carried unanimously opposed the proposed cut of \$77.4m in Queensland allocations of Commonwealth grants, and resolved to institute a campaign designed to oppose the proposed cuts? Is the Premier and Treasurer also aware that, despite the attendance of National, Liberal and Democrat senators, the five Australian Labor Party senators did not bother to attend the meeting to demonstrate support for the State of Queensland, which they are supposed to represent?

Can the Premier give the House any information on the proposal by the Commonwealth Grants Commission to cut Queensland and Tasmanian shares of Commonwealth funding, whereas New South Wales, Victoria and South Australian shares will be increased, having regard to the fact that South Australia's share will increase by \$15.6m, and bearing in mind that Queensland's share will decrease by \$77.4m and Tasmania's share will decrease by \$34.9m?

**Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN:** What the honourable member for Balonne has said is correct. Queensland senators, except the Australian Labor Party senators, met yesterday. Of course, Labor senators are not interested in Queensland or in taking a stand in the interests of Queensland.

The senators met to discuss what has become known as a great discrepancy in revenue-sharing, as has been outlined by the honourable member, relative to Queensland's share of tax reimbursements. It should be recognised that the move represents a very blatant and outrageous change in policy and attitude on the part of the Commonwealth

Government. At the last Premiers Conference, it was indicated quite clearly to me by the Labor Premiers that they would not accept——

**Mr Comben** interjected.

**Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN:** The honourable member for Windsor ought to get on a horse again and go bush.

The decrease in Queensland's share of tax reimbursements is very serious. The Government will have much to say about it, because it is obvious that the Commonwealth Grants Commission was ordered by the Commonwealth Government to drop all of its——

**Opposition Members** interjected.

**Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN:** Or the Special Minister of State (Mr Young), or whoever it was.

**Mr Burns:** Are you saying that the Commonwealth Grants Commission is not independent?

**Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN:** Yes. If you want me to, I will come out and tell you what it is.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order!

**Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN:** My word I will! The honourable member for Lytton had better lie low.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I have called for order to be maintained in the House, and I will take appropriate action if my directions are not obeyed.

**Mr Warburton:** May I ask the Premier and Treasurer whether he is casting aspersions on the recommendations made by the Commonwealth Grants Commission?

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! No. I warn the Leader of the Opposition.

**Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN:** In reply to the Leader of the Opposition, I will tell him that the honourable member for Murrumba (Mr Kruger) is chairman of the Pine Rivers Credit Union, from which \$29,000 is missing.

**Mr KRUGER:** I rise to a point of order. This morning, the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General (Mr Harper) made it quite clear that no funds have been misappropriated in the operations of that credit union. The Premier and Treasurer has made a statement, and if he persists, I will take further action in——

**Government Members** interjected.

**Mr KRUGER:** Laugh your heads off, because I can explain my position.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Has the honourable member finished his point of order?

**Mr KRUGER:** No, I have not. I ask the Premier to withdraw the statement and tell the House quite clearly that what he said was incorrect. It is offensive to me, and on behalf of people generally in the community and people in the credit union movement, I want it withdrawn immediately.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Murrumba has asked that the statement be withdrawn.

**Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN:** First of all, will he tell us whether it is correct that \$29,000 is missing? I want to know before I withdraw that.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order!

**Opposition Members** interjected.

**Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN:** Has the \$29,000 been returned?

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I call the Premier.

**Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN:** I think that before the honourable member asks me to withdraw that remark, I am entitled to know whether the \$29,000 has been returned.

**Mr WARBURTON:** I rise to a point of order.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Before the honourable member does so—Mr Premier, you have been asked to withdraw certain statements. Under Standing Orders, I ask you to do so.

**Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN:** Yes, I will withdraw it, but I would still like to know when the honourable member is going to return that \$29,000.

**Mr KRUGER:** Mr Speaker——

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The statement has been withdrawn.

**Mr KRUGER:** I seek leave of the House to make a personal explanation.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Is leave granted?

**Government Members:** No!

**Opposition Members:** Aye!

**An Honourable Member:** Divide.

**Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen:** You can talk on it after 12 o'clock, if you like, and tell us when you are going to bring it back.

**Mr KRUGER:** Mr Speaker, this matter is so important that I seek leave to make a personal explanation.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Murrumba has sought leave to make a personal explanation.

**Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN:** I still have to finish my answer to the Leader of the Opposition. The rules of the——

**Mr KRUGER:** I rise to a point of order.

**Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN:** The Grants Commission——

**Mr KRUGER:** My point of order is that you, Mr Speaker, have not ruled on my request to make a personal explanation.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! As soon as the Premier has finished, I will ask the House whether the honourable member can make a personal explanation.

**Mr KRUGER:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

**Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN:** To continue my reply to the Leader of the Opposition—the rules under which the Grants Commission have operated were changed this year. Who changed them? The Leader of the Opposition does not mean to tell me that the Grants Commission would completely change the rules when it had not finished dealing with Queensland's application. The circumstances under which, and the reasons why, Queensland had lodged an application had not changed, but the rules were thrown aside and a new procedure was adopted. Under that new procedure, Queensland lost

not \$77m but many tens of millions of dollars more than that. Without any warning or any reason being given, the rules were changed and the Grants Commission did not comply with the procedure that it had adopted in previous years.

### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**Mr KRUGER** (Murrumba) (11.38 a.m.), by leave: It is necessary for me to make this personal explanation because of the ministerial statement made this morning by the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General (Mr Harper). The explanation is needed to clear up any doubts that may hang over the credit union mentioned this morning or any other members of the credit union movement as a result of the unprecedented remarks made by the Minister.

The clearest way to explain what occurred is to quote from the minutes of the special meeting of the credit union that I as vice-chairman—at the time, acting chairman—had called.

**A Government Member** interjected.

**Mr KRUGER:** It will take a little while, but it has to be done. I am sure that you will bear with me, Mr Speaker, because of the circumstances and because of the slanderous remarks made by Government members.

The minutes read—

“A.P.M. and Pine Rivers Community Credit Union Limited

Minutes of Special Meeting held on Wednesday, 30th January, 1985.

Opening: The meeting appointed the Vice-Chairman Mr. R. C. Kruger, to be Chairman of the meeting pro tem.”

The full board was present. The minutes continued—

“Business of the Meeting:

The Chairman indicated that the purpose for which the meeting was called was to discuss irregularities in loan arrangements.”

**Mr McPHIE:** I rise to a point of order.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Before the honourable member for Murrumba continues, I have to ask him, firstly, whether he claims to have been misrepresented and, secondly, how he has been affected personally. Unless he is able to prove both of those points, I cannot allow him to continue.

**Government Members** interjected.

**Mr KRUGER:** Mr Speaker, if you just ask the garbage to be quiet for a while—

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr KRUGER:** This is a very important matter.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I ask the honourable member to make his personal explanation.

**Mr KRUGER:** My personal explanation is that I am aggrieved and upset about what has been said. These people have come out to misrepresent APM and Pine Rivers Community Credit Union Limited. I am chairman of the board of that credit union. I find what has been said offensive, and I want to make a personal explanation to clear up the matter.

I understand that the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General (Mr Harper), in the statement that he read to the House this morning, pointed out the situation quite clearly. I ask the Minister also to tell the Premier and Treasurer to withdraw the



statements that he has made, in all fairness to the credit union movement. He brought the matter to the attention of the House at the request of the member for Pine Rivers (Mrs Chapman), who could have approached the board and discussed the problem.

No money has been lost from that credit union. Certainly, under the insurance policies, everything is quite clear and above board. Nobody is at fault except the accused person who is now being investigated by the Fraud Squad at my request and at the board's request. What I was trying to indicate and get into the parliamentary record was the minutes of that meeting, which prove quite clearly and conclusively that every statement that I made and every action that I took were correct.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Does the honourable member wish to table them?

**Mr KRUGER:** I table them accordingly. Also, I have with me the auditor's report to the board and to the registrar.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr KRUGER:** Mr Speaker, in fairness to all concerned, I again ask the Premier and Treasurer to withdraw his remarks and state that he was misled. That would clear the matter up once and for all for the people of the Pine Rivers district.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The honourable member has made his point. Does he wish to table the documents?

**Mr KRUGER:** Yes.

*Whereupon the honourable member laid the documents on the table.*

## QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

### Picket Lines at SEQEB Depots

**Mr NEAL:** I ask the Minister for Mines and Energy: Following the arrest last week of Senator Georges for the third time, has his attention been drawn to a report by the secretary of the metal trades group of unions calling on all Australian Labor Party members of this House to join the picket lines and be counted in the fight against the State Government and that, if they do not, their re-endorsements would be on the line? Since that statement was made last week, can the Minister, who is no doubt monitoring the situation at SEQEB depots, advise the House of the reaction——

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! It is impossible to hear the question being asked. I ask all honourable members to desist from talking.

**Mr NEAL:** I ask: Since that statement was made last week, can the Minister, who is no doubt monitoring the situation at SEQEB depots, advise the House of the reaction from the Leader of the Opposition or his deputy, or indeed from any other Labor Party members, to this clarion call to man the picket lines?

**Mr I. J. GIBBS:** The answer to the honourable member's question is, of course, "nil". The union official's call for Labor members of this House to man the picket lines with their Electrical Trades Union comrades has obviously fallen on deaf ears. Apart from the initial action by the honourable members for Wolston and Kurilpa, there has been a conspicuous absence of any State Labor members of Parliament at those disturbances. So, as the threat by the union official is obviously being ignored, we must now wonder whether the honourable members for Sandgate and Lytton, or indeed any of their comrades who so stoutly defend the union movement in this House, will even be sitting on the Opposition benches after the next State election if they are not re-endorsed.

It is also interesting to note that, of 29 people arrested yesterday, only 12 were known as former SEQEB employees. To date, of all people arrested, fewer than half

have been SEQEB employees. They have been either members of rent-a-crowd, union hacks, union representatives or Labor members of this Parliament and of other Parliaments.

### **Car-manufacturing Industry**

**Mr BURNS:** In directing a question to the Premier and Treasurer, I refer to the announced closure of the Jeep Australia Pty Ltd assembly line at Salisbury and the loss of approximately 70 jobs. The Premier is aware that the General Motors- Holden's plant at Acacia Ridge remains idle since its shut-down last November, despite several announcements from him that foreign car manufacturers were ready to take over the plant. I now ask: When will an announcement be made about which foreign car manufacturer will take over the GMH car plant following the Premier's negotiations here and overseas? What does the Government intend to do about the closure of the Jeep Australia Pty Ltd factory at Salisbury?

**Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN:** I did not think that the honourable member was so simple that he would walk into a trap like that. All honourable members are aware that the economy has been wrecked by the Federal Government. It is obvious that the honourable member did not read the article in this morning's paper because, if he had, he would know the answer to his question. The way in which the Australian dollar has fallen and the economy's worth round the world—

**Mr Burns:** The GMH plant closed last year.

**Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN:** As the honourable member knows, the Australian economy is in a disastrous position and the dollar is at an all-time low, which is unbelievable for this nation. The people in Canberra promised the nation joy, happiness, prosperity and jobs in abundance. They also promised lower petrol prices and lower taxes. In fact, they promised anything that they thought that the people would like to hear. However, exactly the opposite has happened.

The Australian car-manufacturing industry is one of the tragedies of the policies of the Canberra Government and of the state of the economy. It was Canberra that changed the car-manufacturing policy to permit the importation of cars and bodies. The honourable member should know that, because I am sure that he has an input into Federal ALP policy.

**Mr Burns** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order!

**Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN:** I would be amazed if Queensland Labor Party members did not have an input into the Federal ALP policy of permitting the importation of motor vehicles, mostly from Japan. The Federal Government, in an attempt to rationalise the car industry, has permitted the closure of car-manufacturing plants. The Federal Government knows that unless the industry is rationalised it cannot compete with foreign car-manufacturers. Because of the Federal Government's policy of permitting the importation of foreign motor vehicles, times have become very hard for Australian car manufacturers.

**Mr BURNS:** I understand from the Premier's reply that—

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The honourable member will put his second question.

**Mr BURNS:**—GMH closed its plant last November—

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr BURNS:**—because the dollar fell in March!

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The honourable member will ask his second question.

### Unemployment Task Force

**Mr BURNS:** In directing a question to the Premier and Treasurer, I refer to the announcement on 5 February that a task force would be set up to consider unemployment in the State. The Premier said that the State's economy had many problems, and that they have nothing to do with the falling dollar. At the time, it was stated that the task force would report back to Cabinet by April, and it is now 10 April. I now ask: In light of the extreme seriousness of Queensland's massive unemployment problem, will the Premier inform the House when the report from the task force is expected? Will he agree to table that report in the Parliament or, if Parliament has risen, to release the report for public scrutiny? Will the recommendations be implemented immediately or will Queenslanders have to wait until the Budget has been brought down before they are implemented?

**Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN:** A draft report has been prepared and a full report should be released in two to three weeks' time.

**Mr Burns** interjected.

**Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN:** Yes, the report will be released to the public. The honourable member is not correct in saying that the position in Queensland is disastrous compared with those of the other States. Yesterday the honourable member should have read about the comment in the south that job opportunities in Queensland have increased over 51 per cent, which means that at least another 7 000 jobs are available at the moment.

**Mr Burns** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! This persistent questioning during an answer will not be tolerated.

**Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN:** As I indicated recently, Queensland produces more in export earnings than any other State. Queensland is above the Australian average for production and employment. Honourable members opposite do not like to hear that because they live and breathe gloom, doom and misery. If they lived in another State they could do so to their heart's content.

### Australian Labor Party Factions

**Mr STONEMAN:** I ask the Premier and Treasurer: What is the significance of the formation of yet another faction—the centre left faction—within the Queensland branch of the Labor Party? Does he agree with various newspaper columnists that this new faction represents another nail in Labor's coffin, especially in light of the arrest yesterday of the socialist left ALP State president (Mr Ian McLean) for picketing outside the Fortitude Valley SEQEB depot?

**Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN:** From things that have happened and current trends, there is no doubt that on every day of every week the nails are really being hammered into the Labor coffin.

I should try to point out to my colleagues how many factions are in the Labor Party. The centre left, the majority left, the majority centre, the old guard and the mid guard are often spoken about. I would like to ask the Leader of the Opposition to give the House a run-down of the number of factions within the Labor Party. I know that, with his memory, he would not be able to remember them all.

The sad and tragic point is that the Federal Government and the State Opposition have to contend with all these different factions, which, with the turmoil and strife that is currently occurring, are destroying the whole basis of the economy, the security of employment and the incentive to people to do something. There is no questioning that over the next few weeks the State will witness more and more turmoil and strife, which will have the backing of honourable members opposite. Members of the Opposition

want, and are seeking to generate, a disruptive attitude in an element within the community. The Opposition is doing everything that it can to encourage that. That is brought about by all the factions within the Labor Party.

**Ms Warner:** What we are trying to do is support the workers. What are you doing?

**Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN:** Shall I tell the story about the way the honourable member ran away and hid the other day? When the police came, the honourable member for Kurilpa ran and hid behind the bushes.

**Ms Warner interjected.**

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I warn the honourable member for Kurilpa. She will not yell in this House.

**Ms Warner interjected.**

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I warn the honourable member under Standing Order No. 123A.

#### **Potential for Train Collision, Raglan-Yarwun Line**

**Mr PREST:** I ask the Minister for Transport: Is he aware that Railway Board of Inquiry No. 119 into the running of trains 858 and 3 C 37 between Raglan and Yarwun on 18 December 1984 found that a possible collision between a coal train and the Sunlander was narrowly averted? Is the Minister also aware that the major reasons for this potential disaster were that the electronic centralised traffic control system for the area failed; that proper signs, as directions for running crews, had not been installed to the up and down lines, as described in by-law 1121, despite a written direction by the chief engineer dated 28 July 1983, about 18 months previously; and that the push buttons on the up home signal A E 14 at Ambrose had been incorrectly labelled when installed by the contractors and had been certified as correct in the final inspection of the installing contractor's work by railway engineers on 17 July 1984, approximately five months before the incident? What guarantee can the Minister give the travelling public that a combination of these three circumstances cannot occur again in areas where railway traffic, especially passenger traffic, is controlled by CTC?

**Mr LANE:** If I was to endeavour to go into that sort of detail in my answer, I would be accused of filibustering. I am not aware of any of the many matters raised by the honourable member. I have no information that would be helpful to the House. However, if he puts the question on notice, I will be happy to give the information to the House on the next day of sitting.

**Mr PREST:** That is a serious situation. I put that question on notice accordingly.

#### **Failure of Centralised Traffic Control System, Caboolture-Gympie Line**

**Mr PREST:** I ask the Minister for Transport: Is he aware that, on the nights of 27 and 28 February this year, on the single track of the main north coast line between Caboolture and Gympie, the centralised traffic control system failed because of wet conditions and that train crews were forced to continue their traffic movements against constant red signals? Is he also aware that controllers operating on those nights admitted that they had no knowledge of the position of trains on that section of the line and that this often occurs during wet weather? As train crews and controllers alike are concerned that, if those circumstances continue without an urgent review of the present outdated CTC system that is used in Queensland, there will be a main-line, head-on smash, possibly with horrific results, will the Minister undertake such a review and implement the necessary corrective action to return safety to the operations of Queensland Railways?

**Mr LANE:** I am not aware of any of the specifics of the honourable member's question. I will ask the commissioner's advice with respect to them.

With regard to the political propaganda attached to the end of the honourable member's question—I can give the House an assurance that Queensland's trains operate in a safe manner and that Queensland has one of the best signalling systems in the world. In a ministerial statement this morning I said that Queensland has a signalling system that is used throughout Britain where trains travel at 100 miles per hour or 160 km/h. The system is only as good as those persons who man it. If the honourable member is endeavouring to cast——

**Mr Prest** interjected.

**Mr LANE:** Does the honourable member want an answer or not?

**Mr Prest:** I know the answer.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr LANE:** Why did the honourable member ask the question? What a fool! If he is satisfied in himself with the answer, why waste the time of the House?

**Mr Prest** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr Prest** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I warn the honourable member for Port Curtis under Standing Order No. 123A.

**Mr LANE:** I understand the difficulty of honourable members opposite, who are endeavouring to upstage one another as one faction fights another faction. The honourable member, in his own puerile but desperate way, tries to perform as a front-bencher in the Opposition in this House.

**Opposition Members** interjected.

**Mr LANE:** There they go again!

I congratulate the old guard bunch—the Trades Hall group led by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr Warburton)—on its victory in the aldermanic caucus yesterday when Brian Walsh of the old guard was returned as leader of that particular group. Once again, there has been a victory for the old Trades Hall bunch. They are coming back. The Peter Beatties and the new reform group are on their way out. Apparently they passed away with the tragic death of Denis Murphy.

**Mr Davis** interjected.

**Mr LANE:** Back come the jackboots.

**Mr Davis** interjected.

**Mr LANE:** This morning the honourable member is looking very happy about the Labor Party's new success in City Hall! It is now in opposition in City Hall and it is in opposition in this Chamber. The Labor Party is a huge success as an opposition group!

To return to the honourable member's propaganda—Queensland's trains are safe. I can give the public an assurance to that effect.

#### **Home Mortgage Rates; Australian Dollar**

**Mr KAUS:** I ask the Minister for Works and Housing: Has he seen the report in today's "Daily Sun" that states that the Federal Government is deliberately forcing up home mortgage rates to try to prop up the Australian dollar?

**Mr WHARTON:** I have seen the report. I will show a copy of the report to those members who have not seen it.

The report in today's "Daily Sun" that the Federal Government is deliberately forcing up home mortgage rates to try to prop up the dollar is a shocking indictment of the Federal Government. It is another indication that the Federal Government is prepared to sacrifice the housing industry and the interests of the home-buyer.

It comes hard on the heels of other Federal Government moves that indicate a downgrading by Canberra of the housing sector. The Federal Government is sowing the seeds of uncertainty in the housing area.

The Prime Minister's address to the recent annual conference of the Housing Industry Association indicated that the Federal Government was considering reducing its assistance through the First Home Owners Scheme.

From within the Labor Party's ranks comes the proposal for a capital gains tax, which would affect the housing industry. Federal Government sources are now stating that there is a deliberate policy by the Federal Government to prop up the dollar at the expense of home-buyers.

I call on the Federal Government to clear the air on all these matters and to give the industry and home-buyers a clear commitment that the housing sector is not to be downgraded and encumbered by Federal Government actions. Any one of these three steps—a cut in FHOS, a capital gains tax or rising interest rates—would have a detrimental effect on the nation's housing industry.

The Federal Government has been made aware that, even without those factors, the prediction for the housing industry throughout Australia is one of falling activity in almost every State. That was made clear by the recent report of the Indicative Planning Council for the housing industry. The Federal Government's action, or lack of it, is only causing further uncertainty in the vital area of the nation's economy.

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

## MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

### Dairying Industry

**Mr BOOTH (Warwick) (12 noon):** I will speak about recent developments in the dairying industry and, in particular, about what is known as the Kerin plan. I will make some comments about the effect of that plan on the economy and about the effect that the performance of the Federal Minister for Primary Industry (Mr Kerin) has had on the general economy.

**Mr Comben** interjected.

**Mr BOOTH:** I am pleased that the honourable member for Windsor used the word "rationalise" Labor Party members love that word; it simply means "close down".

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row):** Order! The Chamber will come to order. Will all those members who are walking about the aisles please either take their seats or carry out their intentions?

**Mr BOOTH:** In terms of agriculture, the word "rationalise" simply means to close down or downgrade. If the honourable member for Windsor wants to know why the Australian dollar has nosedived, it would be very easy for him to find out. For years—all of my lifetime, and, I would suggest, all of the lifetime of honourable members opposite—it has been found that, in relation to Australia's balance of payments, primary industries have kept the dollar viable and afloat.

I do not think that one Opposition member or one Government member thought that the dollar would dive as low as it has. The lack of credibility of the Australian

Government is pathetic. In my opinion, the Kerin plan to rationalise and close down agriculture is one of the major concerns. Other countries will not be fooled. They know that Australia's balance of payments is such that without primary industry this country will be in serious difficulties.

I do not propose to attack the Minister for Primary Industry (Mr Kerin); I propose to urge him to realise the folly of his ways. What has the Minister done to the sugar industry, and what is he doing now to the great dairying industry? I do not care what the honourable member for Brisbane Central (Mr Davis) or the honourable member for Windsor (Mr Comben) say. If one industry has supported this country and contributed to its development through the years, it is the dairying industry. It provides some of the best food that is available in this country, and it will continue to do so. During my lifetime, Australia has always had problems with selling.

**Mr Comben** interjected.

**Mr BOOTH:** There is no subsidising now. Australia has always had problems with selling. However, the equalisation committee, which had its beginnings in the depression era, and on which I had the honour of serving—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The honourable member for Brisbane Central and the honourable member for Everton are not in their usual seats. I issue a warning. The honourable member for Brisbane Central is holding a conversation across the aisle and disturbing the Chamber. I ask the Chamber to come to order.

**Mr BOOTH:** I had the pleasure and honour of serving on the equalisation committee for a number of years, both as a Federal director and as chairman of the Queensland branch. I urge the Federal Minister to go back to an equalisation committee, because at the present time—

**Mr Vaughan:** Why don't we secede, as the Premier suggests?

**Mr BOOTH:** I am trying to make a responsible contribution. I am not supporting either of those suggestions. I am surprised at the honourable member for Nudgee, because I respect him as a man who usually makes a reasonable contribution. I am trying to do just that.

I repeat: I urge the Federal Minister for Primary Industry to watch what he is doing. I will not go into the details of the Kerin plan yet, because it is fairly hazy, and I will not say that it is all bad. However, a serious disadvantage of the Kerin plan—it will cause terrible trouble in the dairying industry, and perhaps also in other primary industries in this fair nation—is that it is to be implemented on 1 July, without any regulation or preparation. On 1 July, there will be utter confusion; the result will be an absolute disaster.

The Federal Minister is trying to discuss the matter with the industry in Queensland. I do not support those who wish to howl him down. I am prepared to listen to him; probably other people were personally upset.

**Mr Comben:** They are bully boys.

**Mr BOOTH:** Mr Kerin has met with a similar reaction in Victoria. In not one State has he received a favourable hearing. He is not receiving a favourable hearing because he does not have an argument. He is not developing his argument by saying, "This will work. That will work." He has simply said, "On 1 July, I will throw you all to the wolves."

**Mr Comben:** Isn't that free enterprise?

**Mr BOOTH:** The member for Windsor is an exponent of regulated wages—a regulated economy for the worker and price control—but he wants to smash another group of workers. Let us face it: the people in the dairying industry are workers. Most

of them are silly enough to work seven days a week. In some instances, their wives and children work alongside them.

I return to the talk about rationalisation. Of course the Federal Minister will rationalise the industry. If he throws it into utter confusion, he will put thousands of people out of work. Perhaps in a few years' time Australia will be importing dairy produce. That is extremely foolish. It is already importing dairy produce. One would think that Mr Kerin's first action would be to put that house in order. Much of the dairy produce being imported by Australia is being dumped. It may be argued that New Zealand produce is not being dumped, but I doubt very much that it could be produced for the price at which it is presently being sold.

In my early days in the industry, on the frequent occasions when I visited Victoria—I was down there about once a month—I repeatedly heard dairy farmers say, "We can produce, no matter how low the price." Are they saying that today? No way! They are saying, "We have to have more money." They want the price for market milk lifted—and rightly so.

On 1 July, all dairy manufacturers will face a problem, but small manufacturers in particular—those who might export 500, 600 or 1 000 tonnes of cheese a year—will face great difficulty in estimating what they can pay. If there is no regulatory process, the small manufacturer is simply being thrown to the wolves and told, "Get the best you can."

On the last page of the Kerin document are some frightening words. One part of it, which is drawn a little like a balloon, says that the manufacturer will have to get the best he can. That is catch-as-catch-can. That was eliminated from primary industries back in the days of the Depression. Now the dairying industry is being told to revert to that catch-as-catch-can system.

I am urging a tolerant approach. The Federal Minister for Primary Industry should be told that his task is to get primary industries going, not to destroy them. If he did that, he would have the support of all State Ministers, and the economy would benefit enormously.

Surely very few people in Australia thought the dollar would dive as low as it has, losing 20 per cent of its value. It is a tragedy. The Australian dollar is even held in ill repute in comparison with Mickey Mouse currencies. It has fallen in comparison with the New Guinea kina. What a telling comparison that is! One thing that will lift the economy and help the Australian dollar is a healthy primary industry and a will to win in primary industry.

Mr Kerin is now known as "Sweet-talking" Kerin and, unless he changes his ways, he will be recorded in history as the most disastrous Federal Minister for Primary Industry that Australia has ever had.

I urge the Federal Minister to improve, and I also urge the Queensland Minister for Primary Industries (Mr Turner) to do battle with the Federal Minister in an effort to try to talk to him. I realise that it may be very difficult for the present State Minister for Primary Industries to talk sense to his Federal counterpart, but the Queensland Minister must try. On 1 July, the Queensland Minister must try to cushion the effects of problems that are certain to eventuate.

*Time expired.*

#### **Trade Practices, White-collar Crime and Consumer Protection**

Mr VEIVERS (Ashgrove) (12.10 p.m.): On 27 February 1985, I spoke in the House on rackets in the transport courier industry. As a result of further information I have received and more investigation into other aspects of trade practices, I can only conclude that consumer protection and company law in Queensland are a joke. Our State is a con man's paradise, a haven for scavengers, company shysters, rip-off merchants and bogus companies.



The National Party Government is doing nothing about it. This Government has had 28 years in office, but has done nothing about rampant white-collar crime in Queensland.

No-one should tell me that the Government has not known about it. Time after time, companies have taken down Queensland people and the same directors have formed another company, taken others down by the use of similar practices, moved on, and escaped scot-free. And still they operate in this State.

Do honourable members know why such people operate in Queensland, or come to Queensland? I am very serious about this matter, and if Government members would listen for a moment, they might ascertain some facts. The operators I have referred to come here because they know that in Queensland they can get away with disreputable practices.

Hundreds of thousands of dollars can be involved. My investigations have shown that practices amounting to fraud have occurred across a wide range of activities, apart from the transport courier industry that I referred to in February. Some of the activities include door-to-door selling of a whole range of goods and services.

**Mr Randell:** Have you got any proof?

**Mr VEIVERS:** I suggest that the honourable member for Mirani should be very careful lest he be tarred with the brush of protecting some of the criminals who operate in Queensland. If I were the honourable member, I would be very careful.

The activities also include food plans, furniture, savings plans, books, used motor vehicles, stolen cars, mail orders and real estate. Franchise selling agreements are, without doubt, one of the most likely areas in which people can be taken down.

Shysters are fully aware of how to go about getting individuals into these arrangements. They prey upon the basic honesty of people and, in many cases, a man's desire to be his own boss or run his own business.

Unfortunately, an unemployed person is particularly vulnerable. Honourable members would be aware of the problems associated with unemployment. Many men who have lost jobs or been put off because of company take-overs or internal changes have fallen victims to these shifty operators. Some men will grasp at any opportunity to provide security for their families. The matter of pride, too, is involved for a man who wants to do his own thing.

The crafty operators know exactly how to go about getting these men involved and taking their life-savings. The operation takes a form something similar to the following: a small advertisement is placed in a newspaper, attractive enough to get responses from those looking for small business investments as individuals; an interview takes place in an attractive office with every appearance of friendliness, efficiency, success and security. In some cases, the interviews have occurred in solicitors' offices, because the contracts for the franchise agreements are already prepared.

The purchase prices for the franchises can range up to tens of thousands of dollars, but many average between \$5,000 and \$6,000—amounts that are often within the capacity of, or can be borrowed by, most individuals. Frequently, guarantees of work and earning potentials are given, which often look reasonable. But, again, the unsuspecting person is made to feel secure, and that there is nothing to be wary of. Exclusive territories, sole franchises and no competition are also offered as protection and security.

The sell is professional, well-organised, well-presented and well-articulated. It almost always carries a degree of urgency for the money to be paid as soon as possible. The victim is told: "People are lined up wanting to come in"; "You're one of the lucky ones"; "Do it whilst you've got the chance"; "You're the ideal type of person who would succeed in this business"; and "We'll even ring your bank manager for you." All members will have heard of those types of sales pitches. Those are the type of comments that I have heard, as a result of my delving into some of the dubious practices in this State.

After everything has been signed and money paid over, what happens? A whole range of events occur, all of which, or any one of them, can be the sting and send the subcontractor broke. He might find that promises or guarantees of business are not there; or that contracts are not worth the paper they are typed on. That enables the company to impose additional conditions which force the subcontractor to the wall; for example, a percentage of gross earnings taken off the top for administration charges. The percentages vary. In the transport courier industry they vary from 20 per cent to 30 per cent, although I know of one company that is taking 50 per cent of gross earnings from its owner-drivers, which is an absolutely ridiculous situation. It is offering rent-free operating space for three months as an attraction—as a come on.

Members can guess how long that company will last. When it folds, the subcontractors stand every chance of losing their up-front contractual payments with little or no legal protection.

In many cases, exclusive product protection or territorial protection does not exist. The purchase of equipment—for example, a vehicle—from a nominated firm or loans from a finance company are not good deals. Repayments are at high rates of interest. This type of exclusive dealing, with all the potential for kick-backs, is illegal under the Trade Practices Act.

Why then is company fraud so prevalent in this State? I do know that the Federal Trade Practices Commission is doing its best, and has a good track record, in its attempts to nab some of the con men, but its efforts are hamstrung by Queensland's inadequate laws and this Government's lack of commitment to do something about the problem.

Let me talk about four aspects of the problem in this State that need to be looked at urgently. The Fraud Squad is grossly understaffed. This means that white-collar criminals have every chance of escaping. It also means delays in laying charges. Federal trade practices legislation provides a 12-month restraint on charging. Before the Fraud Squad catches up with an individual, he has gone and the company folded.

In the area of consumer affairs, the Queensland Consumer Affairs Bureau is regarded as a joke by every other consumer organisation in Australia. It is called a referral bureau only. It cannot do anything about business transactions. It can only act on private transactions and its record of success, even in that area, is appalling. Seventy five per cent of complaints received by the bureau relate to products or service, contracts, guarantees and warranties. Of the 4,000 complaints received in 1983-84, only 30 or approximately 8 per cent resulted in prosecutions. In every case except one, the grounds for prosecution were failure to supply information. What a joke!

In the area of corporate affairs, Queensland is the only State in which there is no register of company directors. There is no cross-referencing. Joe Bloggs, or a modern day Al Capone can register a \$2 company in this State without any asset backing. He could have gone bankrupt in every other State in the Commonwealth, or taken down hundreds of people elsewhere, but he can legally form a company here because no checks on his background are made by Corporate Affairs. He can take down hundreds of people in this State, the company can fold, he can disappear for a while, and he can form another company and do the same thing. Nothing is done about it. There is no register of company directors kept in this State to prevent that happening. In the age of the computer, I would think that the establishment of a register of company directors ought to be a formality. Who, and what kind of people, is this Government protecting by its refusal to act?

Finally, I wish to refer to some of the professional associations in this State, such as the Queensland Law Society and the Australian Society of Accountants, which should act to clean up their own back yards. As I mentioned previously, some solicitors are operating as fronts for these shady operators.

**Mr Davis:** Aided and abetted by the National Party.

**Mr VEIVERS:** Indeed.

Professional groups need to take firmer action over unsavoury members in their associations. Not only should charges be laid when the codes of ethics for the respective associations are broken, but also offenders should be dismissed.

*Time expired.*

### **Kewland Pty Ltd**

**Mr BAILEY (Toowong) (12.21 p.m.):** It is with enormous concern that I reveal to the people of Queensland a confidence trick aimed at small investors by two foreign confidence tricksters, thieves, or whatever one wants to call con men of this type.

I do not think that any honourable members need to have the concept of pyramid selling explained to them but, for those who are not too sure, let me put it this way: it is a system whereby a large number of people lose a small amount of money as opposed to, as in a recent case of northern sugar-cane-farmers, a small number of people losing a good deal of money.

I am talking about housewives, pensioners, retired businessmen—people who are gullible enough to believe that they can get a massive return from a modest investment.

It is the casket or lotto mentality, but it leaves the way open for the types of rogues who have set up their illegal and immoral operation in Taringa and could rip off a million dollars from naive investors who want an unrealistic return.

Simply, the scheme works like this: A potential investor is offered, for a modest \$33 per unit, with a minimum buy of 10 units, or a minimum investment of \$330, or a maximum investment of \$6,600 or 200 units, a scheme whereby he recoups 33 per cent net return on his investment each week. We are talking here of a return of \$2,200 net profit per week for a once-only investment of \$6,600—over a year, a return of \$114,400, or 1 733 per cent. Surely blind Freddy would find that a slightly suspicious return, at the very least.

But the uneducated small investor falls in—and why wouldn't he? What is he being duped into? Briefly, the investor puts his hard-earned money into the purchase of a bio-culture—yoghurt, to be precise; a crude formula of yeast, cheese and milk which, left for seven days, regenerates another batch of the same muck.

This is the contract that is offered by Bio-nursery, which was the name of the company before it bought this shelf company. At the top it states—

“Congratulations on purchasing your bio-culture! You are now on your way to reaping a large financial harvest. All you have to do is follow the simple instructions listed below. To ensure that your harvest is of a high standard, please follow our instructions explicitly.

#### **ITEMS REQUIRED**

- 1 x bio-culture
- 1 x Teaspoon of finely grated cheddar cheese
- 1 x 200 ml Fresh unboiled milk
- 1 x Wide drinking glass
- Some net fabric or paper tissue.”

Then it is stated that, after seven days, the bio-culture is ready for harvesting and that if people bring it into the company they will be paid 33⅓ per cent. That goes on ad infinitum.

There are some pretty stringent conditions in the contract. At the bottom it states—  
“NEW GROWERS

We are desperately short of new growers! Since advertising is very expensive, please tell your friends about our system and how to make easy money! By helping

our organisation you are helping yourself. We wish you every success in your BIO venture—have fun!”

Kewland Pty Ltd, which, up to recently, traded as Bio-culture, a simple business name, claims that this inert and virtually useless produce is sold to Austria for use in cosmetics. It does not and will not reveal to any Queensland authority, including the Fraud Squad, who is buying what is basically yoghurt.

So hundreds of Queenslanders are buying literally hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of what has been analysed as a growth derived from a mixture of cheese, milk and yeast. They are being paid a return of 33 per cent per week for this rubbish. In fact, when it is brought to the company's office at 7 Princess Street, Taringa, in, believe it or not, small brown envelopes, it is not even checked; it is thrown into a large plastic garbage can. Some investors have conned the con men by taking in all kinds of substances. None were checked, and they got their money. It is my understanding that there are literally hundreds of gullible people waiting to put their money into the pockets of these operators.

The Fraud Squad cannot touch these operators, because they pay the investors. The Health Department cannot touch them, because they grow what can basically be described as inert rubbish and the morality of the scheme is not the concern of that department. This is a pure, unadulterated, pyramid selling rip-off, which has been constructed in such a way that its operators are untouchable by any and all authorities in Queensland.

The early investor puts his hard-earned money into the scheme and receives such a massive return that he tells a number of other people. They then invest and tell more people, who tell other people, until thousands of people are investing into the scheme. As a result, the initial investors get returns from the following investors and reinvest their profits with the hope of increasing the return.

One does not have to be a mathematical genius to realise that the pyramid scam has a definite cut-off point, and those who come late to the party and those who reinvest—which most people do—are left high and dry. The two operators, Dieter and Heinz Habr, will abscond with hundreds of thousands of dollars, perhaps even a million dollars. Most investors will be left with zilch and will have no recourse under law.

The contract that investors sign is quite clearly a franchise, which is a prescribed business interest, for which a licence is required by the National Companies and Securities Commission.

Kewland Pty Ltd uses Bio-culture as a vehicle to defraud the people of Queensland in the same way as the infamous chain-letters and the \$50 house parties worked. To put it simply, 1 000 people invest \$330,000. The pay-out from Kewland Pty Ltd is \$110,000 per week, most of which is reinvested. Word of mouth increases the number of investors until no more are available. At this stage, the out-goings of Kewland Pty Ltd begin to exceed income, at which time the operators take the remaining investments of hundreds of thousands of dollars and bolt. Because no-one has been defrauded until this stage, the operators leave without apprehension.

The secret to an operation of this magnitude is to keep all investors happy at all times because the scheme works on the basis that everybody gets ripped off at the same time. To add insult to injury, the contract states that pay-outs are made on the 15th of the month, which gives the con men 30 days' head start before legal action can be taken.

Who is responsible? In February 1983, the National Companies and Securities Commission was set up to stop these practices. In essence, any person, company or organisation operating a franchise in Australia needs a licence or an exemption from a licence. That licence will operate what is referred to as a prescribed business interest or a business in which the investor is reliant on the stability and credibility of the principal controller.

Kewland Pty Ltd is not licensed by the Federal Government, nor has it applied for such a licence. To do so means a declaration of the entire operation. The penalty under

this law is \$20,000 or five years' gaol, or both. It could be said that \$200,000 per year for 5 years in Boggo Road is not bad money by any means. Of course, the operators would not get the maximum penalty if they were caught. Their ill-gotten gains, which are the funds of Queenslanders, remain intact. Approximately six weeks ago, the National Companies and Securities Commission was informed of this scheme through letters and telephone calls, but it has not acted. One can only wonder why.

Such schemes play on the inherent greed and gullibility of those people who want to make a quick quid, but they usually suck in those who can ill-afford to lose their savings. Something must be done about this blatant exploitation. A strengthening or complete reappraisal of the Companies Code in Queensland is needed because it appears that the law can do nothing to prevent colossal pyramid rip-offs from taking place. That is very disturbing to all Queenslanders and Australians.

### Sugar Industry

**Mr KRUGER** (Murrumba) (12.29 p.m.): Over the last few months particularly and over the last couple of years, some shocking statements have been made by Government members about the sugar industry. Today I want to set the record straight.

I shall take members back to 1982 when the then Minister for Primary Industries (Mr Ahern) promised an inquiry into the Queensland sugar industry. During the debate on the Sugar Acquisition Act Amendment Bill 1982, in front of many honourable members and a crowded public gallery, he promised that an inquiry would be conducted. That inquiry was never forthcoming and the Government did nothing in that field. That was a let-down to the industry. The Minister neglected to perform at that time.

As things in the industry worsened and more serious problems confronted it, the industry undertook its own internal review, which has continued for about 12 or 18 months, with limited results at this stage. However, some good did come out of it, even if it was only that more people are now aware of the problem that has to be solved.

For some time, Government members have been huffing, puffing and going on about the industry and trying where possible to make statements against the Federal Government. They thought they were being politically wise, whereas in fact they were doing more and more damage to the sugar industry of this State. The Government members have got themselves into a ridiculous situation by trying to do some harm to Mr Kerin and the Federal Government.

Only recently, the member for Mirani (Mr Randell) said in the House that "Sweet-talker" Kerin could not fool all of the people all of the time. I do not believe that Mr Kerin set out to fool anybody at any time. Over the last 18 months, Mr Kerin has spelt out quite clearly that the Federal Government would not give across-the-board prop-up funds for the sugar industry until certain obligations were met by that industry. He has stuck by that, as has the Prime Minister. Anything that honourable members might hear or read to the contrary is a heap of garbage, to say the least.

The honourable member for Mirani also said that the hopes of 7 000 cane-growers had been dashed. The hopes of those cane-growers were dashed when members such as the member for Mirani and the Minister for Northern Development and Aboriginal and Island Affairs (Mr Katter) made statements and issued press releases to the effect that no good will come to the industry from the recent meeting in Canberra.

**Mr KATTER:** I rise to a point of order. I have been misrepresented to my detriment. The honourable member has alleged that I have said that the review will be of no use whatsoever. That is not what I have said. What I have said is that the review will further delay the assistance which is needed now to save cane-growers who are going broke and will go broke long before the review has been completed.

**Mr Fouras:** He is making a speech.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row):** Order! I am in control of this Chamber. The Minister has objected to certain implications and I ask the honourable member for Murrumba to withdraw the implication to which the Minister has objected.

**Mr KRUGER:** I will withdraw it, but I will try to give the quotations when I get to his press release a little later on.

In his speech, the member for Mirani said that the cane-growers accepted the plan under duress and that a gun was held at the heads of the delegation. That is a ridiculous statement. I was in Canberra the day before the meeting of sugar industry representatives and I spoke with the Prime Minister for about an hour and a half after that meeting.

**Mr Katter** interjected.

**Mr KRUGER:** The Minister can giggle and carry on, but if he wishes to check the records in Canberra, he will find that what I have said is quite right. I had some useful discussions in Canberra. I point out quite clearly that what I have said is 100 per cent correct. That very evening, the Prime Minister released a press statement, part of which stated—

“The Prime Minister today met with the Queensland Premier and sugar industry leaders to discuss the current situation of the sugar industry.

Mr Hawke said he was pleased with the outcome of the meeting.

‘I think we took today a major step towards securing the establishment of a viable sugar industry which is so important to the economy of Queensland and of Australia as a whole’, Mr Hawke said.”

In fairness to Mr Hawke, I should also say that he went on to speak about the things that the Premier and Treasurer had asked for.

That press release is a clear indication that the Federal Government has set out to do all that it can to ensure that the sugar industry once again becomes viable. At this stage the Federal Government has not decided on the magnitude of the amount of money that will be forthcoming, or whether in fact money will be forthcoming. What the Federal Government has said is that the working party will meet over the next 100 days and present its findings to the Government.

In his recent speech, the member for Mirani said that Mr Kruger, Mr Warburton and Mr Casey went to Canberra. I am quite pleased that we did. I might add that that visit was at the request of Mr Kerin and his staff. They had been in Queensland to have a look at the industry and we had discussions that proved to be of great use to the industry generally. I make no apology for our visit to Canberra, because certainly, without us, things could have turned out differently.

The honourable member for Mirani referred to other industries, such as the car industry and the steel industry, which have received assistance. The Prime Minister (Mr Hawke) met representatives from those industries several times and discussed the problems. There was give and take on both sides. That is the intention of the committee over the next 100 days. If the politicians on the Government side of the House would be responsible and look at what has been proposed instead of trying to stir up an unusual situation so that the Minister does not know what he is talking about, everyone would be better off. The people in the industry would then reap the benefits of that proposal.

**Mr Katter** interjected.

**Mr KRUGER:** The Minister can make that statement if he likes.

However, people with more knowledge of the sugar industry than the Minister have told me that they never expected to receive any cash flow before the end of 1985. However, under the present proposal they may receive it at the end of 100 days from 1 April. If money is forthcoming, the proposal will make it available some months earlier. I am sure that the committee will be a success. If everybody wants to be fair

dinkum about it, particularly the fool politicians on the opposite side of the Chamber, who make stupid statements to conjure up something that will spoil the program—

**Mr KATTER:** I rise to a point of order. The honourable member pointed at me and said, “fool politicians” I ask him to withdraw that remark.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row):** I ask the honourable member to withdraw the word “fool”. I consider it to be unparliamentary language.

**Mr KRUGER:** In withdrawing it, I point out that I did a full circle; I did not single out the Minister for Northern Development and Aboriginal and Island Affairs. If he is the only one who wants it withdrawn, I will withdraw it on his account.

The Premier and Treasurer travelled to the south. He made a big song and dance about his going there to save the sugar industry. He wanted \$75m. After his outburst this morning, I do not know whether he has any credibility left. He is reported in the press as saying, “There has been difficulty getting the industry to speak with one voice. Now we have them all moving in the same direction.”

I have heard the Prime Minister and the Federal Minister for Primary Industry (Mr Kerin) ask everyone to get together on a united front. They said, “We cannot talk to the growers, the millers and the processors.” Honourable members cannot deny that they have said that all along. The Premier has admitted that what other people have been saying for ages is correct. He said that they presented a united front. The Premier said—

“But to date the Federal promise has not been fulfilled—only limited assistance has been forthcoming.”

I deny that it was forthcoming. I also deny that it was limited.

Today I do not have time to go through all the figures. The article that appeared in the press stated—

“State Government leaders said they did not expect a final decision at tomorrow’s two-hour meeting. However they wanted a positive reaction from the Federal Government. . .”

That was spelt out clearly in the “Sunday Sun”

Another report, which appeared in the “Daily Sun”, stated—

“A new tripartite committee will make recommendations on federal funding and restructuring needed to save the troubled sugar industry.

The Premier, Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen, agreed to the establishment of a committee, proposed by Prime Minister Mr Hawke at the half-day sugar summit in Canberra yesterday.

Although similar to previous recommendations rejected by the Premier, the new committee was agreed to by Sir Joh after Queensland won its chairmanship.

Sir Joh said the new inquiry would be a starting point.

‘We’re going to go step by step,’ Sir Joh said.

‘And we accept the commitment that the Prime Minister and Mr Kerin made in relation to responsibility to meet the sugar industry’s needs . . .’”

There was a friendly and good set-up in the south. The discussions went exceptionally well. A committee will be formed. I understand that in the near future the names of the persons who will be appointed to the committee will be released. The sugar industry should then be in a position to go to the Federal Government to obtain any moneys that might be available. I am opposed to any across-the-board approach to the industry at this stage. Where the money is needed needs to be determined. Certain mills are still doing quite well and others are not. It may be that certain mills need help. It may be that only the growers need help.

*Time expired.*

### Commonwealth Disbursements to Queensland

**Mr BORBIDGE** (Surfers Paradise) (12.40 p.m.): The matter that I wish to raise is the national disgrace concerning Commonwealth funding for the State of Queensland and, in particular, comments made by the Labor Premiers of Victoria and New South Wales alleging that the people of Victoria and New South Wales are subsidising the people of Queensland. It is very interesting to note the lack of support by members of the Opposition for sufficient and fair funding for Queensland. I suggest it is about time that honourable members opposite started standing up for the interests of Queensland and the interests of the people whom they claim to represent.

**Mr Booth** interjected.

**Mr BORBIDGE:** As the honourable member for Warwick says, they need a little Queensland backbone. They certainly have not been showing it to date.

I refer to an independent assessment of Commonwealth funding to Queensland carried out by Mr Peter Hennessy, a former Health Department executive and now a private health consultant. That assessment has confirmed the worst fears of Government members in relation to Commonwealth funding. His independent calculations, based on 1984-85 Federal Budget Papers, show that Queensland received \$104.7m under the tax-sharing arrangement, which works out at \$41.35 per capita. That represents 45.9 per cent of the national average. The next lowest per capita share went to Victoria, which received \$344.2m or 93.3 per cent of the national average. Queensland and Western Australia are already burdened with having to subsidise New South Wales and Victoria as a result of Commonwealth tariff protection for their secondary industries. I suggest that honourable members opposite listen to the facts and start to stand up for the people of Queensland, whom they have been selling out day after day, week after week in this Assembly and outside it.

I will cite some official figures of the Industries Assistance Commission in 1980. The subsidies arising from tariff protection amounted to \$430 per capita in Victoria and \$294 per capita in New South Wales. How do those figures compare with the Queensland subsidy of \$123 per capita? Victoria received an additional \$307 per capita or more than \$1,200m per annum and New South Wales received an additional \$171 per capita or more than \$900m per annum to support uncompetitive manufacturing industries to the detriment of what are internationally competitive export-orientated industries located in northern Australia, particularly in Queensland and Western Australia.

Yesterday the Minister for Education revealed the national scandal concerning tertiary education funding in Queensland.

**Mr Smith:** That was a lot of rot.

**Mr BORBIDGE:** As usual, the honourable member was caught out by the Minister. The Minister thrashed him.

The Labor Party in Queensland is selling out the people of Queensland. If it were not for the degree of protection that I have just mentioned, much of the Victorian and New South Wales manufacturing industry simply would not exist. Yet honourable members opposite agree with the Victorian Premier (Mr Cain) and the New South Wales Premier (Mr Wran) that their States subsidise Queensland. I find that incredible. I find it absolutely incredible that members of the Labor Party in this Assembly are not prepared to stand up for the people of Queensland.

**Mr Fouras:** You people never accept the umpire's decision when it goes against you, do you?

**Mr BORBIDGE:** I am glad that the honourable member mentioned that, because if the track record is examined, the previous favourable recommendations of the Grants



Commission for Queensland have not been honoured. I would like to know what the honourable member opposite has been doing to play his part in convincing his colleagues in Canberra to give the people in his electorate a fair go. It is obvious that he has been doing nothing.

It is relevant also to comment on the national deficit and the devaluation of the Australian dollar.

**Mr Fouras** interjected.

**Mr BORBIDGE:** It should be of the utmost concern to the ridiculous member for South Brisbane, who cannot control himself, that Australia is now facing the second-highest current account deficit in 30 years. In 1981, the Australian dollar was worth \$US1.15. A short time ago it was worth US66.5c.

**Mr Booth:** What a shocking turn-out.

**Mr BORBIDGE:** Indeed it is.

In 1970, Australia's gross external debt was \$3.5 billion. By 1980, it had increased to \$13.5 billion. In 1984, it soared to \$43.5 billion. That should concern honourable members on both sides of the House, but obviously it does not concern members of the Opposition.

I refer now to figures calculated by the Development Finance Corporation. Under the national Building Trades Award, employees are entitled to four weeks' paid annual leave, two weeks' sick leave, two weeks of public holidays, 2.6 weeks rostered off a year and wet-weather time of four weeks a year. In other words, employees are paid for 52 weeks but work only 37.4. In addition, there is a 17.5 per cent annual leave loading, or .7 weeks a year, long service leave of 1.04 weeks, pay-roll tax of 3.7 weeks and workers' compensation of 14.85 weeks. Of course, the payments for pay-roll tax and workers' compensation in Queensland are significantly lower. The national average of those benefits, however, totals 19.76 weeks. In other words, for 37.4 weeks of actual work, an employer expends a total of 71.76 weeks' pay, or 1.9 weeks' wages for one week's work. Is it any wonder that the Australian dollar has fallen so dramatically around the world? Is it any wonder that we as a nation simply cannot compete on the world's marketplace?

**Mr Davis** interjected.

**Mr BORBIDGE:** It is because of the policies adopted by the colleagues of the member for Brisbane Central and the policies adopted by his political party.

Time and time again the Federal Government, which is leading Australia to economic disaster, fails to give Queensland its just entitlement under national tax-sharing arrangements. Some members opposite laugh. Labor members fail to lift a finger or argue for a reasonable deal for Queenslanders. Their time will come. They will be indicted by the people of Queensland, just as they were sent to Coventry in the recent local government elections in Queensland.

Members of the Labor Party ought to be ashamed of themselves. Their colleagues in Canberra have sold Queensland out in a conspiracy with Mr Wran and Mr Cain. I suggest that, judged by statements made by honourable members opposite, the Labor Opposition in this place is a willing co-conspirator in the shameful and shabby facade, trick and treachery perpetrated on the people of Queensland.

#### **Commonwealth Disbursements to Queensland; "This is Queensland"**

**Mr MACKENROTH** (Chatsworth) (12.49 p.m.): The speech delivered by the member for Surfers Paradise (Mr Borbidge) reminds me of the saying, "Lies, damned lies and statistics." One Government member referred to Queensland's getting its fair share. Reference was made to per capita payments. On that basis, if Queensland were

to receive its fair share—that is, the same amount paid to all other States—according to the Grants Commission, it would have to accept a drop of \$112 per head of population.

The following are the per capita grants under the new formula, based on the 1984-85 figures: New South Wales, \$508; Victoria, \$504; Tasmania, \$854; South Australia, \$746; Western Australia, \$736; and Queensland, \$716. That is the new formula, and it means that Victoria will be receiving \$212 less per head of population than Queensland, and New South Wales will be receiving \$208 less per head.

If Queensland is such a poor State that it needs additional funds—and that is what Government members have been continually saying since the announcement of the Commonwealth Grants Commission report—perhaps Government members will be able to answer this question for me: Why is it that Queensland has the only Premier who will arrive at the Premiers Conference in June in his own aeroplane? The Premier of Victoria will arrive in Canberra, economy class, on a Trans Australia Airlines flight. So why does the Queensland Premier and Treasurer not sell his \$7.5m jet aeroplane if Queensland needs additional funds? As the Queensland Government advocates a free enterprise system, why does the Premier and Treasurer not fly down to the Premiers Conference on a TAA or Ansett flight?

If the Premier and Treasurer wants to be able to say that Queensland is not receiving enough money, why does he not get rid of the aeroplane, or undertake other cost-cutting measures?

**Mr Borbidge:** You ought to be ashamed of yourself.

**Mr MACKENROTH:** Government members ought to be ashamed because they are always saying that Queensland is not getting enough revenue. I ask: Why is money squandered in Queensland?

I wish to draw the attention of honourable members to the finest example of squandering money that I have ever seen. I refer to a publication 10 copies of which I received yesterday. The title of the publication is "This is Queensland". Having read it, I really think that it should be retitled "This is Fantasyland". That is about all the publication amounts to.

I want to know the cost of the book. Is it \$30 or \$40? Where is the name of the printer to be found in the book? Every other book that is bought in Queensland has the printer's name in it, but where is the printer's name in this book? I hope Government members can tell me where the book was printed, how many copies were made and its cost.

I wish to quote from a few passages that appear in the book, so that the people of Queensland can understand my appraisal. Part of the way through the book, the following passage appears—

"It could be claimed that the Queensland business executive is different from his counterparts in other parts of the world."

It should be remembered that the book is printed in large type so that National Party members of Parliament can read it. It is expressed in very simple English so that most National Party supporters can understand it.

**Government Members interjected.**

**Mr MACKENROTH:** That is about what the publication amounts to. Government members should just listen if they have not read it. With some Queensland Government publications, I cut out the photograph of the Premier and Treasurer, and replace it with my own photograph; but I could not give this publication to anyone. The passage I quote from continues as follows—

"He knows he has the talents and products other people want, is supple in negotiation, but firm in agreed commitment.

'Please', 'Thank you' and 'Have a happy day' are customary greetings.

Visitors to Queensland are welcome. They are greeted by smiles, ready handshakes and 'can we help you' exchanges."

Visitors are also greeted by National Party bagmen telling them who they should pay the money to. The Government obviously forgot to print that. The publication continues—

"Queenslanders are by nature agreeable and tolerant of people and situations that would provoke more volatile temperaments."

Perhaps that is a true statement, but it is well known that the Premier and Treasurer is not a Queenslander. Perhaps that is the reason that the statement appears in the book. The publication continues—

"Queensland's population has been spiced by large-scale migrant intakes. While these people have merged with Queenslanders, they have retained their cultures and customs. There is a ready acceptance and understanding of their diverse lifestyles, philosophies and outlooks."

That is why a Cabinet Minister called the honourable member for South Brisbane a wog. The article refers to acceptance, and that is an example of the way in which Greeks are accepted—the Government calls them wogs. That is the kind of treatment that migrants receive at the hands of the Queensland Government.

The article gets better, for those honourable members who have not read it. It states—

"Queenslanders enjoy democratic freedom."

I emphasise the words "democratic freedom", and point out that people cannot even go out into the streets without being arrested.

**Mr Borbidge:** Yes they can.

**Mr MACKENROTH:** People cannot go out into the streets without being arrested.

Queenslanders can vote for the Government representatives of their choice; but, of course, if they live in a National Party electorate they get two representatives, whereas if they live in a Labor Party electorate they get only one representative. That is what the redistribution Bill that will be debated this afternoon will do.

The document continues, and I am sure that the young journalist from 4ZZZ, the Channel 0 cameraman who was threatened with arrest and the four journalists whom the Government took to court last Friday will love this next part. The document states that there is freedom of the press in Queensland. What a load of rubbish! I really cannot believe such statements. The document then states—

"The majority are Christians. Most people religiously observe important events in their life and have the choice to practise the religious belief of their upbringing."

Yet when one looks at this morning's newspaper, one sees an article referring to statements made by the Anglican Primate of Australia, Sir John Grindrod. The article states—

"The Anglican primate of Australia, Sir John Grindrod, last night defended the right to strike of workers in essential industries. .

Sir John said that people who studied history would be aware that once communities were deprived of normal democratic freedoms in particular areas, there was no certainty how far those rights would be eroded."

Sir John is the leader of one of the major Australian churches. The document then refers to how those Christians are allowed to have their say. How many of the sacked SEQEB workers—

**Government Members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row):** Order! The multiple interjections from my right are not adding anything to the debate.

**Mr MACKENROTH:** Then comes what must be the greatest pearl of all. I can just envisage somebody in the Premier's Department watching some sort of American rubbish on television as he wrote the next couple of sentences. If members listen, they will all know what it is. I can remember watching this show as a kid—

“They also respect the democratic structure and traditions of their society—truth, justice and fairness.”

And the American way! Can members not see it? Superman flies through a window of the Executive Building, and there he is—Sir Joh! The superman of Queensland! The document continues—

“All nurture national pride and a respect for all their State and its institutions.”

It is all so much drivel! Yet this document has been produced to tempt people to come to Queensland.

The document continues—

“Social equality, stable employment, parity of wages—”

Queensland has the lowest wages in Australia, but according to this document it has parity of wages—

“and constantly rising standards of living are benefits the State Government has provided . . .”

Can Government members tell me when this State Government has appeared before the Industrial Commission and supported a wage rise for workers in this State? This Government does not support wage rises for workers. The union movement has had to fight all the way to obtain any sort of conditions for the workers, and it has had to fight this Government on every occasion.

**Mr FitzGerald** interjected.

**Mr MACKENROTH:** The State Industrial Commission will automatically grant the latest cost of living increases, will it?

As I said, the document referred to the benefits that the State Government has provided. Here we go again—

“... under the Westminster Parliamentary System.”

That would be the most hackneyed phrase one could ever hear. I really cannot believe it.

The document's last paragraph states—

“Consequently, most Queenslanders enjoy a wholesome life enhanced by good wages, acceptable working hours, generous holidays and long-service leave and retirement benefits.”

Why, then, does Queensland need more money from the Commonwealth Government?

*Time expired.*

### Drugs

**Mr GOSS (Salisbury)** (12.59 p.m.): I want to draw to the attention of the public the failure of this Government to do anything about the increasing drug problem in the community. Almost 18 months ago, the Premier and Treasurer (Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen) and the National Party promised tough new drug laws. Those proposed drug laws are nothing more than superficial, because they provide life sentences for drug-pushers when Supreme Court judges already have a discretion to impose a maximum sentence of life imprisonment.

What point is there in introducing mandatory life sentences if none of the big herion-pushers are ever actually caught? That is the manner in which this Government is exposed for failing to deliver the goods and for failing to keep its promises to the public to seriously combat the drug problem.

Let me look at the Government's promises. Eighteen months ago, during the State election campaign in Cairns, the National Party promised, with a huge fanfare, tough new drug laws. They will not be worth the paper on which they are written.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Row): Order! Under the provisions of Standing Order No. 36A, the time allotted for the debate on matters of public interest has now expired.

*Sitting suspended from 1 to 2.15 p.m.*

## ELECTORAL DISTRICTS BILL

### Second Reading—Resumption of Debate

Debate resumed from 27 March (see p. 4512) on Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen's motion—

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

**Mr WARBURTON** (Sandgate—Leader of the Opposition) (2.15 p.m.): No matter how legitimate and constructive the Opposition's objections to this legislation may be, we accept the inevitable. It will be forced through this Parliament by the National Party unamended. Irrespective of the substance and validity of the matters that we raise today, the National Party will undoubtedly use its numbers to ensure that this Bill becomes law.

That being the case, I want to say at the outset that, because the National Party Government is hell-bent on prostituting parliamentary democracy in Queensland, I have no qualms about giving my full support to any moves that are made in the Federal Parliament to have this kind of legislation outlawed. The days of any Government, irrespective of its political colour, rigging and rorting electoral boundaries can no longer be tolerated. This is an issue that can in no way be construed as being a matter of States' rights. It is a responsibility of the Federal Government to ensure that electoral justice prevails. I assure honourable members that the members of the parliamentary Labor Party in Queensland will be urging their Federal colleagues to take appropriate legislative action.

I refer to the introduction by the Premier and Treasurer (Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen) of this redistribution legislation in this House on 27 March. The Electoral Districts Bill was presented to Parliament by the Premier as a Bill “To make provision for the better distribution of electoral districts” The Bill would be more honestly and accurately described as a Bill to make provision for the further rigging of electoral zones and electoral boundaries in Queensland for the purpose of giving the Queensland National Party a grossly unfair electoral advantage. In doing so, of course, the National Party violates and debases basic democratic principles.

I agree with the Premier's observations in his second-reading speech, when he said—

“... a redistribution of State electoral districts in Queensland is absolutely necessary.”

Later, he said—

“... a redistribution is necessary to redress the imbalances.”

This, however, is the full extent of any agreement between the National Party Government and the Opposition on this Bill. We agree wholeheartedly that a redistribution is necessary to redress the imbalances that exist in Queensland's electoral system. But we do so for reasons entirely different from those advanced by the National Party.

It needs to be emphasised that this redistribution does absolutely nothing to address or redress the fundamental inequities and imbalances in the State's electoral system; rather, this Bill seeks to further entrench the already blatant gerrymander of electoral zones and electorate boundaries. It seeks to perpetuate electoral injustice in the State of Queensland.

The Premier maintains that Queensland's population increase requires additional seats in the State Parliament. He claims that the National Party State Government is increasing the number of State seats to give Queenslanders fairer representation. Nothing could be further from the truth. This claim by the Premier defies logical explanation.

The whole purpose of the Government's move to create extra seats is an attempt to preserve the National Party in Government. That is what it is all about. It is a deliberate attempt to preserve the National Party in Government in Queensland. The additional seats have got nothing to do with giving people fairer representation. There never has been fair representation under the National Party's system of gerrymandered electoral zones and boundaries, and there never will be. I repeat: no justification can be put forward for additional State electorates and, consequently, additional politicians.

The only explanation that the Premier can offer is that the State's population has increased. That in itself does not justify additional seats. It is my belief that 82 seats are sufficient, and my opinion is shared by the majority of Queenslanders. The National Party's efforts to misrepresent the policy of the Australian Labor Party on electoral justice are typical of its deceitful and scaremongering tactics. During his second-reading speech, the Premier told the Parliament that—

“One vote, one value applied to Queensland would see seven electorates taken from northern and western Queensland and placed in the south-east of the State, where 60 per cent of all seats are already located.”

That is nonsense, and it does the Premier of Queensland no good to persist in his efforts to hoodwink the people of Queensland on such an important matter. However, the Premier and the National Party will stop at nothing to mislead the people about the effects of Labor's policy. On Monday of this week, the Deputy Premier (Mr Gunn) parroted the Premier's ridiculous claims.

The Labor party has already substantiated how its policy would not be detrimental to the representation of western and far-northern districts in the Queensland Parliament. Not surprisingly, the National Party is not at all interested in the facts, but prefers to deal in falsehoods and fabrications.

For the record—a redistribution of the State's 82 electorates based on the one vote, one value principle would retain 14 electorates from Mackay north. The area now designated as the western and far-northern zone would be included in eight new electorates, which is no fewer than the number that exist at present. No reduction in the number of seats that presently cover these areas would occur.

The Premier contends that the proposals provided for in this Bill are “soundly based and reasonable” From the National Party's jaundiced point of view, that may be so. However, any objective assessment of the contents of this Bill can lead to only one conclusion: that it is irrationally based and totally unreasonable.

Queensland's population growth since the last redistribution does not substantiate “an urgent need to provide a more satisfactory parliamentary representation”, as the Premier claims. Certainly, a more satisfactory parliamentary representation is needed urgently to dismantle the rigging by the National Party of the State's electoral system.

Parliamentary democracy is based on the principles of equal voting rights for all people, and Government by the majority as indicated at elections that have been conducted fairly. The National Party does not possess these qualities and never will possess them.

I draw to the attention of the House Article 21 (3) of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states—

“The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government. This will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.”

Clearly, this legislation is a flagrant violation of that declaration. This legislation does not provide for genuine elections by universal and equal suffrage. Rather, it provides for undemocratic elections under an electoral system that is rigged expressly for the benefit of the National Party and to the detriment of its political opponents.

I also draw the attention of the House to a quotation from Mr Justice Warren of the United States Supreme Court. In 1969, on the subject of gerrymanders, he said—

“Legislators represent people, not trees, nor acres. Legislators are elected by voters not farms or cities or economic interests. To the extent that a citizen’s right to vote is debased; he is that much less a citizen. The basic principle of representative government remains and must remain unchanged. The weight of a citizen’s vote cannot be made to depend on where he lives.”

The Australian Labor Party supports constitutional Government and parliamentary democracy. It believes that all electors’ votes should be of equal value, no matter what their race, occupation, income or place of residence.

In view of this travesty of electoral justice being inflicted on the people of Queensland by the National Party, it is very necessary for the ALP in this Parliament to propose its alternative policy on this very vital issue of redistribution. A Labor Government will legislate to establish an independent and impartial electoral commission which, once and for all, will remove the influence of politicians over electoral boundaries. This initiative will effectively stifle the prospect of political abuse and interference in the drawing of electoral boundaries. Only by making that provision will the people of Queensland be assured that the basic tenet of equality between voters is respected.

The guide-lines in the ALP legislation would be—

There should be one quota for the State, no separate zones, and a variation of plus or minus 10 per cent allowed to the electoral commissioners.

The persons who are to be the electoral commissioners should be named in the Electoral Districts Act, and not simply appointed by the Premier or by the Cabinet.

They certainly would not be reporting directly to the Premier and Treasurer, as is provided by the legislation; they would be reporting to this Parliament. The third guideline would be—

All submissions, objections and reasons for decisions must be made public.

There is no need for justification for the National Party’s present four-zone system. The ALP’s proposal for a single electoral quota with a 10 per cent enrolment tolerance would still give effective representation to all Queenslanders. As I have outlined, under Labor’s policy there would be no fewer seats from Mackay north and in the areas now covered by the western and far-northern zone than at present. At 31 December 1984 1 523 361 voters were on the State electoral rolls. Under Labor’s proposal for 82 electorates, the average enrolment would be 18 577 voters; the 10 per cent upper limit would be 20 434 voters; and the 10 per cent lower limit would be 16 719.

A provision the Labor Party would include, which is conveniently absent from the present legislation, would be one providing absolute protection for the electoral commission against political interference in the performance of its duties. In Victoria, electoral laws provide for a penalty of \$5,000 for any person found guilty of an offence to obstruct or otherwise influence a member of the commission other than by way of an authorised submission.

Queensland can no longer tolerate a system of electoral redistribution which has been abused by National Party Ministers and National Party back-room manipulators, such as Sir Robert Sparkes and Sir Edward Lyons, and others like them. Labor proposes for Queensland an independent electoral commission that would be responsible for the equitable redistribution of electoral boundaries, absolutely free from political influence.

The commission would be empowered to initiate a redistribution when it considered one necessary, not when it was convenient for the Government of the day.

It is worth recalling that in 1910 the Queensland Parliament passed an Electoral Districts Act which provided for 72 electorates on a one vote, one value basis. Members of Parliament then had no telephones, no electorate offices, no electorate secretaries, no travel rights other than a railway pass and no electoral allowances. Redistributions in 1922, 1931 and 1934 followed the principle of one vote, one value.

One might reasonably ask why members of Parliament, who now have free telephones, electorate offices, electorate secretaries, electorate allowances and broad travel entitlements, should not still be elected on a one vote, one value principle. The case for equal electorates is clearly stronger in 1985 than it was even in 1910.

It is true that in 1949, the Hanlon Government legislated for a redistribution that was a gerrymander. That is admitted.

**Government Members** interjected.

**Mr WARBURTON:** That is one thing about the Australian Labor Party; it admits that problems were experienced in the past.

**Government Members** interjected.

**Mr WARBURTON:** Perhaps if Government members listen rather than chant, they will understand the thrust of what I am about to say.

The Country-Liberal coalition had obtained more votes than the ALP in 1947, and the 1949 redistribution was a gerrymander—I am the first to admit that—designed to keep Labor in office. It is now 1985 and life has changed. So it should have.

Fortunately, equal franchise or one vote, one value is now written into both State and Federal Labor Party platforms. There will be no possibility of such gerrymanders occurring in the future.

In 1949, Premier Hanlon said—

“Basically in a democracy the ideal is equal representation for all people throughout the State irrespective of class or calling.”

I fully endorse that statement, and I am sure that my colleagues would endorse it, too.

It is admitted that Hanlon later said—

“It is necessary for us to modify the opinion that it was essentially right to have a system under which each vote had exactly the same value.”

I emphasise that that is not the view that the Australian Labor Party now accepts.

**Government Members** interjected.

**Mr WARBURTON:** Perhaps Government back-benchers will be interested in what I am about to say. Had a number of my colleagues and I been members of this Assembly in 1949, I am sure that we would have found ourselves in total agreement with the words of a new Country Party back-bencher, none other than Johannes Bjelke-Petersen. He described the proposal to divide the State into four electoral zones as—

“A crafty and vicious piece of legislation . . . in this legislation the people are given the right of voting, admittedly, but the odds are so greatly against them that to achieve the results they desire is impossible because the numbers set out will mean nothing but that the majority will be ruled by the minority.”

This latest redistribution legislation introduced by the Premier is designed to try to entrench one party, the National Party, in power. This legislation places the Queensland electoral system on a par with regressive and undemocratic countries throughout the world. This National Party legislation destroys absolutely any notion of democracy existing in Queensland.



Under the legislation, the electoral commissioners have no real independence. The legislation is so restrictive that the commissioners cannot help but come up with a redistribution that is favourable to the National Party. In addition, they are under the direct control of the Premier, and they must report their recommendations to him. Admittedly, that provision has been in legislation since 1971, but where else would one see legislation in which important issues, such as decisions or recommendations by a commission specially set up, are reported to the Premier? The legislation provides that the commissioners report directly not to the Parliament, not even to the National Party Government, but to the Premier. From then on, one does not need a vivid imagination to predict exactly what will occur. The end result is that the Premier might as well pick up a pencil and draw the boundaries himself.

The legislation is a farce, and the Opposition totally opposes it. The Australian Labor Party believes that redistributions must, as a matter of urgency, be taken out of the hands of politicians. I repeat that this Bill sets out to further prostitute the parliamentary and political processes of Queensland and destroy democracy in this State.

Possibly the most serious aspect of this manipulation of boundaries and electorate sizes is that it seeks to prevent the voters from changing a Government with a normal swing against that Government. An Opposition that gains more primary votes than a Government should legitimately expect to come to power.

The argument that such electoral rigging is legitimate because "the country produces all the wealth" is based on a false premise. It falls down further when one looks at the seats won by a particular party in the artificially created zones.

It is not the country people who are being favoured by the National Party gerrymander; it is the National Party that is being favoured, and pursues this unfair advantage.

Under this legislation, the denial of electoral justice is accomplished in four stages—

Political interference by the National Party in the setting of electoral zone boundaries;

Provision for huge variations in electorate quotas between zones;

Political interference by the National Party in the setting of individual electorate boundaries through its control over electoral commissioners; and

Provision for huge variations in voter enrolments, of plus or minus 20 per cent, for electorates within particular zones.

That is what is occurring by virtue of this legislation. It is a multi-tiered rort.

One point must be made clear: The National Party regards this legislation as the most important in the statutes in Queensland. This Bill, soon to be an Act of Parliament by virtue of the numbers game so effectively played by the National Party, is the political life-blood of the National Party.

The National Party is afraid to face the people of Queensland in a fair electoral contest. It wants to remain in Government under false pretences. Provisions in this legislation open the way for collusion between National Party Ministers and electoral commissioners during the drawing of boundaries.

Because the legislation does not make provision for the public release of all submissions and objections, a massive electoral fiddle can occur between National Party Ministers, party officials and their two hand-picked commissioners.

The people of Queensland have no guarantee that a fiddle will not occur in the coming redistribution. The Principal Electoral Officer of the day is traditionally an automatic commissioner who handles machinery matters. The other two commissioners are hand-picked by the National Party to do the National Party's bidding. They are selected because they will comply with the wishes of the Premier and because they are prepared to be a party to the rigging of boundaries. That is what it is all about.

It is amazing that people who try to hide the facts and carry out sneaky operations are found out.

During the last State redistribution in 1977, Sir Douglas Fraser and the then Archibald Archer—later Sir Archibald and now the late Sir Archibald—used to visit the Premier in his Executive Building office. They entered the building through the basement so that they did not have to walk into the Executive Building from George Street and be seen. Unfortunately for them and unfortunately for the Premier and Treasurer, they were seen on numerous occasions.

The people of Queensland need a guarantee that boundaries will be drawn without any assistance from Premier Bjelke-Petersen, National Party president Sir Robert Sparkes or any other person associated with the National Party. Confidentiality in the matter should be an absolute prerequisite. The commissioners must be people of impeccable integrity, allowed to carry out their responsibilities absolutely free from political interference. Their honesty and trust must be beyond reproach. That, I put it to the Parliament, is urgent and necessary.

In summary—this electoral legislation betrays the people of Queensland. One would hope that voters recognise this redistribution for what it really is. One would hope that the people of this State would not tolerate any political party legislating for such undemocratic principles. One would hope that the people will reject this legislation and, consequently, the National Party for its introduction.

I now refer to comments in an editorial in “The Courier-Mail” of 17 March 1977, on the last occasion on which changes were made. It was at that time that the 1971 Act was amended. Under the heading “Wanted: A Fair Redistribution”, the editorial said—

“There cannot be a fair distribution of electorates—and therefore fair representation in Queensland Parliament—if the Premier has stacked the deck beforehand.”

Incidentally, it was the same Premier. The editorial continued—

“Yet this is the position as Mr Bjelke-Petersen prepares to put through a redistribution this year on his terms.”

It continued—

“The present system of distributing electorates based on four zones created in the Electoral Districts Act of 1971 is totally slanted in favour of the Nationals. The Act is grossly unfair, even iniquitous.

The planned redistribution seemingly will ignore this. It may rearrange boundaries, and lessen some anomalies in the process, but the root cause of the Queensland gerrymander is to be ignored.

Some people fear that the Nationals want a gerrymander on top of a gerrymander—a fix of the boundaries on top of the zoning fix.”

The editorial also observed—

“... if they follow him (the Premier), the Liberals will make themselves partners in one of the shabbiest deals the State has known—and it has known a fair number.”

At that time the Liberal Party was in coalition with the National Party. As the parliamentary record shows, unfortunately, the Liberals were willing partners to that shabbiest of deals in 1977.

Today we are considering legislation that is far worse than that described by “The Courier-Mail” in 1977. I will be very interested to watch and listen to the members of the Liberal Party in the debate. I understand, through their leader, the member for Nundah (Sir William Knox), that they intend to oppose the legislation as it stands. Although the Liberal Party has indicated that it intends to oppose the increase in the number of seats provided for in the legislation, there could be some uncertainty about where it stands on the whole concept of the Bill before the House. In other words, does

it support the zonal system or not? I point out for the record that it certainly did in 1977, when the then Deputy Premier and Treasurer, the honourable member for Nundah, had this to say—

“When the proposal was put up in the normal manner in the joint party room, it had the support of all members. There was no dissent in the party room on this issue. There was no confrontation, no wrangling, no fighting one another and no amendments were proposed. I want to make that perfectly clear.”

**Mr Innes:** Were you there?

**Mr Warburton:** No. I am quoting direct from “Hansard” That is what the member for Nundah (Sir William Knox) said in 1977. The honourable member for Nundah introduced the amendments to the Electoral Districts Act that ushered in the 1977 redistribution. Voting with him in support on that occasion were the honourable member for Mount Coot-tha (Mr Lickiss) and the honourable member for Stafford (Mr Gygar).

I sincerely hope and trust that the Liberal members of Parliament are unanimous in their opposition to the National Party gerrymander proposals, and that they will support the Australian Labor Party in its total opposition to what has been proposed.

Together with my colleagues, I personally condemn the legislation in the strongest possible terms and I wish to advise you, Mr Deputy Speaker, that the Queensland parliamentary Labor Party is in total opposition to the Bill that is currently before the House.

**Mr Simpson (Cooroora) (2.45 p.m.):** It is incredible that the Leader of the Opposition (Mr Warburton) has been so pathetic in speaking to the legislation that he has had to resort to denying the principles that were espoused by his predecessors when the electoral system was introduced many years ago.

The Leader of the Opposition has claimed that the system was a gerrymander. I wish to offer a definition of the term “gerrymander” The term originated in the United States and it means, “to divide a country into electoral districts in such a way as to give a political advantage to the party in power” I emphasise the words “advantage to the party in power”, because I wish to expand on that extract at a later stage. It is timely to point out that if the political party referred to does not retain power, the electoral system is proven to no longer constitute a gerrymander.

The definition explains that, “the word perpetuates the memory of Governor Gerry of Massachusetts who resorted to this strategem in 1812, and is formed by coupling his name with the latter half of the word ‘salamander’.” The story goes that while a group of politicians were studying an electoral map, one of them commented that the unusual shape of one of the constituencies resembled a salamander, whereupon the word “gerrymander” was hit upon.

Leaving aside the definition, I turn now to refer to the mockery of the electoral system that has evolved. I realise that members of the Opposition are not the only people in politics who bring out as the excuse for losing an election the claim, “The system is wrong.” Members of the Opposition are adept at blaming the umpire, and, in the same vein, the Opposition blames the rules of the game. However, it must be recognised that, in politics, representatives cannot run away and play another game.

Today, honourable members witnessed the audacity of the Leader of the Opposition in suggesting that another Government should subsume the rights of the Queensland Parliament. Shame on the Leader of the Opposition! And shame on the honourable member for Windsor, who said that he would vote out the very existence of the State Government! Today, the Leader of the Opposition did exactly the same thing when he said that he would abolish the State Parliament. That demonstrates how corrupt the Australian Labor Party has become.

I turn now to examine the electoral system that aims at equal representation. It will be necessary to refer to the Magna Carta and the whole basis of democracy.

**Mr Hamill:** You do not have a very good argument, do you?

**Mr SIMPSON:** You would not be able to follow it. I know that the honourable member for Ipswich considers himself to be an intellectual. This morning, I obtained the identification of "intellectual" and it means someone who is educated beyond his intelligence.

**Mr Borbidge:** What the Labor Party has advocated today is completely foreign to the Westminster system.

**Mr SIMPSON:** Of course it is.

The principles that laid the basis for the Magna Carta meant that the people governed themselves instead of being ruled by the monarch. Because each individual could not fit into one place, the people elected a representative. The key to the whole principle of fairness in electoral representation is equality of representation, and not equal numbers among electorates. That occurs because of the difficulty that a constituent has in communicating with his representative.

Opposition members are afflicted with tunnel vision. They do not look beyond what they read in the media, and what they read is what they have given to the media. All they can talk about is the gerrymander in Queensland; they do not bother to look at the world scene.

I will do so, however, and refer to the mother of democracy, Great Britain, and the weightage system that applies there. Opposition members are really going crook about the fact that all Queensland electorates do not have the same number of electors. The same system applies in many other countries and has been introduced for the same reasons; the difficulty of and variation in access to the member. In Great Britain there is a weightage of four and a quarter to one.

**Mr Comben:** What year is that?

**Mr SIMPSON:** The most recent election held in 1983. How is that! The House of Commons constituency of the Isle of Wight has 94 266 electors compared with the constituency of the Western Isles with 22 822 electors, or four and a quarter to one.

**Opposition Members interjected.**

**Mr SIMPSON:** Opposition members should hang their heads in shame. The system was exported from Great Britain to the United States, although the weightage there is three to one. The highest enrolment is in South Dakota with 448 000 electors and the lowest in Nevada with 149 000 electors, or three to one.

**Mr Menzel:** Do they have one vote, one value in Russia?

**Mr SIMPSON:** That is what happens when Opposition members enter this Chamber. They claim that they want to get rid of this Parliament——

**An Opposition Member:** Get rid of you.

**Mr SIMPSON:** Because there was a gerrymander in Cooroora, is that it?

**An Opposition Member:** No.

**Mr SIMPSON:** In which electorate is it? The honourable member is dumb. He does not have an answer.

I turn now to Canada which, like Australia, suffers from communication difficulties. The weightage system there is of the order of 12 to one.

**Mr Borbidge:** The seat of the Leader of the Opposition in this Parliament only has a bit over half the numbers you have in your seat.

**Mr SIMPSON:** I will not get into an argument about differences in ability.

To return to Canada—the electorate of Nunatsiaq has 8 060 voters——

**Mr Hamill:** What are you trying to do?

**Mr SIMPSON:** I am trying to prove the absolute fallacy——

**Mr Hamill:** You're trying to prove that there are other countries with undemocratic electoral systems.

**Mr SIMPSON:** I will come back to that point without referring to Russia and the honourable member's comrades.

As I was saying, Nunatsiaq has 8 060 voters while York-Scarborough has 98 312 voters, or a ratio of 12 to one. The member for Ipswich was saying——

**Mr Hamill:** Be careful.

**Mr SIMPSON:** I will. The honourable member asked me to refer to a democratic country.

**Mr Hamill:** I am talking about democratic electoral systems.

**Mr SIMPSON:** All right. Which party is in office in Western Australia?

**Mr Hamill:** Labor.

**Mr SIMPSON:** The honourable member has fallen straight in. I will now cite the Labor——

**Mr Hamill:** Mr Simpson——

**Mr SIMPSON:** The honourable member will just have to listen now.

The electorate with the least number of electors in Western Australia is Murchison-Eyre with 3 213 electors compared with Murdoch, the largest, with 18 616 electors.

**Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen:** Repeat it for them.

**Mr SIMPSON:** Yes; 3 213 in Murchison-Eyre and 18 616 in Murdoch. That is a ratio of six to one. It used to be seven to one.

**Mr Hamill:** Who put the system in place?

**Mr SIMPSON:** The honourable member's colleagues in Western Australia claim that that is fair. In Queensland, because Opposition members did not win the game, they want to change the rules.

**Mr McElligott:** We did win the game.

**Mr SIMPSON:** No, the Labor Party did not win the game. It will shrink out of existence.

The electorates for the Legislative Council in Western Australia range from 7 199 electors to 85 906 electors.

If any criticism can be levelled at this legislation, it is that not enough weightage is being given to compensate for the difficulties involved in providing representation in remote areas.

**Mr Comben:** There are telephones.

**Mr SIMPSON:** Here is the member who lost his horse but has found his telephone. His constituents can walk to his electorate office while they are doing their shopping. They can also pick up the telephone and contact him at his electorate office, if he is there, for the cost of a local call. What is the position in Gregory? For most constituents of Gregory, to telephone their member of Parliament, they have to pay the maximum charge.

**Mr De Lacy:** Talk about Cooroora; do not worry about Gregory.

**Mr SIMPSON:** I am talking about Queensland. The honourable member has got to do a bit better than that. No doubt, in common with the honourable member for Windsor, he wants to get rid of this Assembly.

As I was saying, many constituents in electorates such as Gregory have to pay the maximum charge to telephone their member of Parliament. If they write to their member of Parliament, it will take a couple of weeks for the letter to reach him and for him to send a reply—provided there are no strikes. Gregory consists of an area of 506 700 sq. km. I know that it is a bit hard for people to grasp the enormity of an area such as that.

**Mr R. J. Gibbs:** With your subintellect, it would be very hard for you to grasp it.

**Mr SIMPSON:** Perhaps I should ask the honourable member: How many times would Great Britain go into Gregory? Great Britain would go into Gregory more than twice and into the electorate of the honourable member for Cook (Mr Scott) one and one-third times. Denmark would go into Gregory seven and one-quarter times.

**Mr Hamill** interjected.

**Mr SIMPSON:** I am giving those facts so that people who read "Hansard" will be able to understand the position. I know that it is beyond the grasp of many Opposition members to understand the difficulties involved in servicing electorates of that size.

It is not just a question of increasing the electoral allowances of members to compensate for those difficulties, or of saying that Gregory should be twice as big as it is and that the member should be paid more money to service it. Even if an aeroplane is provided to enable the member to service his electorate, that does not buy him time.

In so many electorates of Opposition members, housewives can walk into their electorate offices while they are out doing their shopping. It would take several hours to fly in an aircraft from one end of the electorate of Gregory to the other. The Opposition suggests that its system will buy time; by paying the elected representative more, time can be bought. If that could be done, many people who are wealthy enough would live for ever.

**Mr Davis** interjected.

**Mr SIMPSON:** I will not take the honourable member's interjection because I want to continue with this comparison of electorates by area.

Tasmania, which is a State of Australia, will fit into the electorate of Gregory seven and a half times and into the electorate of Cook four and a half times.

**Mr Hamill:** The honourable member for Cook supports one vote, one value.

**Mr SIMPSON:** Yes, equal representation.

**Mr Hamill:** No; one person, one vote, one value.

**Mr SIMPSON:** That is not equal representation. The Labor Party has aborted the original concept of democracy, of people governing themselves. Equality of representation is important to that system. The Labor Party wants to rig the electoral system so that it has a set of rules that suits it. After the electoral commissioners have carried out their

task of redistributing the boundaries, I challenge Labor members to find an electorate that is gerrymandered.

**Mr Hamill:** Will there be some to find?

**Mr SIMPSON:** No. I am sure that Opposition members will not be able to find one gerrymandered electorate.

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr Warburton) has admitted that the electorate of Cooroora is not gerrymandered or rigged. He has also suggested in this place that, because of the percentage of voters for a particular party, in some way injustice can be found in representation in the electoral system in Queensland. Because the Opposition has missed the point, the system must be explained to them.

Queensland has adopted the Westminster system. The electoral system in Queensland has been formed on the basis of preferential voting, returning one member from each electorate. That does not mean that, if one party gets 43 per cent of the vote, it should get 43 per cent of the representatives in the Parliament. In homogeneous electorates, 43 per cent would not return a party a candidate in any electorate.

**An Opposition Member interjected.**

**Mr SIMPSON:** It is interesting that the honourable member objects. He does not support the democratic principle that the candidate who gets the most votes is returned as the representative. He thinks that a candidate who receives only 43 per cent of the vote should be returned. That is the type of thing that can be flushed out of Opposition members.

A similar thing happened when the Leader of the Opposition claimed that he wants Mr Hawke, who has very few feathers left, to activate an international agreement to change the electoral system in the State of Queensland. Hawke wants to get rid of the States altogether.

**Mr FitzGerald:** The member for Windsor wants to get rid of the States, too.

**Mr SIMPSON:** Yes, he has said that.

**Sir William Knox:** He wants to get rid of the Senate first, then the States.

**Mr SIMPSON:** Hawke will get rid of the Senate and then cut all the ties that this nation has with the monarchy.

The preferential system elects the candidate with the most votes—not the one with the least—as a representative to this House.

Dr Colin Hughes is one of the commentators who has expressed an opinion about the fairness of electoral systems.

**Mr Borbidge:** He was the chairman of the Federal Electoral Commission.

**Mr SIMPSON:** That is right.

He criticised the Labor Party in New South Wales, which likes to claim that it supports equality, for rigging electoral boundaries. He claimed that in New South Wales there is no electoral fairness at all. Studies show that the 1981 redistribution in that State provided an inbuilt 6 per cent bias to the ALP, just as there was in the recent Federal election. When the additional seats were created, the commentators all said that they were weighted in favour of Labor. The people of Australia had an appropriate response on the day of the election.

Dr Colin Hughes compared the 6 per cent bias to the Labor Party in New South Wales with a bias of 1.5 per cent in favour of the conservative parties in Queensland.

**Mr McPhie:** Six per cent to the socialists in New South Wales.

**Mr SIMPSON:** What a tremendous variation that is—6 per cent versus 1.5 per cent.

I shall turn to the increase in the number of seats as provided in the Bill. In 1950, the Hanlon Government increased the size of the House from 62 to 75. I have already told honourable members that percentages are not the way to decide whether or not a person is elected to Parliament. In 1947, the ALP had 35 members in this place, or 56.5 per cent of the seats, from an across-the-State support of 43 per cent of the voters.

**Mr De Lacy:** Do you agree that that is wrong?

**Mr SIMPSON:** No. That proves that percentages are not a proper basis for analysis.

**Mr Innes:** Yet you rule with only 37 per cent of the vote.

**Mr SIMPSON:** No, that is not right.

**Mr Innes:** You receive only a little more than a third of the vote.

**Mr SIMPSON:** No, the National Party gained 39 per cent of the vote for half the seats, and then it gained a couple more. Would the honourable member for Sherwood (Mr Innes) tell me in which seat the National Party did not gain a majority of the vote yet have a representative in this House? His silence is deafening.

In 1950, the Labor Party increased the number of seats by 13 and ended up with an almost equivalent percentage of the vote and percentage of the seats in this place. The important thing is equality of representation.

**Mr Innes:** What does that mean—that you divorce cane towns from cane-fields? Is that equality? Do you draw a circle round a sugar-mill to make sure it is divorced from other areas?

**Mr SIMPSON:** No. The important thing is community of interest. I will give the honourable member for Sherwood an example of that. It means that people who live in suburbia are grouped with others who live in suburbia. That results in having one zone for south-east Queensland, a metropolitan zone, a western and far-northern zone and a country zone. Those zones contain people with like interests. That system is used in Canada and Great Britain. I would have thought that at least the Liberals would support that concept.

It is interesting to note how many of the 159 nations that are members of the United Nations operate under the Westminster system and have the monarchy as the upholder of the Constitution. It is interesting to note that only 27 nations out of a total of 159 have the Westminster system. They can be further refined into countries that have a monarchical head and the Westminster system. They are Australia, Barbados, Bahamas, Canada, Fiji, Jamaica, Mauritius, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu and the United Kingdom.

**Mr Hamill:** Are you saying that the Westminster system equals democracy?

**Mr SIMPSON:** No, I am just pointing out that the majority of nations in the United Nations are undemocratic. They are the ones from which the Labor Party, as socialists, receive their support.

**Mr Hamill:** Like New Zealand?

**Mr SIMPSON:** Not like New Zealand.

If anything, too much consideration has been given in the legislation to the number of people in the electorates. The electorates should have been weighted more, as is done in Western Australia. The position in Queensland would then have been more in line with that in the United Kingdom. The system in Queensland is fairer than any other system in Australia.



**Mr Hamill:** That is not what Colin Hughes says.

**Mr SIMPSON:** Yes it is.

**Mr Hamill:** No, it is not.

**Mr SIMPSON:** Yes it is.

Members of the Opposition stand condemned because not only will they not play by the rules but also they want somebody to break up the game for the Government. In 1922 the Labor Party voted the Legislative Council out of existence in Queensland.

**Mr Comben** interjected.

**Mr SIMPSON:** The honourable member for Windsor concurs with that action and with the whole system of cutting out the representation of the people. He would take it to its nth degree and have all the control in Canberra.

I support the legislation wholeheartedly. I am sure that it will show further good government and representation in the State of Queensland. I issue a challenge to the members of both the Liberal Party and the Labor Party. If they think that the system is not fair, I guess that they will find that more and more people will go to live in those electorates in which they think people receive greater equality of voting.

**Opposition Members** interjected.

**Mr SIMPSON:** I expect that there will be a flock of people going——

**Opposition Members** interjected.

**Mr SIMPSON:** Suddenly Opposition members do not want to be in it. I cannot see them going out and getting their hands dirty and looking after the wealth of this State. There was a saying: no taxation without representation.

**Opposition Members** interjected.

**Mr SIMPSON:** Opposition members are laughing. They do not believe in profit. They do not believe in productivity. Like the member for Windsor when he gets off the kerbed and channelled streets, they would get lost. They ought to go out——

**Mr Booth** interjected.

**Mr SIMPSON:** No doubt they will be advocating that all those persons who think like members of the Labor Party and the Liberal Party will be going out into the seats that numerically do not have many electors, because there they will get that gem that they claim that they hold so dearly.

While the Leader of the Opposition was saying that this was the most important legislation that has come before this House for a long time, three of his colleagues behind him were asleep.

**Hon. Sir WILLIAM KNOX (Nundah) (3.15 p.m.):** It is probably correct for the Leader of the Opposition to say that there is no more important legislation before the House, because it concerns the survival of members of Parliament. That is pretty important to those of us who are surviving. I can assure the House that many honourable members will survive after the next election. Perhaps 15 or 20 honourable members will leave the House. However, neither I nor my colleagues will be amongst them. Having thrown down the gauntlet, I will now begin my thesis.

I am not too sure of the official position of the Government, apart from the statement made by the Premier and Treasurer in relation to the legislation. And fine rhetoric it was, although it was a repeat of speeches that have been made on previous occasions. One problem that I admit to having straight away—because it will be used

if it has not already been used in private places—is that I was a party to the redistributions of past years.

**Mr Fouras:** I will remind you about it again.

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX:** I am sure that the honourable member will.

**Mr Simpson** interjected.

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX:** Is that the honourable member for Cooroora's new electorate, or is that the honourable member for Wavell's new electorate?

I believe that it was important that I make that statement, because I will have to recapitulate on the history of some redistributions so that people understand what it is all about.

**Mr Davis** interjected.

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX:** I will tell the honourable member about it, because I am sure that his memory will need refreshing. The honourable member for Brisbane Central was a teller. I intend to deal with that particular issue.

In 1859 the Queensland Parliament had 26 members. If the number of members of this House was based on population growth, there would now be 1 800 members. However, that has not been the history of redistribution in Queensland. In fact, the most significant event in the history of the Legislative Assembly—and I am talking only about the Legislative Assembly and not including the Upper House—was a reduction in the number of members. In 1931 the number of members was reduced to 62. Subsequently the number remained fairly constant at 35 members, 49 members and 75 members. Even using those figures, if the size of this Parliament was increased in accordance with population growth, today Queensland would have more than 200 members of Parliament. In 1958 the number of members was increased to 78; in 1972, it was increased to 82. For the last 14 years the number of members has remained at 82.

Every person in this State feels adequately represented by the present 82 members of Parliament. Every person who lives in this State is adequately represented by the members of Parliament in Queensland.

**Mr Borbidge:** Your party is on record as calling for more seats for the Gold Coast.

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX:** That can be done. There can be a redistribution without an increase in the size of the Parliament.

**Mr Borbidge** interjected.

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX:** They will have to be taken out of the centre of Brisbane anyway. Under the Government's proposal, seats will be taken out of the centre of Brisbane. Therefore, there must be a redistribution. Nobody is objecting to a redistribution. However, the Liberal Party objects to the increase in the size of the Parliament. If indeed the Government is anxious to fiddle the boundaries, it should be looking at reducing the Parliament, because it runs the risk, as Steele Hall did in South Australia, of redistributing itself out of office.

Unlike the honourable member for Cooroora (Mr Simpson), I do not see that as the test of whether a redistribution is fair. That is only a test of what sort of mugs the Government members might be. That was Steele Hall's position. He thought he had the situation sewn up in South Australia. One must be practical and realistic about redistribution.

**Mr Lane:** He was appointed as the spokesman on redistribution in the Federal House.

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX:** He would be a disaster.

If there was ever an aristocracy of gerrymanderers, our friends on the Opposition benches would be the robber barons in such an aristocracy. They are experts at it.

**Mr White:** They showed the Nats how to do it.

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX:** Nobody could be as blatant as they were with their electorates in the shapes of dumbbells in various parts of Queensland. They did it blatantly, without any apologies. I assure you, Mr Deputy Speaker, that, if they ever occupied the Treasury benches in Queensland, their high-flown statements and rhetoric about a statesman-like approach to the matter would fly out the window. With them in power, Queensland would have a gerrymander to end all gerrymanders. That is the political reality.

In the realm of contemporary Queensland politics, never has there been a more dissected subject than that of electoral redistribution. No topic has inflamed passions so consistently over such a long period and no issue has given rise to so many distorted assertions and emotional outbursts in place of reasoned argument.

In presenting the case from the viewpoint of the Liberal Party, I am in a unique position. I have alluded to that already.

**Mr R. J. Gibbs:** You can say that again.

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX:** I do not apologise.

**Mr R. J. Gibbs:** You are certainly in a unique position.

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX:** Yes, I am.

Today, as is obvious, the Liberal Party is neither in Government nor in Opposition; yet it has played varying roles in the three redistributions in the State that were held in 1958, 1971 and 1977. In this perspective, it is probably true to say that the 1985 redistribution will differ little in mechanics and outcome from its predecessors. Submissions will remain secret, reasons for decisions will remain inexplicable and the final proposals will remain free from any parliamentary, judicial or administrative review, save that of the Queensland Cabinet, exercising its collective wisdom in the interests of the people of this State. I do not say that in any derogatory way.

Inevitably, the Bill and the moves towards a redistribution generated a great deal of political debate. However, it has not exceeded that of past occasions, particularly in 1971, which was the last occasion on which the Parliament was expanded, when the Government's original proposals were amended in the Legislative Assembly by an alliance of eight Liberals and the Labor Opposition.

**Mr Davis:** Then, of course, the Liberals caved in.

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX:** That Bill was rejected because eight Liberals crossed the floor.

**Mr FitzGerald:** Not an uncommon occurrence at times.

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX:** Not without justification. On that occasion, those eight Liberals objected to the enormous increase in the size of the Parliament. The new Bill that was introduced considerably reduced that size.

**Mr FitzGerald:** Which way did you vote?

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX:** I voted with the Government. The people who crossed the floor on that occasion——

**Mr FitzGerald:** For an increase?

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX:** I ask the member for Lockyer to allow me to finish my story.

The people who crossed the floor and voted against the Government on that occasion——

**Mr Davis:** The ginger group.

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX:** No, surprisingly, it was not the ginger group. By that time it had just about died out.

The group was led by no less a figure than Charles Porter, who is today, I understand, a prominent adviser to the National Party, and included my deputy leader, the member for Mount Coot-tha (Mr Lickiss), John Murray, Geoff Chinchin, Bill Hewitt, Clive Hughes, Arthur Crawford and Colin Miller. They were the people who, on that occasion, saw fit to vote with the Opposition.

**Mr Lane:** It is a bit like musical chairs, isn't it?

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX:** If the cap fits, wear it.

The proposal for such an extraordinary increase in the size of the Parliament was objected to by sufficient members to ensure that the Bill was defeated. The Bill was withdrawn, redrafted, and presented again to the House. When it was brought back, it was supported by the Liberal and National Parties. The Queensland Parliament has witnessed very torrid times, and that was one of them. I can remember that honourable members did not speak to each other for weeks, and that was the atmosphere that prevailed at the time.

The unique feature of this redistribution is that on no previous occasions have the political stakes been higher. The game is different, and the rules of the game are slightly different as well. It is my belief that the Government has not understood—I repeat, not understood—that the game is different from what it was in previous redistributions.

The National Party desperately wants to retain its tenuous majority in Parliament without resorting to Liberal Party support. The Labor Party ought to recognise that it needs to reverse its litany of electoral failures or it will be condemned to the political wilderness, which that party is well on the way to accomplishing. The Liberal Party, however, will rebuild on its recent electoral successes and demonstrate its long-term strength. Even the Australian Democrats regard the redistribution as an opportunity to assert themselves in the Senate.

Members of the Liberal Party have looked on in mild astonishment at the strange alliances that have been formed under the proposal of an electoral redistribution.

**Mr McPhie:** What about the article that was written in "The Bulletin" the other day?

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX:** That was a commentary written by someone without my support.

Recent events seem to suggest that the most effective solution to the unemployment problem of the nation is a politician-led recovery. For the third time in less than 18 months, a Government has suddenly been struck by a compelling urgency to create more seats in Parliament, as though the ease of solving problems is directly proportional to the number of bodies that are being caressed by parliamentary leather.

In 1983, the Federal Labor Government indicated that Australia would be better off with an additional 35 politicians; 12 senators and 23 members of the House of Representatives. That represented an increase of 19 per cent. Despite behind-the-scenes efforts of the Premier and Treasurer and me to stop that occurring—and I candidly reveal that information—we witnessed a sight no stranger than National Party senators, including Senators Bjelke-Petersen and Boswell, crossing the floor of the Senate to vote with the Australian Labor Party in support of an unjustified and an unjustifiable increase in the size of the Federal Parliament. The increase represents an additional \$10m a year

to be borne by the tax-payers for the purpose of administering the Parliaments in this country.

It was only the Liberal Party in the Senate and the House of Representatives that supported the Australian Democrats in the Upper House. The increase in the number of parliamentary representatives can be seen as nothing more than an attempt by the Hawke Government to shore up its declining electoral support. The December election, which resulted in a swing of 2.3 per cent to the Liberal and National Parties would have resulted in a conservative coalition majority of one seat, had it been conducted on the previously existing boundaries. The result of the last Federal election returned the ALP with a majority of 16 seats, or a substantial reduction from the 25 seat majority in the smaller House. The influence exerted by the National Party in both Houses combined was considerably reduced under the new electoral system, compared with its influence under the former system. The National Party fell into the trap, despite the fact that I lost count of the Federal politicians I spoke to in my efforts to dissuade them from doing such a crazy thing as supporting the Labor Party in its proposal to increase the size of parliamentary representation. The effect was to simply reduce the influence of the National Party in the Federal Parliament.

Within months of that action federally, the National Party Government of this State recognised the assistance that it could give to the Labor Party municipally and introduced measures to increase the number of Brisbane City Council aldermen from 21 to 27, or by nearly 30 per cent—not asked for by the people of Brisbane; not sought by the rate-payers—at an additional cost to the rate-payers of \$1.3m. Surprisingly, on 12 April last, the Australian Labor Party voted with the National Party in support of those moves. Again, only the Liberal Party voted against the increase. Clearly the National Party's moves were inspired by the belief that, by changing the system, it could field a suitably qualified and attractive candidate for Lord Mayor to beat Sallyanne Atkinson and Roy Harvey. A number of people were approached, some of whom I know personally, but they rejected the offer. Failing that, the National Party's motive was to make it as difficult as possible for the Liberal team to win a majority of the 26 new wards, irrespective of the result of the lord mayoral contest. Both strategems were equally unsuccessful. The unholy alliance between the National and Labor Parties was exposed 10 days ago for what it was—a piece of unprincipled opportunism that was decisively rejected by the electors of Brisbane.

Honourable members are now faced with the third episode in this trilogy—a virtual hitch-hiker's guide to boundary-rigging. The National Party Government regards an increase in the number of members of the Legislative Assembly as the answer to the problems of the electoral system. I warn the National Party now that it runs the risk of redistributing itself out of office. There is not very much fat in the system. I also warn the National Party hierarchy not to allow politicians to design the redistribution, because they are not objective enough to do the job for the long-term purposes of the party.

Most of all, the National Party fears any semblance of a Liberal revival that would threaten the Government's tenuous 43-39 hold on this Parliament. Those who feel particularly threatened are the metropolitan Nationals, those who won their seats from the Liberal Party in 1983 and who were seduced by the latest approaches. I warn National Party members to take care. They should remember the lesson of Steele Hall, that is, that in increasing the size of the Parliament one does not have the room to move that one thought one had.

Such then is the sorry saga of recent electoral legislation and its effect on Queensland voters. The Liberal and National Parties have been consistent on all three occasions. The Liberals have opposed the increases in the number of local, State and Federal politicians; the National Party has supported the increases on all three occasions. The Australian Labor Party has shared its favours, depending on the circumstances. Even today, the Australian Labor Party was crying crocodile tears, knowing full well that the redistribution could favour it. Indeed, I think that members of the Australian Labor Party protest too much.

In introducing the Electoral Districts Bill last month, the Premier sought to justify the 9 per cent increase in the number of seats by pointing to a 25 per cent increase in enrolments since the 1977 State election. The Premier has been publicly supported by the Deputy Premier and Minister Assisting the Treasurer (Mr Gunn).

**Mr Borbidge:** It is 38 per cent since the last increase in the size of the House.

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX:** Well, whatever it is. If simple percentage increases are the sole determinant of the number of seats, one is entitled to ask why electors are not facing an increase of 20 seats rather than seven seats. Taking the honourable member's interjection, why not 20 seats, based on the growth in population, rather than seven seats? If no satisfactory answer is forthcoming—and I do not hear it—members are entitled to look at the Government's real motives.

On average, each of Queensland's 89 members will represent 17 116 electors, compared with the average of 18 500 now represented by each of the 82 members. That contrasts with nearly 67 000 electors in a Federal seat. I do not believe that the demands of State representatives are so onerous as to warrant an increase in the number of those representatives. Indeed, in 1929, the Moore Government saw merit in reducing the number of members from 72 to 62. It is regrettable that the present Government does not share some of the views of its National Party predecessor in office, the Moore Government.

**Mr FitzGerald:** What happened to them electorally?

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX:** It was not because of redistribution that the Governments at that time were thrown out of office. Because of the Depression, every Government in Australia, regardless of its political colour, lost office in that period.

**Mr Lickiss:** Throughout Australia.

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX:** That happened throughout Australia. Scullin also lost. It had nothing to do with redistribution.

At the crux of this issue is the distribution of electoral districts throughout the State, not the political affiliation of their sitting members. Under this legislation, Queensland electors along the eastern seaboard will be underrepresented. The claim that that is justified by their failure to produce wealth is nonsensical. By the same token, the argument that decentralised development of the State depends on rural overrepresentation is equally misguided.

If nothing else can be said about politics, one of its most refreshing aspects is the ability of man to adapt his ideas to changing times. For example, the Premier's "seats as a reward for production" argument has had its advocates in many jurisdictions. In 1948, Earl Warren, as Governor of California, stated—

"Many Californian counties are far more important in the life of the State than their population of the State. It is for this reason that I have never been in favour of restricting the representation in the Senate to a strictly population basis."

Although many contemporary Queensland politicians who would have enthusiastically embraced Governor Warren's comments in 1948 have not altered their views, Chief Justice Warren indicated a far more reasonable approach in a case in the 1960s, when he said—

"Legislators represent people, not trees or acres. Legislators are elected by voters, not farms or cities, or economic interest."

Under the proposals presented to this Parliament, the country zone, that zone extending from the Queensland/New South Wales border near Stanthorpe to Cairns, will have about one-fifth of all the seats but less than 13 per cent of the State's population. Although few people would disagree with giving fair representation to the western and far-northern regions of the State—I strongly support such a principle and it is a principle

that was enthusiastically supported by the Hanlon Labor Government in its 1949 redistribution—there is little justification for granting an even greater measure of over-representation to the rural south east.

At present, the seat of Somerset in the south-eastern zone has more than twice as many electors as Barambah, the seat next to it in the country zone. Fassifern, with over 38 000 electors, has more than three times the number of electors as the seat to its immediate west, Warwick, which has 11 400 electors. The seat of Mount Isa, which encompasses a vast area of the north west, including Mornington Island, has 3 000 more electors than the seat of Barambah, which is within three hours' drive of Brisbane.

Given that the existing system favours the country zone—particularly that area within three hours' drive of Brisbane—and that two of the seven new seats will also be within that zone, it is clear that the proposed legislation has little to do with overcoming problems of isolation or of allowing more effective representation. In fact, the Liberal Party's policy on this issue, if it is placed on a map, shows one more seat in north Queensland than is provided in the proposals before us. However, it is possible to have a situation in which electoral districts vary widely in their enrolments while the major political parties win seats in proportion to their share of the votes cast. It is also possible to have a situation in which, although the electoral districts are roughly equal in enrolments, one party has a considerable advantage over its competitors in converting votes into seats in Parliament.

If we accept the principle of single-member constituencies for the Federal Parliament's Lower House—and there is little widespread advocacy in favour of changing the system—those alternatives are clearly possible. That was not the story in Queensland. For many years, many of the constituencies had three or four members of Parliament. Queensland has enthusiastically adopted the worst of both alternatives. Enrolments vary from as low as 8 260 in Warrego to as high as 38 183 in Fassifern, and votes obtained bear little relationship to seats won.

In the 1983 election, the National Party received 39 per cent of the vote yet won 50 per cent of the seats—nine more than its vote suggested that it was entitled to win.

Despite the claims of the Labor Party to the contrary, the Liberal Party emerged from the last State election most severely underrepresented, even allowing for the two subsequent defections to the National Party. The average Liberal Party vote was about 25 000 a head.

I make it perfectly clear that the Liberal Party does not accept the argument that electoral victory has been snatched from the ALP's grasp by the operation of the electoral laws. That is in keeping with the views of Dr Colin Hughes. Whatever the shape of the boundaries might be, 50 per cent of the vote must be won. At no time in the past 28 years has the ALP won a majority of the two-party preferred vote. It cannot claim that a gerrymander has kept it out of office, even if a gerrymander does exist. In 1983, when the Labor Party won 32 seats in this 82-seat Parliament, it fell 3.5 per cent short of the target in the electorate.

**An Opposition Member** interjected.

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX:** The boundaries have not kept the Labor Party out of office; the people with whom Labor Party members associate have kept them out of office.

Of equal importance in this legislation are the mechanisms for the redistribution itself. Once again, Queenslanders will have no legal right to see submissions put forward by the political parties. That is in marked contrast to the current Federal legislation, under which submissions are made public, and those people who wish to challenge the initial proposals of the independent committee must be prepared to make their objections public. They also have the right to argue their case before the committee at a public hearing.

In 1971, widespread demands were put forward requesting that submissions be made public. Unfortunately, the Premier declared his opposition to the proposal on the ground that, if the commissioners' proposals resembled too closely the submission of one party, they would be accused of bias. That view is to be regretted. Because the National Party's submission and any subsequent objections to proposed boundaries remain secret, it has been easier to allege bias and undue influence.

An independent commission with a duty to submit suggestions and objections to public scrutiny would put to rest the speculation that is a large part of the Queensland redistribution process. At its 1979 and 1983 State conventions, the Liberal Party endorsed a proposal that would allow for a refreshing element of frankness in that process. Public scrutiny of an independent commission's proposals was the keystone of that policy.

The Liberal Party believes that the electoral system that is accepted by all parties and works well at Federal level should be adopted in Queensland. A single quota system—not the one vote, one value system—as has been endorsed federally, with a maximum deviation of plus or minus 10 per cent, can be designed to meet adequately the legitimate demands of all Queenslanders. With a weighting of 10 per cent, one more seat in north Queensland than will result from the proposal that the Government has put before the House today would be added.

Clearly, neither the Liberal Party nor the ALP is in a position to defeat the current Bill on the floor of Parliament. However, the Liberal Party does not agree with the proposal put forward by the Australian Democrats that this matter should be resolved by the Federal Parliament. Unpalatable as it may be, this Bill relates to Queensland alone, and this is where it will be decided, not in the Senate or some other place by a rare committee.

It would be the height of absurdity to suggest that we, as Queenslanders, have a right to intervene in another State over an issue that has no bearing on our lives. Similarly, we should not entertain granting such a right to people outside this State simply because we object to a particular piece of local legislation.

The Liberal Party will oppose this legislation in toto. There is no justification for an additional seven members of Parliament, because the people of Queensland are adequately represented. More services should be provided to the members so that they carry out their job more effectively. Other States have many more constituents per member of Parliament than Queensland has, and are coping adequately. Queensland can also do so.

I warn the Government that it may well be on the road to redistributing itself out of office because more and more people in the community, particularly those of Liberal persuasion, are convinced that Australians are grossly overgoverned. This legislation is another contribution to that excessive and expensive overgovernment.

**Hon. D. F. LANE** (Merthyr—Minister for Transport) (3.44 p.m.): It would not normally be my practice to enter into a debate——

**Mr Innes:** You are not on the list.

**Mr LANE:** I beg the honourable member's pardon?

**Mr Innes:** You are not on the list.

**Mr LANE:** I called. The honourable member for Sherwood is not running the House. He does not say when I can have my say in the House. To try to push me aside is a denial of my right to speak. I will not accept that.

I was tempted to enter the debate upon hearing the speech delivered by the honourable member for Nundah, the leader of the Liberal Party, which concentrated on the single proposition, it seemed to me, that the Liberal Party objected to an increase in the number of seats in this Assembly. That is the sort of simple catchcry that one adopts in these circumstances if one wants to secure cheap political support.



I suggest that the holier-than-thou speech delivered by the honourable member was one of convenience. It suited his current circumstances. He said early in his speech, perhaps in an endeavour to head off other honourable members, that no doubt people would remind him of the stand that he had taken on this matter on previous occasions. I would be lacking in my responsibility to the electorate at large if I did not take the opportunity to do just that. I draw attention to the fact that, in 1959, following the election of the honourable member for Nundah to this place in 1957, the number of seats was increased from 75 to 78. I understand that on that occasion the new back-bench member for Nundah supported that move. In 1971, when the number of seats was increased from 78 to 82, as Minister for Transport and part of the Government of the day, he supported that move for an increase in the number of seats.

I now bring the member for Nundah to an occasion that was more traumatic for him and for some of us who were with him and who, indeed, were his supporters. I take him to the year 1978, when he lost the leadership of the Liberal Party on the motion of the member for Stafford (Mr Gygar), who is back with us today. Last Wednesday night on "Today Tonight", I noticed that the honourable member for Nundah claimed as one of the great victories for the Liberal Party since the last State election the return of the member for Stafford to this Chamber.

**Mr Fouras:** He didn't even want him.

**Mr LANE:** The honourable member should keep out of it. I can handle this.

The honourable member for Nundah must have had his tongue in his cheek. Perhaps once again, to suggest that he welcomed the honourable member for Stafford back to this Chamber, was a convenient statement for the day. As I said, it was the honourable member for Stafford who had been instrumental in removing the honourable member for Nundah from the leadership of the Liberal Party. Probably the member for Stafford was only the cat's-paw of other gentlemen who have since departed this place.

I remember very well that occasion in 1978, but I do not intend to go into the details of the party meeting that transpired that day.

**Mr Lickiss** interjected.

**Mr LANE:** In a moment I will tell the House for whom I voted. I ask the honourable member for Mount Coot-tha to be patient. I have not yet got to him and his stand on this issue.

As I say, I remember the day well. What was quite a traumatic meeting was held next to Queen's Park in the old Victorian Chambers occupied by Charles Porter, who was then Minister for Aboriginal and Island Affairs. That meeting lasted for five or six hours. I must express some sympathy for Sir William Knox for the trauma of that day. It was not a pleasant meeting. Without going too deeply into it, he was dressed down by almost everyone in the room apart from those Ministers who looked like losing their positions or, to use the expression of the honourable member for Nundah, losing their opportunity to be caressed by ministerial leather.

**Mr Innes** interjected.

**Mr LANE:** I do, too. The honourable member has wanted ministerial leather ever since he became a member of this Assembly, over the dead body of anyone he could tread on. That has been the main reason for most of the honourable member's activities since he became a member of this Assembly. However, I will deal with him at another time.

At that terrible meeting there was another gentleman, Mr Robert Akers, who, in the last week, has been acclaimed, once again by the honourable member for Nundah, as winning another great victory for the Liberal Party when he was returned as chairman of the Pine Rivers Shire Council. Sir William said that he welcomed the other triumph in the Pine Rivers shire when Robert Akers was returned.

I remind those members of the Liberal Party who were here at the time that Robert Akers was a most virulent attacker of Sir William at that terrible party meeting in Charles Porter's chambers. He was so vicious on that occasion that even those honourable members who had some sympathy for his position were constrained to quieten him down and ask him to behave himself because he was becoming too personal.

The point that is most relevant to this Bill is that the basis for his attack and the attack by the former member for Mount Gravatt (Mr Scassola) and the honourable member for Stafford (Mr Gygar) was that in 1977 Sir William Knox had caved in to the redistribution Bill and allowed the redistribution to proceed, to the disadvantage of the Liberal Party.

At the time, I was one of those pragmatic persons who did not blame Sir William. I had something else to blame him for at the time. He knows very well what it is; I told him about it at that time.

The major criticism that he faced on that day was that he caved in to the 1977 redistribution Bill and also to the use of section 8, which allowed for the commissioners of a redistribution committee to be appointed by the Governor in Council by commission under his hand and seal. That was the great condemnation that he faced from within the Liberal Party both at executive level and at his party or caucus meeting in 1977. That was the major factor that caused Sir William Knox to lose the leadership of the Liberal Party at that time.

I differed with him on another matter, but I did not embrace the criticisms of those other members of the Liberal Party on the basis of the redistribution. In political terms, I felt that it was a fact of life and that there was a need for an increase in the number of members. I could not blame him for what he had done, nor could I blame the Government of the day for what it had done. That is why I voted for the Bill in 1977, as did the honourable member for Nundah, who was a Minister at the time, and the honourable member for Mount Coot-tha (Mr Lickiss), who at that time was the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General. He was the man who was responsible for the Elections Act. Under the Elections Act he had the formal responsibility for the conduct of elections. Through that responsibility he could claim to know the number of members who were required and what would be suitable machinery for a redistribution. He had some direct ministerial involvement and experience in detail in the administration of the election machinery. He also supported that proposal in 1977.

Now those gentlemen appear on television and come conveniently into this Chamber—perhaps I should put it the other way round: they come into this Chamber in order to appear conveniently on television—to condemn the proposed increase in the number of members in the Parliament.

In addition, I raise the matter put forward by the honourable member in respect of the increase in the number of aldermen in the Brisbane City Council. As honourable members would know, I supported openly, and predicted, the downfall of the Labor administration in the Brisbane City Council. I am very pleased that the Liberal Party won. I am pleased that the Brisbane City Council is in private enterprise hands. I look forward to a wonderful future in this city as a result of the election of the new Lord Mayor.

I remind honourable members that for some years, under the leadership of Syd McDonald, the Liberal Party was approached on numerous occasions to persuade the Government—in fact, to persuade the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing in a former capacity—to introduce a Bill to increase the number of wards in Brisbane. The proposal was put forward on more than one occasion by Alderman Denver Beanland, who was the deputy leader of the council Opposition and is now vice-mayor of Brisbane. He had a plan and a scheme for an increase of five seats.

Of course, Alderman Beanland is the man who now comes out and says, “We didn't need an increase in the number of wards.” I suggest that that also was a convenient

argument for short-term gain. I could easily have drawn the attention of the public to that fact prior to the council elections, and it would not have done Alderman Beanland or his party any good. However, I refrained from doing so, despite the fact that he was heaping criticism on the Government for increasing the number of seats, because I wanted the Liberal Party to win the council elections.

Roy Harvey was a disaster for this State. The Labor Council consisted of a bunch of broken-down trade union officials and pent-up party hacks. It was time they were removed from their seats. That is why I refrained from raising the matter. However, hearing Alderman Beanland's statements repeated by Sir William Knox forces me to bring the matter out in the open.

The increase in seats was first proposed by Alderman Denver Beanland on behalf of the Liberal aldermanic team. They wanted five more wards; they got six. I must say that the result has been quite satisfactory for them. I do not see what they have to complain about. I know that, in the future, they will apply themselves to doing positive things for the city of Brisbane.

I turn to a few basic figures contained in the proposal concerning an increase in the number of seats. If no other honourable member has mentioned it up to this time, I will speak about the number of electors in the south-eastern zone.

Honourable members will be aware that since the last redistribution, which was in 1977, there has been a considerable increase in the number of electors. As at 31 December last year, the roll listed 260 884 electors, people over 18 years of age who are naturalised Australian subjects or native born Australians. During those seven years, the population of the south-eastern zone increased by more than a quarter of a million. Surely that warrants an increase in the number of seats in the south-eastern zone.

If an increase in the number of members in Parliament in the south-eastern zone had not been proposed in this Bill, the Government would have been forced to arrive at a quota by dividing the existing number of seats, which is 47, into the total enrolment, which is 987 237 people—a quota of 21 005 electors for each electoral district in the south-eastern zone. That is much larger than the quota of 15 454 supported by the leader of the Liberal Party under the 1977 Bill.

In 1977, Sir William Knox thought that in the south-eastern zone each member could properly represent 15 454 voters. In 1985, he believes that each of the present members should be able to represent 21 000 people, and that no change should be made. That is despite the fact that he voted for the two previous increases. In fact, in 1971 Sir William Knox agreed that 12 657 was an adequate quota in the south-eastern zone. That is vastly different from the 21 000 electors that he now advocates should make up a quota. In fact, if the Government used the 1977 criterion proposed by Sir William Knox when he was Deputy Premier and he persuaded Liberal Party members to support the Bill and institute that redistribution, that is, if the Government took 15 000 and divided that into the current enrolment, there would be 63.8 seats in the south-eastern zone. That would result in an increase of considerably more than the four seats proposed by the Government. I suggest that the honourable gentleman's argument is an argument of convenience. If he thinks that the present number of electorates is satisfactory, I point out to him that his electorate and mine are less than half the size of the electorate of Fassifern. Surely that provides justification for an increase in the number of seats.

I mention that the quota of 15 000-odd voters was supported also by the deputy leader of the Liberal Party in the 1977 redistribution, when he was Minister for Justice and Attorney-General. Now, presumably, he feels that 21 000 is a convenient number. Once again, it is an argument for the day—as indeed most speeches on redistribution are. When Neville Wran changed the electoral boundaries in New South Wales following his election to Government, he put forward arguments that suited him on the day. When Cain engaged in a redistribution in Victoria to secure himself in office, he put forward a convenient argument for the day.

**Mr Innes** interjected.

**Mr LANE:** If the honourable member for Sherwood will be quiet for a moment, I would like to deal with Colin Hughes, who has been put forward as some sort of guru on the subject. Anyone wishing to test the validity of the Federal redistribution held by the Commonwealth Redistribution Commission, which was headed by Professor Colin Hughes, need look no further than the seat of Rankin, which begins in Inala and finishes in Warwick. What a ridiculous proposal! What an absolutely absurd proposal! There is absolutely no community of interest. That seat goes through the major gap in the Great Dividing Range, which was discovered by Cunningham. If it were not for that gap, presumably the boundaries would not have been drawn in that way. I would like to know the commonality of interest between the grain-growers on the Darling Downs and the people who live in Inala. It is absolute nonsense. A consideration of how a person could represent the seat adequately highlights the absurdity of it. I hope that no-one resorts to Colin Hughes as the expert on redistribution.

**Mr Elliott:** I noticed that the Federal member wasn't at the Clifton show. He was swanning around overseas.

**Mr LANE:** I imagine that he would have stood out if he had attended the Clifton show. He would have looked a little different from the people at Clifton.

I put forward those few points to debunk some of the claims made. I must say how disappointed I was to hear them put forward by the leader of the Liberal Party. I have sat with him through meetings of all kinds—Cabinet meetings, parliamentary party meetings, party meetings outside, and meetings in all sorts of public and private places—and discussed these matters. I found it very difficult to reconcile what he said today with what I have heard him say in any of the many forums that I have shared with him in the past.

I have tremendous respect for the honourable member for Nundah as a politician and a parliamentarian. It is a great disappointment to me that, for reasons of convenience, his organisation has thrust this sort of bunkum down his throat. I listened to the speech that he read today. None of the words were his. What nonsense was his statement about a number being caressed by parliamentary leather. What absolute nonsense! He would not dare to use the phrase. Only one other member has been caressed by parliamentary leather longer than he, and that is no shame. It is just that it is not his phraseology. It was probably written by David Fraser or one of the other party people. It was a valiant attempt, but it was not Sir William's submission. Honourable members should not take much notice of it.

He suggested that the submissions should be made public. It is the first time I have heard him advocate such a policy. In fact, on dozens of occasions, I have heard him put the contrary argument. I support his earlier approach. The submissions should not be made public. Humble people who wish to approach the commission privately may be held up to bullying, to ridicule, to pressure, to intimidation and to harassment by people with whom they live and work.

**Mr Casey** interjected.

**Mr LANE:** The honourable member for Mackay should be quiet and should go back to packing railway wheels, whilst I deal with the important subject-matter that is before the Parliament today.

I can imagine a humble labourer at work in the Ipswich railway workshops: how would such a person dare to put forward a public submission to an electoral redistribution commission? The moment he did so, he would be hounded out of the workshops by fellow-workmates. The shop steward would line him up in the workshop immediately and threaten to drop a weight on him from a high place while saying, "How dare you as an individual express an opinion? That sort of thing is done through our party, the great Labor movement, where unity of labour is the hope of the world." My God!

Members of the Australian Labor Party proudly wear such slogans on badges in their lapels, but I notice that not too many of them are evident today. There are three different kinds of badges nowadays: unity of labour is the hope of the world and——

**Mr Davis** interjected.

**Mr LANE:** What was the slogan used by the honourable member for Brisbane Central? The others are: drive to Bribie Island and fix the ballot, and get yourself pinched every Friday. Beliefs held by members of the Labor Party are many and varied, but still they come.

In my opinion, the contributions that have been made to the debate so far are regrettable.

**Mr Yewdale:** At least the Labor Party does not have any political renegades.

**Mr LANE:** And does the honourable member for Rockhampton North know why? Because a Labor Party member does not have the freedom to choose the party on the socialist side of politics; of which he would like to be a member, because he would be knocked about and intimidated, and people would harass him by coming to his home and bullying him. Labor Party members would not even be game to go to the pub.

On my side of politics, I do not fear that kind of action. I am free to choose the private enterprise party of which I wish to be a member. I happen to have chosen to be a member of the National Party private enterprise organisation.

**Mr R. J. GIBBS (Wolston) (4.8 p.m.):** It always saddens honourable members of this side of the Chamber to see a falling-out among bedfellows—such splendid fellows as the honourable member for Merthyr and the honourable member for Stafford. At least the honourable member for Merthyr confirmed one thing clearly this afternoon—the constant stream of inconsistencies displayed by his former colleagues, the members of the Liberal Party. It is my opinion that members of the Liberal Party could be adequately described as Scarlet Pimpernels in such a charade—they vote here, they vote there, in fact they vote everywhere.

However, on this occasion the Australian Labor Party welcomes the support of the Liberal Party. It is a great shame that members of the Liberal Party did not have the intestinal fortitude in the past to adopt a stance similar to that which they are prepared to take today—to support Labor Party policy on electoral redistribution based on the principle of one vote, one value.

It is no secret that on numerous occasions in the Parliament members of the Liberal Party were asked for support, and some of those occasions were periods which led up to State elections, particularly the last State election. More importantly, they were asked for support following the State Liberal Party conference in the same year when the Liberal Party formulated, accepted and adopted an identical policy to that adopted by the Labor Party.

As the honourable member for Merthyr has correctly said—Opposition members are well aware of the things that take place in Government and political circles—it was because of the weak-kneed attitude of people such as Sir William Knox that the Liberal Party was unable to adopt its present stance in the Parliament previously. How hypocritical can the honourable member for Nundah be to stand up in Parliament this afternoon and espouse support and at the same time thump his chest with bloated and false confidence because of the recent Liberal Party result in the local authority election held in Brisbane last week-end. That gentleman dares to say that State Liberal Party members, including him, will all be back the next time round. Well, I have news for the honourable member for Nundah. The dogs are already barking that at least two present Liberal Party members will not be back, and Sir William Knox is one; the other one is the hired gun, the Paladin of the Liberal Party, the honourable member for Stafford.

The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights reads as follows—

“Considering that, in accordance with the principles proclaimed in the Charter of the United Nations, recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world,

Recognizing that these rights derive from the inherent dignity of the human person,

Recognizing that, in accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the ideal of free human beings enjoying civil and political freedom and freedom from fear and want can only be achieved if conditions are created whereby everyone may enjoy his civil and political rights, as well as his economic, social and cultural rights.”

More importantly, it goes on to say—

“To take part in the conduct of public affairs, directly or through freely chosen representatives;

To vote and to be elected at genuine periodic elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret ballot, guaranteeing the free expression of the will of the electors;”

That certainly does not take place in Queensland at the present time. Equal suffrage has never existed in this State under the graces of the National Party or, or course, under the former coalition Government.

Today I join with my leader (Mr Warburton) and my colleague the member for Windsor (Mr Comben) in calling on my colleagues in the Federal parliamentary Labor Party and the Prime Minister (Mr Hawke) to explore every possible avenue under the external affairs section 51 (29) of the Constitution in order to implement the human rights declaration that will assure Queensland electors of one vote, one value.

Much play has been made of the Labor Party's policy in that regard. So that it cannot be doubted, today I propose to make this Parliament aware not only of the policy of the Labor Party on electoral matters but of a private member's Bill that the parliamentary Labor Party prepared about four years ago. It is still available and ready to be implemented by Labor. So that the people of Queensland, Government members and our fair-weather friends in the Liberal Party are aware of our attitude, I propose to make them totally au fait with Labor's intentions.

**Mr ELLIOTT:** I rise to a point of order. I ask that, when he is finished, the honourable member table that document.

**Mr R. J. GIBBS:** That will be no problem at all. I took that for granted. Unlike the honourable member for Cunningham, I have nothing to hide.

The document states that—

“Whenever an electoral redistribution is made, the redistribution shall be made upon the principle that the number of electors comprised in each electoral district must not (as at the relevant date) vary from the electoral quota by more than the permissible tolerance.

‘permissible tolerance’ means a tolerance of ten per centum;”

Labor also says, as distinct from what the National Party proposes and from its past practices—

“There shall be a Commission by the name of the ‘Electoral Districts Boundaries Commission’ constituted of the following members:—

- (a) the Chairman of the Commission who shall be a Judge of the Supreme Court appointed by the Attorney General of Queensland;
- (b) the Principal Electoral Officer of Queensland or a person appointed pursuant to subsection (2) of this section;
- (c) the Surveyor-General of Queensland or a person appointed pursuant to subsection (3) of this section.

(2) If there is no Principal Electoral Officer, or the Principal Electoral Officer is for any reason unable to act as a member of the Commission, then the Attorney General of the State of Queensland shall appoint as a member of the Commission, for such term as the Attorney General considers expedient, a person who, in the opinion of the Attorney General, has wide knowledge of, and experience in, electoral matters.”

I will read subsections (2) and (3) later. The same principle applies to the Solicitor-General. The document continues—

“The Commission—

- (a) shall be a body corporate with perpetual succession and a common seal;
- (b) shall be capable, in its corporate name of acquiring, holding and disposing of real and personal property;
- (c) shall be capable of acquiring or incurring any legal rights or liabilities, and of suing and being sued;”.

It goes on to provide for those people who shall constitute the commission, to ensure that they shall operate in a fair and impartial manner. We also spell out very clearly the requirements of the commission. They are—

“(1) The Commission shall, whenever required to do so make an electoral redistribution.

(2) The Commission is required to commence proceedings for the purpose of making an electoral redistribution—

- (a) within twenty eight days after the commencement of this Act;
- (b) as soon as practicable after the enactment of an Act that alters presently or prospectively the number of members of the Legislative Assembly;
- (c) within three months after a polling day if five years or more has intervened between a previous polling day on which the last electoral redistribution made by the Commission was effective and that polling day.”

We spell out in clear, unequivocal terms, what Labor’s intentions are.

Quite frankly, the implementation of that policy will benefit the people of Queensland, including the honourable member for Nundah (Sir William Knox), who worries about getting back onto the Government benches. It will ensure that electoral redistribution in Queensland is taken out of the hands of politicians and placed into the hands of people who are impartial and have no political connections. Electoral redistributions will be carried out on a fair and equitable basis.

Our policy states—

“For the purpose of making an electoral redistribution, the Commission shall as far as practicable have regard to—

- (a) the desirability of making the electoral redistribution in such a manner that there will exist, as far as reasonably possible, amongst the population of each electoral district, a community of interest (of an economic, social, regional or other kind);”

It is quite proper for me to say that I agree with some of the comments made by the honourable member for Merthyr (Mr Lane) about the Federal seat of Rankin. The drawing-up of the boundaries for the Federal seat of Rankin was an absolute disgrace.

**Mr FitzGerald:** They were drawn up under your law.

**Mr R. J. GIBBS:** No, they were not. Shortly, I will tell the honourable member what they were drawn up under.

It cannot be said that there is a community of interest or an interest of an economic, social, regional or other kind. I go on the public record as saying that I would not have appointed Colin Hughes to head the Electoral Commission. I have never liked his ideas on redistribution in Australia. Some of them belong to the last century. Any accusation of bias in that redistribution can be completely and totally refuted. The Federal Labor Government appointed, under an Act of Parliament, an independent Electoral Commission, which was free from the interference of Federal politicians. That redistribution is the creature of that Electoral Commission. I think that most political commentators shared the view that the boundaries for that Federal redistribution in Queensland certainly did not favour the Australian Labor Party. In fact, it can be said that at the last Federal election those boundaries reacted against the Labor Party in Queensland.

The commission also has to have regard to—

- “(b) the population of each proposed electoral district;
- (c) the desirability of leaving undisturbed as far as practicable and consistent with the principles on which the redistribution is to be made, the boundaries of existing electoral districts;
- (d) the topography of areas within which new electoral boundaries will be drawn;
- (e) the feasibility of communication between electors affected by the redistribution and their parliamentary representatives in the Legislative Assembly;”

I will expand briefly on that point. Today I heard one of the most inane, stupid statements ever attributed to a member of this House. I refer to the honourable member for Cooroora (Mr Simpson) who used the example of the electorate of Gregory. A number of Government members, particularly country members, do not live in their electorates. It is my belief that the honourable member for Gregory, who is the Minister for Lands, Forestry and Police (Mr Glasson), lives at Cannon Hill, but I stand to be corrected. So much for his ability to communicate with his electorate.

In addition to his electorate allowance, which is quite large, the honourable member for Gregory has a special dispensation from the Government so that he can fly his own private aircraft round his electorate and have it fuelled at the expense of the Government. I do not disagree with that.

**Mr Elliott** interjected.

**Mr R. J. GIBBS:** I say this to Mr what's-his-name. He made such an impression as a Minister that he is easily forgotten. I point out to Mr Elliott that, in this day and age of modern communications such as satellites in space, telex machines, telephones and improved cars, no communication problems should exist within an electorate because of the one vote, one value concept. It cannot be argued rationally that a lack of communication would prevent any member of Parliament from servicing his electorate.

**Mr Casey:** I wonder what special concession Mr Lester will look for now that he has moved to the seaside suburb of Emu Park near Rockhampton?

**Mr R. J. GIBBS:** I do not want to make mention of poor Mr Lester. All honourable members are aware of the problems that he has at the moment, and we should have sympathy for him.



The Labor Party policy is that the commission should pay heed to—

“... the nature of substantial demographic changes that the Commission considers likely to take place in proposed electoral districts between the conclusion of its present proceedings and the time when proceedings are likely to be next taken for the purpose of making an electoral redistribution, and may have regard to any other matters that it thinks relevant.”

One of the outstanding discrepancies in the system of electoral distribution in Queensland is that the findings of the commission can hide behind a cloak of secrecy. The people are prevented from having access to the commission. That will not happen under a Labor Government because it would legislate to ensure that—

“Before commencing proceedings for the purpose of making an electoral redistribution the Commission shall, by means of an advertisement in a newspaper circulating generally throughout the State, invite representations from any person in relation to the proposed electoral redistribution and in any such advertisement a date must be specified as the date before which such representations must be made.

A person who desires to make representations to the Commission in relation to the proposed electoral redistribution may do so by instrument in writing served personally or by post upon the secretary of the Commission before the date specified in the advertisement.”

Contrary to what the honourable member for Merthyr said, Labor Party policy will ensure the anonymity of an individual, if he so desires. Labor Party policy is that the commission will consider all representations made in accordance with the relevant legislation and may, at its discretion, hear and consider any evidence or argument submitted to it in support of those representations by or on behalf of any person. The Labor Party believes that the commission should make public all representations made to it.

It is also Labor policy that, within 14 days of the publication of an order, an elector may appeal to the Full Court of the Supreme Court against that order on the ground that it was not made under the provisions of the legislation as though the order was an order of a judge of the Supreme Court. The Labor Party will allow individuals and parties who feel aggrieved by the findings or the recommendations of the commission to appeal to the Supreme Court.

The document continues—

“(6) In any appeal under this section, any person having an interest in the proceedings may, upon application to the Court, be joined as a party to the proceedings.

(7) On the hearing of an appeal under this section the Full Court may—

(a) quash the order and direct the Commission to make a fresh electoral redistribution;”

Therefore, if sufficient people feel aggrieved by the contents of the recommendations of the electoral commissioners, they have the open right to take their argument to the Supreme Court. The same applies to a political party. If the Supreme Court, free from political interference and free from the heavy-handedness of politicians from any party, so finds, it may quash the order and direct the commission to make a fresh electoral redistribution.

The policy continues—

“(b) vary the order;

or

(c) dismiss the appeal.

and may make any ancillary order as to costs or any other matter that it thinks expedient.

(8) The validity of an order of the Commission shall not be called in question except in an appeal under this section.”

In other words, the Labor Party will also allow an appeal against that decision of the Supreme Court.

Most importantly, legislation introduced by the Labor Party will lay down as the law of this Parliament that, once the Labor Party is able to have a Bill of this nature agreed to by the Parliament, it will guarantee for ever that electoral protection of equal adult suffrage—that right under the Declaration of Human Rights—because the Labor Party policy document states—

“(2) A Bill providing for or effecting the repeal, suspension or amendment of any provision of Part II of this Act shall not be presented to Her Majesty or the Governor for assent unless—

(a) the Bill does not provide for, or effect, the repeal, suspension, or amendment of a provision of this section and the Bill does not:—

(i) offend against the principle that the State is to be divided into electoral districts each returning the same number (whether that number be one or more than one) of members to the Legislative Assembly;

(ii) offend against the principle expressed in section 7 of this Act by which the number of electors to be comprised in each electoral district upon an electoral redistribution is to be ascertained;

(iii) affect the frequency with which electoral redistributions are to be made;

or

(iv) offend against the principle that an electoral redistribution is to be made by a Commission that is independent of political influence or control;

or

(b) the Bill has been approved by the electors in accordance with this section.

(3) Where it is necessary for a Bill to be approved by the electors in accordance with this section, the Bill shall, on a day appointed by Proclamation (being a day that falls not earlier than two months after the day on which the Bill is passed by Parliament) be submitted to a referendum of the electors for the Legislative Assembly.

(4) If the majority of the persons voting at the referendum approve of the Bill it shall be presented to the Governor for assent.

(5) Any person entitled to vote at a general election of members of the Legislative Assembly shall have the right to bring an action in the Supreme Court for a declaration, injunction or other legal remedy to enforce any of the provisions of this section.”

That is what the Labor Party will enshrine in its legislation. That will prevent the types of action taken by Sir William Knox and the six-pack on the back bench of this Parliament. Today it is convenient for them to oppose the legislation. We in the Labor Party can understand that convenience. Today they will vote, one assumes, with the Labor Party. The legislation proposed by the Labor Party will prevent for ever the prostitution of electoral reform by the likes of the Liberal Party and the National Party. In short, the Labor Party’s legislation will ensure that if ever there is to be amendment to this legislation, it must go before the people of the State by way of a referendum asking for a direction to the Parliament to change the principle of one vote, one value, to change the principle of having only 82 State members of Parliament, or to change the principle that ensures that never again will there be a seat like mine with 18 500 people enrolled while there are seats such as Gregory with only seven and a half thousand voters.

**Mr Gunn:** Come to my electorate. I'm next door to you.

**Mr R. J. GIBBS:** I do not mind going into the electorate of Somerset, which is represented by the Deputy Premier. Without skiting, I consider it fair to say that at present I do most of his work. The electors of Carole Park, Redbank Plains and Camira never see him. They telephone me because they think that I am their elected representative. The Deputy Premier and Treasurer is only a lightweight in this Assembly.

The Labor Party does not accept and does not wear any responsibilities for the actions taken by former Labor Governments in this State. I make that very clear.

**Mr FitzGerald:** Pontius Pilate.

**Mr R. J. GIBBS:** I am not being Pontius Pilate at all. I was not around at that time. I would not hold certain Government members responsible for the actions of some members of their families under certain circumstances; nor does the Labor Party hold itself responsible for the actions of people who might have gerrymandered this State's electoral system in the past.

The Labor Party is proud to stand up on this issue and to make sure that the people of Queensland know that Opposition members represent what the people of this State deserve; that is, equal adult franchise under an open voting system. Opposition members are quite unlike the Robin Hoods and the bandits in the Liberal Party and the National Party who, in the past, prostituted electoral redistribution in this Parliament.

**Mr FITZGERALD (Lockyer) (4.31 p.m.):** It is with pleasure that I join in the debate on the Electoral Districts Bill. It was said by previous speakers that the Bill seems to draw a lot of fire and that many members in this Chamber are very sensitive. I can imagine how, whenever a redistribution Bill is before a Parliament, members tend to judge their electoral chances and speak with forked tongue.

I draw the attention of honourable members to the fact that the Bill provides for relatively minor changes to the zonal system in Queensland. I did not hear any Opposition members state whether or not they thought that the changes were necessary. They rejected the Bill totally out of hand.

The main provision in the Bill proposes to increase the number of members of this Assembly. I do not think that any other aspects have been alluded to by honourable members. Some reference has been made to the increase in the number of members elected to this Assembly. If the Bill passes through this House today—I presume that it will—there will be 89 members of this Assembly.

The leader of the Liberal Party (Sir William Knox) spoke to the Bill earlier. He said that perhaps some persons will read his past speeches to see what his stand was at that time. By way of interjection, he admitted that in 1976 he voted for an increase in the number of members in this Chamber. He went on record as saying that he voted for the increase. He did not indicate why he voted in that way. He said that some of his colleagues had not voted for an increase in the number of members.

As the Deputy Premier and Treasurer in 1977, the honourable member for Nundah introduced a minor amendment to the Electoral Districts Act. He made a speech on St Patrick's Day, 17 March 1977. I alert honourable members to the fact that I will quote only part of his speech. At that time, he said—

“It should be made clear that the proposal when presented to Cabinet by the Premier had the support of all Ministers, without reservation.”

The honourable member for Lytton (Mr Burns) interjected, “And without resignation.”

The honourable member for Nundah continued—

“Without reservation and without resignation. There has been no suggestion that Liberal Ministers should toe the line or hand in their resignations. I want to

make it perfectly clear that the amendments had the support of all Ministers, including all Liberal Ministers.

When the proposal was put up in the normal manner in the joint party room, it had the support of all members."

In 1977, as the leader of the Liberal Party, he said that he and his party supported the amendments to the Electoral Districts Act. That is the basis of the legislation that is being debated today. That continues the zonal system which is designed to give better representation to all.

The honourable member made reference to the Act. Another part of his speech reads as follows—

"I should now like to digress for a moment from the purport of the amendment to answer some of the points that have been raised. To illustrate the classic redistribution of all, which has been mentioned several times during the debate, I have here a map showing the way in which the Labor Party used to carve up Queensland."

He continued—

"It shows the famous electorate of Nash—the dumb-bell electorate. It contained a little of Maryborough at one end, a little of Bundaberg at the other and a huge area of no man's land in between."

I notice that the Labor Party spokesmen do not wish to refer to the gerrymanders that took place during Labor's term of office.

**Mr Gunn:** Hanlon was an artist.

**Mr FITZGERALD:** He certainly was. Today, the Labor Party is washing its hands of those deeds. The Bill was designed to give better representation to all people.

Opposition members have put forward arguments against the increase in the number of members of this House. I realise that they are aware that Queensland has a unicameral system. Queensland has only one House of Parliament. I was interested in how Queensland's 89 members would compare with the number in other State Houses on the basis of the number of electors per member of Parliament. The New South Wales State Parliament has 144 members, each representing 37 535 electors. The Victorian State Parliament has 125 members, each representing 32 607 electors. When Queensland has 89 members, it will have 28 147 electors per member of Parliament.

**Mr Hamill:** That is absolute rubbish. Are you talking about the population?

**Mr FITZGERALD:** I should have said the average number of people.

The South Australian State Parliament has 69 members, each representing 19 608 people. The Western Australian State Parliament has 91 members, each representing 15 193 people. The island of Tasmania has 54 members, each representing 8 092 people. The Northern Territory has 25 members, each representing 5 556 people. The Australian Capital Territory has 18 members, each representing 13 644 people.

**Mr De Lacy:** Are you counting the Upper House seats as well?

**Mr FITZGERALD:** Yes, the population per members of Parliament. Queensland is the only State with a unicameral system. The Northern Territory also has that system. People might be saying that this Parliament will inflict upon the population of Queensland an unwieldy number of members. The Queensland system should be put into perspective with the system of the other States and the number of members of Parliament in their Houses.

I realise that the Labor Party does not believe in the Upper House. I realise also that, in 1922, the ALP deliberately set about abolishing the Upper House in this State. Several Opposition members—and let them deny it—are opposed to an Upper House

for the States. They are also opposed to an Upper House for Australia. They are opposed to the Senate. ALP members have gone on record as saying that.

Therefore, in my opinion, these things must be explained. At present why is a redistribution taking place? As I said before, it is to alter the zonal boundaries and increase the number of members.

Why is a redistribution necessary? A redistribution probably will be necessary after the Bill becomes law. I imagine that a redistribution will be on; I hear no disagreement about that. I imagine that commissioners will be appointed and that a redistribution will be made. At present, 14 electorates in Queensland are above quota, 12 of which are held by the National Party and only two by the Labor Party. Of the 15 seats under quota, the ALP holds eight, the Liberals hold two, an Independent holds one and the National Party holds four.

It is claimed that a redistribution will benefit the National Party. On the basis of the figures that I have quoted, the new seats must be created in the growth areas represented by the National Party. It is reasonable to expect that a redistribution will take place and that additional seats will be created on the Gold Coast, for instance, where the Labor Party has no pretence to winning a seat. Additional seats will be created to the west of Brisbane, in the area represented by the Deputy Premier and Minister Assisting the Treasurer (Mr Gunn), and in the Caboolture area, where neither the Liberal Party nor the Labor Party has any pretence to winning. The Labor forces, particularly in southern Queensland, with which I am more familiar, have suffered a gradual shrinkage of support over the years. Before the election in 1957, the ALP held every seat west of the Great Dividing Range. Labor now claims that, because of the "electoral gerrymander"—they are Labor's words; I will not use them—it has experienced electoral misfortune. The fact is that Labor cannot win seats west of the range. It held two seats in Toowoomba, but it has lost them.

**Mr Gunn:** They took the names off tombstones.

**Mr FITZGERALD:** Many complaints were substantiated about the shenanigans that occurred.

Labor will never win back the two seats in Toowoomba; neither will the Liberal Party, which also held two Toowoomba seats, one of which it had won from Labor. They are now safe National Party seats. If there is to be an increase in the number of seats, the National Party will have a very good chance of winning them. However, it is for the electorate to decide who shall be the member. It is not up to the electoral commissioners; it is not up to you or me, Mr Deputy Speaker. If new seats are created where National Party members have represented the areas well, the people will tend to vote for a National Party candidate.

**Mr Borbidge:** Labor Party philosophy is that if they cannot win a seat, they abolish it.

**Mr FITZGERALD:** How very true.

What will happen to the ALP? Honourable members have witnessed its gradual demise. I know that members opposite take a keen interest in history. The fortunes of political parties rise and fall. In my opinion, in 20 or 30 years' time the Labor Party will not exist in Queensland. Socialism has had its day here. I can vouch for the general support in the electorate for the Government's actions against the more militant unions. The electorate has said, "Enough is enough." In various towns and cities throughout Queensland, the Labor Party has been thrown from office. Anybody who put an ALP tag on his chest carried it at the last local authority elections like a millstone round his neck.

**Mr Campbell:** What about Townsville?

**Mr Hamill:** What about Mount Isa?

**Mr FITZGERALD:** Members opposite are referring to the ALP's last bastions of support in Queensland. Out of 134 local authority areas, Opposition members can give only two instances. I wonder whether there are any more, or whether any further bids are to be made by members on the other side of the Chamber. At present, the Opposition has been able to give me two instances. I invite honourable members opposite to think of more. The Opposition is very entertaining when it comes at that kind of caper.

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr Warburton) and the honourable member for Wolston (Mr R. J. Gibbs) referred to the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and I think that their comments are worthy of consideration. Both honourable members, but particularly the honourable member for Wolston, admitted that they would appeal to their Federal colleagues in an attempt to persuade the Federal Government to use its external affairs powers to intervene and effect an electoral redistribution in Queensland. It is a matter of record that that has been said.

I acknowledge that the leader of the Liberal Party has said that in no way would outside interference be acceptable to him in an electoral redistribution, or in amendment of the Electoral Districts Act in Queensland. I certainly agree with those sentiments.

However, it is despicable that Queenslanders who are members of Parliament on the Opposition side are advocating that the Federal Government should use its constitutional powers to effect a redistribution of the electoral system in this State. I believe that, as has been pointed out by the honourable member for Surfers Paradise, those honourable members have betrayed their oaths of office.

The question must be asked: What is the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights? Although the declaration has been read out, I want to know who drew it up and which countries comprised the body that formulated it. I would like to know also what kind of voting system operates in the country that dominates that body.

**Honourable Members interjected.**

**Mr FITZGERALD:** I have heard it all before. That body is dominated by Russia and other left-wing puppet regimes.

**Mr Hamill:** You are a member of a party that formed part of a coalition Government in Queensland. Who ratified the covenant?

**Mr FITZGERALD:** I can see a great deal of yawning on the Opposition side because Opposition members have heard all that before. Many other countries also ratified the covenant; but I want to know which country was responsible for formulating the declaration, and how that country honours the terms of the covenant. What is the voting system in Russia like? That ought to be examined. What is the voting system in the Sudan like? That also should be examined. What is the voting system in England like? Honourable members ought to examine that, too. The voting system in England operates on a system of weightage and variation in representation. The honourable member for Ipswich does not want to examine the English system.

The honourable member for Cooroora (Mr Simpson) gave examples of electoral systems that operate in other western democratic countries. I emphasise the words "democratic countries" Western-style democracies use a weightage system of representation, and they vary the number of electors for each member. The honourable member for Ipswich would prefer to ignore that.

How much credence should be given to the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights? It is a joke, and all honourable members know that it is. It is well known that countries that have been signatories to the agreement, or have been responsible for drawing up the agreement, have disreputable voting systems. However, the Labor Opposition is trying to tell the people of Queensland that the system of Government in this State is not democratic because the Government does not adhere to what the Opposition urges as the correct interpretation of that declaration.

I draw the attention of honourable members to the fact that the prime purpose underlying the functions of a member of Parliament is the formulation of legislation and its presentation to and carriage by Parliament. It is true to say that responsibilities of members of Parliament have increased gradually over the years. Former honourable members will say that they did not have electorate secretaries and did not always operate from a particular office; that they attended Parliament when it was in session, and at other times looked after their electorates to the best of their ability. Nowadays members are provided with an electorate office, the services of a secretary, telephones and other assistance through the parliamentary library, although that was always provided.

However, those members representing the larger electorates, particularly those containing a large number of disadvantaged people with housing and social security problems, will say that they have an enormous work-load. I know that most members opposite would say that they have an enormous work-load, something that did not exist 20 or 30 years ago, even though in those days members did not have electorate secretaries. In those days constituents contacted a member only occasionally, but these days a member seems to be continually giving advice or helping people. One is always on the telephone talking to departmental officers. I know that members opposite do the same thing. We all do the best possible for our constituents.

A member must always be available to his constituents. Although constituents will not come to one's office, one often sees them at functions and they say, "Oh, I wanted to see you, but I haven't had time." All members face that sort of constraint on their social lives. They always have to be available to assist people even if sometimes they have to say, "Come and see me on Monday, but what is your name so that I can be sure to contact you." One always has to carry a pen, notebook and diary. As I said, a member is available 24 hours a day, even if he happens to be attending a social function. When one compares the number of people one has physically to look after, one finds that the job is becoming more and more difficult every day.

**Mr De Lacy:** Do you agree that those seats that have the large numbers of disadvantaged people should have a smaller number of electors?

**Mr FITZGERALD:** It was mentioned earlier that this Bill will take that into consideration. With your permission, Mr Deputy Speaker, I draw the attention of members to clause 12, which states in part that consideration shall be given by the commissioners to community or diversity of interest.

To digress from that for a moment—the member for Wolston referred to the Federal electorate of Rankin. I asked him by way of interjection—I do not think that my words were taken down—how else the boundaries of that electorate could have been drawn, considering the tight constraints placed upon the commissioners. They drew the boundaries of electorates from the southern border, the Northern Territory and the South Australian border on the western fringe, and the eastern coastline. If all those electorates contained an equal number of people as per the formula, Rankin was the scraps left over. It is inevitable that the commissioners charged with drawing up boundaries will have constraints imposed upon them. If constraints are imposed, in the end there must be scraps, and in this case they were Rankin. Honourable members opposite know that they would not accept nomination for such a seat, but it is a fact of life that it exists.

Clause 12 also refers to—

- “means of communication;
- physical features;
- the boundaries of Areas of Local Authorities and Divisions of Local Authorities;
- distance from the seat of government;
- density of population;
- demographic trends”

All those things will be taken into consideration.

I totally support the Bill. It is necessary to clear up a few anomalies relative to electoral districts. It does increase the number of members, and the figures prove that since 1971 there has been a population increase of 38 per cent. But there are still only 82 members, so I believe the increase to 89 members is warranted.

I ask the people of Queensland whether they want an extra seven members of Parliament. The members of this Parliament earn their salary, and I do not think that even Opposition members would disagree with that. The people of Queensland are getting good service from their members of Parliament. We receive less pay per hour than most public servants in this State. With the extra seven members of Parliament, the people of Queensland will have seven more public servants because, after all, we are public servants. The people elect us to Parliament for a term of three years. Whether we are returned at the end of three years depends on the way in which we perform our duties.

The increase of seven in the number of members of this Parliament is warranted. Increasing the number of members will be seen by the people of Queensland as being a wise move. As I said, in the past other members have agreed to an increase in the number of members of this Parliament. I referred to the stand taken by the leader of the Liberal Party on a previous occasion. Since then he has changed his mind, and that is his prerogative.

I have great pleasure in supporting the Bill.

**Mr HAMILL (Ipswich) (4.56 p.m.):** When the Premier and Treasurer (Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen) introduced the Electoral Districts Bill into the Parliament on 27 March, I noted that the title of the Bill claimed that it was "A Bill to make provision for the better distribution of electoral districts" In his speech, the Premier and Treasurer sought to justify the seven-member increase in the size of the Parliament and the zonal arrangements by which parliamentary representation would be weighted according to various areas in the State in the following terms—

" it is as a result of the population growth in Queensland that there is such an urgent need to provide a more satisfactory parliamentary representation . . . The proposals which I have outlined are soundly based and reasonable."

He went on to state—

"The four-zone system will continue the balanced presentation, balanced development policy of my Government."

That is a jaw-breaker.

The statement poses two questions that are fundamental to any discussion of Queensland's electoral system. Firstly, to whom is the Premier's scheme for parliamentary representation more satisfactory? Secondly, what compatibility is there between the notion of balanced representation as espoused by the Queensland Premier and the principles of a representative parliamentary democracy? The answers to those questions, at least from the Premier's point of view, lie in his condemnation of the principle of one vote, one value. He referred to it as being short-sighted. He said—

"It reflects blinkered vision, sectional policies—"

that is a good one coming from him—

"and an inability to see beyond the heavily populated south-eastern zone. It is espoused by those who are more concerned about mathematical formulas than representation of people, growth and balanced development.

One vote, one value applied to Queensland would see seven electorates taken from northern and western Queensland and placed in the south east of the State, where 60 per cent of all seats are already located."



The Leader of the Opposition (Mr Warburton) has already pointed out the furphy of that last statement. It is manifestly untrue, and we have proved that to the people of Queensland. The Premier went on to say—

“This would represent a sell-out of the interests of the people of the north and the rural areas of Queensland. The zonal system ensures the right balance of seats between country and city.”

If honourable members note those remarks they will see that it is obvious that what the Premier claims is satisfactory parliamentary representation is the attainment of what he terms the right balance of country and city representation in Parliament. He further claims that that right balance in Queensland's electoral system produces only a relatively mild bias to the conservative parties; therefore, it is OK. Those observations are really enlightening. They do show that balanced representation, as espoused by the Premier, has nothing at all to do with democratic representation of the people of Queensland in the State Parliament.

I hope that Government members will remember that democracy is concerned with people. Even the very derivation of the word “democracy” betrays that basic fact. Although our society has become so large and so complex that direct participation by the voting public in making decisions is impracticable, our parliamentary system has evolved in such a way that the public generally has an indirect input into its government—except, of course, at election-time when in a country such as ours, in which electoral enrolment and voting are compulsory, every elector is called upon to express his or her opinion directly through the ballot-box.

For the outcome of elections to be representative of the views of the public, impediments to the ability of the public to participate fully should be removed. It is pleasing to note that Australia has led the world in many electoral procedures designed to provide maximum participation in free elections. I instance secret ballots and universal adult franchise, although our record in relation to Aboriginal and Islander Australians is not good. Another Australian innovation was the introduction of absentee and postal votes.

Australia's record in experimentation with electoral systems to ensure that parliamentary representation is more closely reflective of electoral support than the principle of first past the post inherited from the United Kingdom has been impressive. The bastions of the Westminster system who sit on the Government benches have not advocated the reintroduction of the United Kingdom voting system in Queensland. So much for their high-minded harking back to the UK Parliament. The Australian electoral experience has been impressive in the variety of the use of voting systems including second ballots, full and optional preferential voting systems and various forms of proportional representation.

Despite all of that, one fundamental issue concerning democratic representation remains in the political debate occurring in Western Australia and Queensland. That issue is whether the franchise or right to vote in a representative democracy should be based on a system of one person, one vote, one value. It has long been accepted by Australian Governments of all political persuasions that an elector is entitled to one vote only in elections for State and national Parliaments. Nevertheless, it has only been in the last decade that most States and the Commonwealth have enshrined the principle of one person, one vote, one value in legislation.

The honourable member for Cooroora said that the electoral system in Western Australia is extremely unfair and biased, and that that can be seen in the large disparity in electoral enrolments from one seat to another. The honourable member should remember that the present Western Australian Labor Government has been endeavouring to have legislation that gives effect to the principle of one person, one vote, one value passed through the Upper House, which is dominated by the political comrades of National Party and Liberal Party members. This Government, which is made up of members who are of the same ilk as those dominating the Western Australian Upper

House, has introduced a Bill that repudiates the principle of one person, one vote, one value.

As I noted before, the Queensland Premier argues for a system of weighted representation for rural areas, which, he claims, will provide balanced representation and balanced development. Presumably, this will satisfy the interests of the people of north Queensland and of those in the rural areas of the State. The drift of population within the State makes an absolute mockery of any commitment by the Queensland Government to decentralisation and to ensuring that populations in rural areas are maintained. The rural areas of this State are lagging well behind other parts of the State in population growth. However, the new electorates will not be allocated exclusively to the growth areas.

The argument for weighted representation is not a new one. Unfortunately, I believe that, in this case, it is based more on the Premier's desire to maintain a right or satisfactory balance—that is his term, not mine—in party representation in Parliament. It is not based on an adherence to democratic principles. The Premier seeks to camouflage political advantage in the guise of seeking redress for those people in rural Queensland who, through the tyranny of distance, are denied the parliamentary representation afforded to those who live in closely settled areas. When one considers the quality of Government back-benchers, one can understand why country people are unhappy with the quality of their representation.

Nevertheless, this argument raises the important issue of the ability——

**Government Members** interjected.

**Mr HAMILL:** Government members should listen to this, because they might agree with it. This argument raises the important issue of the ability of a member of Parliament to represent his or her constituents.

It is unquestionably the case that the geographical size, demographic characteristics, physical features and quality, and the availability of transport and other forms of communication are variables which will affect a member of Parliament's ability to fulfil the role of representative. I notice that the member for Condamine agrees.

In a seminar held on 22 September 1984 to recognise Parliament Week in Western Australia, the issue of rural representation was addressed by the keynote speaker, Mr J. F. H. Wright, who said—

“I remain unconvinced that voters who consider themselves disadvantaged because they live in remote areas should be compensated by having the values of their votes increased. If we accepted the principle that disadvantaged people should be compensated in this way, we might be surprised to find how many people consider themselves eligible for loaded votes because of disadvantage of one kind or another.”

I will take up the argument that the member for Lockyer was putting but a few minutes ago that areas with large numbers of disadvantaged voters should be given wider representation. If that was the case, the urban electorates with large Housing Commission populations ought to be the electorates with the least number of people on the rolls. However, under this legislation, those electorates in Brisbane will have some of the largest enrolments in the State. The whole thing is absolute poppycock.

**Mr Simpson:** No.

**Mr HAMILL:** Even the honourable member for Cooroora knows that.

I endorse the comments made by that keynote speaker at that seminar in Western Australia. If parliamentary representation is to be based on hectares or square kilometres,

where does that leave the fundamental democratic principle that every citizen, regardless of race——

**Mr Simpson** interjected.

**Mr HAMILL:** The honourable member probably does not believe in that.

As I was saying, where does it leave the fundamental democratic principle that every citizen, regardless of race, colour, creed, residential address or any other distinguishing features has an inalienable right to an equal voice in the selection of representatives whose task it is to represent the citizens who select them. I ask honourable members opposite which of those characteristics can they not agree with? Can they not agree that everyone, irrespective of race, colour, creed, and residential address should have equal representation? What other criteria are members of the Government applying to give one person a vote of greater value than others?

That principle of equal voting power does not deny the difficulties experienced by members of Parliament and constituents alike in seeking to fulfil the representative democratic ideal in geographically large and often sparsely populated electorates. I notice that most of the electorates with low quotas that are created under the National Party's legislation are not the geographically large and sparsely populated ones.

The violation of democratic principles is not the answer in trying to reach the ideal representation. Other solutions are available to overcome the problems caused by poor communications and distance.

**Mr Simpson:** You are trying to buy representation.

**Mr HAMILL:** The honourable member for Cooroora probably believes that radios still have to be pedalled. I am afraid that technology has moved a little further ahead than the honourable member.

Those solutions include increased travel entitlements for members of Parliament in their electorates and additional office facilities so that members in far-flung electorates can maintain a number of electorate offices to serve the far-flung areas of their electorates. Free phones can be made available to constituents so they can contact their representative. They will not have to pay STD charges to ring their representative; they will be able to use Telecoms 008 service. Those are only a few of the available options.

The Queensland Government does not accept these arguments and will persist with its plan to provide for different quotas for different electoral enrolments. Unlike the Commonwealth system, in which electorates in any State or the Australian Capital Territory may vary by up to 10 per cent above or below quota, the Queensland Government is proposing a modification of the existing electoral system that will result in electoral enrolments ranging from approximately 7000 voters to more than 23 000 voters.

This legislation permits electoral enrolments to range up to 20 per cent above or below the particular quota for the area. Based on enrolment statistics compiled to December 1984, the south-eastern zone, with its 51 electorates, would have a quota of 19 357 voters; the 17-seat country zone, a quota of approximately 13 000 voters; and the western and far-northern zone, an average enrolment of approximately 9 500 voters. I might point out that, under this legislation, the Government is not satisfied with a 20 per cent margin above or below quota; it is providing that electorates in the western and far-northern zone be permitted to range over the 20 per cent tolerance that applies in other zones.

In the five coastal enclaves that constitute the provincial cities zone, the quotas will range from over 19 000 in the Townsville area to 17 550 in the Mackay area. From that it is quite clear that the value of a Queenslanders' vote will depend upon the Queenslanders' residential address, which is a feature that strikes at those fundamental principles of representative democracy discussed earlier.

Another commentator, Doctor Dean Jaensch has written in his paper, "The process of Electoral Reform"—

"Those who wish to incorporate a system of malapportionment must explain why they consider some people to be inferior to others—"

that is what the Government is doing; it is saying that some Queenslanders are inferior to other Queenslanders—

"why they consider that the citizens of one area should not have an equal right to select their representatives."

Last night I said by way of interjection that the National Party is not very strong on civil and political rights and liberties.

To put this in Queensland terms so that the minds opposite can understand it, why should a person's vote in Charleville be valued more highly than the vote of a resident of Kingaroy, which in turn is worth more than the vote of a person from Cairns, which is valued more highly than the vote of residents of the Brisbane suburbs of Chermiside or Carina? The system is totally irrational.

The division of the State into zones has been strongly criticised not only in principle but also in particular. Contrary to the claims made by the honourable member for Lockyer (Mr FitzGerald), the zonal boundaries are fraught with anomalies. The four zones that were established by the Electoral Districts Act 1971-1977 led to the drawing of electoral boundaries that had no respect for the community of interest or population criteria that the Government claims are important. For example, the Darling Downs shire of Rosalie is an area close to the home of the honourable member for Lockyer. The residents in the town of Cooyar are enrolled within the country zone.

**Mr McPhie:** Have you ever been there?

**Mr HAMILL:** Yes, I have. I even know the way.

The residents of Yarraman, which is only a few kilometres to the east, are enrolled for an electorate in the south-eastern zone. The new legislation does not remove that anomaly, with the result that the vote of a person from Cooyar is worth 50 per cent more than the vote of a person in Yarraman.

Other anomalies abound. The rapidly growing electorate of Somerset, which is represented by the Deputy Premier and which, at 31 December last, had an enrolment of 27 681 and an area of 8 700 sq. km, is located in the south-eastern zone. The neighbouring electorate of Barambah, which is represented by the Premier and Treasurer, has an enrolment of only 12 141 and an area of only 7 950 sq. km, which is less than that of the electorate of Somerset. Yet it happens to be in the country zone.

The north Queensland electorate of Townsville is represented by my colleague Mr McElligott. It has an enrolment of 27 963 and an area of 4 090 sq. km. It is located hundreds of kilometres from the capital city. The electorate of Warwick, which is represented by Mr Booth, and which is located within two hours' drive of the capital, has an enrolment of only 11 403 and an area of 4 450 sq. km., which is not much more than the area of the electorate of Townsville.

The size of those electorates was based on the Government's legislation, and the legislation that it is pushing through this House will not alter the situation. The existence of these anomalies illustrates the basic dishonesty that lies behind those high-minded claims that Queensland's four-zonal electoral system is designed to provide fair and balanced representation between country and city, disregarding totally distance from the capital city and community of interest. However, the Government claims that they are important criteria for consideration by the electoral commissioners.

Quite clearly, the zonal boundaries are drawn more for political party advantage than any desire to enhance the operation of democracy in this State. It is no coincidence that the Australian Labor Party and the Liberal Party have their political bases in the

higher quota electorates of the provincial city zone and the south-eastern zone, whereas the National Party almost monopolises representation from the low-quota electorates of the country zone and the western and far-northern zone.

It is also no coincidence that the malapportionment system is advantageous to the National Party and discriminates against Labor and, more particularly, against Queensland's Brisbane-based Liberal Party.

Queensland has the dubious distinction of having the most inequitable electoral system in Australia, second only to that of Western Australia. I have already pointed out that at least legislation has been introduced into the Western Australian Parliament, albeit in vain, to redress the situation.

I will quote some statistics from Dr Colin Hughes, a person whom the National Party seems to quote often in trying to justify its electoral fixing in Queensland.

However, before I do that, I point out that in his second-reading speech the Premier quoted enrolments for zones. I do not know who the Premier is trying to fool. The enrolments for zones that he quoted are the zones as they stand under the existing legislation. The Premier has obviously tried to mislead the House in not providing the enrolments for the new zones.

The Premier also selectively quoted from a study conducted by Dr Colin Hughes concerning bias in the electoral system. What he does not go on to say is that Queensland's electoral system compares very unfavourably with other Australian electoral systems in the area of malapportionment.

When dealing with the situation in New South Wales, the Premier referred to a finding in the 1981 State election in New South Wales. New South Wales does not have a full compulsory preferential voting system. Therefore, the compilation of two-party preferred votes in New South Wales, which is the basis of the other part of the Hughes statistic, is purely a hypothetical calculation, because the electoral laws of that State are different from those that prevail in other States.

Nevertheless, I will compare the Queensland situation with those in other States. On three different indexes, the Queensland electoral system comes second only to Western Australia in the degree of malapportionment. One index compares the enrolment in the biggest seat with that of the smallest seat. That is the David-Eisenberg Index. The second index compares the total enrolments in those seats with lowest enrolments that would make up a majority in the Parliament. That is the Dauer-Kelsay Index. The third index, the one most favoured by Dr Hughes—the Gini Coefficient Index—also shows Queensland as having the second worst electoral system in Australia. The figures are quite clear. I seek leave to incorporate a table in "Hansard"

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row):** Order! Has the table been sighted by Mr Speaker or the Temporary Chairman? The honourable member can proceed with his speech. I will determine this matter later.

**Mr HAMILL:** Since that table was compiled, Victoria has enacted one person, one vote, one value legislation, and the Commonwealth has done likewise. However, the constitutional guarantees that exist in the Constitution concerning representation for States such as Tasmania and the formula for allocating seats to the States detract from the full achievement of the democratic principle of one person, one vote, one value.

Nevertheless, the statistics for Queensland put this State in a very bad light. Under the redistribution that the Government proposes under the new Electoral Districts Act, nothing will be done to remove anomalies such as I mentioned earlier, nor will it do much to remove the malapportionment which denies Queensland votes equality in the ballot-box.

Although a new redistribution may reduce the first index, that is, the David-Eisenberg Index, to around 3.0, and raise the second index, that is, the Dauer-Kelsay

Index, to approximately 42.5, this compares most unfavourably with the situation that prevailed after the 1971 redistribution and the 1977 partial redistribution, for which the David-Eisenberg Index records 2.3 and 2.1 and the Dauer-Kelsay Index renders 46.3 and 44.5 respectively.

As did its predecessor, the new Electoral Districts Bill goes into great detail in describing the boundaries of the zones. The differential quotas applied to the zones or parts of zones will continue the anomalies discussed and create a few more, as the Schedule to the Bill provides for the partition of a variety of local government areas and divisions with scant regard for community of interest or the Bill's requirement in clause 12 that the redistribution commissioners generally distribute the electorates in such a way that their boundaries conform to local government area and divisional boundaries.

The list of shires and divisions arbitrarily truncated in this matter include: Division 4 of Rosalie shire; Widgee shire; Woongarra shire; Mulgrave shire, particularly division I; Fitzroy shire; Calliope shire; Pioneer shire; Thuringowa shire, particularly divisions 1 and 2; Waggamba shire, particularly division 3; Belyando shire, particularly division 2; Dalrymple shire, particularly division 2; and Mareeba shire, particularly division 2. In all, 12 local government areas appear in the list.

The zonal system outlined in the new legislation further departs from the democratic principle of one person, one vote, one value by providing that enrolments in electorates may vary by up to 20 per cent above or below the quota for electorates in that zone or part of a zone in the case of the provincial cities zone.

Even this generous allowance may be relaxed in the case of electorates in the eight-seat western and far-northern zone.

This means that Queensland electoral enrolments may range from some electorates with around 7 000 voters to others with over 23 000 electors—a ratio of almost 1:3.3. In other words, one vote in a low-quota electorate is equal to over three votes in a high-quota electorate. A commitment to one person, one vote, one value would remove the 20 per cent tolerance and replace it with a 10 per cent tolerance in line with legislation in other parts of Australia.

Queensland Governments have a history of ensuring that electoral redistributions produce results favourable to the Government party or parties. Allegations of political pressure being applied to commissioners in the drawing of electoral boundaries are a regular feature of redistribution in this State. The proposed redistribution will be no different. The Bill does not provide for a permanent and independent electoral commission, as does legislation recently enacted elsewhere in Australia; nor does it provide for adequate public scrutiny of the redistribution process in line with the Commonwealth legislation. Those deficiencies must be addressed if the State's electoral system is to be taken out of the realm of political machinations and thereby fulfil its task as a vehicle by which public opinion can be fairly translated into government.

Those propositions have been enacted elsewhere in Australia. The ALP's opposition is based on its desire to amend the Bill in a range of particulars to provide for the removal of the zonal system and its replacement with a single quota for the whole of Queensland; to abolish the variation of 20 per cent or more and provide for a 10 per cent tolerance above or below quota for enrolments in individual electorates; to establish an independent electoral commission constituted by a Supreme Court judge, the Principal Electoral Officer and the Surveyor-General; and, importantly, to provide for the public disclosure of submissions and objections to the commissioners in the conduct of the redistribution.

Those reforms, coupled with improved resources and facilities for members representing country areas, would be the basis of Labor's objective to reform the electoral system to give effect to that fundamental principle of democratic representation—one person, one vote, one value.

If the civil rights of the vast majority of Queenslanders—after all, the parties opposing the legislation represent over 60 per cent of the voting public of Queensland—are not protected by the State Parliament, I support the proposition that the ALP be prepared to look elsewhere for remedies. I refer, of course, to legislative action by the Commonwealth. Two courses of legislative action appear to be open to the Commonwealth to defend the basic civil right of one person to have one vote equal in value to that of another person.

The first alternative is to enact the equal suffrage clause mentioned earlier by my colleague from Wolston (Mr R. J. Gibbs), which is contained in the International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights, which has been ratified by the Australian Government. Interestingly, it was the Fraser/Anthony Government that ratified much of that covenant. Such legislation would come under section 51 (v) of the Commonwealth Constitution, which empowers the Commonwealth to legislate to give domestic effect to the international covenants entered into by the Commonwealth. There can be no doubt that such a move would be contested in the High Court by the Queensland Government, which does not believe in one person, one vote, one value. However, in the light of recent decisions of the High Court on section 51 (v), there is every possibility that the court would uphold the legislation as being validly enacted under that head of power.

**Mr FitzGerald** interjected.

**Mr HAMILL:** We are all Australians. There ought to be one law for all Australians, particularly for their democratic right to vote.

**Mr McPhie** interjected.

**Mr HAMILL:** That applies right across the board.

The second option is to conduct a constitutional referendum on the issue. Again, legislation would be required in the Federal Parliament. It is the unanimous view of the State parliamentary Labor Party that the principle of one person, one vote, one value is fundamental to a democracy's political and civil rights. As a party that is committed to civil liberties—unlike those who sit opposite—the ALP bears a heavy responsibility to legislate to defend the civil and political rights of all Australians.

A number of members on the Government back benches have referred to electoral systems in other democracies. The member for Cooroora (Mr Simpson) even tried to convince us that a Westminster parliament was the only criterion by which one could judge a country as having a democracy.

**Mr Simpson:** The member for Cooroora didn't say that at all. You are making up stories again.

**Mr HAMILL:** The member's whole speech was a fabrication. He commented that malapportionment existed in the United Kingdom and other countries. If Queensland's electoral laws were brought into line with those in operation elsewhere in the world, the operation of democracy in this country would be greatly impaired. Secret ballots would not have been necessary, and I point out that they are an Australian invention. Compulsory enrolment would not be necessary, because most other Westminster parliamentary systems do not have such enrolments. Preferential voting would not exist, because in most Westminster Parliaments, such as that of New Zealand—and even in the United States of America—preferential voting is not in operation.

If the example that has been set by other political systems was followed—systems with which people such as the honourable member for Cooroora seem to have an affinity; for instance, that in South Africa—political and civil rights would not be enjoyed by people who were not whiter than white. That would be a disgraceful situation, especially as it has been urged that Queensland should tailor its electoral laws so that the Government keeps in line with a system that operates in other countries.

**Mr SIMPSON:** I rise to a point of order. I find it insulting that the honourable member for Ipswich has referred to me as being in favour of certain systems of government that are far nearer to that honourable member's totalitarian philosophy and operate in other parts of the world.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row):** Order! The honourable member for Cooroora objects to the implications in the comments made by the honourable member for Ipswich.

**Mr HAMILL:** I withdraw any statement that the honourable member may have found offensive.

I must say, though, that the principle exists, and if honourable members on the Government side will not accept the principle that every citizen in the country has the right to one vote, of equal value to another, they deny basic democratic principles that ensure that people will not be prejudiced by race, colour, creed, place of abode, or any other feature associated with their existence.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The honourable member's allocated time has expired, so I suggest that he now seek leave to incorporate in "Hansard" the table that he referred to.

**Mr HAMILL:** I seek leave to have the table I referred to incorporated in "Hansard"  
Leave granted.

Table 2: Indices of Malapportionment

Election	Measure of Malapportionment*		
	David-Eisenberg	Dauer-Kelsey	Gini
Tas. 1982	1.05	50.9	0.037
NSW 1981	1.28	48.5	0.039
SA 1982	1.64	46.1	0.090
AUS 1983	1.86	46.1	0.070
Vic 1982	1.84	45.4	0.088
Qu. 1983	3.88	40.4	0.171
WA 1983	5.79	36.1	0.194
*NOTE	David-Eisenberg. "Perfect"	1.0, larger = malapportionment	
	Dauer-Kelsey. "Perfect"	50.0, smaller = malapportionment	
	Gini. "Perfect"	0.0, larger = malapportionment	

**Mr NEAL (Balonne) (5.27 p.m.):** I take pleasure in joining in this debate. I have listened with great interest to the Leader of the Opposition and the honourable members for Wolston and Ipswich. I have listened to them speak so eloquently about such things as a charter of human rights, a totally independent electorate commission, no political interference in the determination of electoral commissions, equal representations, and all those sorts of things. The honourable members have also said that if they were elected to govern, they would introduce those measures. All I can say is that, if they expect members on the Government side to swallow such ideas, either they think Government members believe in the tooth fairy, or they themselves do.

Honourable members are not dealing with an airy-fairy, highly idealistic matter. The reality is that we are dealing with a system of representation that will give all people in this State a fair go and maintain a high standard of living through development of the State.

I shall refer to figures that indicate that the necessity for a redistribution of Queensland electoral districts has been brought about by a huge increase in the State's population by 410 000. That increase is approximately 19 per cent higher than the number of electors who formed the basis of the last redistribution in 1977. Demographic changes relative to areas to which people have moved during that time also must be taken into account.



Since the last increase in the number of representatives in this Assembly, in 1972, the population has increased by 700 000, or 38 per cent. If the figures are examined in relation to the proposed increase of seven seats, it will be seen that that increase represents approximately 8.6 per cent as an increase in the number of parliamentary representatives, whereas the increase in population since 1972 has been of the order of 38 per cent.

It is as a result of the population increase that 14 electorates are presently over quota and 15 electorates are under quota. I realise that Government members have referred to this already, but I believe it is pertinent to reiterate that of the 14 over-quota electorates, 12 are held by the National Party and only two are held by the Labor Party. Of the 15 under-quota seats, the Labor Party holds eight, the Liberal Party holds two, an Independent holds one, and the National Party holds only four. In addition to that, of those 15 under-quota electorates, 11 are held by the Opposition as opposed to only four held by the Government.

The present system of vote distribution disadvantages the National Party, and it is important to get that fact straight at the start. It is mainly in areas represented by the National Party that a need exists for redistribution.

The huge increase in population has occurred mainly in the south-east corner of the State, and of the 29 seats out of balance, 25 are in that area. At present, the area is represented by 47 seats, and the proposed redistribution will increase that number to 51. It is very important that that be remembered.

The main thrust of any redistribution in a State so large and with such a divergence of pursuits requires careful consideration if any sort of electoral justice is to be given to those people living in remote areas or, more particularly, outside what may be termed the golden circle—the area within a 125-mile radius of Brisbane. As was indicated by a number of other Government members, electoral weightage has been accepted by many great democracies, including the United States of America, the United Kingdom and Canada. It is also accepted in a number of Australian States. A basic principle of democracy is that all sectors of a community are entitled to an adequate voice and vote. To achieve that, and in the interests of balance and decentralised development, it is essential that there be an adequate spread of parliamentary representation.

**Mr Davis** interjected.

**Mr NEAL:** For years, I have had to listen to the honourable member for Brisbane Central carping in this House, asking questions and suggesting that electorates represented by Government members have more money spent on works than do those represented by Opposition members. The honourable member does not even have the brains or the ability to count the number of schools in different electorates that have to be serviced. Many country electorates have up to 40 schools; there are only two in the electorate of the honourable member for Brisbane Central. Because there is greater utilisation of Government resources in city electorates, is it any wonder that more money is spent in rural electorates? That is what it is all about. If the honourable member is going to suggest that people in far-flung country areas are not entitled to equal representation and a share of Government resources, then he stands condemned.

As far as I am concerned, the runs are on the board. It cannot be denied that Queensland is the most decentralised State in Australia. That situation did not just happen; it was made to happen. It was brought about by the policies of this Government, shaped by the representations of many members, by pressure for development, and by the provision of Government services throughout the State. It would not have happened to anywhere near the same extent under the one vote, one value system proposed by the Australian Labor Party and the Liberal Party. Under such a proposal, the emphasis is placed on the more populous areas; the money is spent where the numbers are. The one vote, one value system is a centralised system that would centralise parliamentary representation——

**Mr Davis** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row):** Order! I notice that the name of the member for Brisbane Central appears on the Whip's list of speakers. He will have a chance to speak later on, and I would appreciate it if he did so then rather than attempting to do so now.

**Mr NEAL:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, but I did not really need protection from him; I have been more frightened of koalas.

As I was saying, the one vote, one value system is a centralised system that would centralise parliamentary representation, and, of course, political power, in the extreme south-eastern corner, thus virtually disfranchising the rest of the State.

**Mr Hamill:** That's where your electorate is.

**Mr NEAL:** I will come to the honourable member shortly; he need not worry about that.

Under a one vote, one value system as proposed by the Australian Labor Party and the Liberals, there would be approximately 57 seats in the area covering the south-eastern zone, or golden circle, and 32 seats for the remainder of the State. Under the proposed redistribution, there will be 51 seats in the south-eastern zone and 38 seats for the rest of the State. That is not unreasonable. Of the 38 seats in the other zones, the western and far-northern zones will have eight members who will be expected to represent 76 per cent of the area of the State, or an area almost half as big again as the State of New South Wales.

What we are talking about is not the value of votes but the equality of representation; in other words, adjusting the numbers in each electorate in terms of systems applied in other countries to achieve a fair and just value for each vote. By taking into account a zonal system and a variation above or below the average, consideration is given to electors' isolation, the availability of services, access to their elected representatives, communications and transport difficulties.

I heard the honourable member for Ipswich talking about free telephones. He does not even know that many people in remote areas cannot get a telephone. They cannot afford the cost of installing a telephone. He should do a little bit of homework. People in remote areas are not connected to the telephone system for the nice little amount that the honourable member pays. He should have a look at the condition of some of the roads in those areas.

**Mr Hamill:** Roads are your responsibility.

**Mr NEAL:** Of course they are my responsibility. The Government lays down priorities, and I cannot expect that the 8 000 electors in my far-flung electorate will have roads of the same standard as those in the honourable member's electorate. He should not talk rubbish like that and act childishly. He should go out and have a look at the area.

Another matter of concern is community of interest. Again, the member for Ipswich talked about the terrible zones. The Hawke Labor Government has just carried out a redistribution. Reference has been made to the Federal seat of Rankin and to the fact that that is not a zone. Heavens above! It is an electoral boundary. What is the difference? It is a shemozzle, anyway. The honourable member should look in his own back yard first.

Another matter that should be considered is the ability of a parliamentary member to service the people, industries and institutions in his electorate effectively. That includes the area, the ease or otherwise of transport, and the distribution of population. It takes into consideration the desirability of achieving balanced representation by ensuring that all areas have the opportunity to develop to their full potential.

Electoral weightage simply means allowing variations in the numbers of voters in electorates in recognition of representational problems, such as distance from the seat

of government. The principle of electoral weightage, applied within reasonable bounds, is not undemocratic. In fact, it is a vital prerequisite for the realisation of the principal objective of a sound electoral system. In fact, as other Government members and I have stated, that is recognised and accepted in some of the world's greatest democracies.

I listened with great interest to what the honourable member for Wolston (Mr R. J. Gibbs) said. He quoted what Judge Warren of the Supreme Court of the United States of America said in 1964 about equal and universal suffrage. For the information of the honourable member, I shall carry that on a little further and indicate what happened.

In 1973, the Supreme Court in the United States of America reversed its decision of 1964, which ordered strict mathematical equality of voters as a basis of electoral redistribution. That decision was overturned.

**Mr R. J. Gibbs:** I did not mention that.

**Mr NEAL:** The honourable member referred to Judge Warren.

**Mr R. J. Gibbs:** I made no reference to him.

**Mr NEAL:** Perhaps I misunderstood the honourable member. I still make the point that in 1964 the Supreme Court in the United States of America ordered strict mathematical equality of voters as a basis of electoral redistribution. In 1973, the Supreme Court overturned that decision.

One vote, one value is nothing more than an emotional catchcry that attempts to convey to electors living in the more populated areas the idea that their vote is equal to only half the vote of an elector living in the more remote areas. In terms of Government services provided, the reverse is the case.

Those who propose the principle of one vote, one value, display an amazing ignorance of distance, time span and rural Queensland. The only way in which any semblance of a one vote, one value system can be achieved is through proportional representation, and the ALP does not support that system. Under that system, 50 per cent of the popular vote must be won, and the recent Senate election revealed that that result is unattainable for the Labor Party. It is significant that it is ALP policy to abolish the Senate. In fact, the honourable member for Windsor wants to get rid of the Legislative Assembly of Queensland, too.

The zone system was introduced many years ago by a Labor Government. The honourable member for Ipswich made the claim that the Premier said that the present electoral system reflects a slight bias in favour of the Government party. I inform the honourable member that the Premier said nothing of the sort; he has misread what the Premier said.

**Mr HAMILL:** I rise to a point of order. The honourable member for Balonne is misleading the House. In his second-reading speech, the Premier stated quite clearly that a bias of 1.5 per cent to the conservative parties exists in the electoral system in this State. That appears in his second-reading speech.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row):** Order! I do not consider that inference was drawn against the honourable member for Ipswich. He has made his point.

**Mr NEAL:** What the honourable member for Ipswich does not understand is that the bias within the system is called electoral weightage. The south-eastern zone has an enrolment of 987 238, and that represents 64.8 per cent of the voters in Queensland. Although it has an entitlement to 57.3 per cent of the seats in the Parliament, it has only 51 seats. The provincial cities zone, with an enrolment of 254 810 or 16.7 per cent of the voters, has 13 seats, although it is entitled to 14.6 per cent of the seats. It is obvious that the system does contain a bias.

**Mr Hamill:** The figures are wrong.

**Mr NEAL:** I ask the honourable member to let me finish. The most glaring bias or weightage occurs in the western and far-northern zone where 4.7 per cent of the voters in Queensland have eight seats in the Parliament. However, as I said earlier, that zone represents 76 per cent of the physical area of the State. Because of that, the weightage in their favour is not unreasonable. The country zone, in which 13.7 per cent of the voters are enrolled, has 17 seats, and is entitled to 15. That weightage is not unreasonable.

The ALP, which contests all of those seats in those zones, holds some of them. What is significant is that years ago it held almost every seat in those zones. However, it is now vehemently opposed to this system because it has lost most of the seats in rural areas. It deserted the rural people and became centralised in Brisbane.

The honourable member for Ipswich and the Leader of the Opposition have called on Mr Hawke to intervene in this redistribution. It is interesting to note the manoeuvres of the honourable member for Ipswich. He has been described by the media as one of the bright young men in the ALP, and his star is certainly on the rise. I am sure that honourable members can look forward to watching his star rise to the heights reached by his colleagues Gareth Evans in the Federal sphere and Peter Duncan in South Australia. They have both risen completely out of sight.

Mr Hawke would be well advised to keep out of things that do not concern him. I quite seriously suggest that what Mr Hawke should do is send his modern day Marco Polo, the Federal member for Oxley (Mr Hayden) over to the United States of America and some of the other great democracies that have electoral weighting and tell them where they are going wrong under the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

I also wish to raise the stand of the Liberal party that the House witnessed today. Again the Liberal Party is flirting with the ALP. It has indicated that it would be prepared to form a minority administration with the ALP should it win the balance of power at the next election.

**Mr Innes:** That is a lie.

**Mr NEAL:** That has been quoted. The honourable member for Sherwood will have an opportunity to refute it.

All I can suggest is that if the Liberal Party is prepared to fight an election on this issue, it will not even have a six-pack after that election. Because of the Liberal Party support for the ALP and the one vote, one value system, obviously it will not win any seats outside the city limits. That is quite understandable, as the only member who has any idea of what is going on outside the limits of the city of Brisbane is the member for Yeronga (Mr Lee). For the Liberals to join with the ALP today shows their desperation. They believe in the old saying: any port in a storm.

This redistribution will give a fair representation throughout the State. The huge increase in population in the south-east zone has been taken into account, as have the disadvantages of both representation and living in the vast inland areas. I have much pleasure in supporting the Bill.

**Mr BRADDY (Rockhampton) (5.46 p.m.):** Several members of the Government have risen in the House to say what they are really about is equality of representation. That phrase somehow encapsulates the magic that is enshrined in the National Party system, which is enshrined in the Bill. They have suggested that the phrase "equality of representation" is somehow markedly different from one vote, one value. I suggest that the phrase "equality of representation", which the National Party supporters say they are seeking, is a principle that we in the Labor Party accept and that we in the Labor Party say we are seeking. The difference is that we really are seeking it and members of the National Party are merely mouthing platitudes.

The phrase "equality of representation" was recently defined in the Canadian Parliamentary Review, volume 6, number 4, page 3, which states—

"The formal aspect of representation is equity, which we define as the relationship between the percentage of votes obtained and the percentage of seats won in the legislature."

**Mr Borbidge:** Will you take an interjection?

**Mr BRADDY:** At this stage, I will not.

**Mr Borbidge:** Are you aware that the tolerance in Canada is 6 to 1?

**Mr BRADDY:** At the moment I will speak about the principles of the Bill. Later in my speech I will take interjections about Canada, the United Kingdom, the United States of America and anything else that the honourable member likes to say.

"Equality of representation", which is the principle that was spoken about by the member for Cooroora (Mr Simpson) and was mentioned by the member for Balonne (Mr Neal), is the magical phrase that they say they are seeking. I have given the House a definition of that phrase; no definition has come from the Government side. In fact, the definition of "equality of representation" is an equitable system that defines the relationship between the percentage of the votes obtained and the percentage of the votes won. In effect, the one vote, one value system is equality of representation. We in the Labor Party have never said that we demand and would insist upon a strict one vote, one value system; in effect, we are seeking equality of representation.

Earlier today the honourable member for Wolston (Mr R. J. Gibbs) told the House that he was stating the key points of a Bill that encapsulates Labor Party policy. That Bill would allow a 10 per cent variation either way which, in effect, allows for a 20 per cent variation. That is equality of representation, not some artificial system that demands, down to the last vote or the last 10 votes, that every person and every electorate has the same number of people and equal rights.

A 10 per cent variation is equality of representation. What we got from the Government side was a waving of the flag, "Equality of representation" No definition was given as to what it meant in theory, but some reference was made to what it means in practice when they look at the country zones—the far-flung areas that have been referred to as needing the additional help and additional pandering because they are suffering the inequities of the present system.

The Bill fortifies the malapportionment and the gerrymandering that has gone on in Queensland through the zonal system since 1949. As the Leader of the Opposition said, the zonal system was introduced into Queensland by the Hanlon Labor Government in 1949. None of the present members of the Opposition were members of this Assembly at that time. The Opposition accepts that historically the system was introduced by a Labor Government. However, one must examine the history of Australia and the Australian electoral system in 1949 and keep it in perspective.

In 1949, the Hanlon Labor Government introduced the four-zone system, which was a system that was also common right throughout this country. The system operated in an environment and in a society that was totally different from our present environment and society. The system that was introduced in 1949 was not fully justifiable, but in 1949 many people in Australia thought that it was justifiable. At that time all the other mainland State Governments had some form of zonal system. That was nearly 40 years ago.

What did that system mean in terms of equity in 1949 and in 1985? Even in 1949, members of this Assembly and other persons in Australia believed that, whatever the zonal system's justice might have been at some time in history, it was no longer justifiable

or applicable in Queensland in 1949. In the debate on the introduction of that measure, the following statement was made in this Chamber—

“In introducing this measure the Premier in a plausible way sought to convince the members of this House and the people generally that it was designed to give greater representation, greater benefits and freedom, as it were, to the people of the State. But when you consider the principles of the Bill you come to the conclusion that its purpose is to get greater control over the lives of the people, as it is in effect saying to the public, ‘Whether you like it or not, we will be the Government; whether you like our policy or not, you have to accept it.’ ”

**Mr Hamill:** Who said that?

**Mr BRADDY:** It was said by the then honourable member for Nanango, on 29 March 1949. The man now holds the office of Premier and Treasurer of this State. It was probably the only democratic speech that he made in this Chamber. He continued—

“It is a ‘bill of sale’ over the lives of the majority of the people of this State for the benefit of this Government and the minority they represent. Truly, these are grave days for the people of Queensland, not so much because of the enemy without as because of the enemy within. Little do the people realise the grave injustice that is silently being inflicted upon them. In a most subtle way their freedom to select the Government they want to represent them is being taken away from them. In many other countries people are brought to heel by more ruthless methods. In this State the bringing in of full control over the lives of the people is being accomplished by legislation of one kind or other.”

Is that not true in this State now? The speech continues—

“In this legislation the people are given the right of voting, admittedly, but the odds are so greatly against them that to achieve the results they desire is impossible because the predetermined zones and the numbers set out will mean nothing but that the majority will be ruled by the minority.”

**Mr Warburton:** A very young Robert Sparkes wrote that.

**Mr BRADDY:** A very young Robert Sparkes; no doubt a very democratic young Robert Sparkes. I heard no interjections from Government members as I read the Premier’s democratic speech of 29 March 1949.

As time has passed, the Premier has proved that his espousal of democracy is purely a matter of words. I suggest that what he said in 1949 is very relevant to 1985. In my opinion, it was a good speech. I read it several times to myself and I thought, “Undoubtedly it is the Premier’s best speech.” It is magnificent that those principles were set in this House. However, it is a tragedy that the principles have been lost by his party. The members of that party who in 1949 said they believed in and fought for electoral justice have allowed themselves to be bought by the smell of power since they came to office in 1957.

As I have said, that speech by the Premier was a great speech, because at that time in Australia many other State Governments had zonal systems in which gerrymanders were applying. What else has changed in Australia between 1949 and 1985? As several Labor Party speakers have said, the whole system of communication in this country has changed. Australia now has much better roads. It has fine air transport and telecommunications. Therefore, any justification for a rural malapportionment that applied in 1949 and earlier is much less justified in 1985. Any justification for such malapportionment can definitely be taken care of within the 10 per cent variation that both the Labor and Liberal Parties believe is reasonable and logical in the current situation in Queensland.

What else can be said in relation to the changes in Australian society since 1949? I suggest that important changes have occurred that the National Party refuses to face. I suggest also that it refuses to face these changes at its peril and at the peril of this

Parliament. The changes to which I refer are in the attitude of the people towards public authority, judicial authority and authority generally in this State and this country.

In 1949, it would have been unbelievable that members of this Assembly would have to vacate the Chamber and stand on the verandas for some time while checks were made to establish whether or not a bomb had been placed in the precincts of the House. That incident occurred shortly after I entered this Parliament. I was told that that was the first occasion on which such a thing had happened, and I believe that to be so. That is not just a matter of histrionics or drama; it is a matter of fact.

What else is fact in this country? Within the last decade, a Family Court judge has been gunned down at his door; the wife of another Family Court judge has been blasted to death in her home; explosives have been placed in courts; and Criminal Court judges in Victoria have had shots fired in their courts. Again, that is not a matter of drama or histrionics. Those things demonstrate that there has been a change of attitude towards authority in this country. People who are in despair are prepared to use violence. What greater despair can be imposed on a society than by saying to people, "You will never change the Government of this State by electoral justice. You will never change it at the ballot-box."? That is what the Government is doing. That is the responsibility it is accepting in a country in which judges and their wives have been killed——

**Mr Alison:** Do you advocate it?

**Mr BRADDY:** I do not advocate it. I thought that the honourable member would have the sense to realise that what I am advocating is a fair electoral system so that people will not despair and will change Governments at the ballot-box and not with a bomb. Government members will have to take the responsibility if violence comes into the political system, and it has already come close. The honourable member for Maryborough left this House recently when a bomb threat was received. He lives in a country in which judges have been killed. What I am saying is that what was applicable in 1949 is not applicable in 1985.

*Sitting suspended from 6 to 7.15 p.m.*

**Mr BRADDY:** In these troubled times, an onerous responsibility rests on Governments to ensure that democracy is not only practised by the Government but is also seen to be practised. These are not the times of 1949, when the present Premier and Treasurer so eloquently and correctly spoke out against the zonal-system gerrymander of the Hanlon Government. We are now living in very troubled times. The Parliament was adjourned because of a bomb threat. Judges and their wives have been murdered. These are indeed troubled times and the Government must accept the responsibility for administering the Electoral Districts Act, paying due cognisance to these troubled times. A responsibility rests fairly and squarely on the Government to ensure that a just electoral system is visited on the citizens of Queensland. It is the cry of both the Labor and Liberal Parties in the Parliament that the zonal system is unfair and unjust. I therefore suggest that the Government look long and hard at the continuation of a four-zone system to ensure that no charge can ever be laid at its door that it in any way encouraged extremists. The legislation, presented as it is in such troubled times in a democracy, is an incitement to further trouble.

The Labor Party stands squarely on the principle of equal representation—that is, one vote, one value—with a margin of 10 per cent either way, to cater for those areas that are in some way deprived. The policy of the National Party is to adopt a policy that it hopes will ensure its continuation in office for the foreseeable future.

What about the Liberals? Whenever legislation such as this is debated, the Liberals say that they are all for democracy; that they are all for a Bill that will give equal representation, with a tolerance of 10 per cent either way. They are all for that when it is easy to say it in the House.

What happens when the crunch comes in the political life of this State? The crunch-times have always been when the Liberals were in coalition with the National Party and when they had to decide what the coalition agreement really meant. On each and every occasion when the Liberals were in a position to do something about establishing truly democratic principles in Queensland, they have backed down. The only place in which the Liberals have ever stood up to be counted is here in the Assembly, where it is comparatively easy to do so.

Historically, the people of Queensland have not been able to place any trust in the Liberal Party. I suggest that, if after the next election it is opportune for the Liberal and National Parties to again enter into coalition, the present leader of the Liberal Party will crawl over broken glass to form a coalition Government. The principles that the Liberals have espoused today and on other occasions will be thrown out the door, just as they have been before. The people of Queensland know that no trust and no faith can be placed in the Liberal Party.

**Mr Gunn:** You offered to go into coalition with them. What are you talking about? Time and time again you said that you wanted to go into coalition with them, but they wouldn't go with you.

**Mr BRADY:** To my knowledge, no offer of coalition has ever been made by the Labor Party to the Liberal Party. The Labor Party does not enter into coalition with the Liberal Party or any other party. The suggestion was that, for a limited purpose, the Labor Party would support a minority Government. That is totally different. I thought that even the Deputy Premier would understand the difference between supporting a minority Government and entering into a coalition. Apparently the concept totally escapes him, just as other concepts escape him.

Supporting a minority Government for the passage of one Bill only is entirely different from coalition, and the Deputy Premier and Minister Assisting the Treasurer is aware of that. Anyone with any common sense would be aware of it as well.

In any event, honourable members can only listen—when the Liberal Party members finally return to their seats after a prolonged dinner—to Liberal Party cries about democracy that have been raised so often. No faith can be placed in Liberal Party democratic principles because Liberal members throw the principles out of the window as soon as the bait of coalition Government is dangled in front of them.

Some Government members attempted to draw comparisons between the system of electoral distribution that applies here and the systems that apply in England, Canada and the United States of America. It should be noted that very significant differences exist between the Queensland system and the English system. One difference is that, when the English electoral boundary commissioners change the boundaries in England, the report is presented to the Home Secretary who, in turn, must place it immediately before the Parliament. No such requirement exists in Queensland for the commissioners' report to be placed before Parliament. The redistribution is proclaimed after a lengthy process of debate has been completed in the secret conclaves at National Party House and the offices of the Premier and Treasurer.

Government members have also spoken about the necessity, as they call it, for different zonal systems that allow for electoral justice. They indicated that, by dividing the State into different zones, a system will result whereby only four of the National Party seats at present will be under quota. However, I point out that that only applies when the quota referred to is one of the small quotas located in the northern and far-western zone or the country zone. When one examines electorates that are located in the country zone, terminology such as "far-flung", "disadvantaged" or "unequal", is used. I wish to look closely at some of the areas that have been described as far-flung and disadvantaged.

The electorate of Gympie is based on the town of Gympie. Could that be described as far-flung or disadvantaged? The seat of Barambah is based on the town of Kingaroy.



Could that be described as far-flung, disadvantaged or unequal? The electorate of Warwick is based upon the town of Warwick, and the electorate of Carnarvon is based upon the town of Stanthorpe. The electorate of Burdekin is based upon the town of Ayr. All of the electorates I have mentioned are based on fine country towns in Queensland.

None of the electorates to which I refer could be described as being located in disadvantaged or far-flung areas of the State. All of the electors in seats that I have mentioned are entitled to representation, and I have no doubt that in many cases the electorates would return National Party members according to established voting patterns, as occurs at present under the unequal zonal system.

The Opposition's argument is that fewer of these seats would exist if they were amalgamated into proper electorates containing proper quotas. I say to members on the Government side who refer to disadvantaged areas that they should not say such things in Parliament because the people of Queensland will not be fooled.

**Mr Alison:** What have you got against country areas?

**Mr BRADDY:** I have nothing against country areas at all. I believe that country people are entitled to equal representation, but I do not believe that they are entitled to unequal representation, and the advantage that is being provided at the expense of other people.

I have given examples of towns such as Gympie, Kingaroy, Warwick, Stanthorpe and Ayr, which most honourable members would have visited. All are fine towns that enjoy fairly sound economies and are entitled to equal representation; but no more and no less.

Equal representation has been defined as a 10 per cent allowance either way. The Labor Party urges Government members not to try to convince the people of Queensland that areas surrounding the towns that I have mentioned are disadvantaged. The people of Queensland know that that is nonsense.

**Mr Stoneman:** Wait until the next election.

**Mr BRADDY:** Members of the Labor Party would welcome the next State election, particularly if it were based on fair boundaries and equal representation, that is, a 10 per cent margin either way, and not on the present zonal system. It is retained for only one purpose, that is, to perpetuate the National Party Government in this State.

**Mr Stoneman:** What about Broken Hill and Campbelltown in New South Wales?

**Mr BRADDY:** I am talking about what I know well. I do not intend to debate Broken Hill with the honourable member. I am talking about Kingaroy, Gympie and Stanthorpe. I am not answerable, nor will I ever be answerable, for Neville Wran and the Labor Party in New South Wales. I am answerable to the Labor Party and the people of Queensland. Neville Wran can look after himself. He is big enough and tough enough to do that without needing my support. He can certainly handle the National Party people in New South Wales without any trouble at all.

The crux of the problem at the present time, as has clearly been identified by all fair-minded people in Queensland, is not so much the boundaries as the four-zone system that applies in Queensland and has survived as an anachronism. It has only one purpose, and that is to try to perpetuate this Government in power.

I therefore say on behalf of my party that we will continue to fight this policy and to fight this legislation. We will never accept that the present electoral system is fair and democratic.

**Mr ALISON (Maryborough) (7.27 p.m.):** The first point I make is that the zonal electoral system of this State was introduced by the Labor Premier Mr Ned Hanlon. It has contributed to quite a significant degree to the decentralisation of this great State.

The reason for that is quite simple. If political representation is spread, power is spread, and if power is spread, naturally development is spread.

This Bill is really all about the spread of power; not only effective representation but the spread of political power throughout the State. Since 1949, the zonal electoral system has contributed a great deal to decentralisation. This Government has adopted a sensible decentralisation policy through the activities of the various departments and by giving incentives to private enterprise to decentralise.

Today, Opposition members stand condemned out of their own mouths. If Ned Hanlon had heard some of the comments that they made today, he would turn in his grave. Their comments did him no credit. He was a great Premier and he did a wonderful job for this State. He was far-sighted enough to see the advantages of the four-zone system.

The Bill provides for an increase of seven members to 89. My colleague the honourable member for Balonne (Mr Neal) cited some statistics, the significance of which might have been missed in all the hoo-ha being thrown up by Opposition members. For anyone who has any skill at arithmetic it is not too difficult to wake up to the fact that an additional seven members represents an increase of approximately 8.5 per cent. Since the 1971 redistribution, the population has increased by 38 per cent. So where is the proof that more seats than are needed are being created? It should be taken into account that members today have to do far more work of a more complicated nature than members at the time of the last redistribution had to do. As I said, this Bill simply increases the number of members of this Assembly by 8.5 per cent, and that is offset by the 38 per cent increase in the population since the last redistribution.

I now turn briefly to discuss the fundamental objectives of a sound, equitable electoral system.

The basic purposes of a satisfactory electoral system are—to ensure that all electors enjoy approximately an equal value in terms of the quality and effectiveness of their parliamentary representation insofar as the nature of electorates affects that representation; to ensure that minority as well as majority sections of the community have an effective political vote; and to ensure that all areas have an effective political voice, thus providing a reasonable and equitable spread of political power throughout this State.

Unfortunately, the ALP does not want to ensure that minority sections of the community have an effective vote. It wants to take away any effective vote cast by country people.

It cannot be over-emphasised that an adequate spread of political power is a vital prerequisite for the decentralisation of industry and population, that is, for balanced development, which I mentioned previously. If all or most political power is concentrated in one area, that area will receive the major proportion of Government expenditure and, consequentially, other areas will not obtain the facilities necessary to attract and retain industry and population.

The members of the ALP, who are the authors of the plausible and emotive phrase “one vote, one value”, maintain that the only just method for providing equality of representation in Parliament is to design electorates of practically equal population or voting strength. That is utterly fallacious. In fact, an electoral system so based would defeat the purposes of a sound electoral system, which I have just enunciated.

I turn for a moment to the important criteria for electoral boundary determination. To give each elector approximate equality of parliamentary representation, other important factors, besides the number of voters in each electorate, must be taken into consideration. They are: the ability of a parliamentary member to effectively service the people, industries and institutions in his or her electorate, taking into consideration area, ease or otherwise of transport, communication, population, size and distribution; the ease or otherwise with which people in an electorate can contact the parliamentary representative when necessary; and the maintenance, as far as possible, of community of interest.

In all other democratic countries, great importance is attached to those three principles and they are firmly embodied in their electoral legislation. On the available evidence, it would appear that, in relation to the United Kingdom and Canada, there is no case for assuming that electoral boundary redistributions are carried out mainly on the basis of population or numbers of voters. Although quotas are defined and used in the determination of electoral boundaries, that criterion is often largely offset by provisions that recognise the foregoing criteria and allow for greater representation for remote areas. In fact, almost all democracies accept the principle of limited overrepresentation, and that is from a strictly arithmetical viewpoint of the more sparsely populated areas.

There are two basically different approaches to electoral distribution. From what I have already said, it may be inferred that there are two quite different approaches to electoral distribution: a system based on the so-called one vote, one value concept, that is, a system in which all electorates have an equal number of voters; and a system based on the principle of electoral weightage, that is, a system in which the electorates have a variable number of voters.

I turn to the one vote, one value misconception. A popular misconception in this State today, which is propagated and reinforced by our political opponents and some misguided academics, is that there can be no democracy unless the electoral system is based on the one vote, one value concept. I have already indicated that a one vote, one value electoral redistribution would defeat most generally accepted purposes of a sound electoral system. But, in case my assessment should be considered biased, I shall quote a former great ALP Premier, Ned Hanlon, to whom I referred earlier. Paradoxically, although the members of the ALP are quite irrationally fanatical today in their advocacy of the one vote, one value concept, Hanlon had this to say in this House in rejecting it—

“ it has been found that in a country such as this there is some need for variation in the number of people a member represents . . . in all parts of the State, even the isolated parts people are living. Those people are entitled to at least the same services as those in the metropolitan area get; as a matter of fact, if there is to be any balance in favour of any section in this respect, it should be in favour of the people developing the outback parts of this great State.”

**Mr Borbidge:** That principle is accepted throughout the Western World.

**Mr ALISON:** That principle is accepted in any true democracy. However, we do not see it being accepted by the Opposition tonight.

**Mr Stoneman:** Even the Labor States accept a huge variation.

**Mr ALISON:** That is quite right, particularly the Western Australian Government.

Let me look at the one vote, one value principle that was rejected by Premier Hanlon. Mr Hanlon's speech in introducing the ALP zonal system constitutes a most cogent and eloquent argument in justification of electoral weightage by zoning, and I commend it to anyone who doubts the necessity for electoral weightage to provide an equitable spread of parliamentary representation.

I have already quoted from the Hanlon speech in which he rejected the one vote, one value principle. Because of obvious limitations, I shall quote only two more passages.

In the following extract, Hanlon expresses well-founded concern at the possibility of the metropolitan area politically dominating the State. He said—

“We do not wish to reach the stage in this State when the representation of Brisbane in this Parliament will overshadow Country representation . . . it would be very foolish for Parliament to allow that result to take place. It would be a bad thing not only for the Country people but in the last analysis a bad thing for the Metropolitan area, because on the successful development and expansion of our country areas depend the very life and security of our capital cities.”

At the conclusion of his speech, Mr Hanlon lucidly described the compromise that electoral weightage really represents, in these terms—

“Personally, I think we have arrived at as fair a compromise as we can between the principle of preserving equal values of voting among our community and at the same time giving due consideration to the distances that have to be travelled by representatives of the country areas and the difficulties under which the electors have to live.”

From listening to Opposition members in this debate, one would think that living in the country, particularly in the western part of the State, did not have any disadvantages.

The wisdom and vision of enlightened old-style ALP leaders, such as Ned Hanlon, is a far cry from the narrow outlook of the academics and the people from the socialist left who control the ALP today. A person may well ask why the ALP has done such an incredible mental somersault in vehemently rejecting the concept of electoral justice that was so enthusiastically extolled and justified by a former great ALP leader.

**Mr De Lacy:** What about your Premier’s mental somersault?

**Mr ALISON:** Obviously the honourable member does not believe in what Mr Hanlon said in 1949. No doubt the House will hear from him shortly.

A simple answer can be found to the question as to why the ALP has done this mental somersault. Leaving aside all their pious platitudes about democracy, the fact is that, although ALP members once held all seats in the western and far-northern zone, their party now holds only one. Those seats were lost to the National Party, and only Cook has been regained. I understand that, at the next election, it is likely that the electorate of Cook will be won by the National Party.

ALP members refuse to recognise that their electoral defeats lie with their party and its policies. Instead, they want to scrap the electoral system, and blame the gerrymander.

At the 1983 State election, the ALP obtained 44.01 per cent of the total vote in Queensland. From the way in which ALP members carry on, one would think that only 30 per cent of the vote is needed to gain a majority in the Parliament. When the ALP wins 50 per cent plus one vote but does not have more than 50 per cent of the seats in the Parliament, it will have something to scream about. Opposition members should not scream until they are in that position.

**An Opposition Member:** What about the National Party?

**Mr ALISON:** I am coming to the National Party.

The National Party received 43.85 per cent of the votes in the seats that it contested. It contested 72 seats out of the 82. I will put it another way. The ALP got 44.01 per cent of the vote. All the other parties, including the National Party, got 56 per cent. As I said, when the Labor Party wins 50 per cent plus one vote, but does not have the numbers in the House, it can scream, but not before.

**Mr Wilson:** Tell us what the Government got; the seats that the Government got in relation to the percentage of the vote. How many seats did the Government get?

**Mr ALISON:** I realise that figures are not the speciality of the honourable member. I will give him a photostat of this document and I will go through it carefully with him to get my point across.

**Mr Borbidge:** Take it slowly.

**Mr ALISON:** I will have to take it very slowly.

**Mr Shaw:** I bet you wish you hadn’t started this.

**Mr ALISON:** No, it is no trouble at all. The ALP got 44 per cent of the vote and it does not have the numbers. It is as simple as that. The Opposition should not worry about the electoral redistribution. If the ALP smartened up its policies, it might do some good. On second thoughts, it should not smarten up its policies; it should leave them and the leadership as they are. In that way the ALP will stay on the Opposition benches and the National Party will remain as the Government.

The only other point that I wish to make is that some other democracies in the world have a far greater electoral variation in their voting systems than Queensland. For instance, in the United Kingdom the variation is 5.6 to 1; in Canada, it is 6 to 1; in Western Australia, it is 2.3 to 1; and in the United States of America, it is 5 to 1.

I am pleased to be able to support the Bill.

**Mr De LACY (Cairns) (7.40 p.m.):** I rise to speak briefly to the Bill, simply because I represent a non-metropolitan seat. The area that I represent does not belong to the south-east corner and therefore I would like to turn the debate on its head, as it were, and speak about the way in which I, coming from an area a long way away from the south-east corner, receive no advantage from the way in which this system works.

In his second-reading speech, the Premier and Treasurer quoted population statistics ad nauseam. Many Government members have done the same. For instance, the member for Lockyer (Mr FitzGerald) gave the House the number of elected representatives in every State per head of population. He did not do a very good job, incidentally. He was referring to population, yet he spoke about electors, and members of the Opposition had to put him on the right track.

Although the Premier quoted population statistics, when the Government proceeded to set the parameters for the redistribution, it conveniently ignored population figures altogether. Since that point, the Government has used every conceivable argument—except population figures—to justify the kind of gerrymander that it is putting up as an electoral system.

As evidence of that, the south-eastern zone will have 19 357 electors in each electorate. Electorates in the provincial city zone will each have 19 600 electors. However, the western and far-northern zone and the country zone have been selected for preferential treatment. Each electorate in the western and far-northern zone will have 8 967 electors and each electorate in the country zone, 12 327 electors. A comparison of the 9 000 electors in western electorates with the 19 600 in the provincial city electorates shows an electoral weightage of something like 2.5 to 1. In other words, in a provincial city electorate it takes two-and-a-half times the number of people to elect one member to Parliament as it does in an electorate in a country zone.

Today I am speaking on behalf of the people of Cairns. Why should two-and-a-half people in Cairns have the same voting power as one person in electorates such as Warwick?

**Mr Borbidge:** What is the area of your electorate?

**Mr De LACY:** I will get onto that in a minute. I can tell the honourable member of electorates in the provincial city zone that are larger than electorates in both the country and the western and far-northern zones.

The point that I am making is that, because of inconsistencies, all of the Government's arguments to justify the different electoral weightage in the different zones fall down. Before I get to that, however, I wish to make a few other points. As I have said, a weightage of something like 2.5 to 1 exists in the zonal system. However, because a tolerance of one-fifth below or above the quota is allowed under this legislation, the discrepancy can be carried on quite a distance further.

One-fifth below or above leads to a discrepancy of up to 50 per cent. In other words, an electorate with one and a half times more people can elect one person to

Parliament. If the discrepancy that exists between different zones is multiplied out, a stage is reached at which enormous discrepancies exist between particular electorates.

Government members say, "So what? What is the difference? They elect one person to Parliament; we elect one person to Parliament." The fundamental principle of representative democracy is one vote, one value. Everybody's vote should have equal weight. No argument can be put forward that one person's vote should be worth more than the vote of another person. No matter what Government members say, they cannot convince me that the vote of a person in the electorate of Warwick or Barambah is worth more than the vote of a person who lives in the electorate of Cairns or in any Brisbane electorate.

The honourable member for Maryborough (Mr Alison) accused the last Opposition speaker of being anti-country. Opposition members are not anti-country; they are not anti-city. The Opposition believes that every vote is equal. Government members are anti-city and anti-provincial-city.

A great deal is made of the fact that the south-eastern corner will dominate Queensland. The electorate that I represent is 1 000 miles from Parliament House. However, electors in my electorate receive no advantage over the people who live in Brisbane.

The Premier referred to population statistics and growth levels to justify two matters, the first of which was the need for a redistribution. I do not think that anybody in this Chamber disputes that there is a need for a redistribution. However, the Opposition disagrees with the basis on which that redistribution is being carried out. Secondly, the Premier quoted growth statistics to justify the need for more members of Parliament. The Opposition does not accept that there is such a need. It believes that a better apportionment of members of Parliament throughout the State is needed. If the Government was fair dinkum and believed that more members are needed because of the growth in the population of Queensland, it would have allocated those additional seats to the areas in which the greatest population growth has occurred. That has not been done; in fact, the Government has done almost the opposite.

The Premier, in his second-reading speech, said that since 1977 there has been an increase in enrolments of 19 per cent throughout Queensland. He stated further—

"The coastal strip approximately south of the Tropic of Capricorn, including the south-eastern zone, has seen a growth of 25 per cent since the last redistribution. The coastal strip approximately north of the Tropic of Capricorn has seen a growth of 38 per cent."

I ask Government members to compare that with an overall growth of 19 per cent.

If the western and far-northern zone has grown at all, it has grown only marginally. On the basis enumerated by the Premier in his second-reading speech, the number of seats in the far-western zone should have been reduced and the number of seats in the two zones in which there has been a big increase in population—the south-eastern zone and the provincial cities zone—should have been increased substantially.

**Mr Borbidge:** What you are saying is that you support the zonal system and that there should be more seats in some areas?

**Mr De LACY:** What I am saying is that, on the Government's argument, if there was a need for more seats and redistribution of seats on the basis of growth that has taken place in Queensland, the additional seats should have been given to those areas in which the growth has occurred. In the proposed distribution, that patently has not occurred. The arguments, justifications and rationalisations that have been put forward in support of the zonal system are utter nonsense.

The honourable member for Merthyr (Mr Lane) made a contribution to the debate. It seemed as though he was provoked into making a speech because he heard his former Liberal colleague opposing the Bill. If the honourable member did anything tonight, he

did convince members of the Liberal Party of something that ALP members have been saying all along—there is no such thing as a good scab.

The honourable member came closest to admitting the truth when he said that any Government with any sense will redistribute on the basis of expediency. In contrast to that, Government members have made clowns of themselves by trying to justify this redistribution on all sorts of grounds which do not make sense.

All honourable members will recall the famous statement made some years ago by the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing (Mr Hinze), "Give me the pen when we do the redistribution and we will never be out of power." That is certainly the attitude behind this particular redistribution. It seems ironic to Labor Party members that Government back-benchers have tried to justify it when everybody knows what the Government is trying to do. The National Party is endeavouring to ensure that it retains power in perpetuity.

A little while ago, the honourable member for Maryborough (Mr Alison) was quoting that great Labor Leader Ned Hanlon. He said that it is strange that Mr Hanlon was in support of a zonal system in 1949. He said that the Labor Party seems to have done a mental somersault.

I will quote someone and I will see whether Government members can work out who said it—

"How could more Members improve things for the country people?"

This time the government are out to win again—whether by fair means or foul does not matter—and they are going to impose themselves upon the long-suffering public by means of additional seats so arranged that Labor has the best opportunity to win them.

The Bill, by the method by which it is to be applied or executed, is a crafty and vicious piece of legislation, if ever there was one."

That statement was not made by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr Warburton) or the leader of the Liberal Party (Sir William Knox) in 1945; it was made by none other than Mr Bjelke-Petersen in 1949.

**Mr Newton:** Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen.

**Mr De LACY:** I think that he was only Mr Bjelke-Petersen, because he was not the Premier and he was not in a position to grant himself a knighthood. Talk about mental somersaults! The person who has done the biggest mental somersault is Mr Bjelke-Petersen.

As I was saying earlier, all the arguments that have been advanced in order to defend the zonal system fall apart because of inconsistencies or anomalies. Page 6 of the Bill deals with matters to be considered by the commissioners when they draw the different electoral districts within the zones.

I am in a unique situation in that I represent an area in a provincial city zone and, because this particular legislation requires the outer boundaries of the provincial city zone to be drawn, I will be able to judge fairly accurately what will happen to my electorate. That is something that members in the south-eastern zone cannot find out at this stage. Presumably, they have to wait another six months.

**Mr Innes** interjected.

**Mr De LACY:** I know what will happen. There are only two seats in Cairns. I can see what has been taken out and what has been left there. I know what I am left with. Just in case Government members are anticipating anything on that score, I can tell them that they will have to put up with me for a long time yet.

Dealing with the matters to be considered in distributing the zones—I will talk about what was done in the Cairns provincial city area when the zones were drawn up. Two or three of the southern suburbs of Cairns which form part of my electorate—Bayview Heights, Woree and Edmonton—were taken out. Bayview Heights is really part of the city of Cairns. The people who live there work in Cairns, go to the shopping centres in Cairns and use the Cairns bus service. The bowls club that is in the middle of Bayview Heights is named the Cairns Bowls Club. The Mulgrave shire surrounds the city of Cairns. The Mulgrave shire chambers are right in the middle of the city of Cairns. The people who live in Bayview Heights are part of Cairns on any criteria that Government members care to suggest.

What has been done in the provincial city zone of Cairns? Bayview Heights has been removed from the southern side. That was fair enough. Perhaps the number of people in the zone had to be reduced. However, on the northern side, the Cape Tribulation rain forest area is retained. It is 100 miles north of Cairns. It is the last pristine wilderness area left in Queensland.

**A Government Member:** You can't get through.

**Mr De LACY:** Quite so. That is exactly what I am talking about. What community of interest is there between Cape Tribulation and the provincial city zone of Cairns? I thank the honourable member for that interjection. I am pleased that he reminded me of that fact.

One of the factors to be considered is means of communication. Cape Tribulation is 100 miles from Cairns, and is a rain forest. If one believes the member for Barron River (Mr Tenni), it is full of white slave traders, hippies and marijuana-growers. Anything that it has in common with the city of Cairns eludes me. Yet the boundaries of that electorate were set according to what was supposed to be a fair dinkum redistribution carried out according to community of interest, means of communication and physical features. I invite honourable members to compare the physical features of Cape Tribulation with those of the city of Cairns.

Another criterion is distance from the seat of government. That implies a disadvantage in being a long way from the seat of government. I accept that. Cairns is 1 000 miles from Brisbane. The member for Warwick (Mr Booth) is in the Chamber. As a young fellow I played football in Warwick. I have given up football and taken to golf. I would be able to hit three No. 3 woods from Warwick to Brisbane. This afternoon a Government member spoke about the Federal seat of Rankin, which is based on Brisbane and includes Warwick. The State seat of Warwick has 11 403 electors and a total area of 1 710 square miles. At present the second seat in the provincial city of Cairns is Barron River, which has an area of 1 810 square miles; so it is geographically bigger than the seat of Warwick and almost 1 000 miles further from Brisbane than Warwick. What is the justification for having fewer than half as many electors in Warwick? Barron River has 24 448 electors.

**Mr Booth:** You are trying to have it both ways. You are trying to use the old figures and the new rules.

**Mr De LACY:** After the redistribution, Barron River will have 18 000 people. It will have a larger area than Warwick and be almost 1 000 miles further from the seat of government in Brisbane. What is the justification for that, according to the guidelines laid down? It is total nonsense to suggest any reasons. It proves that the Government is laying down the guide-lines to ensure that more seats are created in National Party areas to perpetuate itself in the Government.

**Mr Yewdale:** His cows vote.

**Mr De LACY:** His cows and horses, that is right. Anyone who listened to his speech before lunch could be excused for thinking that after John Kerin has been at work there will not be any cows left.



I undertook not to speak for too long on the Bill, but a very important point that I wish to raise relates to objections. The Bill provides a period for objections. The clause dealing with objections is probably the most sinister part of the Bill. I have had experience of objections. After the redistribution in 1977—and I am led to believe that there were similar occurrences in 1971—objections were heard and changes to the redistributed electorates were made in secret, without explanation. In every single case those changes disadvantaged the Labor Party. That worries me.

**Mr Booth:** Come clean and tell us what the Federal people did with objections in relation to Rankin. They threw them all into the waste-paper basket.

**Mr De LACY:** I do not know what the Federal people did. I understood that they were to be public. My point is that the objections in 1977 were secret, and changes were made on the basis of them, but no explanation was ever given when they were delivered to the unsuspecting public.

I have had experience of this because, in those days, I was interested in the seat of Barron River. After the redistribution had been carried out—no change had been made to the boundary between the electorates of Barron River and Cairns—and after the objection period had elapsed, the boundary was moved merely a couple of blocks from what used to be McKenzie Street to Lily Street, which in effect took 200 net Labor votes out of the seat of Barron River. I am not sure whether members know, but when I contested the seat of Barron River, I was defeated by 70 votes. That illustrates that the secret manoeuvre at the end of the redistribution process cost the Australian Labor Party a seat—and, mind you, a few years of representation by a very good member.

The honourable member for Lockyer (Mr FitzGerald) has referred to difficulties in representation experienced in some electorates, and in doing so he almost got himself into trouble. The honourable member for Cooroora also got into difficulty, but in his case it was from the beginning to the end of his speech. That honourable member added a new dimension to bad-speech-making in this Parliament.

The difficulties mentioned by the honourable member for Lockyer referred to large numbers of Housing Commission tenants, the number of State schools and the number of welfare recipients. I put it to Government members that the only difficulty associated with representation is not the geographical size of the electorate but the kinds of problems that have to be dealt with. I ask Government members why it is that the electorates that have the largest number of welfare recipients and the largest number of Queensland Housing Commission houses are located in zones that have the largest number of people in them. Speaking as the representative of the seat of Cairns, I suggest that the electorate of Cairns has more of the kinds of problems referred to than many of the country electorates. Twice as many electors are found in the electorates that I have referred to.

For example, the names of 400 people appear on the waiting-list for Housing Commission accommodation in Cairns, but I do not know how many names would be on the waiting-list in Warwick, Roma or similar places. Thousands of people who are recipients of welfare payments also live in the Cairns electorate, and it is an electorate that has more than its share of problems. On the criteria that have been established and supported by Government members, should not those factors be taken into account in assessing the difficulty of representation? The difficulties I have outlined would not be taken into account, because the Government is not really interested in the things that have been described by Government spokesmen. All that the Government is interested in is retaining power.

The leader of the Liberal Party warned the Government that there is a risk of the Government's redistributing itself out of office. It may seem strange for me to advance a proposition of the nature that I will shortly describe, especially when the kinds of statements that I have made are recalled. However, people do say that it does not matter how malapportioned electoral districts are, if a political party wins 50 per cent of the vote in any electorate, that electorate will be represented by the successful party. That is fair enough.

It has also been said that even when the cards are stacked against chances of winning an electorate, it is still possible to win. That proposition has been proven in Western Australia, and I am reminded of the stupid statement that was made shortly before I rose to speak about the Labor Party gerrymander that exists in Western Australia. I take this opportunity to point out that the gerrymander referred to was created by the Liberal Party, and that the Labor Party is presently attempting to redress the imbalance in representation.

I repeat that it is possible for the Government to redistribute itself out of office, because in the far-northern areas of the State, the National Party represents two out of five of the presently existing electorates. Because of the proposals under the new redistribution, I am led to believe that another seat will be created, making a total of six seats.

It appears that if the additional seat is to be based on Mareeba, Dimbulah and Atherton, the unfortunate member for Mulgrave (Mr Menzel), whose electoral success has been slipping rapidly, stands to lose a sizeable portion of a safe part of his electorate in the Tablelands area. If the redistribution resulted in radical changes to two of the electoral areas, the end result could be a victory in one of the seats for the Labor Party. The Government would be left with the honourable member for Barron River only, and that would mean that only one out of six electorates would be represented by the National Party.

Although the Government is attempting to ensure that it will govern indefinitely, it could in fact redistribute itself out of office.

**Mr BORBIDGE** (Surfers Paradise) (8.4 p.m.): I rise to support the legislation. I note that Opposition members have been promoting themselves as the champions of democracy in Queensland. That is very interesting, and I wish to remind those honourable members on the Opposition side of certain comments that were made by the Leader of the Opposition's predecessor, Mr Keith Wright.

In the "Daily Sun" of 9 April 1983, the following story appeared—

"A Queensland Labor Government would immediately redraw electoral boundaries because 'we want power not for three years but 33 years,' the Opposition leader, Mr Wright, promised yesterday."

**Mr Bailey:** Who said that?

**Mr BORBIDGE:** Mr Wright, a former Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr Bailey:** As leader?

**Mr BORBIDGE:** Yes, as leader; yet tonight members have heard the paragons of virtue opposite defending democracy in the State of Queensland.

**Mr Booth** interjected.

**Mr BORBIDGE:** As the honourable member for Warwick said, the same Mr Wright who is going to fix up the assets test.

The article continued—

" 'The gerrymander—' "

his word, not mine—

" 'of Queensland's electoral system will be swiftly dealt with by our Attorney-General, Bob Gibbs,' Mr Wright said.

'Labor will redistribute the State on a one-vote, one value, one-zone principle.' "

in their own words, to stay in power not for three years but for 33 years. How soon Opposition members forget!

The principle of one vote, one value has no credence in any western democracy with the exception of Australia. It does not exist at Westminster; it does not exist in Canada; it does not exist in the United States of America; it does not exist in Japan; it does not exist in Western Australia; and it does not even exist in the Senate with respect to the representation of the States.

**Mr Mackenroth:** It does exist in my p. and c.

**Mr BORBIDGE:** Honourable members opposite are a little bit sensitive. They make great claims about the Westminster system; yet tonight they have abandoned one of the basic foundations of the Westminster system in equality of representation. One vote, one value is a fraud, a propaganda exercise perpetrated by the socialist Left and promoted by its lackeys and stooges. That is where the facts have it, and very firmly indeed.

**Mr Wilson:** What about the legislation your Government brought down in the electricity industry?

**Mr BORBIDGE:** The honourable member makes the odd appearance in the House. I suggest that if he listens he might just manage to learn something tonight.

Let me look at Great Britain. It is significant that in a nation as heavily and evenly populated as is Britain, after the last redistribution of electorate boundaries for the House of Commons, the voting strength of electorates varied from 113 000 to 22 000. The majority of electorates varied in numbers of voters between 50 000 and 70 000, but five electorates had fewer than 26 000 voters. From those figures, it is clear that, although a quota system is used to define boundaries in Britain, other important factors are taken into consideration. The result is a difference of 5 to 1 in the voting strength of electorates.

The Canadians use a system based on the House of Commons model. A quota is used, but other important influences are taken into consideration in determining the final result. After the last boundary adjustment, the electorate of Clark-Scarborough had 139 000 electors and Malpeque had only 22 000 electors, a difference of 6 to 1. Earlier tonight, the honourable member for Rockhampton (Mr Braddy) cited a definition that he said he had found that was based on the Canadian model. The fact is that the Canadians have accepted and entrenched a variation of 6 to 1.

I turn now to the United States of America, where individual liberty and freedom is enshrined in the Constitution. The greatest number of voters represented by one member of Congress is 951 527 and the smallest is 177 431.

Other members have mentioned Western Australia, where there is a difference, which the Labor Government in that State still has not changed, of 7 to 1. So, for heaven's sake, let Opposition members show some consistency. One vote, one value does not exist in any major western democracy in the world except in those Parliaments in Australia in which it has been foisted upon the people after a campaign of deceit and deception by the Labor Party and its fellow-travellers.

Tonight, there has been much criticism of the decision by the Government to increase the number of members in this Parliament. I simply confirm the observation made by the honourable member for Maryborough (Mr Alison). Since 1971, Queensland's population has increased by 38 per cent. In fact, areas such as the one that I have the privilege to represent have experienced an increased growth rate that is unprecedented in the history of this State. What the Government is suggesting in the legislation before the Chamber is an increase of only 8.5 per cent in the number of members of this Assembly.

I shall look at the electorate of Sandgate, which is held by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr Warburton). It has an enrolment of 16 611 electors. Nundah, which is the electorate represented by Sir William Knox, has an enrolment of 15 889 electors. Those members can hardly claim to be overworked.

I shall look now at the Gold Coast electorates. Albert has an enrolment of 32 518 electors, South Coast has 29 968 electors, Southport has 24 820 electors, and Surfers Paradise has 26 824 electors.

**Mr Miller:** What about Windsor?

**Mr BORBIDGE:** The honourable member for Ithaca mentioned Windsor. It has an enrolment of 15 909 electors. There is no doubt that the electorates are seriously out of kilter, and tonight the Government is seeking to remedy that situation.

I shall have a look at the Government's proposals. Under this Bill, there is a close relationship between the percentage of electors and the percentage of the seats in each zone. In the provincial cities zone, 16.7 per cent of electors will be enrolled in a zone that has 14.6 per cent of electorates. In the western and far-northern zone, 4.7 per cent of electors will be enrolled in a zone that has 8.9 per cent of electorates. In the country zone, 13.7 per cent of the electors will be enrolled in a zone that has 19 per cent of the electorates. The Government is all about securing balanced representation so that all people, wherever they live in this State, have easy and reliable access to their members of Parliament.

Of the 14 over-quota electoral districts, 12 are held by the National Party and only two by the Australian Labor Party. Of the 15 under-quota electoral districts, the Australian Labor Party holds eight, the Liberal Party two and an Independent one. That is a total of 11, with only four held by the National Party. That is a reply to those members who suggest that the National Party is somehow advantaged by the present system.

Earlier, the honourable member for Lockyer (Mr FitzGerald) referred to the population of Australia per parliamentary member. There are 224 members in the Commonwealth Parliament, 144 in the New South Wales Parliament, 125 in the Victorian Parliament and 82 in the Queensland Parliament. After the passage of this legislation, there will be 89 members in the Queensland Parliament.

The Government has to take some action. I have heard it said, "OK, you give members of Parliament more staff." How ridiculous! If members of this Parliament are to maintain the quality of representation that I believe they have been able to provide, some compensation must be made for the unprecedented population growth that has occurred.

I welcome the fact that the Gold Coast is likely to receive increased representation. I noted the comments of the members of the Liberal Party. On 27 November 1980, the then Deputy Premier and Leader of the Liberal Party (Dr Llew Edwards) forecast that the Gold Coast would get more seats in the Parliament.

On 14 October 1983, which was at the time of the last election, the then deputy leader of the Liberal Party, the honourable member for Sherwood (Mr Innes), was reported as saying—

"The Gold Coast would gain at least two extra seats in the State Parliament under an electoral redistribution policy announced by the Liberal Party yesterday.

A third seat could possibly take in part of the Gold Coast's existing northernmost seat of Albert and the existing seat of Redlands.

But the Liberal policy does not spell out any specific details on this. It simply promises the creation of three new seats in the Gold Coast-Redlands region."

I am surprised at the criticism from some members of the Liberal Party, because that is precisely what the Government is seeking to do. The growth areas of this State will have the additional representation that they deserve. Honourable members suggest that the Government does not have to increase the size of the Assembly. My reply to those members would be: Who will be disfranchised? From which group of people will the right of access to members of Parliament be taken? Which seats will be abolished? Not one member of the Liberal Party or the Labor Party has been prepared to name

the seats that his party would abolish. Members opposite want to have their cake and eat it too. That is not on, and they have been caught out by their hypocrisy.

I take this opportunity to express concern at an article by Denis Reinhardt, which appeared in "The Bulletin" of 9 April. I draw the attention of the House to it because, if the statements contained in it are not correct, it would be appropriate for the people involved to state their position. I quote as follows—

"At the State level, informal and exploratory talks between representatives of the Liberal and Labor parties are planned within the next fortnight. Consideration of a minority government represents a dramatic change of heart for Liberal parliamentary leader Sir William Knox."

The article goes on to state—

"'It (a minority Liberal government) is on the cards,' Knox told The Bulletin after the government's electoral boundaries legislation was tabled last week."

The article then turns its attention to the Leader of the Opposition (Mr Warburton) as follows—

"'It would be absolutely stupid for me to dismiss out-of-hand some sort of proposition which would give the Liberals and Labor a temporary alliance with which to bring about a proper redistribution,' Warburton told The Bulletin. 'How far we would go with a temporary coalition remains to be seen. The scenario developed on a previous occasion would be a most obvious one.'"

Mr Warburton went on to say—

"My door is absolutely open in getting together with the Liberals."

I bring that to the attention of the House because I believe that it should be canvassed. The honourable member for Nundah and the Leader of the Opposition have not made statements denying the content of the article, but I will welcome their comments in due course. All honourable members are aware of the stories that went round prior to the last State election involving the honourable member for Redcliffe.

I would like to close with a reference to Professor Colin Hughes, who has been mentioned in this debate. He was chairman of the commission set up by the Federal Government to develop the electoral redistribution. He is the professorial fellow at the research school of social sciences in the Institute of Advanced Studies at the Australian National University in Canberra.

In what was probably the first objective analysis of the Queensland electoral system in years, he made certain comments that have been denied by members of the Liberal Party and the Labor Party, despite the fact the Federal Government saw fit to appoint Professor Hughes as the chairman of the committee involved with the Commonwealth redistribution. Professor Hughes has stated—

"Few aspects of Queensland politics have attracted more attention and more hostile criticism than the State's electoral system, yet in the main it differs little from that of the four other mainland States."

A little later he makes the following simple, objective observation—

"It might be well to record the writer's considered opinion that there is much less inequality and unfairness in the Queensland electoral system than most writers on the subject have claimed to see."

I support the legislation before the House. It is an appropriate response from this Government to remedy the problem of a number of electorates being out of kilter. It will respect the democratic right of the growth areas of the State to increased parliamentary representation without taking representation away from people in other parts of this vast and decentralised State.

**Mr INNES (Sherwood) (8.20 p.m.):** Although the consequences of what the Liberal Party argues for might well be the removal of a couple of country electorates and perhaps

a couple of farmers and graziers from this place, in itself that would not be a matter of any satisfaction because, frankly, when one compares the old Country Party candidates with those who are attracted from the newer National Party areas, one prefers to deal with the straightforwardness and the directness of the older style of member—albeit that differences do exist—rather than those earnest, dissembling, deceptive, dishonest—

**An Opposition Member:** You are getting a wrap-up here, Des.

**Mr INNES:** Give me Des Booth any day. I know that we have differences, but give me a Randell, a Booth or one of those people, because at least I know where I stand with them. One does not deal with earnest, silky dissemblers who, having heard it said that such-and-such was a lie—was untrue, did not happen—go unctuously on with some apparent political intent.

**Mr Borbidge:** I did not hear any denial.

**Mr INNES:** You heard. I don't believe you for a minute. You have heard it twice. It was shouted out at you.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row):** Order!

**Mr BORBIDGE:** I rise to a point of order. A reflection has been cast on me. I point out to the honourable member for Sherwood that if any such denial was made, I have not read it, I have not seen it, and I have not heard it.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Would the honourable member for Sherwood accept that explanation?

**Mr INNES:** There is no point of order.

A number of times this afternoon the retraction was shouted out in this House. In fact, the leader of the Liberal Party sent to "The Bulletin" a letter that dealt directly with those issues and directly denied them. The Liberal Party has not entertained, has not negotiated and has not talked with the Labor Party with regard to any coalition. It will not entertain a coalition. That was the nature of the letter. That was the case in the past; that will be the case in the future. The Liberal Party will pursue its own course and others can find their own level. We certainly notice that they do.

**Mr Wilson:** You will continue to look up to us.

**Mr INNES:** The Pimpernel strikes. He is here. The Pimpernel from Townsville South. "Hansard" should record his presence because he needs every mention that he can get in this place.

The Liberal Party does not in any way argue against a redistribution. Nothing we have said suggests the contrary of our acceptance that a discrepancy exists between the sizes of electorates in this State of such a nature that they deserve and are entitled to a readjustment. That proposition of total support for a reassessment of the boundaries to adjust the numbers to bring them into line is somehow converted by the slippery member for Surfers Paradise (Mr Borbidge) into the suggestion that the Liberal Party should be pointing to electorates that should disappear.

One would have thought that it is perfectly obvious from the fact that a redistribution is supported that an adjustment of boundaries will occur. Nobody should be disfranchised. Nobody suggests that one person in Queensland should not stay within an electoral boundary. If one talks about the word "redistribution", one embraces the expectation that some people will be affected by redistribution and will have their electoral boundaries changed.

**Mr Stoneman:** What would you do with the western seats—wipe them out?

**Mr INNES:** I have a personal view that differs slightly from my party's view.

**A Government Member** interjected.

**Mr INNES:** No, I will not cross the floor.

In terms of evolution rather than revolution, I would kill the argument that I think is overstated about the far open spaces and the difficulty in servicing them. I would deal with that by saying, "There will be eight seats in the far-western zone. You can have that, and the rest is dealt with in the same manner."

**Mr Stoneman:** Your party won't wear it, though.

**Mr INNES:** 10 per cent up and down provides a reasonable flexibility. As an evolutionary process to get over this nonsense, which is more argument than reality and logic, it could be handled in that way. One could say that it is a staging post. However, the essence of the gerrymander is the country zone. Shortly I will show honourable members how illogical the country zone really is. It is interesting to go back to some of the comments that have been made in this House in the past. On an earlier occasion it was said—

"It is not a good thing for a growing population in the metropolitan area to obtain an overwhelming control of representation in Parliament. Therefore we propose to make a drastic alteration in the method of representation under this Bill."

**Mr Miller:** Ned Hanlon.

**Mr INNES:** The member for Ithaca is right. He said—

"We propose to limit the number of members in the metropolitan area to 24. We propose to increase the total membership of the House by 13, allowing four in the metropolitan area and nine additional representatives of the country. That will keep the balance of the representation of the country."

There was a great deal of rhetoric about servicing the extension of Government services, difficulties of travel and such matters.

Later, in the same debate, the following contribution was made—

"After listening to the Premier one can come only to the one conclusion, and that is that this Bill is designed for the one purpose of endeavouring to save the political skin of the Labour Government. When one looks at what the proposed representation is to be, one arrives inevitably at the conclusion that this proposed redistribution and the increasing of the number of Parliamentary seats will have only one result, and this is to give a very unfair advantage to the Labour Party.

We know that at the present time the Government are a minority Government. They represent the minority of the electors of Queensland, and after the passage of this Bill they will continue to hold office representing a minority of the people of Queensland—as they do at the present time. Is that democracy? It is not."

That statement was made by Mr Frank Nicklin, the Leader of the Opposition. He went on to warn—

"... instead of being a winner this Bill may become a boomerang that will be the means of tipping out the Government."

It was not many years before the boomerang came back. Frank Nicklin said—

"Even under present legislation there are a great number of electorates in this State that are under or over quotas and something had to be done."

The Liberal Party agrees with those same arguments today. Mr Nicklin continued—

"But nobody expected the Government to increase so largely the number of members of this Parliament. I do not think it is necessary; in fact, it has never been warranted at all by the electoral position."

He went on to comment that the consequences of the zonal system would be to reduce the western electorates containing between 6 000 and 7 000 voters to 4 783 voters. Despite

the enormous progress in technology that has occurred, the advances in aeroplane flight, the advances in motor vehicle transport and road-building, the enormous increase in electoral allowances, improvements in telecommunications, and so on, those seats are scarcely any bigger today than they were before they were redistributed in 1949. If one looks at the numbers, that is the reality of the matter. Frank Nicklin thought that those seats could be adequately represented in those days by the situation that existed before the redistribution in 1949.

Honourable members today read about the tragic death of Eddie Beardmore. Although I did not know him as a member of Parliament, I met him later. I know that he travelled the bush in a utility with his swag in the back. That is the way in which he served the electorate of Balonne.

**A Government Member:** An old Country Party member.

**Mr INNES:** My word he was!

Of course, in those days in the bush many people travelled in that way. At a later point in time I saw people who still travelled in vehicles with a swag in the back of the tray.

Honourable members should look at relativities. Eddie Beardmore was a person who knew the problems of a far less sophisticated age and knew the plight of the countryman. He was a Country Party member who was prepared to accept that, even in those days, an electorate that was only a little smaller than today's western and far-western electorates could be served.

Let us get rid of the silly arguments about the size of electorates such as Gregory, Balonne and Warrego. Let us concentrate on the real argument in the gerrymander—the country zone.

The argument about the difficulty of servicing is very much related to distance and remoteness from the centres of power. The country zone and the provincial city zone must be considered. Honourable members know that people in far-northern Australia—and I have lived in far-northern Australia—feel a sense of alienation from the south. That is the basis of the new north Queensland State movement. It is the basis of a similar feeling in Western Australia.

Let us look at the figures in far-north Queensland. If I leave aside Cook——

**Mr Stoneman:** That is very convenient.

**Mr INNES:** No, it is not.

I will deal with the situation in Barron River and Cairns, in which 23 315 is the quota if those two electorates are averaged out. They are as much over quota as seats in the south-east corner. They are suburban seats a thousand miles or more from Brisbane. However, they have the same problems in relation to representation and the same level of representation as most of the average seats in south-east Queensland.

Still in north Queensland but a little further south is Townsville. The average there is 21 600. In Mackay it is 21 000. In central Queensland—Port Curtis, Rockhampton, Rockhampton North—almost 19 000 votes is the average. In the Bundaberg area—Bundaberg, Isis and Maryborough—it is virtually 18 000 votes, much the same as the averages for south-east Queensland.

I will examine the matter a little more closely. What happens if one drives a few minutes south of Cairns, a city that was developed in the cane-fields and to service a mining community? One can drive farther south through cane-fields on a closely settled coastal strip. Driving to school each day is available. Driving to a reasonable centre of services is available. Suddenly the quota has been translated from 23 000 to 13 600 in Mulgrave, to 11 800 in Mourilyan, and to 13 700 in Hinchinbrook. All of those electorates have good towns that offer plenty of good services. What is the logic? How does one



logically take the chain-mill away from the cane tower? There is no logic in it. That is the essence of the gerrymander.

Honourable members talked about the community of interest. The community of interest is between the people who work in the mills and the mill towns and the people who grow the cane in the cane-fields. Why are the boundaries drawn around the bigger centres of population? Is it because they vote another way? I suspect that the community of interest relates to voting habits.

Some people might say, "What about the size?" Cairns is small. Barron River is in the provincial city zone and, as somebody has already pointed out, it is of a similar size to, for instance, Townsville, Warwick, Gympie and Cooroora, if one is looking at a population-plus-size argument.

The illogicality of the whole situation is exposed if one looks at location, population and the size of the electorate. I will deal with Townsville a little more closely. The seat of Townsville is bigger than the seat of Barron River. It is as big as, or bigger than, the seat of Warwick. If one wants an Australian style salamander—a goanna—it must be the seat of Townsville. If one drives south east of the city of Townsville, one enters Burdekin. If one drives south, one enters Burdekin. If one drives south west, one goes through Burdekin. If one drives west, one goes through Burdekin. If one drives north west, one drives through Burdekin. It snakes round the city of Townsville as the seat of Somerset snakes round the city of Brisbane.

**Mr Stoneman:** They have a good member there, though.

**Mr INNES:** I do not take that away from the member for Burdekin; but I ask him to look at the broad justice and merits of redistribution. The honourable member probably services his electorate well. The seat of Townsville is as big as many seats in the country zone and is more populous than many seats in the country zone.

**Mr Stoneman:** Haven't you seen the map? Haven't you looked at the new Townsville zone boundary? It is a small urban seat.

**Mr INNES:** If the Electoral Act is being reviewed, it should be subject to the processes of change that result in equity. There is no logic in maintaining the country zone. The Darling Downs and the coastal strip of Queensland consist of closely settled areas, all accessible to townships, all accessible to daily travel to schools and all accessible to communications.

**Mr Stoneman:** Do you mean to tell me that you are making these statements and you haven't looked at the boundaries of the zones? I find that incredible.

**Mr INNES:** I know the boundaries of the present zones.

**Mr Stoneman:** No, you don't. We are debating the changes—the Electoral Districts Bill.

**Mr INNES:** I am saying that the interrelationship between the provincial city zone, the country zone and the south-eastern zone is such that the whole system should be abolished. Those zones should be dealt with equally. The numbers stack up in favour of equality of treatment. The far north has the same problems of overrepresentation as the far south. On the basis of community of interest, it is crazy to divorce the hinterland of Mackay from the coal province, from the tourist area, from the cane fields and from the grazing areas. Communities ought to be treated as a whole. Areas with similar human problems ought to be treated in exactly the same way. Seats based upon the fertile coastal strip and upon the Darling Downs deserve equality of treatment.

**Mr Littleproud:** The Darling Downs is different.

**Mr INNES:** The Darling Downs is not different, apart from climatically, from the coastal areas. The Darling Downs is a closely settled area, with access to established

communities, day-time schools and adequate communications. It has all of the desirable features.

**Mr Stoneman:** What about soil conservation?

**Mr INNES:** Every area has its problems.

**Mr Stoneman:** Do you have soil erosion problems in Sherwood?

**Mr INNES:** I have different problems. I have problems of pollution.

**Mr Stoneman** interjected.

**Mr INNES:** That is an illogical and irrelevant comment.

The National Party will have to watch the consequence of a redistribution that preserves electorates of single interest. As the cane industry gets into trouble, an electorate that depends entirely on cane will become very volatile. If the grain industry is in trouble, a single electorate that depends entirely on grain—the same might be said of beef or any other primary product—will get into trouble. People in urban areas have different problems. One man's meat is another man's poison. The problems of an urban or suburban electorate cannot be remedied by solving one man's problems. If a person is a grain-farmer and represents a grain-farming area, if he looks after grain, he looks after himself. If he looks after his neighbours, he looks after the town, because the town's business depends upon the main primary commodity.

In this day and age, it is dangerous to have electorates of single interest, particularly when massive international economic slumps occur and problems arise.

**Mr Campbell:** They look after the peanut-growers.

**Mr INNES:** Exactly. In primary production, warfare can be engaged in.

In the future, one could encounter significant difficulties by failing to come to grips with the integration of urban and suburban areas into agrarian areas. The Liberal Party says that three of the zones should certainly be examined and that, in making an examination, one should ignore the western zone. That will demonstrate the absolute illogicality created by large electorates. Smaller electorates in the north and smaller electorates in the south that are equal in numbers of electors and types of services provided demonstrate the total illogicality of treating electors in different ways. Although the Liberal Party does not object to a redistribution, Liberal Party members do object to the maintenance of the iniquitous zonal system, which results in disproportionate and unfair representation and the antidemocratic loading that is given in favour of country zones.

Honourable members should face the fact that after implementation of the redistribution proposal, 13.7 per cent of the total number of electors in Queensland will still be responsible for electing 17 members of Parliament to represent 19 per cent of electorates located in the country zone. The Liberal Party does not believe that such a state of affairs is consistent with a reasonable view of the democratic process. It does not advocate one man, one vote, nor does it advocate an absolute, mathematical equivalent; but it does say that, given a 10 per cent margin above or below the average number of electorates, which amounts to a total variation of 20 per cent, and loadings for size or differences in locality to allow for imbalances that are observable in different areas of the State, an equitable system can be achieved.

It is not right that a political party that wins a minority of votes should end up with a majority of seats, and—aided by a couple of defections by former members of the Liberal Party—that is the present situation in Queensland. The process of electoral redistribution needs to include a concept of equity, as the honourable member for Rockhampton said in his over-dramatised manner. The main elements of an electoral system are adult franchise and the democratic right to vote. Those elements, combined

with equitable representation, are the factors that prevent people, in line with the traditions of a western democratic society, from resorting to guns and violence and other means of overthrowing a Government. Citizens must be able to believe that they have a say in the election of Governments. As I understand country electors, that is what is important to them. If a person feels that he has a say in the system of government, he is not inclined to resort to other means of changing the system in order to advantage himself. Everyone must believe that there is reasonable equivalence of voting strength. The fact that honourable members are presently dealing with an Electoral Districts Bill means that people recognise the need for a roughly equivalent system of voting power and representation throughout the State.

In terms of the argument about adequate representation, I invite honourable members to look more closely at the system that operates in southern States. In New South Wales, a 10 per cent margin above or below the quota operates across the State. Each State Parliament representative services an electorate that contains an average of 33 000 voters. In Victoria, the average is 30 000. Those figures demonstrate that a larger number of voters by far is being serviced than is the case in Queensland.

The honourable member for Surfers Paradise (Mr Borbidge) mentioned the bald figures indicating the numbers of parliamentarians in the Queensland Legislative Assembly. In Queensland, the number is in excess of 80, and in New South Wales it is 99 or 100. However, the honourable member did not mention the relativity between representation and population. The key factor in such a comparison is the number of people that a member of Parliament represents.

On the occasion of an electoral redistribution in Queensland, the Liberal Party of Queensland reiterates the views expressed by members on the occasions of local government elections and the Federal redistribution. Members of Parliament in the State of Queensland can cope with the responsibility of representing from 18 000 to 22 000 people. The honourable member for Fassifern (Mr Lingard) represents the electorate that contains the largest number of voters in the State, and I have not heard honourable members suggesting—nor has the honourable member himself suggested—that the needs of his electors are not being met, as a matter of determination of priorities. No-one would suggest that everything can be done in an electorate; but, by the same token, nobody has suggested to that honourable member that he is not doing his best or providing a reasonable service for his electors.

Members of the Liberal Party hold the view that, particularly in times of economic difficulty, the Government that believes in small Government and low taxes, and a political party that also believes in that combination, cannot support an increase in the number of paid representatives. Certainly to do it three times in 18 months is an astonishing trifecta.

The Liberal Party has been absolutely consistent in its opposition to the increase in fully paid members of government at the three levels. At a time of economic difficulty, which is recognised, it is up to the Government to lead the way—particularly a conservative Government, a free enterprise Government—by not encouraging the growth of government and an increase in the number of fully paid members of Parliament. That can lead only to an obvious increase in both the direct cost and the indirect cost of services, such as inquiries by departments and by the vanities of members of Parliament looking to keep themselves relevant.

The Liberal Party is not opposed to redistribution. We are opposed to the maintenance of the present zonal system and, because of the economic circumstances of this State, we are absolutely opposed to the increase in the number of members of Parliament at this juncture, particularly at this juncture. It is an appalling bit of work that we are about tonight.

**Mr COOPER (Roma) (8.46 p.m.):** I realise that most of the relevant arguments have already been canvassed during the debate. Most have been arguments of convenience, depending on which side of the fence a member happens to be sitting. I do want to

reiterate some points and labour others, because the reports of this debate will be music to the ears of the people in my electorate. I want them to be crystal clear as to the reality of the situation.

I will reiterate some points that have already been made, and I do not apologise for that. The first is that the Bill before the Chamber is all about equality of representation. I know that members have heard that phrase many times already, but they will hear it on many more occasions in the months ahead. However, to Government members, anything less is completely unacceptable. The people of Queensland are being given every consideration under this Bill and Government members believe that that is exactly as it should be.

The poor old member for Nundah (Sir William Knox) has copped some stick today. I will not labour this point too much, but it has already been said that, in 1977, he was quite agreeable to the fact that the average city seat would contain about 16 000 electors and that a member of Parliament ought to be able to service that number of people. Given that criterion, that redistribution allowed for an average of 16 000 electors in electorates in the south-eastern zone. If one transposes that number to today's situation one finds that substantially more parliamentarians than the additional seven would be needed, and the figure of 17 has been suggested to me.

The number of electors in an average city seat will be round 18 000 to 20 000, so any increase in the number of seats is being kept to an absolute minimum.

As members know, there has been an explosion in the population of the south-eastern zone, particularly in the Gold Coast, North Coast, Redlands, Caboolture and Fassifern areas. That has brought a need to create more seats and provide adequate representation for people, and that is what this Bill is all about.

The Queensland system of voter representation is among the fairest in any democracy in the Western World. I know that that statement will go down like a lead balloon with members opposite, but the Queensland system should be compared to those in relevant countries. Looking at the voting strength of the larger and smaller electorates, I find that, in Great Britain, that strength varies considerably and gives a ratio, as members have already heard, of four and a quarter to one. Queensland's ratio of two and a half to one compares very favourably with that and is much closer than Great Britain is to the one vote, one value system that members have heard so much about during this debate. In Canada, the variation is from 98 000 voters in the largest electorate to 8 000 in the smallest electorate, which is a ratio of twelve to one. The same situation applies in the United States of America. It can be clearly seen that, in other democracies, redistributions are not necessarily carried out in the main on the basis of the number of voters. Quotas certainly are used, but provision is made in most instances to allow for greater representation for remote areas.

To move to the local scene, I cite Western Australia. Again, members have heard it before, but the ratio in Western Australia is six or seven to one. That is a fact, and again it is a far cry from the Queensland ratio of two and a half to one and certainly far from that popular catchcry of one vote, one value.

It can be seen from those figures that the Queensland system is closer to the one vote, one value concept. Therefore, that negates much of the argument tonight. The one vote, one value concept would effectively disfranchise a vast area of Queensland and perhaps the most productive area in terms of economic productivity and export-earning capacity. Those matters must be taken into account. Why should the people of western and northern Queensland be disfranchised by the implementation of the one vote, one value concept? It would be totally unfair.

At present, the electorate of Roma comprises an area of about 57 500 sq. km. Under the one vote, one value concept, the size of the electorate would almost double, and it would be impossible to service the electorate properly. At present, all members have one electorate secretary. The work-load is enormous. It takes me four full days to make

an electorate tour. If the size of the electorate were doubled, it would be almost impossible to tour the whole of the electorate.

While speaking about my electorate of Roma—under this legislation, the shire of Duaringa will be moved into the country zone. The shires of Bauhinia, Bungil and Bendemere and the Roma Town Council will remain in the western and far-northern zone. I enjoy very much working in the Duaringa shire, and I shall certainly continue to do so for as long as it is possible. At the same time, I am fully aware of the need for electorates to contain areas of common interest. In a geographical sense, the people of the Duaringa shire will probably be better served by a member of Parliament situated in a much more central position. I fully understand the situation.

Under this legislation, we will see a system of representation that will be hard to refute. The Labor Party will find it extremely difficult to justify its stance outside the south-eastern corner of the State. The hocus-pocus and double-talk will fall on deaf ears among the people who reside in the vast areas west of the Great Dividing Range.

To illustrate my point—under this legislation, in the south-eastern zone, 987 238 electors, representing 64.8 per cent of the voters in Queensland, will have 51 seats—an increase of four—or 57.3 per cent of the seats. In the provincial cities zone, 254 810 electors, representing 16.7 per cent of the voters of Queensland, will have 13 seats—the same as at present—or 14.6 per cent of the seats. In the country zone, 209 574 electors, representing 13.7 per cent of the voters in Queensland, will have 17 seats—an increase of two—or 19 per cent of the seats. In the western and far-northern zone, 71 739 electors, representing 4.7 per cent of the voters in Queensland, will have eight seats—an increase of one—or 8.9 per cent of the seats. I do not think that there could be anything fairer than that. Since the last redistribution, Queensland's population has increased. Queensland is the only State in which there has been any real growth.

**Mr De Lacy:** Do you know that the population in the far-western area has actually reduced?

**Mr COOPER:** It may have reduced, but that has been taken into consideration. The Government is trying to provide as equal and evenly balanced political representation as is possible. It is very simple to say that the concept of one vote, one value should be implemented. It is a glib old phrase and, frankly, it does not wash with Government members.

Since 1977, the population of Queensland has increased quite dramatically by about 400 000, or 19 per cent. The increase in the number of seats will be 8.5 per cent. As I have just said, Queensland is recognised as the fastest-growing State in Australia, and political representation simply must increase with that growth in population. That is only fair to the growing number of voters.

This is the first increase in the size of Parliament for 14 years. In 1971, at the time of the last increase, the State's population was about 1.8 million. The population has increased by 700 000, which is a 38 per cent increase. The increase in the number of seats represents 8.5 per cent. These facts are difficult to refute and I dare the opposing parties to justify to the people in my electorate of Roma the one vote, one value principle, or, as I call it, disfranchisement.

The four-zonal system provides equality of representation and continued balanced development. For more than two decades, the State has enjoyed that kind of development under conservative Governments. The present Government wants to continue that development. If a one vote, one value system was implemented, a huge proportion of the State would wither and die, as happened under Labor Governments. It would be a backward and retrograde step, and the State could not afford to take that step. It should not be forgotten that, under the present electoral system, 60 per cent of the existing seats are in the south-eastern zone.

The zonal system, which has been maligned and discredited by members of the opposing parties and misguided academics, is the brain-child of the former ALP Premier.

the late Ned Hanlon. It must also be remembered that the ALP at one time held all the seats in the western and far-northern zone. Now, most of them are held by the National Party, and that may be simply because the voters changed their minds. Criticism of the zonal system by those whose colleagues introduced the scheme in 1949 can only smack of sour grapes because they cannot hold the seats.

Honourable members hear endlessly of the model electoral system that operates in New South Wales, but that system maintains an electoral bias of 6 per cent in favour of the ALP. The Queensland system has a bias of 1.5 per cent to the conservatives. It is a pity that some of these telling facts cannot be explained more clearly by the media and others. Of course, some people do not want to know.

Another example of the detrimental effect of the one vote, one value principle is demonstrated by the fact that nearly 70 per cent of all seats would be concentrated within a 200 km radius from the centre of Brisbane.

**Mr De Lacy** interjected.

**Mr COOPER:** I ask the honourable member to let me expound a little further.

Another example of the unfairness of the one vote, one value system can be found in the more remote regions. Urban constituents have greater access to professional people who can service their personal needs than rural people have. Urban constituents have easier access to a choice of parliamentarians, to public service personnel and departmental staff. For urban people, the opportunity to protest against or lobby for a specific Government policy is really just the cost of a phone call. They can hop into their car and run round to the office of their local parliamentarian. Rural people may have hundreds of miles to travel to do the same thing. To contact the local member by telephone usually means that a trunk-call must be made. It is often very difficult to find a local country member in his electoral office, because he travels over a hell of a long distance round his electorate.

**Mr De Lacy** interjected.

**Mr COOPER:** The honourable member for Cairns should know that, and it is a pity that he is making such a fool of himself.

The vast majority of Queenslanders fear the one vote, one value system for another very good reason. One has only to consider the centralisation of political power in the Federal sphere. Almost half the total number of Federal seats are concentrated in what can be called the golden triangle, which is based on Sydney, Melbourne and Canberra. Members of political parties and individuals who favour a one vote, one value scheme do no more than promote such sectional interests.

The necessity for electoral weightage is demonstrated by the need to combat isolation, to improve availability to services, to provide access to elected representatives, to improve communications, and to foster community of interest. The ability of one parliamentary member to effectively service the people, industries and institutions in the electorate is very important. That has been achieved in many democracies round the world.

I wish to explore still further the electoral policy of the Labor Party.

**Mr De Lacy** interjected.

**Mr COOPER:** The honourable member might know his own party's history.

The supposed policy of the Labor Party is one vote, one value, but an examination of its policy from 1949 onwards suggests that it is prepared to embrace just about any system that it thinks will give it government. Prior to the 1983 State election, the former Leader of the Opposition (Keith Wright) said—

“As a matter of priority a new Electoral Districts Act based on one vote, one value will be introduced.”

That contrasts very markedly with the 1979 policy of Mr Wright's predecessor as Leader of the Opposition, the member for Mackay (Mr Casey), and his zonal proposal, and the introduction of a zonal system by the late Ned Hanlon in 1949. However, that was not done for reasons of high principle and electoral democracy; it was done purely and simply for the blatant political purposes of staying in power.

The change was in response to the conservative parties' success in the 1947 election, at which they obtained 45.2 per cent of the vote compared with Labor's 43.6 per cent. Ironically, Labor won 35 seats with 43.6 per cent of the vote and the conservatives won 23 with 45.2 per cent of the vote.

Honourable members opposite have quoted with boring monotony the present Premier's speech when the Electoral Districts Bill was under discussion in 1949. As a back-bencher, he opposed the change in the zonal system. His reasoning then displayed the political intuition that eventually led him to be Premier of this State. He opposed that change purely and simply for what it was—a desperate attempt by the ALP to stay in power. The Labor Party did not change the system for any philosophic commitment to rural people or isolated areas and it did not introduce it to give better representation to non-metropolitan areas or to encourage growth and development in western areas. The only reason was a blatant attempt to stay in power. History records that fact.

**Mr De Lacy** interjected.

**Mr COOPER:** I will give the Labor Party credit where credit is due. In 1949 it had done its research fairly well and perceived what was right for a vast State, such as Queensland, which was crying out for development. Exactly what was needed was a zonal system. The tragedy is that Labor used the system to shore up its declining political fortunes purely for self-preservation. That was very correctly perceived by that back-bencher, Joh Bjelke-Petersen.

When the former Labor Premier introduced the Electoral Districts Bill in 1949, he said—

“... it has been found that in a country such as this there is some need for a variation in the number of people a member represents ... in all parts of the State, even the isolated parts, people are living.”

It was nice of him to recognise that.

He continued—

“Those people are entitled to at least the same services as those in the metropolitan area get; as a matter of fact, if there is to be any balance in favour of any section in this respect, it should be in favour of the people developing the outback parts of this great State.”

That is a quotation from the late Ned Hanlon. That would have been a very good speech had it not been for the very pernicious reasons for the introduction of the Bill, namely, to save Labor from defeat at the ballot-box.

For the same selfish reasons that Labor wanted a zonal system in 1949—that is to obtain favour at the ballot-box—today Labor is espousing one vote, one value. Just as the people rejected Labor in 1957 and beat the system, today people will reject Labor's one vote, one value policy, which would see non-metropolitan people lose up to seven electorates. That is something that we in the National Party will be hammering like hell out in the bush.

Despite Labor's rhetoric and correct policy stance of one vote, one value, its heart is not in them. It has been drifting along with its academic members who like neat formulas and verbose reasoning, which are of little practical application or relevance. The rank and file members of the Labor Party are not too happy with the party's electoral policy.

I have heard that the honourable member for Lytton (Mr Burns), unless he has had a change of heart, has a soft spot for the zonal system, because in 1971 he was the very powerful State secretary of the Labor Party. It seems that the Labor Party's submission to the redistribution commission was based on zones. Interestingly, when talking about the 1971 redistribution, the honourable member for Lytton said—

“The ALP had little to complain about in the new redistribution.”

His rhetoric about the Bill is extremely hollow, as is his commitment to one vote, one value. That is probably why honourable members have not heard from him today.

Another former leader of the parliamentary Labor Party, Jack Houston, also looked favourably upon the zoning system. He must have done so or he would not have supported Labor's 1971 redistribution submission. Like the honourable member for Lytton, he thought that the result of the 1971 redistribution was not too bad for Labor. Houston said that the “ALP appeared to be better off under that redistribution than the 1958 redistribution”

The real division in the Labor Party about electoral policy occurred in 1979 under the parliamentary leadership of the honourable member for Mackay (Mr Casey). At that time, the academics in the Labor Party were pushing State-wide for the strict application of one vote, one value.

Labor's Policy Handbook of 1979 stated Labor's electoral policy in these terms—

“That it believes that the essence of representative democracy is an electoral system based on the principle of equal franchise.”

True to form, a fight broke out in the party about electoral policy. The honourable member for Mackay engendered it when he resurrected the 1971 redistribution zonal proposals and prepared to submit them in the form of a private member's Bill. The proposed private member's Bill supported a two-zone system and cut across party policy.

Some Labor members were outraged by the contravention of party policy. In fact, one academic member went to the extent of laying written charges against the then leader of the parliamentary Labor Party. The charge was heard by the powerful disputes tribunal and was promptly dismissed. The lawyer briefed by the honourable member for Mackay said that the charge was frivolous. In other words, the disputes tribunal virtually said that Labor's policy was one that supports a zonal system.

It was the Labor Party that complained the most about the recent Federal redistribution based on one vote, one value. It should be ashamed of its conduct and its complaints about a policy that allegedly it believes to be the backbone of democracy. The record shows clearly that the Labor Party in Queensland is unhappy with the application of the one vote, one value policy.

The present State secretary of the Labor Party (Mr Beattie) said that Labor was disappointed with and disadvantaged by the outcome of the Federal redistribution. He said—

“The Federal redistribution committee had fulfilled its job of taking enrolment growth in the next three years into account when drawing the boundaries, but this had been done at the expense of community of interest, communications and ease of travel.”

More specifically, in the Federal electorate of Dawson, Labor's special electorate redistribution subcommittee, which includes the former Leader of the Opposition (Mr Casey), said—

“Electoral commissioners had done a computer exercise to arrive at their conclusions and had not properly followed their ‘community of interest’ guidelines.”



The Labor Party has no-one to blame but itself for the community of interest being ignored. There is no doubt that the policy of one vote, one value has an inherent weakness, and that is that community of interest must be dropped.

When the commission is locked into a quota and growth for the next three years, community of interest happens to become irrelevant. What then becomes relevant is the mathematical formula.

Labor's disgraceful performance in complaining about its own Federal Labor Government's initiated redistribution, based on its own policy of one vote, one value, shows that the Queensland branch is unhappy with that policy for a decentralised State such as Queensland.

For Labor to support community of interest, communications and ease of travel as ingredients for a redistribution, it suggests very clearly that it supports a zonal system.

For Labor to stand up in this place and criticise the 1985 Electoral Districts Bill, which ensures that the factors of community of interest, communications and ease of travel are taken into account, smacks of hypocrisy, double standards and an inability to come to grips with the difference between one vote, one value and balanced representation deriving from the zonal system.

The considered opinion is that Labor does not know the difference. Some political parties which are metropolitan-based may be forgiven for being interested in only 1.5 per cent of Queensland, but Labor draws some support from the entire State. Labor is objecting to the zonal system because it is the duty of the Opposition to oppose it and it does not want another faction fight about electoral policy on top of all the other party disagreements it is trying to iron out.

It must be difficult for the parliamentary Labor members outside the south-east zone to bow to party policy, because they know in their hearts that under one vote, one value they will be drawn off the map.

Opposition members should do the right and honourable thing by their constituents and vote with the Government and support the Bill or, if they have not got the fortitude to do that, they should leave the Chamber.

Labor Party members by supporting one vote, one value and opposing the zonal system, are consciously voting against growth and development in the non-metropolitan areas and so are supporting a vote of no confidence in 98.5 per cent of the State.

Labor talks about electoral justice and "fair and honest redistribution of electoral boundaries based on one vote, one value". The questions have to be asked: Fair and honest for whom? For the Labor Party and 57 per cent of the voters in the south-east corner of Queensland? What about electoral and representative justice for the remaining 43 per cent scattered over 98.5 per cent of the State? The Labor Party and supporters of the one vote, one value are interested only in 1.5 per cent of Queensland and 57 per cent of the people. They should be ashamed of themselves.

As was pointed out before, Labor's heart is not with one vote, one value—despite all its talk. It is the academic trendies and members in the south-east corner of Queensland who support one vote, one value. The pragmatists in the Labor Party, like the pragmatists on this side of the House, know that the balanced representation system, which we have today and have had since 1957, is the right system for a vast decentralised State such as Queensland.

**Mr Yewdale:** Rubbish! You are giving cows away. What are you talking about?

**Mr COOPER:** That is not correct. However, the Government gives productivity a vote.

The Labor Party and supporters of this policy—one vote, one value—should admit to supporting the wrong electoral policy and do the right thing for a change, give a positive vote for the whole of Queensland and Queenslanders, and support this Bill.

The electorate, as a whole, should be reminded that when Labor introduced the zonal system in 1949, it held many of the rural seats. Labor thought the zonal system would ensure those seats for Labor for ever and a day. Labor was proved wrong, as, under the same zonal system, the then Country Party, now the National Party, went into the electorates and won the hearts and minds of the voters with positive policies and gradually picked off Labor-held seats one by one. That is a matter of history.

It is an historic fact, too, that Labor was beaten on its own rules and now it seeks new rules on which to fight an election. Instead of seeking to change the electoral system, it should look at its policies which have been rejected on 10 successive occasions since and including the 1957 State election.

As I said earlier, this legislation is about equal representation, and anything less than that is totally unacceptable to this Government. I support the Bill in total.

**Mr FOURAS** (South Brisbane) (9.14 p.m.): I join with the Leader of the Opposition (Mr Warburton) and other Opposition members in saying that the Labor Party is incensed by and strongly opposed to this legislation.

Firstly, I will comment on some of the statements of the honourable member for Roma. It is pertinent to point out that the honourable member for Roma currently has about 8 800 electors in his electorate and, from reading the Bill, I gather that a shire will be removed. That will mean that approximately 1 800 electors will be removed from his area and that he will end up with an electorate containing 7 000 people.

**Mr Warburton:** No wonder he is happy.

**Mr FOURAS:** No wonder he is happy and enthusiastic about the Bill. Moreover, it is likely that my electorate of South Brisbane will have something like 20 000 electors, with the result that each of his votes will be worth more than three times the vote of one of my electors.

What incensed me most about the speech of the member for Roma was the arrant nonsense that he went on with about the subject of one vote, one value. He said unequivocally—he repeated it ad nauseam—that the one vote, one value concept would result in large areas of the State dying off. He referred to 98 per cent. He said that productivity should be given a vote. Goodness gracious me, as the Premier would say. Everything else in the Roma electorate is given a vote. The honourable member has 14 000 goats, trees and whatever else voting to make up the numbers that I have in my electorate.

The member for Roma was laudatory of the 1949 Hanlon gerrymander, which he said was introduced for self-preservation. If that is so, it is exactly what this gerrymander is about. It is more than that, of course. It is about keeping the Liberals out of power for ever. Certainly, though, it is about self-preservation.

The other nonsense we hear from Government members is that the additional seats can be justified because of the 38 per cent population growth since 1977. On that logic, the Bill should create 38 per cent more seats, instead of seven additional seats. There is no rationale and no excuse for those additional seats. The ALP vehemently opposes the legislation and opposes any increase in the size of the Parliament. The annual cost of an additional seven seats will be more than \$1m—at a time of deteriorating economic fortunes that require the State to tighten its belt. At a time when the independent Commonwealth Grants Commission is taking \$77m away from the State, Queensland cannot afford the luxury of \$1m of additional expenditure to provide for seven more members.

The zonal system is an appalling aspect of the gerrymander. The concept of equal voting rights for all people, with the result of government by majority following fairly conducted elections, is supported by the ALP. As the Leader of the Opposition said this afternoon, the vote of an elector should have an equal value, whoever he is and wherever he lives. The continuation of the four-zone system will enable the National Party to rule

with a minority of votes. If ever the Liberal Party resurrects itself—and not for one moment do I predict that—the Bill will make it totally impossible for it ever to become the majority party.

Electoral Districts Acts have been on the statute-book since 1910. Until 1949, they were all on the basis of one vote, one value. Regardless of what the member for Roma said, it is absolute nonsense to suggest that country areas of Queensland rotted and died away because of the adoption of the fundamental principle of one vote, one value—a principle that is enshrined in Article 21 (3) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. I emphasise that until 1949 the concept of one vote, one value served the State very well.

In recent years, what kind of representation has been offered in Queensland? Up till 1972, members of Parliament represented their electorates without assistance from electorate secretaries, without the provision of electorate offices, without free telephones, without free plane travel and also without all the electoral allowances that are now paid. If those facilities had been introduced prior to 1949, they could not have been justified. The question might reasonably be asked by members of Parliament who have been provided with those facilities why should they not still be elected on the principle of one vote, one value. Suggesting that the provision of those facilities is not justifiable indicates a very weak argument indeed, and it is important that honourable members debate the issues of the elements of an electoral system.

I was impressed by the quotation that the Leader of the Opposition read into "Hansard" indicating that the then member for Nanango (Mr Bjelke-Petersen) said in Parliament at that time that the proposal to divide the electorate into zones was "a crafty and vicious piece of legislation". I think that that statement bears repeating. I quote now from "Hansard" to indicate the attitude of the present Premier and Treasurer (Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen) in those days. As the member for Nanango, he went on to say—

"In this legislation, the people are given the right of voting, admittedly, but the odds are so greatly against them that to achieve the results they desire is impossible because the numbers set out will mean nothing but that the majority will be ruled by the minority."

That is exactly what the legislation that is presently before the House enshrines. It enshrines a continuation of the power of the minority to rule the majority. The Government was elected on 38 per cent of the vote, and, as I have previously said, the Australian Labor Party strongly believes that democracy is based on equality of opportunity, which, of course, includes equal opportunity to vote.

It is not good enough for the honourable member for Roma (Mr Cooper) to be exuberant about having only 7 000 members after the redistribution takes place, which will mean that a member in the south-east corner of the State will represent 21 000 voters. Such a system of representation means that votes will be counted three to one in favour of that honourable member. With such a gerrymander and unequal representation, people get the type of government that operates in Queensland—a Government that is irresponsible and unresponsive. The whole concept of parliamentary democracy is being abused when honourable members step back from the principle of one vote, one value.

As the honourable member for Roma said, and continued to say, if the principle of one vote, one value were applied, seven seats would be lost in the proposal to redistribute country areas and the seats would be created in the south-east corner of the State. I point out to the honourable members that that is absolutely correct, and why should it not be so? Surely, if honourable members support a democratic system of government, it must be recognised that people elect Governments, and people demand the right to be represented according to the majority of the votes.

The principle of democratic government ought to be examined in the light of the gerrymander that operates in this State. If the electoral system worked on the basis of 82 seats in the Parliament—and I point out now that the Australian Labor Party does

not want an increase in representation—the south-east zone would contain 53 seats, which would be six additional seats, and the provincial city zone would increase from 13 to 14 seats. So, altogether, that would result in seven additional seats. In the western and far-northern zone, three seats would be lost and the country zone would be reduced from 15 seats to seven.

I wish to restate the firm and unequivocal policy espoused by the Australian Labor Party that is based on four fundamental principles. Firstly, one quota should be set for all areas of the State; secondly, no separate zones should be created; thirdly, the variation allowed should only be 10 per cent above or below the average and not the 20 per cent that presently operates.

I can think of instances in which the 20 per cent margin could be justifiably applied, and I refer to the area of my electorate. At the moment, the electorate contains in excess of 16 000 voters, and I believe that I could advance an argument equally as valid as arguments based on the tyranny of distance. I represent thousands of people who are not involved actively in the electorate, because, in the first instance, they are not naturalised and, in the second instance, they live in dormitory suburbs.

Under the terms of this legislation, I believe that I have a good prospect of being allowed to have a 20 per cent margin above the set quota, when it is borne in mind that I service a large number of people who do not have the right to vote. Notwithstanding that, under the principles of our democratic system, they do have a right to representation. As a matter of fact, when I arrived at my electorate office on Tuesday, nine people were waiting to see me at 9 a.m. I am not complaining, because I am committed to doing my job properly; but I do point out that my electorate requires a great deal of work, and a great deal of manpower to meet its demands. The fourth and final fundamental principle that a Labor Government would espouse is that the electoral commissioners should be named in the Electoral Districts Bill and not simply appointed by the Premier and Treasurer. In many ways, the worst aspect of the system is the hand-picking of electoral commissioners, who, by being presented with a fait accompli, are made party to the rigging of electoral boundaries.

As a corollary to that principle, I believe that all submissions made to electoral redistribution commissioners should be made public. It should be a matter of public record what the submissions of the National Party are and what the submissions of the Australian Labor Party are, so that the results can be evaluated in terms of the submissions.

The commissioners should report to Parliament and not to the Premier. How could anybody justify, as at 1 December 1984, an average of 21 000-plus people in electorates in the south-eastern zone and only 10 000 in electorates in the western and far-northern zone? How could anybody justify that sort of rigging and call it electoral justice?

As the Leader of the Opposition said so ably, the electoral redistribution legislation betrays the people. The gerrymander is responsible for a sectional and devious Government. It results in a minority Government that can win in its own right with 38 per cent of the vote, although Government members espouse the principle of representation and say that that is why they want the far-flung areas of what I agree is the most decentralised State in Australia to be adequately represented. The people of this State have witnessed the charade of members being elected to represent country areas but who, upon being promoted to the Ministry, live in Brisbane. I will not name them, but certainly I know of Ministers who have lived in Brisbane and rarely entered their electorates. One Minister who represents 7 000 people, and was elected with 4 000 votes, lives in Brisbane and rarely visits his electorate. The member for Roma (Mr Cooper) spoke earlier——

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Booth):** Order! The honourable member will address the Chair.

**Mr FOURAS:** Certainly, Mr Deputy Speaker.

The member for Roma made a most hypocritical speech. His predecessor was a very nice fellow. I am not impugning his character in any way at all, but for the majority

of the time he was a Minister, he lived in Brisbane. That is the sort of situation about which Opposition members are complaining.

I now want to talk about the Liberal Party's hypocrisy. Liberal Party members have said that they are strongly opposed to this legislation. In my maiden speech seven years ago I said that Liberal Party members had the habit, when they were in coalition, of saying one thing in the electorate and another in the media, and then doing the exact opposite in the joint parties room. They espoused support for an electoral policy that was exactly the same as that of the Labor Party. But they were very meek under the leadership of Sir William Knox; in fact, they were nothing more than the Brisbane branch of the National Party. They were weak, subservient and pathetically insipid.

I said to the Liberals, who were espousing more tolerant attitudes than those espoused by the National Party, that if they wanted to initiate legislation and if they wanted, some time in the future, to bring their policies to fruition and inhibit the Premier's dictatorial style of Government, they could only do it by supporting a fair redistribution of boundaries. I said that they could no more affect what happened in Government than I could—a mere member of the Opposition.

Now one sees and hears a good deal in the media about how the Liberals are holding on because their No. 1 priority is to again become a member of the coalition. They want to return to their subservience. Every now and again they are grandstanding, particularly on issues such as redistribution.

What happened in 1977 when they had the numbers to defeat the partial redistribution? Now that they do not have the numbers, they will grandstand and vote with the Opposition on this important piece of legislation but, when they could have been effective in 1977, they allowed an increase in the number of seats from 78 to 82 and also allowed the Governor in Council to select the electoral commissioners. That led to the deserved dismissal of Sir William Knox as Liberal leader.

What did Sir William Knox say in 1977 when he was trying to get his Liberal colleagues to vote for this Bill when they could have defeated it? He said—

“According to the Press and other media, there are supposed to have been confrontation, wrangling, backing up, backing down and collapses in the Cabinet room and the joint party room. It should be made clear that the proposal when presented to Cabinet by the Premier had the support of all Ministers without reservation.”

All Ministers, Liberals included, without reservation! He went on to say, “Without reservation and without resignation.” The Liberals would not stand up for their policies. They could not do it then and they cannot be trusted to do it now or in the future.

He went on to say—

“There has been no suggestion that Liberal Ministers should toe the line or hand in their resignations. I want to make it perfectly clear that the amendment had the support of all Ministers, including all Liberal Ministers.

When the proposal was put up in the normal manner in the joint party room, it had the support of all members. There was no dissent in the party room on this issue. There was no confrontation, no wrangling, no fighting one another, and no amendments were proposed. I want to make that perfectly clear. Any suggestions that there was confrontation and wrangling are pure fiction and the creation of certain people outside Parliament who feel that they should make up such stories.”

Those gutless wonders want to crawl back into coalition at any price. They want to run away from their commitments.

The Labor Party sought to have the Bill withdrawn. It moved an amendment that was designed to permit a full and fair redistribution under the supervision of a Supreme Court judge. Sir William Knox and his gutless Liberals at that time did not support the amendment. If there had been a skerrick of courage, conscience or sincerity left in the

members of the Liberal Party at that time, they would have opposed the legislation. That was one of the many opportunities that they had to live by their policies. They sat back and allowed the commissioners to be appointed and secret determinations to be made. The commissioners reported to the Ministers. The Liberals sat back and allowed members, such as the previous member for South Brisbane, to be knifed in the back by the commissioners.

At that time, "The Courier-Mail", a newspaper that strongly supported the Liberal Party, was publishing editorials galore. I shall read a couple of the editorials. One editorial, under the heading "An unreal coalition", stated—

"The amendment introduced into Parliament yesterday does nothing more than allow a redistribution and election this year on the same discredited zone system.

The State redistribution turmoil has confirmed what many Queenslanders already knew—that since the retirement of former Deputy Premier Sir Gordon Chalk the Government has become a one-man band led by the lone maestro Mr Bjelke-Petersen."

What has changed? The Liberals still want to crawl back into coalition.

On the same day, "The Courier-Mail" cartooned a four-man circus, with Sundance Sparkes and Ringo Evans selling the tickets while the Kingaroy Kid bounced Billy the Babe through the political hoops. What a joke! Another cartoon said—

"If you want to stay a partner in this act you'll jump when I tell you."

The Liberals did that, and they will do it again. I say to the members of the National Party, "Do not take the Liberals back; they are not worth two bob." Sir William Knox proved to be a weak leader then. He was a lion abroad and a lamb at home.

At that time, Yvonne McComb stated the policy of the Liberal Party. She wanted the Liberals to be firm and to stand up for their principles. She said—

"This convention supports any and all moves for a fair and equitable redistribution of electorate boundaries in Queensland within the life of the present Parliament of Queensland and to this end moves that—

(a) That the numbers of electors in any electorate shall not vary from the quota by more than 10 per cent of the quota;

(b) Electorates be based on communities of interest, demographic similarities, geographic features, communication links, similarity of industry and proximity of community centres and wherever possible provincial centres should be entirely within the one electorate;

(c) The number of electorates to be kept at the present level; and

(d) That one of the redistribution commissioners be a judge of the Supreme Court."

The Liberals have allowed gerrymanders in the past. When they had the numbers to stop gerrymanders, they did nothing about them. The honourable member for Nundah, who proved to be insipid and gutless and was removed from office by his own people, now wants to crawl back into coalition. It is a great act of hypocrisy. The credibility of the members of the Liberal Party has been shot to pieces. They ought not to be listened to.

The Opposition is vehemently opposed to the Bill. It is ludicrous that the honourable member for Roma, who preceded me in this debate, should represent only 7 000 electors and that I should represent 21 000 electors, plus thousands more people who do not have the right to vote.

Such variations are ridiculous. The one man, one vote system is the fundamental basis of democracy. The Labor Party will live with its policy and fight every inch of the way to have it implemented.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD** (Condamine) (9.35 p.m.): I welcome the opportunity to speak in this debate and to support the Bill. A convincing case has already been put forward in support of this Bill, and it has shown the percentage of seats allocated to each zone as compared with the percentage of Queensland voters residing in that zone. That case has obvious merit and is backed up by statistics.

As has been said, electoral weightage is not peculiar to Queensland alone. Cases have been cited of the variation in the size of electorates in the United Kingdom, Japan and Canada and the variation is much wider than the four-zonal system that this Bill proposes.

It is my intention to raise some different points that show in a practical, everyday way, that the people in the rural areas of this State have every right to seek equality of parliamentary representation.

It is a fact of life that the majority of people prefer to live in the cities along the coast. That preference adds weight to the claim that rural people are disadvantaged. My experience at Queensland Teachers College is a good example. All students mixed freely on the campus. Indeed, it was a very exciting time. We were all treated equally until graduation. However, when the postings to the schools were decided, things changed and we were no longer treated as equals.

It became apparent that, no matter what a student's wish might be, the Department of Education was adamant in its policy that, if a student came from the bush, he had to return to the bush. Scores of students like me would have liked to begin their teaching careers in Brisbane. We spent all of our lives in small country towns with one-teacher schools, but, while we were at college, we had grown to like the opportunities available in the city such as ease of communication, shorter distances to travel, and better access to Government services.

**Mr Innes** interjected.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** Yes, that is right; we liked the things produced in the city.

My fellow-students who had lived in the city or provincial cities all their lives and had enjoyed the better facilities offered in those places were posted to schools in Brisbane. I suggest that that happened because the city-bred people knew that life in the country lacked many of the things that they looked forward to. They also resigned immediately if they were given a country posting.

In 1985, the situation is still the same. City people prefer to stay in the city and it is difficult to get them to take up country postings, because they are aware of the disadvantages faced by living in the bush. That is just one example that proves that rural Queenslanders are disadvantaged. More importantly, the city people know it and admit it. Political parties that are unable to win seats in rural Queensland whinge and whine about the one vote, one value principle, and try to make the public believe that many advantages flow to rural dwellers. They do so because their policies are not in tune with rural Queensland. In fact, they are a joke in rural Queensland. Those parties also believe that, if enough noise is made, the public will believe their arguments.

Let me assure members on the other side of the Chamber that the vast majority of people in rural Queensland are adamant that they should have equality of representation. One way of achieving equality of representation is to have electorate weightage.

The very existence of locality allowances paid to the public servants of this State is yet another indication of the severe disadvantages in living in rural Queensland. The Queensland Teachers Union, the Queensland State Service Union and the Professional

Officers Association continually press the Government to compensate their members who are serving in the bush for the loss of quality of life that they experience.

Public servants who have done their required western service, as it is called, are very quick to press for a transfer back to a so-called favoured area, usually a provincial city along the coast. They know of the disadvantages of living in rural Queensland, as do members opposite. However, their boisterous contributions to this debate are aimed at electoral advantage, and are not based on truth or practical experience.

The Federal seat of Maranoa is a perfect example of the absurdity of the principle of one vote, one value. Prior to the last Federal redistribution, it covered an area bounded to the east by Stanthorpe, Oakey, Bell, Jandowae, Taroom, west to the Northern Territory border and south to the New South Wales border.

Under the new boundaries, the number of electors has decreased slightly, but the area extends to north of Blackwater and Emerald in central Queensland. The National Party member for Maranoa (Mr Ian Cameron) now has approximately the same number of constituents as the member for Moreton (Mr Don Cameron), but the Maranoa electorate is 147 times larger than the Moreton electorate—I repeat, 147 times larger! I defy anyone in this Chamber to convince me that a constituent in Maranoa has the same quality of parliamentary representation as a constituent in Moreton.

The one vote, one value system used in the Federal redistribution is the same as the ALP and the Liberal Party would force upon the people of Queensland. There can be no doubt that there is no merit or logic in their argument. It is simply a selfish, premeditated attempt to gain political advantage, and an attitude of, "To hell with the democratic rights of those who happen to live outside of Brisbane or the provincial cities; to hell with the old Australian axiom of a fair go; to hell with balanced development and balanced representation in all areas of the State."

The electorate of Condamine is in the country zone and, in terms of area, is relatively small for a country seat. Nevertheless, it is quite possible for me to draw comparisons that prove conclusively that the people in my electorate deserve an electoral weightage to ensure equality of parliamentary representation. My first comparison is that of distance. Fast driving allows me to cross my electorate from north to south in about two hours, and it takes a similar period to traverse it from east to west. For my constituents, a 10-minute drive to the local member's office is just not on. Every day that I visit my electorate office, I put aside two hours for travel alone.

About 70 per cent of the 13 000 people who wish to telephone me have to make an STD call. The cheapness and advantage of a local call is not for them. If people wish to write to me, those living outside the three major towns in my electorate have only two mail services a week.

I now come to the problems that a country member experiences in serving his electorate in person. Whereas a metropolitan electorate may have four or five schools, in Condamine I have 25 schools and five kindergartens. Of course, each one has its own p. and c. association.

The electorate of Condamine embraces three local authorities, each with its own specific needs, not just one ward of the Brisbane City Council.

Service clubs play a vital role in any community. The Condamine electorate has three Lions clubs, three Apex clubs, three Rotary clubs, three or four branches of the Queensland Country Women's Association, a Rotaract club, five RSL sub-branches and more than 40 sporting clubs. To visit all of those clubs and speak with the members takes time. I also have the disadvantage of distance. I do not have a chance to attend four or five functions in one afternoon and evening. I have to allow an average of one hour's travel to and from a function, in addition to the time spent at the function itself.

Even to city members, it should be apparent that it is physically impossible for me to offer my constituents the type of personal representation that is taken for granted in



the city. But the ALP and the Liberal Party want to make things worse. How sincere are those members? They should be honest. Their fallacious arguments are founded in desperation and expediency. They know they are wrong. They know that the majority of rural voters despise them, but they insist on crying wolf in the vain hope that the umpire may amend the rules. If the umpire did, they would shout, "You fool! You were conned."

I can say with the utmost confidence that the vast majority of the electors of Condamine are adamant that they deserve an electoral system that compensates them for the disadvantages they must endure. They are also adamant that they must have equality of parliamentary representation.

I am totally committed to the Bill, and I support it wholeheartedly.

**Mr SMITH (Townsville West) (9.43 p.m.):** In one of his concluding statements tonight, the member for South Brisbane (Mr Fouras) gave his total commitment of opposition to the Bill. I shall give that commitment as an opening gesture.

I wondered seriously whether I should enter this debate. Although I believe that I have a responsibility to my constituents to make some comments tonight, I feel that, in doing so, all I am doing is legitimising what almost amounts to an illegal action and giving respectability to something that is not respectable.

**Mr FitzGerald:** What is illegal?

**Mr SMITH:** The honourable member would not know. The best thing he can do is shut his mouth and keep it shut!

The member for Condamine (Mr Cooper) spoke about the spirit of "a fair go". That spirit is completely absent from the legislation. What the House sees in this Bill is the essence of arrogance. That is the only component that is present in abundance in this legislation.

The mentality of the present Government is that it sees itself as always being in Government and the Opposition as always being in Opposition. It is not capable of realising that changes will inevitably occur. That attitude is reflected in the way in which Opposition members are treated. To use a cliché, the Government believes that the ends justify the means. If an Opposition is treated in that way, what expectation can Government members really have when the day arrives when the Labor Party rules Queensland? Do they think that our supporters would say to us, "Turn the other cheek and forget all the injustices that the Government has handed out and treat them with a soft glove."? I assure Government members that that will not happen. The only protection they have against that inevitable day when they are in Opposition is to wake up to themselves and begin treating the Opposition reasonably.

I find it incredible that the Queensland Government can take the view that it can ignore the rest of Australia. It thinks that it can ignore the trends that have occurred nationally and the trends that have occurred in the other States. Any community, whether it is national, State or local, that puts itself in isolation and believes that it can insulate itself from the trends that are occurring elsewhere will eventually come to grief. The end will not be gentle; the Government will go over the precipice.

It has been said several times during the debate, but I have to say it again: there is no doubt that the ALP went bad in 1949 and introduced a rorted system that the present Government has perfected. Government members should remember that the ALP paid the price.

Government members want to live in the past. They are not prepared to face the future, and they are showing that now. Irrespective of what Government has been in power since 1949, the situation is deplorable. The thought of the ALP propping up the Liberal Party to form a minority Government would have been abhorrent to the general membership of the Labor Party until fairly recently. However, the recent behaviour of

the National Party has been so abhorrent that the proposition can now be put and sold to the rank and file of the Labor Party—something that could not have been done a couple of years ago.

**Mr FitzGerald:** Keith Wright tried to con this House every week with that, and you know it.

**Mr SMITH:** I tell the honourable member once and for all that he might as well keep his mouth shut. His comments are so inane that I would be wasting my time if I replied to them. The honourable member can yell as much as he likes; I will not be answering his interjections.

Previously, members of the ALP and the Liberal Party have avoided some issues. The Liberals avoided the situation by talking about a three-zone system. At one stage, the Opposition was persuaded to talk about a two-zone system. That sort of compromise did nobody any good. Opposition members should have faced reality right from the beginning. There is now a unity of policy between the Liberals and the ALP. Whether the Government likes it or not, that unity of policy spells the inevitable doom of the National Party Government of Queensland.

The Liberals had to learn, and they have learnt. Government members seem to forget that when the day comes, it will not be a question of what members in this Chamber will decide; it will be the decision of the respective organisations of the political parties. I am certain that the Liberal Party has learnt what it can do to profit and what it can do to lose. I am sure that it will not make the same mistakes again.

The electorates may be complacent and may cop it for so long. However, when the swing is on—and inevitably it will be—no gerrymander or anything that the Government does when that day comes will prevent it from being thrown out, and thrown out very significantly.

The proposed redistribution is the action of a tired, insular and insecure Government. It has to prop itself up. It has to try to support itself artificially. The Government is not game to rely on the popular support of the community. If honourable members opposite were confident of their Government—and I know that they are not—although I certainly would not have thought that they would come up with a one vote, one value proposition, I would have thought they would perhaps go back to the 1956 situation when there was a three-zone system. If the Government had done that, it would have been an expression of confidence in itself. The fact that the Government has remained in its entrenched position demonstrates to me that it does not have the confidence to move out of the trenches. As I said before, the Government is entrenched and insecure. In fact, it is an embattled Government.

It could be said that the Government is putting itself in some sort of electoral suit of armour. However, everyone knows that no matter what armour is used, there will be chinks in it, and sooner or later the weakness in it will be exposed. The Government might have gotten away with some of these zonal proposals because there are those who do not know much about it. The Government might have got away with the western zone proposition for a long time. It might have even been able to put the proposition that it was reasonable to have more people in the metropolitan zone because of the closeness of services and all the hackneyed arguments that the Government uses. However, the Government will not get away with this proposal to reduce the number of voters in electorates in the country zones. Other honourable members have mentioned that.

In this day and age, because communications have improved so vastly, it is just not possible to argue that people who live in country zones close to major provincial cities on the coast are severely disadvantaged. That is really where the whole thing falls down. Any intellectual integrity that the National Party may claim to have, based on its philosophy, is blown out of the door because of what has been done in the provincial cities, particularly Townsville. That is one of the reasons I am speaking on the Bill.

The National Party has always justified its electoral arrangements on the basis of electoral load, the accessibility of the member and perhaps the ability of the member to service the public generally. As I said before, the largest number of people were in the metropolitan zone. There were somewhat fewer people in the provincial zone, even fewer in the country zone and, of course, a handful in the western zone. In the provincial city of Townsville there will be an enrolment in excess of 20 000 in each of the three seats. What some honourable members may not have realised is that that quota is in fact larger than any of the metropolitan seats.

That has been done for one reason only, and I will spell it out. It is very clear that it is because the Government feels that Townsville is a locked-up Labor situation. If there were any justice at all in this redistribution, Townsville would have received a fourth seat. I was amazed that it did not. If any area in the State is entitled to additional representation, it is Townsville. The Government discriminated against Townsville because that city has an ALP vote. The only success that the National Party has ever had in Townsville was with Max Hooper who, incidentally, until he nominated for the National Party, was a member of the Liberal Party. He was the mayor of Townsville. The National Party plucked him out and ran him as a star candidate. In fact, on a personal basis I think that Max is quite a decent man and he and I get on very well. However, when Max won in 1974 he achieved 13 per cent of the vote, and it was only on preferences that he finally got up and won by about half a per cent.

**Mr Yewdale:** That is a classic example of preferential voting.

**Mr SMITH:** That is correct. It is a good example of just how popular the National Party is in Townsville. One has only to look at the election results when the council was recently returned. It was not so much the return of the ALP council in Townsville that was significant; it was the absolute slaughter of the National Party.

No party has ever suffered the embarrassment of such a resounding demise as that suffered by the National Party in Townsville. The reason for its demise is that, because its credibility is so low, it is unable to attract candidates of any calibre. Most of the people the National Party nominated were second-class candidates, and the public knew it. That is why the National Party went down the drain.

**Mr Innes:** Tell us how many Liberal candidates stood and how many were elected. Three out of three?

**Mr SMITH:** No, two out of three, the second one by a very slim margin. One seat, the Liberal Party will not win again. Unless some attempt is made to gerrymander the Townsville City Council wards, the Liberal Party's permanent strength will be one seat. On the basis of the vote last Saturday week, if the ALP is unable to hold all three seats, I doubt whether the third seat will go to the National Party. It could well go to the Liberal Party. Twelve months ago I thought that could not possibly happen.

People in the National Party are very keen on the term "weightage". They avoid the term "gerrymander" That seems to upset them. As I understand it, the definition of "gerrymander" is to alter unfairly or abnormally the political map of a State. I will quote the president of the National Party. I admit that he is an articulate spokesman for the rather poor proposition he is putting. This is how he rationalises the gerrymander—

"Those people—"

he is referring to people in the western zone—

"produce a high proportion of the nation's wealth. They are only five per cent of the State's voters. I don't think it is unreasonable that they have 8 per cent of the seats."

What nonsense!

The gerrymander—not electoral weightage—is produced in two ways. Firstly, by dividing the State into four zones, the National Party locks Liberal and Labor voters

into electorates with high quotas, whereas the National Party is left with zones with low quotas but with a relatively high number of seats. Secondly, inside the zones, the lines on the map clearly favour the National Party. The argument that such electoral rigging is legitimate because the country produces all the wealth is based on a false economic premise. It falls down further when one looks at the seats won by a particular party in the artificially created zones. It is not the country people who are being favoured by the gerrymander; rather, the political party that can win the most seats in those artificial zones is being favoured. As I said before—I do not walk away from it—it has been done by a worn-out ALP Government. However, the National Party is doing it at the moment.

Numbers and percentages have been spoken about at great length. I will not waste the time of the House doing that. Clearly, the Bill will be passed. I do not see much point in putting arguments to people with closed minds. Obviously, National Party members have closed minds on this issue. However, in a modern society in the last years of the twentieth century, no-one can justify giving one human being a greater right than another to such a basic and fundamental right as casting a vote. Nobody denies that a member serving a large area needs concessions. We have always said so. However, he or she does not have a right to represent, beyond a reasonable tolerance, more voters or fewer voters than any other representative.

It is a scandal for the State of Queensland to have 89 seats. It is a disgrace. It is unjustifiable. It is an affront to any reasonable person. A few months ago, it was fairly common knowledge that the Premier and Treasurer was afraid of increasing the number of seats in the Parliament. Whatever else might be said about him, he certainly has a political awareness. He realised that the community was very much against it.

The community is as much against that proposition today as it was a few months ago when it was first rejected. What has happened in the meantime is that the numbers men in the National Party have weighed up the factors that are likely to be in existence at the time of the next State election, and have arrived at the conclusion that if it is necessary to sacrifice representatives of the National Party in the Brisbane metropolitan area—and let me say that I do not think metropolitan members of the Government have a prayer of being re-elected—the party organisation will do so. It will be necessary to lock in the chances of electoral success of the Liberal Party and the Labor Party to ensure that the Government will have a reasonable chance of continuing to rule the State in its own right. The only way for the Government to get around that problem is by the creation of additional seats in areas that support it, and that is completely unjustifiable.

Arguments advanced by National Party members are fallacious and are not worth talking about. The party has no credibility. In contrast to that, I point out that the agreed position adopted by the Australian Labor Party is that the Parliament should consist of 82 seats, and I doubt whether full justification exists even for that number. What is required is not more members, but better facilities that will assist members who have been elected.

If members of the Government were honest, they would acknowledge that the community would be better served if parliamentary representatives were provided with an additional electorate secretary so that staff would be available when the secretary took recreation leave or was otherwise absent. I would happily concede that, in the more sparsely populated areas of the State, an additional electorate office might be necessary and there may be justification for perhaps three electorate secretaries. In that way, both electorate offices could be staffed, and the additional staff could relieve when an electorate secretary took leave.

I want to know why the Government has not been prepared to install telex machines or Voca-dex machines. Their installation could improve the services provided by representatives to members of the public. I advocate very strongly that that should occur, and that the Government should forget about electing additional members.

I must mention also the bogey that has been put about concerning the adverse effects of one vote, one value on electors who live in the northern areas of the State, and alleged diminution in representation of interests that affects northern Queensland. It has already been said by the Leader of the Opposition and at least one other speaker that, if the principle of one vote, one value operated in northern Queensland, it is very clearly the case that that area would not lose representation. I repeat, for the benefit of the honourable member for Burdekin, that one vote, one value would result in a quota of approximately 18 000 voters, whereas under the present system the quota is in excess of 20 000 voters in an area such as Townsville. Can the honourable member tell me how an electorate with a quota of that size can possibly be of advantage to the people of Townsville? Clearly, there is no advantage and the people would be better off under the system of one vote, one value.

**Mr STONEMAN (Burdekin) (10.3 p.m.):** I rise to briefly make one or two points about the provisions of the Bill, especially as they relate to north Queensland. In doing so, I make the point that Queensland is the most decentralised State in the nation. The interests of the State are supported not only by a progressive Government but also by a supportive Government. The redistribution proposals recognise the role of rural communities and decentralised communities.

I would ask the previous speaker, the honourable member for Townsville, this question: If such a thing as community of interest exists, along with recognition of the role of rural communities, how does the Australian Labor Party justify the link between Longreach and Atherton and the link between Ingham and Mount Isa as electoral districts? Such a situation is unbelievable, and constitutes a farce.

I refer to an editorial published in "Queensland Country Life" on 8 April 1976, which reads as follows—

"Real democracy depended on adequate representation of minority groups, in this case, the fast shrinking rural population."

I point out that this is not a quote from a speech made by a politician but an extract from an editorial. The extract continues—

"... an electoral seat should be an area that can be adequately serviced by a political representative, irrespective of the number of people who live in the area."

I point out to Mr Smith that people elect a member of Parliament, and not an electorate secretary, to represent them. There is no doubt that my constituents are very well served by my electorate secretary, but they have to queue up at the door to see me, as I am sure they do to see the member for Townsville West.

Much has been said about the percentage of the vote gained by the National Party Government. However, as a mathematical exercise, if all seats were exactly the same size it would be possible for a party to win power with 25.1 per cent of the vote or just over 50 per cent of the vote in just over half of the seats. That point is often overlooked, as are the variations between electorates in other States.

I noted with interest that not one member opposite referred to his socialist colleagues at the Federal or State levels. Opposition members are not prepared to support the ALP boundary rig in New South Wales, for instance. I travel to New South Wales reasonably frequently and have noted the appalling state of the rural areas, the huge variation between electorates. The largest electorate in New South Wales has 45 612 electors and the smallest has 29 113, a remarkable variation under a socialist gerrymander, if I can call it that. In fact, the variation is 76 per cent, or about 16 500 people.

I am appalled that the member for Sherwood is apparently unaware of the provincial zone boundary in Townsville. I remind him and other members that this debate is about electoral districts, not the boundaries of electorates. Members heard the hypocritical promise of the member for Sherwood that the Liberal Party will in fact change. I very seriously doubt that. I would not have a clue what will happen to my own electorate,

but it seems that it will extend towards Townsville. So my 13 500 sq. km electorate could well be enlarged to 15 000 or 20 000 sq. km.

Many members opposite are very upset at that prospect because they recognise that they will have to work. The new boundaries will obviously smooth out zone lines. In most cases they have moved westward and recognised development and changes in communication.

Following the redistribution, the largest electorates will average about 20 000 electors with the smallest electorates, the huge western electorates, averaging about 9 300. As I mentioned, New South Wales has a variation of up to 16 500. Victoria, which has just had an election, is somewhat closer, but even it has a variation of 5 000 on the January figures. In South Australia the variation is over 11 000, which is in excess of that proposed for Queensland. In Western Australia, another Labor State, the most populous electorate had 26 318 electors as at 2 November 1984 and the smallest had 4 647.

In 1859 when this House was established 26 members represented 16 electorates—one member for every 905 electors. In fact, the census of 1861 brought that figure up to about one member to 1 156 electors. In 1950, in a 75-seat House, a member represented 9 500 electors; in 1953 just under 10 000 electors, and in 1956 just over 10 000 electors. Prior to the last redistribution a member represented on average 14 750 electors and the present figure is an average of just over 17 000 electors. I do not think that any member would disagree that because they are far more accessible and people look to them far more for advice, members now have much more work and greater responsibilities than members did years ago.

In the few moments that I have left I want to comment on the recent calls for a new State. I will be interested in seeing how members opposite react to such calls. Not only would a new State cost a great deal but more politicians and more public servants would be required, at even greater cost. I cannot understand why the proponents of the new State have never really done any detailed costing. Although I strongly support north Queensland, I think that the proponents of the new State need to be very careful about how they approach the subject.

In the area covered by the proposed new State of North Queensland, under a one vote, one value quota of 18 575, about which the member for Townsville West (Mr Smith) spoke, there would be 13.3 seats. At the moment, there are 15 seats in that area, and probably two more seats will be created. That will give 17 seats as against 13 seats—an increase of four seats.

It is interesting to note that Mr Paul Everingham, a prominent Liberal, has suggested that another State should be established in north Queensland so that there would be more politicians. He said, "We need more polities in Canberra." God forbid! I do not know where the members of the Liberal Party have gone, but they were saying that there are too many politicians in Canberra.

I wish to touch briefly on the western and far-northern zone, of which I have had some considerable experience. Over the last 20-odd years, a tremendous reduction has occurred in mail and air services in that area. In fact, 25 years ago, small towns such as Winton received a daily air service. Now, they receive precious little in the way of air services. In fact, they are lucky to receive one service a week. The members who represent that area experience difficulties in servicing it.

It is interesting to note that, once upon a time when Labor represented that area, it did not argue about small zones. At that time many station-hands voted Labor. Now, people cannot afford to employ station-hands, and representation has turned round.

If the Gulf and Peninsula seats were included under the one vote, one value concept, either Cook, Flinders or Mount Isa would disappear, and the member for South Brisbane (Mr Fouras) very positively noted that. I wonder which seat would go. The people in Flinders and Cook would not like their electorates to go, and I guess that the people in Mount Isa would claim that their electorate should remain.

In the far west there would be an amalgamation of Gregory and Warrego. That still would not bring the electorate up to quota. I wonder which one of those seats would go. Perhaps Roma, Peak Downs and Auburn could be amalgamated into two seats, but they would still be under quota. One of those seats would go. The member for South Brisbane said, "We will wipe them up." Three of those seats would disappear in the blink of an eye. That area of 1 500 000 sq. km would be represented by four members. They would have to service 37 or 38 local authority areas. Just imagine 1 500 000 sq. km and 37 or 38 local authority areas being represented by four beleaguered members! That speaks for itself.

I support the Bill and the principles contained in it.

**Mr HENDERSON** (Mount Gravatt) (10.12 p.m.): I wish to take a brief moment to comment on three arguments that have been advanced by the united Opposition parties in this Parliament to criticise the Bill.

The first argument relates to the fact that they feel that this Bill is so undemocratic that they want to appeal to the Federal Government to invoke certain international charters and covenants in an effort to have the Bill overturned. I am totally unimpressed with that argument. Basically, what it amounts to is a call by so-called democrats for the Hawke socialist Government to use non-democratic means to overturn the will of this Parliament.

I call the attention of honourable members to the fact that, in recent weeks, Opposition members have called on the Federal Government to invoke international charters to counteract the construction of the Daintree forest road and to introduce and justify the sex discrimination legislation in Australia. They are now calling on the Federal Government to use an international charter and convention to counter union legislation in this State. They have set up a Human Rights Commission under international charters and covenants. They have called on the Federal Government to override the anti-street-march legislation in this State, claiming that it is a contravention of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. They have proclaimed continuously the fact that they want the Federal Government to invoke human rights and international covenants in an effort to overturn the Queensland Government's action on Aboriginal land rights.

They have called repeatedly for the Federal Government to invoke an international covenant and treaty in relation to territorial seas to solve disputes in the Torres Strait area. Now they are calling on the Federal Government to invoke the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights in an effort to overturn this Bill. What utter hypocrisy!

Not one of those covenants has resulted from any form of consultation with the Australian people. The Australian people have never been asked to contribute to a discussion of those covenants, to vote on them or to criticise them. Those covenants have not originated from the Australian people.

The great democrats in the Opposition in this House do not think for a moment about shouting from the roof-tops that they want to use those covenants in an effort to overturn the sovereign powers of the Parliament. Opposition members stand condemned by their contradictions. What they have said is unmitigated and unrepentant hypocrisy. I am appalled to think that these self-proclaimed democrats yell freely from the roof-tops that they would use undemocratic means to overturn the sovereign rights of Parliament.

Opposition members, particularly the honourable member for South Brisbane (Mr Fouras), have criticised the cost of seven additional members of Parliament. Queensland has 2 520 000 people. The cost of seven additional members of Parliament will be \$1.75m a year. In other words, the cost of the new members will be 69.4c per person per year. If a person goes to the post office, buys two 33c stamps and hands over another three cents, he has covered the entire cost of his contribution for the seven members of

Parliament for one year. If one divides that sum by seven to determine the cost per member, one finds that it works out to 10c for one year. If a person buys a 33c stamp, he has paid for the cost of one of the additional members of Parliament for the entire three-year term and receives three cents change. Honourable members opposite should not talk to me about the excessive burden that will be placed on the people of Queensland by the additional members of Parliament. If the calculation was done, probably the contributions of the entire membership of this Parliament would cover the cost of several members of Parliament for a number of years. The comments about the cost of the new members are so trivial that they are not worthy of serious comment.

I support the comments of the honourable member for Burdekin (Mr Stoneman). It reminds me of the time when a trade-unionist rang the White House in the United States of America wanting to speak to President Nixon. He was referred to the Secretary of Labour. The unionist said, "I do not want to talk to the janitor; I want to talk to the landlord." The same principle applies here. People want to talk to their member of Parliament. They do not want to talk to his officers or his secretary. They do not want to conduct conversations over the telephone and they do not want to receive letters. They want to see their member of Parliament face to face.

**Mr Stoneman:** Some of the Labor people would rather that their secretaries see their constituents.

**Mr HENDERSON:** The way that the unions are carrying on at present, I do not blame Labor members for not wanting to face their constituents. They would probably rather speak to them on the telephone or have their secretary handle the inquiries.

The argument put forward continually by members opposite that the provision of more facilities will result in better representation is utter rubbish. People want to see their representatives, and every democratic institution in the world recognises the fact that the tyranny of distance and isolation must not be allowed to separate people from their right to see their member of Parliament so that they can present to him their views, ideas, hopes, visions and aspirations.

The Bill expresses a sincere desire on the part of the Queensland Government to ensure that all Queenslanders are equitably and fairly represented in the House. That is the basic tenet of democracy. This Bill is a very democratic move on the part of the Government, and I support it.

**Mr BAILEY (Toowong) (10.19 p.m.):** A statement often made is that politics is the art of expediency. Today honourable members have certainly seen more than enough illustrations of that, with the member for Wolston doing a Pontius Pilate and washing his hands of any former redistributions by Labor Governments and the statements of ideology by the Liberals, which were epitomised by their leader (Sir William Knox), who claimed that the only objection his party had to the Bill was the increase in members. Of course, honourable members also saw that hoary old chestnut rolled out again—one vote, one value—as if there was something sacred in all electorates having the same number of voters, be that to their detriment or not.

My illustrious grandfather, Sir Earle Page, entered Parliament to fight for a fair deal for the rural areas. It took years to achieve a system of representation that gave country and provincial Australians a voice in a system that for years lived on the backs of rural industries.

I have no hesitation in supporting a system that allows for sufficient representation of rural and provincial interests and aspirations, one that for years has been described as a gerrymander, notwithstanding spirited defence of weightage systems by Governments in such diverse areas as Great Britain, Canada, the United States of America, Western Australia and even the Australian Senate.

To those who live in the south-eastern zone, a real need exists for a redistribution that will iron out the extraordinary disparity in voice that they have. Most Liberal



members represent seats with well below the present average of electors; most National Party members represent electorates with well above that average and in some cases those electorates are two-and-a-half times the size of the Yeronga electorate. No wonder the Liberal Party does not agree with the rationalisation of the boundaries! It feels that it is being victimised.

In much the same way, the Liberal Party became paranoid about the Brisbane City Council elections. Might I add that I personally offered help to Sallyanne Atkinson, Denver Beanland and a very good mate of mine, John Wolfe, who stood for Paddington. That redistribution was very much based on a submission made by Alderman Beanland for 25 seats. That fact does not come out too often. I was very pleased that the member for Merthyr (Mr Lane) mentioned it today. The fact that those people did not avail themselves of my help is neither here nor there, but for the member for Nundah (Sir William Knox) to describe the boundary changes as some devious National Party plot only underlines the paranoia that the Liberal Party still has about the National Party.

In the words of its present leader, Mr John Moore, this disenchanted group is seeking only enough seats to go into coalition in 1986, with the long-term view of being the major party in 1989. That has a familiar ring to it. It sounds very much like a rerun of 1983. Yet the same Mr Moore, who so desperately wants a coalition because the parties are so similar and who is for ever publicly espousing a moderate point of view, is for ever denigrating the National Party as the—expletive deleted—Country Party and the city members of the National Party as white-shoed troglodytes. That is hardly the moderate language of a man who seriously wants an accord or a realistic working relationship.

He wants to get his party back into power, and he cannot be blamed for that. However, for members of the Liberal Party to for ever present themselves as great mates of the National Party while for ever attempting to undermine the Government at the same time, reeks of rank hypocrisy. The electorate is learning to read that hypocrisy into the oh so moderate public utterances of prominent Liberal leaders.

Why are the Liberal and Labor Parties so against the Bill, which is a fair redistribution on a basis to which the honourable member for Nundah and the honourable member for Mount Coot-tha have agreed before?

The present distribution disadvantages the National Party—not too much has been heard about that—and that disadvantage is mainly in the south-eastern zone—not in Brisbane, but on the Sunshine Coast and the Gold Coast, which are strong bastions of the National Party. Of course, the Liberal and Labor Parties will not be happy with a fair redistribution there, which will mean more National Party members, not fewer, as Sir William threatened. The National Party will not have redistributed itself out of the ball game.

As the honourable member for Merthyr so accurately pointed out, Sir William has managed to do a complete back flip on the stand he took and the way he voted in 1971 and 1977, yet he supported a quota system in the south-eastern zone which in 1971 was only 12 657 and, in 1977, 15 454. The Government is increasing the numbers of parliamentary representatives so that each electorate will have approximately 20 000 electors. Although the population of the south-eastern zone has increased by well over a quarter of a million people, the member for Nundah cannot see the need for four more members. He jokingly asked, "why not 100 more seats?" His erstwhile right-hand man, the member for Sherwood, remarked, "Don't tell the Nationals." If those honourable members do their sums, they will find that Sir William's remarks are appropriate. The substantial increase in population could justify even more politicians, but this redistribution is geared to the fairest representation with the smallest increase in members of Parliament.

I agree with the principle in the Bill and its inherent fairness, which unfortunately will not be publicly acknowledged outside this place by such experts as Dr Kenneth Wiltshire, that well-known impartial hatchet-bearer for the Liberal Party, or the media—

**A Government Member: Or Coaldrake.**

**Mr BAILEY:** Yes, Professor Coaldrake as well.

Long ago, the media convinced themselves that anything the Government does is undemocratic. The so-called gerrymander, perpetuated by repetition, is never really explained. One can only hope that this time all sides of the argument about why the redistribution has been conducted in this way will be expounded rather than the predictable hostile approach with which Government members have become familiar.

The members of the Liberal Party and the Australian Labor Party who spoke tonight are nothing but opportunists. The redistribution will not give them power. That is why they do not want it. Their objection has nothing to do with fairness or equality. They are concerned not about what is best for Queensland but about what is best for their party.

**Hon. Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN** (Barambah—Premier and Treasurer) (10.25 p.m.), in reply: I thank all honourable members who have spoken during the debate. Their contribution will no doubt be considered very carefully later by those persons who have to take into account all the different aspects of a redistribution. Although the Leader of the Opposition said that the Bill was vital and so important, he used only one-third of the time that was allotted to him. As soon as he sat down, it did not seem to be very important to him. I think that he found it a little heavy going, as he tried to find out something critical about the legislation. I was also amazed that the Leader of the Opposition would be prepared to sell out Queensland and to abolish the State, as he said so vocally and so outspokenly in his speech. It was incredible to hear the Leader of the Opposition say that. In my 38 years as a member of this Assembly, I have never heard a Leader of the Opposition say that he would do everything in his power to urge the Commonwealth to bypass or override a particular State.

The Leader of the Opposition raised the issue of one vote, one value. He referred to the conventions and treaties that Queensland has with the United Nations on so many issues. Through those avenues he said he would try to override this State. When he referred to the United Nations conventions and treaties, he did not take into account that the United Nations does not believe in a system of one vote, one value. The Leader of the Opposition overlooked that matter. The United Nations will not support the Leader of the Opposition or anyone else in a one vote, one value system. China has a population of one billion. Denmark has a population of one or two million. In those countries the people get the same vote. Many other countries, such as Britain and Canada, have a system similar to the system in Queensland, in order to get the fairest coverage for their people. The Leader of the Opposition was heading down the wrong track. He was very much out in the cold on the one vote, one value issue and in his attitude of trying to obtain Commonwealth support.

The Leader of the Opposition was not correct in saying that certain seats would not be lost to the north and north-west. Labor's policy is a complete sell-out of those people. It is hard to realise that Opposition members are prepared to deny the people who are prepared to live in the remote and far-northern parts of this State the representation to which they are entitled. The next time the Leader of the Opposition goes into country areas and tries to sell himself, he will find it very difficult. I know that with his background, his policies and his history, he already finds it difficult to sell himself. However, Opposition members will find it much harder to sell themselves when people become aware of their policies.

I have heard many statistics quoted about the results that will follow. The Australian Labor Party was in government for 40 years. Today, its members are hypocrites. They have the same zonal system. They must have had a super-duper gerrymander of the electorates. They were in government for 40 years. The same zonal system operates today.

**Mr Warburton:** Did you hear me read out what you said at the time?

**Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN:** I heard the Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr Warburton:** Who is the hypocrite?

**Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN:** The Queensland Government inherited the zonal system from the Labor Party. Mr Nicklin and Mr Pizzey continued with that system, and the Queensland Government has followed it.

In 1938, even though the Labor Party received only 47 per cent of the vote, it had a majority of 27. That was a gerrymander! In 1944, the Labor Party received 45 per cent of the vote, yet, in spite of that, it had a majority of 18. Back in 1947—the year in which I was first elected—the ALP received only 34 per cent of the vote. However, it still managed to get a majority of 12. It can be seen that, in the Labor Party's day, it was a pretty well organised event.

The final stages of the debate have been reached. I merely want to comment on the absence during the debate of two former Labor Party leaders, the honourable member for Mackay (Mr Casey) and the honourable member for Lytton (Mr Burns). Why did those former leaders of the Labor Party not speak on the Bill? The reason is that, in their day, they both supported the zonal system. Those honourable members were strong supporters of it. They supported two zones and the system that rejected——

**Mr Warburton:** Do you know why they have not spoken?

**Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN:** No.

**Mr Warburton:** It is because your Leader of the House has been running round all afternoon trying to shut everyone up.

**Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN:** That is not correct. I made a point of saying to the Whip and all honourable members that the Government would hear anybody who wished to speak.

The fact that the honourable member for Mackay and the honourable member for Lytton supported the two-zonal systems in their day shows that they reject the one vote, one value system. No doubt that is why they did not speak to the Bill. The ALP is certainly split on this issue. Such things must be highlighted.

Members of the Liberal Party have double standards. In the past, the Liberal Party supported the general policy that has been enunciated today and is contained in the legislation. I noticed an article in "The Bulletin" concerning the Leader of the Liberal Party (Sir William Knox). I take it that the leader of the Liberal Party has denied supporting that article. I know how articles can misrepresent statements made by people. The article stated that a minority Liberal Government is on the cards. That statement was attributed to the honourable member for Nundah.

**Sir William Knox:** It is not correct.

**Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN:** The honourable member says that it is not true. I hope that history will prove that it is not true and that the Liberal Party would not attempt to work with a group of people that it was not very happy with in the past.

The Liberal Party voted with the ALP on 46 occasions in this House. That is a matter that concerns and surprises many honourable members and, I am sure, many people in the community. If the Liberal Party attempted to live and work with Opposition members, who have an entirely different policy and outlook, it would be embarking on a very dangerous course. Members of the Liberal Party must have learnt something from their past experience in relation to following strange courses. The Liberal Party must decide whether or not it is anti-ALP. As I have stated already, on 46 occasions members of the Liberal Party have voted with the ALP——

**Mr Warburton:** Forty-eight.

**Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN:** The honourable Leader of the Opposition is occasionally right. However, my information was that it was 46. The Leader of the Opposition must have counted the occasions.

I realise that many honourable members have spoken at length on the Bill. I do not intend to be very long. In conclusion, I emphasise—as I did when I introduced the Bill—that a redistribution is absolutely necessary. Honourable members opposite seemed to have overlooked the fact that 14 electorates are over quota and 15 are well below quota. Not once did the honourable Leader of the Opposition address himself to that problem.

**Mr Warburton:** But you are going to make one or two of them lower than they are now.

**Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN:** The Leader of the Opposition has not denied that the overall situation is as I have stated.

The increase in the number of seats is also necessary. Since the last increase in the number of seats in 1971, there has been a population increase of 38 per cent. Under the Bill, the number of seats will increase by only 8 per cent, so there is still much leeway that could have been made up.

I would like to be able to thank honourable members opposite for their positive contributions. However, unfortunately, all honourable members have heard the same weak, tired, old, reactionary statements and attitudes that the Opposition has adopted in the past. It is important for honourable members opposite to note that in 1973 the Supreme Court of the United States of America reversed its decision of 1964, which ordered strict mathematical equality of votes on the basis of electoral redistribution. That has been changed in the United States.

The Opposition ought to recognise that the one vote, one value system is out of date and so wrong that very few countries, other than communist countries, follow it. However, the Government does not recognise their system as offering a real vote. The United States threw out the concept of one vote, one value, which was advanced by so many members of the Opposition. Let it not be forgotten that the zonal system used in Government was introduced by the ALP. The Queensland weightage system is used by major democracies round the world.

**Mr Hamill:** Except Australia, of course. Australia does not use your weightage system, does it?

**Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN:** The honourable member is new in the House. He can be excused because of his limited political background. He has a long way to go before anyone takes much notice of him.

**Mr Lester:** They are going to disendorse him.

**Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN:** I would not be at all surprised.

What the ALP does not like about Queensland's electoral system is that, with its policies, the National Party has won many seats that were once considered strongholds of the ALP.

Motion (Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen) agreed to.

#### Committee

Mr Menzel (Mulgrave) in the chair; Hon. Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen (Barambah—Premier and Treasurer) in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 3, as read, agreed to.

## Clause 4—Number of members of Legislative Assembly—

**Mr WARBURTON** (10.37 p.m.): This clause is the crux of the objections raised by the Opposition and by the Liberal Party. It provides for the number of members to grace the Parliament if the National Party gets its way. On the one hand, National Party members, including the Premier and Treasurer, have put forward arguments supporting the increase to 89. On the other hand, the Opposition and the Liberal Party have openly indicated that the number should remain at 82. I added that the proposition put forward by me, my colleagues and the Liberal Party would receive the overwhelming support of Queenslanders. As a matter of fact, if our friends in the media, who are often prepared to conduct polls on matters of importance, saw fit to conduct a poll on the subject of additional seats in Parliament, I dare say that the rejection of the measure that the National Party intends to force upon the people of Queensland would be overwhelming.

The proposal to increase the number of seats is part of the National Party's covert plan to further inflict what I have described as a dreadful gerrymander on the citizens of Queensland. It is painfully obvious that, pursuant to the terms of reference outlined in the Bill, the National Party will be creating seats in areas of Queensland in which it has been receiving support far in excess of its 38 per cent average for the State. At least a couple of National Party back-benchers had the courage today to admit that what I have said is absolutely true. They admitted that that is where the National Party organisation will be aiming its arrows.

As I indicated in my speech, it is worth recalling that in 1910, the Queensland Parliament passed an Electoral Districts Act that provided for 72 electorates on a one vote, one value basis. At that time, members of Parliament had no telephones, no electorate offices, no secretaries, and no travel assistance, other than the provision of a railway pass, and were certainly not provided with an electoral allowance. Redistributions that took place in 1922, 1931 and 1934 followed the principle of one vote, one value.

Bearing in mind the facilities that are available for use by members of Parliament nowadays, I say that it is evident that, if the Queensland Parliament consisted of 22 electorates in 1910, an increase to a number in excess of the present 82 seats is not required.

**Mr Bailey:** Did you tell that to the Federal Government when they increased the number of parliamentary representatives in the Federal sphere?

**Mr WARBURTON:** If the honourable member for Toowong wants me to repeat what I said before, and if the honourable member is concerned about this matter, I will repeat it again and again. If the Bill is passed, I will be doing my best, together with my colleagues, to try to persuade the Federal Government to legislate and bring about electoral justice in Queensland.

**Government Members interjected.**

**Mr WARBURTON:** I can understand the concern expressed by Government members.

I therefore move the following amendment—

“At page 3, lines 13 and 15, omit the expression—

‘89’

and substitute the expression—

‘82’.”

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX:** As I have said publicly and in the House earlier today, no justification exists for increasing the size of representation in this Parliament. The people of Queensland are adequately represented by the present honourable members, and the representatives believe that they are capable of handling the job. By comparison with the number of constituents in each electorate in New South Wales and Victoria, the

Queensland electorates are smaller. It should also be acknowledged that the New South Wales and Victorian members of Parliament are also handling the job of representing their electorates extremely well.

**Mr FitzGerald:** You are making a comparison with a different State.

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX:** I am talking about representatives across the whole spectrum of political parties, including representatives of remote areas in southern States.

Adequately carrying out the responsibilities associated with representation of the people is not a problem, but if increased demand for more services does arise—as can be the case with an increase in population—why should not members of Parliament be provided with more facilities?

**Mr FitzGerald:** Why did you not vote for an increase in the number of elected representatives last time?

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX:** Better services can be provided with the assistance of modern facilities. Facilities such as telex services, word-processors, and the installation of 008 telephone numbers to facilitate direct contact with electorate offices, are available. In the case of the larger electorates, why should not multiple electorate offices be provided for members of Parliament, as indeed is the case in other States?

**Mr McKechnie:** That is what the people said about the electorate of Maranoa, but the Liberal Party and the Australian Labor Party never did anything about it—never provided additional services to the electorate of Maranoa.

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX:** I simply state that in several States, members of Parliament are able to provide more than one electorate office in the area and that facility is of tremendous assistance, both to the members and the people.

**An Honourable Member** interjected.

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX:** That has been done, and it has worked very efficiently.

Increased postage allowances would be very helpful. However, there should be no increase in the number of members. It should be remembered that it has happened recently on three occasions. In the Federal sphere, the National Party and the Labor Party joined forces to increase the size of the Federal Parliament by 36 members—and it backlashed! This move will backlash on this Government. Almost \$1.7m has to be found each year to service the additional members, and that will escalate.

**A Government Member** interjected.

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX:** Tens of thousands of signatures have been collected on petitions objecting to the increase in the size of this Parliament. In the eyes of the public, there is absolutely no justification for an increase in the size of the Assembly at this stage.

Let me deal now with the matter raised by the Leader of the Opposition. He talked about going to the Federal Government. I hope he does go to the Federal Government, and I hope that it gives him “two to the valley” That is what will in fact happen.

**Honourable Members** interjected.

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX:** I know that that is not a parliamentary expression, but I can get away with it.

**Mr Warburton** interjected.

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX:** Yes, a North's expression which the Leader of the Opposition and I understand, particularly when competing against Valleys.

If the Leader of the Opposition goes to the Federal Government and asks it to interfere in legislation passed by this Assembly, it will not approve. I can tell the Leader of the Opposition now that we would muster all of our forces to prevent that from happening. It will be a decision of this Assembly, whether he likes it or not, and he cannot go running off to Big Brother every time he cannot handle a problem or convince people there is another way to go. As I said, I would like to see the Leader of the Opposition go to the Federal Government, because if it decided to intervene, through the use of some external affairs power or some other power that it can drag up, in legislation passed by this Assembly, he would ignite the whole of Queensland behind the National Party and ourselves against that intervention. There is no justification for so doing, simply because Opposition members cannot handle a problem. I say to them, "You are on your own in politics and you have to face up to the decisions that are made whether you like them or not. You can't go running off to Canberra all the time."

**An Opposition Member interjected.**

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX:** Opposition members want Canberra to have a look at the recent industrial relations Bills to see whether they contravene an ILO convention. Not one ILO convention has been breached, and the Feds know it. That is why they are keeping right away. They will keep right out of this one, too.

**An Opposition Member interjected.**

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX:** I do not care what the Australian Democrats do. Opposition members came second; the Democrats thought this up last week and I served notice on them publicly that we would not support their idea of moving a private member's Bill to intervene in the affairs of the Parliament of this State. That is far more precious than the issues Opposition members are talking about.

I challenge the Leader of the Opposition to go to the Federal Government after this Bill has been passed. I will be interested to hear the answer he receives. I believe that it will be a very rude answer indeed. The Liberal Party will be supporting the retention of the existing number of members. There is no justification for the increase in the size of the Parliament.

**Mr HAMILL:** It is with some disappointment that I follow the member for Nundah with his two-bob-each-way attitude towards this Bill—although that is what members have come to expect from the Liberal Party.

I have no hesitation in supporting the amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition. Why should the size of the Queensland Parliament be increased by seven? If one can believe the arguments that have been put forward by the Premier and other Government members that the move is a response to the growth in population in the State, why have those additional seven seats not been allocated to the areas of the State where that population growth has occurred? I refer, of course, to the south-eastern zone and the provincial cities zone. Look at what has happened. Mount Isa, which is a provincial cities zone seat, is to be transferred to the western and far-northern zone. Whitsunday, which is a country zone seat and has been experiencing considerable population growth, is to be transferred to the provincial cities zone. That will mean that the country zone will, in effect, get three extra seats.

I shall look at the enrolments in the country zone, particularly in that area of the Darling Downs and the South Burnett in which so many members of the National Party have their electorates. Those are the areas of the State in which very low rates of growth have occurred; yet that is the country zone that will get three extra seats. The whole Bill is a sham and a piece of political chicanery. It is designed to try to entrench the National Party further in government in its own right.

The figures that the Premier and Treasurer quoted in his second-reading speech on the enrolments in the various zones were hopelessly incorrect. I do not know whether the honourable member for Cooroora added up the figures for him; but the fact is that

whoever wrote that speech for the Premier and Treasurer did not provide accurate information. In effect, therefore, he misled the Chamber. The enrolments that he quoted for the zones were the enrolments that those zones have under the existing legislation and not the zones as described in this legislation.

What the Government is doing is providing three extra seats for that part of Queensland in which the quota will be 13 000 electors, and it is not the area in which the large population growth is occurring.

The Government is providing four extra seats in the south-eastern zone. I hasten to point out that I am not talking here about providing seats for Brisbane. We know quite well that under the Government's redistribution and under the redistribution that the Labor Party would like to see introduced based on the principle of one vote, one value, Brisbane would have fewer seats than it has at present.

The new seats will be created in the urban fringe of the Brisbane area and also on the Gold Coast and the Sunshine Coast. The Opposition totally opposes the proposition that extra electorates should be created in areas of the State in which population growth is not occurring. It believes that representation in this Parliament should be based on the numbers of electors. People should not be disadvantaged because they live in a different part of the State. Because of their residential address, the value of their vote is affected.

It is fundamentally dishonest for the Government to come forward with a proposition to increase the number of seats in the Parliament by seven and claim that the increase is related to population growth, when three of those seats will be created in areas of the State in which population growth has been minimal. For that reason, the Opposition cannot support in any shape or form an increase in the number of members of this Parliament. It is totally unjustified and dishonest.

A little while ago I heard an interjection from the honourable member for Flinders (Mr Katter) about the Commonwealth Parliament. The National Party and the Labor Party sought to increase the number of members of the Commonwealth Parliament. The point that must be recognised is that a major increase in the number of members of the Commonwealth Parliament occurred in 1949. A second increase occurred in 1984. Because the conservative parties in this country have consistently opposed the constitutional provision that there should be approximately twice the number of seats in the Lower House as there are in the Upper House, that has necessitated constitutional electoral changes to increase the number of senators to give effect to even the most meagre increase in representation in the Lower House. That is a side issue.

In the present issue, the National Party in Queensland is endeavouring to retain power in its own right by engaging in political chicanery and machination of the political system. The Bill erodes democracy and takes away the value of a person's vote, whether he lives in south-east Queensland or in north Queensland. Centres such as Townsville are far away from the capital city and the centre of government that the Bill describes. The Premier's arguments are dishonest, his reasoning is illogical and there is no foundation or justification for increasing the size of the Parliament by seven seats.

**Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN:** I am disappointed that the Leader of the Opposition has been very childish and immature in his threat to call on the Commonwealth to override the State. That is the greatest joke of all time, and he ought to know that it is a very vain hope. It is just a lot of hog-wash; that sort of talk does not mean anything, and I remind him of that. At one time he could have said that he would set the unions onto the Government, but because the unions have had their wings clipped, he cannot do that.

I was surprised to hear the comments of the leader of the Liberal Party. I can still see and hear him supporting the principles of the Government down the years. I wonder what has happened to him to make him turn a somersault.

The Government has made its decision and it will carry out that decision.



Question—That the expression proposed to be omitted from clause 4 (Mr Warburton's amendment) stand part of the clause—put; and the Committee divided—

AYES, 41		NOES, 37	
Ahern	Lester	Braddy	Prest
Alison	Lingard	Burns	Price
Austin	Littleproud	Campbell	Scott
Bailey	McKechnie	Casey	Shaw
Bjelke-Petersen	McPhie	Comben	Smith
Booth	Miller	D'Arcy	Underwood
Borbidge	Muntz	Davis	Vaughan
Cahill	Newton	De Lacy	Veivers
Chapman	Powell	Eaton	Warburton
Cooper	Randell	Fouras	Warner, A. M.
Elliott	Row	Gibbs, R. J.	White
FitzGerald	Simpson	Goss	Wilson
Gibbs, I. J.	Stephen	Hamill	Yewdale
Glasson	Stoneman	Knox	
Goleby	Tenni	Kruger	
Gunn	Turner	Lee	
Harper	Wharton	Lickiss	
Harvey		Mackenroth	
Henderson		McElliott	
Jennings	<i>Tellers:</i>	McLean	<i>Tellers:</i>
Katter	Kaus	Milliner	Innes
Lane	Neal	Palaszczuk	Gygar

Resolved in the affirmative:

Clause 4, as read, agreed to.

Clause 5—Zones—

**Mr WARBURTON** (11.4 p.m.): Clause 5 of the Bill relates to the zonal system, about which there has been considerable discussion today. That system goes to the real crux of what the National Party gerrymander in Queensland is all about.

The Labor Party believes that continuity of a zonal system is politically abhorrent. Once again, I say that it is an attempt by the National Party Government to distort the electoral will of the people of the State of Queensland. On this occasion it is a further electoral fiddle that is designed to manipulate massively those persons who will be incorporated in the different zones.

I have already referred to the way in which the honourable member for Barambah, who is now the Premier and Treasurer of the State, referred in 1949 to zonal legislation as crafty and vicious legislation; hence my reference to the Premier's gross hypocrisy in relation to what he said earlier this evening.

The provision of the four zones is the corner-stone of this National Party gerrymander. I will not labour the point this evening because the matter has been canvassed considerably by a number of speakers. The Labor Party opposes absolutely and totally this clause of the National Party's legislation.

**Mr HAMILL:** I have great pleasure in supporting the Leader of the Opposition in the Labor Party's total opposition to clause 5 and its implications on subsequent clauses in the Bill.

I return to the speeches made by Government members in support of the zonal system. If honourable members were naive, they would be led to believe that zoning is for the better representation of people. According to the Premier's second-reading speech, the Bill provides balanced and more satisfactory representation in the Parliament. The Premier's speech dealt with the representation of parties and political party advantage; it did not deal with the proper representation of the people of Queensland.

As I pointed out earlier, none of the Government speakers was very good at quoting statistics. They referred to the number of seats that are above quota and below quota in this State. The fact is that under the legislation there will be eight different quotas.

A whole range of different findings will be made as to which seats will be above quota and below quota.

It cannot be argued that the Labor Party and Liberal Party are not disadvantaged by the zonal system as promulgated by the National Party in this electoral rort that passes for democratic representation in the Parliament. The Liberal Party and the Labor Party are disadvantaged because they have their political base in the provincial cities and in the south-eastern zone. Both are the areas of the high quota, whereas the country zone and the western and far-northern zone are almost monopolised by the National Party.

The real political test that ought to be put to the people of Queensland is whether the National Party Government believes that it has the confidence of the people of Queensland, whether it believes that it can seek to represent people, not livestock, not hectares, not blades of grass or even productivity, as the honourable member for Roma seemed to think was a relevant concept in terms of parliamentary representation. I do not know where Mr Productivity is enrolled, but he is certainly not in his electorate.

The anti-democratic thinking of the National Party came out so clearly in defence of the zonal system. Luminaries, such as the honourable member for Cooroora (Mr Simpson), referred to the Magna Carta. He said that he supported a concept that came out of the very first of our types of Parliaments where two knights should come from every shire—I wonder whether Sir Edward Lyons should be given a place in this Chamber—and two burghers from every borough. The fact is that by the time that system sorted itself out, some electorates in the United Kingdom had no people in them. That is the sort of system that the honourable member advocated. It is certainly not parliamentary democracy.

The National Party is relying upon the zonal system to cling to the very tiny elements of power that it could have. It is not content to risk itself before the whole Queensland electorate. The National Party realises that it won Government at the last State election on only 38 per cent of the vote and 30 pieces of silver. There was no democratic representation in terms of votes that returned honourable members opposite to the Treasury benches of this State.

Labor Party members see this Bill for what it is—a naked attempt to try to clutch onto the reins of power which the National Party, representing only a minority of the people of Queensland, has no right to hold. For that reason, honourable members ought to reject the fundamental basis of the Electoral Districts Bill, which is the iniquitous and unprincipled system of electoral zoning that does this Government no credit.

Professor Colin Hughes, whom the Premier and Treasurer quotes so freely in support of his zonal system, has shown quite clearly that Queensland ranks second only to Western Australia as having the most undemocratic and inequitable electoral system in this country. To the credit of the Western Australian Government, at least it has attempted to remedy the situation by legislating for a one vote, one value State electoral system. It is because of colleagues of the Queensland Government and the Liberal Party in the Upper House in that State that Western Australians are being denied the right of an equal vote. This legislation is denying the rights of Queenslanders to an equal say in who should represent them in this Parliament. It is undemocratic, contrary to civil rights and civil liberties and deserves to be rejected by members.

Question—That clause 5, as read, stand part of the Bill—put; and the Committee divided—

## AYES, 41

Ahern	Lester
Alison	Lingard
Austin	Littleproud
Bailey	McKechnie
Bjelke-Petersen	McPhie
Booth	Miller
Borbidge	Muntz
Cahill	Neal
Chapman	Newton
Cooper	Powell
Elliott	Randell
FitzGerald	Row
Gibbs, I. J.	Simpson
Glasson	Stephan
Goleby	Stoneman
Gunn	Tenni
Harper	Turner
Harvey	Wharton
Henderson	
Jennings	<i>Tellers:</i>
Katter	Kaus
Lane	Neal

## NOES, 37

Braddy	Prest
Burns	Price
Campbell	Scott
Casey	Shaw
Comben	Smith
D'Arcy	Underwood
DeLacy	Vaughan
Eaton	Veivers
Fouras	Warburton
Gibbs, R. J.	Warner, A. M.
Goss	White
Gygar	Wilson
Hamill	Yewdale
Knox	
Kruger	
Lee	
Lickiss	
Mackenroth	
McElligott	
McLean	<i>Tellers:</i>
Milliner	Davis
Palaszczuk	Innes

Resolved in the affirmative.

Clauses 6 and 7, as read, agreed to.

Clause 8—Appointment of Commissioners—

**Mr WARBURTON** (11.16 p.m.): Bearing in mind that considerable discussion has taken place on many of the Bill's provisions, I immediately move the following amendment—

“At page 4, omit all words from and including ‘three’ in line 27 to and including ‘Commissioners’ in line 30 and substitute the words—

‘an Electoral Commission of three Electoral Commissioners shall be appointed by the Governor in Council by commission under his hand and seal. One of the Commissioners shall be a judge of the Supreme Court of Queensland who shall be appointed Chairman of the Commissioners. The Principal Electoral Officer for Queensland and the Surveyor-General shall be appointed as Electoral Commissioners.’”

The clause deals with the appointment of commissioners. The amendment is designed to take the process of redistribution completely out of the hands of politicians of all political persuasions and to place it into the hands of an independent electoral commission constituted by persons of impeccable integrity who are completely beyond reproach. That is the purpose of the amendment, as distinct from the provision contained in the Bill.

As it stands, the Bill gives the Premier and Treasurer a direct line to the commissioners, whom he will no doubt appoint. Once again, during the redistribution, the Premier will be able to usurp the authority of the people who are eventually appointed as commissioners. When legislation of this type is before the Parliament, we do not hear whom the Premier has in mind to appoint as commissioners. If he knows—and I believe that he does—perhaps he will advise the Parliament whom the appointees will be.

In conclusion, I make the point that no other legislation—admittedly, the provision has been in electoral legislation of this State since 1971—contains a provision that the commission to be appointed, which has no independence, is required to report not to the people who constitute the Parliament of the State, as one would consider right and proper, but to the Premier himself. No other legislation operating in the State of Queensland requires commissioners to report directly to one man, and in this case that man is the Premier and Treasurer of Queensland. It is wrong that legislation should be

passed that will cause that to occur. For that reason, and for the other reasons that I have advanced, I commend the amendment to the Committee.

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX:** Liberal Party policy is that Electoral Commissioners should carry out a redistribution under the chairmanship of a Justice of the Supreme Court of Queensland. That attitude has been well publicised by members of the Liberal Party, and the Liberal Party therefore supports the amendment.

In my opinion, the Government has been preoccupied with the knowledge that Electoral Commissioners have carried out redistributions satisfactorily in the past; but I can inform the House that the appointment of a member of the judiciary to chair the redistribution commission would be well received in the community.

No difficulty should be experienced by the Government in the appointment of such an electoral commission chairman. As a matter of fact, I was surprised that such a provision did not appear in the original legislation. I had been informed that such an appointment was seriously considered during the preparation of legislation presently before the House. It is about time that electoral commissioners were chaired by a Justice of the Supreme Court of Queensland.

Question—That the words proposed to be omitted from clause 8 (Mr Warburton's amendment) stand part of the clause—put; and the Committee divided—

AYES, 41		NOES, 37	
Ahern	Lester	Braddy	Prest
Alison	Lingard	Burns	Price
Austin	Littleproud	Campbell	Scott
Bailey	McKechnie	Casey	Shaw
Bjelke-Petersen	McPhie	Comben	Smith
Booth	Miller	D'Arcy	Underwood
Borbidge	Muntz	De Lacy	Vaughan
Cahill	Newton	Eaton	Veivers
Chapman	Powell	Fouras	Warburton
Cooper	Randell	Gibbs, R. J.	Warner, A. M.
Elliott	Row	Goss	White
FitzGerald	Simpson	Hamill	Wilson
Gibbs, I. J.	Stephan	Innes	Yewdale
Glasson	Stoneman	Knox	
Goleby	Tenni	Kruger	
Gunn	Turner	Lee	
Harper	Wharton	Lickiss	
Harvey		Mackenroth	
Henderson		McElligott	
Jennings	<i>Tellers:</i>	McLean	<i>Tellers:</i>
Katter	Kaus	Milliner	Davis
Lane	Neal	Palaszczuk	Gygar

Resolved in the affirmative.

Clause 8, as read, agreed to.

Clause 9, as read, agreed to.

Clause 10—Basis of distribution in Zones (other than the Provincial Cities Zone)—

**Mr WARBURTON (11.27 p.m.):** Clause 10 refers to the basis of distribution in zones other than in the provincial cities zone. The purpose of an amendment, which the Opposition considered, would have been to change the tolerance to 10 per cent across the board by the deletion of subclause (6) which allows for a 20 per cent tolerance. As far as the Opposition is concerned, that is quite unacceptable. The Opposition has chosen not to move an amendment but to oppose the entire clause.

This legislation is bad because it provides for four zones and not one, as the Opposition and, in this case, the Liberal Party have indicated is a fairer proposition. I simply say that this travesty of democracy, as we see it, is compounded by the decision to incorporate a very unreasonable and unrealistic tolerance of 20 per cent. That is certainly completely unacceptable to the Labor Party. In other words, if in some zones

the average enrolment is 20 000 electors, the commissioners, under this National Party proposition, could vary the size of an electorate from a 16 000 lower limit to a 24 000 upper limit. In other words, one electorate in a zone could have 50 per cent more electors than another electorate in the same zone. As far as the Opposition is concerned, that is a preposterous proposition.

In a zone with electorates with an average of 20 000 and with a 10 per cent tolerance as the Labor Party and, I believe, the Liberal Party would like to see, the lower limit would be 18 000 and the upper limit would be 22 000. That would be a vast improvement on what I see as an extremely outrageous proposal incorporated in this clause.

The Opposition is completely opposed to the clause.

Mr R. J. Gibbs interjected.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr Menzel): Order! I warn the member for Wolston.

Question—That clause 10, as read, stand part of the Bill—put; and the Committee divided—

AYES, 41		NOES, 37	
Ahern	Lester	Braddy	Prest
Alison	Lingard	Burns	Price
Austin	Littleproud	Campbell	Scott
Bailey	McKechnie	Casey	Shaw
Bjelke-Petersen	McPhie	Comben	Smith
Booth	Miller	D'Arcy	Underwood
Borbidge	Muntz	De Lacy	Vaughan
Cahill	Newton	Eaton	Veivers
Chapman	Powell	Fouras	Warburton
Cooper	Randell	Gibbs, R. J.	Warner, A. M.
Elliott	Row	Goss	White
FitzGerald	Simpson	Hamill	Wilson
Gibbs, I. J.	Stephan	Innes	Yewdale
Glasson	Stoneman	Knox	
Goleby	Tenni	Kruger	
Gunn	Turner	Lee	
Harper	Wharton	Lickiss	
Harvey		Mackenroth	
Henderson		McElligott	
Jennings	<i>Tellers:</i>	McLean	<i>Tellers:</i>
Katter	Kaus	Milliner	Davis
Lane	Neal	Palaszczuk	Gygar

Resolved in the affirmative.

Clause 11—Basis of distribution in the Provincial Cities Zone—

Mr CAMPBELL (11.34 p.m.): I wish to bring to the attention of the Committee an anomaly that arises in rural representation because of the provincial cities zone. I refer to the Bundaberg area and to the way in which it is broken up into three electoral districts. History will show that Bundaberg will now get less representation than it had in the past.

The Bundaberg area, which stretches from the Burnett River to south of Maryborough, falls within the provincial cities zone. As well, two new shires are included in that area. When the Burnett electorate is added, the area is known as the Wide Bay region. The electoral representation of that basically rural region has, over time, been reduced.

The Leader of the Opposition commented on a redistribution that occurred in 1910. At that time, the region was covered by the electorates of Burnett, Bundaberg, Burrum and Maryborough, and by most of the Musgrave electorate and part of the Wide Bay electorate. In effect, the region had five representatives. Since the introduction of the provincial cities zone, the representation in the region has been reduced to four electorates, namely, Burnett, Bundaberg, Maryborough and Isis. Although the number of representatives

has been reduced in this rural region, the area has approximately the same number of voters. Anomalies have been mentioned, and that is such an anomaly.

In 1910, Queensland had 72 electorates; when this Bill is passed, it will have 89 electorates. My point is that, although the Wide Bay region has the same proportion of population in 1985 as it had in 1910, the National Party Government has seen fit to reduce representation in that rural area. I put it on record for the people of that region that the National Party Government supports reduced representation for the area.

Clause 11, as read, agreed to.

Clause 12—Matters to be considered in distributing Zones—

**Mr WARBURTON** (11.38 p.m.): Clause 12 is very important to the Opposition, because it refers to the matters that will be considered in distributing zones. It should be noted that the distance from the seat of Government will be a matter for consideration. That requirement is typical of the unrealistic thinking of the National Party with regard to this important issue. A number of my colleagues, particularly the honourable member for Cairns, pointed out the absolute hypocrisy of including such matters for consideration in the distribution of zones by the commission.

Submissions and objections before the commission should be made public. It is worth noting that, at the time of other redistributions, the National Party has refused to release to the public its submissions and objections. One could be excused for thinking—certainly the public would think—that obviously this was because the National Party has been in cahoots with the commissioners.

The Labor Party believes that the legislation should empower the electoral commissioners to release to the public all submissions and objections that they receive. Those submissions and objections are neither private nor confidential, nor should they be. They should be made public. In the public interest it is vital that the public be entitled to see them if they so desire. The Opposition wishes to pursue that very important point.

Such a provision would overcome allegations of impropriety and collusion between the National Party and the commissioners. If everything were out in the open, as it should be, everybody would be able to see that all matters surrounding the drawing of the boundaries are above board. At the moment people have every reason to believe that that is not the case, that boundary-rigging goes on.

As I said earlier, it is well known that on previous occasions people have been seen wending their way from the basement and getting out of the lift on the floor on which the Premier's office is located. Whether they went to see the Premier is another thing. As things stand at the moment, because of the way the legislation is drafted, people have every reason to have grave doubts about the integrity of people involved. I make the point that the Opposition is very much opposed to clause 12.

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN** (Mr Menzel): Order! I call the member for Ipswich.

**Government Members** interjected.

**Mr HAMILL**: I hear cries of "not again" from Government members. They will hear me again and again until the Opposition gets the message through that what Government members are doing is endeavouring to deny the people of Queensland their democratic rights.

An extraordinary provision is clause 12 of the Bill, which provides for the commissioners to exercise their discretion subject to clauses 9, 10 and 11 and the schedule to the Bill. The criteria set out in this clause for the consideration of the commissioners are an absolute farce. No discretion is left to the commissioners at all. A consideration of community or diversity of interest, means of communication, physical features, the

boundaries of areas of local authorities and divisions of local authorities, distance from the seat of Government, density of population and demographic trends is negated by the fact that the Bill provides for a zonal system and tells the commissioners not only where they shall draw the electorates but also what sort of deviations are allowed. As the honourable member for Sandgate has pointed out, in the case of those seats in the western and far-northern zone, the commissioners are allowed to ignore even the notional quota that may have been struck for that area.

I am intrigued by the consideration of the distance from the seat of Government. This State has an electoral system that is very selective as to the degree of say that it allows the people of Queensland to have in the Government of the State. The electorates in the provincial cities zone, such as those based on Cairns and particularly those based on Townsville will have enrolments almost as great as the average for the south-eastern zone, yet Townsville is hundreds of kilometres away from Brisbane. What sort of credibility can the Government put on such a claim in the legislation that distance from the seat of Government should be considered as a criterion for the drawing of electoral boundaries?

I ask honourable members to consider the electorates that will be drawn up for areas that are two or three hours' drive from Brisbane. I believe that they will mirror very substantially the sort of electorates that have been created under the Electoral Districts Act presently in force. The enrolments in electorates such as Cairns, Barron River and the three Townsville electorates, all of which are more than 1 000 miles from Brisbane, should be compared with the enrolments of the rotten boroughs that the Government has created on the Darling Downs and in the South Burnett. I will list them so that the Committee can see just which members are affected.

One is the seat based on Warwick and another is Carnarvon, which is based on Stanthorpe. The electorate of Balonne is not very far from Brisbane when compared with the enormous distances travelled by members from northern Queensland. The electorate of Roma is not very far from Brisbane when compared with the enormous distances travelled by members from northern Queensland. The electorate of Cunningham, which is on the Darling Downs, is about two hours' drive from Brisbane. The electorate of Condamine is based on Dalby. The electorate of Burnett—

**Government Members** interjected.

**Mr HAMILL:** Listen to Government members scream! They are exposed for what they are—a bunch of political charlatans.

The electorate of Gympie is another small enrolment seat with an even smaller area. It is perched just north of the south-eastern zone. In the Premier's electorate of Barambah the number of electors is just over 12 000. The size of that electorate is less than the size the electorate represented by the Deputy Premier and Minister Assisting the Treasurer (Mr Gunn) who has an enrolment that is two and a half times the enrolment in the Premier's electorate. Auburn and Callide are rotten boroughs represented by the National Party in this Parliament. All those electorates are within ready access of the south-eastern corner of the State.

If the people of Queensland want any proof that the zonal system as devised by the Queensland Government and that the bogus criteria that the Government put in its electoral legislation for the consideration of the commissioners is nothing more than a total sham, they need look only at the rotten boroughs represented by the National Party.

The Leader of the Opposition discussed briefly the propriety of the electoral redistribution. For too long electoral redistributions have been conducted in this State behind closed doors. Honourable members will remember the controversy that surrounded the 1971 electoral redistribution, when electorates were changed in important particulars to look after sitting members, both Liberal and National. There can be no doubt that an enormous stink hangs over the Queensland Government in its conduct

of the electoral redistribution. It will not be taken away by a provision in the Bill that does not provide that the submissions and the objections that are made to the electoral commissioners be made public.

What has the Government to hide? What right has the Government to deny the people of Queensland the ability to scrutinise the system under which they are supposed to be represented in this place? It is a Government, to use the Premier's own terms, of deceit and deception. The Bill is a deceptive device to entrench a minority Government in power in this State.

As I said earlier, the Government relies on 38 per cent of the vote and 30 pieces of silver to hold its position. It is a Government that is arrogant and does not hold by the conventions and proprieties of this parliamentary system. It disturbs me greatly that, despite the very pertinent points raised by Opposition and Liberal speakers—the Minister should not try to wind me up or I will be inclined to continue my speech a little longer to defy that attempt to cut me out—the fact is that the Government, as epitomised by the attitude of the Premier during the debate this evening, is totally contemptuous of the procedures in this place and totally contemptuous of all others in this place, except the National Party.

Opposition members have seen it in the Premier's consistent attitude not to respond to the issues raised in this debate by speakers from the Labor Party and the Liberal Party. It smacks of contempt for the Parliament. It smacks of contempt for the democratic rights of the people of Queensland. The people of Queensland can only construe, by the silence of the Premier on these matters, that he is unable to defend the indefensible. The Bill is totally indefensible.

**Mr De LACY:** The Government does not follow its guide-lines. Earlier this afternoon I made the point that the provincial cities zone includes the rain forest at Cape Tribulation. However, part of Cairns called Bayview Heights, which is really part of metropolitan Cairns, has been taken out of the zone.

Clause 12 (1) (d) states that consideration shall be given by the commissioners to the boundaries of areas of local authorities and divisions of local authorities. I point out that when this Bill was drafted previously the southern boundary of the provincial city zone of Cairns included all of Division 1 of the Mulgrave Shire Council. I will show honourable members the convolutions that have been gone through to draw a southern line. I wonder what the reason for it is. It is no longer the whole of Division 1 of the Mulgrave shire; it is—

“ that part of the Area of Division 1 of the Shire of Mulgrave that is comprised in the area that lies to the east of the line commencing at the intersection of the Cairns City boundary and the Bruce Highway thence along the Bruce Highway to Skeleton Creek, thence along Skeleton Creek to its junction with Smith's Creek, thence along Smith's Creek to its junction with Wrights Creek, thence along Wrights Creek to the North Coast railway line, thence along that railway line to the southern boundary of Division 1 of the Shire of Mulgrave;”

Honourable members know that the word “gerrymander” came from “salamander” If they look at that area on the map, they will see that it really is a salamander. I wonder what the reason is? The honourable member for Mulgrave is very worried that they are going to put it into his electorate. I point out to the Premier that he might be looking for another Temporary Chairman, because the honourable member for Mulgrave will have to take some of that area.

Question—That clause 12, as read, stand part of the Bill—put; and the Committee divided—



AYES, 41		NOES, 37	
Ahern	Lester	Braddy	Prest
Alison	Lingard	Burns	Price
Austin	Littleproud	Campbell	Scott
Bailey	McKechnie	Casey	Shaw
Bjelke-Petersen	McPhie	Comben	Smith
Booth	Miller	D'arcy	Underwood
Borbidge	Muntz	DeLacy	Vaughan
Cahill	Newton	Eaton	Veivers
Chapman	Powell	Fouras	Warburton
Cooper	Randell	Gibbs, R. J.	Warner, A. M.
Elliott	Row	Goss	White
FitzGerald	Simpson	Hamill	Wilson
Gibbs, I. J.	Stephan	Innes	Yewdale
Glasson	Stoneman	Knox	
Goleby	Tenni	Kruger	
Gunn	Turner	Lee	
Harper	Wharton	Lickiss	
Harvey		Mackenroth	
Henderson		McElligott	
Jennings	<i>Tellers:</i>	McLean	<i>Tellers:</i>
Katter	Kaus	Milliner	Gygar
Lane	Neal	Palaszczuk	Davis

Resolved in the affirmative.

Clause 13, as read, agreed to.

Clause 14—When subsequent redistributions may be made—

**Mr WARBURTON** (11.56 p.m.): The Opposition is totally opposed to the provision. The clause makes it possible for future redistribution laws to be made without any reference to Parliament. That is not correct. No guide-lines are set down about what constitutes the need for a redistribution. An absolute discretion on the matter rests with the Governor in Council. That is not correct, either.

Honourable members are asked to give the National Party Cabinet an open cheque—carte blanche—on future redistributions. The Labor Party is extremely concerned at such a prospect. Politicians should be removed from having any say on the matter of redistribution. This legislation is designed to politicise absolutely the process, making politicians more involved with the redistribution process than ever before.

The arguments have been reasonably well canvassed during the second-reading debate, but I make the point in conclusion that the provision is unhealthy. It is certainly undemocratic. Most of all, it is undesirable.

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN** (Mr Menzel): Order! I call the member for Ipswich.

**Mr HAMILL:** Mr Menzel—

**Government Members** interjected.

**Mr HAMILL:** I am delighted that Government members are applauding my opportunity to contribute to the debate. I note that the honourable member for Hinchinbrook (Mr Row) has already raised the white flag. He has given up. He cannot support the bunkum that we have heard from the Government benches. He has capitulated. If the honourable member for Hinchinbrook has any nous at all, he will join us. He has given up the ghost. He realises the futility of trying to defend the indefensible.

The provision that I find most objectionable is that which allows a partial redistribution. In 1977 a partial redistribution altered the boundaries in three zones only— the western and far-northern zone, the south-eastern zone and the provincial and city zone, as far as that was possible. Under the old Act, the boundaries of the electoral districts of Mount Isa and Mackay were described in toto.

The Government has tried to make play of the fact that electoral distribution is fair. The Opposition has already produced evidence from Dr Colin Hughes showing that the electoral distribution in this State ranks second in inequity only to that in Western Australia.

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The provisions of the Bill allow for further partial redistributions to take place if the Cabinet deems fit. That is what the legislation means. Honourable members would be aware of what occurred in 1977, when the partial redistribution only succeeded in making the electoral system even more unfair than the electoral system that had been put together in 1971.

I have already produced evidence that indicates that, after the Bill becomes law—the Government will, no doubt, continue to steamroller the legislation through the Parliament—the electoral redistribution system will be more inequitable than it was following the redistributions that took place in 1977 and 1971.

The disparity that presently exists between enrolments and the number of seats will not drop below a ratio of 3:1, and that is a far worse situation than occurred in either 1971 or 1977. On the basis of every index and every other kind of indication that leads to an appreciation of the extent of the malapportionment and the degree to which the Queensland electoral system denies the people of Queensland the right to an equal vote, the redistribution proposals must be seen as the worst that have been produced since 1971.

By providing for partial redistributions to take place, the Government is ensuring that the electoral system can only become worse. Since the 1971 legislation was enacted, the areas of rapid growth in population have been the south-east zone and the provincial cities zone. The Bill denies proper representation to the people who live in those areas, and not merely in the south-east Queensland zone. The area I refer to is certainly not confined to Brisbane, but rather extends along the coastal strip of Queensland. The Bill, however, will only serve to ensure that the disparities between zones become worse and that the vast majority of the people of Queensland will be denied an effective voice in legislation that is enacted by the Parliament.

Clause 14, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 15 to 22, as read, agreed to.

Clause 23—Report by Commissioners—

**Mr WARBURTON** (12.2 a.m.): The provisions of clause 23 warrant comment. Needless to say, quite a deal of hilarity has come from the Government side of the Chamber. It is obvious from the diminishing numbers that the Government would rather not have Parliament sitting at present. I point out that the Government has made the rules, and I can only say that if Government members are unable to hack the pace, they should leave.

**Government Members** interjected.

**Mr WARBURTON:** Government members are the ones who are doing the screaming. The ageing Premier and Treasurer had to withdraw and lie down; but that is a matter for the Government.

The sooner Government members become quiet, the sooner I will be able to briefly put what I have to say, and the sooner the debate will be over and done with.

**Government Members** interjected.

**Mr WARBURTON:** I can assure Government members that I have plenty of time.

As I said earlier, the National Party Government is prepared to include in legislation a provision whereby a report of major importance, formulated by commissioners, is to be made directly to the Premier and Treasurer of Queensland. That provision is indicative of the callous disregard that is shown by the National Party Government for electoral justice.

I believe I am correct in saying—and I reiterate my earlier comments—that the Bill is the only piece of Queensland legislation that requires a report of such dimensions and importance to be submitted to one man. That one man then has the right to do as he wishes in respect of that report. It is unbelievable that in this day and age any political party would have the temerity to proceed with such a proposition. Somebody said to me today that he felt—I do not know whether he said it jokingly—that the provisions of this clause are very similar to locking Jack the Ripper in a closed room with a group of vestal virgins. I am not really sure what he meant by that, but I am sure that all members can come up with some sort of an interpretation.

This clause provides for the commissioners to present a report—as I said earlier, not to Parliament, not to Cabinet, but to the Premier—without their recommendations previously being made public. There is no provision to take account of what happens if the Premier rejects the report. There is no provision to prevent the commissioners from having discussions with or reporting to the Premier during the carrying out of their redistribution. I understand—and I have said this quite clearly on two occasions this evening—that that did happen in 1977, when a redistribution was last carried out. I did indicate in my speech in the debate on the second reading that the Victorian legislation provides for the imposition of very heavy fines on anybody who interferes in the processes in which the commissioners are involved.

Those matters had to be brought to the attention of the Committee. I simply indicate that the Labor Party totally opposes the provisions of clause 23.

Clause 23, as read, agreed to

Clauses 24 and 25, as read, agreed to.

Schedule—

**Mr HAMILL** (12.7 a.m.): The schedule is an interesting part of this legislation, particularly when one considers that one of the guide-lines that the commissioners are supposed to take into consideration is that the boundaries of electoral districts are to conform as closely as possible to the divisions of local government areas. But when one looks through the schedule, one sees what an absolute farce it is that the Government should include a provision that the boundaries should conform to local government areas when no fewer than 12 local government areas are truncated and split into different areas.

I will go through them. The whole basis of this legislation is built on one premise, and one premise alone—that the National Party in this State is desirous of clinging to power in its own right, even though it has a minority of the vote. It is not concerned with issues such as community of interest and those other high-minded criteria that it says the commissioners should take into account.

Part I (c ) (i) states—

“the part of Division 4 of the Area of the Shire of Rosalie that, at the commencement of this Act, is comprised in the electoral district of Somerset;”

Not only has the Government not been satisfied with truncating a local government area according to the divisional boundaries; it has cut a division in two, so that part of the shire of Rosalie is in an area in which over 19 000 electors return one member to this Parliament and the other parts of the shire of Rosalie, including the other parts of Division 4 of that shire, are in an area that will return one member of Parliament for 13 000 electors.

Paragraph (c) (ii) of Part I refers to Division 4 of the area of the shire of Widgee. That anomaly occurred in the 1971 legislation. Part of the Widgee shire was included, I think, in the electorate of the member for Gympie. The other part of the shire was included in the electorate of the member for Cooroora.

**Mr Simpson:** Two members looking after Widgee.

**Mr HAMILL:** Those two members probably could not look after themselves, let alone the Widgee shire.

Division 4 of the shire of Widgee is separated from all the other divisions of the shire. The people in the other parts of the Widgee shire will be represented by a member who has to look after 13 000 voters, whereas the electors in Division 4 of the shire of Widgee will have to endure the embarrassment of being part of the electorate of Cooroora and will be represented by a member who has to look after more than 19 000 voters.

I shall look at a couple of other instances that underline the whole basis of the gerrymander in this State. The tacking on of pieces of nearby rural shires to provincial cities furthers the political ambitions of the National Party.

**Mr Burns** interjected.

**Mr HAMILL:** That is exactly right. This totally circumscribes the whole redistribution. It leaves little discretion in the hands of the so-called independent commissioners, whom the Government will purport to appoint under this legislation.

The shire of Woongarra is included in the Bundaberg area in the provincial cities zone. The rest of the shire will remain in the country zone.

Already, we have heard the member for Cairns point out how a section of his electorate, part of Division 1 of the Mulgrave shire, is divided. People living on opposite sides of the Bruce Highway are in different zones. What sort of community-interest principle lies behind the dividing of a division of the Mulgrave shire?

**Mr Scott:** It is a gerrymander.

**Mr HAMILL:** Of course it is a gerrymander. There is no principle involved—apart from the principle of pure political advantage.

In the central Queensland area, the shires of Fitzroy and Calliope lose Division 1 into the central Queensland area of the provincial cities zone; yet the other electors in those shires will vote in the low-quota country zone.

In the area round Mackay, the lucky people in Division 2 in the shire of Pioneer will have a greater valued vote than the people living in Divisions 1 and 3.

We come to the Townsville area in which the Thuringowa shire is divided in an extraordinary fashion. Division 4 of the Thuringowa shire is included in the same area as the city of Townsville. The Government is not content with dividing merely one division, as it has done in so many other instances; it has decided that it must divide up two divisions in the Thuringowa shire. What an extraordinary description appears in this legislation! This is the sort of legislation that gives commissioners a great deal of discretion in drawing up the boundaries. The schedule states—

“ Divisions 1 and 2 of the Area of the Shire of Thuringowa that is comprised in an area bounded by a line commencing at the intersection of the Townsville South boundary (as comprised at the commencement of this Act) ”

Not only can the Government not provide proper geographical descriptions; the gerrymander has to rely upon the old gerrymander that was put in place in 1977. The schedule continues—

“ and the Flinders Highway, thence along the Flinders Highway to Antill Creek, thence along Antill Creek to Five Head Creek, thence along Five Head Creek

to Ross River, thence along Ross River in a generally south-westerly direction to its junction with the existing boundary between Divisions 1 and 2 of the Thuringowa Shire ”

It is a veritable Cook's tour.

**Mr Scott:** The members of the National Party understand that. They know all the creeks and gullies.

**Mr HAMILL:** Creeks and gullies indeed!

Obviously the seat of Burdekin requires certain National Party voting areas from the seat of Townsville. The whole basis of gerrymandering is to bottle up one's opponent's votes in safe seats and spread one's majorities as thinly as possible.

I move to the western and far-northern zone. The Government is not content with providing that the 20 per cent variation on quota will not apply in the western and far-northern zone—and that has no bearing at all on distance from the seat of government. I firmly believe that electorates will be drawn up in the western and far-northern zone of greater area and farther away from Brisbane than other electorates in that zone. So much for considering distance from the capital city!

The shire of Belyando will be chopped up in interesting fashion and Divisions 1, 3 and 4 will be part of the western and far-northern zone. However, it is no surprise that the schedule states that Division 2 of the shire of Belyando, which lies west of a line drawn along the crest of the Denham Range from where the Denham Range crosses the Nebo shire boundary to a point where the Denham Range crosses the Broadsound shire boundary, will be included in the western and far-northern zone. That will include Moranbah, which does not return a National Party majority. Why would the National Party want a Labor-voting area in the electorate that it wishes to hold in the western and far-northern zone after the sitting member (Mr Lester) moves to his new constituency based on Emu Park? This is blatant gerrymandering.

A similar thing occurs in the shire of Mareeba. Parts of that shire will be put in the country zone and other parts will be in the western and far-northern zone. If the Government believes that the people of Queensland will be taken in by this sort of nonsense, it is kidding itself. The schedule to the Bill is a farce and it underlines the lack of discretion that the commissioners have. It also underlines the malapportionment and the gerrymander. It shows that the Government has no consideration for local government areas and divisions and for community of interest. Its only consideration is to ensure that, by fair means, but mostly foul, it will try to hold on to the slimmest of majorities on the minority of votes that it achieved at the last election. At the next State election, the number of votes will probably decrease.

**Mr Burns:** Is it true that the National Party has already drawn up the boundaries?

**Mr HAMILL:** That is a reasonable proposition when one considers the enormous detail that has been put into the schedule to the Bill.

**Mr Burns:** The Government has drawn the dots and asked the commission to fill in the lines.

**Mr HAMILL:** I would say that the dots have been well and truly drawn. The schedule provides all the dots, and I am glad that it will not be left up to National Party back-benchers to draw the lines in, because they would have difficulty with such complicated procedures!

The Bill provides that the commissioners will report back to the Premier. I am sure that any odd mistake or aberration that they make in exercising a little independent discretion will be fixed up by the Government.

**Mr Davis** interjected.

**Mr HAMILL:** It is my understanding that Mr Lester has bought a house at Emu Park and is endeavouring to sell his other house at Clermont. He may be following the great tradition of National Party Ministers who do not live in their electorates. That makes a mockery of the suggestions by Government members tonight that this Bill is designed to provide better representation. It may well be that electors would be better represented if National Party Ministers lived in their electorates, rather than hundreds of kilometres away. It underlines the hypocrisy of the Government in relation to this legislation.

It also underlines the hypocrisy of two honourable members. In 1949, the Premier described the legislation that introduced the zonal system as not being consistent with the principles of democracy.

The other person who should hang his head in shame, although he is hanging his head in slumber at the moment, is the member for Ithaca (Mr Miller) who in 1971 was one of those who crossed the floor to vote against the 1971 first draft of the redistribution Bill. Tonight he has shown his political colours again. I think probably the best way to describe his slumber is to say that he quietly acquiesces in the Government's actions, which endeavour to rot the electoral system.

**An Honourable Member:** He snored, "Yes."

**Mr HAMILL:** That is correct. the honourable member for Ithaca interjects with his snoring.

That a man who purports to be an independent thinker in this Parliament has gone the whole way with the National Party is a total disgrace. The people of Queensland can see that member for the hypocrite he is.

Question—That the schedule, as read, stand part of the Bill—put; and the Committee divided—

AYES, 41		NOES, 37	
Ahern	Lester	Braddy	Prest
Alison	Lingard	Burns	Price
Austin	Littleproud	Campbell	Scott
Bailey	McKechnie	Casey	Shaw
Bjelke-Petersen	McPhie	Comben	Smith
Booth	Miller	D'Arcy	Underwood
Borbidge	Muntz	De Lacy	Vaughan
Cahill	Newton	Eaton	Veivers
Chapman	Powell	Fouras	Warburton
Cooper	Randell	Gibbs, R. J.	Warner, A. M.
Elliott	Row	Goss	White
FitzGerald	Simpson	Hamill	Wilson
Gibbs, I. J.	Stephan	Innes	Yewdale
Glasson	Stoneman	Knox	
Goleby	Tenni	Kruger	
Gunn	Turner	Lee	
Harper	Wharton	Lickiss	
Harvey		Mackenroth	
Henderson		McElligott	
Jennings	<i>Tellers:</i>	McLean	<i>Tellers:</i>
Katter	Kaus	Milliner	Davis
Lane	Neal	Palaszczuk	Gygar

Resolved in the affirmative.

Bill reported, without amendment.

### Third Reading

**Hon. Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN** (Barambah—Premier and Treasurer), by leave:  
I move—

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

Question put; and the House divided—

AYES, 41		NOES, 37	
Ahern	Lester	Braddy	Palaszcuk
Alison	Lingard	Burns	Prest
Austin	Littleproud	Campbell	Price
Bailey	McKechnie	Casey	Scott
Bjelke-Petersen	McPhie	Comben	Shaw
Booth	Menzel	D'Arcy	Smith
Borbidge	Miller	De Lacy	Underwood
Cahill	Muntz	Eaton	Vaughan
Chapman	Newton	Fouras	Veivers
Cooper	Powell	Gibbs, R. J.	Warburton
Elliott	Randell	Goss	White
FitzGerald	Simpson	Gygar	Wilson
Gibbs, I. J.	Stephan	Hamill	Yewdale
Glasson	Stoneman	Innes	
Goleby	Tenni	Knox	
Gunn	Turner	Kruger	
Harper	Wharton	Lee	
Harvey		Lickiss	
Henderson		Mackenroth	
Jennings	<i>Tellers:</i>	McElligott	<i>Tellers:</i>
Katter	Kaus	McLean	Davis
Lane	Neal	Milliner	Warner, A. M.

Resolved in the affirmative.

## ABORIGINES AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDERS (LAND HOLDING) BILL

### Second Reading—Resumption of Debate

Debate resumed from 3 April (see p. 4897) on Mr Katter's motion—

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

Mr SCOTT (Cook) (12.30 a.m.): Once again, important legislation relating to Aborigines is being rushed through the House late at night.

**Government Members** interjected.

Mr SCOTT: I am deadly serious. Why is it that whenever legislation dealing with Aborigines is introduced in this Chamber it must be at this ungodly hour? Government members simply do not know any better. It does not happen by coincidence; it happens because the Government places so little importance on such legislation that it is put right at the bottom of the Business Paper and it comes on only when the Government is ready, which invariably is late at night. The Minister for Northern Development and Aboriginal and Island Affairs has so little clout that he cannot get the legislation placed further up the Business Paper. In fact, as late as today the Minister did not even know whether the legislation would come on.

Why was the legislation not laid on the table? It could well have lain on the table during the recess. The Bill contains serious errors. Those errors could have been corrected by amendments that the Government would have been prepared to move if the community had had an opportunity to debate the legislation.

As I said, the legislation contains very serious errors. It will not work. In any case, I do not believe that it will be implemented. It might as well have lain on the table until the next session, and it could then have been taken from there.

Since I have been a member of this Assembly, delays have always occurred when legislation relating to Aborigines has been brought in. Extensions of time have been granted. So-called debates have taken place in the community in which it has been said that the Aborigines Act will be changed. Although those debates have never been of any substance, they have raised expectations in the community, and those expectations have never been realised.

Out of the blue, this extremely wide-ranging legislation has been brought in in this sudden and deadly fashion. It is certainly not fair to the Aboriginal people of Queensland, and it is not fair to those who are very concerned for them. The legislation is dishonest. I will prove that, and I will make detailed reference to the Minister's second-reading speech.

However, before I do that, I want to make a couple of succinct comments that will sum up the Government's attitude towards the Aboriginal people. I will refer to the glossy book "This is Queensland" that has already been referred to in the House. That book purports to be an authority on the history of this State. I have not had a good look through it, but I have seen enough of it to know that it contains virtually no reference to Aboriginal people. The book contains three untitled photographs, one of an Aboriginal person and a couple that depict cave paintings, for which there are no titles. The history starts when Captain Cook arrived. That is what Government members think about the history of this State. They totally ignore Aboriginal people and their needs.

I refer also to the Royal Gala Concert that is to take place at the Performing Arts Complex on 23 April. The program was to begin with two striking Aboriginal performances. Those performances have been cancelled, and I understand that the Minister——

**Mr Davis:** That is a shame.

**Mr SCOTT:** It is a shame; it is dreadful.

**Mr Davis:** It must have been at the behest of the Minister in charge of the Bill.

**Mr SCOTT:** I believe that he is ducking for cover, because today the matter was aired publicly. The Minister will not be able to hold his head up among the Aboriginal communities. He will not be game to enter any of the black areas of Queensland. It is a disgraceful state of affairs. The occasion on 23 April will now be a "galah" concert.

**Mr Underwood** interjected.

**Mr SCOTT:** My colleague from Ipswich West will give further details.

The points that I have made so far show Government members to be hypocritical and racist. That comment is borne out by the type of legislation that they have introduced, which is being debated so late at night, the totally cavalier way in which they treat Aboriginal people, the tardiness of the implementation of their own legislation and the introduction of this totally dishonest Bill.

I state at the outset that the Opposition is opposed to the Bill on genuine and easily argued grounds. We do not agree with the concept behind it. It does not conform to Labor Party policy. It does not conform to the National Party's policy, as much as that policy can be tracked down. It wanders all over the place. It is a very elusive object. I notice that the Minister is grinning. He knows that the National Party does not have a policy. It is totally ad hoc, which gives him incredible scope. I look round to see whether the Liberals are in the Chamber. They are not.

**Honourable Members** interjected.

**Mr SCOTT:** Perhaps they have gone for a cup of tea. They are never here when Aboriginal legislation is being debated. Last year they walked out at the most inopportune time. They will never be forgotten for that. They have a policy on Aboriginal affairs, but it has never been aired. It has probably been put in the rubbish bin, where it deserves to go.

**Mr Underwood:** Like the rest of their policies.

**Mr SCOTT:** That is right. They are not really worth a comment.



The basis of the Opposition's case is that the Bill destroys the concept of communal ownership, including the Government's own deed of grant in trust legislation. It cuts across the concept of tribal ownership, which is supposed to be the very basis of Aboriginal policies. It could almost be said that Australia has had bipartisan policies. People have struggled extremely hard on two counts: firstly, to make it bipartisan policy; secondly, in an effort to destroy it as bipartisan policy. It has been tugged this way and that, all over the place. Through the Bill, however, the Minister is totally destroying those concepts.

The biggest error to have occurred is that Aboriginal legislation has been put into the hands of Lands Department officials, against the Minister's officials. Shortly, I will have something to say about the Minister's officials.

**Mr Davis:** He would be disappointed if you didn't.

**Mr SCOTT:** The Minister is grinning in anticipation. He probably would be disappointed. A few people would be disappointed if I did not continue in my present vein.

That error of involving Lands Department officials was made quite some time ago, before the present Minister assumed responsibility for the portfolio. It occurred because of the incompetence of the officers of the former Department of Aboriginal and Island Affairs. They would not be incompetent if it were not for the total lack of ability of the man at the head of the department, who was recently promoted to under secretary. He might have had a different attitude had he been trained properly by Ministers, even as far back as when the Premier was Minister for Aboriginal and Island Affairs. The trouble is that the Premier has put his faith in that person. The under secretary let even the Premier down. He should have been shifted long ago. The rot has set in in the department. It has not been possible to counter it. The Government, in its wisdom, knowing of the weakness in the department, required the Lands Department to take over Aboriginal affairs.

**Mr Jennings:** Aren't you going to get to the new speech? This is the old speech.

**Mr SCOTT:** I have the greatest respect for officers in the Lands Department. They perform an excellent job under very difficult circumstances. They are totally understaffed. Now they have had imposed on them the very onerous provisions that become their responsibility under the Bill.

I will have much more to say about that, but first I reply to the interjection of the member for Southport about a new speech. I am referring to the typically damaging legislation continually introduced by the Government. I will use the same argument tonight. It is possible to destroy any of the Government's arguments about its Aboriginal affairs legislation by adopting the line I am using. I am not at all ashamed to plough some old ground. However, he should not worry. I will introduce sufficient new material to keep it interesting for him.

It is a shame that the Lands Department has never been allowed into the conduct of Aboriginal affairs. That brings to mind another interesting concept in Queensland, and that is that the Lands Department came into existence because land was stolen from the Aboriginal people. It is quite improper that the Lands Department should now be brought back into playing the game in an attempt to get the appropriate department out of its difficulties.

I wonder whether the Premier and Treasurer is giving the Minister for Northern Development and Aboriginal and Island Affairs (Mr Katter) some riding instructions, because there is no doubt, before this night is through, that he will need them.

Before developing the theme of the arguments that will be presented and making comment on the Minister's speech, I refer to a legal opinion that has been obtained in respect to the legislation. I quote from prose that is more eloquent than I can muster.

**Mr Jennings:** That would not be difficult.

**Mr SCOTT:** I grant that point to the honourable member for Southport. I admit I do not have a way with words.

The opinion reads as follows—

“The inevitable cost of individual use and ownership will be the loss of communal title and the control of areas so affected. The cost of mortgagability and transferability for economic gain will be the reduced guarantee of inalienability. For Aboriginal communities having spiritual responsibilities for traditional land, this may be a high cost.”

That is a very sad comment, and it is a shame that those words needed to be written. I point out, however, that the words were written after due consideration had been given to the legislation presented by the Government and after the author had become aware of all the inherent weaknesses—not only the weaknesses expressed in the Bill, but the weaknesses expressed in the concept that has allowed the Bill to be brought forward. That is a very sad state of affairs.

I turn now to examine the contents of the Minister's second-reading speech because, although not very much was said and although almost all of the things that were said are totally untrue, giving close attention to the speech is one way in which the weaknesses of the legislation can be highlighted.

Under the circumstances, I do not think that the Minister should laugh. He is seated next to the Premier and Treasurer of Queensland. I am aware that the Minister is on very shaky ground. I know that the Minister has lost the confidence of the National Party and that a very strong move will be made to shift him from administration of his portfolio. Although it took me a moment or two to tumble to this realisation, I now know why the Premier and Treasurer has entered the Chamber. He has come here to observe the performance of the Minister very closely. I would say that the Minister is on the skids, if I can use such a blunt term.

The Minister is at liberty to be amused, but the duration of his tenure in the administration of his portfolio will be something similar to the bare-back ride he took at the Charters Towers rodeo.

**Mr Katter:** The honourable member might care to say a few words about the Bill.

**Mr SCOTT:** It will be a non-event.

I have made notes of the Minister's speech, and I intend to refer to that speech in some detail. I have previously said that the legislation cuts across tribal ownership of land. Although the Government has not stated that in the Bill, that is the situation. It is interesting to note that among the first words spoken by the Minister, this appears—

“In March 1982, the Queensland Government issued the deed of grant in trust legislation . . .”

The Minister is unable even to choose his words correctly because the Government did not issue anything. As a matter of fact, the Government did not issue anything according to a close examination of this proposal. Although the Government may have been responsible for piloting the legislation through the House, I am sure that all honourable members would agree that that was the extent of the action taken by it on that occasion. After that, nothing happened.

It must be remembered that at the time the legislation was before the House, the Minister was under close observation by his colleagues, particularly the Premier and Treasurer. What happened after the legislation went through the House, I do not know. I suggest that nothing happened. The deed of grant in trust legislation was never given assent by the Governor of Queensland, so it could be described as non-legislation. That is the theme that the Opposition will be developing during the course of the debate.

Among the many untrue things that were said in the Minister's speech, I wish to draw attention to this great statement—

“While Government policy in this matter—”

that is, the legislation in respect of Aboriginal affairs—

“has been unchanged ”

What an incredible statement that is! The Government's policies wavered all over the place, yet the Minister has said that the policy is unchanged. That is precisely what the Government's policy has not been—unchanged—and the fact is that the reverse is true. It has swung through changes as wide as 180 degrees apart.

The Minister has said that attempts have been made to strengthen the legislation, and they were effected by legislation passed in February last year that required a special Act of Parliament. That is a true statement, but the purpose of the legislation has been abandoned. The legislation has never been used. Is it the case that the Government passes legislation in the House and does not use it? I wonder what sort of Parliament, what sort of Government and what sort of Minister would allow that to happen.

The Minister also said—

“During my exhaustive consultation with the Aboriginal and Islander people preceding the drafting of the community services Acts, I also consulted the people concerning the deeds of grant in trust and provisions for land usage.”

The Minister is saying that he undertook those consultations then, but strong suspicions were aroused as to whether those consultations actually took place. The Opposition does not believe that they did. We believe that the Minister went out and told some people some things.

The Minister also made a number of promises which, because he does not have the clout in Cabinet, he has never been able to honour. It is totally untrue that the Minister conducted exhaustive consultations. Those were the words the Minister used on another occasion, and perhaps we are all ploughing old ground here. I can remember saying at the time that it was not exhaustive consultation; it was only exhausting for the Minister.

I would like to know where are the formal resolutions, for example, of the Island Co-ordinating Council endorsing this legislation. If the Minister had been able to obtain them, he would have been flaunting them proudly. Of course, he did not obtain them, because he does not have a decent structure for the ICC. He has people who want to provide it, but he has not given them the necessary power. That is a terrible shame.

What about the Aboriginal Co-ordinating Council? Not a thing has been done about forming such a council. If the Minister has not formed such a council, how can he possibly consult with it? What sort of a Minister would sit opposite and squirm under these attacks? The Minister does not have those structures. He is not giving the Aboriginal people the slightest opportunity of talking about the legislation, so he should blush. Where are the statements from Aboriginal people? One Aboriginal name did appear in the Minister's second-reading speech. The Minister named Roy Gray. Government members are good at using the names of Aboriginal people. I know a number of Government members who drop the names of Aboriginal people, but do not even know them. They even use the names of people who have passed on, implying that they are still alive. They are still alive in heaven, looking down on what the Minister is doing.

The Minister then said—

“The vote was overwhelmingly for private ownership.”

Where was that vote taken? The only thing that resembled a vote was a petition that was collected after widespread debate in the Torres Strait. The Minister had no part in that petition, it was drafted by a representative of the National Aboriginal Council and leading Torres Strait Islanders. It was an overwhelming vote in favour of inalienable

freehold title, the implication being that there should be a group title and not individual titles as the Minister apparently wants to give to people under the terms of this Bill.

The Minister also used a phrase to the effect, "only two people out of thousands". He is dishonestly implying that he spoke to thousands of people and that only two of them were not actively seeking private ownership of their own homes and residential blocks of land. That is an utter and arrant untruth. It could not possibly be true.

Then comes a little bit of pious praise for the Minister himself. The Minister said—

"Delays have therefore occurred owing to the need to provide an individual perpetual title in the communities."

That is not true; that is not why the delays occurred. The prospect for these titles was in the deed of grant in trust legislation, but the Minister was too frightened to implement it. At one stage the Minister gave me two reasons why he could not implement it. If the Minister thinks he is fixing the problems now, I can inform him that he is not. He is creating a great problem for himself.

The Minister then said that the drafting of the legislation should not be rushed because it was too difficult. It is relatively simple legislation. The Minister had only to go to the Lands Department and ask the departmental officers to produce something. In the end, when he could hold out no longer, that is what the Minister did.

The Minister then said that because he did not want to—

"... hand a blanket lease over the whole area to the council, it was necessary for the Crown to retain reasonable portions of the present areas to meet its obligations to each community."

Of course it is necessary for the Crown to retain reasonable portions, but the Minister has not spelt out what those reasonable portions are. With the Government's majority in the House, it was able to push the legislation through after all the years of waiting. However, it has still not been implemented and the people do not know what Crown areas will be excised. That is causing them a great many difficulties.

Then the Minister added these unbelievable words—

"Aboriginal people are entitled to receive, and do receive, the same basic levels of public service available to us all, including hospitals, schools, policing, roads and so on."

The Minister is certainly exposing a large Achilles' heel there. He talks about the Aboriginal and Island police. They are untrained. For years, the Minister has promised that he would provide training for those good people, but he has not done so. In fact, there is total confusion over who can use the gaols. The police now cannot even lock people up.

The Minister had his under secretary promulgate a proposed by-law, hoping to get the by-law through the councils to get the Minister out of the trouble that his own incompetence got him into. He does not know how to get out of the trouble. Again he has to lean on that dreadful person the under secretary to try to get him out of the trouble. That is a shame.

I have referred to the untrained police. Those are the equal services that the Minister says the Aboriginal police will receive under this supposedly wonderful piece of legislation.

Council clerks have just run elections, and a good deal of concern has been caused by those elections. Unfortunately, in some places they were not run properly, owing to the fact that the Minister was not able to train the people to run those elections. He did not set out the proper guide-lines. He held the regulations under the community services legislation under his coat. He was not game to take them out and show them to the community. The elections that have just been held were held pursuant to those regulations—not pursuant to the legislation.

Do honourable members know who paid the clerks who ran those council elections? The Commonwealth Government paid them. What an unbelievable state of affairs! The Minister talks about the dreadful Commonwealth socialists, but he does not mind going to them with his hand out for money to get his department off the hook to run the elections.

There is no structure to the Aboriginal and Islander nurse training system. Those good people go in as nurses' aides and they remain as nurses' aides. The Minister included hospitals when he referred to the basic levels of public service that are available. Shame on him!

**Mr Underwood:** DCS hospitals.

**Mr SCOTT:** That is what they are. It is a very poor medical service, because the Minister simply will not spend money on it. He does not care about the people.

The Minister referred to the excision of Crown areas. I ask the Minister: How many town plans are there? How many communities are having town plans prepared? I see that the Minister is asking his adviser to provide an answer to those questions.

I remind the Minister that after the community services legislation was passed through this Chamber, he saw fit to go into publication in the "Cape York Times", which is a neat little newspaper that circulates in that area. A column was run on the comments of three people—the Minister, an NAC representative and myself. We were each asked to comment on the Bill. The only comments that the Minister made were that I had asked no questions of him when that legislation went through this Chamber. That is totally untrue.

**Mr Underwood:** That is his usual form.

**Mr SCOTT:** Yes. He just cannot get away from it. I do not know why he is like that. Basically, he is a nice bloke, but why has he got to descend to those depths? I will emphasise each question that I ask, and I can assure the Minister that his ears will be pretty sore by the time the night is out. I know that his tongue will not be sore, because he will not respond. He will shrug off the questions in his usual inane way.

**Mr Katter:** Unfortunately for you, I will be responding.

**Mr SCOTT:** Don't try to frighten me! That deep voice does not worry me at all.

The Minister also stated—

"Although it was originally envisaged that the survey could be done swiftly and relatively inexpensively, the costs in time and money, owing to distance and isolation, proved almost insurmountable."

Why did not the Minister know that? He claims that he is a bushman. I think that he has a little property in the Flinders electorate. He should know about surveying in those areas and the difficulties that are encountered. Of course, he knew nothing about it—again because of his incompetence.

The Minister continued—

"Therefore, while this work is ongoing, the Government has facilitated the issue of the deeds of grant in trust . . ."

I thought that "facilitated" meant made easy. If the Minister has facilitated them, why has he not issued them? There is some nefarious reason why he has not issued them. If he does issue those deeds, he will issue them and then destroy them through this legislation. The deeds of grant will be meaningless, because so much of the land reverts to Crown land once it is dealt with as a lease.

The Minister also said that the Bill will ensure that the rights of the individual residents, the trustees of the deeds of grant and the Crown are sound and secure. That

is not true because the rights of individual residents are not protected in this legislation. All that the Minister has done is store up these troubles.

In his second-reading speech, the Minister stated that Crown land may no longer be required. When will it no longer be required? Crown land will always be needed so why was the Minister's speech padded out with that useless statement?

A very interesting part of the Minister's second-reading speech reads—

“Aboriginal people will now be responsible for the maintenance of their own homes and residential blocks. To date, the people who paid their rent regularly and looked after their homes were subsidising a group of irresponsible people who knocked their houses around and were notoriously late with rent payments.”

That is a dreadful thing to say in an unqualified way and it shows that the Minister has absolutely no understanding of Aboriginal communities.

When the Minister first took over the portfolio, he was honest enough to say that he has played football with some Aborigines, and that they were not bad people. Unfortunately, he has not increased his knowledge of them. He should know why some houses in Aboriginal communities might be in a bad state of repair. Uninvited guests may come in, and damage can be done. There is no way in the world that the tenants of those houses in Aboriginal communities should be made responsible for repairs when damage is not caused by them. I make that point very clear.

The Minister has not required his officers to find out who causes damage so that they can be made responsible for the repairs. Instead, he wants to make the owners pay for the repairs, such as replacing broken louvre blades. Unfortunately, the position will be much worse because it is espoused and enshrined in the legislation, and that is a dreadful state of affairs.

Damage is seldom the fault of your tenants; but you are now trying to shed them. I have used direct reference to the Minister, Mr Deputy Speaker, because he is responsible. The Opposition will attempt to amend that clause, and if the Minister has any sense of decency, he will accept the amendment. I know that he really agrees with it.

Each individual will have sole responsibility for the care and maintenance of his home and land. The Minister does not know what condition those houses are in. The honourable member for Southport has been on a number of publicly funded jaunts up to north Queensland with the Minister. The ministerial flag is waved, but not much else is done. However, the Minister does not care. The honourable member for Southport should be aware of the condition of the houses. For years, I have fought in this place to have those houses repaired and I am always told that no money is available. Under this legislation, the Government will give those houses to the Aboriginal people and make them responsible for carrying out repairs.

**Mr Underwood:** Don't forget about the smorgasbord that they had on TI.

**Mr SCOTT:** Yes, on the boat that they go sailing and fishing in. They often have lavish smorgasbords in the room marked “Director” on the boat.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Booth):** Order! The honourable member for Cook is not sticking to the Bill. His last comment is completely irrelevant. I suggest that he return to the Bill.

**Mr SCOTT:** I thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, for your direction. Honourable members are trying to get at me and divert my attention.

The Minister stated in his second-reading speech that the Government believes that the Bill will encourage and facilitate maximum usage of the tremendous resource that is available to Aboriginal and Islander people. If such a resource does exist, why is it that the Minister and his minions have not been able to develop that resource, given the tremendous resources that are available to the Government?

The Minister has not been able to do that. Will he blame incompetent departmental people? If that tremendous resource is there, why has he not been able to do something with it? Nowhere has the Minister been able to do that. I intend to document these things. What has the Department of Community Services been able to achieve? The Kowanyama farm is a wonderfully arable and fertile piece of ground, but all that the under secretary has done there is denigrate the farmer who ran it and, I think, totally relieve him of his responsibilities. In fact, he is not allowing any farming to go on at Kowanyama. Aboriginal people were involved in that farming. Because of the direction that the Minister failed to give to those people, that farm did not produce a great deal.

**Mr Underwood:** As soon as they look like being successful, it gives them the chop.

**Mr SCOTT:** Yes, of course it does. The department does not encourage them in the proper manner.

The Minister went to Edward River. Because that is some of the land that is to be given away under this amazing form of leasehold, that is very important. The staff person in charge of the cattle operation at Edward River was able to point out to the Minister that the cattle operation at Aurukun was being carried out so much more efficiently. That operation is being run by an Aboriginal co-operative company. Aurukun has been made a local authority, but the Minister has not had the intestinal fortitude to give that privilege to the Aboriginal communities.

Before his visit to Edward River, the Minister had done his private checking and he was aware that the Aurukun cattle operation was going ahead very successfully and very efficiently. The Minister sent a note off to one of his staff to the effect that it had become apparent to him that there was just no comparison between those two cattle operations. He told his staff to lift their game and improve their efficiency at Edward River and Kowanyama. That is the way he tried to improve the cattle operations in those places. If the Minister had any responsibility or power, he would have lined up the under secretary and told him to get off his backside and do his job. Of course, the Minister does not have the power to control the under secretary.

What has the farm at Bamaga produced? I will listen very closely to the Minister's reply. I ask him not to forget that I will have the opportunity at the Committee stage to say that once again he is continuing to not tell the truth.

In his second-reading speech the Minister said—

“The Government believes that this Bill will encourage and facilitate maximum usage of the tremendous resource . . .”

The Minister also said that the land has traditionally been owned and occupied by Aboriginal people.

Barely 24 hours ago, I heard the Deputy Premier of this State say, in regard to the Murray Islands, that there was no traditional ownership. That is what Mr Gunn said. Who is telling the untruth? One of these two very responsible people is misleading the House. I ask to be informed just who is misleading the House and why that should be allowed to happen. In the debate on the Queensland Coast Islands Declaratory Bill, that is what the Deputy Premier said. I know that he said it for devious political purposes, to justify that legislation. Perhaps he was telling the untruth. However, the fact is that one of those two so-called responsible people misled the House. How can that be allowed to happen?

The Minister said that 30 people at Yarrabah have already made application for areas to establish small businesses. Yarrabah is not in my electorate, but I am quite happy to have some comment made from this side of the House by the very good member for that area.

The Minister also said that last year six families at Edward River had no private enterprise whatever but are now fully involved in their own small businesses and are

well on the way to self-sufficiency. I am sure every member in this House saw the way in which the Minister sat down in the dust at Edward River, drew a line with a stick and gave as enterprises half of the reserve to one family and the other half of the reserve to another family. But what did he do to support them?

**Mr Price:** Solomon!

**Mr SCOTT:** Yes, the wisdom of Solomon there in the dust. It looked so impressive.

I have to digress for a minute. I am sure the Chair will extend me some courtesy. That is much the same as when he was talking about the fires up at Croydon. For the benefit of the "60 Minutes" program, the fires were lit so the Minister could be seen to be running away. That is a common joke for the Croydon people. The Minister was talking about the terror and the trouble that the fires had caused in that area. I simply give that explanation to illustrate the fact that once again the Minister was not telling the truth, this time on "60 Minutes"

**Mr De Lacy:** Surely he rode that horse, didn't he?

**Mr SCOTT:** No, I do not think he did ride the horse.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Booth):** Order! I have extended the honourable member the courtesy to make his point. I think he is drawing the longbow. I ask him to get back to the Bill.

**Mr SCOTT:** I shall return to the subject of Edward River. I know that the Minister is worried about these revelations. I do not blame him. I would be very worried if such things were being said about me.

The job is too big for the Minister. He is a nice bloke. As a back-bencher, he was not too bad. He used to speak out for the north. He should never have been promoted. I would like to know who the six families are. I know two of them. I do not want to hear too many names bandied about in the Chamber. The Minister might give me some indication. I have made some inquiries. The first thing that the Minister will ask me is when I was last there. The last time I was at Edward River was late last year. I will be returning to Edward River in the next few weeks and I will be checking out what the Minister tells the House on this occasion to see how true it is.

**Mr Katter:** You told me that I cannot mention the names.

**Mr SCOTT:** I am sure that it is not beyond the Minister's ingenuity to let me know who they are. The Minister can mention the names if he likes.

The Minister's second-reading speech continued—

"The Queensland Government is deeply opposed to the socialist ethic under which Big Brother Government. . ."

He is talking about the Federal Labor Government. If it were a Liberal Government, his tones would be more muted. The Minister held out his hand to the Federal Government for Community Employment Program funding for the fencing of the two projects at Edward River. The two families had been involved in contract mustering. The Minister wrote a letter to the Aboriginal people and said, "I will organise CEP funding to help you with the fencing." What did he do with those enterprises? This matter is pertinent to the Bill because the lessons will indicate that the Bill will not work.

The Minister was able to say that those families could obtain some contract mustering from the department. That means that they would be mustering departmental cattle. I saw the letter that the under secretary wrote to the people concerned, setting out very onerous conditions on the way that the mustering must be carried out and how they would not be paid until every beast was accounted for, in a proper place and about to



be loaded on to a truck to be taken away. There would be no part payments or interim payments. That was the hard-lining under secretary.

The Minister went up there as a politician and sat down in the dust. He went away and applied to Big Brother Government—that socialist Government that he abhors—for money to allow those persons to continue with their fencing project. He would not give them Queensland Government money. However, he asked the Commonwealth Government to provide the money. That has happened in so many instances. The Minister should be totally ashamed of himself that that should happen. The Minister said, “Government-run agricultural and pastoral enterprises have never been successful.” What an indictment of the years of operation of the Department of Community Services, formerly the Department of Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement (DAIA).

**Mr Underwood:** They had to get the Fraud Squad in.

**Mr SCOTT:** They had to get the Fraud Squad in at Doomadgee. That was during the current Minister’s administration. I do not know what is going on there. The Minister has never told the House what is going on there. He said that his Government cannot run agricultural and pastoral enterprises. He will expect the Aboriginal people to do that. How can that possibly happen, because the Minister will not back them up with any resources, as I have proved in my reference to his application for CEP funding.

The Minister says that Queensland is the only State in Australia that makes provision for private enterprise. The Minister is out of step; so is the Government and its administration. He is selling the Islanders down the drain. There is no doubt about that.

The Minister used the following high-falutin words—

“Queensland is the only State in which that foresight and confidence in the Aboriginal and Islander people is evident.”

That is hog-wash. The Minister should have confidence in them. However, he has destroyed their confidence and done nothing to engender that type of foresight. The only foresight they have is for difficult times. By this legislation, the Minister is in the process of making their lives that much more difficult. Once again, the Minister has gone off into cloud-land, which he seems to like to inhabit. He stated—

“The individual lease provided by this Bill—and I stress that it is exactly the same as the perpetual lease issued on mining fields at Ipswich. . .”

It is not exactly the same as that. The Minister should withdraw the statement. He has misled the House, and I will tell honourable members why. It is an arrant, outrageous and unforgivable untruth. For a start, in places such as Ipswich, Mount Isa and Charters Towers, the land can be mortgaged to anyone who will take up the mortgage. If the mortgagees foreclose and take possession, they can retain possession. That is not the case with this legislation, and that is not the case with the Aboriginal communities. I ask the Minister to accept that that is an utter untruth. Mortgagability does not apply.

**Mr Jennings:** He qualified it.

**Mr SCOTT:** It is absolutely qualified and trammelled mortgagability, and therefore totally useless. It will not mean a thing. I thank the honourable member for his interjection.

**Mr Jennings** interjected.

**Mr SCOTT:** I will not allow the honourable member for Southport to waste my time with inanities.

The Minister said in his second-reading speech—

“The people themselves, however, will be able to develop their own blocks individually.”

That requires capital. I note that the Minister for Lands, Forestry and Police (Mr Glasson) is in the Chamber. It must not be forgotten that he has a shared responsibility for this

Bill. I will be turning to that point later, and I hope that the Minister will be in the Chamber.

I ask the Minister for Northern Development and Aboriginal and Island Affairs: Where will the money come from for those people to develop their blocks? It requires capital. The Minister is the owner of an undeveloped block, and I am told that, even with his generous ministerial salary, he is unable to develop that grazing property west of Charters Towers. Even with all the resources of the Department of Community Services and the Government, those blocks could not be developed, so how in goodness' name are the poor Aborigines going to do it? I ask the Minister to spell out in detail how that will be done. The Minister needs to make a better fist of it than he did in his second-reading speech.

The Minister said also in his second-reading speech—

“At the moment, land transactions can only take place between members of the community. . .

Whereas I believe that this is necessary during this development stage, I am hopeful that a future Government will be able to remove this bar.”

The Minister does not even have the intestinal fortitude to take responsibility for his own legislation. He says, “a future Government” Is the Minister saying that the Labor Party will be in power so soon that it will be able to fix up his dreadful legislation? The Labor Party will take up the challenge. Labor Party members will sit on the Treasury benches and fix the legislation. The Labor Party will repeal it. There is no doubt about that. The Labor Party will bring in sensible land rights legislation.

**Mr Underwood:** He will be back home on the farm.

**Mr SCOTT:** Yes, the Minister will be back home on the farm.

I return to the classic statements of the Minister and his pious hopes. The Minister said further in his second-reading speech—

“. . . Aboriginal and Islander people living in this State should enjoy the same rights and privileges and bear the same responsibilities and obligations as every other Queenslanders.”

With what money will they do that? With the money that the Minister pays? Of course, later I will deal with the award wages situation.

So many things are needed in the Torres Strait and in Aboriginal communities. The Minister should have provided them before abrogating his responsibility, as he is doing with this legislation. The Minister should have done something about the need for new housing, repairs to old housing because of the dreadful conditions that he has allowed to develop, the need for electricity and for water supplies in schools and pre-schools. I have documented all those things in such detail in this House that the Minister knows all about them.

**Mr Underwood:** The normal standard of service that the whites get.

**Mr SCOTT:** Yes. There is no doubt that black people do not get the same standard of service as white people under this Government.

It is in order to talk about award wages, because how are the leases going to be paid for? How will the Aboriginal people pay the rental when the Government does not pay award wages? I have here an interesting document. It is actually a copy of a Cabinet document, and it is one that the Minister presented to Cabinet in his futile and weak attempts to try to get some sort of funding. The Minister says in this document—

“Currently the Department of Community Services employs and pays from Consolidated Revenue Fund 1130 workers . . .”

It was not very long ago—in fact, it was in the latter part of 1984—that that was the situation. I doubt that it has changed very much. That is where the basic part of the

employment comes from. There are not very many opportunities up there to develop private enterprise. Unfortunately, I do not expect that the Aboriginal people will be able to do it. I would like to think that they could, but I doubt it.

I will not read large portions of the Cabinet document. I am quite prepared to table it, even though it has a familiarity with the table. The document states also—

“The supporting philosophy is one of encouragement and training of the people to handle their own affairs—”

something about which the Government has done nothing at all—

“enabling ownership of land (deeded in trust)—”

which the Minister is now not going to introduce—

“by residence, as well as self-involvement through Local Authority decision making and land management.”

Those are things that the Minister did not do because he did not know how to do them.

The document indicated how many people were involved. Then it suggested that certain aspects of council operations—hygiene and sanitation; council building repairs; ambulance services; Aboriginal/Island police; cemeteries; libraries; roads; parks and gardens—should be funded by the Aboriginal councils with moneys provided by the Government. However, the Government would not provide money at award rates. That is a crime against humanity. The document says—

“... the rate of the current allowance paid each of the workers and at least one Council seeks funds to enable them to pay the full Award wage.”

The hide of that council, in the eyes of the Minister, to pay full award wages!

The Minister had a simple solution to that—and I emphasise that this is a Cabinet submission, not a minor document—

“It has been informed—”

that is, the council—

“that this can only result by either the injection of additional funds from Council resources or alternatively a reduction in the number of workers.”

What a simplistic solution to the problem! The Government is not prepared to pay award wages. One of my colleagues will have much more to say about that.

**Mr Wilson:** That is in line with the legislation that the Government introduced in relation to the electricity supply industry.

**Mr SCOTT:** That is right. The Government has introduced dreadful industrial legislation.

The Minister had the grace to say in the document—

“It should also be said that there is some reluctance to accept these responsibilities immediately.”

My goodness me, there certainly is a reluctance to accept them! The Aboriginal council wants to pay award rates. It wants to be responsible for such things as workers' compensation, holiday pay, loadings for week-end work, proper rates for supervisors and so on. That deals with the Cabinet submission. It is not worth the paper it is written on. That is the level of submission to the Queensland Cabinet.

I have said about as much as I wish to say on the Minister's second-reading speech. I was amused by his final paragraph, in which he gave credit to the member for Roma (Russell Cooper) and the member for Southport (Doug Jennings). He has nicely shifted the blame for the shortcomings of the legislation onto them. I wonder which one he is tipping will replace him as the Minister. It might be the kiss of death. Only one is in the House. I do not think either of them would be too happy about it.

It is typical of the Minister that he has totally misled the House. He misleads the media—and I refer particularly to the “60 Minutes” program—and he misleads the people of Queensland, both black and white.

**Mr De Lacy:** And the “Daily Sun”

**Mr SCOTT:** Yes. His actions have been typical of the attitude of the Government towards Aboriginal affairs. It is a misleading Government.

It has been necessary to deal with the untruths and specious arguments in the second-reading speech, because the Bill itself can be dismissed with a few words. Before dealing with it, I remind the House of some matters. First, the Minister and his under secretary do not speak to one another. I have alluded to that in the House previously. That is a dreadful state of affairs. When I entered the Chamber during the debate on the Electoral Districts Bill, I was rather interested to see that the under secretary was already sitting in the lobby. He arrived for the wrong Bill. He was sitting there with a very proud look on his face. He thought he would be staring at the Minister. Subsequently, he decided that it might be more diplomatic to be substituted by a junior person. The under secretary does not have a great deal to be proud of.

It is impossible for a department to run efficiently when the two most senior people do not speak to each other. As I have said before, what would happen if the Minister for Lands, Forestry and Police and the Commissioner for Police did not speak to each other? I direct the question to the Minister for Police, who is now in the House. How could a department be run under those circumstances? It could not.

The Minister for Northern Development and Aboriginal and Island Affairs does not have sufficient authority to remove the under secretary. The under secretary goes his own way, with his departmental girl-friend. He still flies up to Cairns and then up into the Cook electorate. He picks up a junior female departmental officer and they go traipsing round the electorate.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Booth):** Order! The honourable member’s comments are quite irrelevant to the Bill. I direct him to proceed with comments on the Bill. I do not wish to use any of the provisions of Standing Orders.

**Mr SCOTT:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I see a relevance between my remarks and the Bill. The under secretary still has a responsibility to administer the legislation. Because of his actions, he has demonstrated an incapacity to administer it.

A petition was signed by senior departmental officers—not the most senior ones, but executive officers of the department—for the removal of the Minister. How can a Minister who enjoys so little of the confidence of his senior departmental officers administer provisions such as those before the House? I am sure that, throughout the political history of Queensland, a petition has never previously been circulated calling for the removal of a Minister from office. I do not know to whom the petition was presented, but I do know that the petition was signed by many responsible executive officers, as they are now called. That is a very bad state of affairs.

As soon as the Minister became aware of such conduct, he should have acted immediately to dismiss the under secretary for impertinence, and for the part played by that officer in circulation of the petition. The Minister is aware that the petition was circulated, because he is now squirming, as he should.

**Mr McPhie:** That has nothing to do with the Bill.

**Mr SCOTT:** It has everything to do with the Bill. It is the reason that Aboriginal affairs are such a shambles in Queensland. Administration of Aboriginal affairs will never be corrected until one of the officers I have mentioned has been moved on. I do not care which officer it is, or whether it is both officers, but one of the officers must go so that the affairs of Aboriginal people can be restored to a proper level.

The Minister has said that Aboriginal and Islander people should enjoy the same rights and privileges as other people, but he does nothing that will provide them with those rights and privileges, and the people I refer to do not enjoy such entitlements.

I turn now to establish that the payment of award wages is a valid subject for debate, because it relates to the Bill. Apparently, the Government will not pay award wages, and it does not know where it is going in the conduct of Aboriginal affairs. The chief reason for Labor Party opposition to the Bill is that it destroys the concept of communal ownership, and that fact is borne out by the provision that enables areas in excess of 1 hectare to be leased.

Members of the Opposition would go partly along the way in approving the leasing of areas less than 1 hectare in size because, under the Labor Party's principle of inalienable freehold title, a communally held title would apply to the land, and the trustees of the Aboriginal council would be in a position to sublease the land. That was the notion behind the deed of grant in trust legislation that has now been totally destroyed by the new concept embodied in the Bill. The provision is a very worrying one because it allows for so much more than 1 hectare to be taken up under the terms of a lease. The Opposition wants to know how much of the land will be protected for use by Aboriginal people on a common basis?

The Opposition has been informed that so much ownership of the land will be vested in the Crown, but an accurate description of how much land is involved has not been given, and the Opposition wants to know. I ask: Are all of the lands excluded from the tattered remnants of the deed of grant in trust and alienated for use by certain families under the provisions of, for instance, a 30-year leasehold agreement? The provision amazes me. So much for the Minister's consultation with Aboriginal and Islander people! The deed of grant in trust legislation was the means by which the land was secured. The Minister's credibility is now totally destroyed. As I said, I believe that the administration of his portfolio is on very shaky ground.

**Mr Milliner:** He ought to resign.

**Mr SCOTT:** Of course the Minister should. However, I await the Premier and Treasurer's opinion, because that is the one which will count.

I return to my examination of the Bill, and I intend to make some damning points. The provisions of the Lands Act, as amended, that included the deed of grant in trust provisions had not been given assent by the Governor of Queensland. A legal question is involved because the legislation went through the last session of Parliament. I would be interested to know whether the deed of grant in trust provisions can be validated by the present session of Parliament. Can the Government have them signed into law? I refer the minister to the provisions of the Lands Act, and the sections are sections 334 (c) and (e), which were inserted by an amendment 1982, No. 17, section 7, which has not yet been proclaimed.

The situation is that in an amalgamated Lands Act provision, the Government now brings forward further legislation that relies on previous legislation and amends provisions of an Act that has not yet received royal assent. I cannot help shuddering when I think of the incompetence of the Queensland Government.

My colleagues on the Opposition side will develop an argument about the lack of consultation. I have previously said that no consultation has taken place, and my comments have been very well documented by the electronic and printed media, and in books that have been written. The Minister does not even go through the motions of claiming that consultation has taken place, except to briefly mention Mr Roy Gray. Mr Gray admitted to me that no meaningful consultation has taken place, and I am in a position to confirm that that is so.

People had been given a limited outline of a leasing idea. When it is talked about like that, it does not sound too bad. It is when it is looked at in detail that one realises the damage that it will cause to those communities and that it would cause to decent

people. Although it sounds good at first, on closer examination it will be seen by the Aboriginal people as detestable.

I was told by Aboriginal people that they did not want the provision for a visiting magistrate, but they did not hear about that until late in the piece. They said that they did not want that provision, but did the Minister take any notice? No!

**Mr Jennings:** Who told you about it?

**Mr SCOTT:** I talk to more Aboriginal people in a week than the member for Southport would run into in a month of Sundays.

The Torres Strait Island Co-ordinating Council, or the ICC as it is commonly known, is an invertebrate organisation, because the Government will not give it anything that has even the semblance of a carapace. It has no backbone and not even an outer shell. That council was not consulted. The ICC is not in that jelly-like form because it wants to be, but because this Government will not allow it to take a stronger form. As soon as anyone is prepared to stand up and speak, the Government wants nothing more to do with them if they are Aborigines.

I will sum that up by quoting from a recent book written by the distinguished lawyer F. Brennan SJ and two colleagues. He happens to grace the gallery of this House this evening. This passage relates to the lack of consultation. It states—

“In neither of his second-reading speeches—”

this is years ago, of course—

“introducing these new bills did the Minister refer to the expressed and recorded wishes of the Advisory Council—”

that used to exist in those days—

“and their Working Parties. Since 1971 it has been established practice for the Minister to claim Advisory Council approval for legislation.”

They went through the motions of saying that the advisory council had approved those things. It continues—

“One can only conclude that the coming of age of the Advisory Councils at Bamaga in July 1982—”

this is getting closer to the present time—

“spelt their death. Once they stood up to government, expressed and recorded their disagreement, they were cast into oblivion while undisclosed persons in George Street, Brisbane, decided what was good for Aborigines. After all, all members of the Aboriginal Working Party and Mr Les Stewart, Chairman of the Aboriginal Advisory Council, were anxious that their Advisory Council meet again as long ago as 11 September 1982.”

It has not met since, nor has its replacement, the ICC. That is a dreadful state of affairs. That was a quotation from a very worthwhile book—

**Mr Katter:** You're going to regret this speech; you've made so many mistakes.

**Mr SCOTT:** I do not think I will. The Minister will have difficulty in covering up.

**Mr Davis:** There is a very strong rumour that Mr Jennings might be taking over from him.

**Mr SCOTT:** That would be about right. That is why the honourable member for Southport has been spending so much time in the Chamber. I hope that he is not studying the Minister's methods, or he will never get close to the smell of ministerial leather.

As I said, that quotation sums up this Government's attitude towards consultation. Government members do not want to consult people who are anywhere near as well informed as they are.

Yesterday and today I rang round the Torres Strait area to confirm that there had been no consultation with Torres Strait Islanders either. The Minister promised that the ICC people would be able to use the "Four Winds" when they were on Thursday Island, but he then reneged on that promise. They are not allowed anywhere near the place. That was a directive from the under secretary. He does not want people sussing out what he might be doing during his lost week-ends on Thursday Island. The trouble is that the ideas and philosophy of the National Party towards black people become quite insidious and permeate society from the top down. That, too, is an important point.

An example of that philosophy comes from a judgment in the Supreme Court of Queensland in its civil jurisdiction. It was the result of an action between Robert Smallwood, the State of Queensland and the Mulgrave Shire Council. In giving judgment Mr Justice Kelly dismissed the plaintiff. I will read part of the judgment on a subject about which that venerable judge knew absolutely nothing. It shows how quite senior people in society who want to take a legalistic view about those things, without the benefit of a little bit of grassroots politics, can be so badly informed. All he did was use the bare legislative bones about the role of Aboriginal councils versus the role of normal local government in this State.

**Mr KATTER:** Mr Deputy Speaker, we have put up with an enormous amount of diatribe, but there is a point of order that I must raise. The statements that the honourable member has just made are very serious. He has just acted in contempt of court. In deference to the House and to the judiciary of Queensland, those remarks should be removed from the record of this House.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Booth):** Order! Is the Minister referring to the last remarks that the honourable member made?

**Mr KATTER:** Yes.

**Mr SCOTT:** They did not refer to him.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Standing Order No. 120 refers to imputations. There is definitely an imputation in regard to the Minister in that.

**Mr SCOTT:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I shall go back over that part of the debate so that you can follow it more closely. I am talking about a past legal case and about a judgment. I have the document here. It was case No. 33 of 1985. The judgment was given on 27 March 1985. I am not out of order to the slightest extent.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr KATTER:** Mr Deputy Speaker, that was not the point that I made. The point that I made was that the honourable member is now using this House to criticise the decision of a judge in the State of Queensland, and that is an act of contempt of court. What the honourable member is actually doing here could amount to a criminal offence, and I do not think that it should be allowed in this House from any single point of view—most certainly from the point of view of decorum and decency in the public interest.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! My ruling is that, unless it reflects on another member or there is an imputation under Standing Order No. 120, I will have to ask the honourable member to continue. In this instance I do not think that there is any imputation, and I call the member to continue.

**Mr SCOTT:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I think that that is a proper ruling and I was pleased to hear you make it. You have managed to put the Minister in his place very nicely. Once again he has shown his total incompetence and ignorance.

Before I was so rudely and uselessly interrupted by the Minister, I was saying that that attitude permeates our society. These points of view come from the very top. It is

no wonder that they percolate down to the bottom of society. Unfortunately, some people are uninformed and know nothing about these matters. They simply have a prejudice against Aboriginal people. It starts at the level of an eminent judge, who said—

“I would consider that there is no useful purpose to be served by any detailed comparison of the provisions of the respective Acts, and, if it should be relevant to consider this aspect, which in my view it is not, there is nothing to indicate that the system established by the Community Services Act—”

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! I will have to bring the honourable member back to the Bill. The Bill is about land dealings and deeds of grant. It is not about a finding made by a judge, unless that finding refers to land dealings. This whole Bill refers to the leasing of land and to other arrangements. To go outside the Bill and talk about a judgment in court is quite wrong. I warn the honourable member that I can take action under Standing Order No. 141, which refers to tedious repetition. Unless the honourable member stays with the Bill, I will take action.

**Mr SCOTT:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. The point that I am trying to make is that the judge was referring to the community services legislation, which is the parent legislation of this Bill. It is mentioned in the Bill. Mr Deputy Speaker, are you denying me the right to speak about the community services legislation?

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Where is it mentioned in the Bill? I have been looking through the Bill and I cannot find any reference to that legislation.

**Mr SCOTT:** I would be very surprised if it is not mentioned in the early pages of the Bill. Mr Deputy Speaker, you can take my assurance that it is mentioned in the Bill.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! My ruling is that that reference is not in the Bill. If the honourable member does not return to the Bill, I will ask him to discontinue his speech.

**Mr SCOTT:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I am certainly not going to debate your ruling, but I shall just quote from page 2 of the roneoed copy of the Bill. It states—

“An islander or other person who is authorized by the Community Services (Torres Strait) Act 1984 . . .”

I am reading directly from the Bill.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! In what way does a previous judgment affect that? I have been very patient with the honourable member for Cook. I have made a ruling that he must return to the Bill. I warn him that, if he does not return to the Bill, I will ask him to discontinue his speech.

**Mr SCOTT:** I accept your ruling, Mr Deputy Speaker, but I will be listening very closely to other honourable members in case they should refer to the community services legislation. It is a strange ruling.

The Opposition will debate the clauses in detail at the Committee stage. I have made a very fair summing-up of the Bill's weaknesses. I would have liked to have found some strengths in the Bill, but I could find nothing. I have not damned it with faint praise. I have made a fair summary of legislation through which the Minister has failed, and he will continue to fail.

**Mr JENNINGS (Southport) (1.36 a.m.):** Honourable members have just heard a typical harangue from the honourable member for Cook. This is a dramatic piece of legislation. It is important for the future of Aborigines and the country. The Government is doing something that has not been done before in this nation. However, the honourable member for Cook did nothing but criticise; I did not hear one word of praise.

He said that the legislation contains serious errors, and that it will not work. He said that he did not believe that it will be implemented, and that it was brought in very



suddenly, but he omitted to mention that it was foreshadowed last year. He made mention of the royal command performance and said that the Government is racist and hypocritical.

The honourable member claimed that it is totally dishonest legislation, and that he is opposed to it. He stated that it does not conform to Labor policy, and he made it quite clear what that policy is. The Labor Party does not believe that the Aboriginal people should have title to their own property.

The honourable member got stuck into the fellows from the department, who cannot reply to him, and he does that every time. He also said that the land has been stolen from the Aboriginal people. That is the same old stuff that Clyde Holding has been on about. Does the honourable member for Cook believe that the land on which this building stands was stolen from the Aboriginal people? What about the land in Queen Street? What will he do about that? What about all the other buildings in the middle of Brisbane? Has the land on which they stand been stolen from the Aboriginal people? Are honourable members thieves? Who did the stealing? It is all very well for the honourable member to come forward with this sort of tripe, but what happened 200 years ago should not concern us, because we are living in today's society. The Government has done something that the Labor Party would not do, and the honourable member for Cook made that quite clear.

The Aboriginal people in the communities will now get title to their house and land. The honourable member for Cook emphasised proudly his opposition to that. He said that it was a bad provision because the Aborigines will lose communal and tribal ownership. That is socialism at its worst. Karl Marx said that the way to destroy the system is to destroy property-ownership. In Stalin's time, Molotov said that as long as there are millions of small land-owners in the country, the revolution is in danger. In case of war, there would always be the chance that the land-owners would side with the enemy in order to defend their property.

That is what Opposition members are on about; that is the policy of the Labor Party. I do not know what the shadow Minister for Aboriginal and Island Affairs is trying to do. He is probably catering for the socialist left mob down in Canberra. Bob Hawke had to kowtow to them. Nifty Nev is in trouble, and Wright was kicked out. The same will probably happen to Nifty Nev. That is what the member for Cook is on about; he is espousing communist land policies, and he is proud of that. The Labor Party is proud of it, but the Government is not.

The Government believes in giving people the right to own things. That is what this is all about.

**Mr Price:** How do you own it when you lease it?

**Mr JENNINGS:** The Government is giving them a document that says they own it. The Government foreshadowed that last year.

The member for Cook did not acknowledge that any consultation took place, but then he said that he knew that members of the Government went up there.

**Mr Scott:** For a pleasure trip.

**Mr JENNINGS:** The way we did it, it was no pleasure trip. The honourable member for Cook might take pleasure trips, but not members of the Government. He might get around and enjoy himself, but Government members have to work in their electorates. I know that he has one of the smallest electorates in the State. I know that he enjoys those beautiful beaches, the beautiful climate and the beautiful country.

The honourable member for Cook was critical of the fact that a vote was taken for the elected council. What does he want? He does not want to give these people title to their lands; he does not want to give them a vote.

**Mr Scott:** He did not take a vote, and you know that.

**Mr JENNINGS:** Wait a minute! The honourable member was critical of the fact that an election was held. He was also critical of the fact that reasonable areas of land would be taken for the Crown. Surely, under any circumstances, that is reasonable. That land is for schools and other public facilities. The honourable member criticised the council clerks, the department, the Minister, the health conditions, the town plan and the fact that the surveying had not been done. That is incredible!

The honourable member said that there was no way that the tenants should be responsible for their houses. I do not know whether the honourable member for Cook and I are living in the same country. At the moment, those people are leasing the land and the Government intends to give them a title. They will own it. According to the honourable member for Cook, if something goes wrong, they cannot be blamed. In other words, somebody can say, "Boys, it is open slather. I am throwing a party. Go ahead, wreck the joint. It's not my responsibility." I have never heard of anything so ludicrous in my life.

The Government is getting back to responsibility. It is giving people the pride of ownership. The honourable member for Cook is saying, "Don't give them any pride. Don't give them a chance to succeed. Don't give them a chance to improve their property."

**Mr Scott:** I noted that you were asleep through most of my speech.

**Mr JENNINGS:** Some speeches put me to sleep; but the speech of the honourable member for Cook was so incredible, I could not go to sleep. I could not believe it. I was surprised that anyone in this House could make such statements.

The honourable member for Cook also criticised the contract mustering up there. That is some of the best cattle country in Australia.

**Mr Price:** You would carry more beasts to the acre in your back yard.

**Mr JENNINGS:** Than on some of that Gulf cattle country? Does the honourable member suggest that Kowanyama is not good cattle country?

**Mr Price:** Kowanyama is all right.

**Mr JENNINGS:** What is the honourable member talking about, then?

Eighteen major management techniques in use up there enable that area to produce cattle cheaper than anywhere else in the world. The members of the Opposition, particularly the honourable member for Cook, should know that. The opportunity is there to achieve terrific results.

The honourable member for Cook was crazy. He criticised the Minister because the Minister asked the Federal Government for a CEP grant for fences. I wonder whether the member for Cook has asked the Commonwealth Government for any CEP grants. The honourable member is silent. First of all, the cattle have to be placed in a paddock.

**Mr Mackenroth:** Last week when we talked about this Government selling off some of that land to Americans for almost nothing, your mob over there claimed that it was worthless land. Now you are telling us that it is some of the best country in the State.

**Mr JENNINGS:** Does the honourable member know the difference between "Silver Plains" and Kowanyama?

**Mr Scott:** I bet you would rather have it.

**Mr JENNINGS:** I know; but the honourable member for Chatsworth does not know the difference. "Silver Plains" is totally different from Kowanyama.

The north is a large area. Although I am not trying to be critical, the honourable member is crazy. It is not possible to generalise in that area. Rainfall and other factors must be taken into consideration.

The honourable member for Cook referred also to a consultative council. He said, "Where will the money come from for development?" It is important to recall what the Minister said about that matter. It is important to recall what Senator Bonner said in November 1973. The following report appeared in the press—

"Aboriginal Senator Bonner (Liberal, Qld.) last night criticised the formation of the National Aboriginal Consultative Council.

He claimed it would lead to 'auto-apartheid' and an aboriginal bureaucracy.

Many aboriginals only became enrolled because there was a 'pretty good job and pretty good money at the end.'

He said the council would only be an advisory body which would be called upon three times a year in Canberra.

They would be sitting around in plush offices for the rest of the time.

'I don't think there are going to be many aboriginals coming into the big plush offices they have,' Senator Bonner said."

Although that is what Senator Bonner said in November 1973, he has changed his tune.

It is important to recall what the shadow Minister said in regard to communal title. That is the key to it. I am proud that we are able to do this; it is quite dramatic.

Land rights have been an issue for a long time. The honourable member for Cook refuted what the Government is trying to do. Clyde Holding has been mouthing land rights. For the first time, the Labor Party has put down in black and white its policy on land rights. Its land rights are no different from those in a communist or socialist State. The honourable member has espoused the truth of Clyde Holding's land policies; he has espoused the truth of the Labor Party's land policies. Everyone in this country should know about those policies.

The honourable member has done the Queensland Government a good deed. He has come out loud and clear. There is no way that Clyde Holding would do such a thing. The honourable member has done that, because all Opposition members know that the Queensland Government is pulling the rug from under the Federal Government. Opposition members cannot imagine the Commonwealth coming in and saying that it is going to take over Queensland's reserves when people have individual titles to houses and land, as Opposition members have titles to their houses. The honourable member has done a good service to this country, because he has laid down the Federal Government's policy in black and white so that everyone can read it.

**Mr Scott:** Usually you quote from our policies chapter and verse. Have you lost your copy?

**Mr JENNINGS:** These are the five points referred to by the Federal Minister: Aboriginal land to be held under inalienable freehold title. It does not say by whom. The Queensland Government is giving it to individuals; the Federal Government is not. The second point is the protection of Aboriginal sites. The third point is Aboriginal control in relation to mining on Aboriginal land, which has cut out mining. More than half of Australia will be cut out. The fourth point is access to mining royalty equivalents, which is the same thing. The fifth point is compensation for lost land to be negotiated. There is a lot more to that.

What the honourable member for Cook said tonight is very important for the future. What is being done tonight will be remembered 50 or 100 years from now. For the first time in the history of this country, title to a block of land and a house is being given to Aboriginal people. They have never had that before. They have never had the incentive of ownership before. It was foreshadowed—

**Mr Scott** interjected.

**Mr JENNINGS:** Last year Labor Party members laughed at the Government. As honourable members are aware, 12 months ago the House sat all night to get the original legislation through, and it was worth doing because it was important legislation.

Queensland is leading the way. There is no doubt about that. I think it is important that all honourable members realise that. It is an exciting Bill. It will have a great impact in the future. It is an example to all Australians and to people right round the world. Just imagine the reaction when it is raised with the United Nations. Opposition members know how the Government has been criticised by its colleagues in the south.

What do honourable members think John Cain will do? The Victorian Government was going to levy a tax on everyone to pay for Aboriginal reserves. This Bill will provide an opportunity for so many people. The honourable member for Cook has emphasised the hypocrisy of the Federal Government.

The Federal Minister for Aboriginal Affairs (Clyde Holding) has his own problems in Canberra. That is because of growing opposition to plans put forward by him for a national land rights Bill. It discusses the rights of Aborigines to claim present and former Aboriginal reserves, national parks——

**Mr De LACY:** I rise to a point of order. Prior to your resuming the chair, Mr Deputy Speaker, the Labor spokesman for Aboriginal and Island Affairs was prevented from speaking on fairly tenuous grounds because he was straying from the Bill. I suggest that the record of the Federal Minister for Aboriginal Affairs (Mr Holding) is totally irrelevant and I ask you to direct the member to come back to the Bill.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row):** Order! I do not see that there is any point of order unless there is a personal reflection on the honourable member for Cairns. I will determine whether or not what the honourable member is saying is irrelevant.

**Mr JENNINGS:** It has a great deal of relevance, because the Federal Minister has threatened the Queensland Government with taking over Aboriginal lands in Queensland. I make the point that the caucus members of the Federal Minister for Aboriginal Affairs are scared stiff of him in Canberra. So they should be. I saw him when he was Leader of the Opposition in Victoria. I know what he is like as a member of Parliament. I have no respect for some of the things that he did there.

**Mr Mackenroth:** What about the Government of which you were a member?

**Mr JENNINGS:** The honourable member asked me the question. I was a member of a Liberal Government in Victoria. Does he know what happened in Victoria? When the worst land deals that this country has ever seen were exposed, the Leader of the Opposition happened to be Clyde Holding. In the first session of Parliament after those land deals were disclosed—\$20m was misused—Clyde Holding got up in the Parliament and spoke. Everybody listened. Nothing was forthcoming. He did not ask one question about these crooked land deals. The Labor Party did not ask one question. It is equally responsible for that corruption. He did not ask one question. I know why. I was told the amount of money involved. That is how bad it is. The honourable member for Chatsworth asked the question; he has to listen to my answer. That is the situation in Victoria. Clyde Holding should not have the responsible job of Minister for Aboriginal Affairs in Canberra. He should not have it, and the honourable member should not have asked such a stupid question.

In 1983 the Human Rights Commission called on the Queensland Government to give Aborigines full rights to land and control over the lives of people living on that land. What is the Government doing? The Government is doing just that. I note that the honourable member for Cook is silent.

The Human Rights Commission prepared a full report after the legislation that the Government introduced last year. The commission tried to pull it apart. It said that, at the date of writing the report, no grants had been made. The report said—

“The commission considers that the Act, which came into operation on 31 May 1984, contains the potential for discrimination against members of Queensland Aboriginal communities which are subject to it. It is also concerned that in some respects the new Act does not provide Aborigines subject to its operations the rights recognised in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights . . . and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination . . . It recommends action which it considers the Commonwealth should take to remove or reduce this discrimination.”

That is a recommendation that the Commonwealth step in and take over from Queensland.

The report said that the Queensland Government ought to give Aborigines land rights. That is happening—and Queensland should be proud of it. However, members of the Labor Party have shown, once and for all, the sinister way in which they approach the matter of land rights. They do not want people to own land.

The long title of the Bill says that it is—

“ . . . to provide a sound and secure individual perpetual land title to residents of Queensland’s Aboriginal and Islander communities. ”

What is wrong with that?

**Mr Scott:** You know that that is nonsense.

**Mr JENNINGS:** No, it is not nonsense. The member for Cook said that we totally ignored the people of the Torres Strait.

**Mr Scott:** You did, too. I was talking to them on the telephone.

**Mr JENNINGS:** We still have the handwritten documents.

**Mr Scott:** Signed by them? Will you table them?

**Mr JENNINGS:** We will get them tabled.

**Mr SCOTT:** I rise to a point of order.

**Mr JENNINGS:** They can be tabled.

**Mr SCOTT:** The honourable member for Southport has referred to documents that I believe ought to be tabled in the House. They would be very important documents—but I do not believe he has them.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row):** Order!

**Mr JENNINGS:** We haven’t got them, but I can soon table them.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! I wish to deal with the point of order raised by the member for Cook. The member for Southport has referred to documents, but he has not demonstrated any documents. If the documents are not available for tabling, they cannot be tabled in this session.

**Mr Mackenroth:** He said in his speech that he would table them.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** If the documents are not available to be tabled, they cannot be tabled in this session. If the honourable member wishes to table documents, that is up to him.

**Mr JENNINGS:** I have them here. We will table them. I just want to read from them. They are handwritten. We had meetings with them.

**Mr Scott:** I will move that they be tabled.

**Mr JENNINGS:** I will table them. I wish to read from them.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The honourable member for Southport has undertaken to table the documents. I consider the matter settled.

**Mr SCOTT (Cook):** I move—

“That the documents referred to be tabled.”

**Mr JENNINGS:** I will table them. I wish to read from them first.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! There is no need for a motion. The honourable member has indicated that he will table them.

**Mr SCOTT:** I withdraw my motion.

**Mr JENNINGS:** I will table them. The member for Cook has seen them, anyway.

**Mr Scott:** Signed by Torres Strait Islanders, accepting this legislation?

**Mr JENNINGS:** The first is from Hope Vale and reads—

“The elected representatives of the Aboriginal reserves . . . representing the wishes of the majority of the people living on these reserves call for the provision and the establishment of self management of the reserves in accordance with similar and existing local Government principles throughout Queensland bearing in mind that the detailed administrative arrangements will be under the specific control of the individual Councils.

This meeting acknowledges the possible need to retain the expertise at present provided by D.A.I.A. personnel for a maximum period of 3 years, or longer if specifically requested by the Councils until sufficient reserve residents are appropriately trained.”

It was passed unanimously and signed by Roy Gray—

**Mr Scott:** Roy Gray is not at Hope Vale.

**Mr JENNINGS:** I cannot read the signature.

**Mr Scott:** Where is the reference to the mining style of tenure?

**Mr JENNINGS:** The member for Cook said that we did not consult the people.

**Mr Scott:** About this Bill.

**Mr JENNINGS:** The member for Cook should not try to squeeze out of it now. He can be slippery, but he cannot get out of it now. He said that we totally ignored the people of the Torres Strait.

**Mr Scott:** What is the date?

**Mr JENNINGS:** Twenty-fourth of the fifth.

**Mr Scott:** What year?

**Mr JENNINGS:** 24-3-84.

**Mr Scott:** That is a year ago. That has nothing to do with this legislation.

**Mr JENNINGS:** The member for Cook cannot get out of it. Last year he said that we did not consult them.

I can provide another example. The resolution was moved by Mick Connelly and seconded by David Brookdale, and it reads—

“That the meeting expresses—”

**Mr Scott:** You are wasting the time of the House.

**Mr JENNINGS:** No I am not. The member has just said that consultation did not take place. This is proof of what the Government did, and could there be anything better or more democratic?

**Mr Scott:** That happened years ago.

**Mr JENNINGS:** No. The honourable member cannot get out of it that way. He has said that the Government did not consult, but it did. What happened was that all of the leaders of the Torres Strait Islanders assembled and a meeting was held at which a document such as this was signed. Then all the Aboriginal settlements were visited and Government members went to the Yarrabah Aboriginal reserve and had a meeting with leaders there.

**Mr Scott:** You are wasting the time of the House.

**Mr JENNINGS:** No. The honourable member for Cook has been caught because the Government is honest and fair dinkum, and I have the proof of that.

In any case, as the Minister has said, the individual leases operate in exactly the same way as an individual lease that operates over mining areas in places such as Ipswich, Charters Towers and Gympie and they are designed to provide the owners with something of immense value, such as the mortgagability of land.

I turn now to highlight the seriousness of the situation caused by the approach adopted by the Federal Government. That Government has made it quite clear that it will take over Queensland reserves. The most important event that has occurred tonight is the exposure of the Opposition's game and plan by the honourable member for Cook. He knows as well as I do that the Queensland Government will thwart the Federal Government's intent to interfere. The Federal Government has no part to play because it does not support the action that the Queensland Government proposes to take. The Queensland Government proposes to confer private ownership, and the Federal Government does not believe in that kind of concept.

It is almost criminal that members of the Opposition, who, no doubt, own titles to their own homes and land, continue to deny the Aboriginal and Islander people the title that the Queensland Government proposes to offer them. Members of the Opposition ought to be ashamed of themselves because they are two-faced and hypocritical.

**Mr McLean:** Why don't you pay Aborigines award wages?

**Mr JENNINGS:** I will pay them award wages. Does the honourable member have the title deeds for his house and land? I feel sure that he owns a title deed.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row):** The honourable member for Bulimba should not interject unless he is seated in his usual place.

**Mr McLean:** The honourable member for Southport has robbed workers on the reserves for years. Why are award wages not being paid?

**Mr JENNINGS:** That is an incredible assertion. I employed Aboriginal workers for seven years in the Gulf of Carpentaria.

**Mr McLean:** Not one Aboriginal worker who is employed on a reserve is paid award wages, and the honourable member for Southport knows it. Every Government member knows it as well, so why aren't award wages being paid?

**Mr JENNINGS:** Anyone who is employed by the Department of Education is paid at the appropriate rate.

**Mr McLean:** Why don't you answer my question?

**Mr JENNINGS:** What question?

**Mr McLean:** Why don't you pay workers employed on reserves the wages they deserve?

**Mr JENNINGS:** Me?

**Mr McLean:** Yes. Why doesn't the Government that the honourable member represents pay proper wages?

**Mr JENNINGS:** What about teacher aides? They are paid award wages, so I do not know what the honourable member for Bulimba is talking about.

**Mr KATTER:** I rise to a point of order. I am unable to hear the member because of the noise that is coming from some empty symbols on the other side of the Chamber.

**Mr McLean:** Perhaps the Minister will answer my question.

**Mr Katter:** I most certainly will. I will be addressing remarks in my reply to the honourable member for Bulimba.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row):** Order! I draw the attention of all honourable members to the fact that a certain number of interjections are permissible, but multiple interjections that render the debate impossible to follow will not be allowed. I so rule.

**Mr JENNINGS:** In conclusion, I wish to quote the following—

“Federal Aboriginal Affairs Minister Clyde Holding has outlined proposals for national land rights legislation which will ensure one way or another that the process of carving up Australia begun in the Northern Territory is extended to the rest of the country.”

The quotation continues—

“Race relations in Australia are more harmonious now       ”

That is an expression of the politics of racial hatred, and that is exactly what the Opposition was talking about. Government members are called racists but when Clyde Holding's process is complete there will be legislation in every State, with consonant Commonwealth laws to override it when differences occur. All vacant Crown land will then be up for claims by Aborigines who can produce anthropological support for an inherited association and make out a case of need. That has frightening implications for this country, but this legislation will thwart it. It is the most progressive move ever made by this Parliament in regard to the future of land use in this State. It will thwart the Federal Government because it will give to the people the basics of what our side of the political fence is all about—freehold title.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row):** Order! I ask the honourable member for Southport to table the documents which he undertook to table.

*Whereupon the honourable member laid on the table the documents referred to.*

**Mr BRADDY (Rockhampton) (2.6 a.m.):** The legislation relates basically to the provision of land for residents on reserves. It relates to both housing allotments and land for commercial purposes that can be leased to Aborigines and Islander residents. The question to be decided is whether this legislation will validly carry out the purposes for which it was granted and whether it will act for the betterment of the Aboriginal and Islander people.

The member for Southport claimed that the shadow Minister opposed all private ownership of land by Aboriginal and Islander people. That remark was a gross insult to the honourable member for Cook (Mr Scott). The member for Southport was clearly not listening to him.



**Mr Jennings:** Now we are going to get the split in the Labor Party.

**Mr BRADDY:** Obviously the member for Southport did not listen to the member for Cook, so perhaps he should read his speech tomorrow. The member for Cook indicated that the principle of people being able to have their own housing allotments on reserves is certainly very acceptable to the Opposition. That was made very clear by the honourable member for Cook, so the honourable member for Southport was clearly not listening to him.

The attack made by the member for Cook related to whether this legislation is the best way of doing what it sets out to do, whether Aboriginal people have been adequately consulted about it and whether they are happy with the legislation in its present form.

I turn now to the Bill. Is it likely that this Government has introduced legislation following adequate consultation with the Aboriginal and Islander people? In its present form is it capable of doing what it sets out to do?

On 28 March I asked a question of the Minister for Tourism, National Parks, Sport and The Arts which related very much to this Government's attitude to Aboriginal people. I asked—

“Is it correct that the artistic director retained by the Queensland Government to prepare the Royal Festival performance program to commemorate the opening of the Lyric Theatre at the Performing Arts Complex on 20 April this year submitted a program to Cabinet which included a performance by the Aboriginal and Islander Dance Theatre of Queensland?”

The Minister gave what was at best a very technical answer. The Opposition has still not been able to track down the correct answer because the Minister today refused to talk to the media. The program “The National” showed that tonight.

**Mr Austin:** That would have been an unbiased report.

**Mr BRADDY:** Well, the Minister said——

“No. There was no submission taken to Cabinet.”

**Mr Austin:** True.

**Mr BRADDY:** I therefore have to accept and do accept that no submission was taken to Cabinet, but it appears now that the Minister blocked the performance by the Aboriginal people at that very important festival. That is symbolic of the attitude of this Government to the Aboriginal people. I do not say that it is typical of the attitude of the Minister who is responsible for this legislation. His attitude is an improvement on that of the Minister for Tourism, National Parks, Sport and The Arts and the rest of his Government. This Minister has to carry the load for the rest of the Government.

There is in the Government a Minister who did not believe that the Government would want an Aboriginal performance at that most important festival for the people of Queensland. It is now clear that the performance was deleted from the program, and I challenge the Government to deny it. It was included in the program by the director of the festival who was engaged by the Government to prepare a program for the opening of the theatre. I challenge the Government to deny what I am saying in this House. I challenge the responsible Minister to come into this Chamber and tell us that what I am saying is not true. I understand that today he refused to talk to the media about that matter. That is symbolic of the Government.

The Minister for Northern Development and Aboriginal and Island Affairs has a real problem with a Government of that nature, which cannot face up to the sound of a didgeridoo in the Lyric Theatre or to Aboriginal and Islander people dancing on the stage as the first item in the concert. How can this Minister present fair legislation?

**Mr Cooper:** What has this got to do with the Bill?

**Mr BRADDY:** I am giving the background to show what the Government's attitude is. It certainly has a lot more to do with the Bill than the tirade that we got from the honourable member for Southport, who referred to Mr Holding and his land deals in Victoria.

**Mr Austin** interjected.

**Mr BRADDY:** I am talking about a program that is symbolic of the people of Queensland. It was prepared specially to summarise the culture of the State. Not one Aboriginal item has been included in the program. In fact, one item has been deleted from it.

The problem facing the Minister is that he has the Government to deal with. What has he done in relation to consultation? The honourable member for Cook (Mr Scott) challenged the Minister and the member for Southport to produce proof of adequate consultation taking place, not in relation to past matters—we know that that was inadequate—but in relation to this legislation. The member for Cook asked the House: When have the Aboriginal Co-ordinating Council and the Islander Co-ordinating Council met? The Minister made no reference to those bodies in his second-reading speech. If those important bodies have ever met at all, when was this House informed of that fact? If those important bodies have met in relation to this legislation, why was not reference to their advice and approval included in the Minister's speech? The member for Cook, other Opposition members and I say that those bodies have not been given an adequate opportunity to give their advice and to give instructions to the Minister and, therefore, to the House.

It is not surprising that, even though the Minister set out with a good purpose, namely, to give some right of ownership to people living in these areas, he is likely to fail. What proof is there that those co-ordinating councils or other relevant Aboriginal consultative bodies have given their approval to this legislation?

This legislation is important because it deals with people who, whether the honourable member for Southport likes it or not, have a different life-style from the people who live in the cities and towns and on farms in Queensland and Australia. The concept of communal title and spiritual living is not relevant to our life-style and has not been so for many centuries.

During the debate on the deeds of grant in trust legislation, the Minister for Aboriginal and Island Affairs recognised the concept that it is important that much of the land in Aboriginal communities remain communal. Have the Aboriginal people been consulted about that land? Has adequate thought been given to the alienation of that land by the leasing method so that, in effect, very little of the communal title will remain to the people? That is the particular worry of the Opposition in relation to this Bill.

No particular problems will arise in leasing small housing allotments. However, problems may arise when the remaining land is leased for commercial purposes. I do admit that the legislation provides that that land cannot be leased by way of perpetual lease, although the small housing allotments can.

If communal land is leased for a period of, say, 30 years for commercial purposes, what will the other people living on the reserve make of that? What jealousies will develop? I can foresee that difficulties will arise when a member of the community applies for a lease over land of which the traditional owner has always believed that he has ownership.

From the Minister's second-reading speech, it appears that these concepts have not been discussed with the Aboriginal and Islander people. Problems relating to the leasing of land for commercial purposes will occur. I ask the Minister to provide proof that adequate or even minor consultation has taken place. I ask him to reply to satisfy me that leasing can be done in such a way that the people will not be seething with unrest as a result of the legislation.

It is all very well for the honourable member for Southport to say that other Australians prefer to have land dealt with privately, but that is not typical of the people who live in the communities, as he well knows, if he stops to think about it for a while. The communal and spiritual attachment of the Aboriginal people to their land must be protected.

This legislation provides that land will become Crown land when it is leased to those members of the community who apply for leases, whether they be for housing allotments or for commercial purposes. I suggest that that was not the Minister's intention when he introduced the deeds of grant in trust legislation. As the honourable member for Cook suggested, the better course would be to make some arrangements pursuant to the deeds of grant in trust legislation.

**Mr Katter:** May I answer that question? Will you take an interjection?

**Mr BRADDY:** Yes, certainly.

**Mr Katter:** The reason we did that was to give them a title identical to that held by anyone in Queensland so that in commercial dealings with banks relating to mortgages they would not think that they had a funny-money title that had no effect. We wanted to have something that they would recognise, and that is the reason we did it that way.

**Mr BRADDY:** I respect the Minister's logical answer. Although it is fine for those people who will deal with banks, building societies or the Aboriginal Development Commission, what about those who live on the reserves and are otherwise not involved? What about their concerns about the protection of the communal lands and their attachment to them?

This problem is peculiar to this group of people; it does not occur anywhere else in Queensland. Their rights must be protected. A way must be found to enable people to undertake commercial enterprises on this land. It must also be possible for them to arrange loans, and I presume that they will need security for those loans.

The Opposition does not wish to prevent these people from engaging in business dealings. However, that must not be done at the risk of creating seething unrest amongst the balance of the population.

The Northern Territory legislation also provided the opportunity for people to lease the land. By comparison, that land was not so closely settled and was much larger in area than the small areas of land under discussion, which have comparatively large Aboriginal communities living on them. What will happen very quickly is that the smarter people will get in and arrange a 30-year lease over the good land. The others, in the community will be virtually unable to acquire a lease over land.

It seems to the Opposition that the legislation will cause considerable problems within the communities. I can appreciate the logic of trying to give people their own housing on their own piece of land and allowing them to engage in commercial enterprises, but the legislation creates more problems than it solves. Therefore, it must be rethought. The Opposition must oppose it in its present form.

One provision of the Bill attempts to make the tenants responsible for their houses. The Opposition does not oppose that. The Opposition says that what must be remembered is that many of these houses are now in a dilapidated condition. I foreshadow an amendment that will make the responsibility placed on these people no higher than that which is placed on tenants under the Residential Tenancies Act.

The end result is that the Opposition is not opposed to the principles that the Minister is trying to achieve, but it seriously challenges that the Minister has looked at the problems adequately and had sufficient discussions with the members of the communities, who will have to live with the legislation. The Opposition seriously challenges that this legislation is the best method of achieving what the Minister has set

out to achieve. For those reasons, the Opposition will oppose the legislation in its present form.

**Mr McPHIE (Toowoomba North) (2.22 a.m.):** I wish to deal very briefly with only one small aspect of the Bill. It deals with small business. I will not present the House with the type of rambling, gloomy diatribe that it has already experienced from the member for Cook (Mr Scott). I choose not to mention the disjointed contribution of the member for Rockhampton. I do not know why he is in this place. He would be far better off keeping to his practice as a solicitor.

The Bill is designed to help Aborigines and Islanders commence small businesses. The aspect of the Bill dealing with land-holdings has been adequately dealt with by the honourable member for Southport (Mr Jennings). Significantly, if a title is held to a piece of land, it provides the ability to mortgage that land to raise money to commence businesses.

**Mr Scott interjected.**

**Mr McPHIE:** This will not happen overnight. It will not appear suddenly, as the honourable member for Cook seems to think it should.

The Government is giving the Aborigines and Islanders the chance to develop their own free enterprises and the same rights and privileges to develop as are given to other Queenslanders. Of course, they will be expected to accept the same responsibilities and obligations as other Queenslanders.

The Bill emphasises and encourages self-sufficiency and independence. It promotes private enterprise. I was a member of the Minister's party that visited Thursday Island, Yarrabah and Woorabinda. I was most impressed by the capability, the pride, the dignity and the independence of the people. At every place we visited, the message was clear that they welcomed this opportunity. I congratulate the Minister on giving it to them. Because they are Queenslanders and because they recognise the opportunity that the Government is giving them, they wish to stand with us.

The Government's policy is complete equality. The Bill is a move in that direction. The Government is introducing the private ownership of land and houses as well as the opportunity to own cattle stations and farms and to establish fishing undertakings.

**Mr Scott interjected.**

**Mr McPHIE:** This is not the gloom and the knocking that we hear from the honourable member for Cook. I have been in this House for 18 months and I have heard nothing but that from the honourable member, yet he claims to represent those Aboriginal people. They will toss him out. He will be gone next time. They will be sick of his efforts. They want a new representative in the electorate of Cook.

The introduction of private ownership for those people includes business and commercial undertakings. There are great opportunities for tourism. Yarrabah is a wonderful place for tourism. There are even provisions for mining. There is already stimulated productive effort.

Reference has already been made to what is happening at Edward River. Development is taking place at other places as well. Where development has not started, the communities are ready for it. The developments will provide security and pride. An immense range of jobs will be provided so that people can earn their own living. They have not had that opportunity before. There will be carpenters, builders, electricians, plumbers, garage mechanics, butchers and shops of all types that can be opened by persons who have the initiative and ability to commence a business. Artefacts can be produced. They are already being produced and marketed very successfully at Edward River. Jobs will be created for market gardeners. With some encouragement, the work that can be done by those people is almost unlimited. The Government is providing encouragement.

Unlike the honourable member for Cook, the Government is not knocking them. The Bill is a Bill for individuals and Queenslanders. The Government accepts that some businesses might fail. Businesses would fail in any community when they are over-stretched. The people in the north cannot be wet-nursed. They have to stand on their own two feet. Although there will be failures, many of them will be successful. They will be a credit to the Minister and his department.

Baled up with this matter is the private ownership of land. That matter is covered completely in the Bill. Provision is made for applications to be made to the trustee council. Provision is made for the rental or purchase of structural improvements. The Bill contains lease responsibilities for repairs and maintenance of the structural improvements. Provision exists for appeals against forfeiture of land when things go wrong and a person has to give up his land holding. Provision is also made for mortgagability so that finance can be raised to establish businesses.

I ask the Minister to include in the regulations a provision to protect those people from the finance sharks who will go to the north and try to make a killing. Those people should not be allowed amongst the Aborigines and Islanders, especially in the initial stages of the program.

I do not know whether Father Frank Brennan is still in the north, but he said—

“I regard the proposals as a welcome attempt to address a major problem for land tenure in the more commercially minded Aboriginal and Islander communities.”

I could be blamed for taking that matter out of context. However, I did not intend to do that.

The Minister should be congratulated on what he has done. He should not be criticised or condemned by the Opposition.

**Mr Scott:** He should be forgiven.

**Mr McPHIE:** I have seen what the Labor Party has produced. I have a copy of the Commonwealth Preferred National Aboriginal Land Rights Model. It is a lot of tripe. It does not say anything about starting them off in business.

The honourable member for Rockhampton (Mr Braddy) referred to consultation. Let us examine the consultation that takes place between Federal members. The Minister for Health (Mr Austin) experienced consultation on Medicare. He received a telex setting out the Federal Government's ideas. He was asked, “Do you agree or don't you agree?” That is the Federal Government's idea of consultation. Government members go to the north and talk to the people. I talked to the honourable member for Cook when I visited the area. He knows that I was there. It is nonsense to say that members of the Government have not visited the area and consulted the people.

I conclude by quoting the following passage from the Minister's second-reading speech—

“Queensland is the only State in which that foresight and confidence in the Aboriginal and Islander people is evident. . .”

The Minister also said—

“ this Bill will encourage and facilitate maximum usage of the tremendous resource that is available to the Aboriginal and Islander people. ”

They can make a start on developing 7.5m acres of Queensland. The development that the Queensland Government will see through will be magnificent. It will be a credit to it in the years ahead.

The Minister further stated—

“It is land traditionally owned and occupied by them. The Government is now confident that individuals and communities will move towards self-sufficiency through private enterprise ”

The Bill is a giant step forward in the granting of equal rights and the provision of opportunities to Aborigines and Islanders in Queensland. They will stand beside other people from Queensland with pride.

I congratulate the Minister and his departmental officers on the Bill. I support it totally.

**Mr PRICE** (Mount Isa) (2.30 a.m.): During the election campaign in October 1980, the Premier said that the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Acts would be abolished. In March 1982, the Premier and the Deputy Premier announced a new system of land tenure over Aboriginal reserves known as the deed of grant in trust. In February 1984, the Minister for Northern Development and Aboriginal and Island Affairs (Mr Katter) told the House—

“The amended legislation will give to the Aboriginal residents rights of occupation and land management for themselves and their children that are complete and beyond interference except by a special Act of Parliament.”

The new land legislation was to be complemented by services legislation which would repeal the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Acts and ensure that Aborigines and Islanders have the same rights, privileges and responsibilities as every other Queenslanders.

All honourable members will recall Friday, 13 April 1984, the dawning of the new age for Aborigines with the introduction of those two new Acts. In spite of the Government's claim that the new Acts do not give Aborigines and Islanders the same rights, privileges and responsibilities as every other Queenslanders, they do not fulfil the expressed and recorded wishes of the elected leaders of the Queensland reserves.

The Queensland Government has never held a public inquiry of any kind into Aboriginal land rights. The Minister says in his speech that he had exhaustive consultation with the Aboriginal and Islander people. That consisted of mainly public meetings. The Minister is perpetuating this Government's tyranny over the legitimate aspirations of Aboriginal citizens.

The issue of land rights is one of justice and not charity. All that Aborigines and Islanders are looking for is legal recognition of the fact that they have always lived on their land, land to which no other person has a moral claim. The Government is intent on dispossessing the Aborigines and Islanders altogether, driving them into the sea, if necessary, or further—out of sight and out of mind.

It is not as though land is scarce. Most of their claims to land would be satisfied out of the large left-overs, that is, the unalienated Crown lands. The Local Government (Aboriginal Lands) Act of 1978 constituted Mornington Island and Aurukun as shires with some special provisions. The success of those shires has to be seen to be believed. On Mornington Island in particular, which happens to be in my electorate, the progress is very evident. The community development employment program that has been instituted there by the people actually pooling their dole reserves and using that money to attract grant money from the Federal Government has been used to bring the island back to life. Every person on that island at the moment is fully employed. The council on the island actually has the right to raise money by other means such as by the sale of beer. It does not have the control of liquor, but it can sell beer and other commodities. The market garden on the island has made the 900 residents self-sufficient in fresh vegetables.

The residents have now purchased a barge and they run across from Mornington Island to Karumba. The day before yesterday, the Minister tried to imply that he had something to do with that. I had advised the Islanders that, in working out their priorities, they get a supply system that could use the bitumen road all the way from the capital city right through to Karumba. By doing that, they would cut freight costs. The freight bill for the island was enormous. As they are Queensland's most remote community, they have suffered greatly. However, while the Minister was touting his ideas for a barge

up in the Gulf, perhaps unbeknown to him discussions were already being held among the people on Mornington Island with a view to their going it alone.

**Mr Katter:** It's hurting that we did that one, when you criticised us.

**Mr PRICE:** Because the Minister got in a little too late, after we had already started doing it? It is a shame that he did not know about it. It has turned out that way, and it is all the better for the people of Mornington Island.

If I might stray a little from the principles of the Bill—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row):** Order! The honourable member cannot stray too far at this hour.

**Mr PRICE:** It is important that I express my concern about an incident that occurred recently on Mornington Island. It perhaps reflects on the Government and the way in which the people are treated by it. Recently on the island a rape occurred involving six youths. The youths were quickly flown to Mount Isa to face trial. Apparently the incident coincided with the extension of drinking laws on the island. On the night that the drinking laws were extended, the six youths attacked a 40-year-old woman. They caused severe injuries to her, including a broken jaw. The woman was not found until approximately half past 11 the following day. She also was flown immediately to Mount Isa. Unfortunately, she died two days ago. The youths now face a murder charge.

Today in the mail I received six statutory declarations from the parents of the youths involved. I have been in touch with the Minister for Lands, Forestry and Police (Mr Glasson) about them. The youths range in age from 14 to 17 years. With your permission, Mr Deputy Speaker, I will read one of the affidavits to indicate the treatment of the youths at the hands of the police on the island. The statutory declaration is from Teddy Moon of Gununa, Mornington Island—

“ .. on Sunday 31st March, 1985 me and my wife Bessy were out of town and away from our house. We were hunting. At about 12 o'clock in the day we came home. There was no one at our home. Bessy and me went to my mother's house. She is Dot Evans. She told us that the police had taken our son Rowan Moon away for questioning. She did not know what the Police had taken Rowan away for. She said the police did not tell her. We went home. Rowan didn't come home so we got worried about him and went to the Police station. Bessy said to Graham Wilson an aboriginal policeman why they take Rowan. He didn't tell her. Bessy said she wanted to see Rowan and Graham said they had him up top in the police station and she couldn't go up there. We went home. Later our niece told us Rowan was charged but she didn't know what he was charged with. Just before dark we went to the police station with supper for Rowan. The sergeant drove up and took the meal off Bessy and took it over to the lockup and he told Bessy to put the tea on the step of the police station. The sergeant told us that we were not allowed to see Rowan. He did not tell us what Rowan was locked up for. We went back to the police station on Monday to give Rowan lunch. The constable let us inside the lockup to see Rowan. He said Rowan was going to be flown out to Mt. Isa. He did not tell us what Rowan was charged with. We are responsible and look after our son. We are very worried and upset and we think the police should have let us see Rowan and be with him and they should have told us what was happening. They did not come to our house at all.”

Although I have no sympathy with the perpetrators of the crime, I express my concern about the treatment meted out by the police. The other statutory declarations tend to carry the same message.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! I do not wish to hear the other statutory declarations. The honourable member has made his point. He will now return to the principles of the Bill.

**Mr PRICE:** I take your point, Mr Deputy Speaker. I do not wish to read them out. However, I think they should be tabled for the perusal of the Minister for Northern Development and Aboriginal and Island Affairs. He should be concerned about their contents. Perhaps the incident can be investigated by him, with the help of the Minister for Police, to whom I have handed copies of the statutory declarations, with a view to straightening the matter out.

I refer to the Lucas report that was published in 1977 as a statement for the guidance of police and the application of the law with respect to the treatment of persons under disability. The Lucas report recommendations include——

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! I ask the honourable member for Mount Isa to return to the provisions of the Bill. He has strayed from the subject of the debate, and I believe that the matter now referred to could be the subject of another debate on another occasion.

**Mr PRICE:** I take the point that you have made, Mr Deputy Speaker.

I wish to finish my reference to that report by saying that it contains paragraphs that purported to deal with most Aborigines and children under 17 years of age. I ask the Minister to examine those paragraphs of the Lucas report and use them for guidance when dealing with the statutory declarations that I will table.

Despite pressure being applied by the Commonwealth Government, the Queensland Government has indicated that it is not in favour of the adoption of the Aurukun or Mornington Island community model in other areas. The Minister for Northern Development and Aboriginal and Island Affairs (Mr Katter) told me towards the end of last year that as soon as the Doomadgee community, for instance, wanted to be designated as a shire, that could be done.

I will take the Minister at his word on that matter, and I will certainly be applying pressure. The people of the Doomadgee community have indicated to me that that is the way that they want to go.

**Mr Scott:** I doubt whether the Minister has enough to say about it. It will be up to the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing, and he may not appoint an Aboriginal council to administer that shire.

**Mr PRICE:** I take the point raised by the honourable member for Cook and acknowledge that he has quite comprehensively covered the provisions of the Bill. He has been able to pinpoint the weaknesses of the Minister.

To add to the confusion created by the Government's attempts to initiate unique legislation for the people who live in the reserves, the Government has presented a load of double-dutch. As I address myself to the business of the Bill, I find that its provisions have been covered comprehensively by other speakers. However, I believe that the major points are worth repeating.

The approach adopted by the Queensland Government refuses to acknowledge the people whom it purports to serve. The history of the Department of Community Services evidences a lack of notice taken by it in its failure to heed the wishes of the people who live in Aboriginal and Islander communities. The total extent of the consultation that took place over the deeds of grant in trust legislation amounted to public meetings in major communities throughout the State at which the Minister told the people what they wanted.

Since that time, amendments to the relevant community services legislation has been followed by the presentation of the legislation that is presently being considered. Again, no further consultations have taken place. In the early years of the Minister's life, he gained experience by working in mineral fields and an understanding of the operations of a perpetual lease. I guess that he has tripped over the idea of perpetual lease conditions being incorporated in the legislation because he believes that that is the



way to go. He has been able to convince others who are not well informed, and that has compounded the difficulties and prevented the presentation of the deeds of grant in trust legislation.

The Minister started out as Queensland's black hope, and his northern life-style augured well for an understanding of the problems and an active role of the Government in the affairs of Aborigines and Islanders. Unfortunately, Mr Killoran and the Premier and Treasurer have been able to warp his vision by passing on their belief that the same treatment for all Queenslanders should be applied on a uniform basis. The Minister has capitulated in his attitude, and now espouses the approach taken by the Government.

The Minister realises that the concepts associated with ownership of land for the people referred to in the Bill are completely different from ours. The Minister knows that common ownership and inalienable security are of principal importance, but not for motives of personal gain. They are purely related to the knowledge that these people will always have, with no strings attached, somewhere to go, somewhere to return to, and something that cannot be taken away by anybody, either now or in the future. People do not want to mortgage the land, sell it or keep it as a nest egg. Although the people understand the individual ownership concept of land, land is sacred to them in a way that words in the English language are unable to express.

I can foresee the initial acceptance of the legislation by the people, but I believe that their hearts and souls will not be in the acceptance. Because the Minister has not consulted the people, it will mean that the people will make no effort to participate and can only offer their efforts to please. In the Doomadgee community, to my knowledge, only one person has indicated an interest in private enterprise.

In his second-reading speech the Minister, in his inimitable style, declared his support for Aboriginal entitlements, particularly in the fields of hospitals, schools, police, roads and so on. Boy, what a laugh!

The Doomadgee hospital has eight beds. God knows how long ago it was that money was spent on it prior to last year, when all of a sudden a \$10,000 grant was made to fix up the hospital, which had been condemned on at least two occasions that I know of. The bed space had been gradually whittled down to the point at which only two patients can occupy the hospital. Only 12 months ago there was insufficient sterilising equipment——

**Mr JENNINGS:** In view of the hour, I rise to a point of order. The honourable member is talking about police matters. He is now talking about a hospital. There is no reference in this Bill to hospitals. I submit that the honourable member's speech is completely irrelevant to the Bill.

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

**Mr PRICE:** Now that the Minister for Education (Mr Powell) has assumed responsibility for the schools in these areas, they are starting to come good. Fortunately, teachers are now being transferred and are remaining in the area.

The policing of the Doomadgee area, which comes under the jurisdiction of this Bill, is not very good; in fact, it is non-existent. The 1 200 people at Doomadgee are being looked after by six Aboriginal police aides who are not fully trained in the law. I have previously complained about the complete lack of interest on the part of this Government in providing police for the area. Recently, however, the Minister for Lands, Forestry and Police (Mr Glasson) has been kind enough to mention to me that there is a possibility of police being stationed in the area, and that is great. I hope that that seed will grow. The six Aboriginal police aides cannot really do anything. They cannot even arrest anybody. I have mentioned before that, the last time I was at Doomadgee, three of them had broken limbs, two were on holidays and the remaining fellow was too scared to go to work.

I want to mention here the necessity for better town-planning. That was mentioned by the member for Cook, and it was brought home to me recently by the acquisition of new homes for Doomadgee. This year has probably been the greatest year of development on that reserve, and 30-odd homes will be transported to the area. I thank the Minister for Works and Housing (Mr Wharton) for his efforts in obtaining houses for what was probably the area of greatest need in Queensland. However, no thanks are due to Mr Katter for that.

The administrator, though, was trying to push the council into placing those houses in a certain area that I did not consider suitable. He assured me that that was the wish of the council. I thought that the plots were too close together. I asked the administrator what town-planning went on at Doomadgee. He assured me that the services of a Government town-planner were available. About 15 small dwellings in a concentrated area in the old town of Doomadgee were torn down. Some had been built on areas as small as 10 perches or even less. They were being torn down and replaced by the solid three-bedroom homes.

Perhaps two of them would have had to be knocked down in order to erect one of the new houses.

**Mr KATTER:** I rise to a point of order. I do not really think that this has anything to do with the Bill. If the honourable member wants to send me a letter, I will gladly do something about it, but I would like him to come back to the Bill.

**Mr PRICE:** I shall quote what the Minister said in his speech. He said—

“Therefore, while this work is ongoing, the Government has facilitated the issue of the deeds of grant in trust and the individual issues by making provision in this Bill for the automatic excision of Crown land for the purposes of providing an instrument of title . . .”

That raised in my mind the town-planning issue. I will leave the matter there and ask the Minister to make some comment. I am disturbed that town-planners in Brisbane can do it on the say-so of part-time or full-time administrators on the reserves.

**Mr Katter:** What are you asking for?

**Mr PRICE:** I would like a town-planner to have a look at an area such as Doomadgee. Probably a town plan was prepared at the turn of the century or when the mission was first established there. I do not know whether a town plan has been prepared, but I was assured by the administrator that a town-planner does look at those matters.

**Mr Scott:** I do not think that this Bill could operate effectively without town plans being implemented in those communities.

**Mr PRICE:** I take the honourable member's point. I am asking that a town-planner look at these matters before the provisions in this legislation are implemented. I see a need for a town-planner to look at these matters even without the implementation of the provisions of this legislation.

I refer now to the occupational provisions, such as those relating to miners' homestead perpetual leases that the Minister mentioned. He knows the troubles that MHPLs cause in mining areas. Mining leases are subjected to conditions, such as continuous and bona fide use, payment of rental and the performance of labour conditions. The Minister claims that these perpetual leases are exactly the same as those found in mining areas. I do not know whether the conditions would be the same as those that I have just mentioned. Labour conditions apply to mining itself; but under miners homestead perpetual leases, those conditions can be done away with and other conditions can be included.

A few years ago, quarter-acre blocks were made available in areas such as Mount Isa and Charters Towers, and people were required to provide \$1,000 worth of improvements on the land before they could receive the lease document. Has the Minister failed

to mention any other occupational provisions, such as those applying to MHPLs? If so, how does he expect people to pay the cost involved in implementing those types of provisions? I do not even know how people will be able to pay for the improvements that are on the land.

The other point that I wish to make concerns the interjection that I made when the Minister was making his second-reading speech. I interjected and pointed out that miners' homestead perpetual leases can be freeholded. The Minister gave what turned out to be the most confusing explanation that I have ever heard. He stated—

“Freehold replacement of the entail system meant non-saleability of land.”

I got a couple of legal people to look at that and they could not understand it. I still cannot get any sense out of it.

**Mr Katter:** I would advise you to change your lawyers.

**Mr PRICE:** Is that right? I looked at the Act to find out what the Minister was trying to say, and I think that I have worked it out. A person would have to be a Philadelphia lawyer to work out what the Minister meant. Obviously, he misunderstood my question. However, I will ask it again.

The Minister stated that this Bill will give people exactly the same title as a perpetual lease in mining areas. I question whether the land can be freeholded. The Mining Titles Freeholding Act that came in in 1957—

**Mr Katter:** If you will accept an interjection—freehold means saleability and the right to own land. The one thing that everybody in the House agreed on was that they did not want the land sold to outsiders at this stage in the development of the reserves. Freehold gives saleability to outsiders. If you want that, fine; but come out and say it. That is what freehold means.

**Mr PRICE:** I accept the Minister's point. However, I point out to him that, contrary to what he says, that is not so. As an owner of a perpetual lease or a miner's homestead perpetual lease, I have the right to sell that land to anyone, either outside or inside the community. The Minister will not qualify his statement, but he wants me to qualify mine.

**Mr Katter:** Do you want us to do that?

**Mr PRICE:** I am not asking the Minister to do that. He has become the Minister for sweeping statements.

**Mr Scott:** He is called something else outside the Chamber.

**Mr PRICE:** I had to hesitate before I said that.

If in the future the people will have freehold title, there will be hope for the legislation. However, I do not think that that is the Minister's intention, because he has just overstated his claim, so to speak.

The Minister has visited the communities and is fond of telling the House that he is in control of his portfolio. He claims that he has a good knowledge of the Aboriginal and Islander people. I ask him to consider the ramifications of these leases. The Government is working towards setting up a State bank, but I wonder which bank will lend money for mortgages on properties that may well be deserted on the expiration of the leases. The bank would have to hold the property and try to get rid of it in a 12-month period.

**Mr Scott:** To a qualified person.

**Mr PRICE:** Yes, to a person who meets the requirements. I do not know of any bank that would lend money in that way. The Minister is kidding himself if he thinks that that will happen.

At the expiration of the leases, land reverts to the Crown. I have asked the Minister to detail what the provisions of tenure will be. Perhaps he will give me an answer in his reply.

The Minister must be aware of the problems faced by the Lands Department over miners' homestead perpetual leases. I could take the Minister to land in Mount Isa that has been held under that type of lease for 20 years, but the requirements of the lease have not been carried out. No inspector from the mining warden's office or from the land commissioner's office has checked to see whether the provisions of the lease have been carried out. Until that is done, the land cannot be used. It is tied up ad infinitum.

Because there is so little agricultural land at Doomadgee, only a few people take it up. The land use is held together by the administrator in the community interest. Under this legislation, the Government wants to break that land up and lease it to individuals.

As the honourable member for Southport said, the cattle country up there is not like the wonderful land at Yarrabah. The cattle-carrying capacity of the land at Doomadgee is extremely low, and one or two people would not be able to make a living off the land. If, by chance, a couple of people did make a go of it, others would want a share in the land, and five or six people would soon control the business side of the reserve's affairs and nothing would be left for anyone else. No-one could start up in opposition, because this concept is bound by the parameters of the reserve on which the people live.

**Mr Katter:** You controlled the transport industry in Mount Isa. Did you think that that was bad?

**Mr PRICE:** Others had room to compete against me. However, in areas such as Doomadgee, there will be nothing left to compete with. The people must be able to afford to set up commercial enterprises. When they can, the development is limited.

**Mr Katter:** You held all the transport contracts in Mount Isa.

**Mr PRICE:** I did?

**Mr Katter:** Yes.

**Mr PRICE:** No, I did not, but I went close.

**Mr Katter** interjected.

**Mr PRICE:** There was sufficient competition, but there will not be enough competition on these lands.

**Mr Scott:** The Minister has a magic wand that he will wave.

**Mr PRICE:** That is right, that is how he will give them the money to do it all. In the preamble, the Minister has passed the buck onto some future Government.

*Time expired.*

*Whereupon the honourable member laid on the table the documents referred to.*

**Mr LINGARD (Fassifern) (3 a.m.):** As I have lived on the Torres Strait islands, I would have liked the chance to make an extensive contribution to the debate. However, at 3 a.m., I must express my regret at what the Opposition is now doing. The House has previously experienced this. The Opposition spokesman went on for a great deal of time. I do not resent his doing that, but I object to his continual repetition. At his command, other back-bench members are continuing with his repetition to fill up the time.

Because they provide for the ownership of houses and land in those communities, the changes contained in the Bill are very desirable. The legislation is necessary for the

deed of grant in trust areas so that the Government can provide individual perpetual titles to the communities.

I would have liked to concentrate on the aspects of housing. As has been explained, the Bill allows for the excision of Crown land for the purposes of hospitals, schools, police stations and similar facilities. However, it is also necessary to issue leases over areas so that individuals may have ownership of their own residences. That will mean that many Aborigines and Islanders will now be able to own their own homes and be responsible for their maintenance.

The area of the Torres Strait islands shows great contrasts in the care which both Aborigines and Islanders take of their housing. One sees a difference in the housing on Umagico and New Mapoon compared with Bamaga, Red Island Point and Cowal Creek. The people on Darnley, Murray, Yorke and Yam Islands look after their houses with great pride, but there is a great difference on Saibai and Boigu.

What I am trying to say is that when these people are given the opportunity to maintain their own homes with pride, they can certainly do it very well. The Government believes that the Aborigines and Islanders of this State should enjoy the same rights and privileges as other Queenslanders. The councils should be based on the same concept and face the same demands as any of the 134 local authorities in the State.

The Government must learn to remove any paternalistic and Big Brother mentality towards the new communities, the same as it must remove any dependence on the hand-out or welfare state mentality.

The bold step being made by the Government is appreciated by the Aborigines and Islanders. Many specific problems will have to be faced, but I trust that the long-term effects will be self-government and control by people who I know have great pride in their history and culture.

**Mr EATON (Mourilyan) (3.3 a.m.):** I would like to join the debate——

**Mr Lee:** The member for Fassifern showed a bit of consideration for the Hansard staff. Why don't you do the same?

**Mr EATON:** I will do the same.

As other members of the Opposition do, I believe in the intent of the Bill but I am concerned about the fact that it is within a couple of days of 12 months since the Parliament sat all night debating legislation dealing with Aborigines and Islanders. The legislation that should be amended should have enabled the resumption of that reserve land for Crown land. Then those in the community could have been given perpetual leases. For some reason, the Government wishes to avoid long-term leases, except in certain areas. Had the Government taken that course, the Aborigines and Islanders would have been well on the way towards establishing grazing and many other projects throughout the reserve areas. I have been onto a few of the reserves in Queensland.

Although in a debate earlier this year the Minister for Lands, Forestry and Police said that someone had said that the land of the Cape York Peninsula was virtually all mongrel country, I think he will find that it contains many rich areas. Anybody who goes to the missions at the right time of the year will find that they grow beautiful, quality fruit and vegetables.

I know that that is not done all the time. On occasions I have visited those areas. Because the Government would not replace a part for an irrigation pump, the crops died. A couple of years ago I saw a beautiful crop of bananas at one of the missions. It shows that such places can be self-sufficient if they are given the right encouragement. I do not believe that the Bill will provide that encouragement.

Several attempts have been made to introduce similar Bills. Like many other Bills, this Bill will be kept in the cupboard awaiting the Governor's signature. The Government has used such Bills to buy time instead of making a genuine contribution to the problem.

I do not dispute that problems are encountered in setting up communities and providing land so that there is justice as well as satisfaction in the communities.

Under the Bill, the trustee council will need to allocate the land. I can envisage problems in that area. Certain tribal customs are still honoured by some families. They still play a great role in those communities today, despite the fact that they are pushed into the background by politicians. The communities have great respect for their tribal elders. That is something that should be examined on a broader scale, particularly when large areas of land are allocated. If the area of land is more than 1 ha, the conditions that apply to a building allotment do not apply. In some of the areas that I have visited I have seen communal areas of about 1 ha that are used for gardens, plantations and so forth.

I remember seeing the Minister on a television program in the company of a couple of boys from Edward River. Two men out of a community of hundreds would have been controlling a large area of land. The rest of the community could be offside with them, or they could be offside with the community. Those are problems that will be encountered if the Bill is implemented.

As I stated earlier, I have very grave doubts that the Government will go ahead and implement the Bill. In 12 months' time honourable members could find that amendments to the Bill will be introduced without its being proclaimed. The Opposition realises that the Minister has some problems. It is not easy to find a solution. When a solution is found, it is not easy to implement it, because of the diversity of certain areas of Queensland and because Aborigines and Islanders still honour certain customs. Because of the customs and traditions of the various tribes in the Torres Strait, great respect is paid to persons in authority.

The Opposition is concerned about the financing of the projects. The Opposition accepts that the Government has good intent and that it proposes to provide assistance with some projects. The funding of those projects will be a matter of concern.

I have seen good crops ruined because the Government would not fly a part for an irrigation pump to a settlement. I have seen crops of tomatoes and cucumbers that were bigger than any produce one would find in the market-place in Brisbane. I know that distance from the market-place is a problem. I am sure that it is possible to overcome that problem. As there are always planes flying goods into the Torres Strait, there will always be a load to fly out from those areas. Transport will be the smallest problem that will be faced.

The communities will need backing from the Government. I am sure that the Minister and the other members of Parliament who travelled with him to Cape York would have seen great stands of timber. I know that years ago in some areas timber-mills were operated. That is going back to the days when churches operated the missions. On some missions the communities kept dairy cows and bee-hives and operated their own sawmills. Because of the road conditions, the overland route can be used for only half of the year. At the moment it is costing the Government dearly to freight in the type of housing that is needed in the area. It is about three times the usual cost to anybody else in Queensland. The timber is there. All that is needed is a sawmill and somebody with a little bit of nous and know-how, and those communities will be able to operate their own sawmills. If the Minister for Lands, Forestry and Police has been up there, he will have recognised the potential in that particular area.

In my opinion, grazing and agriculture are most suitable projects for those communities. Again, I say that it will take a little bit of know-how. There are cattle herds in the area, but because of inbreeding they need building up. As both the Minister for Lands, Forestry and Police (Mr Glasson) and the Minister for Northern Development and Aboriginal and Island Affairs come from the land, I am sure that they would recognise the problems. Those matters must be considered if the Government is to put this on a commercial basis.

As I said earlier, Aborigines should have been given leasehold land for a start. If the Government had forgotten about the fight over freehold land and given them short-term leases or even long-term leases, if they wanted them on a trial basis, the Aboriginal and Islander communities would have gained contributors to the system and not been beneficiaries of Government hand-outs. That is what they are trying to get away from. They want to be self-sufficient, they want to be participants in the community, and they want to hang on to their ideals, principles and customs. With a bit of patience, tolerance and understanding, it can be worked out.

As I mentioned earlier, funding will be the biggest bugbear. Honourable members are aware that overall funding for Government projects will be pretty hard to come by, because the economic situation is very tight. I think that it will have an adverse effect on some of the projects that the Government is trying to get off the ground.

I sincerely hope that the intent of the Bill is put into practice. However, I am very doubtful that that will happen. As I said, I think that honourable members could find themselves back in the Chamber in 12 months' time moving amendments to this Bill without its being proclaimed.

**Mr McLEAN (Bulimba) (3.12 a.m.):** I rise firstly to answer one of the criticisms that the Minister made earlier in reply to an interjection that I made regarding the underpayment of wages to Aborigines in this State. At that time the Minister stated that he would deal with me later. If that was the Minister's attitude——

**Mr KATTER:** I rise to a point of order. I am only too happy to deal with this matter and with the honourable member for Bulimba at great length—in this Chamber, anywhere else, by letter or personally. However, it really has nothing to do with the Bill.

**Mr McLEAN:** I will continue for a couple of reasons. First of all, it has a good deal to do with the Bill. It has a basis in fact. If the leases on these areas covered by the Bill are to be paid for by the people who live there, the people who live there must be paid a reasonable wage to enable them to do that. The pay that those workers receive has a good deal to do with the Bill.

I point out that the Minister's department has been responsible for the underpayment of about 1 130 Aboriginal workers throughout Queensland. Although I have been told that the Minister is sympathetic towards those workers, the fact remains that Aboriginal workers are being discriminated against in this State. It is another example of this Government's disregard for basic industrial laws and its attitude towards and treatment of workers in this State.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I am afraid that the honourable member for Bulimba is straying from the provisions of the Bill.

**Mr McLEAN:** Mr Speaker, I seek your ruling. It is very clear in my mind that the wages that are paid to Aborigines in this State have a significant bearing on the contents of this Bill.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The honourable member for Bulimba will direct his remarks to the contents of the Bill.

**Mr Casey:** The Bill contains a provision under which Aboriginal communities can borrow moneys from lending institutions. How are they to repay lending institutions or borrow money if they do not get a decent wage?

**Mr McLEAN:** That is a very valid point.

The Minister is presiding over an Act that contains gross discrimination. Aboriginal workers in Queensland are being underpaid. I shall continue in that vein until you rule me out of order, Mr Speaker. That is a very important part of the Bill. The Premier's

outlandish hatred and extreme right-wing obsessions restrain the Minister from administering justice in his portfolio. The points that I wish to raise in the short time that I will take are very pertinent to the Bill.

The Minister and the under secretary of the Department of Community Services (Mr Killoran) have argued about this. Both of them have been very involved in the formulation of the Bill. An argument between those two people about rates of pay for workers to be covered by the Act most certainly ought to be discussed in the debate.

**Mr Scott:** You are talking about "Political Pat", the National Party candidate.

**Mr McLEAN:** That is exactly the person I am referring to. He stood against the member for Cook for the National Party. He thought he was a certainty to win. He was trying to buy Aboriginal children with lollies, using the old-style mentality of giving beads. Mr Killoran is an avid supporter of the Premier and Treasurer (Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen). His attitudes are oppressive, but well known to all.

I wish to give some examples of wage injustices on Aboriginal communities in Queensland.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I really cannot accede to the honourable member's request. The Bill deals with private ownership. I ask the honourable member to return to that point.

**Mr McLEAN:** Because of the hour, I will shorten my speech as much as I can. I might add that it is typical of the Government to hold a debate such as this at twenty past 3 in the morning, after Parliament has been sitting all day.

I have received correspondence relating to problems within some of the Aboriginal communities. I refer first to Yarrabah. Earlier, the Minister said that he would deal with me because I referred to the fact that Aboriginal workers in Queensland are being underpaid. They most certainly are. On numerous occasions the Minister and his Cabinet colleagues have said that the reason why Aborigines are underpaid is that they do not do as much work as other people. The Government relies on the fact that it has employed many people and allowed them to do less work.

I wish to refer to a document that I received and that sets out the duties of the Aboriginal workers I referred to before I was prevented from describing the contents or detail. At the Yarrabah Aboriginal reserve, the work-load that is related to the positions associated with hygiene, sanitation and duties carried out by aboriginal workers entails the collection of garbage, a degree of collection of night-soil and disposal, and control and maintenance of a community refuse tip.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I regret that I am unable to allow the honourable member for Bulimba to continue. The matters referred to are completely irrelevant to the Bill.

**Mr McLEAN:** Very well. I will bypass some of that material, but I point out that it is a shame. I would have thought that the Minister would have wished to hear it, because the matters referred to are pertinent, from my point of view.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Just get back to the subject-matter of the Bill.

**Mr Katter** interjected.

**Mr McLEAN:** If the Minister were prepared to do that, he would accept the argument I have advanced.

**Mr Katter:** You want to sack half of the workers.

**Mr McLEAN:** No, I do not. I want to see the workers receive a fair go and I want to see people who administer the reserves live up to a letter that was sent by the Minister to the Minister for Health (Mr Austin). I believe that the contents of the letter are pertinent, and I would like to quote from the letter.



The letter was sent by the Minister for Northern Development and Aboriginal and Island Affairs to the Minister for Health in relation to the very matter I have referred to. If I could quote it and have it incorporated in the record, I would be glad. The letter states—

“Dear Mr Austin, The Queensland Government pays the guaranteed minimum wage to its employees in the State’s Aboriginal Communities. To date”——

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The same phrase has been repeated again and again, and the Bill has nothing to do with wages at all. Would it be possible for the honourable member for Bulimba to put the material into an acceptable form?

**Mr McLEAN:** I will ask the following question of the Minister: I refer to a statement made to the Minister for Health (Mr Austin) that related to the conditions of employment for Aboriginal workers under the control of the Minister for Northern Development and Aboriginal and Island Affairs and the Minister for Health in the administration of hospital facilities in this State to the effect that, “If we were to persist in delaying the payment of award wages then some very serious problems could arise.”

**Mr Scott:** Did the Minister say that?

**Mr McLEAN:** He did. It is expressed in writing, and I ask for it to be incorporated in “Hansard” I move—

“That the document be incorporated in ‘Hansard’ as part of my speech.”

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I do not think that the document has anything to do with the Bill.

**Mr McLEAN:** It is a very short letter.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! On three occasions now, I have asked the honourable member for Bulimba to refer to the Bill. The honourable member is not referring to the Bill, and I am afraid that, if he does not do so immediately, I will not be able to allow him to proceed.

**Mr McLEAN:** I am disappointed that that is the attitude of the Minister and the Chair, because I feel that the document is pertinent to the Bill and would be of assistance to the Minister. The Government has much to answer for in its administration of Aboriginal and Island Affairs.

**Mr NEAL:** I rise to a point of order. Surely honourable members do not have to listen to such drivel.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! No point of order has been made out.

**Honourable Members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I direct the honourable member for Bulimba to proceed.

**Mr McLEAN:** It is not my fault that it is 20 past 3 in the morning, and it is not my fault that the House continues to sit. However, it is my fault that I am endeavouring to pursue a line of argument that the Opposition regards as important to the debate.

Unless a comparable award scale is developed, Queensland will quite rightly continue to retain the deep-north tag.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I cannot allow the honourable member to proceed any further.

**Mr McLEAN:** I move—

“That the member for Bulimba be further heard.”

Question put; and the House divided—

AYES, 30		NOES, 46	
Braddy	Warner, A. M.	Ahern	Lester
Burns	Wilson	Alison	Lickiss
Campbell	Yewdale	Austin	Lingard
Casey		Bailey	Littleproud
Comben		Booth	McKechnie
De Lacy		Borbidge	McPhie
Eaton		Cahill	Menzel
Fouras		Chapman	Miller
Gibbs, R. J.		Cooper	Muntz
Goss		Elliott	Newton
Hamill		FitzGerald	Powell
Kruger		Gibbs, I. J.	Randell
Mackenroth		Glasson	Row
McElligott		Goleby	Simpson
McLean		Gunn	Stephan
Milliner		Gygar	Stoneman
Palaszczuk		Harper	Tenni
Price		Harvey	Turner
Scott		Henderson	Wharton
Shaw		Innes	White
Smith		Jennings	
Underwood		Katter	
Vaughan	<i>Tellers</i>	Knox	<i>Tellers</i>
Veivers	Davis	Lane	Kaus
Warburton	Prest	Lee	Neal

Resolved in the negative.

**Hon. R. C. KATTER** (Flinders—Minister for Northern Development and Aboriginal and Island Affairs) (3.33 a.m.), in reply: The first speaker in the debate, the honourable member for Cook (Mr Scott), spoke for an hour and 20 minutes and touched on the Bill for about 10 minutes. He commenced by saying that what the Government was doing was destroying the concept of communal ownership. He stressed the point of communal ownership throughout his speech. The comments made by the member for Southport (Mr Jennings) in that regard were extremely valid.

I think that it was the first time that I have ever heard communist principles espoused openly in this Chamber, and the honourable member for Cook appeared to be quite proud of it. Later, the member for Rockhampton (Mr Braddy) appeared to be extremely embarrassed by the remarks of the honourable member for Cook. It will be interesting to see the reaction in his own area when reports of his speech get to the north.

The honourable member for Cook then proceeded to make a number of statements that were really quite extraordinary. He said that the Lands Department should not handle these reserves. He asked why responsibility for those matters was being transferred from the Department of Community Services to the Lands Department. That statement is entirely wrong. The reserves are administered by the Lands Department and, at present, two leases are issuing from that department. The honourable member's speech revealed his ignorance on that matter.

The honourable member for Cook made the point that the Lands Department came into existence when land was stolen from the Aborigines. I resent that remark. My forbears came to this country many years ago and did not steal any land from anyone. The honourable member's forbears may have done that, but mine did not.

The honourable member for Cook said that no meetings have been called of the ACC or of the ICC, which are meetings of the chairmen of each of the Aboriginal and Islander councils. That is an extraordinary comment for the Opposition spokesman on Aboriginal and Island Affairs to make, especially when it is considered that his electorate encompasses most of the Aboriginal communities in Queensland. In fact, two meetings of the ACC have been called and, if my memory serves me correctly, the ICC has met on four occasions, the most recent being three or four weeks ago. Obviously the honourable member does not communicate with the chairmen of any of the reserves in Queensland.

The honourable member proceeded to denigrate the council clerks, who did a magnificent job running the elections for the community councils. My department has not received any complaints.

**Mr Scott** interjected.

**Mr KATTER:** The honourable member claimed that the Federal Government is paying the wages of the council clerks. The Queensland Government has offered to pay the wages of every council clerk in the State but, in some areas, the communities have chosen to take the money from the Federal Government, and I can do nothing about that. I cannot force people to take money. It is my information that, in most of the reserves in Queensland, the council clerks are employed by my department. That is another example of the ignorance of the honourable member, who obviously does not know what he is talking about.

The honourable member for Cook claimed that the regulations were not shown to the council clerks. I point out that a copy of the regulations was sent to every council clerk and workshops were held over three days in Cairns. The honourable member for Cook lives in Cairns, not in his own electorate. My department has received congratulatory letters from those people who attended those workshops, and I was appreciative of those letters. The regulations were explained in great detail by people from my own department and from other departments, and I thank those officers for their help in those training sessions.

The honourable member for Cook demanded town plans for the communities. Almost every community in Queensland has a town plan. I am not wildly enthusiastic about a person from Brisbane, who has hardly set foot on a reserve, drawing up town plans for communities right up in the peninsula. Many honourable members would be aware of shortcomings in many town plans. I am not as enthusiastic about town plans as members of the Opposition are. I do not approve of the concept of the Department of Community Services imposing a town plan on Aboriginal communities. I would prefer the communities to make their own decisions. However, I point out the colossal ignorance of the honourable member, who did not know that the town plans existed.

The honourable member stated further that people should not have to pay for damage to their own homes. Who does he think should pay for that damage? He must think the money for repairs should come out of the public purse. He must also think that a person can invite a group of people over for a big grog party, smash the house up and let the community pick up the bill. That is exactly what he proposed this evening.

**Mr Scott:** We will fix you on that one up there; I will spread it round.

**Mr KATTER:** I tremble with fear.

The honourable member stated that Kowanyama farm is to be closed down.

**An Opposition Member** interjected.

**Mr KATTER:** When I was up there a few weeks ago, it had not been closed. The land had been tilled and the crops were growing magnificently. Far from being closed down, further development work is taking place at this stage.

The honourable member for Cook claimed that the Government is riding across traditional ownership. In conjunction with the recent legislation handled by the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General, the Government has tried to hand over the deeds of grant in trust. The injunction in the Mabo case has prevented the department from doing that. In fact, before the Government can hand over the deeds on Mauar Island, the Government has to beat the injunction that is now before the High Court. That is the reason for this legislation. The honourable member for Cook had some cock-and-bull story that the Government was trying to avoid issuing the deeds of grant in trust. That displays a total ignorance of the Mabo case.

**Mr Scott:** There is no doubt that you are trying to avoid the issue of the deeds.

**Mr KATTER:** The Government certainly is not; in fact, it is fighting the injunction. If it succeeds, the department will be able to grant those deeds. The injunction does not allow the department to issue the deeds of grant for the area.

When the honourable member criticised a judge's decision delivered in a court of law, I understand that he was in contempt of court. I warn him against doing that.

**Opposition Members interjected.**

**Mr KATTER:** Let him proceed at his own peril.

The honourable member told the House that people on the Aboriginal reserves in Queensland could not muster cattle. I find that really offensive. Some of the greatest stockmen and some of the greatest men on horseback in this State have been people of Aboriginal descent. Over a long period, they have won rodeo after rodeo. They have been honoured in their profession. Some honourable members may denigrate that profession, but I hold it in great esteem. The honourable member criticised the Aboriginal stockmen, just as he criticised the council clerks for being incompetent and most of the other people on the reserves of Queensland for being incapable of looking after their houses, incapable of owning a piece of land and incapable of running their own council affairs. That is a most extraordinary action by a person who is supposed to be the spokesman on these matters for a prominent political party.

The honourable member said also that the Department of Community Services cannot run cattle stations, but he expects people on communities to be able to. The Department of Community Services is staffed by public servants. The chairman of the council at Edward River, Jackson Shortjoe, is a top head-stockman, and has been for almost all of his life, which he has spent in the Gulf country. He is a very prominent person in that field. However, the honourable member states that I cannot run a cattle station when he knows that I have to attempt to do it with public servants. The outfit to which the honourable member belongs tried to do that in the 1920s. It was a dismal failure. One after the other, 17 of the stations went broke. I suppose many members of the Labor Party lined their pockets, so it was not really a great tragedy for the members of the ALP.

The honourable member for Cook said that the Government should have the money to finance all of these projects. I bring to the attention of the House that the Federal Government has \$290m per year to spend on Aborigines. As more than one-third of the people of Aboriginal descent in Australia live in Queensland, approximately \$100m should be rolling into this State. The Department of Community Services has an annual budget of \$49m from which it has to provide all of the garbage disposal services, all of the night-cart services, all of the water supply systems and all of the local government facilities such as roads, the maintenance of roads, repairs to houses and everything else. I defy the honourable member to tell me what the Federal Government does with its \$100m. I will pause now so that the honourable member can tell me.

**Mr Scott:** The Commonwealth Government is doing far more than you are doing. Every project has an input of Commonwealth money.

**Mr KATTER:** What a lovely litany of cliches that was! The Opposition spokesman cannot think of one single thing that the Federal Government is doing for Aborigines in Queensland with \$100m. I must admit that I am a little on his side. I have not been able to find what the Commonwealth Government is doing with the \$100m, either.

The honourable member for Cook had an answer for everything—to take money out of the tax-payers' pockets and give Aborigines huge amounts of money. That is what he has been telling the House. Some of the Aboriginal people are not like honourable members. Unlike us, they do not know the honourable member for Cook and some of them may believe what he says. They will assume that there is an unlimited amount of

money to flow in there and solve all their problems. That is a deceitful and very dangerous lie.

The honourable member said that I did not consult with the advisory councils. I chose not to consult with the advisory councils, because I had heard from Opposition members over a protracted period that the advisory councils were flunkeys of the Queensland Government. Although I spoke to them, I really bypassed them and went out to the elected councils. I did not consult with the advisory councils and go through everything with them. I went out to the 27 reserve areas in Queensland and conducted public meetings. Some public meetings were attended by 300 or 400 persons. Almost the entire community of Doomadgee attended one evening meeting. At other places, virtually nobody turned up. The only thing I can do is to go there and say, "I am here. We want to consult with you. We want to talk to you about this. Give us your ideas."

Tonight, the spokesman for the Opposition made a complete fool of himself by requesting the honourable member for Southport to produce the documents that were signed. Of course, all the documents were brought back signed.

**Mr Scott** interjected.

**Mr KATTER:** I take the point made about the last Bill. The appeal system in this Bill was in the last Bill. Unfortunately, at the last moment some persons prominent in Aboriginal affairs changed their minds and put up what I consider to be a fairly good argument against the proposed appeal system. I have not been able to get any unanimity of opinion throughout the reserve areas. Two weeks ago I sat down with one council, and all four persons at the table disagreed.

When drawing up that appeal system, I attempted to take into account all the various considerations. When the honourable member for Southport said, "These are the things that we got," they were most relevant, because that was in the original Bill. That is where consultation took place. I cannot see any point in consulting 400 times on the same subject and on which people have already expressed their opinions.

The honourable member was incorrect when he said that I did not sit down with the advisory council. That is an incredible statement. We travelled 320 000 km and visited all 27 reserves. A separate meeting was held with the council for half a day. A separate public meeting was held for the rest of the day. Behind me came Eric Lawes, who was consultant to the Government.

It is true that the other States have held an inquiry. Mr Justice Woodward was appointed in the Northern Territory. That inquiry was a total and absolute disaster. Approximately 47.6 per cent of the surface area of the Northern Territory is not available to anyone except the Aboriginal people living in the area. Out of 320 mining applications, not one was in an Aboriginal area. That has been the grand success of Mr Justice Woodward's approach!

I chose to obtain a person of Aboriginal descent from Cherbourg. I did not choose to take Mr Seagram from Western Australia, who was another eminent lawyer chosen by the ALP to tell it how to run its affairs, or Mr Justice Woodward, who was chosen by the Liberal Party to make its decisions in the Northern Territory.

Queensland thought that it might not be a bad idea to consult with a person of Aboriginal descent who had lived on a community for most of his life. He carried out the same consultation and consultative process. The National Party parliamentary committee then sat down with the non-existent organisation that has never met—the Aboriginal Consultative Council! The documents tabled by the honourable member for Southport were signed by all of the delegates at the Aboriginal Co-ordinating Committee meeting. The honourable member for Cook claimed that it could not exist. That was a most incredible example of ignorance on his part. Seventy per cent of his speech was personally vindictive. I do not know that that achieves a great deal, except to provoke a reaction from me.

I congratulate the honourable member for Southport on making an excellent and forceful speech. I thank him for being one of the great pressures behind the Government in demanding perpetual title and private ownership. That is something in which he believes profoundly. I think that his beliefs were shared by many people.

I believe that I have answered many of the matters raised by the honourable member for Rockhampton (Mr Braddy). I must say that, in contrast to the Opposition spokesman, he asked intelligent questions and made mostly intelligent points. The honourable member for Rockhampton said that he was worried about the alienation of the land creating jealousies and rivalries in a community. It most certainly does in the white community. Those people are no different from anyone else. Similar pressures will be created in those communities.

Two cattle leases have been granted at Edward River. They are large cattle leases. I thought the granting would result in the destruction of those two people in the community and that it would cause great hate and jealousies in that community. It is with a sense of pride, I suppose, that I inform the House that Jackson Shortjoe, one of those people, was re-elected as chairman in the recent council elections. In fact, he topped the polls. The other man involved, Eddie Holroe, who had never before been on the council, was also recently elected to the council. The Edward River community is far from being small-minded and petty. It appears that members of that community have a much broader outlook and are much more hopeful that the honourable member gives them credit for. Those matters did worry me. Those worries have not eventuated.

The honourable member for Toowoomba North (Mr McPhie) expressed concern during his excellent and very forceful contribution to the debate when he warned people to watch out for, amongst other things, loan sharks. They do concern me. It is an area that will be watched carefully administratively. I would hope that the Department of Community Services people will be keeping an eye on that.

I think I have covered most matters. The honourable member for Mount Isa (Mr Price), when he last spoke on a Bill of this nature, said that he only wished some of his people were down here to see the legislation. He is reported in "Hansard" as saying—

"I wish that some of my people were down here."

The chairman of the Doomadgee Shire Council was sitting in the front row in the gallery. The honourable member did not even know the chairman of the Doomadgee Shire Council. Yet he had the hide to tell honourable members that he only wished that some of his people were down here.

The comment was made that no interest is shown in private ownership on Doomadgee. In many centres, none is. However, the Government is hoping to stimulate some interest.

The honourable member for Fassifern (Mr Lingard) expressed great faith in the Islander people. It was interesting to note that Opposition members said that they could not possibly make a go of anything and described them as being hopeless and useless. That was implicit in almost all of the speeches made by Opposition members. If honourable members opposite doubt my word, they should read their speeches.

The Islander people have a life-style that is the envy of most other places in the world.

The award wage has nothing to do with this Bill.

**Mr LEE:** I rise to a point of order. Does the Minister realise that the Hansard staff worked 16 hours straight yesterday, that they got only a few hours' sleep and that on this sitting day they have already been working for 16 hours? Surely he has some consideration for them. I realise that what the Minister is saying is very interesting, but surely he could show the Hansard staff some consideration.

**Mr KATTER:** I point out to the honourable member for Yeronga that the Opposition spokesman spoke for an hour and 20 minutes and the honourable member did not pull

him up. I have spoken for only about 15 minutes. I strongly resent the honourable member's remarks.

I conclude by saying that the Opposition's answer to the problems of Aboriginal people is taking more money from the public purse. Opposition members' speeches were a litany of reasons why Aboriginal people are incapable of handling their own affairs, owning their own land and standing on their own two feet.

The Government believes in people of Aboriginal descent and that they have the ability and the industry and that, given the proper social machinery and conditions, they will ultimately achieve all of the great things that have been achieved by other people in the State of Queensland and in this nation.

Question—That the Bill be now read a second time (Mr Katter's motion)—put; and the House divided—

AYES, 45		NOES, 30	
Ahern	Lester	Braddy	Warburton
Alison	Lickiss	Burns	Warner, A. M.
Austin	Lingard	Campbell	Wilson
Bailey	Littleproud	Casey	Yewdale
Booth	McKechnie	Comben	
Borbidge	McPhie	De Lacy	
Cahill	Menzel	Eaton	
Chapman	Miller	Fouras	
Cooper	Muntz	Gibbs, R. J.	
Elliott	Newton	Goss	
FitzGerald	Powell	Kruger	
Gibbs, I. J.	Randell	Mackenroth	
Glasson	Simpson	McElligott	
Goleby	Stephan	McLean	
Gunn	Stoneman	Milliner	
Gygar	Tenni	Palaszczuk	
Harper	Turner	Prest	
Harvey	Wharton	Price	
Henderson	White	Scott	
Innes		Shaw	
Jennings		Smith	
Katter	<i>Tellers</i>	Underwood	<i>Tellers</i>
Knox	Kaus	Vaughan	Davis
Lee	Neal	Veivers	Hamill

Resolved in the affirmative.

#### Committee

Mr Randell (Mirani) in the chair; Hon. R. C. Katter (Flinders—Minister for Northern Development and Aboriginal and Island Affairs) in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 3, as read, agreed to.

Clause 4—Interpretation—

Mr KATTER (4.1 a.m.): I move the following amendment—

“At page 4, after line 7, insert the following words—

‘(3) for the purposes of this Act a “prescribed person” is the Crown in right of the State or of the Commonwealth and any statutory body acting in discharge of its statutory functions under an Act of the State or of the Commonwealth but does not include The Corporation of the Under Secretary for Community Services in its capacity as a bare trustee of land.’ ”

The last part of the amendment has been added so that the under secretary, as the agent for the Department of Community Services, will not be left with ownership of a reserve vested in him indefinitely.

The first part of the amendment refers to a prescribed person and that has been described as the Crown. That simplification has been added to define Crown responsibilities. For instance, at the moment, the Island Industries Board may not necessarily

be considered to be a Crown entity, and the Government wishes that board to retain a separate identity. The ownership of that board is vested in the Island Industries Board, and the majority of the members who constitute that board are island people.

That body will be administratively strung up for a period of two years, but, at the end of that period, its functions will be taken over by the executive committee of the ICC, which appears to be the most suitable organisation to carry the administration of the Island Industries Board into the future.

**Mr SCOTT:** Opposition members will attempt to keep the debate on the amendments brief. The Opposition does not intend to call for a division because it has formulated its own amendments. The Opposition will use its opportunity to speak to ask questions of the Minister. I trust that he will not mind answering the questions when they are asked, because certain charges have been made by the Minister about me concerning previous legislation.

When does the under secretary cease to be the corporation sole? He is the officer who is responsible for the reserves at the present time, and I would like the Minister to tell me when his responsibilities will cease. I also wish to refer to the trust area of the legislation.

**Mr KATTER:** I shall answer the first question. When the deeds of grant in trust are declared, the under secretary will cease to be the trustee of all of the reserves in Queensland.

**Mr SCOTT:** I ask the Minister to give an undertaking about when that is likely to occur. I draw his attention to the fact that he has used the past tense in clause 4 (b) in the definition of "trust area". The Bill states that it means "Land granted", and I draw attention to the fact that that is the past tense. The Minister knows that the land has not been granted.

**Mr Katter:** Can I answer the question?

**Mr SCOTT:** How about the Minister telling the Aborigines and Islanders of whom he has recently spoken so highly? I concur with his sentiments, despite his denigrating the Opposition by saying that it has criticised and knocked the Aborigines and Islanders. That is not the case at all. All that was said was that the Minister was not giving those people the opportunity of doing things that they should be able to do.

I feel sure that honourable members have taken note of what I have said and it will be matter of record in "Hansard", despite the fact that the Hansard staff must be extremely tired. I ask: When will the deeds now be issued so that the past tense can become the present tense?

**Mr KATTER:** With some hesitation, I will say that it is hoped that in the next two months all the deeds of grant will have gone through. There are some big problems at Bamaga, as the member realises, because of the overlapping of the community areas there. I say "hope" because if I had been asked the same question previously I would have said without any hesitation that all of them would have been put through within two months. A surveying problem was encountered, and I did not expect it to turn into as big a problem as it has. All I can say is that it is certainly hoped to have the deeds out within two months. I see no difficulties that would prevent that happening, other than in the MPA area.

**Mr SCOTT:** I realise that that one will be a little too difficult for the Minister to handle. Possibly by that time he will no longer be the Minister. Just as he gave some of the problems of the Bill to Labor as the incoming Federal Government, he will give these problems to the back-bencher who will be promoted into his place.

Do the Yarrabah people still reject the idea of a visiting justice as it is expressed in the Bill?



**Mr KATTER:** Although I do not really see that it has anything to do with the clause, I will answer the question. As far as I can remember, I have never had a complaint communicated to me about the concept of a visiting justice. I cannot see why anyone would want to complain about it. He is just a person who goes into the areas to check on them. The communities are extremely isolated. In some cases, no Queensland police are on hand. It is possible that a group of bully-boys could take over an area and the people would be too scared to notify the outside world. The only communication with the outside world is by two-way radio, which could well be in the hands of some of those bully-boys. That was the thinking behind the insertion of that provision.

Amendment (Mr Katter) agreed to.

Clause 4, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 5—Application for tenure in trust area—

**Mr KATTER (4.7 a.m.):** I move the following amendment—

“At page 4, omit all words comprising lines 16 and 17 and substitute the words—

‘(a) land that is occupied or used by a prescribed person;’.”

This amendment simply relates to the first amendment.

**Mr SCOTT:** Again, the Opposition will support the amendment. The Opposition is giving the necessary assistance to allow the Minister and the Government to get the Bill back into shape. I will not ask who drafted it. Obviously, it was drafted by an under secretary whose mind was on other things. The Bill contains so many errors—

**Mr KATTER:** I must object to this constant denigration of people who are not here to defend themselves.

**Mr SCOTT:** Will the Minister then give an explanation of why the Bill contains so many errors? I have never seen a Bill that has required so many amendments. I ask the Minister for an answer.

**Mr R. J. Gibbs:** If I were you, I would stick it right in. He was a National Party candidate. There's no apology for it.

**Mr SCOTT:** That is right. There is no apology for that man; that is his political pattern. I will go one step further. I believe that he has his eye on the new seat based on Mareeba.

**Mr KATTER:** I must say that this has nothing to do with the clause.

**Mr R. J. Gibbs** interjected.

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr Randell):** Order! I do not intend to stand for a slanging match between members across the Chamber. Time is getting on—

**Mr Prest** interjected.

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN:** Order!

**Mr Prest** interjected.

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN:** Order! I warn the member for Port Curtis under Standing Order No. 123A.

**Mr SCOTT:** I am not happy with the warning—

**Mr Hamill** interjected.

**Mr SCOTT:** I will bring it back to the Minister. He has not told me why there are so many errors. He did not like the other explanation I suggested, so I can only assume that the errors must have resulted from his own incompetence.

The Minister made a statement earlier about not liking town maps. I do not see how this leasehold arrangement can possibly be implemented if town plans are not prepared. The Minister will find that the leases are let on the wrong basis. Now that he is including that provision in the legislation, Aboriginal people will be constantly applying for leases. I can understand that, and I wish them well. We want a sensible approach to town-planning. Aboriginal councils and Aboriginal people who apply for leases will not have the information that they need on which to base sensible applications.

**Mr Katter:** I will explain that one straight off.

**Mr SCOTT:** No, I have not finished my speech. I realise that the Minister cannot keep too many things in his mind at once, but I ask him to do his best.

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN:** Order! I ask the honourable member to return to the Bill.

**Mr SCOTT:** His was quite a rude interruption.

I would like to know whether various parts of reserves will be kept for communal purposes. I would also like to know about communal farming land. On a reserve, such as the Palm Island reserve, there is a small amount of arable land. Will the Minister let that small farming area go to a person who wants to lease more than 1 ha and alienate that small area of land to one family?

I would like to know about the beach-front areas. Will any of those areas be set aside for parks or recreational areas?

The Minister tried to shoot me down for putting forward the idea about a town plan for those communities. I put it straight back on him that those areas cannot be properly developed, in the terms that I am using now, unless plans are produced.

What about the uninhabited small reserves round the towns of Queensland? Will leases be made available? That is an important question. People are no longer living on the Chillagoe reserve or the Cooktown reserve. There is also the reserve at Georgetown. Will the Minister allow the leasehold idea to be extended to those areas?

A question must also be asked about the uninhabited outer islands. Under which councils are those islands to be placed in terms of control? Those are important questions to which these good people want answers. When the Minister gets an opportunity to speak, perhaps he can give us the answers to those questions.

The Minister answered the question about who is in control of reserve lands.

**Mr KATTER:** I rise to a point of order. Mr Randell, obviously I will not be able to remember 10 questions in a row. The honourable member should ask me one question and allow me to answer it.

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN:** Order! The member for Cook has 20 minutes in which to speak. He said that he will not divide the Committee, so I think that honourable members should go along with him.

**Mr KATTER:** Mr Randell, he is asking me questions.

**Mr SCOTT:** I will remind the Minister as he goes.

Has all existing land use on reserves been identified? The Minister has held his portfolio for long enough now. Does he know what the basic purposes of land use are? At present, what record is there of the type of occupation?

**Mr Katter** interjected.

**Mr SCOTT:** The Minister can use a pen and paper. I know that he is thick in the head.

The Minister referred to six enterprises at Edward River. That must imply that the land is being used. He used that alleged fact to bolster his argument for introducing this type of leasehold. Previously, I asked the Minister a question but he did not answer it. Will he confirm that there are six enterprises at Edward River, and will he give a quick and brief outline of the type of land use? Clause 5 (2) (b) states—

“land that is occupied or is, at the material time, used by a qualified person other than the person who is seeking the tenure;”

If no record of land use is kept, how will the applicants know whether lease applications have been made for that land? I can see great difficulty with the way in which the various reserves will be divided up. I await with considerable interest what the Minister says in that regard.

**Mr KATTER:** The honourable member asked 10 questions and gave the answers himself. None of them have anything whatever to do with clause 5.

**Mr SCOTT:** The Minister said that my questions have nothing to do with clause 5. I am referring to applications for tenure in trust.

The Minister has absolutely no grasp of the Bill; he has no idea of what I am talking about. He should go back to sleep. I remember that when the community services legislation was debated, he fed himself with milk.

**Mr Katter:** You have asked 10 questions, you have given the answers yourself and you continue to talk. It is obvious that you are not the slightest bit interested in the answers.

**Mr SCOTT:** Will leasehold applications be granted over the small, uninhabited reserves adjacent to the towns? The Minister knows the reserves that I am talking about. Will consideration be given to that?

**Mr KATTER:** My department is considering the town reserves on an ad hoc basis. At present, two are being processed. My department will look at any proposals that are put forward, which must also be put to Cabinet.

**Mr Scott:** What about the uninhabited islands?

**Mr KATTER:** I have been informed by the Island Co-ordinating Council that every single island has been accounted for and belongs to a particular head island. The traditional ownership will be recognised.

**Mr Scott:** If I write to you, will you identify which councils those islands come under?

**Mr KATTER:** No, I certainly will not, because that is up to the ICC. It has told me that no difficulties have been encountered, and I accept that it is the responsible body that should make such a decision. I will not become involved in bun-fights over who owns which island.

Amendment (Mr Katter) agreed to.

Clause 5, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 6—Duty of Trustee Council concerning application—

**Mr SCOTT (4.17 a.m.):** I move the following amendment—

“At page 5, line 8, after the word ‘determination’ insert the words—

‘and to any person who objected to such application pursuant to subsection (2)’.”

That merely provides a further protection so that the people are advised of the progress of their lease applications. That is only right and proper. I stress that it will be very difficult to administer this legislation. I have had many dealings with the Lands Department and the Mines Department, and although I respect the role played by the officers from those departments, they must be understaffed, because it is only with the greatest difficulty that I can get answers from those departments. Honourable members who represent country electorates constantly chase up lease applications seeking information about when the leases will be granted.

This Bill contains many references to the mechanism that will be used in the granting of leases. I am very thankful that the leases will be under the control of the Lands Department and not the Department of Community Services. Nine months is the average time for a reply from the Minister for Aboriginal and Island Affairs to one of my letters; that is a pregnant pause. I do not know why he takes so long to answer my letters.

It is essential that every attempt be made to smooth the way for the granting of leases. The Aboriginal people will be happy to follow the procedures laid down in this Bill and in the regulations. However, they will come to me as their member wanting to know when the leases will be granted. If this amendment is not adopted, it will only make their lives more difficult. I will have to go out to the communities to remind the Aboriginal people that, unfortunately for them, an incompetent Minister controls their affairs, and he did not accept my amendment. I must say that about him, Mr Randell, because it will be the only argument that I will be able to put up.

**Mr KATTER:** The honourable member for Cook distinguishes himself by his name-calling. Although my department will consider the honourable member's amendment, it will not accept it at this stage.

Amendment (Mr Scott) negatived.

**Mr KATTER:** I move the following amendment—

“At page 5, line 26, after the words ‘sought to’ insert the word—  
‘be’.”

**Mr SCOTT:** As my amendment was rejected, I have to make a very brief reference to the Minister's amendment, which is simply rubbish that reflects some degree of incompetence. If he objects to my calling him names, I will simply use the general term. The incompetence is there and he is continuing to demonstrate it.

Amendment (Mr Katter) agreed to.

Clause 6, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 7—Remedy of person aggrieved—

**Mr SCOTT (4.20 a.m.):** I will proceed with what is basically a procedural amendment. I move—

“At page 5, line 44, after the word ‘may’ insert the words—  
‘within 21 days of the determination or failure, as the case may be.’”

The purpose of the amendment is to try to ensure that Aboriginal people, whether they be applicants or objectors, are advised within a reasonable period. Because of the previous remarks that I have passed in the Chamber, I do not feel that I have to argue the point any further. I urge the Minister to have second thoughts. He rejected my previous amendment. I ask him to have some second thoughts and recognise the sense contained in my amendment. The Minister admitted that he could see the sense in my other amendment and said that he would consider it further. Members on this side of the Chamber have predicted that the Minister will be constantly trotting this legislation back here for amendment. The Opposition has made the most sensible suggestions in

its amendments. The Minister once again is sitting there with a grin on his face. It is no wonder that I get distracted and use words that I probably should not use. Because I am not doing any good, anyway, perhaps I should change my tack. It all just washes off the Minister's shoulders.

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr Randell):** Order!

**Mr SCOTT:** Mr Randell, I am trying to find a way of urging the Minister to accept my amendment.

**Mr KATTER:** It seems most reasonable that this be introduced. I am a little perturbed that the honourable member for Cook is claiming the glory for it. Father Brennan presented it to me last night. It seems to me that the suggestion has much merit. I do not like to accept the amendment without considering it closely and thinking about it for a while. Most importantly, I want to send it back to the ACC and the ICC for their approval.

Amendment (Mr Scott) negatived.

Clause 7, as read, agreed to.

Clause 8, as read, agreed to.

Clause 9—Nature of tenure and entitlement thereto—

**Mr KATTER (4.22 a.m.):** I move the following amendment—

“At page 6, line 32, omit the expression—

‘1984’

and substitute the expression—

‘1985’ ”

This amendment results from a typographical error. I do not think that I can be blamed for that.

**Mr SCOTT:** Mr Randell——

**Mr FitzGerald:** Oh come on, Bob.

**Mr SCOTT:** I do not intend to speak to the Minister's amendment. I have a sensible comment to make on the clause. Does the honourable member intend to deny me the right to speak?

Clause 9 (1) (a) states—

“a lease in perpetuity where the land to which title is sought does not exceed one hectare in area.”

Members of the Opposition do not greatly object to that. Labor Party policy is for inalienable freehold title. In some ways the Opposition goes along with the clause, but we would not have done it quite that way. However, what I do object to and what will cause all of the trouble in the communities— I do not think that the Minister even knows that he has a tiger by the tail in this regard—is clause 9 (1) (b), which states—

“in any other case, a tenure that in the opinion of the Minister within the meaning of the Land Act 1962-1984 is appropriate to the use to be made of the land to which title is sought and is in accordance with this Act.”

That clause should not be in the Bill. It does more than the Minister really wants it to.

The Minister said that he is worried about nepotism on the Aboriginal communities. There is no doubt that he has denigrated them. I will explain what the Minister means by that. He is worried that the councillors will give the land to their relations or friends. That is the only reason why this legislation has been introduced. He has disguised that fact perhaps to look after someone about whom he is concerned.

He has inserted clause 9 (1) (b), which will apply to virtually any areas of the reserves. I cite as an example the small area of arable land on Palm Island. The Minister did not reply on that matter, because he cannot remember a range of things at one time. Perhaps the Minister will tell me now whether that small area of farming land on Palm Island will be alienated.

**Mr KATTER:** The honourable member referred to farming land on Palm Island and other islands. If he reads the Bill, he will see that that matter will be decided not by me but by the relevant council.

**Mr SCOTT:** The Minister has a discretion. He is being slope-shouldered about the whole matter and passing it all off.

**Mr KATTER:** I am afraid that if the honourable member thinks that I have some discretion under the Bill, he has not read it.

**Mr SCOTT:** I am quite familiar with the provisions of the Bill. I am also aware of the Minister's grasp of these things. The members of this Assembly can judge who is likely to have the better grasp of these things.

Will inspections have to be carried out on lots of more than 1 ha that the Minister will hand out gratuitously round the place? Will inspections have to be carried out by officers of the Lands Department to determine the worth of the proposal, to set the conditions and to do all the things necessary under the Bill?

**Mr KATTER:** The honourable member is finding it very hard to cope with the Bill. That is not my decision to make. The Bill makes it a decision of the council. I repeat that it is not my decision. If the people do not like that decision, they can have recourse to the appeal tribunal. The only discretion I have is in the appointment of one Government representative to the five-member appeal tribunal. The honourable member should not keep asking me what I am going to do with it. It is not my decision. I cannot tell the honourable member. He will have to ask the council.

**Mr SCOTT:** Mr Randell, the Minister——

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr Randell):** Order! The honourable member's time has expired.

Amendment (Mr Katter) agreed to.

Clause 9, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 10—Divesting and vesting of title to land—

**Mr KATTER (4.28 a.m.):** I move the following amendment—

“At page 7, lines 11 and 12, omit the words—

‘an Aboriginal or Island Council as’

and substitute the word—

‘a’.”

The amendment is fairly irrelevant. However, it tidies up the meaning of the clause.

**Mr SCOTT:** It is rather pointless pursuing any sort of debate with the Minister. As I said, he simply slopes his shoulders, lets it all slide off and hands the responsibility to someone else. He has no grasp of the Bill. Fortunately, this is one of the few pieces of legislation in this State for which two Ministers will be responsible. The other Minister is a Minister of some competence. Unfortunately, the Minister for Lands, Forestry and Police (Mr Glasson) is not in the Chamber. I believe that he should be present in the Chamber answering questions, too. This Bill is more his Bill than the Bill of the Minister for Northern Development and Aboriginal and Island Affairs. A senior officer from the Lands Department is sitting in the lobby. He would be able to give the Minister for

Lands, or even the Minister for Northern Development and Aboriginal and Island Affairs, the answers to my questions. The clause refers to the divesting and vesting of title to land. It states—

“Where the title to land in respect of which any person or persons is or are entitled to a lease . . . is vested in an Aboriginal or Island Council the title shall, upon the approval referred to in section 9 (2), divest from the council and the land shall thereupon become and be Crown land . . .”

That is the responsibility of the Minister for Lands. He is not here to answer those questions. When a divesting and vesting occurs in any other part of Queensland, an inspection is carried out by responsible officers of the Lands Department. Although I feel that I am wasting my time, in order to do justice to my constituents and the Aboriginal people in this State, I ask the Minister: Does he see a role for the Lands Department inspectors to go out to the communities and to inspect the applications and set the conditions that will be set in normal leasehold terms for the Lands Department leasing arrangements?

I cannot help saying that the Minister is too foolish to grasp this. He has no idea of the ramifications of this Bill, and he will prove that if he does not answer my simple question.

The greatest difficulty is that the Lands Department is understaffed. Inspectors go up to the peninsula once a year. I can foresee a multiplicity of appointments to the Lands Department office in Cairns if these inspections have to be carried out. If the people of this State are denied that basic information, I know what they will think of the Minister, and, if he cannot answer that simple question, I would have to agree entirely.

**Mr KATTER:** I ask the honourable member to simply ask the question. I can easily answer it. The answer is that my department envisages that photographic maps will be kept in every Department of Community Services office and every reserve or community area throughout Queensland. They will delineate each of the blocks as they are alienated to various people and also delineate the Crown areas so that a person can walk into a particular area and see who owns what very, very quickly. Hopefully, it will be the responsibility of my department to keep that information up-to-date.

In regard to inspections—my department would undertake to do whatever inspection work the Lands Department requires. Earlier this evening, the honourable member stated that he wanted the Department of Community Services to handle it; he now says that the Lands Department should handle it. My department has staff in the areas on the ground who should be competent to advise the Lands Department. However, ultimately the Government feels that the Lands Department has people who are experts in this particular field and that they should have the ultimate decision-making powers.

**Mr SCOTT:** Honourable members can make a judgment on that convoluted answer. Subclause (4) of clause 10 states—

“Upon land becoming Crown land under subsection (1) or (2) it ceases to be part of the trust area within which it is situated . . .”

That states very, very simply that the deed of grant in trust is in tatters. The Minister can try to refute that if he wishes. The deed of grant in trust is dead, and Aboriginal and Islander people will be duly informed of that fact. If the Minister does not tell them, they will draw their own conclusions when these leases are popping in and out, divesting and vesting. That is what will happen.

I will give the Minister some encouragement. The Opposition has no argument about the next part of clause 10—

“the discharge of the functions of local government—”

or what the Minister euphemistically calls local government in that part of the world—

“within the trust area and the exercise of powers incidental thereto;”

It is essential that that takes place. The Opposition is quite happy with that part of the Bill.

Amendment (Mr Katter) agreed to.

Clause 10, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 11 and 12, as read, agreed to.

Clause 13—Restriction on area to be held—

**Mr SCOTT (4.34 a.m.):** I have a question to ask the Minister, and I am sure that he will be happy to give me the proper answer. The end of clause 13 reads—

“ except with the approval of the Governor in Council first had and obtained.”

I ask the Minister: Is that a normal provision that applies to all Lands Department leases? I do not want the Minister to tell me that I will have to ask the Minister for Lands, Forestry and Police. He is not in the Chamber. The Minister has to take his responsibility.

I am concerned about the amount of land that will be held. The Minister says that no person shall hold more than one block. However, that qualification has not been added to the very large areas that can be leased under the second part of the leasing provision. I ask the Minister also: How is he going to control the people who own those very large areas of land? Again, the Minister's shoulders will slope nicely and he will tell me that it goes back to the appropriate council.

**Mr KATTER:** I have answered every question that the honourable member has asked this evening. All honourable members could do without the little speeches that he attaches to his questions. That provision is identical to the one contained in the Mining Act, which covers most of the honourable member's electorate.

Clause 13, as read, agreed to.

Clause 14, as read, agreed to.

Clause 15—Structural improvements on tenement—

**Mr SCOTT (4.35 a.m.):** This is a very important clause. There is much to be said about it. It is one of the worst clauses in the Bill and a principal reason why the Opposition has opposed the Bill so vehemently. It imposes onerous conditions on those who wish to lease departmental housing. I would like to have the time—and I recognise that half past 4 in the morning is not the time to do it—to paint a word picture of the conditions in which the Government has left housing on Aboriginal reserves. I leave it to the imagination of honourable members. I realise that Government members, when they visit communities, do not see conditions as they are. The conditions of the houses are not the fault of the Aboriginal or Islander people. The department has never carried out appropriate maintenance. Consequently, the houses in the communities are in extremely poor condition.

Eventually those houses will be owned by Aboriginal and Islander people. When I visit the areas, as I do frequently, they constantly approach me and say, “Couldn't you contact the department for us and have something done about these houses?” The Aboriginal communities have very few carpenters. The carpenters are employed by the department. Are those carpenters to be employed by the people who will own the houses? Who will control the rates of pay for the carpenters who carry out the work? When there is so much work to be done to the houses—and there are not nearly sufficient carpenters—it is a shame that the ownership of the houses is to be transferred to the people.



I therefore move the following amendment—

“At page 9, omit all words comprising lines 7 to 9 and substitute the words—  
‘shall care for the structural improvements in the manner of a reasonable lessee, and repair, within a reasonable time, damage to the structural improvements caused by the wilful or negligent conduct of the lessee or persons coming into or upon the structural improvements with his consent;’”

I have moved that amendment because, under the Residential Tenancies Act and similar legislation, that is a requirement imposed on the rest of the people of Queensland. We are prepared to extend that requirement to the Aboriginal and Islander people. It is the Opposition's intention to remove the onerous provision requiring that people—

“shall keep the improvements insured to the full insurable value thereof with a licensed insurer approved by the owner or vendor—”

which of course is the department.

**Mr Katter** interjected.

**Mr SCOTT:** The Minister should not say that it is not. The department owns the houses now. Of course it does. It collects the rent. It takes people from Cherbourg to a civil court in Murgon. It is not the council that does it. In a dreadful way, the department hauls them before a court—it does not allow them any legal representation—and the people are fined. That action is taken for back rent and bills that they cannot pay for repairs to stoves and so on.

**Mr Katter:** Do you think they shouldn't pay any rent?

**Mr SCOTT:** Yes, I believe that they should pay.

**Mr Katter:** No, you don't.

**Mr SCOTT:** But not to be threatened in the way in which the department threatens them. It should give the people a bit of a go.

**Mr Katter:** You have just said that we don't.

**Mr SCOTT:** What about the insurance provision? Does the Minister believe that they should insure those houses?

**Mr KATTER:** This clause has been inserted because the houses are the subject of a loan agreement between the Queensland and Federal Governments. That agreement could hold up the deeds of grant indefinitely, unless we could transfer the title in the land without transferring the ownership of the houses. It is a difficult legal problem. I am assured by the Federal Minister for Aboriginal Affairs (Mr Holding) that he will be able to solve the problem for us with his colleague in the Federal Government, the Minister for Housing and Construction (Mr West). In case he cannot, this clause has been inserted.

Houses will not be sold to the people. I do not know how many times I have to explain this. This clause covers a relationship between a council as the vendor and the people who lease, rent or purchase. It is really up to a council whether it imposes the conditions contained in the clause. I do not deny that the conditions are stringent. The Government felt that the council ought to be provided with fairly stringent controls in case it needed to use them. The extent to which the controls are taken is really a matter for the council. If people find the actions of the council oppressive, no doubt the council will be dealt with in the ordinary manner.

However, I must make it clear to the House that the spokesman for the Opposition has said that the Government ought not to punish people or force them to pay rent. I suggest that if people are not required to pay rent, they simply will not do so. The Opposition has adopted the attitude that the Government should provide free housing

and that no payment should be made for accommodation. That is a great system, and I hope that members of the Opposition have a money machine.

**Mr SCOTT:** The Minister has access to a money machine; but he does not apply funds to those areas of north Queensland in a remotely fair way for use by the people of north Queensland.

It is shocking that the Minister continues to mislead the House about ownership of the houses. The houses were built by the Department of Community Services and are owned by the department. Ownership of the houses has not been ceded to the council. The Minister cannot produce a single legal document that indicates that ownership of the houses has been ceded to the council. Carpenters employed by the department carry out the small amount of maintenance that can be effected, and I point out that people make requests for repair to the houses through the executive officer on the reserves.

I am sorry to say that the Minister simply does not know how his own department operates. He has referred to the provision as being fairly stringent, and I call it a shocking provision. I shudder at the way in which people will receive the Minister when the Minister refers to the legislation on his visits to reserves. I ask him to ensure that he visits Cairns at the time of the next State election and campaigns against me. I will look forward to that with a great deal of pleasure.

**Mr KATTER:** The honourable member for Cook will remember that I did so at Wujal Wujal and Yam Island during the last State election campaign and the Government won in the votes that were taken at both booths. I suspect that the honourable member would not be particularly happy about my campaigning against him in Cairns.

I turn now to answer the question asked by the honourable member and provide the information he seeks. I again state that when the deed of grant in trust legislation goes through, the ownership of the land will shift to the council. Under British and Australian law, when title to the land shifts, structures and fixtures upon the land also shift to the ownership of the person who has purchased the land.

**Mr Lingard:** A special permit can be obtained for removal.

**Mr KATTER:** Well, it may be necessary for the Government to preserve some rights by virtue of the terms of the Australian Loan Council agreements. However, that is not to be expected to arise. When the deed of grant in trust legislation is proclaimed, it is expected that ownership of the houses will vest in the council. Purchase of the houses will be effected by dealing with the council and not with the department.

I say again that the provisions relate—and I do not intend to take a political stance on this—to the relationship between the council, as the lessor, the renter or the seller of the houses, and an unspecified person. The clause will operate only if the Queensland Government is unable to reach agreement with my Federal counterpart the Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs (Mr West).

Amendment (Mr Scott) negatived.

**Mr SCOTT:** I move the following further amendment—

“At page 9, omit all words comprising lines 14 to 17.”

Amendment negatived.

Clause 15, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 16 and 17, as read, agreed to.

Clause 18—Dealings with leases—

**Mr KATTER (4.42 a.m.):** I move the following amendment—

“At page 10, line 39, after the word ‘land’ insert the words—  
‘(other than by way of a mortgage charge).’”

The difficulty that has been created is that if a mortgage charge is to be regarded as an interest in land, a piece of land could never be mortgaged to a person who was not resident on the reserve. Obviously, a mortgage would be issued in favour of a bank that would be prohibited from holding an interest in the land. The amendment is intended to clarify the legal position, because some wrangling has taken place about whether a mortgage charge constitutes an interest in land. The Government wishes to cover itself in the event that the legal position is determined to mean that a mortgage charge constitutes an interest in the land.

**Mr SCOTT:** This is another area in which the Bill falls down round the Minister's ears. He has tried to claim that people will be able to use these leases as security to raise funds. That is simply not true. The Bill gives the lie to that statement, and I do not know why the Minister goes through the charade of saying that it is true. Will bank or insurance company officers be qualified persons? That is the only way there is any chance of money being raised.

It is dreadful that the Minister is misleading not only the Committee—it is under his control, so I suppose that if he wants to mislead it perhaps that is the type of person he is—but also the Aboriginal people. It is totally dishonest to say that they can use this legislation to raise money, because the Bill prevents that from happening. If there is a foreclosure, it can only occur for a year, and there is no way in the world that banks or other credit institutions will lend money to Aboriginal or Islander people.

I have Aborigines constantly coming to me asking that I act as guarantor so that they can buy a vehicle. The reason for that is that they have been told by the bank or credit firm that if they can get a guarantor they might get a loan. It is extremely difficult for an Aborigine or Islander on a very limited income to find a guarantor.

The Minister is acting indecently and raising their hopes by telling them that under this legislation they will have the security on which to borrow money. It is shocking that the Minister should carry on as he is. The Minister can do what he likes to this Chamber. He has been doing what he likes to their housing for many years and the Aboriginal and Islander people will only think bad of him, anyway. The things he has said about the possibility of their raising money has totally destroyed his credibility. I ask again: Are bank credit officers to be regarded as qualified persons?

**Mr KATTER:** No; they are not, and that is why the amendment has been moved. The reference to a mortgage charge is being omitted as not being an interest in land. I have seen many foreclosures take place in my electorate, and in not one case can I remember the mortgagee staying in possession for more than nine months. In most cases, the mortgagee moves into possession for only about a month and then puts the property up for auction. I know of only two or three cases of a mortgagee actually taking possession. It just forces the sale and the money is transferred. So when the member says that the fact that the mortgagee cannot hold the property for more than a year will act as a restraint, I disagree, because it has never proved to be a restraint in my electorate.

I have already had a half-day discussion with the manager of one of the main banks in Queensland that does business on the reserves. He said that if the bank could get some sort of guarantee over the money that it lends, it would be prepared to look at making loans. So I went to the ADC and said, "Can you guarantee the loan?" The ADC said, "Yes, we can see some really interesting possibilities here. We will look seriously at it and give you an answer in due course." So the chances of success are substantial.

The member would agree that at present it is impossible for a person of Aboriginal descent living on a reserve to obtain a loan for anything at all. That is a general statement, but I think a fair one. The first thing a bank looks for is security, so the Government has looked at providing Aborigines with some security that they can hand to a bank.

I have made only one statement about the mortgage provision, and in it I said that in its present form it was of no use. But as time goes by and one or two people make

a go of things, they will be able to afford to buy a house. The first house that is bought by one of those people will establish a market. From that point onward there will be a growth in the availability of finance in those areas. They simply cannot grow without an influx of money, and if the honourable member thinks that it will come from the tax-payer, I have to disagree with him.

That is the only game plan for those people at the moment. If that game plan is not made available, then I feel sorry for them because there is nothing else offering. Certainly the Federal Government is cutting back on the amount of money that it is providing, and the Queensland Government is not in a position to increase its payments to reserve areas.

**Mr SCOTT:** The Minister said that no money will be coming from the tax-payers. What about the ADC? He is not even aware that that happens to be tax-payers' money.

The Minister has agreed with the totality of my argument in this regard. I am happy to accept the fact that he has agreed with me. It really advances the game plan, as the Minister likes to call it, to a very small extent. The remarks that he has made indicate that he is looking at setting up a class of money-lenders or exploiters. Whether they are black or white, those people are not to be admired. If the Minister intends to encourage people to buy up houses like that, again he shows his attitude towards people in Queensland.

Amendment (Mr Katter) agreed to.

Clause 18, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 19 and 20, as read, agreed to.

Clause 21—Forfeiture upon default in rent—

**Mr KATTER (4.51 a.m.):** I move the following amendment—

“At page 11, line 44, omit the expression—

‘1968-1984’

and substitute the expression—

‘1962-1985’ ”

Again, this is simply a typographical error.

Amendment (Mr Katter) agreed to.

Clause 21, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 22 to 24, as read, agreed to.

Clause 25—Procedure for forfeiture—

**Mr SCOTT (4.52 a.m.):** This clause confirms my belief that the Lands Department will have a very strong presence in regard to these leases. The Minister has denied that. He has gratuitously made the offer that his officers will handle the normal Lands Department jobs. I do not think that that is right or proper. I know some of the things in which the Department of Community Services has been involved. It has been involved in the adoption of children—much to the concern of the Department of Children's Services. Over the years, that area has been totally mishandled. Again, to use a dreadful pun, that is the progeny of the under secretary. He has always had total and complete control in those areas, including the adoption of children. I know the mess that he has made of those sorts of things.

People are constantly coming to me and saying that they thought that they had adopted children who had been in their families for years. When they go to the Department of Children's Services to seek proper advice, they find that they have been given only the care or custody of the children. They thought that they had actually adopted the children. That is the sort of game that the Department of Community Services plays,

and it will continue to play that game. There are moves to get the Department of Children's Services to move in and handle those matters.

On the same basis, the Lands Department will be required to make those inspections. The DCS has a long tradition of playing with the lives of Aboriginal and Islander people. That will not be allowed to happen in the 1980s and the 1990s. Whether the Lands Department likes it or not, it will be involved in these matters. Of course, it will want payment for the services that it renders. That department will be putting its hand out to the Department of Community Services for payment for those services. The rents on the leases are very modest. They are 0.5 per cent of the annual rates. The councils will not collect enough money to pay the Lands Department for services rendered, so the whole thing will be a complete and utter mess.

This clause also refers to visiting justices who attend the trust areas. It is well known that visiting justices go to those areas only very rarely. I will not bother to ask the Minister about this, but he knows as well as I do that visiting justices never go to the outer islands of the Torres Strait. Court cases from those islands are heard on Thursday Island. Dozens of visiting justices will be needed to handle the work that will be created under the new leasing arrangements.

**Mr KATTER:** I have more faith in the Aboriginal and Islander people than the Opposition spokesman does. I do not expect that there will be a great number of forfeitures. The honourable member said that the Department of Community Services has played games with these people. This has nothing to do with the DCS. The Minister for Lands will make the decision.

Clause 25, as read, agreed to.

Clause 26, as read, agreed to.

Clause 27—Consequences of forfeiture—

**Mr KATTER (4.56 a.m.):** I move the following amendment—

“At page 14, lines 32 and 33, omit the words—

‘an Aboriginal Council or an Island Council as’

and substitute the word—

‘a.’”

Amendment agreed to.

**Mr KATTER:** I move the following further amendment—

“At page 14, line 34, omit the words—

‘council as’.”

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 27, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 28, as read, agreed to.

Clause 29—Nomination of panels—

**Mr SCOTT (4.58 a.m.):** I ask the Minister whether he has given up the idea of establishing an Aboriginal Co-ordinating Council. He makes much of the Island Co-ordinating Council, and people in that body have had much to say and are very responsible. Because they get no response from the Minister, they are totally frustrated. The members of that council are among the vast majority of Aboriginal and Islander people who realise that the Minister goes round with a nice smiling face, and at his best, he is a very nice person, but he does not produce results. The ICC has not been given any facilities. The Minister has not provided an office. At this stage, the ICC is negotiating the use of an office, which will be paid for with Commonwealth funds. The Minister is the greatest leech of Commonwealth funds that I know of; yet he stands up

in this place and abuses the Commonwealth Government. That is shocking. I would like to hear his comments on the Aboriginal Co-ordinating Council. I presume that such a body exists, but I do not know who has been appointed and when they were appointed. I would like him to tell me their names and to state approximately when they were appointed.

**Mr KATTER:** If the honourable member had read the community services legislation, he would know that the ACC is a body comprising the chairmen of each of the reserve areas in Queensland. It is extraordinary that he does not know that.

**Mr Scott:** When does it meet?

**Mr KATTER:** As I have already said, it has met on two occasions. My department offered the chairman another meeting and he said that the council did not want one. I could not force him to hold another meeting. He was the chairman of that body and that was all that I could do. The ACC has had two meetings.

**Mr Scott:** Who is the chairman?

**Mr KATTER:** The chairman was Les Stewart and the deputy chairman was Tom Geia. I should tell the honourable member that, if those people are to get together, there is a little matter of money for the cost of the transport of these people from the various areas of Queensland. There is a certain lack of community of interest between Cherbourg, which is a couple of hundred miles from Brisbane, and Kowanyama. The chairman, Les Stewart, was extremely resentful that someone from Kowanyama should be telling him what to do at Cherbourg. I sympathise with that argument. That is one of the reasons why the provision is being amended. I am sure that it is an adequate answer to the question now asked by the honourable member.

Clause 29, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 30 to 34, as read, agreed to.

Clause 35—Amendment to s. 7; New ss. 334C, 334D and 334E—

**Mr KATTER (5.1 a.m.):** I move the following amendments—

“At page 17, line 27, omit the words—  
‘in section 7’ ”;

“At page 17, line 36, omit the words—  
‘the Crown’

and substitute the words—

‘a prescribed person’ ”;

“At page 17, line 40, omit the words—  
‘the Crown’

and substitute the words—

‘a prescribed person’ ”;

“At page 17, line 43, omit the words—  
‘the Crown’

and substitute the words—

‘a prescribed person’ ”;

“At page 18, line 6, omit the words—  
‘the Crown’

and substitute the words—

‘a prescribed person’ ”;

“At page 18, after line 15, insert the words—

‘In this section the expression “prescribed person” includes the Crown in right of the State or of the Commonwealth and any statutory body acting in discharge of its statutory functions under an Act of the State or of the Commonwealth but does not include The Corporation of the Under Secretary for Community Services in its capacity as a bare trustee of land.’ ”

Amendments agreed to.

Clause 35, as amended, agreed to.

Bill reported, with amendments.

### Third Reading

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

## BILL: REMAINING STAGES

### Suspension of Standing Orders

**Hon. C. A. WHARTON** (Burnett—Leader of the House), by leave, without notice: I move—

“That notwithstanding the provisions of Standing Orders the remaining stages of the Mortgages (Secondary Market) Act Amendment Bill be proceeded with during this day’s sitting.”

**Mr R. J. GIBBS** (Wolston) (5.2 a.m.): I oppose the motion moved by the Leader of the House. Standing Order No. 241 (d) on page 50 of the Standing Rules and Orders of the Legislative Assembly states quite clearly and concisely—

“Further debate on the Question ‘That the Bill be now read a Second time’ shall be adjourned for a period of at least six whole calendar days.”

The amendment to Standing Orders is dated 28 August 1984.

The amending Bill was put before this Assembly by the Attorney-General only yesterday afternoon.

**Mr Davis:** It is a shame.

**Mr R. J. GIBBS:** It is not only a shame, it is a sham that yesterday afternoon the Attorney-General introduced a Bill containing major amendments that will affect the economic future of this State without any consultation with the Opposition and, as I understand it, without any consultation with some members of his own committee. The Opposition is not prepared to accept that debate should take place in this House on such short notice. In accordance with Standing Orders, the debate should have been adjourned for at least six whole calendar days. Had the Attorney-General considered that the debate was so important, the amendments should have been introduced into the House last week. The Opposition believes that, in accordance with Standing Orders, the Minister and the Government have no choice if they are considering taking a certain stance in this Chamber. The Opposition believes that the debate should not take place before the Parliament is reconvened, which I understand will be in August. The Opposition completely opposes the Bill’s being debated.

**Mr Casey:** It is only to cover up another one of Sir Edward Lyons’s mistakes.

**Mr R. J. GIBBS:** Absolutely.

Question—That the motion (Mr Wharton) be agreed to—put; and the House divided—

AYES, 46		NOES, 30	
Ahern	Lee	Braddy	Warburton
Alison	Lester	Burns	Warner, A. M.
Austin	Lickiss	Campbell	Wilson
Bailey	Lingard	Casey	Yewdale
Booth	Littleproud	D'Arcy	
Borbidge	McKechnie	De Lacy	
Cahill	McPhie	Fouras	
Chapman	Menzel	Gibbs, R. J.	
Cooper	Miller	Goss	
Elliott	Muntz	Hamill	
FitzGerald	Newton	Kruger	
Gibbs, I. J.	Powell	Mackenroth	
Glasson	Randell	McElligott	
Goleby	Simpson	McLean	
Gunn	Stephan	Milliner	
Gygar	Stoneman	Palaszczuk	
Harper	Tenni	Prest	
Harvey	Turner	Price	
Henderson	Wharton	Scott	
Innes	White	Shaw	
Jennings		Smith	
Katter	<i>Tellers</i>	Underwood	<i>Tellers</i>
Knox	Kaus	Vaughan	Davis
Lane	Neal	Veivers	Comben

Resolved in the affirmative.

## MORTGAGES (SECONDARY MARKET) ACT AMENDMENT BILL

### Second Reading—Resumption of Debate

Debate resumed from 9 April (see p. 4990) on Mr Harper's motion—

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

**Mr R. J. GIBBS** (Wolston) (5.16 a.m.): At the outset, it ought to be said that in the very early hours of this morning a number of Government members were asleep. They are the same members who fraudulently express their concern in the House about Queensland's economy. Others were not in Chamber and had to be called by the division bells. I repeat that their colleagues who remained in the Chamber were asleep.

The most disgusting thing, however, is the sudden reappearance in the Chamber of the Liberal Party six-pack. On previous occasions, they have carried on a charade of support for changes in the Standing Orders. I have just referred to Standing Order No. 241 (d), on p. 51 of the Standing Rules and Orders. The heading of that Standing Order is “Bills Presented by a Member, read a First Time and Printed” The provision to which I referred reads—

“Further debate on the Question ‘That the Bill be now read a Second time’ shall be adjourned for a period”——

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Row): Order! The speech by the honourable member is totally irrelevant. I ask him to direct his remarks to the Bill.

**Mr R. J. GIBBS**: I am quite happy to do so, Mr Deputy Speaker, because I respect you as a fine gentleman with extreme intelligence, a man who is impartial.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER**: Order! The matter that the member is now discussing was debated prior to the resumption of debate on the Mortgages (Secondary Market) Act Amendment Bill.

**Mr R. J. GIBBS**: Of course. I merely point out that, when Queensland is approaching a time of economic ruin and absolute chaos, the Liberal party, which pretends to be concerned about the State's economy, was not prepared to support the Labor Party's request for a fair, adequate and competent debate.



The Bill is further evidence of the Government's incompetence in establishing a secondary mortgage market and evidence that Queensland is having a great deal of difficulty in launching this market. Members will recall my previous speech on this subject, particularly in relation to the differences between "Fannie Maes", "Ginnie Maes", and "Freddie Macs". My close friend and colleague the honourable member for Chatsworth (Mr Mackenroth) would be well aware of that.

Queensland has now added its own Queenie Macs to this fine list and I wonder whether the name itself has something to do with the reluctance of investors to become involved in the market. Who would invest in a Queenie Mac when an Aussie Mac is available? One would wonder what is being invested in.

It is interesting to note that the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General has failed to give an indication to the House about how well the Queensland secondary mortgage market is developing. Hailed as a great revolution in finance by the Premier and Treasurer and as a move that would make Brisbane the financial capital of Australia, the Queensland secondary mortgage market has appeared to have suffered a still birth. Obviously the so-called stringent conditions that were laid down by the Government have made investment unattractive.

Problems have been caused by the Queensland Government's rushing into the secondary mortgage market in an attempt to gain cheap publicity. The Queensland Government did not plan properly for such a move. The Bill proposes further exemptions in connection with the transfer of a mortgage. It also provides for a reduction in the liquidity requirement to 25 per cent of the value in the hope that that percentage will be sufficient. It also provides for a reduction in the level of insurance, and I understand that a few other minor amendments are proposed to be made.

Fundamental decisions will have to be made by the Queensland Government if the secondary mortgage market is to develop. Decisions will have to be made about the types of securities in which investment will be made. Investors will also have to decide whether it is desired to deal in variable interest rate securities or not.

As I said before, generally speaking, four types of securities are issued. Firstly, there is the whole-loan sales; secondly, there is the category of pass-through securities; thirdly, there is the category of collateralised mortgage obligations; and, fourthly, mortgage backed bonds are issued.

It would appear that Queensland's legislation only allows for the development of the market in Queensland in connection with pass-through securities. Before I comment on the restricted form that the market will take in Queensland, I wish to say a few things about development of the market in Australia. The secondary mortgage market will see trading banks, savings banks, finance companies, credit unions, permanent building societies and co-operative housing societies enter into transactions as both mortgage originators and investors.

Life and general insurance companies, pension and superannuation funds, trustee companies, law firms, trust funds, unit trusts and the private investor will enter as buyers of mortgages or mortgage-backed securities.

**Mr Harper:** Tell us about Fannie Mae.

**Mr R. J. GIBBS:** I take the interjection made by the Minister because I am well aware of the fact that the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General has very limited knowledge on the subject-matter of the Bill. I advise the Minister, through the Chair, that if he is prepared to sit back and spend the time, I will educate him somewhat in the complicated world of financial market dealings in Queensland.

Building societies will be able to benefit from participation in the market by—  
lengthening the maturities of their liabilities;  
raising finance from the secondary mortgage market; and

using secondary mortgage market funds to undertake new diversified activities in the forthcoming deregulated environment.

The form taken by securities backed by mortgages will be dictated by the needs of investors. The types of mortgage-backed securities which may be marketed in Australia, include the following—

- (1) Primary mortgages themselves: Here the purchaser bears the risk of default (which may be insured), obtains the benefit of any early repayment and undertakes the management of the mortgage, either directly or through a manager.
- (2) Pass-through mortgage securities: These take two forms—
  - (a) a one-to-one pass-through mortgage security; and
  - (b) a pass-through mortgage security over several mortgages.

**Mr Harper:** Is that what is referred to as Fannie Maes?

**Mr R. J. GIBBS:** No, it is not. I can see that the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General is confused. As I said previously, if the Minister takes some time, he will be able to understand what I am saying.

These pass-through mortgage securities give the holder all the entitlements of a mortgagee less a margin on loan payments which goes to a mortgage manager. The mortgage underlying the security is usually held by a trustee on behalf of the holder of the security. Only this type of security appears to be allowed by the Queensland legislation.

- (3) Collateralised mortgage securities: Here the holders have entitlements equal in amounts to the mortgagee's total entitlements, less the mortgage manager's margin and administration expenses.
- (4) Overcollateralised securities: Here the holders' entitlements total a smaller amount than the total entitlements of underlying mortgages. This type of security is particularly suited to the Australian market where the underlying mortgages may be subject to interest rate controls causing their market value to be less than their face value.

Mortgage bonds may also take a pass-through, collateralised or overcollateralised form. I seek an explanation from the Attorney-General of why the Queensland Mortgages (Secondary Market) Act only permits the issuing of pass-through securities when the market will obviously develop and issue collateralised and overcollateralised mortgage securities.

**Mr Warburton:** I was just going to ask whether you think Sir Edward Lyons might be overcollateralised.

**Mr R. J. GIBBS:** I am absolutely sure that Sir Edward Lyons is overcollateralised. In fact, from information that I have received in the last 24 hours, I believe that he is overcollateralised to Queensland book-makers to the tune of \$300,000. That worries them, because it is all on the nod. They cannot put it on their books. If they do, it will line them up for additional book-making taxes.

It is clear that this restriction on the form that mortgage-backed securities may take in Queensland will inhibit the development of the market, particularly in relation to securities backed by variable rate reducible residential mortgages. Pass-through securities based on variable rate reducible mortgages subject to interest rate controls are possible, but would be virtually unmarketable. With residential mortgages, the interest on which is officially regulated, the mortgaged-backed securities could be marketed in an overcollateralised form.

So I ask the Attorney-General: Why has legislation been passed in Queensland that ostensibly prohibits the marketing of mortgaged-backed securities in an overcollateralised form? Did not the committee that investigated the setting up of a secondary mortgage

market in Queensland look at the United States experience and determine the types of security that were common in the market?

I again draw to the attention of the House and the Attorney-General that the name of Sir Edward Lyons is constantly popping up. Sir Edward Lyons was supposedly the mastermind of the secondary mortgage market in Queensland. Yet, for the second time in a very short period, the Attorney-General has entered this Chamber and is rushing through emergency legislation to plug the gaps that people like Sir Edward Lyons have left in this legislation.

It would appear from Queensland's effort that, far from removing the shackles that prevent the development of the market in Queensland, the Government has actually restricted the development of the market by restricting the form that mortgage-backed securities may take.

Like so many other claims of this Government, the suggestion that Queensland has beaten the southern States in getting this market off the ground is absolutely laughable.

In 1981-82, the Victorian Government reduced the duty payable on the transfer of a mortgage to \$10 a transaction. Queensland only did that in its 1983-84 Budget.

On 9 April 1984, the Victorian Government stated that it would remove the ad valorem marketable securities duty payable on the transfer of mortgage-backed securities. Queensland only did that in July, when it set up the committee.

So, far from taking the lead, Queensland has followed New South Wales and Victoria, with a lag of anything between six months and two years.

The inadequate legislation that was pushed through this Parliament late at night was designed purely and simply as a public relations stunt.

It is well known that the Premier's introduction of this legislation pushed the Attorney-General's nose out of joint. I am sure that the members of the press gallery can remember that the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General was the person who was supposed to be given the responsibility for introducing that legislation into the House.

Suddenly, one evening, the Premier and Treasurer rushed into the Chamber and introduced the legislation. He took the kudos from the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General. Everyone was aware that the Minister was extremely offended by that action. He can laugh, but it is stinging him to the core. We can all see that. After the legislation proved to be an embarrassment to the Premier and Treasurer and he had to dump it, he dumped it where it belonged—I see that the member for Nundah (Sir William Knox) is laughing and nodding his head in agreement. As I say, the Premier and Treasurer dumped the legislation back where it belonged—on to his little dummy, his little boy, the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General.

True to form, the Government, with its agrarian socialist principles, decided to regulate the market by establishing a board. It is very fond of boards which have usurped the operation of the market in Queensland and replaced it with regulation. The board sits on top of the secondary mortgage market and registers trustees and controls prudential standards. Only individuals or corporations that are registered are eligible to issue and trade in securities.

On the other hand, following the successful experience in the United States of America, New South Wales and Victoria have proposed the setting up of a Government-backed corporation that will actively participate in the market. It has been proven that that will greatly accelerate the establishment of a secondary mortgage market.

In its present form, the Queensland legislation is much too restrictive. On the macro-level, the Government argues that this policy will be expansionary. However, on the micro-level—

**A Government Member:** Do you know what it means?

**Mr R. J. GIBBS:** I understand what it means. Of course, I know that some Government members would not have a basic understanding of economics.

However, on the micro-level, on the level of the institutions involved in the market, the legislation will be restrictive.

On my understanding on the legislation, it would appear that collateralised and over-collateralised mortgage securities will not be permitted in Queensland.

So again the National Party has created another fiasco by rushing in with inadequate legislation, following on an inadequate investigation of the secondary mortgage market. Of course, that is due entirely to the fact that, rather than professional Treasury officers, cronies of the Premier and Treasurer, who frankly admit that they know little about the market, were put in charge of investigating the establishment of a secondary mortgage market in Queensland.

Again I shall ask a question of the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General. Only a week ago in this House he answered the question but not to some people's satisfaction. Rumours are rife in Queensland at present that the doyen of the National Party, the professional bagman, Sir Edward Lyons, received a commission of \$100,000 from the Queensland Government for the work that he put into the establishment of this market. If any person in the community was paid \$100,000 for the absolute financial fiasco that we have witnessed in the establishment of this market, he would be sacked. He should not be given a dollar for the type of legislation that has been introduced into this House.

The Under Treasurer saw the holes in the legislation but was overruled by the Premier and Treasurer who was desperate for a headline. Of course, I am referring to Leo Hielscher, the pretender to the throne of the financial empire of the State Government Insurance Office.

This fiasco confirms the view held by the business community that we have a hick Government that has little understanding of the business world as such, and even less understanding of the detailed operation of a secondary mortgage market.

I finalise my comments by directing a number of questions to the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General. How many Queenie Mac bonds have been sold to date? How many operators have been licensed to date? To what extent have building societies become involved in the secondary mortgage market? When will the principal Act be amended again?

They are important questions. I note that the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General has taken no notice of them because he cannot understand the complex questions that the Opposition has posed. I hope that his advisers, who are present, can at least give him some knowledgeable "uncomment" so that he can reply to the "unknowledgeable" questions that have been posed by the Opposition.

**Hon. Sir WILLIAM KNOX (Nundah) (5.36 a.m.):** The way in which this debate has begun is unfortunate, because important legislation is involved. I remind honourable members that, by agreement, the original legislation was introduced as a matter of urgency on 19 September and was put through in the early hours of 20 September. It was agreed to by all parties because it was considered that good reasons could be found for establishing a secondary mortgage market in Queensland at that time. Honourable members were told that it would be the first market to be established in Australia.

It was subsequently found that the Act required substantial amendment. During the course of the debate on the original legislation, a number of honourable members, including my own colleagues, raised shortcomings in the legislation that needed attention. The amendments that were suggested by honourable members were put through the House by agreement on 27 November. That Bill was passed as a matter of urgency because the House was about to rise and the original legislation was deficient and required attention.

Even though no attempt was made by the Minister to establish urgency, the Bill currently before the House is being debated now. That is a very serious oversight on his part. This Bill has been lying round in the Minister's office for over three weeks. It is not a difficult, complicated or extensive Bill. It deals mostly with technical matters. The Bill is being pushed through the House in this way when it could well have been put to the House some time ago as it has been lying round in the back rooms of the Government. That is not in keeping with the traditions of Parliament, and the Parliament cannot show proper respect to important legislation.

**Mr R. J. Gibbs** interjected.

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX:** The Liberal Party supports it because it is urgent and should go through.

**Mr R. J. Gibbs:** You are like the Scarlet Pimpernel—you are here, there and everywhere.

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX:** Not at all. At least Liberal Party members understand what it is all about and why it is necessary that the Bill go through. I tell the honourable member that the Bill is urgent. The Minister should have established its urgency long before this because the Parliament is entitled to an explanation when such matters come before the House in these circumstances.

**Mr R. J. Gibbs:** How do you explain that?

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX:** Explain what?

**Mr R. J. Gibbs:** How do you explain the fact that Parliament deserves some explanation of what it is all about?

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX:** It does not deserve an explanation about what the Bill is all about. The Parliament is entitled to a statement from the Minister about the question of urgency so that members can judge in open debate whether the matter is urgent. It so happens that members know that the legislation is urgent. The Minister should have attended to that by explaining the situation or by placing the Bill before the House two or three weeks ago when it was ready. It is not a complicated piece of legislation at all. At this late hour the House is faced with the predicament in these unusual circumstances.

**Mr Yewdale:** At this early hour.

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX:** Yes, at this early hour.

The honourable member for Wolston was somewhat rude to the Liberal Party. That is not unusual. At least during the division we had 100 per cent attendance in the House. The Labor Party had one member missing. No doubt she was paired with either the Premier or the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing.

**Mr Innes:** It was a half of his faction.

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX:** Yes, his faction was decimated; 50 per cent of his faction disappeared. One member of the Labor Party was missing. No doubt she is lining up with the pickets that will commence in about one hour's time.

**Mr R. J. Gibbs:** Where is the member for Redcliffe?

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX:** He was present in the House during the division, but 50 per cent of the honourable member's faction was missing. No doubt his other half is out practising for the picket-lines.

I want to make it quite clear to the House that the Liberal Party protests at the lack of explanation to the House on the question of urgency.

**Mr R. J. Gibbs:** I have never seen anybody as deflated as you are after Don Lane's attack on you today.

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX:** I do not know that it was an attack.

The amendment is necessary to make the Mortgages (Secondary Market) Act work. I realise that the Minister is in a difficult position. Originally the legislation was handled by the Premier and Treasurer. Probably in some circles it is regarded as a financial Bill rather than a legal one. Nevertheless, the massive number of amendments that were dealt with by the House on 27 November last year and these amendments indicate quite clearly that if the proper procedures had been adopted by the Government in the preparation of this legislation and the system had not been short-circuited, the Parliament would not now be faced with this legislation under these peculiar circumstances.

**Mr Lee:** Or even if they had accepted some of our amendments.

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX:** Indeed so. Our amendments were certainly well put forward at the time.

In the preparation of legislation, there is really no need for the normal procedures to be bypassed. In this case the legislation was apparently prepared by people who are not employed by the Government, other than on contract. That has been revealed in answers to questions asked in the House. The Bill was prepared by people who are not trained in draftsmanship and are not familiar with this area of the financial world. Those people made claims about familiarity with this area of business. They are known to be associated with the financial world, but they do not understand legislation or administration. The preparation of this legislation has been a complete mess-up. The massive number of amendments that were dealt with at the end of last year proves that.

As a result of that mess-up, instead of being the first, the best and the biggest in this field in Australia, Queensland is way behind the rest of the country. That is a reflection on the inadequate preparation of the legislation. The Minister has experts available in his department. Other experts are available in the Treasury and in the Premier's Department. They are all quite capable of preparing legislation of this type and of doing it right the first time.

**Mr R. J. Gibbs:** Don't you understand that they are being frozen out?

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX:** If they are, that is regrettable. It is quite proper for people to present briefs to the Government, but the preparation of legislation should be in the hands of the experts who know and understand all the ramifications of the legislation and not just some of them. That the Parliament has been subjected to this sort of pressure on what is now three occasions is regrettable.

**Mr INNES (Sherwood) (5.45 a.m.):** I rise to speak briefly on the Bill. When the original Bill was introduced by the Premier and Treasurer, reference was made to the importance of becoming the first State in Australia to establish legislative backing for a secondary mortgage market. In that context, the legislation was supported as a matter of urgency. Benefits can be gained by being the first into the field in a competitive financial world. However, the "first" was the introduction of legislation into this House; unfortunately, it has proved not to be the setting up of the secondary mortgage market. Phrases used by the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General since he took over the carriage of the matter include statements such as, "It is very important legislation to reinforce and to promote Queensland as the most dynamic free enterprise State in Australia."

In the Minister's second-reading speech, honourable members find statements such as, "I am determined that any unnecessary impediments or restrictions on market activities should be obviated." Those sentiments are fine. The greatest impediments to the development of the secondary mortgage market appear to be legislative impediments.

Had the legislation been right on the first occasion, there would not have been impediments that would have caused delays in the setting up of the secondary mortgage market. Obviously, in pioneering matters there will be some degree of learning along the way. The Liberal Party accepts that. This legislation deals with the removal of fees charged for the usual type of actions that have to take place to make a mortgage market work. That was a substantial part of the amendments in November. One would have thought that if those problems were experienced in November, clear thinking and some care would have enabled both those matters to be dealt with at the one time.

At some stage we need to stop legislating and at some time the market has to begin operating. Because this is the last sitting day before a possible four-month break, the Liberal Party accepts that there is urgency. It would be hoped that further legislative impediments do not inhibit the development of the secondary mortgage market.

I was going to ask questions that were very similar to the questions asked by the honourable member for Wolston. I add to his questions the following question: What is the value of mortgages that have been dealt with so far by the secondary mortgage market in Queensland? Some details about the costs of setting up the secondary mortgage market have been elicited by questioning.

**Mr R. J. Gibbs:** It is very, very shrouded.

**Mr INNES:** Reference was made to an amount of \$35,000 being expenses of Mr Phillip Miskin in the setting up of the secondary mortgage market. What was very shrouded, cloudy or lacking in clarity was the answer to a question as to the amounts of money paid out on behalf of what was stated to be the use of subconsultants, and to whom. The answer revealed that some element of privacy was involved and that the matter would not be disclosed.

I find it incredible, and I should think that other members in this House would find it incredible, that an answer should not be given to a reasonable question about the expenditure of public moneys, when the Government is the source of the payment out, and when it should not have been paid out except with evidence as to where it was going.

I specifically asked the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General about the matter. I know that the Deputy Premier and Minister Assisting the Treasurer (Mr Gunn), who is present, also has an iron in the same fire. What subconsultants were used in the preparation of the mortgage market facility, which is apparently still proceeding? As public moneys are being used for the establishment of an important public facility, how much have those subconsultants been paid?

**Hon. N. J. HARPER** (Auburn—Minister for Justice and Attorney-General) (5.50 a.m.), in reply: I point out for the benefit of the honourable member for Wolston (Mr R. J. Gibbs) that this Bill was introduced two days ago, if I read the calendar correctly.

The amendment is evidence that the Government is prepared to respond to market requirements as this new concept develops. Queensland claims to be and in fact is the leader in this field. I must give the Opposition spokesman credit for his reading ability. I trust that he has thanked his Victorian comrades for the paper that he delivered in this House.

Unlike the Victorian secondary mortgage market, which is only one issuer and one form of marketable securities—promissory notes—the Queensland market allows for a range of issuers and types of marketable securities. In fact, the Queensland market is much more flexible, much more market oriented and that has been recognised by the commercial community.

The honourable member is correct in saying that the Bjelke-Petersen Government decided to regulate the market by establishing a board—a free enterprise board—in Queensland, unlike the socialist enterprise set up by the honourable member's comrades in Victoria who, quite obviously, prepared his paper again. This paper was in a much

more readable form, might I say, than the paper that they prepared for him in September last year.

I thank the honourable member for Nundah (Sir William Knox) for his contribution. However, I point out for his benefit that this Bill has not been lying about for three weeks. In fact, three weeks ago not even the first draft or even a part of the Bill had been received from the Parliamentary Counsel. It is reassuring to me that on this occasion the source of the Liberal Party's information is very much in error. It is comforting to know that Liberal Party members do not have an accurate source for such claims. In fact, the amendments have been in the process of development for some weeks but were only finalised to my satisfaction and to the satisfaction of the Government on the morning of last Tuesday. I reject the honourable member's unwarranted criticism. Queensland is not way behind the rest of Australia. Queensland has led the field since last September.

I thank also the honourable member for Sherwood (Mr Innes) for his contribution. However, I point out for his benefit that New South Wales has not proceeded with its secondary mortgage legislation at this time. In fact, New South Wales has retained the services of a private financial adviser.

**Mr Fouras** interjected.

**Mr HARPER:** For the benefit of the honourable member for South Brisbane—because he was too busy speaking and listening to himself again—I repeat that his comrades in New South Wales have actually turned to a private financial adviser. The adviser has visited Queensland and has indicated that New South Wales is looking at the Queensland model rather than the Victorian socialistic model.

Again I make the point that Queensland set out to lead the field in this area of finance in September of last year when the Premier and Treasurer thought that the matter was of such importance that he introduced the Bill to the Parliament. Since September, Queensland has continued to lead in the field, and with the co-operation of the House and the financial community it will continue to do so.

Motion (Mr Harper) agreed to.

**Mr R. J. Gibbs** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Row): Order! If the member for Wolston continues to interject in that manner, I might have to suggest that he consider something like Fanny Bay instead of "Fanny Mae"

#### Committee

Mr Booth (Warwick) in the chair; Hon. N. J. Harper (Auburn—Minister for Justice and Attorney-General) in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1, as read, agreed to.

Clause 2—Commencement—

**Mr INNES** (5.56 a.m.): The commencement of the Act relates to certain matters called impediments to the operation of the market at present. So that the Parliament understands the importance of the removal of the impediments, it must understand the context in which it operates, the value of business done to date and what can be expected in the future. I reiterate the question that was asked earlier, which the Minister, perhaps regrettably, did not appear to wish to answer. I ask: Has any business been done in the trading of mortgages so far? If so, to what value? What difference can we expect when the amendments contained in the Bill come into force?

**Mr HARPER:** As I indicated, there is one trustee, the Bank of New South Wales nominees—which I may have informed honourable members about previously—and one issuer, Forward Mortgages. Once assent is given to the amendments, a number of



further approvals and increased participation are envisaged. In fact, the Free Enterprise Board and the Commissioner for Corporate Affairs have dealt with and are continuing to deal with a number of applications. The momentum is building up.

Off the cuff, the first issue was in the order of \$90m. I am not able to advise the Parliament in detail of subsequent issues other than to say that a little over a week ago Forward Mortgages advised me that two further issues had taken place during the previous couple of weeks. An indication was given of an intention to have a further issue at about this time or perhaps next week. The market is active. It is moving. A number of points were discussed—the features, the financial returns available and the need for close supervision from the point of view of the issuer. The market is active. I believe that, following these amendments, it will gain momentum.

**Mr R. J. GIBBS:** I ask the Minister, as I did at the conclusion of my speech at the second-reading stage: How many applications for licences have been made to the department so far and how many licences have been granted?

**Mr HARPER:** If the honourable member refers to my answer to the honourable member for Sherwood, as recorded in “Hansard”, he would have an indication.

Clause 2, as read, agreed to.

Clause 3, as read, agreed to.

Clause 4—New s. 27B—

**Mr CAMPBELL (6 a.m.):** I wish to raise only one point, and that relates to the clause that provides penalties. The Queensland Government has a very poor record for the control of white-collar crime, and it should be known that an estimated \$90m in mortgages has already been handled. Penalties provided for white-collar crime can amount to a lousy \$500.

Only yesterday, the Fraser Island Public Access Bill provided for penalties in respect of breaches of the provisions to the value of \$5,000. How is it that when the Queensland Government deals with very large amounts of money that will be handled in the market that is proposed, which is open to white-collar crime—and that is acknowledged by virtue of the fact that honourable members are discussing amendments in an attempt to either tighten or loosen legislative provisions—greater penalties are not proposed to ensure that white-collar crime does not proliferate in Queensland?

**Mr HARPER:** Surely the honourable member for Bundaberg does not expect that question to be taken seriously.

Clause 4, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 5 and 6, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

### Third Reading

Bill, on motion of Mr Harper, read a third time.

### AUCTIONEERS AND AGENTS ACT AMENDMENT BILL

**Hon. N. J. HARPER** (Auburn—Minister for Justice and Attorney-General), by leave, without notice: I move—

“That leave be given to bring in a Bill to amend the Auctioneers and Agents Act 1971-1981 in certain particulars.”

Motion agreed to.

### First Reading

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

### Second Reading

**Hon. N. J. HARPER** (Auburn—Minister for Justice and Attorney-General) (6.3 a.m.): I move—

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

The Auctioneers and Agents Act Amendment Bill represents a major review of the Act. Efforts were made to invite as wide a cross-section of the community as possible to submit suggestions for the improvement of the Act.

A large number of submissions was received from a wide cross-section of the industry as well as from several Ministers of the Crown and honourable members. Members of local authorities, professional bodies and officers of my department also made suggestions which were considered during preparation of the Bill. Accordingly, most provisions of the Act are affected by the Bill.

Many of the proposed amendments have been framed to incorporate appropriate submissions, whereas others have been initiated by the Registrar of Auctioneers and Agents and by the Auctioneers and Agents Committee.

A significant number of the amendments are directed towards practical difficulties encountered by those called upon to administer the Act. Others are directed towards corrections, omissions and removing anomalies which have become apparent.

As a result of the amendments, the Act will become more coherent and readable, for both the industry and the general public alike. To achieve this, various sections of the Act dealing with common principles have been repealed and consolidated in one part. Examples of this are the disciplinary provisions and a new part dealing with pastoral house licenses.

The Bill also covers such areas as franchise agreements involving licensees and empowers the committee to require guarantees or indemnities of franchisors. In recognition of a desire from a large segment of the community, the Bill allows for the investment of trust moneys in interest-bearing accounts following instructions from purchasers to the agents for their deposit money to be so invested. The Bill also clarifies when and by whom claims may be made against the Fidelity Guarantee Fund. In order to assist in the effective running of the industry, the Bill also makes provision to enlarge the number of members appointed to the Auctioneers and Agents Committee in addition to the Registrar, from six to eight. The increased numbers will facilitate subcommittees and will enable wider representation to be given to the industry.

The Bill substantially amends the Auctioneers and Agents Act 1971-1984. An endeavour has been made to strike a proper balance between, on the one hand, tightening provisions in certain areas to allow for more effective control of the relevant sectors, thereby achieving greater protection for the public, and, on the other hand, ensuring that persons governed by the Act are not unduly hampered in carrying on their business. It is my opinion that the Bill has achieved those objectives.

The Bill is being presented to the House now to enable the widest possible public access to and comment on it before it is dealt with by the House.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr R. J. Gibbs, adjourned.

### HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR

#### Appreciation of Service

**Hon. W. A. M. GUNN** (Somerset—Deputy Premier and Minister Assisting the Treasurer), by leave, without notice: I move—

“(1) That the following Address be presented to His Excellency Commodore Sir James Maxwell Ramsay, KCMG, KCVO, CBE, DSC, RAN (Retd), on his retirement from the Office of Governor of Queensland—

‘We, the Members of the Legislative Assembly of Queensland, desire to place on record our deep appreciation of the great service rendered to this

State by Your Excellency during your tenure of the high and responsible Office of Governor of Queensland. As Her Majesty's representative, Your Excellency has given a magnificent example to our people by your loyalty, zeal, ability and enthusiastic interest in the State and its people. Your Excellency's contribution to the development and progress of Queensland has been outstanding, and you have earned the respect and admiration of all. In these endeavours Your Excellency has had Lady Ramsay at your side, and together you have worthily and faithfully served Her Majesty The Queen.

This House therefore expresses its deep regret at Your Excellency's impending departure but, in bidding farewell, extends its sincere appreciation of your service to Queensland and trusts that Your Excellency and Lady Ramsay will enjoy good health, happiness and success in the years to come.'

(2) That the Address be presented to His Excellency by Mr Speaker, accompanied by such Members as think fit to attend with him."

**Mr WARBURTON** (Sandgate—Leader of the Opposition ) (6.8 a.m.): In seconding the motion, I have to say that on occasion my wife, Fran, and I have had the pleasure of being guests of the Governor and Lady Ramsay at Government House, and unquestionably I would have to agree that we have been treated with the greatest of respect.

The Governor has always treated the Opposition as a real and integral part of the parliamentary system of the State. I believe that that is a great credit to the man who has been the Governor of our State for quite a long period.

One of the problems confronting any Governor of Queensland is that, in many cases, the people do not fully understand the very strict guide-lines under which he is required to function. It is not readily understood that the Governor is required to take the advice of his Ministers.

I, together with members of the Opposition, are appreciative of the fact that the Governor and Lady Ramsay have been part of the Queensland scene for a considerable period. We join with the Government in wishing them a happy retirement and hope, of course, that the next Governor and his lady are equal to the task.

**Hon. Sir WILLIAM KNOX** (Nundah) (6.10 a.m.): On behalf of the Liberal Party, I wish to support the motion moved by the Deputy Premier and Minister Assisting the Treasurer (Mr Gunn) and supported by the Leader of Her Majesty's Opposition (Mr Warburton). I heartily endorse the sentiments expressed in the motion.

I think that all members agree that His Excellency has served with great distinction, not only in his previous career but also as Governor of this State.

Having served for a considerable time as one of His Excellency's advisers, I found that his interest in the State and its people was magnificent. He was an inspiration to many people and gave great leadership to the people of this State.

Motion (Mr Gunn) agreed to.

### SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

**Hon. C. A. WHARTON** (Burnett—Leader of the House): I move—

"That the House, at its rising, do adjourn until 11 o'clock a.m. on a date to be fixed by Mr Speaker in consultation with the Government of this State. Mr Speaker shall, not less than seven days prior to the meeting date so fixed, give notification of such meeting date to each member of the House."

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 6.12 a.m. (Thursday).

## BILLS ASSENTED TO AT CLOSE OF SESSION

The following Bills, having been passed by the Legislative Assembly and presented for the Royal assent, were assented to in the name of Her Majesty on the dates indicated—

(20 *March* 1985)—

Queensland Marine Act and Another Act Amendment Bill.

(15 *April* 1985)—

Architects Bill;  
 Construction Safety Act Amendment Bill;  
 Deer Farming Bill;  
 Director of Prosecutions Act and Justices Act Amendment Bill;  
 Petroleum Products Subsidy Act Amendment Bill;  
 Queensland Coast Islands Declaratory Bill;  
 University of Queensland (Confirmation of Powers) Bill.

(17 *April* 1985)—

Fire Brigades Act and Fire Safety Act Amendment Bill;  
 Motor Vehicles Safety Act and Other Acts Amendment Bill;  
 Racing and Betting Act Amendment Bill;  
 Regulatory Offences Bill;  
 Retail Shop Leases Act Amendment Bill;  
 Solicitor-General Bill;  
 Superannuation (Public Employees Portability and Acts Amendment) Bill;  
 Toowong Railway Station Development Project Bill.

(19 *April* 1985)—

Electoral Districts Bill;  
 Fraser Island Public Access Bill;  
 Land Tax Act Amendment Bill;  
 Stamp Act Amendment Bill.

(24 *April* 1985)—

Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders (Land Holding) Bill;  
 Building Societies Bill;  
 Land Sales Act Amendment Bill;  
 Local Government Act and Another Act Amendment Bill;  
 Local Government Act Amendment Bill;  
 Mortgages (Secondary Market) Act Amendment Bill;  
 Racing and Betting Act Amendment Bill (No. 2).

Governors' Pensions Act Amendment Bill (reserved for Royal assent 4 *April* 1985; assented to 15 *May* 1985).

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## PROROGATION

On 11 July 1985 the following Proclamation was issued by His Excellency the Governor:—

A PROCLAMATION by His Excellency Commodore Sir James Maxwell Ramsay, Knight Commander of the Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George, Knight Commander of the Royal Victorian Order, Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire, upon whom has been conferred the Decoration of the Distinguished Service Cross, and Commodore in the Royal Australian Navy (Retired), Governor in and over the State of Queensland and its Dependencies in the Commonwealth of Australia.

[L.S.]

JAMES RAMSAY,

*Governor.*

In pursuance of the power and authority vested in me, I, Sir James Maxwell Ramsay, the Governor aforesaid, do, by this my Proclamation, prorogue the Parliament of Queensland to Tuesday, the Sixth day of August, 1985.

Given under my Hand and Seal at Government House, Brisbane, this eleventh day of July, in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and eighty-five, and in the thirty-fourth year of Her Majesty's reign.

By Command,

JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN.

God Save the Queen!