

The Government is also considering the question of stricter controls on the disclosure to investors that should be developed. I know that trustee companies have and will continue—and I am sure members of the Opposition would support this assertion—to have the capacity to invest in the general investment market. The companies would see that freedom as being one which they should enjoy, but because of this company, serious consideration will need to be given to regulating their involvement in the general investment market.

Lastly, if the Opposition or the honourable member who spoke before me has any material which it is believed should be disclosed, that information should be made available to the appropriate body. It is no good coming here and saying that they have matters that are too serious to indicate to the House, and then sitting on them. If honourable members have any information that would be of assistance, it should be provided to me, or Mr Masel—who is responsible for conducting the inquiry, and/or the Commissioner for Corporate Affairs, if it is the matter of local concern and involves any breaches for which the commission is responsible. I conclude by saying that any material that is provided to me will be conveyed to the appropriate bodies as quickly as possible.

**Mr STEGGALL (Swan Hill)**—The Swan Hill electorate has not been represented in this place for some twelve months as a result of the ill health of the former honourable member for Swan Hill, Mr Alan Wood. As there are quite a few new members in the House who may not have heard very much about the Swan Hill electorate, I hope I can help them understand a little more about it in the next few minutes.

For the past ten years or so, Alan Wood represented the electorate of Swan Hill in a fine manner. His popularity throughout the electorate is something that has amazed many critics, and the hard work and dedication that he showed to the electorate and the results he obtained were certainly reflected by support given to him at elections. I am sure all honourable members who have known and worked with Alan for the past ten years would join with me in wishing Alan and his wife, Joyce, a happy, healthy and long retirement.

Swan Hill is a rural electorate and stretches from Robinvale in the north to Donald in the south, and from Birchip in the west to Koondrook in the east. In other words, its length is equivalent to travelling from Melbourne to Sale and in the breadth it represents travelling from Melbourne to Bendigo. It is a rural community with basically two types of farming practices. It has dryland farming areas, which take up most of the electorate, and also it has the irrigation belt which stretches along the River Murray—the River Murray seems to be a long way away from this place!

The major service towns in the electorate are Swan Hill, Robinvale, Kerang, Birchip, Charlton, Boort, Sea Lake, Wycheproof and numerous smaller community areas. Swan Hill dominates the area in size. It is just a little more than twice the size of any other town I have mentioned. These areas are typical rural communities. They are strong, self-help communities that assist each other in gaining the things that are necessary for them. As they have shown in the past three years, they are also very politically aware.

The issues of the electorate are many, but they are overshadowed at present by drought. The drought in the Swan Hill electorate, as throughout the rest of rural Australia, has been rather devastating. We in the country watched with interest when the people of Melbourne had to learn something of the drought when water restrictions were introduced in Melbourne. To make sure that Melburnians got the message of what a drought was, we arranged for that big dust storm to arrive, and after that, all Victoria knew what a drought represented. The press coverage of the dust storm indicated that it covered only Melbourne; in fact it covered most of Victoria.

The Swan Hill electorate has few industries. As such, it has many small rural-related industries. I should like to run through a few of them. There is the Charlton feed lot facility, which is an interesting type of rural pursuit in Australia. This practice is common in the United States of America and other places overseas, but in Australia the practice is not so common. The Charlton feed lot represents an 800-herd dairy operation and a 10 000 beef cattle production unit.

Throughout the river areas, there are the canneries, the packing sheds, as well as other

irrigation and horticultural pursuits. There are also wineries, which are in strong competition with Rutherglen and the like. There are the feed milling areas in Kerang, as well as a lot of farm-related engineering works.

Production in the dry land areas is basically related to cereal grains, with wheat being the biggest single income producer. That production covers all the other cereal grains as well. The area is now moving into the production of grain legumes and, for those who are not sure of the meaning, grain legumes are peas and lupins, which are becoming very popular.

Swan Hill also has grazing areas for sheep and cattle. It is renowned for fat lambs, wool and beef cattle. There are some piggeries throughout the electorate, and those piggeries are at present experiencing some difficulties. Production from the irrigation areas along the river extends from Koondrook through to Robinvale, and there is an enormous range of products produced in that area.

All the fruit industries, such as peach, apricot and that type of production which supplies local and export markets. The fruit is sold either dried or fresh and grapes are grown to service the vineyards in the area. Olives are produced in the Robinvale area and there are small producers of citrus fruits and avocados.

The citrus areas like the dry land areas suffered badly from the frosts associated with the drought last year. Oil seeds are also grown and margarine and butter are produced side by side. There are small vegetables and flower producers and a small timber industry along the River Murray.

The interests of the Swan Hill electorate are many and varied in the production area. Tourism is another aspect which has been tackled by the electorate and the people have worked hard to try to achieve a viable industry which they have. The tourist outlets are mainly in Kerang, Robinvale and Swan Hill. Tourism in the City of Swan Hill has lifted the business sector and also given the people in that region many facilities that they otherwise would not have had. There has been an increase in the number of restaurants, motel accommodation and entertainment venues.

The issues in the electorate still centre around the drought, the effect of the drought

on rural areas was shocking. There has been a complete financial wind-down in the farming sector which flows through to the towns. The result is that many workers have been put off and generally business slows down. Unemployment in Swan Hill is at 14 per cent, which is higher than the average. I hope that now the drought has broken the situation will alter but cash flows will not begin until January or February next year. The Government incentive and employment schemes are important in rural areas and I hope the Government will support the councils and local government bodies throughout the Swan Hill electorate in their applications for jobs.

The Swan Hill region has an enormous pool of keen workers and yet there is no work to go around. Swan Hill electorate is not alone in that instance. Another problem facing the electorate is the pioneer settlement which began as a tourist attraction. It was constituted by the Parliament to operate under the Pioneer Settlement Authority Act. As the settlement has progressed it has turned into an outdoor museum.

With the recession and the drought, the throughput of tourists had dropped and the generation of money is insufficient to allow development of the pioneer settlement. I hope the Government will examine the plight of the pioneer settlement and recognize and apply museum status. The Government could hold a curatorial status and provide financial assistance. It could be in the form of subsidies through the gate rather than a lump sum handout. Funding could be arranged so that the settlement could act as a museum. The pioneer settlement has a tremendous educational side and fulfils an important role. The Federal Government together with the State Government should express interest in this rare piece of inland Australian history.

The town of Birchip is looking for redevelopment of its hospital. It is a strong community and it has met its local contribution target and even passed it. When the next Budget is brought down, I hope the Minister will support the community in its drive for better medical and health services. The community at Sea Lake is concerned that the State Electricity Commission is considering relocating its service set-up which would cut off the servicing of electricity to

that region. The community would probably be on a 2 hour or 3 hour delay before any problem, no matter how minor, could be corrected. The State Electricity Commission and Sea Lake are working as an effective unit and the community do not see any advantage to the Government or the State Electricity Commission in withdrawing the services that are vital to the rural areas.

Another area of interest which has had some airing in this place over the months, is the problem associated with sulphur-crested cockatoos. In some areas in Victoria, the population of this species of bird has grown out of balance with nature. The farming communities are virtually asking for the right to shoot at those birds in an attempt to move them on to other feeding areas, perhaps more heavily timbered areas, because at present they feed mainly on cereal and oil seed crops. Farmers would like the opportunity of doing that without having to go through red tape and apply for the permits.

Many farmers have difficulty marketing rural produce. It is well known that farmers are not the best marketers of their own produce. They should be marketing their goods but, as a group, farmers have not organized their marketing programmes as well. The Swan Hill electorate suffers many problems with marketing but it is not a problem for the Government. I hope the Victorian Farmers and Graziers Association and other farming organizations are encouraged to examine closely the problems associated with marketing, and possibly when solutions are discovered, the Government might provide the assistance necessary.

Salinity is a word that runs off the tongue easily and a problem that has been around for a long time. The Salinity Committee, which is examining the problem, has been established for approximately ten years. The results of the committee are eagerly sought by people throughout the Murray Valley in the three States.

As a community, they will try to come to grips with the problem. Salinity occurs in two forms, namely, on irrigated land and on dry land. Salinity in irrigation areas is being overcome with the introduction of new technology including laser grading, new land forming methods, improved layouts and better drainage, land form and re-use schemes. The Government has recognized

the problem and allocated \$470 000 for the salinity loans programme. The funds this year are fully committed and the National Party would like to see \$1.5 million allocated to the salinity loan programme each year for the next three years. This would allow irrigated areas affected by salinity the opportunity of correcting a huge problem area. By so doing, there will be increased production more food and less salt. Farming regions are in business for the production of food and fodder.

The salinity problem is harder to tackle in dryland areas. I hope discussions will take place between the Governments of the three affected States and the Commonwealth Government about the concept of a pipeline to the sea. The technological level has been reached where the feasibility of such a project is possible. The community views this as a method of handling an important problem which must be given serious consideration. This proposal will be canvassed in the report of the Salinity Committee. Reafforestation programmes would also be of assistance in providing employment and restoring the balance of nature which farming methods have upset over the years. Salt is a people problem. It has a devastating effect on the farming communities because it sets back production and the financial consequences affect the surrounding service towns and communities. The problem affects food production, which is something about which everyone has a vital interest.

Decentralization is a subject which has been rolling around for many years, without many real results. We must endeavour to have people in small towns take a close look at the assets they possess as a community so that the thought processes and ideas to increase employment and production can come from those areas. Local government in country areas has an important role to play. I spent ten years with the Swan Hill City Council and I believe State Governments need to have more trust in local government. Government departments improve communication by cutting down on red tape and the accompanying difficulties that occur at present. Co-ordination between local government and the State Government is stifled because of the bureaucracy. This stifling is not really necessary and no more trust must be placed in local government.

I thank the House for the opportunity of making a contribution. I thank Government Ministers for showing so much interest in the Swan Hill electorate in the past few weeks and I trust that this interest will not wane! I am sure it will not. I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his continued interest in the seat of Swan Hill!

**Mr NORRIS (Noble Park)**—I congratulate the honourable member for Swan Hill on his maiden speech and I hope his stay in this House will be both productive and happy. This might be an appropriate time to discuss the results of the “No Buts” campaign which was held yesterday. I congratulate the Minister of Health for concocting the campaign and overseeing its initial success. Initial surveys illustrate that the success of the smoke-out campaign was well beyond the wildest expectations of both the Minister and the department. A telephone survey conducted this morning was most encouraging and a number of people have pledged to try to kick the smoking habit.

If I may say so, tobacco is possibly receiving more attention in terms of the drugs available in our society over the past few years than almost any other product. Last month the State Minister of Health met and agreed to a series of anti-smoking measures including a request to the Federal Government for an increase in the tobacco excise and the allocation of part of that increase to a smoking control programme. The Minister also declared a commitment to reducing tobacco use in this country.

I congratulate the Minister and the initiatives taken by the Minister of Health and the Victorian Government with the implementation of the “No Buts” campaign are to be applauded. One of the interesting sidelines to the campaign was the reaction demonstrated by letters in the newspapers and comments on talk-back radio this morning. People say, “We have tackled the easy option. We have had a go at smokers, let us tackle the hard one. Why not mount a similar campaign at alcohol abuse?”

That is a fair comment. I note that the honourable member for Doncaster is straining at the leash. I know he is in the slips ready to go, and I will make sure he has plenty of time to make a contribution. Tobacco is the soft option. I would like to

see a Government campaign against alcohol abuse with the help of the same advertising company. Many of the gimmicks used were good. Instead of “the great smoke-out”, we could have a campaign for “the great dry-out”. There are double standards in the community and tobacco has been the easy target. It has been cleverly painted into the corner and it has become a matter of status to say, “I am a reformed smoker. I used to smoke, but I have kicked the habit and I feel terrific”.

The double standard has been encouraged by television advertisements. Commercial television is not permitted to advertise smokes, but can go for its life as far as advertising grog is concerned. A so-called code of ethics exists amongst advertisers about the age group at which the alcohol advertisements are aimed. This code of ethics was introduced by the Federation of Australian Commercial Television Stations known as FACTS. “Facts” is a misnomer with the Federation of Australian Commercial Television Stations.

Not all advertisements are aimed at people under 21. I am sure Mr Speaker has seen the advertisement featuring Wendy Stapleton, the well known popular singer, blatantly advertising Southern Comfort.

That commercial is aimed specifically at teenagers. The code of ethics regarding alcohol advertising on TV is not worth a butt.

There is pressure on the sporting fraternity regarding tobacco advertising. What about grog? It does not come into it because it is a socially accepted drug. Tobacco has been painted the villain and alcohol has got off scot-free.

**Mr McNamara**—You should advise the tobacco smokers to take up drinking.

**Mr NORRIS**—I am sure the honourable member for Benalla has the same problems with teenagers in Benalla as I do in Noble Park. The point is that if a person is silly enough to smoke, he gives himself cancer or lung disease, but if a person is silly enough to abuse alcohol he affects many people. Tobacco is a means of self-abuse but the effects of alcohol go right through society.

I refer to the 1977 Senate Standing Committee report on Social Welfare which shows that the cost to the community of alcohol abuse puts into the shadows the cost to the community of tobacco abuse.