QUESTIONS ON NOTICE.

The following answers to questions on notice were circulated:—

HOUSING COMMISSION ACCOMMODATION FOR PENSIONERS.

(Question No. 436)

Mr. AMOS (Morwell) asked the Minister of Transport, for the Minister of Housing—

Further to the question without notice asked on 23rd October, 1973, regarding policy directives issued to Housing Commission officers, what are the details of the policy directive requiring pensioners to accept smaller accommodation or be proceeded against for the possession of the larger commission dwelling they already occupy, indicating—(*a*) whether it is still possible for pensioners eligible for rebated rent to pay full rental and remain in larger accommodation; and (*b*) whether consideration will be given to allowing those pensioners in special circumstances to remain in the larger accommodation?

Mr. MEAGHER (Minister of Transport).—The answer supplied by the Minister of Housing is—

(*a*) No.

(*b*) Where medical evidence is produced that separate bedroom accommodation is desirable, the commission would ensure that such type of accommodation is provided.

WESTERNPORT REGIONAL PLANNING AUTHORITY REPORT.

(Question No. 448)

Mr. KIRKWOOD (Preston) asked the Minister of Public Works, for the Minister for Local Government—

Whether the Minister had studied the report of the Westernport Regional Planning Authority outlining advantages and recommending a toll gate system on the Mornington Peninsula and Phillip Island; if so, what decision has been reached on these recommendations and what were the factors on which the decision was based?

Mr. DUNSTAN (Minister of Public Works).—The answer supplied by the Minister for Local Government is—

No copy of the report has yet been made available to the Government.

The authority resolution was to circulate its proposal to member councils before considering any approach to the Government. On a previous occasion when a similar suggestion was raised in the authority, the Government rejected it as unacceptable to the public.

Legislative Council.

Tuesday, October 30, 1973.

The PRESIDENT **(Sir Raymond Garrett)** took the chair at 4.58 p.m., and read the prayer.

DECENTRALIZED INDUSTRY (LAND TAX REBATES) INCENTIVE PAYMENTS BILL.

This Bill was received from the Assembly and, on the motion of the Hon. MURRAY BYRNE (Minister for State Development and Decentralization), was read a first time.

CHILDREN'S COURT BILL.

This Bill was received from the Assembly and, on the motion of the Hon. A. J. HUNT (Minister for Local Government), was read a first time.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (HOUSE BUILDERS' LIABILITY) BILL.

The Hon. A. J. HUNT (Minister for Local Government), by leave, moved for leave to bring in a Bill to make provision requiring certain guarantees or indemnities to be given in relation to the construction of certain buildings and for that purpose to amend Part XLIX. of the Local Government Act 1958 and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

AMALGAMATION OF MUNICIPALITIES.

REPORT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT ADVISORY BOARD.

The Hon. A. J. HUNT (Minister for Local Government).—By leave, I move—

That there be laid before this House the report of the Local Government Advisory Board in the matter of an inquiry into the

proposal for the union of the municipalities of the City of Melbourne, the City of Fitzroy, the City of Port Melbourne, and the City of South Melbourne.

It is by no means obligatory to lay a report of the Local Government Advisory Board before this House. However, I think all honorable members will agree that the matter to which this report relates is of vital importance to many people and that it ought properly to be brought before the House. I therefore adopt that course.

This afternoon at my office I met with the Lord Mayor of Melbourne and the mayors of the three cities affected. I gave them advance notice of the contents of the report and supplied each of them with a copy and summary of it. I have copies of the summary for honorable members representing the areas affected although copies of the full report are not readily available and for the moment honorable members will have to peruse the copy which I have laid before the House.

The report recommends that the four municipalities referred to should be united and that the municipal district of the united municipality should be subdivided into seven wards each with three members upon the basis and in a manner which will not give a predominant interest in the council of the united municipality to the central business district of the present City of Melbourne.

Honorable members will appreciate that the inquiry was lengthy and protracted and that much of the evidence was given a considerable time ago. I have therefore invited the leaders of the four municipalities to submit to me, before the Government makes any decision, any further submissions that they may desire to make in the light of the findings of the board. I have assured them that I have a completely open mind which I will not close in advance of considering the further submissions. I have indicated that submissions may relate to fresh matters, including changes in community opinion, or to any matter the leaders of the municipalities desire to bring forward in rebuttal of any findings of the board or in the light of any comments in the report.

I have assured the mayors that full weight and consideration will be given to their further submissions. With a view to ensuring that the present prolonged uncertainty is concluded as soon as possible, I had proposed that the further submissions should be in my hands by the end of November, and on that basis I indicated that I was prepared to give an undertaking that the Government would determine the matter during the first week in December.

Three of the four mayors present indicated that they considered one clear month was not long enough to complete submissions on a matter of such importance to the municipalities that they represented. Discussion took place and ultimately it was agreed that the date for the completion of submissions should be 18th January, 1974. If allowance is made for holiday periods, this will allow something like an effective period of two months for the preparation of submissions. I thereupon undertook that in or by the first week in February next the Government would make an announcement resulting from consideration of the submissions. I have indicated to the Lord Mayor and the mayors of the three other municipalities that submissions may be as wide ranging as desired.

I hope no municipality will put prime emphasis on protest meetings and public action. The Government will be influenced most by factual material which provides evidence of changes in circumstance or opinion. I commend the motion to the House.

The motion was agreed to.

The Hon. A. J. HUNT (Minister for Local Government) presented the report in compliance with the foregoing order, and it was ordered that the report be laid on the table.

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY (Melbourne North Province).—I move—

That the Council take note of the report on the next day of meeting.

The motion was agreed to.

PAPERS.

The following papers, pursuant to the directions of several Acts of Parliament, were laid upon the table by the Clerk:—

Dried Fruits Act 1958—Dried Fruits (Amendment) Regulations 1973 (S.R. No. 298).

Education Act 1958—Resumption of land at Nunawading—Certificate of the Minister of Education.

Films Act 1971—Films (National Film Theatre of Australia) Regulations 1973 (S.R. No. 301).

Forests Commission—Report for the year 1972-73.

Melbourne Underground Rail Loop Authority—Report for the year 1972-73.

Mental Health Act 1959—Mental Health (Travelling Expenses) Regulations 1973 (S.R. No. 299).

Monash University—Report of the Council, together with Statutes approved by the Governor in Council, for the year 1972 (nine papers).

Motor Boating Act 1961—Motor Boating (Port of Mallacoota Speed Restrictions) Regulations 1973 (S.R. No. 296).

Public Service Act 1958—Public Service (Public Service Board) Regulations—Regulations amended (Nos. 554 to 567) (fourteen papers).

Second-hand Dealers Act 1958—Second-hand Dealers (Exemption No. 10) Regulations 1973 (S.R. No. 300).

Seeds Act 1971—Seeds Regulations 1973 (S.R. No. 295).

Teaching Service Act 1958—Regulations amended—

- Teaching Service (Classification, Salaries, and Allowances) Regulations (seven papers).
- Teaching Service (Teachers Tribunal) Regulations (six papers)

Town and Country Planning Act 1961—

- Planning Schemes—
  - City of Horsham Planning Scheme 1965—Amendment No. 14, 1972.
  - City of Knox Planning Scheme 1965—Amendments No. 73, 1970, No. 117, 1972, and No. 120, 1973 (three papers).
  - Seymour Planning Scheme—Amendment No. 9.
  - Shire of Kilmore Planning Scheme, with maps (two papers).
- Town and Country Planning Regulations 1962, Amending Regulation No. 15 (S.R. No. 297).

SMALL CLAIMS TRIBUNALS BILL.

The Hon. F. J. GRANTER (Minister of Water Supply).—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

It provides for a small claims tribunal which will deal with disputes arising between consumers and suppliers of goods and services where the claim for payment of money or performance of work does not exceed $500. Detailed summaries of complaints received by the Consumer Protection Bureau are contained in the annual reports of the Consumer Affairs Council of Victoria. By far the greater proportion of these complaints relate to matters which could be considered to be "small"—that is, the value of the transactions is well below $500, the proposed limit of transactions to be covered by the Bill.

One of the functions of the Consumer Protection Bureau under the provisions of the Consumer Protection Act 1972 is to receive complaints from persons as to fraudulent or other illegal or unfair practices. Having received a complaint, the bureau refers it to the trader seeking some settlement of the matter on behalf of the consumer and asks for his explanation. In many cases, a satisfactory settlement is reached. This is particularly so where the trader is anxious to preserve his business reputation.

There are, of course, many other cases where the supplier either ignores the approach from the Consumer Protection Bureau or refuses to correct the cause of complaint. In these circumstances, the advice given by the bureau is that the only course open to the consumer is to take civil proceedings. The thought of taking legal action deters most consumers from continuing with their complaints. Civil proceedings are likely to be costly, especially when compared

with the amount involved in the claim. The uncertainty of the final result and the possibility of having costs awarded against the complainant are added deterrents. Many people, particularly the elderly, have a fear of courts or a dislike of the court atmosphere. They are unwilling to prosecute their claim by appearing to give sworn evidence from the witness box. The result is that, when the consumer decides not to take action through the courts, he is not receiving the justice which his case possibly merits.

The Government has several times expressed its clear intention to introduce further measures aimed at assisting the consumer to obtain a fair deal in his transactions with suppliers of goods and services. It sees the disadvantages of the court system as being sufficiently serious to warrant an alternative method of dealing with the small claims of consumers. It is convinced that these claims can be dealt with cheaply and speedily by the use of informal proceedings.

Small claims tribunals will not be courts of law, although they will have the same effect and their orders can be enforced through the courts. The proceedings will not be governed by the normal rules of evidence. The aim of the proceedings will be to bring about a settlement by negotiation and compromise. The referee will act as a conciliator and arbitrator. Cases will be heard in private, not in a court room but in an office or meeting room. Both the complainant and supplier will, except in special circumstances, present their sides of the case personally.

The Hon. M. A. CLARKE.—Will offices be provided in country towns?

The Hon F. J. GRANTER.—I hope so. I have stated in my second-reading notes that this should be done. I believe it is the practice in Queensland where the conciliator or the person in charge visits country areas, and this is what I advocate. The costs will be kept to a minimum; a fee of $2 will be payable at the time of filing the complaint with the registrar.

This concept of a small claims tribunal has been discussed with Ministers in some other States of Australia and, indeed, Queensland has already in operation its Small Claims Tribunal Act 1973. This Bill follows closely the provisions of that Act. I have been advised that the Queensland tribunals are operating successfully.

This Bill is the first instalment of consumer legislation which the Victorian Government will introduce this session. The Government believes it will materially safeguard the interests of consumers of goods and services. Often the Government has been accused of not putting enough "teeth" into consumer legislation. I assure the House that the Bill, and other measures to be introduced shortly, will not only provide the teeth, but will also ensure that they bite—and bite mighty hard—the people who defraud or cheat our consumers in any way.

The Government believes the Small Claims Tribunal will go a long way in rectifying the innumerable complaints received from consumers about the quality of goods and services. Last month the bureau received a rather amazing number of 401 complaints from consumers. It is estimated that about 200 of these would be likely candidates for hearing by the tribunal. On this basis the tribunal will have a mighty busy time.

Clause 2 of the Bill contains the definitions. It will be seen that "consumer" is defined to exclude corporations and business partnerships. Part I. sets out the constitution and establishment of tribunals. Clauses 4 to 8 relate to the appointment of referees, and clause 6 gives the required qualifications for appointees. Clauses 9 to 12 relate to the functions of referees, the venue of sittings—this is where I hope the country areas will come in—the

establishment of a registry, including the appointment of a registrar, and the keeping of records.

Part II. relates to the jurisdiction and powers of tribunals. Clause 14 gives the extent of jurisdiction and clause 15 excludes other jurisdictions. Clause 16 proposes that settlements or orders of the tribunal shall be final without appeal, and clause 17 limits the issue of writs or judgments in relation to the proceedings or orders of the tribunal.

Clauses 18 to 21 relate to orders of the tribunal. Clause 19 proposes to limit the orders of the tribunal for the payment of money or for performance of work to $500 or work to the value of $500.

Part III. relates to claims. Clause 22 lays down the proposed procedure for the lodgment of claims and clause 23 provides for notice of claims and proceedings to be given by the registrar. Clause 24 defines the parties to the proceedings and clause 25 refers to the withdrawal of claims.

Part IV. relates to hearings. Clause 26 defines "tribunal" and clause 27 provides that the hearing of a case shall be by the same referee. Clauses 28 and 29 relate to amendment of claims and the adjournment of proceedings.

Clause 30 relates to the presentation of cases by parties to the proceedings. Each person is to present his own case except where the tribunal approves otherwise. Practising barristers, solicitors or professional advocates are specifically excluded from acting as agents except by agreement of the parties and to the satisfaction of the tribunal.

Clause 31 relates to the taking of evidence and proposes that the tribunal is not to be bound by rules or practice as to evidence. Clause 32 proposes that the tribunal shall act on the evidence available even when the case of any of the parties to the dispute is not presented. If there is sufficient reason for the absence of one of the parties, the claim may be re-heard. No costs are to be allowed to or against any party in clause 33.

Part V. contains a group of miscellaneous provisions. Clause 34 gives the tribunal control over its own procedures with the accent on natural justice. Clause 35 fixes penalties for contempt, and clause 36 prohibits contracting out to annul, vary or exclude any provisions of the proposed Act.

Clause 37 enables the registrar to send notices by certified mail to effect sufficient service. Provision is made in clause 38 for the publication of particulars of references to tribunals. Clause 39 gives protection for things done under the proposed Act; and clause 40 relates to the regulation-making power in the Act. I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of the Hon. A. W. Knight, for the Hon. J. W. GALBALLY (Melbourne North Province), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Tuesday, November 6.

DECENTRALIZED INDUSTRY (LAND TAX REBATES) INCENTIVE PAYMENTS BILL.

The Hon. MURRAY BYRNE (Minister for State Development and Decentralization).—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The Bill implements the Government's election undertaking to remove land tax from all approved decentralized secondary industries.

Last year this Parliament passed the Decentralized Industry Incentives (Pay-roll Tax Rebates) Act 1972, which marked a significant step forward in the promotion of industrial growth and development in country areas. The Bill now before the House provides for a system of incentive payments based on land tax which follows the existing system of incentive payments based on pay-roll tax. It changes the title of the principal Act to the "Decentralized

Industry Incentive Payments Act 1972" and restructures the Act to include payments based on pay-roll tax under the heading "Pay-roll Tax Rebates" and payments based on land tax under the heading "Land Tax Rebates".

An employer carrying on an approved decentralized secondary industry, within the meaning of section 5 of the Commercial Goods Vehicles Act, and who has paid land tax, as owner, in respect of the land on which the decentralized industry is situated, will be eligible to apply for an incentive payment equal to the amount of land tax.

As honorable members will be aware, approved decentralized secondary industries under the Commercial Goods Vehicles Act are industries approved by the Minister for State Development and Decentralization, and which are located beyond a radius of 50 miles of the Melbourne General Post Office, or within a radius of 5 miles from the principal post office at Bacchus Marsh, Broadford, Gisborne, Kilmore, Kyneton or Woodend.

In addition to providing for incentive payments to approved decentralized secondary industries, the Bill follows the policy contained in the pay-roll tax rebates legislation of also providing for incentive payments equal to 50 per cent of the land tax paid in respect of special establishments declared by the Governor in Council which are within a radius of 50 miles of the Melbourne General Post Office but outside the metropolitan area. Incentive payments may be claimed for the first time for land tax paid in respect of the year ending on 31st December, 1974.

Clause 6 of the Bill contains the provisions relating to applications for and calculation of incentive payments based on land tax. Because land tax is assessed on the total land owned by a person, the Bill contains a formula for calculating the land tax paid in respect of the decentralized industry, namely, the proportion of the total land tax paid by the owner that the unimproved capital value of the land on which the decentralized establishment is situated bears to the unimproved capital value of the total land on which land tax was assessed. As with pay-roll tax rebates, land tax paid is calculated net of any refunds received. It is estimated that the annual cost of the incentive payments will be some $250,000.

Clauses 2, 4 and 7 provide for changing the title of and restructuring the principal Act to include the new scheme of incentive payments by way of land tax rebates.

Clause 10 amends the Land Tax Act 1958 to enable the Secretary for State Development to obtain the necessary information for the operation of the scheme from the Commissioner for Land Tax. Clause 3 provides for the addition of the necessary definitions and clauses 5, 8 and 9 contain amendments to the principal Act of a consequential or drafting nature. I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of the Hon. D. G. ELLIOT (Melbourne Province), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Tuesday, November 13.

CHILDREN'S COURT BILL.

The Hon. A. J. HUNT (Minister for Local Government).—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The purpose of this Bill is to re-enact with minor amendments the law relating to Children's Courts. These courts were first established in Victoria under the Children's Court Act 1906. This Act was consolidated in 1915 but without amendment. The first substantial amendment was made in 1917 and only minor amendments were made until 1956 when the whole Act was re-enacted so as to give effect to a large number of reforms proposed by various persons and bodies concerned with Children's

Courts and in particular the recommendations of the Delinquency Advisory Committee presided over by the late Sir John Barry. This Act was incorporated without amendment in the 1958 consolidation of statutes and since then has not been amended to any significant extent.

The present Bill is the result of much painstaking work by various people and bodies. The first steps towards it were taken by Mr. A. K. Brown, Stipendiary Magistrate of the Children's Court, who produced a draft Bill. As many honorable members who have been justices or who are lawyers will recall, Mr. Brown was a much-loved Children's Court magistrate until his retirement. He had unparallelled experience of Children's Court work in Victoria, and the Government and State are indebted to him not only for his service concerning the work and procedures of the Children's Court but also for his assistance in the preparation of this measure.

Mr. Brown's draft Bill was considered by the Law Department and the Social Welfare Department and, by agreement, further suggestions were incorporated. Other suggestions by various interested persons were taken into account and a further draft Bill was prepared and referred to the Statute Law Revision Committee. The Statute Law Revision Committee subsequently invited the Chief Justice's Law Reform Committee to examine the Bill and report on it.

Both of these committees recommended a number of improvements which have been included in the Bill. In fact, all the recommendations have been followed with the exception of two relating to a retiring age for magistrates, and their training.

The Statute Law Revision Committee recommended that all Children's Court magistrates should retire at 60 years but this would create difficulties. Firstly, honorary magistrates can under the present practice continue until 72 years, whereas stipendiary magistrates, being members of the Public Service, retire at 65 years.

It is thought desirable that parity should be maintained for all staff magistrates, and the retirement age adopted in the Bill is therefore 65 years. There is a saving clause to provide that all persons currently holding office as honorary Children's Court magistrates may continue in that office until the age of 72 years, subject to the power of the Governor in Council to revoke any appointment. In another place some queries were raised about the desirability of this policy, and the Attorney-General undertook to have the matter further examined. He has done so. Those appointed as honorary Children's Court magistrates are all justices of the peace.

The Hon. J. M. TRIPOVICH.—Do you not think age has a bearing on the degree of tolerance which may or may not be shown in the Children's Court?

The Hon. A. J. HUNT.—Perhaps so, but the Attorney-General examined the matter and, in doing so, he paid particular attention to the needs of country areas to ascertain whether it would be possible to amend the Bill to exclude the use of honorary magistrates altogether, or alternatively to dispense with the use of those who had attained the age of 65 years. He came to the conclusion that it was essential to retain the use of the honorary justice, who had also been appointed as an honorary Children's Court magistrate, in order to avoid unnecessary delay in children's cases.

In the interests of the children affected, it was thought the services of these magistrates ought to be readily available. Frequently urgent cases arise where children are arrested and the only alternative is to send them somewhere in custody for quite a period. It would be better to convene the court readily.

Another urgent matter arises in relation to care and protection matters. I am told that the statistics from the Children's Courts for the

year just concluded, to 30th June, 1973, indicate that country Children's Courts dealt with more than one-third of the total cases in the State, including one-third of the total care and protection applications, in all of which Children's Courts were convened urgently to deal with the matters to avoid having to hold the children in custody. It is for this reason that the age of honorary Children's Court magistrates is kept in line with the age of justices of the peace.

The Hon. J. M. TRIPOVICH.—The Minister is applying what is necessary for the country to what happens in the city, and these are two different issues. Could he not give consideration to that?

The Hon. A. J. HUNT.—Mr. Tripovich has raised an interesting point which I will discuss fully with the Attorney-General before this debate is concluded.

The Hon. J. M. TRIPOVICH.—He said that he would have a look at it.

The Hon. A. J. HUNT.—With respect, I have indicated to the House the undertaking given by the Attorney-General. Mr. Tripovich has raised a further issue, and I will, in turn, have further discussions with the Attorney-General on it.

The Hon. J. M. TRIPOVICH.—I accept the logic of the Government in relation to the country.

The PRESIDENT (Sir Raymond Garrett).—Order! This matter would be better debated when the second-reading debate is resumed.

The Hon. J. M. TRIPOVICH.—I am entitled to have it elucidated.

The Hon. A. J. HUNT.—The matter mentioned by Mr. Tripovich will be further examined. The Statute Law Revision Committee made a further recommendation relating to the training and qualifications of magistrates, and the Government recognizes the desirability of the course proposed in the recommendation. However, at present practical difficulties could arise if mandatory requirements were placed in the Bill. In any event, the matter can be dealt with administratively and the Attorney-General has assured me that attention will be given to it on a phase-in basis, quite apart from the provisions of this measure.

I specifically mentioned that not only the interests of the children coming before the court have been given detailed consideration in drafting the Bill but also the interests of their families and the community. The measure is accompanied by a detailed and comprehensive explanatory memorandum and comparative table. I could not hope to improve on those comments. Therefore, I do not propose to explain the clauses in detail; nor do I believe it is necessary for me to ask for leave to incorporate the explanatory memorandum in *Hansard.* The Bill has been circulated to members of this Parliament and to other persons outside and the attached explanatory memorandum explains the clauses. I should be happy, if honorable members so desire, to explain any specific clause.

I should like to refer briefly to some of the more significant clauses, and the most important one is that relating to the raising of the age from seventeen years to eighteen years of those who can be dealt with by Children's Courts. This was done as a matter of policy. A number of amendments have recently been adopted, including the amendment to the Electoral Act, reducing the age of responsibility for many purposes from 21 years to eighteen years. For many purposes, people over the age of eighteen years are regarded as mature adults and below that age they are regarded as children.

I have always believed it to be anomalous that young people should be treated as children for the purposes of the law up to seventeen

years of age, and yet, for other purposes, up to 21 years of age. With a view of creating some rationalization of the age of responsibility, it is now proposed to raise the age of those with whom Children's Courts can deal to eighteen years. No case before a Children's Court may be adjourned beyond the eighteenth birthday nor can any probation period extend beyond the eighteenth birthday. This is a major change of principle and one which ought specifically to be brought to the attention of the House.

I have said enough to indicate that the Bill is a significant measure directed to the improvement of justice and to social welfare in Victoria. I have indicated that it is the combined work of many people and that the recommendations of two most important law reform committees in the community have been adopted. On behalf of the Government I thank all of those who have made contributions at any stage to the preparation of this measure. I include in my comment the Chief Justice's Law Reform Committee, the Statute Law Revision Committee, and various individuals and organizations. This Parliament has frequently had cause to be grateful to one or other of the Chief Justice's Law Reform Committee and the Statute Law Revision Committee; on this occasion it has reason to be grateful to both.

It is a worth-while Bill and even now the time for further improvements has not passed. If, during the period of the adjournment of the debate, any organization or honorable member can make further contributions towards its improvement, they will be gratefully considered by the Government. I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of the Hon. J. M. Tripovich, for the Hon. J. W. GALBALLY (Melbourne North Province), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Tuesday, November 6.

MONEY LENDERS (ADVERTISEMENTS) BILL.

The debate (adjourned from October 24) on the motion of the Hon. A. J. Hunt (Minister for Local Government) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

The Hon. I. B. TRAYLING (Melbourne Province).—A person who talks about money lenders is talking about members of a very old profession. I daresay there is only one profession in history that is older than money lending—and that is illegal. The purpose of this Bill is to ease the advertising restrictions presently placed on money lenders and to set a new scale of fees for the licensing of money lenders. The present fees have been unchanged since 1938. The Bill also provides that such advertising as now will be permitted should not be misleading or dishonest. Penalties are provided for this. That is an excellent provision. Commercial advertising is frequently used to entice a consumer to buy a product by claiming in the advertisement that the product is something more than it really is. It is deceptive advertising to snare the unfortunate prey, who has always been only too willing to grab something in times of urgent need.

The Bill also provides that the advertising of interest rates be made quite clear and unambiguous. As part of this, the money lender will need to advertise interest rates at a per-annum rate. That is to ensure that people understand precisely what interest charges they will pay.

The Hon. A. J. HUNT.—The effective interest.

The Hon. I. B. TRAYLING.—That is so. Honorable members know that a person, in an effort to extricate himself or his family from unfortunate present circumstances, frequently will not closely study the small print of a contract or agreement, to his later detriment. To the extent that this provision endeavours to make as clear as possible the situation in which a person is involved,

it is good. For the first time the Bill provides the opportunity for a money lender, in some circumstances, to invite people to borrow money. It does not mean that money lenders will be able to circulate thousands of letters to people soliciting them to borrow money, but it does mean that where they have had a prior establishment with people and other bodies, they will be able to communicate with them and invite them to borrow money.

Penalties ranging up to $500 are also provided for various forms of misleading communications. Although that is a fairly large amount of money, it is not much for misleading advertisements and misleading communications of any sort, and another zero could perhaps be added to the proposed maximum. Things have changed since the days when the merchants of Venice operated with more freedom than is possible now. The first legislation on the subject was introduced in Great Britain in 1900 because misfortune was frequently suffered by borrowers owing to the terms and conditions imposed on them and penalties exacted from them by money lenders in the past. Similar legislation was introduced in Australia in 1906. Major legislation was introduced in 1938 following the depression, when, because of hard times, people were in difficult circumstances and sought to borrow money to feed their families, to try to survive in small businesses, and so on. During those times money lenders did not have a good reputation. Many of them were merciless, hard and unrelenting in their attempts to grind into the ground people to whom they had lent money at high rates of interest.

It is little wonder that it has taken so long to bring in a Bill of this kind to liberalize the law relating to money lenders to enable them to operate more freely in the present market. In 1941 an amendment was introduced to tighten the legislation concerning advertising by money lenders, and to set the maximum rate of interest at 48 per cent. That figure appears generous, but the risks involved in money lending apparently warrant such a high return. Although I personally find this figure difficult to accept we do not intend to oppose the interest rate.

At present in Victoria there are 814 registered money lenders, 776 of whom are corporations. As I calculate the new rate, in a full year, this will bring to the Government $159,000 from licence fees. Undoubtedly, because of the more liberalized approach to advertising, there will be an increase in the number of money lenders, particularly corporate money lenders. I should be surprised if that revenue did not increase significantly in the period ahead. One could argue about money lending generally and its discriminatory nature in contemporary society. One could argue philosophically that a time may come when there will not be such an enormous proliferation of different types of lending institutions accommodating all the demands within the market, the terms and conditions of which favour those who are already fortunate and not those who are less fortunate. However, society today accepts that philosophy and it will probably remain unchanged for some time. The Labor Party does not oppose the Bill.

The Hon. M. A. CLARKE (Northern Province).—This Bill deals with money lending, and its first part relates to the liberalization of the law on advertisements which money lenders are allowed to use. It also controls this advertising. Although I deplore the liberalization of the advertising I commend the controls which the Government intends to impose. Therefore, I view the Bill with mixed feelings.

In modern society there is a great deal of lending and borrowing of money. Statistics reveal that the amounts of money lent on hire purchase, personal loans and bank loans

are out of kilter with and an unhealthy part of the economy. The Minister stated that in the old days usury, which merely referred to interest—not excessive interest—was illegal.

Originally in England the only people who were allowed to lend money were the Jews. Under the Mosaic law of the Bible, the Jews were allowed to lend money only to strangers, so in coming over to England to lend money to the British, they were carrying out the Mosaic law. However, Christians could not lend money, even to Jews. From 1154 to 1189 during the reign of Henry II. the ordinary rate of interest which the Jews were permitted to charge was two-pence in the pound a week, or 43-1/3 per cent a year. Compound interest was forbidden then, as it is now.

Under the Magna Carta—which effected some magnificent reforms—no interest was payable on debts owing to the Jews for money lent during the minority of the heir of the debtor. A widow's dower was free from exaction of the debt. Jewish creditors had a substantial insurable interest in the health and long life of the person to whom they had lent money, because if that person died and left a young heir, the Jew would not collect any interest for a long time and would not collect any interest while the widow had her dower.

The activities of the money lenders became notorious, and under the later Edwards—Edward I. and Edward III. —the Jews were expelled from England. Under the Statute of Jewry they had been forbidden to deduct any interest for their loans, but evaded the statute by binding the borrower to a contract for the periodical delivery of so much merchandise, with a pecuniary penalty for every default. When this was discovered, they were expelled from England and usury became illegal because not even the Jews could lend money. The Tudors brought back usury and a maximum interest rate of 10 per cent was allowed. King James I., the first of the Stuarts, reduced the rate to 8 per cent; Charles II. reduced it to 6 per cent, and Queen Anne reduced the maximum rate to 5 per cent. For a long period the rates of interest in England were very low, and that was commendable. It might have been a brake on commerce but nobody suffered from it.

The Hon. H. M. HAMILTON.—We could do with Queen Anne again today!

The Hon. M. A. CLARKE.—I should also welcome her back, in her younger years. There were laws against usury in England, but unfortunately in the early days of the Colonies such as New South Wales and Van Diemen's land, because of a curious interpretation of the statute, the law against usury did not apply to the Colonies. In 1854 the laws against usury were repealed and soon after, interest rates of 20 per cent and 30 per cent were common. Unfortunately, the stage has been reached again today where 20 per cent or 30 per cent is a common rate of interest on loans. As I said earlier, I deplore that trend.

Over the years, one of the objectives of the various Governments has been to protect the poor person, the working man, who needs money, has not much security and wants to borrow at a reasonable rate of interest. For a long time pawnbrokers provided loans for poorer people. The symbol of the pawnbroker was the three golden balls, which originated from the sign which the Lombard merchants used in London. They were the first recognized money lenders in England during the reign of the Tudors. The emblem of the three balls was taken from the emblem of St. Nicholas of Bari, who gave three purses of gold to three virgin sisters to enable them to marry. The Lombard merchants did not give money away; they lent it and required it back. The pawnbroker has almost disappeared from society and there are now very few

registered pawnbrokers. With them a service to the community has disappeared, and the place of the pawnbrokers has been taken by corporations.

Mr. Trayling stated that there are 776 corporations amongst the 814 registered money lenders in Victoria and that they are going to pay increased fees. I do not believe the fees are high enough, considering that they are corporations. In the early days one of the reasons why Jews were the only persons in England who were allowed, under Royal licence, to lend money was that when a practising usurer died the whole of his estate reverted to the Crown. Naturally, the kings encouraged usurers to become wealthy, because they could suck up, like a sponge, all the wealth that the Jews had sucked from the people.

The Hon. V. T. HAUSER.—Was the gift duty rate high in those days?

The Hon. M. A. CLARKE.—There was no gift duty then. The king treated the whole of the estate of the usurer as a gift to him when the usurer died. A usurer had to be careful to cease practising usury before he died, because an inquiry was held to determine whether he was a practising usurer at the date of his death.

Money lending is to be encouraged by the Government, and I regard the advertising provisions in this Bill as an encouragement. Certainly, the Government has never discouraged money lending. It will—like the ancient kings of England—take more cream from the cake.

The last time fees for money lenders' licences were increased was in 1938. I have made a rapid calculation that the fees proposed in the Bill will be an increase of 100 per cent. I ask the Minister whether that is correct. Does the honorable gentleman consider that, in view of the fact that of the 814 money lenders, 776 are corporations of which 350 are subsidiaries of Esanda Ltd., the Treasury is receiving a fair recoupment on the protection it is giving to money lenders in this State? I leave that question with the Minister.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was read a second time, and committed.

Clause 1 was agreed to.

Clause 2, relating to advertising.

The Hon. A. J. HUNT (Minister for Local Government).—I thank honorable members who contributed to the second-reading debate for their remarks, particularly Mr. Trayling for his comments on social policy and Mr. Clarke for his interesting historical appreciation of the background of money lending. I do not propose to traverse the issues of social policy behind the measure because I covered these in the second-reading speech, but I want to make it quite clear that the purpose of this measure is not to encourage money lending; it is to put the activities of money lenders upon a basis similar to that which applies to other lending authorities and institutions—in other words, to rationalize the law, to remove some outmoded and over-harsh restrictions, to make it easier in the advertising field and yet at the same time prescribe conditions designed to protect the public.

Although I have said that the policy of the Government is certainly not to encourage money lending, I must make it clear that the Government recognizes that the activity is a necessary one which serves a great many people. The Government has seen its role as a regulatory one to ensure that the public is protected—no more; not to outlaw an activity and not to encourage it, but simply to protect the public.

If one examines the history of the present Government in this field, one will see that it has sought on a number of occasions to remove old, over-harsh and outmoded restrictions and yet always to ensure that the public is protected. We seek no more than to ensure fair conditions, and that is all we have done in the Bill.

The suggestion that fees should be raised higher again of course has some attractions to the Treasury, but it is only fair to point out that these fees are always passed on. The effect of Mr. Clarke's suggestion would be to further raise interest rates to those persons who have to utilize the services of money lenders. It is true that in economic theory the higher the interest rate the less the amount of borrowing. However, people who for good reason desire to borrow may be discouraged, and I would prefer cheaper interest rates. The most recent rise in interest rates is in no way attributable to private enterprise in this State or in this country.

The clause was agreed to, as were the remaining clauses.

The Bill was reported to the House without amendment, and passed through its remaining stages.

The sitting was suspended at 6.22 *p.m. until* 8.4 *p.m.*

TOMATO PROCESSING INDUSTRY (UNIFORM AGREEMENT) BILL.

The debate (adjourned from October 24) on the motion of the Hon. W. V. Houghton (Minister for Social Welfare) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

The Hon. J. M. TRIPOVICH (Doutta Galla Province).—This Bill not only has a unique background but is one with which I completely agree and upon which I congratulate the Government. The procedures adopted by the Government to stabilize the tomato growing and processing industries are correct and the Labor Party heartily supports the motion.

In 1964 there was a consent agreement between growers and processors. In secondary industry a consent agreement means that the union and employers have got together, bargained an agreement and, having recorded all the points on which they can find agreement, applied to a court for registration of the document. Up until 1964 the tomato growers and processors were at loggerheads. There was considerable dissatisfaction with the prices being paid and following this unfortunate history—I have some sympathy with the tomato growers in their fight to get what they consider to be an equitable return for their produce—a consent agreement was reached and it was ratified by the 1964 Bill.

At this stage I pay tribute to the former Minister of Agriculture, Sir Gilbert Chandler, who played no mean part in bringing both sides together to establish a reasonable agreement between the growers and the processors. The agreement was reached and the Bill was introduced into the House and passed, with the universal support of all parties. The Country Party and the Labor Party were in agreement with the Government on the issue. As a result of the experience gained in the 1964 season, amendments which were required by both sides, again by agreement, were made to the legislation in 1965. It applied again in 1968 and was again amended in 1970.

As the Minister explained in his second-reading speech, there have been other developments in the industry. I refer to the new tomato products; the processing and canning of whole tomatoes and of sliced tomatoes. Tomatoes are also being harvested mechanically. This method of harvesting has applied to peas and beans for some years and is now being applied to tomatoes. I pay tribute to the officers of the Department of Agriculture for developing suitable types of tomatoes for machine harvesting and bulk handling. In addition, the Government has made provision in the Bill for the metric conversion of quantities.

There is now further agreement in the industry between the processors and the growers. The growers have agreed to the terms and conditions laid down by the processors on the types of tomatoes to be planted and the methods by which the plants are to be nurtured. The growers have also agreed to certain conditions relating to the recording

of chemicals used in spraying the tomatoes. The Bill incorporates the points on which agreement has been reached.

Clause 2 of the Bill contains the definitions and provides that, with respect to tomatoes, processing means the canning of whole, peeled or sliced fruit. Paragraph (*a*) of sub-clause (1) of clause 3 provides that the contract now shall be in writing and paragraph (*b*) states that the contract "shall be in or to the effect of the form of the agreement". This means the agreement that has been written into the schedules. The First Schedule sets out the agreement in accordance with paragraphs (*a*) and (*b*) of sub-clause (1) of clause 3.

The Hon. M. A. CLARKE.—That is not new.

The Hon. J. M. TRIPOVICH.—No, but it is an improvement. I have said that agreement was first reached in 1964.

The Hon. M. A. CLARKE.—Mr. Tripovich is suggesting that this is a new measure.

The Hon. J. M. TRIPOVICH.—I am not suggesting this is a new measure; I am suggesting that the provisions for the canning and processing of whole fruit and for the canning of sliced tomatoes are new.

Inherent in clause 5 is a tribute to the inspectors of the Department of Agriculture. Sub-clause (2) provides—

> A departmental inspector whose opinion is sought pursuant to paragraph (*g*) of clause 3 of the agreement may make such inspections and take all such other steps as he deems necessary to enable him to determine the matter in respect of which his opinion was sought.

This means that the departmental officers have been accepted as referees in cases of dispute and this shows the great respect that both the growers and the processors have for the departmental officers. Both parties have confidence in the officers and are prepared to accept their decisions.

Clause 3 of the First Schedule makes provision for the tomatoes to be delivered at the grower's road gate or nominated loading point. As the Minister has explained, this relates to the picking up of tomatoes in bins. The pick-up need not take place at the grower's gate as it did when the tomatoes were delivered in cases or other containers. They can now be loaded in bins and the bins may be picked up in the paddock. Paragraph (*f*) of clause 3 of the First Schedule makes provision for sampling arrangements. This again concerns bulk handling. Sub-paragraph (i) of paragraph (*f*) provides that the weight of tomatoes in every bin of a consignment shall be the net weight of tomatoes delivered or shall be taken to be the average net weight of a sample of bins of tomatoes taken at random from the consignment.

In the old agreement there was a reference to the buyer's inspectors and in the present agreement they are referred to as buyer's representatives. I think the new term is more correct and I offer no objection to it because previously the inspectors of the department could be confused with the buyer's inspectors.

Under the old legislation when a consignment of tomatoes was rejected, the buyer had to notify the grower and the Department of Agriculture. That is rather a broad term and it was considered, I think quite wisely, that an officer from the Department of Agriculture should be involved and therefore there is provision in the First Schedule, where a consignment has been rejected, that the buyer shall notify the grower and the Director of Agriculture.

That is more direct, and the Labor Party supports the provision. Clause 14 of the First Schedule leaves open the question of delivery. The grower will notify the buyer when the tomatoes will be available. That is common sense. One matter about which there has been some controversy is when the responsibility

for the tomatoes passes from the grower to the buyer. Clause 16 of the First Schedule now provides that the property and the risk in the tomatoes shall pass to the buyer when he takes delivery. This provision is to be commended. The First Schedule, which provides the form of agreement, results from negotiations between the growers and the processors, and sets out fair and reasonable terms for growing tomatoes for processing.

The Second Schedule sets out amendments which may be made in the agreement subject to the consent of both parties. Again, this is common sense. Clause 1 of the Second Schedule would give the processor power to cause the grower to maintain records of such crop protection measures to be taken at the direction of the buyer. That means that the buyer can lay down the recording of what chemical sprays have been used against insects and disease, and so on. That is a worth-while provision.

Another clause in the Second Schedule relates to the introduction of the collection of tomatoes in bulk. The Minister has told the House that there will be twelve to fifteen picking machines in operation this year and the schedule provides for their use with up-to-date provisions. Canning tomatoes now are a recognized type of tomato in the industry and paragraph (*b*) of clause 3 of the Second Schedule relates to canning grade tomatoes, and so does clause 4.

What commends the Bill to me is that the growers and the processors, with the department acting as referee, have argued their cases for and against the conditions under which they will grow and take delivery of tomatoes. The processors have reserved the rights to say what types of tomatoes will be planted, the recording of sprays used, and the standard of tomatoes to be delivered. We are moving into an organized economy and this sort of thing has happened in the production of other vegetables. The arrangements of yesterday have gone; this is a new method.

The Hon. J. M. Tripovich.

I conclude with a tribute to the previous Minister of Agriculture, Sir Gilbert Chandler, because, in anything he did, he always attempted to bring about justice for all concerned. I believe that, with this type of arrangement, justice is obtained.

I have experience in the industrial field, and I know that only 28 per cent of industrial awards are determined by compulsory arbitration. Seventy-two per cent of awards result from consent agreements. This is the best type of agreement for anybody, when both sides can argue their cases. This agreement follows on those lines in setting out what one side is prepared to pay and what the other side is prepared to do. The Opposition wishes the Bill well. It trusts that the arrangements may work satisfactorily and beneficially to both parties to the agreement.

The Hon. M. A. CLARKE (Northern Province).—The main point in favour of the Bill is that the complete schedule is printed and honorable members are not faced with a series of amendments, as with so many Bills. The schedule and the agreement have been amplified to a great extent but the biggest change is the conversion of measures to the metric system from the Imperial system.

Mr. Tripovich painted a delightful picture of an agreement being made between the growers and the processors with the Department of Agriculture as an impartial umpire so that everyone is fully satisfied all the time. I pay tribute to Sir Gilbert Chandler for what he did in bringing the parties together. Before 1964 there were a number of disputes between growers and processors.

Over the past two or three years, the growers have not been completely satisfied with the state of the industry. I represent many growers located in the Northern Province. Last year they were disappointed that there was no rise in price. Costs went up—nobody disputed that—but because there was an ample supply of tomatoes in the previous year the

processors were in a strong position and they kept the price to what it was in the previous year.

Owing to the floods last year, there was a cut in production and the processors were faced with a shortage of tomatoes. There was a disastrous winter in northern Victoria. Much ground is still so waterlogged that tomatoes cannot be planted. Generally, the planting of tomatoes is only just beginning. Some growers are two months behind and others are six weeks behind. None of them is up to date. The crop will be light and it will be late. The processors must come to the party and that is why there is a good relationship at the present time. As Mr. Elliot suggests, it is a question of supply and demand. If there had been a surplus of tomatoes last year and an impending surplus this year, the boot would have been on the other foot.

I pay tribute to those mainly concerned with the negotiations of the agreement. Mr. John Clifford, of the Victorian Farmers Union, attended all meetings of tomato growers. Many of them were difficult because of language troubles. It is not easy to explain to Italian and Yugoslav growers just what the position is. Mr. Eric Merrigan, who is the head of that section of the Victorian Farmers Union, made an outstanding contribution to bringing the parties together.

I am concerned with the area of ground available to tomato growers. The trouble is not just that the season is late because of weather. A smaller area of ground is being put into tomatoes. I wrote to the Minister of Water Supply suggesting that tomato growers should be given water rights which would be allocated by the district engineer of the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission so that they could take that water right to a property belonging to someone else which was not being used to grow tomatoes.

The Hon. F. J. GRANTER.—On a yearly basis?

The Hon. M. A. CLARKE.—Yes. The Minister knows about this because he wrote a long comprehensive reply. However, the answer was that water rights go with the land. That was a traditional old-fashioned State Rivers and Water Supply Commission reply—that the water right is allocated to the land and is unalienable. In many cases in the past, the water right has not entirely gone with the land. In horticultural pursuits there have been exceptions. In every district, after the irrigation season is concluded, some water rights are left unused. This applied even last year when northern Victoria suffered from drought. I emphasize that these were water rights, not entitlements to water sales. I know of one property which had a water right of 500 acre-feet on which not 1 acre-foot of water was used. The owner did not work at all. On another property, 250 acre-feet of water right were not used. In one case, the owner was an invalid who did not live on his property, which was badly neglected. Under a more authoritarian Government, the place might be taken out of his hands. In England the agricultural authorities of the local council would be on his wheel telling him to do something about his land and to clear up the noxious weeds.

It should be possible to take up this pool of unused water rights which exist in every district each year. In a composite district such as the Murray–Goulburn district, each year some quantity of water rights would not be used. It might be 1,500 acre-feet. That should be put at the discretion of the district engineer, who could say that part of it could be used by a person who was a regular tomato grower.

Land can be used for tomatoes for two years only; it must then be rested for seven years before they are again planted. That avoids the risk of disease, anmal pests, and so on. Tomato-growng operations must be rotated. It is difficult for a professional grower to do that on his own

land, so he leases land and farms on shares. It would be practicable for the district engineer to make an annual allocation to registered tomato growers—not to fly-by-nights. In some years the professional grower would use his own land and in others he would use the land of others. A scheme could be worked out. Tomato growing is not undertaken on an enormous scale and a vast scheme would not be needed.

There have been two bad years. I do not want to be pessimistic, but prospects for this year are gloomy because there is so much water around northern Victoria, as the Minister is aware. The other day we heard the story of the European carp found in an oat crop. Farmers are finding conditions devilishly difficult. I put this proposal to the Minister of Water Supply as a practical proposition. I hope it sinks into the heads of the members of the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission, who say, again and again, that rights go with land. If there is a poor crop of tomatoes this year, many more tomatoes will be needed next year. Tomatoes must be irrigated and both land and water must be available.

I turn to the question of machine picking. Mr. Tripovich referred to the fifteen machines in operation but I remind the honorable member that all those machines are not fully mechanized. They are very heavy and take off the whole crop in one hit.

It is necessary to grow a variety of tomatoes which will ripen at the same time so that the machine can go through the paddock, take the plants out and then strip the tomatoes off the plants. Under the present system, some tomatoes are fully ripe, and others are not. That is why the contract provides that 50 per cent of the fruit shall be fully ripe. To achieve this, a variety of tomatoes must be planted and each variety will flower and ripen in its turn.

Nothing can be more dangerous to the future of the grower than planting a single variety of tomatoes which all flower at the same time. In those circumstances, during flowering the grower could strike bad weather such as a heatwave, flood or heavy rain, in which event the flowers would come off and he would lose the crop. Moreover, even if the crop does ripen, heavy rain could prevent a machine getting on to the property.

Everyone is talking optimistically about machines at present. Pickers cannot be obtained and it is suggested that the growers should get machines to harvest the crops. Any grower who does that is taking an enormous risk, and more so if he grows only one variety of tomatoes. On my own property, we plant eleven and sometimes twelve different varieties of tomatoes, so that the entire crop will not be ruined by bad weather conditions. Sometimes, 10 per cent might be damaged during flowering, but the others will not be flowering at that particular time. The Department of Agriculture should continue to encourage the growing of different varieties. I do not want the department to say that machine harvesting is the "in" thing, that all growers should plant the same variety of tomato and then the machines can harvest the fruit. Enormous losses could be incurred under this system.

My chief adviser on tomato growing is Mr. Peter Slotegraaf, the Department of Agriculture officer at Rochester. Mr. McDonald will agree with me that this officer's advice to tomato growers in northern Victoria has been of enormous assistance. I am not sure whether it is binding, but the contract includes a provision that the buyer has some right to dictate the type of chemicals to be used by the grower. I do not interpret the contract as binding although Mr. Tripovich referred to it

in this way. If the Minister reads the provision in that way, then I do not agree with it.

The Hon. D. G. ELLIOT.—Why not?

The Hon. M. A. CLARKE.—The person who should advise on the type of chemicals to be used is the local agricultural officer. Mr. Slotegraaf is constantly in the area and if he detects eel worm in one crop, he then suggests to other local growers that they should check their crops. When this officer knows of a disease approaching the district he advises the growers and aerial spraying is undertaken with the appropriate pesticide for the disease.

The Hon. W. M. CAMPBELL.—How much does it cost for that service?

The Hon. M. A. CLARKE.—The Department of Agriculture service is free. Aerial spraying has become very important. Growers like myself make a paddock available, the plane flies in, the chemicals are delivered, and six or eight growers collaborate in hiring the plane for a day or two. The pesticide sprayed by the plane is the one recommended by Mr. Slotegraaf and not by the processor.

H. J. Heinz and Co. process tomatoes from my area and the company's local representatives are experts on tomato processing. They efficiently handle the picking up and cartage and I have the highest praise for them but their job is not to recommend which pesticide or weedicide should be used. The contract is a little vague on this point and it should remain that way. Moreover it is vague in many other respects in referring to fairly firm fruit, flavouring, colour, and so on. In these matters, the contracts should remain vague.

One matter which became a major point for debate in another place related to pick-up points for the bins. It is now provided that the pick-up points can be wherever nominated. For some years, the pick-up points have been the subject of negotiation between the grower and the buyer. Sometimes the point has been on a property and at other times alongside the road. The contract provides for specific pick-up points to be nominated for the season. This is impossible because the tomatoes in one area of the property may be cleared out and it is therefore necessary to move the pick-up point to another area. I am not particularly concerned about that aspect.

The important point is that tomatoes should not be picked up on the side of a busy road. Any nominated point should be inside a property or at least on the side of a back road. Normally, tomatoes are picked up at night or early morning, during hours of darkness, and a traffic hazard can be created.

The contract may have gone into too great detail on this point but I do not see any objection. Many people who will sign a contract cannot read English very well and will have to rely upon an explanation through an interpreter as to what they are signing. I do not desire the Government to go into too much legal detail and so tie these growers up with things that they do not understand.

I have studied the contracts over a number of years. The present one is reasonable and fair to both sides and undoubtedly its interpretation will vary according to whether there are too many tomatoes, too few or a fair average quantity. If there are too many tomatoes, the Government will have to watch the processors; if there are too few——

The Hon. A. W. KNIGHT.—We have to watch the "cockies".

The Hon. M. A. CLARKE.—As Mr. Knight says, we have to watch the "cockies" because instead of tomatoes going to the processors they may well be sent to the market to obtain higher prices.

The important point which I make for the benefit of the Minister of Water Supply is the question of revolving water rights from central funds to growers who cannot grow

on their own land. If this year's season is poor, probably an amending Bill will be introduced to expand the industry. There is no over-production of tomatoes at present, only under-production, and the industry needs promotion.

The Hon. S. R. McDONALD (Northern Province).—I support Mr. Clarke in his remarks. We have the privilege and honour of representing the major tomato-growing area in Victoria. The House has had the advantage of Mr. Clarke's expert advice because he has had years of experience as one of the leading growers in northern Victoria. The Government would be well advised to take note of his comments.

I do not intend to go into individual matters mentioned in the Bill but merely to make two points which are important to the industry. Mr. Tripovich was enthusiastic about the progress that has been made in getting a uniform contract system and all honorable members will agree with that. He also mentioned that the Bill results from a unanimous agreement between processors and growers, and again this is true. However, there are areas of disagreement which are not covered in the Bill and which I suggest the Government must examine in the future.

On the subject of the negotiated price, it would be fair to say that in most areas it is not a true negotiation. I have noted the system of the processors working out a price and telling the growers what it is and that they can take it or leave it. They may not put it quite so bluntly, but that is the effect of the offer. The situation is similar to that experienced in the poultry or broiler industry where they have not the advantage of a contract system. A negotiated price is talked about but in practice it is not a negotiated price; generally speaking, it is dictated by the processors.

Mr. Tripovich mentioned that about 72 per cent of industrial awards are arrived at by consent and that the remainder go to arbitration. In the case of a stabilised primary industry like the tomato industry, if agreement is not reached on the negotiated price then there is no arbitrator or arbitration system. The Government may well consider whether it may be necessary or desirable to appoint an independent arbitrator or to institute some independent means of arriving at a fair and reasonable price.

The second point that I want to make relates to the provisions regarding inspection and the rights of the buyers and growers in the event of a dispute. My researches reveal that in the tomato industry in the United States of America the graders or the persons responsible for deciding the quality and standard of tomatoes are entirely independent of the processors and the growers; they are employed by the responsible Government department. This matter should be examined by the Minister of Agriculture and the Government.

I am not suggesting that a marketing board should be set up, but merely that there should be some means of independently assessing the quality of tomatoes rather than having the quality and standards set by the processors. Because of the volatile nature of some of the growers in the industry, many of whom are not entirely conversant with the English language, quite often areas of disagreement arise over grading and a satisfactory method of overcoming this disagreement would be the appointment of independent inspectors. Quite obviously, because of the expertise and independence of the Department of Agriculture, officers of that department would be the best persons to carry out this task.

The Hon. K. I. WRIGHT.—Like the system in the dried fruits industry.

The Hon. S. R. McDONALD.—That is so. As has been stated, the Bill is a step forward. It has been agreed to by the processors and growers. I suggest that there are some areas in which unanimous agreement has

not yet been reached, and therefore honorable members should not be deluded into thinking that everything is satisfactory in the industry. This year the price has increased by 17 per cent. As pointed out by Mr. Clarke, the increase was brought about by the supply and demand situation and the fact that the processors finally realized that if they did not give the growers an increase in price they would end up with insufficient tomatoes for processing.

The Hon. H. R. WARD.—Are better prices being obtained interstate?

The Hon. S. R. McDONALD.—I think interstate growers are rather envious of the Victorian system. I support the Bill but some areas of the industry require further investigation and improvement.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was read a second time and committed.

Clause 1 was agreed to.

Clause 2 (Interpretations).

The Hon. W. V. HOUGHTON (Minister for Social Welfare).—I thank honorable members who have made interesting contributions to the debate. I suppose the necessity to make an agreement in the tomato growing industry is promoted by the fact that many tomato growers are small farmers—they may be share farmers—who do not have the protection in their marketing organization that is available in many big industries. Therefore, the provisions contained in the Bill, including the schedules and the agreement, and other matters referred to by honorable members, are particularly important to a primary producing industry in which most of the growers are small and not particularly united.

The supply and demand system largely influences the price of a product, notwithstanding any agreements that may be made. However, agreements provide the necessary stability in any industry, if not from season to season, at least during a season, which helps an industry to produce efficiently. The Minister of Water Supply assures me that the suggestion regarding the provision of water rights to those people who do not necessarily own the land will be examined and that he will consider the suggestions made by Mr. Clarke in the course of the debate.

The objections which Mr. Clarke made to machine harvesting of tomatoes are common to all industries, particularly vegetable industries, which use machines for the harvesting of crops. Similar problems arise in various industries. However, economics are important in industry. Is it more economical to save time and labour by the use of machines, at the risk of picking fruits which are not top quality grades, and perhaps having to sell part of the crop at a lower price; or is it preferable to employ a considerable amount of labour, hand pick the fruit and be able to select those parts of the crop which are ready for market and of a high quality? It is a perennial problem.

The Hon. M. A. CLARKE.—Machines vary with every crop.

The Hon. W. V. HOUGHTON.—The point is well taken that varieties of plants should be used to cushion the effects of seasonal variations which may be sudden and can be devastating.

Mr. Tripovich referred to chemicals. I do not quite agree with his interpretation. I am more inclined to agree with Mr. Clarke that it is a little more vague than interpreted by Mr. Tripovich, that the buyer does not really have control of the chemicals used by the grower but he has a right to reject them where those chemicals are, I think, of the order of 1 per cent.

The Hon. M. A. CLARKE.—Something in that order.

The Hon. W. V. HOUGHTON.—In effect, a buyer may reject a grower's crop because an excessive amount of

chemicals has been used, but a fair amount of flexibility is allowed. The advice of the adviser of the Department of Agricuture on the chemical that should be used will obviously be within the limits set in the agreement so that no problems will be encountered in this respect.

The Hon. J. M. TRIPOVICH.—The buyer has the right to express a view on what he would like.

The Hon. W. V. HOUGHTON.—I agree that the buyer has that right, but it is a flexible arrangement. I expect that in relation to a tomato growing arrangement the grower, the buyer and the adviser will be able to decide the best chemical treatment for a particular crop. If growers are not sensible in this regard they are likely to run into all sorts of trouble.

Mr. McDonald made several points on the negotiated prices not being true prices.

The Hon. S. R. McDONALD.—Not a true negotiation.

The Hon. W. V. HOUGHTON.—Mr. McDonald said the prices were not really negotiated; that the law of supply and demand was the overriding factor in the determination of prices. Doubtless that is true, but as I said earlier, the stability which the agreement will give to growers through a season is worth something. The honorable member referred to a system of arbitration which is not contained in the schedules. I agree that this is worth examining and I have no doubt it will be taken up by the Minister of Agriculture and his department. The fact that honorable members have indicated that the Bill is well received and worth while is received gratefully by the Government.

The clause was agreed to.

Clause 3 (Contracts for sale and purchase of tomatoes for processing to be in writing and in or to the like effect of the form of the agreement).

The Hon. M. A. CLARKE (Northern Province).—Clause 3 refers to a contract between a grower and a buyer. I omitted to say earlier, and I think it is relevant, that it should be borne in mind that tomato paste can be readily imported from overseas. In past years, if the processors in the State did not want to meet the growers' price they were able to threaten to import tomato paste. Fortunately for the growers, there is such a shortage of tomato paste throughout the world that the processors could not make that threat and I hope the price will not be depressed in the future when there is a good crop.

The clause was agreed to, as were the remaining clauses and the schedules.

The Bill was reported to the House without amendment, and passed throughout its remaining stages.

THE CONSTITUTION ACT AMENDMENT (EXECUTIVE COUNCIL) BILL.

This Bill was received from the Assembly and, on the motion of the Hon. V. O. Dickie (Minister of Housing), for the Hon. MURRAY BYRNE (Minister for State Development and Decentralization), was read a first time.

LAND (METRIC CONVERSION) BILL.

This Bill was returned from the Assembly with a message relating to amendments.

It was ordered that the message be taken into consideration later this day.

POISONS (FEES) BILL.

The debate (adjourned from October 23) on the motion of the Hon. V. O. Dickie (Minister of Housing) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

The Hon. D. G. ELLIOT (Melbourne Province).—If you, Mr. President, will allow me, I shall express my thoughts on this Bill in poetic language—

The march of time it does appear,
Makes everything a bit more dear.

To some, of course, this smallish Bill,

Would be a somewhat bitter pill.

But alas, Sir Pres, that's how it goes,

With all the world in inflation throes.

Therefore, Sir, we see no reason,

To oppose this measure in the springtime season.

Having said my piece, I now retreat,

As I slowly but surely resume my seat.

The Hon. A. K. BRADBURY (North-Eastern Province). — Mr. President, I find it extremely difficult to follow my friend, Mr. Elliot. Unfortunately, I am not able to phrase my words in such poetic language as that used by the honorable member.

The PRESIDENT (Sir Raymond Garrett).—The sentiment in Mr. Elliot's last line was very commendable, Mr. Bradbury.

The Hon. A. K. BRADBURY.—This simple Bill proposes to increase the fees to manufacturers, wholesalers and retailers who dispense poisons and deleterious substances. The Government can be commended on the introduction of the Bill. On this occasion the Government is reversing the order and is taking away from the Governor in Council the power to fix these fees and returning it to Parliament. I am sure that Mr. Nicol, who is a champion of the rights of Parliament, is most pleased. This is what should be done. The fixing of fees should be a matter for Parliament.

Clause 3 of the measure contains a schedule which indicates the maximum amounts which will be charged for particular licences, and if in future it is desired to increase the fees it will be a matter for Parliament.

My party supports the proposed legislation and commends the Government for introducing it. We hope other Bills which are introduced during the sessional period will embody the same principle in relation to fees.

The Hon. G. J. NICOL (Monash Province).—I agree with Mr. Bradbury's remarks.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was read a second time and committed.

Clause 1 was agreed to.

Clause 2 (Amendment of No. 6889 s. 10).

The Hon. V. O. DICKIE (Minister of Housing).—When Mr. Elliot rises on another occasion I have no doubt that he will say—

"The time has come," the walrus said,
"To talk of many things:
Of shoes—and ships—and sealing wax—
of cabbages—and kings—".

The clause was agreed to, as was the remaining clause.

The Bill was reported to the House without amendment, and passed through its remaining stages.

CAMPERDOWN (PUBLIC PARK) LAND BILL.

The debate (adjourned from October 23) on the motion of the Hon. F. J. Granter (Minister of Water Supply) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

The Hon. R. J. EDDY (Doutta Galla Province).—The purpose of the Bill is to make additional land available for recreational purposes within the Town of Camperdown. Any municipality which endeavours to improve its recreational facilities in the interests of its citizens deserves to be complimented. The area of the land which is to be made available is 43 hectares. In the past, land has been available for golf, cricket and hockey clubs, and the additional land is to be used for further sporting activities such as bowling, tennis and croquet.

Green fees will be charged by the golf club. I believe this to be a welcome innovation, because it will permit people to travel to Camperdown, which is not far from the metropolitan area, and play golf there. They will also be able to participate in other sports. As I have said, the town council deserves commendation. The Labor Party supports the measure.

The Hon. K. I. WRIGHT (North-Western Province).—The Camperdown (Public Park) Land Bill seeks to give Camperdown Town Council approval to lease 43 hectares—approximately 100 acres—of Camperdown public park for the purposes of sport, recreation and social activities including amenities and buildings.

In an article headed "Park lease for sports complex," the Camperdown *Chronicle* of 2nd October of this year stated, *inter alia*—

A Bill before State Parliament will, if passed, give the Camperdown Town Council authority to grant leases of the land known as the Camperdown public park.

The Bill was brought into the Legislative Assembly last week by the Minister of Lands, Mr. Borthwick, and the Minister of Mines, Fuel and Power, Mr. Balfour.

The Bill proposes the Camperdown (Public Park) Land Act 1973 and will come into operation as soon as it receives Royal assent if passed by Parliament.

The Act states that the corporation of the Town of Camperdown "may from time to time grant a lease of the whole or any part of the . . . (public park) . . . for the purposes of sport or recreation, or social purposes connected therewith, including the provision of amenities and the erection of buildings."

The town council is also granted the power to make covenants, conditions, exceptions and reservations as it thinks fit to approval by the Governor in Council.

The Act specifies that any such lease will contain a condition that "members of the public who are of good character" will have the right to use any golfing facilities provided on the land at "reasonable times and upon payment of any reasonable charge."

It specifies that moneys received through rent will be used by the Town Council on maintenance and improvement of any part of the public park.

The second reading of the Bill and resumption of debate will occur in Parliament next Tuesday, October 9.

The introduction of the Bill is seen as an important step in developments to establish a sporting complex at the park.

It is exactly a year since the Camperdown Golf Club completed tentative plans for $168,500 proposals.

The plans had been prepared over a period of two years after consultation with other district sporting bodies.

The plans also include lawn tennis courts, bowling greens and a coursing track, conversion of the existing golf club house into a manager's residence, improvements to the golf course, cricket and hockey ground.

Late in April this year, the then Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation, Mr. Ian Smith, promised a $1 for $1 subsidy for development of the area.

This would seem to be an opportunity for the establishment of country-club type motel units in the area, either by the community itself or by a private company. Experience of these projects has shown that if it is done by a private company, ground rent is paid by the company annually which helps to offset running expenses. The company is expected to contribute to the capital cost of dining rooms, kitchens and lounges. Profits are ploughed back into improvements and amenities. Examples of this are to be found in similar projects which have been carried out in Mildura and Renmark and I understand that a similar project is being carried out at Robinvale, which is within North-Western Province. I am sure that an astute business man such as Mr. Elliot will see the merit of my suggestion. He is listening closely.

The Hon. D. G. ELLIOT.—It is good to be a capitalistic Socialist.

The Hon. K. I. WRIGHT.—There is another aspect of the Bill to which I should refer. The Australian Hotels Association considers that there is a licence of some kind inherent in the Bill. The association is concerned about the future of the three hotels in Camperdown.

In the *Vigilante* of 18th October, 1973, an article entitled "Licensed Country Clubs Will Be Detrimental to Hotels" stated, *inter alia*—

$168,000 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AT CAMPERDOWN TO INCLUDE A LICENCED CLUB. A.H.A. HAS LODGED A PROTEST TO THE STATE GOVERNMENT.

A move earlier this year to form a combined sporting club, incorporating golf, tennis, cricket, football and other sporting facilities proposes to include a $70,000 licensed club house at Camperdown in the Western District.

It was said in the local Camperdown press some months ago that the State Government, (as promised by the local member and, at that time, Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation, Mr. Ian Smith), would give a $1 for $1 subsidy towards the development of the 130 acre, $168,000 complex at Camperdown public park.

With a population of 4,000 in Camperdown there are already five liquor licences, including the three hotels, which are regarded by hotel-keepers as being adequate for the needs of the community.

Notwithstanding the views expressed in that article, I believe a country club or a licensed golf club would draw people to the town and that can only be good for the hotels there. Their interests must be watched, of course, and if there is any indication that this development is to their detriment something will have to be done to alleviate the position. The Country Party supports the Bill, as do the people of Camperdown.

The Hon. W. G. FRY (Higinbotham Province).—I have pleasure in supporting this measure which will give some 104 acres of extra land to the people of Camperdown on which to construct their sporting facilities. I am interested in the history of this club which may be worth recording because events such as these tend to be forgotten. The golf club occupies a major portion of the public land between Lake Gnotuk and Lake Bullen Merri. The golf club commenced its activities on lands which are associated with the early history of Victoria, namely, the land of James Chester Manifold at Talindert in Camperdown. James, the grandfather of the present Sir Chester—who is well-known as a former member of Parliament and for his connection with racing activities in this State—allowed the golf club to set out its course and to pay an annual fee of 10 shillings. Moneys still had to be found to maintain the golf course and several members of the club, including Mr. F. A. Robertson of Camperdown, decided that the Manifold family had borne the expenses of running the club for too long and that they should approach the trustees of the land under discussion.

These gentlemen went to see the four trustees, who are well-known and respected men, some of whom were living when I resided in the district. They were Mr. Gilbert Gurney Errey, Mr. Jack Walls, a relative of the town clerk of Box Hill. Mr. William Chappel and Mr. Fordham who, I believe, were also trustees at the time the request was made. Mr. Chetty Manifold, as he was affectionately known in the district before he was knighted, joined forces with Alec Robertson and Peter Law Smith and they engaged a professional golf course architect named Morcom to set out the golf course in the area adjacent to that land which is shown hatched in the schedule to the Bill.

This is one of those instances in which people with foresight have gone to great pains to set aside lands for public purposes. This area was set aside in 1879 as a permanent reservation. However, no moneys were provided to allow the area to be properly maintained, and the approach by the golf club was welcomed by the trustees who desired the area to be improved. Even this did not provide sufficient money and the trustees had to lease part of the land for cattle and grazing purposes. Of course, this only added to the fun of the games and golfers had to hit over or around animals or through flocks of sheep.

The club, of which I had the pleasure of being a member for many years, worked on improving the golf course. I learned for the first time just how hard it was to remove the stump of a giant red gum tree. Eventually, after many years of work like this, the club had a golf course and planted native shrubs until the whole course was developed.

I am pleased to have had an opportunity to recall my association with Camperdown which I regard as a forward-looking town of approximately 3,500 to 4,000 people which needs land on which to expand its sporting activities. The town has been raising finance in various ways and I hope it will receive support from the Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation. I have pleasure in supporting the Bill. I know that the people of Camperdown have the know-how and necessary professional competence to

ensure that these projects will be completed and provide a most attractive facility for the people of Victoria.

The Hon. D. G. ELLIOT (Melbourne Province).—I rise not only to support the previous speakers but to pay a compliment to the people of Camperdown for their forward thinking and courage in accepting responsibility for quite a sizeable financial outlay. The proposed sporting complex will bring comfort to the people in the immediate environments and for many miles around Camperdown. Instead of golf, cricket and hockey enthusiasts being the only sporting interests to utilize the facilities, other sports such as bowling, tennis and croquet will be indulged in.

The Hon. H. R. WARD.—What about the bikies?

The Hon. D. G. ELLIOT.—It does not matter, because they will have common usage of the club-house which will be licensed premises. I do not agree with the comments of Mr. Wright concerning the possibilities of erecting a motel-type complex in such an area as this. One has to go into feasibilities very carefully when considering the erection of these types of facilities. Not only town population but also climatic conditions are important because a 52-week a year potential would be required of a motel attached to the sporting complex proposed for Camperdown. At Mildura, where Mr. Wright resides, there is a 52-week potential The same applies to Renmark and would, no doubt, apply in Robinvale. Being a tourist supporter, I do not want tourist money to go outside Victoria. I sincerely hope that the town of Camperdown will concentrate more on the sporting complex as one concept than engage in the hazardous undertaking of a motel not situated on the Princes Highway. A motel project would, in my opinion, add to the financial problems attached to establishing the sporting complex. In the meantime, I join with my confrère Mr. Eddy, in wishing them all the best at Camperdown.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was read a second time and committed.

Clause 1 was agreed to.

Clause 2 (Commencement).

The Hon. F. J. GRANTER (Minister of Water Supply).—I thank those honorable members who have contributed to the debate. When I knew this Bill was to be introduced, I was sure there would be little comment but those honorable members who have spoken have taken an interest in the town of Camperdown. I agree with them that it is a lovely Western District town and that the sporting complex proposed for Camperdown will add to its beauty.

I thank Mr. Eddy and Mr. Wright for their remarks. Mr. Wright suggested establishing a motel complex. No doubt the people or the councillors in the town of Camperdown will take note of what he said but they will also remember Mr. Elliot's wise remarks on this subject. The honorable member has had wide experience in the hotel and motel industry. He is also very well versed in tourism and no doubt his remarks will be read with interest.

I also thank Mr. Fry for his remarks as an old resident of the town. It was most interesting to hear him detail the history of the golf club, of which he was a member, and his association with the Manifold family and many other Western District notables. This no doubt took him back many years. I hope when the complex is completed Mr. Fry will go back and see the wonderful work that the people of Camperdown are doing. I am sure they will continue to do this work in the future. I join the honorable members who have spoken in wishing the complex and the town of Camperdown well in its new venture.

The clause was agreed to, as were the remaining clauses and the schedule.

The Bill was reported to the House without amendment, and passed through its remaining stages.

STATE FORESTS WORKS AND SERVICES BILL.

This Bill was received from the Assembly and, on the motion of the Hon. F. J. GRANTER (Minister of Forests), was read a first time.

MAIDSTONE LAND BILL.

The debate (adjourned from October 23) on the motion of the Hon. F. J. Granter (Minister of Water Supply) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

The Hon. H. A. THOMAS (Melbourne West Province).—This Bill proposes to regularize the occupancy of the Rosamond Bowling Club, which is situated on the Rosamond Road Recreation Reserve. It also proposes to empower the Sunshine City Council to make a grant of $15,000 for the building of the bowling club club-house.

In 1926, the Braybrook Shire Council, as the council was then known, approached the Lands Department for an area of land in the district for recreation purposes. This was agreed to in 1929 with a grant of an area of 12 acres. The land was set aside as a temporary reserve for recreation purposes, and the Shire of Braybrook was made the committee of management. The reserve was called Rosamond Road Recreation Reserve. As development continued, in the following years the council saw the need for a further area to be added to the reserve and approached the Lands Department for a further grant. This was acceded to by the Government of the day and in October, 1946, another 10 acres was granted.

In 1947 the Rosamond Tennis Club was formed. The first president was Councillor Barrett, and a later president was Mr. Ern Naughton who held that position for many years, with Mr. Keith Stone as the secretary. Mr. Stone was active in community affairs, especially the Legacy Club, and with his committee he conducted a very active and successful club. In 1945, the Maribyrnong Trotting and Social Club was given access to the reserve and later, in 1955, people interested in bowling met and formed the Rosamond Bowling Club. With the assistance of the council and much voluntary work, the first green was laid in 1956 and the club-house was built in 1957.

The first president of this club was Mr. Barrett who was also interested in municipal affairs and the secretary was Mr. Ern. Naughton, who is now president. The club continued quite successfully until 1971 with a membership of 95 members and 100 associates. In that year disaster struck and the club-house was burnt out. The members then set about a rebuilding programme. Although the original building was insured for only $8,000, the rebuilding valuation was $15,000. The Sunshine City Council desired to grant $15,000 towards the building of the club-house, but legal problems arose from a judgment given in the Hislop case in the Camberwell municipality which questioned the right of a lessee to be granted a lease of Crown land for exclusive sporting club use. The bowling club and the Sunshine City Council desire that occupancy be given to the bowling club and that the council be permitted to grant $15,000 for the building of the club-rooms. Therefore, members of my party do not oppose the Bill and they wish the club every success in the future.

The Hon. K. I. WRIGHT (North-Western Province).—Members of the Country Party support this Bill, which relates to the occupation of an area of Crown land at Maidstone. Mr. Thomas has adequately outlined the circumstances that led to the introduction of this measure.

I understand that the Rosamond Bowling Club, the City of Sunshine and the people in

that city are united in favour of the Bill. As Mr. Thomas stated, the club-rooms were burnt out, but they were under-insured by approximately $7,000. The Sunshine City Council is adding a grant to make the $8,000 insurance money up to the $15,000 estimated value at the time of the fire. I commend the council for its action in making a loan of $15,000 to this club as well and I commend the Bill to the House.

The Hon. J. M. TRIPOVICH (Doutta Galla Province).—I commend the action of the Government in regularizing the problem associated with the rebuilding of the new club-house for the Rosamond Bowling Club. It is a sister club of my own club, Ascot Vale, and its building was burnt down whilst I was president of my club. Ascot Vale was sympathetic to Rosamond, as were many other bowling clubs. Because of the legal technicalities associated with the granting of the lease of land and because there was one objector to the making of the grant by the council, it was necessary to introduce this Bill.

With all the goodwill of the council, one can never be certain that a challenge will not be made unless the position is regularized. I am pleased that honorable members do not oppose this Bill. Rosamond Bowling Club was in a position to rebuild its club-house about three years ago but could not go ahead because the right of occupancy had not been regularized. I am grateful that the Sunshine City Council has taken action on behalf of this club and rendered this assistance.

Bowling clubs in the northern suburban areas—the position may be different in some other areas—are making a wonderful contribution to society, particularly to older people. The membership of my own club, Ascot Vale Bowling Club, consists of 50 per cent of people who are either retired or pensioners. Bowling clubs make a great contribution towards the physical and mental well-being of those people and they should be encouraged, just as sport is encouraged for the younger people. I should like more to be done in the provision of sporting activities for people of all ages, including those who are old. I welcome the Bill; I wish Rosamond Bowling Club well in its restoration work; and I look forward to the opening of its new club-house.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was read a second time and committed.

Clause 1 was agreed to.

Clause 2 (Interpretation).

The Hon. F. J. GRANTER (Minister of Water Supply).—Once again, I have pleasure in thanking honorable members for their contributions to this debate. Mr. Thomas had a wealth of knowledge of the area and gave honorable members the history of events that took place in this area over many years. Mr. Wright also made contributions to the debate.

Mr. Tripovich, who is well known as a bowler, told honorable members what bowling does for the community, and I agree with him. The Government commends the Sunshine City Council and the Rosamond Bowling Club in this joint venture. It is important that councils and bowling clubs should get together and work readily for a project such as this. It has the support of Parliament.

As Mr. Tripovich said, bowling clubs make a great contribution to the well-being of the aged and the pensioners of Victoria. The clubs are well administered by their members; they ought to be congratulated and encouraged in the way that this Bill encourages the Rosamond Bowling Club. I join with other honorable members in wishing the club and the council well in this venture. I hope it will do a lot for the people of the district and that it will give them much pleasure.

The clause was agreed to, as were the remaining clauses and the schedule.

The Bill was reported to the House without amendment, and passed through its remaining stages.

LABOUR AND INDUSTRY (AMENDMENT) BILL.

The debate (adjourned from October 24) on the motion of the Hon. F. J. Granter (Minister of Water Supply) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

The Hon. I. B. TRAYLING (Melbourne Province).—This small Bill—to which the Labor Party raises no objection—provides mainly for a new scale of fees for shops and factories referred to in the 1958 Act. There has been no increase in the fees since 1958, and it is appropriate that after fifteen years they should be increased. The level of increase is acceptable.

The measure also provides for the appointment of deputy members of wages boards, and that is reasonable, because delays can occur through illness and other reasons. If deputy members are available, these delays can be obviated. A further minor amendment is to delete the words "a Court of General Sessions" and insert the words "the County Court".

A small conflict exists between the actual number of shops and factories which are registered and those which exist. As this involves revenue, the Government should ensure that all shops and factories are registered. The Act at present provides that shops or factories employing up to two persons are in a particular category in determining fees. That category is now being expanded to include factories and shops employing up to four persons. The Labor Party has no objection to the Bill.

The Hon. K. I. WRIGHT (North-Western Province).—The Country Party supports the Bill. It fixes a new scale of fees for shops and factories and makes other minor amendments to the Labour and Industry Act 1958. One of the proposed amendments relates to the appointment of deputy members of wages boards.

Some of the increases in fees are steep. The fee for a corner store will be increased by 150 per cent, from $4 to $10. Some honorable members may argue that a $6 increase is not much, but it is only one of many expenses which have to be met by the owners of small businesses. They work 70 or 80 hours a week and render a valuable service to the community. Most small shops are open at odd hours when other stores are closed. They have to battle against competition from large supermarkets, and some proprietors barely make a living. Therefore, a nominal charge such as $1 a year would be ample in these cases to give the shopkeepers a fair go.

Some of my colleagues have mentioned that possibly at least five inspectors from the Department of Labour and Industry could be withdrawn from some country centres, including Swan Hill and Mildura in my province. I hope this is incorrect. If it is correct it would be detrimental to the areas concerned, to the inspectors, and to the department in relation to the collection of the relevant fees, because inspections cannot be carried out adequately from a distance. The Minister for State Development and Decentralization will appreciate that this will also be a blow to decentralization. Members of the Country Party believe that, wherever possible, departmental employees who work outside the metropolitan area should be domiciled where they work. This practice results in a considerable saving in working time, expenditure and increases efficiency. If the trend of withdrawing departmental employees from country areas continues, it is to be deprecated. Apart from those reservations, the Country Party supports the Bill.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was read a second time and committed.

Clause 1 was agreed to.

Clause 2, relating to appointment of deputy members of wages boards.

The Hon. F. J. GRANTER (Minister of Water Supply).—I thank Mr. Trayling and Mr. Wright for their contributions to the debate. Mr. Trayling offered the support of the Labor Party, but referred to the number of factories that are registered. If there are some factories which miss out on registration at times, they are probably in remote areas of the State. Most factories are registered for their own good and that of their employees. I agree that they should be registered because they must be supervised.

Mr. Wright spoke about corner stores. Small businesses are dear to my heart, and they have made a valuable contribution for many years to Victoria. The corner store can still play a significant part in the commercial world, and should be encouraged, because it faces terrific competition from the large supermarkets. Governments of all shades should endeavour to maintain small businesses for the good of the community. As Mr. Wright pointed out, most of them are open at odd hours and remain open for long periods, so that they can serve the public without fighting the huge competition from the supermarkets. The rise in their fees from $4 to $10 seems rather steep, and I shall pass Mr. Wright's comments on the matter on to the Minister. I do not say that there will be any reduction in fees, but the honorable gentleman should consider the remarks of honorable members in this House.

Mr. Wright also referred to the labour and industry inspectors who may be withdrawn from country districts. It would be a shame if this happened—I do not say it will happen—because a resident inspector is much better than one who must travel 350 miles from Melbourne to a place such as Mildura. An inspector can administer his department better if he is a resident of a town such as Mildura, Castlemaine or Maryborough, than if he must travel to those centres from Melbourne. I shall also direct comments on that matter to the attention of the Minister of Labour and Industry in another place. With those few remarks, I thank honorable members who contributed to the debate.

The clause was agreed to, as were the remaining clauses.

The Bill was reported to the House without amendment, and passed through its remaining stages.

THE CONSTITUTION ACT AMENDMENT (EXECUTIVE COUNCIL) BILL.

The Hon. A. J. HUNT (Minister for Local Government).—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

It will make provision for the expenses of the Clerk of the Executive Council and of the Executive Council itself. The last amending Bill was passed last year, when the total allowable expenditure was increased to $13,000. That amendment followed the raising of the salary of the Clerk of the Executive Council to a little under $11,000. The expenditure of the Executive Council above the salary of the Clerk was approximately $500. Therefore a margin of approximately $1,500 has been left. The salary of the Clerk, following incidental increases, has risen to just below $13,500. The expenditure is now estimated to be about $850; in other words, the total allowance is $14,000.

Rather than bringing in Bills every time there is a salary increase, the Government has provided a margin above the current increase to allow for future changes in salary scales and expenses. The total allowance now proposed by this Bill is $20,000, which allows a reasonable margin for change without the necessity of burdening Parliament further. This is a sensible approach and I ask the House for its support.

On the motion of the Hon. A. W. Knight, for the Hon. J. M. TRIPOVICH (Doutta Galla Province), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until the next day of meeting.

STATE FORESTS WORKS AND SERVICES BILL.

The Hon. F. J. GRANTER (Minister of Forests).—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

It provides authority for the expenditure of $5·97 million on works and services. An amount of $4·45 million has been approved for expenditure on proposed works for the financial year ending June, 1974. The additional amount authorized by the Bill is to provide Parliamentary authority to continue works until the passing of further legislation relative to the works programme to be approved for the financial year 1974–75.

Clause 1 of the Bill comprises the short title and citation. Clause 2 provides for the expenditure of moneys for the purposes set out in the table in that clause. Clause 3 provides that no moneys shall be expended except under this measure, and has the effect of cancelling unexpended authorities remaining under the State Forests Works and Services Act 1972.

ITEM 1: Fire protection, $1·05 million.—The Forests Commission is responsible for the protection from fire of more than 14 million acres of State forest and for the control of fire suppression in national parks and approximately 3 million acres of private property located within a mile of State forests and national parks. This territorial responsibility covers almost one-third of the State.

The combination of climate and flammable eucalypt fuel makes Victorian forests one of the most dangerous fire areas in the world, and the history of damaging forest fires in this State makes it essential to maintain expenditure on forest fire protection at a high level.

The commission's fire-fighting organization is geared to pre-season prevention work, early aggressive initial attack and determined follow up. Accordingly, provision has been made for the construction of 14 miles of roads, 209 miles of fire access tracks, and 84 miles of bulldozed firelines. In this dry continent, water for fire fighting is often in short supply; nineteen new dams will be constructed in areas where water supplies are not normally available in summer.

The commission will continue to undertake an extensive programme of fuel reduction burning. Procedures, including aerial ignition using both fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters, have been developed to enable prescribed burning to be carried out with minimal damage. The current year's target is 500,000 acres. The commission again will retain a helicopter on immediate call during the height of the summer for fire observation, transport of crews and for aerial ignition of fire breaks to control the spread of major fires.

Seven fire-bombing bases are strategically located around the State. These are equipped with facilities for loading fire retardant into aircraft for fast attack on fires in mountain areas when weather conditions make use of this modern technique necessary. The commission's basic force of fire fighters will be augmented during January and February by the employment of mobile, self-contained fire-fighting crews. Similar crews have proved most valuable in previous fire seasons.

The Government has made special provision for fire protection in the Dandenongs where the major work will be consolidation of the "buffer zone" above The Basin by removal of fire-hazardous material.

Increases in international usage of available channels have forced changes in the field of radio communications. Accordingly, special provision has been made to implement the second stage of a six-year

programme of converting the commission's field radio network from a high frequency system to a very high frequency system.

Equipment.—Additional weather stations will be set up in strategic locations, principally in the mountain forest area, to improve accuracy in assessing fire danger.

Fire research.—Work continues on projects designed to give basic data on fire behaviour and on new techniques, in an attempt to increase fire suppression efficiency in the field. These include quick and practical methods for determining fuel quantities, moisture contents and evaluation of the effectiveness of various fire retardants. Work is continuing on the preparation of prescriptions for controlled burning and on evaluation of the results of large-scale fuel reduction burns. Investigations continue into the effects of fire on flora and fauna within the forest.

ITEM 2: Indigenous State forests, $750,000.—The main types of operations under this item will be reforesting blank areas, regenerating recently-logged areas and the removal of defective trees in order to permit the growth of better stems.

The major activities will be in the forests in the higher rainfall areas which have high potential for valuable timber production. About 5,000 acres of cut-over mountain forests will be treated to ensure the establishment of a new forest crop. Large quantities of eucalypt seed will be collected for either hand or aerial sowing in these regeneration operations. Agricultural aircraft will continue to be used to sow specially prepared seed on the larger areas.

Regeneration operations using natural seeding, the thinning of established young stands and the removal of useless trees will be continued in the forests in the lower rainfall areas of the State. Forest types to be treated include mixed species, river red-gum, box and ironbark.

Operations by forest licensees removing such produce as sawlogs, poles, pulpwood and fence posts will continue to be closely supervised by commission staff with the aim of maintaining and increasing the productivity of native forests.

Provision has been made under item 2 for increased expenditure on forest recreation facilities and environmental conservation. Works will be carried out in the 107 forest parks, scenic reserves and various types of special purpose reserves totalling 120,000 acres which have been set aside by the commission in the interest of environmental forestry for scientific, aesthetic, educational and recreational purposes.

Forest works in these reserves will provide facilities for recreationists such as parking-picnic areas, toilets, walking tracks, and interpretative aids. Protective works will be undertaken to protect areas of archaeological and historic value from vandalism; and in other instances to protect intensively-used sections of forest from over-use by people. The increasing use of forests by campers will require provision of facilities which include toilets and fireplaces in a number of new localities.

ITEM 3: Extraction roads, $600,000.—Under this item new roads will be constructed and improvements made to existing forest roads and bridges. Additional roads are necessary to permit the further extension of timber harvesting activities into remote forest areas, increased utilization in the older softwood plantations, and the expansion of harvesting in the eucalypt regrowth stands resulting from the 1939 fires. Some of this new roading will be required to ensure supplies of timber to wood-using companies with whom the commission has entered into long-term timber supply agreements.

Existing roads will need to be improved, including surfacing, to cater for the generally larger log trucks now used and also to cater for the increasing use of forest roads

by the general public for tourism and recreation. In addition to providing for timber extraction and tourism, these additional and improved roads will assist the commission's fire protection organization.

ITEM 4: Plantations establishment —softwoods and hardwoods—including softwood planting undertaken in accordance with the agreements between the Commonwealth and the State, $3 million.—The planting of new softwood areas under the agreement between the State and the Commonwealth will continue with the aim of achieving the target area of approximately 58,000 acres over the five years of the agreement. These plantings will be in the eight established plantation development zones—Central, Benalla–Mansfield, Ovens, Upper Murray, Latrobe, Portland, Ballarat and Otways. Development of plantations in this way is creating large concentrations of wood which will be available as raw material for major decentralized industries. Within these zones plantings are confined to areas suitable for the economic growth of softwood species.

Planning for the commission's softwood planting programme makes provision for aesthetic and recreational requirements, and for the retention of representative wildlife and plant habitats within the projects. Plantations occupy a relatively small area in comparison with the very extensive area of native forests.

Within the limits of finance, suitable freehold properties will continue to be purchased for inclusion in the softwood programme as they become available at economic prices, with the aim of having a substantial part of each year's programme planted on purchased farmland. Some 6,000 acres has been purchased over the past two years for this purpose.

Works to be carried out under the softwood planting programme include clearing and site preparation, raising nursery stock, planting, tending planted areas and roading. The clearing programme will use both departmental and contractor resources and is designed to give a reasonable reserve of cleared land in advance of immediate planting requirements. This enables ploughing to be carried out in the summer prior to planting which not only gives a more suitable site for planting but it kills or retards a lot of the competing weed species so lowering later tending costs.

The seedlings required for the planting programme will be raised at nurseries located at Benalla, Trentham, Rennick, Koetong and Narbethong, the main species used being *Pinus radiata*. A total of 2,000 lb. of seed will be sown to raise softwood nursery stock. Some seed has been collected from existing mature plantations in this State but purchase from interstate sources will be necessary to make up the deficiency. However, it is expected that by the late 1970s sufficient seed will be available from the seed orchards which the commission has established.

Tending works will be carried out over some 24,000 acres of plantation. Tending includes cleaning of lately-planted areas to reduce competition from scrub species, firming of plants after planting and spraying of areas to overcome nutrient deficiencies where this is deemed to be necessary.

With the increasing demands by large decentralized industries for softwood timber, substantial areas of the older plantations are being clearfelled. Extraction of the timber will necessitate extensions and improvement of existing road systems. The clearfelled areas will be prepared for replanting with suitable species, and some 800 acres will be prepared in 1973-74.

Hardwood plantings will continue in a number of areas of the State. The major plantings will be in the South Gippsland hills, where some 900 acres of purchased scrub-covered marginal farmland will be replanted with

eucalypts. The main species to be used is mountain ash raised at the Olsen's Bridge nursery, south of Boolarra. Prison labour, provided by the Social Welfare Department and supervised by Forests Commission staff, will be used in the nursery and at all stages of planting. Clearing and other site preparation for this reforestation programme will be carried out largely by the Forests Commission.

Other hardwood plantings will be made to fill blank areas in forests and to reclaim worked-out gravel pits in various parts of the State. Further developmental and planting work will also be undertaken in the Olinda Arboretum.

ITEM 5: Forest officers' quarters, workshops and other buildings, $200,000.—In accordance with departmental policy of providing accommodation for its permanent staff in country locations, two new residences will be provided for district foresters, and improvements will be made to some of the older existing residences.

New district offices are planned for Macedon and Forrest, and extensions will be added to several offices in locations where commission activities have increased. A divisional plant repair workshop will be built at Traralgon. The new buildings will be of modern design and will display Victorian timbers. Other building proposals include additional and replacement garages and stores.

ITEM 6: Purchase of land, $70,000. —Private property will be purchased by negotiation to improve areas being developed for forest recreation, to provide access for fire protection and timber extraction and to consolidate the forest estate. The purchase of properties in the Dandenong Ranges is continuing in pursuance of the Government's policy for the preservation of the area and its protection from fire. This item does not include land acquisition for softwood plantation purposes.

ITEM 7: Purchase of plant, other than under items 1–5 inclusive, $180,000.—Provision is made in this item for the purchase, design and fabrication of vehicles, plant and equipment not financed from the Plant and Machinery Replacement Fund. Fourteen 4-wheel-drive tankers which have reached the end of their economic life will be replaced. Purchase is proposed of additional rotary slashers and mowers, and of tools and general equipment for plant repair centres.

ITEM 8: Farm forestry, $120,000.—This item provides for loans to landowners under the farm forestry loan scheme to assist them in establishing plantations of commercial softwoods. The maximum amount which can be advanced is $5,000 and loans are interest free for the first twelve years. At 30th June, 1973, the amount committed for advances to agreement holders was almost $300,000. I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of the Hon. A. W. Knight, for the Hon. D. E. KENT (Gippsland Province), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Tuesday, November 6.

LAND (METRIC CONVERSION) BILL.

The message from the Assembly relating to the amendments in this Bill was taken into consideration.

The Hon. W. V. HOUGHTON (Minister for Social Welfare).—The amendments made by the Legislative Assembly are in the main to correct inaccurate readings or notings of the provisions to which they refer. The first amendment inserts the expression " (1) " after " 43 " in clause 43. The second amendment adds the following new sub-clause to clause 43:—

'(2) In paragraph (*d*) of section 239 of the Principal Act for the word " acres " there shall be substituted the word " hectares ".'

The third amendment omits the expression "(*e*)" and inserts the expression "(*b*)" in clause 50. The fourth amendment inserts the following new clause to follow clause 1:—

'AA. In sub-section (6) of section 2 of the Principal Act for the words "twenty acres" there shall be substituted the words "nine hectares".'

I move—

That the amendments be agreed to.

The Hon. J. M. TRIPOVICH (Doutta Galla Province).—On behalf of Mr. Kent, who is handling this Bill for the Labor Party, I inform the House that the Labor Party agrees to the amendments.

The Hon. S. R. McDONALD (Northern Province).—When this Bill was considered by the House previously I made the point that it contained 246 separate amendments. In view of the large number of amendments and the fact that they were technical, honorable members had to accept the assurance of the Minister that everything in the Bill was in order. Obviously it has now been found that the Bill needs to be amended and, like Mr. Tripovich, I must support the amendments. I reiterate the hope that what the Minister has said this time is the end of the Bill.

The motion was agreed to.

HAIRDRESSERS REGISTRATION (AMENDMENT) BILL.

The debate (adjourned from October 24) on the motion of the Hon. W. V. Houghton (Minister for Social Welfare) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

The Hon. I. B. TRAYLING (Melbourne Province).—Members of the Labor Party are not entirely pleased with the Bill. We have gone through it with a fine tooth comb and we believe that subject to some evidence being provided, which is not yet forthcoming, there is a risk that hairdressers might be being scalped over the fee increases provided for in the Bill. We do not want to fall out with the Government over any opposition to the Bill but we would certainly like to see the conflict which appears to exist resolved. The Bill provides that the present fees of $8.50 a year for employers or self-employed hairdressers and $2 a year for employed hairdressers will be increased and the fees proposed are $10.50 a year for principals and $3 a year for employees. The existing Act provides for maximum payments of $10 and $2 respectively, and this Bill provides for maximum payments of $15 and $5 respectively. The basis of the proposed increases and maximum fees will make it unnecessary for another amending Bill to be introduced in the near future.

The activities of hairdressers in Victoria are controlled by the Hairdressers Registration Board and there appears to be a distinct difference in the figures of the number of registered hairdressers in Victoria as given by the Government and by others and the amount of income which the board receives from this uncertain number of hairdressers. We do not want to see the board in a position where it cannot properly administer the hairdressing industry, where it cannot properly attend to the inspection of the hygiene conditions in hairdressing salons and so on, but if the board has sufficient money at present, we would not be pleased if additional registration fees were imposed on hairdressers. I understand that the Government is prepared to have a look at this consequent upon the findings of an investigation being carried out at present by the Auditor-General and I am sure that any additional amendments which may be made as a result of his findings will be undertaken by the Government. I understand that the records of the board have not been subject to audit for at least two or three years. That is probably why the figures relating to income and the number of hairdressers are not consistent.

The Hon. B. P. DUNN.—Are you suggesting that they do not correspond?

The Hon. I. B. TRAYLING.—The figures submitted as the basis for increases in registration fees are not consistent with figures which the Opposition has obtained from very good sources. The Opposition has confidence in the good faith of the Government to make any changes subject to the findings of the audit presently under way. That is our proviso in not opposing the Bill.

The Hon. B. P. DUNN (North-Western Province).—Mr. Trayling's suggestion that the income of the Hairdressers Registration Board does not correspond with the number of hairdressers is an interesting allegation. If the honorable member has the figures, perhaps they could be presented to the House or made known to honorable members.

I am not happy with a measure which fixes maximum fees but allows the Governor in Council to set the actual fees by regulation. In some cases, not even maximum fees are set by the Act—the fees are subject to regulation only.

If the House accepts the Bill it accepts the maximum fee. The next opportunity of discussing the subject will be when it is proposed to further increase the maximum fee. By passing the Bill, honorable members accept a registration fee of $15 for a proprietor and $5 for a hairdresser. A fee should not be set by regulation. Although the Hairdressers Registration Board intends only to increase the registration fee for proprietors to $10.50 and for employees to $3, as I have said, the acceptance of the Bill means that honorable members accept the maximum fees.

The House has been given a few broad figures to justify the increased maximums but no detail. The Government is taking money from all and sundry. It takes an expert to keep up with its actions in collecting a few extra dollars from everyone it can tax. More justification should have been given for these increases.

The Minister suggested that in 1974 the Hairdressers Registration Board would have a deficit of $8,000 but no details were given. The Country Party will not oppose the Bill but it offers a word of caution on the principle of setting high maximums for fees which will be set by regulation.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was read a second time and committed.

Clause 1 was agreed to.

Clause 2 (Maximum fee).

The Hon. W. V. HOUGHTON (Minister for Social Welfare).—Mr. Trayling has indicated that, after treating it with a fine tooth comb, he could find only a few flaws in the Bill. I am glad that he was not prepared to take the scissors to it in this salon.

Mr. Dunn suggested that there was no justification for making it possible for the Hairdressers Registration Board to increase fees, but I suggest that the projected deficit of $8,000 next year is reasonable justification. Mr. Dunn said that he disagreed with setting maximum fees and allowing the fees to be raised to the maximum by regulation. There are others who disagree with the setting of fees by regulation, particularly when the Governor in Council may set fees without any maximum laid down in the Act. The Government has tried to go along with this view by suggesting reasonable maximums which mean that Bills need not be introduced every time a fee is altered.

The clause was agreed to.

The Bill was reported to the House without amendment, and passed through its remaining stages.

CONSUMER PROTECTION BILL.

This Bill was received from the Assembly and, on the motion of the Hon. F. J. GRANTER (Minister of Water Supply), was read a first time.

ADJOURNMENT.

SWAN HILL PIONEER SETTLEMENT.

The Hon. MURRAY BYRNE (Minister for State Development and Decentralization).—I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

The Hon. D. G. ELLIOT (Melbourne Province).—This evening it came to my notice that the finance committee of the Swan Hill council has appointed as chief executive officer of the Swan Hill Pioneer Settlement a Mr. W. I. Cleghorn. I have had a long association with the settlement, and I am full of admiration for the man who has been responsible for its growth over the years, Mr. Ross Mellor. He is as well known to the Leader of the House as he is to me. Mr. Mellor is also well known to other honorable members including Mr. Ward, who allows me to say that he is full of commendation for the work Mr. Mellor has done over the years. I have spoken about Mr. Mellor to members of the Country Party who are also aware of his work.

The Hon. S. R. McDONALD.—He stood as a Country Party candidate in one election.

The Hon. D. G. ELLIOT.—Apart from that, honorable members will be aware of his sterling service to Swan Hill. The Swan Hill Pioneer Settlement is unique. It has features which not even Sovereign Hill at Ballarat has. It is as good as any place of its type that I have seen.

I have been impressed by the enthusiasm of Mr. Mellor, not only in getting things done for the pioneer settlement but in his work for the youth hostel at Swan Hill, which can house up to 100 young people at a nominal fee. The youth hostel is a credit to Mr. Mellor and his fellow workers.

A lot of little people in Swan Hill have set themselves out to "get" Ross Mellor. I make no apologies for saying this as the results of my inquiries suggest that that is so. I am duty bound to say that some two months ago I brought this matter to the attention of the Leader of the House. I was afraid that something would happen to this wonderful servant of our Victorian community. The Leader of the House promised that Mr. Mellor would be looked after and I was advised to tell him "to play it cool" for the time being. I have no doubt that the Leader fully intends to look after Mr. Mellor, but what has happened is unfortunate.

I stand to be corrected about the person who has been appointed, and hope I am, but if I am not, I want to know why he was appointed. Mr. Cleghorn is not an accountant although a permanent accountant is sorely needed by the Pioneer Settlement in the opinion of Robin Poole and Associates who have been consulting accountants for the settlement for some years. Mr. Cleghorn's skill as manager or entrepeneur has been gained only in his association with Sarah Coventry Jewellery, an American-based firm with a branch at Wodonga, a direct selling organization, and from his association with mini-golf operations in Melbourne.

That does not mean that this gentleman is not accomplished and would not be capable of running the undertaking, but I want to know why Mr. Ross Mellor has been by-passed. My opinion, based on extensive investigations by myself and by Mr. Alan Lind, who sits in another place, is that he is being "got at" and is the victim of little people. I have read reports of the finance committee of the Swan Hill council and I know the whole sorry story. This man's history speaks for itself. On a meagre salary and an even more meagre allowance to entertain visitors to the settlement, his services have been outstanding. Because of my love for it, I have been personally responsible for 600 or 700 people visiting the pioneer settlement. It is one of the finest settlements of its kind in Australia. From my intimate knowledge of the man, I firmly believe that the inspiration and dedication of Ross Mellor has

resulted in the Swan Hill Pioneer Settlement achieving its present unique position.

The settlement, which is a $1·5 million asset, is operating on an overdraft of $170,000 or $180,000. In the opinion of the consulting accountants, Robin Poole and Associates, this is quite a good percentage of overdraft for such an undertaking. It must also be remembered that the hostel complex accounts for part of the overdraft.

I should like some explanation from the Leader of the House and an assurance, if possible tonight or otherwise as soon as possible in the House, that Mr. Mellor will receive the dignity and security that he richly deserves.

The Hon. MURRAY BYRNE (Minister for State Development and Decentralization).—Mr. Elliot has aired publicly a number of matters concerning the Swan Hill Pioneer Settlement. I cannot confirm the truth or otherwise of some of his statements for reasons which I will endeavour to elaborate. I agree with Mr. Elliot on a number of the matters that have been mentioned. The Swan Hill Pioneer Settlement is a great tourist success story in Victoria and in Australia. From the figures that have been presented to me, the total revenue brought into Swan Hill from this tourist project is greater than the revenue of the shire council.

Mr. Elliot has justifiably praised Mr. Mellor who has been a keen and motivating spirit, and the initiator of the project. From my own knowledge and information I agree with the praise but I should like to tell the rest of the story. The Swan Hill Pioneer Settlement vests in the local council, which initiated the project, borrowed the money and still manages and controls the project. It is true that the council approached the State Government which was the first Government in Australia to grant financial assistance for this type of project. The Government assisted the local community in the project.

Although Mr. Elliot had a right to do so, it is regrettable that he has raised many matters which are unrelated to Government administration. The Government does not employ Mr. Mellor, it has no say about him and does not determine his conditions of employment. That matter is one for the local people who have elected a committee of management.

As a result of matters which were brought to my attention some two months ago, I took the opportunity, upon becoming Minister for Tourism, of examining the various tourist projects in Victoria. I satisfied myself that the projects had outgrown their early beginnings when they were receiving substantial Government assistance. They had become important not only as local tourist attractions but as State and national tourist attractions. Therefore, there was a good case for the setting up of a statutory body, which would have representation from the local level, to bring some degree of expertise to these things which have now become big business.

Mr. Elliot knows that the Government is investigating the possibility of forming corporations and indeed discussions have been held with responsible people in Swan Hill. I suppose I am not disclosing any secrets by saying that the Government has drafted a Bill along those lines. The whole venture vests in the shire council, and I am sending, if it has not already been posted, a copy of a suggested Bill and seeking the council's support in setting up a corporation.

I cannot confirm the other statements of Mr. Elliot because they have nothing to do with the Government.

The Hon. D. G. ELLIOT.—You know all about them, Mr. Minister.

The Hon. MURRAY BYRNE.—I do not know about them, but I am concerned. The only information that I can give to the House is that the Government has put before the local municipality the possibility of establishing a statutory authorty which

will introduce representatives other than local people. Currently, the local municipality runs and controls its own local tourist project even though it may be a great State and national attraction.

The PRESIDENT (Sir Raymond Garrett).—Perhaps I should advise honorable members that on the motion for the adjournment of the sitting, the only matters which may be brought up are those which relate to Government administration. Until the Minister spoke, I did not know that the matter raised by Mr. Elliot was not one of Government administration and therefore I did not prevent him from bringing the matter forward. Because I had not stopped Mr. Elliot, I allowed the Minister to continue even though his remarks did not relate to a matter of Government administration. I am quite sure that the Minister and Mr. Elliot can get together and come to some agreement.

The motion was agreed to.

The House adjourned at 10.52 *p.m.*

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE.

SPORTING COMPLEXES.

(Question No. 112)

The Hon. J. M. TRIPOVICH (Doutta Galla Province) asked the Minister of Housing, for the Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation—

Has the Government considered and approved the erection or development of any sporting complex in the metropolitan area; if so—(i) where will each be located; (ii) what subsidy has been offered; (iii) what bodies will receive the subsidy and what will be their respective responsibilities, both in money (to be provided), and administration?

The Hon. V. O. DICKIE (Minister of Housing).—The answer supplied by the Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation is statistical in nature and I seek leave for its incorporation in *Hansard* without my reading it.

Leave was granted, and the answer was as follows:—

Location of facility	Subsidy approved	Local contribution	Body receiving subsidy	Body administering complex
	$	$		
Westlands sporting complex, Sun Crescent, Sunshine	161,160	Nil	Sunshine City Council	Sunshine City Council
Olympic Park synthetic track, Melbourne..	184,000	Nil	Olympic Park Committee of Management	Olympic Park Committee of Management
Carrington Park family leisure centre, City of Knox	107,000	Y.M.C.A. 14,000, council 111,000, local committee, 50,000	City of Knox	Y.M.C.A.
Greensborough sporting complex, civic centre, Shire of Diamond Valley	256,000	256,000	Shire of Diamond Valley	Committee of management
Nunawading community youth project, City of Nunawading	170,000	170,000	City of Nunawading	Y.M.C.A.
Outer eastern women's sports centre, City of Waverley	50,000	83,000	City of Waverley	Committee of management appointed by council

(Question No. 115)

The Hon. R. J. EDDY (Doutta Galla Province) asked the Minister of Housing, for the Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation—

(*a*) What subsidies have been paid to sporting complexes to date?

(*b*) To whom and for what sporting activities have these subsidies been paid?

The Hon. V. O. DICKIE (Minister of Housing).—The answer supplied by the Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation is—

With one exception no subsidies have been paid to sporting complexes to date by the Department of Youth, Sport and Recreation. The department has purchased the Westlands Sporting Centre, Sunshine, and payments to date amount to $45,100 of the total of approximately $200,000 for this complex. This centre has been purchased outright by the Public Works Department on behalf of my department and with funds made available from my department. The City of Sunshine has accepted responsibility for the operation and maintenance of this

centre on behalf of its local community and an interim committee to consider the use of the centre was established at a public meeting recently. This committee has met a number of times and will report to the City of Sunshine on the activities it considers the centre could be utilized for.

The honorable member will be aware that the Local Government Department had operated the Country Sporting Centres Fund since 1969 and that this fund has now been transferred to my department and incorporated in our over-all policies. Any commitments entered into by the Local Government Department have been accepted by my department and will be honoured as first priority. Details of subsidies paid by the Local Government Department could be made available to the honorable member if he so desires.

TEACHERS.

(Question No. 121)

The Hon. K. I. WRIGHT (North-Western Province) asked the Minister for State Development and Decentralization, for the Minister of Education—

(*a*) Can teachers join the permanent staff of the Education Department before they have become naturalized citizens?

(*b*) What plans has the Minister of Education to enable eminently qualified teachers from overseas to join the permanent staff of the department within the two years required prior to applying for naturalization?

The Hon. MURRAY BYRNE (Minister for State Development and Decentralization).—The answer supplied by the Minister of Education is—

(*a*) No.

(*b*) The matter is currently under consideration.

NORTHERN HIGHWAY.

(Question No. 127)

The Hon. M. A. CLARKE (Northern Province) asked the Minister for Local Government, for the Chief Secretary—

With regard to the flashing light cross-road on the Northern Highway, 90 miles from Melbourne—

(*a*) How many persons have been killed and injured, respectively, since the flashing light was installed?

(*b*) How many persons have been killed and injured, respectively, in each of the past three years, and this year to date?

(*c*) Which Government instrumentality is responsible for safety measures?

(*d*) What plans does such instrumentality have for improving safety and reducing the road toll?

The Hon. A. J. HUNT (Minister for Local Government).—The answer supplied by the Chief Secretary is lengthy and detailed, and I seek leave to have it incorporated in *Hansard* without my reading it.

Leave was granted, and the answer was as follows:—

(*a*) and (*b*) The flashing signals were installed on 26th April, 1957. Precise details of numbers of persons killed and injured at this location prior to 1968 are not readily available. The numbers killed and injured since 1968 are—

1968—one person killed; four persons injured.

1969—nil.

1970—one person injured.

1971—one person killed.

1972—one person injured.

1973—four persons killed—data *re* number of persons injured not yet available.

(*c*) The police are responsible for enforcing the law. The Country Roads Board is responsible for implementation of traffic engineering measures on the Northern Highway. The Waranga Shire Council and the Country Roads Board are responsible for the implementation of traffic engineering measures on the Goornong–Murchison road. The Road Safety and Traffic Authority is responsible for establishing policy guidelines within which appropriate safety measures should be applied throughout the State. In addition, the identification of high accident locations and the development of measures for the reduction of the accident situation is a function of the authority.

(*d*) On 4th October, 1973, the Country Roads Board replaced the flashing signals with new larger sized flashing signals. The Road Safety and Traffic Authority and the Country Roads Board are jointly investigating the need for further improvements at this location.

LICENCE FOR SAND-BLASTING UNIT.

(Question No. 129)

The Hon. H. A. THOMAS (Melbourne West Province) asked the Minister of Housing, for the Minister for Conservation—

Has the Clean Air Branch approved of a full licence to Deer Park Engineering Pty. Ltd. to operate a sand-blasting unit; if not, what is the present situation of the licence, and the workings of the sand-blasting unit?

The Hon. V. O. DICKIE (Minister of Housing).—The answer supplied by the Minister for Conservation is—

Deer Park Engineering Pty. Ltd. is currently exempt from the licensing provisions of the Environment Protection Act 1970.

However, under the Clean Air Act 1958 there is provision to require organizations to install, maintain and operate air pollution equipment and consideration is currently being given to such a requirement in the case of this company.

SUNSHINE HIGH SCHOOL.

(Question No. 131)

The Hon. A. W. KNIGHT (Melbourne West Province) asked the Minister for Local Government, for the Chief Secretary—

When is it proposed to build a pedestrian overpass opposite the Sunshine High School?

The Hon. A. J. HUNT (Minister for Local Government).—The answer supplied by the Chief Secretary is—

Sunshine City Council has applied for a subsidy towards the cost of installing a pedestrian overpass at Sunshine High School.

The Country Roads Board and the Road Safety and Traffic Authority have examined the proposal but the priority of the location is low compared to other locations in the metropolitan area.

Applications for subsidies are reassessed from time to time in view of changing circumstances.

FLOOD PREVENTION.

(Question No. 133)

The Hon. S. R. McDONALD (Northern Province) asked the Minister of Water Supply—

Has a decision been made to refer the matter of flooding and flood prevention in northern Victoria to the Public Works Committee for investigation and report; if so—(i) what are the terms of reference of the inquiry; and (ii) when will the inquiry commence?

The Hon. F. J. GRANTER (Minister of Water Supply).—The answer is—

(i) The Premier has advised me that the Public Works Committee will be asked to conduct an inquiry into and to evaluate, report and make recommendations on the factors which contributed to the flooding of property in northern Victoria having regard to the recommendations of the Joint Select Committee on Drainage contained in its final report of 25th March, 1970, and in particular—

(*a*) (1) The nature and extent of the flooding in 1973 from the Goulburn, Campaspe, Loddon, Avoca and Murray rivers and their tributaries and the frequency of floodings of this magnitude.

(2) The effect of public and private works on the flow of water, and the flooding of lands, and whether any remedial measures should be undertaken.

(3) The nature and extent of flood warning systems and the adequacy thereof.

(*b*) (1) The adequacy of existing powers of authorities and persons in respect of flood mitigation and control.

(2) Any legislative changes additional to those recommended by the Joint Select Committee on Drainage which are necessary to achieve a greater efficiency in the control of major floods.

(*c*) Any other matters which appear relevant to the inquiry.

(ii) The inquiry will commence as soon as practicable.

CHARGE AGAINST POLICEMAN.

(Question No. 136)

The Hon. R. J. EDDY (Doutta Galla Province) asked the Minister for Local Government, for the Chief Secretary—

(*a*) Will a former sergeant of the Victoria Police Force, who was acquitted last week of a charge in the County Court, be reinstated?

(*b*) Will there be an inquiry or action taken against other members of the force whose evidence was not accepted by the jury?

The Hon. A. J. HUNT (Minister for Local Government).—The answers supplied by the Chief Secretary are—

(*a*) No. The member submitted his resignation and this was accepted.

(*b*) No. No reasons were given by the jury in relation to its finding and there is no indication that the evidence of police was rejected.

ROAD ACCIDENTS.

The Hon. R. J. EDDY (Doutta Galla Province) asked the Minister for Local Government, for the Chief Secretary—

How many accidents have there been at intersections where rocket signs have been placed or installed within metropolitan municipalities?

The Hon. A. J. HUNT (Minister for Local Government). — The answer supplied by the Chief Secretary is—

The information sought cannot be provided as accident records for 1973 are not yet available for every intersection.

However, if the honorable member has particular municipalities and intersections in mind, and advises me accordingly, I will endeavour to have the information obtained.

PROBATE AND GIFT DUTIES.

(Question No. 139)

The Hon. S. R. McDONALD (Northern Province) asked the Minister for State Development and Decentralization, for the Treasurer—

What revenue has been received from probate duty and gift duty, respectively, in each of the past five years?

The Hon. MURRAY BYRNE (Minister for State Development and Decentralization).—The answer supplied by the Premier and Treasurer is—

The revenue received from probate duty and gift duty in each of the past five years is as follows:—

1. Probate duty	Actual collection
	$
1968-69	46,801,133
1969-70	44,422,887
1970-71	49,926,736
1971-72	44,540,830
1972-73	48,872,551
2. Gift duty	
1968-69	Nil*
1969-70	Nil*
1970-71	Nil*
1971-72	91,588
1972-73	1,444,689

* Gift Duty Act 1971—No. 8176—was proclaimed to come into operation on 1st January, 1972.

SALINITY OF RIVER MURRAY.

(Question No. 140)

The Hon. K. I. WRIGHT (North-Western Province) asked the Minister of Water Supply—

In view of the urgent problem of salinity in the River Murray, has the working party of senior officers of the Federal and State Governments reported to the steering committee comprising the Minister for the Environment and Conservation and the State Ministers of Water Supply; if so, has the steering committee made any recommendations; if not, when are these expected to be available?

The Hon. F. J. GRANTER (Minister of Water Supply).—The answer is—

The working party of senior officers of the Australian and State Governments established to consider problems of management on the River Murray has submitted an interim report to the steering committee.

The steering committee will meet in Canberra on 7th November, 1973, to consider the recommendations contained in this report.

SUNSHINE NORTH TECHNICAL SCHOOL.

(Question No. 143)

The Hon. A. W. KNIGHT (Melbourne West Province) asked the Minister for State Development and Decentralization, for the Minister of Education—

(*a*) How many hours per day are the class-rooms of the east section of the Sunshine North Technical School used, and what subjects are taught therein?

(*b*) Have any proposals been suggested for better utilization of the class-rooms; if so, for what purposes?

(*c*) In view of the problems associated with the removal of the trades section from the Footscray Institute of Technology, has any consideration been given to the use of this school area for a selected trade school; if so, what was the decision?

The Hon. MURRAY BYRNE (Minister for State Development and Decentralization).—The answer supplied by the Minister of Education is—

(*a*) Approximately 5·4 hours per day. Business studies, needlework, home economics, music, graphics, science, humanities.

(*b*) In 1974 a reduction of students from the Sunshine region will increase the enrolment at Sunshine North Technical School to a level that will necessitate full utlization of these class-rooms.

(*c*) No.

POLICE STATIONS IN DOUTTA GALLA PROVINCE.

(Question No. 141)

The Hon. R. J. EDDY (Doutta Galla Province) asked the Minister for Local Government, for the Chief Secretary—

(*a*) How many police officers are now stationed at Thomastown and Epping police stations, respectively, stating the hours worked by the officers at each station?

(*b*) How soon will finance be made available for the construction of the new police station at Lalor?

The Hon. A. J. HUNT (Minister for Local Government).—The answer supplied by the Chief Secretary is lengthy and detailed, and I seek leave of the House for its incorporation in *Hansard* without my reading it.

Leave was granted, and the answer was as follows:—

Station	Number of members: Uniform Branch	Number of members: Criminal Investigation Branch	Normal hours worked
Thomastown	7	3	Uniform Branch — Sunday to Friday, inclusive—7.30 a.m. to 11 p.m. Saturday, 7.30 a.m. to 1 a.m. on Sunday. Criminal Investigation Branch — 8.30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday to Saturday, inclusive.
Epping	2	..	9 a.m. to 5 p.m. each day. There is a resident member at this station.

In addition, the Thomastown–Lalor-Epping area is patrolled by a Crime Car Squad vehicle during the 24 hours of each day. A divisional van patrols the area from 6 p.m. to 2 a.m. daily and a C.I.B. night patrol car also patrols the area from 9 p.m. to 5 a.m. daily.

(*b*) Having regard to over-all commitments, it is unlikely that the necessary finance will be available to commence construction of the new police station before the 1975–76 financial year.

Legislative Assembly.

Tuesday, October 30, 1973.

The SPEAKER **(the Hon. K. H. Wheeler)** took the chair at 2.55 p.m., and read the prayer.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE.

FIREWORKS.

Mr. WILKES (Northcote).—In the light of publicity in recent days, is it the intention of the Minister for Fuel and Power to recommend to the Government that a total ban should be placed on the sale of fireworks in Victoria; if so, when does the Minister intend to do this?

Mr. BALFOUR (Minister for Fuel and Power).—The control of fireworks has been under review for some years. The Government has always said that at the end of the period when fireworks may be sold a review of what has taken place during the period will be undertaken. The present period for the sale and use of fireworks ends on 15th November next, following which happenings during the period will be examined.

Following the experience last year with the sale and use of fire crackers, it was decided to reduce the period this year by one month and to permit the sale of fireworks from 1st June until 15th November instead of from the 1st May. The new dates avoided the May school holidays, which in previous years has been a worrying time. Also, people in the trade were told that after 15th November this year the permissible size of fireworks would be reduced. They were

given this advice then to enable them to sell present stocks and not to place orders for further supplies of that type of fire cracker in the future. After 15th November, the situation will again come under review.

DISTANCE POSTS ON HIGHWAYS.

Mr. B. J. EVANS (Gippsland East).—As the Country Roads Board is replacing the old mile posts with new kilometre posts on highways, will the Minister of Transport instruct the board to indicate the distance to the next major town instead of the distance to Melbourne as is the current practice, because, in many cases, particularly in more remote areas, the distance from Melbourne is of relatively minor importance whereas the distance to the next major town can be quite significant?

Mr. MEAGHER (Minister of Transport).—I will be happy to discuss the suggestion with the Country Roads Board.

DRY-DOCKING FACILITIES.

Mr. HOLDING (Leader of the Opposition).—In asking a question without notice of the Minister of Public Works, I refer the Minister to a Ministerial statement by that honorable gentleman on 23rd October last concerning dry-docking facilities for the Port of Melbourne, in which the honorable gentleman said—

> Representations for financial assistance from the Commonwealth for a new dry dock in Melbourne were made by the Premier to the then Prime Minister in October last year, but a decision was not made before the defeat of the Government in December.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. K. H. Wheeler).—Order! There is an item on this subject on the Notice Paper and I take it that the Leader of the Opposition is anticipating a debate that may be held.

Mr. HOLDING.—I am not anticipating anything; I am asking a question about an omission in the Ministerial statement. I ask the Minister: Is it not a fact that the first letter from the then Premier of Victoria was sent to the Commonwealth on 6th January, 1972, and is it not equally a fact that in a written reply from the then Prime Minister, the Honorable William McMahon, on 15th August, 1972, it was stated that it was the intention of the Commonwealth Government to provide a dock in New South Wales and—

> I regret to inform you that the Commonwealth is unable to provide you with financial assistance for the construction of a new graving dock at Melbourne.

Was the Minister aware of the existence of this correspondence, which was on the file, and if so, why did he not refer to it in the House? Does he agree that his omission to refer to it in his Ministerial statement may have had the effect of misleading the House?

Mr. DUNSTAN (Minister of Public Works).—The answer to the second portion of the honorable member's question would be a matter of my opinion. As to the first part of the question, I do not dispute any dates mentioned by the Leader of the Opposition. Before I answer the question, honorable members should clearly understand the difference between a graving dock and a floating dock, both of which are termed "dry" docks. Rather than use the word "dry" dock, I shall use the expressions graving dock and floating dock.

It is true that the then Premier, Sir Henry Bolte, made representations to the Federal Liberal Party Government for financial assistance towards the cost of a graving dock. A graving dock is a dock which is a fixture—not a floating dock.

Mr. EDMUNDS.—Like Duke and Orr's dock?

Mr. DUNSTAN.—That is correct; Duke and Orr's dock, which is currently operating in the Yarra, is a graving dock?

Mr. HOLDING.—Is it also a dry dock?

Mr. DUNSTAN.—I pointed out that both a graving dock and a floating dock were "dry" docks. I am

avoiding the use of the expression "dry" dock to prevent any confusion in my reply.

It is true that the then Premier, Sir Henry Bolte, made representations to the then Federal Government during 1972 for financial assistance towards the construction of a graving dock to replace Duke and Orr's graving dock, which will be closed once the Johnson Street bridge is constructed over the Yarra. In view of the poor conditions prevailing in the ship building industry in Australia twelve months ago—they have improved somewhat since then—the Federal Minister for Shipping and Transport, the Honorable Peter Nixon, and the Prime Minister replied to the Premier and to the Minister of Public Works that a subsidy of 45 per cent would be available if Victoria went ahead and constructed, in Australia through the ship-building industry, a floating dock. Representations were renewed on the basis of a floating dock which would attract the 45 per cent subsidy.

Mr. CURNOW.—I wish you would float out of here.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. K. H. Wheeler).—Order! The Leader of the Opposition asked the Minister of Public Works a rather lengthy and complicated question, and I dare say that the answer requires a lot of concentration by the Minister. Therefore, I request and demand that the Minister not be interrupted in his attempt to answer the question.

Mr. DUNSTAN.—No one regrets the interruption more than does the Leader of the Opposition. No decision was made by the Prime Minister before 2nd December, 1972, about the 45 per cent subsidy towards the cost of a floating dock. The Liberal Party Government was defeated, and representations were renewed by the current Premier to the current Prime Minister immediately afterwards—I think on 19th December—on the basis of a 45 per cent subsidy for a floating dock.

I cannot answer the remainder of the honorable member's question because it would be a matter of my opinion whether the omission mentioned by the honorable member could have the effect of misleading the House. After all, my Ministerial statement last week was based on the latest development regarding the future of dry-docking facilities following the imminent closure of Duke and Orr's dry dock.

VICTORIA PROMOTION COMMITTEE.

Mr. EDMUNDS (Moonee Ponds).—I direct a question to the Premier and Treasurer. In view of the new initiatives adopted by the Australian Government to overseas trade, does the State Government intend to encourage the Victoria Promotion Committee to set up an office and to have a representative in either Tokyo or Peking, following the extension of trade by Australia to China, particularly, and also to Japan?

Mr. HAMER (Premier and Treasurer).—The Victorian Government is considering the establishment of some representation in Japan, because of the tremendous change in direction of our trade and our relationship industrially with the South-East Asian and Asian countries. No decision has been made on the matter, but I believe it would reflect a considerable shift in our interest away from Europe to the Far East.

QUADRELLA BETTING.

Mr. SKEGGS (Ivanhoe).—In view of the fact that two pre-post favourites have recently been withdrawn from night trotting races, causing extensive losses to quadrella punters, will the Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation consider altering the regulations covering quadrella betting to provide for substitutes for withdrawn horses? Will he also ascertain the cost of programming the computer at the Totalizator Agency Board to provide the service?

Mr. DIXON (Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation).—In view of the importance of the matter, I shall be pleased to refer it to the Totalizator Agency Board and ask for its comments.

POWER DISPUTE.

Mr. AMOS (Morwell).—In view of the apparent concern of special class electricians working in the Latrobe Valley over the decision of Mr. Justice Aird to grant a $4 increase only to base grade electricians, can the Minister for Fuel and Power inform the House whether he, the State co-ordinating committee, or his colleague, the Minister of Labour and Industry, have instructed or negotiated with the State Electricity Commission in order to prevent the State Electricity Commission from further negotiating the wage claim with the union involved?

Mr. BALFOUR (Minister for Fuel and Power).—This matter is one for arbitration, and no recommendations or instructions have been given to the State Electricity Commission that it must not be a party to arbitration. Originally, through a metal trades award, special grade electricians were given an extra $9. Following that, other people received increased amounts until on 20th September, after a work study by Mr. Justice Aird, he awarded the base grade electricians, $4 — $2 for the first two years' service and $2 for the next year. In that determination Mr. Justice Aird said that he believed the $5 difference between the base grade electrician was sufficient and that the $4 should not flow on. Since then the special class electricians have demanded the $4.

I believe this matter is still one for arbitration. No prohibition would be imposed by myself or by the Government to prevent the State Electricity Commission from arbitrating. I believe it is up to the Electrical Trades Union of Australia to lodge an appeal against Mr. Justice Aird's decision and I believe Mr. Justice Aird would be available if an appeal were lodged. That is the proper action to take and would possibly be the easiest way of resolving this difficult situation.

SPECIAL GRANTS.

Mr. MACLELLAN (Gippsland West).—Is the Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation in a position to indicate the role his department will play in co-ordinating projects which involve municipal councils, the Education Department, the Ministry for the Arts and perhaps the Local Government Department in respect to public hall grants and his own department in respect to special grants, and to indicate whether all of those matters may be involved in a single approach?

Mr. DIXON (Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation).—My department has already taken two initiatives in this matter. Firstly, there was the formation of the community school projects committee on which the Public Works Department, the Education Department and the Department of Youth, Sport and Recreation are represented. Where the Municipalities Assistance Fund is involved, we have established co-ordination with the Local Government Department; and where the Ministry for the Arts is concerned, we have established some co-ordination for recreational activities to be included in community projects.

However, the problem is much wider than that, because we, as the Government, are interested in enabling communities to act as communities in which people are able to be involved with one another in the process of improving the quality of life. In providing multi-purpose facilities which could involve the Ministry for the Arts, the Local Government Department, the Department of Health through preschool centres or elderly citizens' clubs, the Social Welfare Department through community welfare groups, the Education Department through adult education matters and

even before-and-after school education for boys and girls, and the Housing Commission through new development. Certainly, it would involve my own department in terms of recreation.

There is a need for co-ordination to take place at a level which has not yet been achieved. The Premier has asked me to bring together representatives of the various departments I have mentioned in the form of a standing committee to which representation from other departments can be co-opted to ensure that when major community developments take place within a local community there is an opportunity for a single body to concentrate its attention on the most desirable form of development within the community.

This concept is, in fact, the antithesis of the concept which is being developed by the Australian Government by its talk of regionalization. The Victorian Government understands that the most important way of improving the quality of life of people is through their involvement in community decisions. Essentially, communities are fairly small places. They do not extend over many thousands of square miles or involve a large number of different people and different regions. There are many associations of groups within small local communities, and there are many small local communities within existing municipalities. For economic reasons, the different communities have been brought together. One would not seek to alter this situation. In terms of quality of life it is important that local community efforts can be co-ordinated; and the committee which will be drawn together from my department will ensure that this is done.

PENSION REBATES.

Mr. TREZISE (Geelong North).—Can the Premier inform the House whether, approximately six weeks ago, he received a letter from the Combined Pensioners Association of Victoria requesting that he receive a deputation from that association in connection with alleged shortcomings in rate rebates which were promised to pensioners by the Government? If so, what action does he propose to take in the matter; if not, will he receive a deputation from the pensioners?

Mr. HAMER (Premier and Treasurer).—To my knowledge I have not received any request for a deputation from the Combined Pensioners Association of Victoria. However, at all times I am prepared to see a representative group of people on this matter. In any event, the policy of the Government will be sufficiently disclosed when legislation is introduced into this House on the subject, which I hope will be this week.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

Mr. ROSS-EDWARDS (Leader of the Country Party).—Can the Premier inform the House when Parliament is likely to rise at the end of this sessional period in view of the fact that many honorable members have to accept many electoral commitments in the near future?

Mr. HAMER (Premier and Treasurer).—This is always a difficult question to answer at this stage of the sessional period. Somehow it seems to happen that in the middle of the session there is a tremendous rush of legislation and this session promises to be no exception. Another unknown factor is how promptly the Parliament will deal with the legislation. It is the objective of the Government, if it possibly can, to complete the sessional period at the end of the first week in December.

CEMENT PRICES.

Mr. LIND (Dandenong).—In view of the fact that Adelaide cement is quoted in Bairnsdale, a distance of 640 miles from Adelaide, at $38 a ton and Traralgon cement is quoted at $40.30 a ton, will the Premier

investigate the method whereby Mr. Dunstan, the Premier of South Australia, is able to give such obvious advantages to home builders and people who use cement in large quantities?

Mr. HAMER (Premier and Treasurer).—I do not imagine this has anything to do with Mr. Dunstan. For example, this sort of thing happens in Victoria—it is not confined to imports from South Australia—as there are local metropolitan firms which do the same thing at times. They accept some kind of loss or, anyhow, a lack of profit, in order to build up a business. If the honorable member will give me the details of what he is talking about I shall have investigations made into this case.

DRY-DOCKING FACILITIES.

Mr. HOLDING (Leader of the Opposition).—Is the Premier aware that in a letter signed by the then Acting Premier to the Prime Minister relating to the proposed Yarra River replacement dry-docking facilities, the honorable gentleman indicated that an overseas study had recently been conducted by State officers and, following consideration of that report, his Government would prepare a detailed submission to the Federal Government requesting financial assistance for the construction of the new dry dock? In view of the fact that the report has been completed, will the Premier inform the House if such detailed submissions have been prepared by the Government for submission to the Federal Government and, if they have, will the honorable gentleman lay a copy of the detailed submissions on the table of the Library before debate is resumed on the Ministerial statement by the Minister of Public Works?

Mr. HAMER (Premier and Treasurer).—The Leader of the Opposition has had the whole file, which I handed to him last week and from which he is now quoting. The Leader of the Opposition is well aware, therefore, that what happened was that after the officers went abroad to study dry-docking facilities around the world—incidentally, they were accompanied by a Commonwealth officer—on their return a report was made. The report was made available to the Federal Minister for Transport and the Victorian Minister of Public Works. The letter referred to by the Leader of the Opposition was written about that same time by the Acting Premier. A reply came from the Federal Minister for Transport to the Minister of Public Works indicating that he had read the report and asking for further particulars from the Victorian Government as to our ideas on the new dry-docking facilities for Melbourne, and proposing a conference between the two Ministers.

Mr. HOLDING.—That was not on the file.

Mr. HAMER.—I will lend the Leader of the Opposition the file again so he can refresh his memory. The matter I was referring to was a request from the Federal Minister for Transport to the State Minister of Public Works for a conference on the whole concept of the dry dock. That conference was arranged three times and three times it was cancelled by the Federal Minister and that is what has led to the present situation. As the Leader of the Opposition is aware, I have written to the Prime Minister setting out these facts and I have received a letter in which the Prime Minister indicated that there should now be no delay in the Ministers meeting and conferring on the matter and it was his expressed wish last week in the Federal Parliament that this conference should take place as soon as possible. I understand that the Minister of Public Works is anxious to have this conference and that he will take the initiative.

WHEAT SALES TO EGYPT.

Mr. TREWIN (Benalla).—Can the Minister of Agriculture inform me whether he is aware of the reported

sale of wheat to Egypt and, if so, can he inform the House of the circumstances of this sale? If not, can he obtain the information and inform the House at a later date?

Mr. I. W. SMITH (Minister of Agriculture).—Like other honorable members, I only know of a press report which has indicated that, under some powers that the Australian Government has relating to the Australian Wheat Board, it proposes to force that board to make a sale of wheat to Egypt, against its commercial judgment, over a three-year term, involving an amount of money to the order of $125 million or $126 million, of which the wheat industry will be forced to bear 25 per cent of the risk.

The Australian Wheat Board has apparently expressed its strong objections to the Australian Government, because the proposal is against the better commercial judgment of the board, and there is widespread concern in the wheat industry that, if extended, this policy could jeopardize wheat growers' money. The proposal involves extended terms and conditions which otherwise would not have been agreed to if the trade had acted as an independent industry.

I personally have no objection to the Australian Government's selling wheat to Egypt, but if it wishes to do so it should be on terms and conditions that that Government fixes with its own money and not with wheat growers' money. I shall be raising this matter with my colleagues from interstate at a special meeting to be held at the end of this week in Canberra.

DRY-DOCKING FACILITIES.

Mr. HOLDING (Leader of the Opposition).—The Premier failed to answer my previous question. I ask the honorable gentleman: In view of the fact that the Acting Premier indicated that detailed submissions would be prepared by this Government and submitted to the Federal Government, does the Premier's answer mean that these submissions have not been prepared, have not been submitted, and therefore will not be available to this House?

Mr. HAMER (Premier and Treasurer).—I did answer the honorable member's question. I indicated quite plainly that the letter from the Acting Premier to the Prime Minister was overtaken by events. The Federal Government asked for a conference on the subject. If this had been held there would not have been any question of independent submissions. That is the position and as soon as this discussion takes place, if there is any need for further submissions, of course they will be prepared.

FLINDERS LANE POLICE STATION.

Mr. JONES (Melbourne).—Last week I asked the Chief Secretary whether he would investigate the proposed closure of the police station in Flinders Lane near Degraves Street. The honorable gentleman undertook to advise me this week. Since it is intended to close that police station on Wednesday—tomorrow—can the Chief Secretary inform the House whether he has now investigated it as he said he would?

Mr. ROSSITER (Chief Secretary).—The answer is, "Yes".

NORTH WING OF PARLIAMENT HOUSE.

Mr. MACLELLAN (Gippsland West).—Following the announced intention to construct the north wing of Parliament House, will the Minister of Public Works arrange for the plans to be displayed in Parliament House so that honorable members who do not have the privilege of serving on the House Committee will have some idea of what is proposed?

Mr. DUNSTAN (Minister of Public Works).—If you are agreeable, Mr. Speaker, perhaps we could confer later on this matter. I should be pleased to make these plans available for one week or for whatever period

you think fit, to be inspected in either the Library or Queen's Hall. I should like your opinion on this, Mr. Speaker.

ELWOOD CANAL AND COWDEROY STREET DRAIN.

Mr. DOUBE (Albert Park).—I ask the Minister for Conservation whether the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works currently holds a licence to discharge the offensive contents of the Elwood Canal and the Cowderoy Street drain into Port Phillip Bay? If so, what are the terms and conditions of the licence and what body granted it?

Mr. BORTHWICK (Minister for Conservation).—I should have thought the honorable member who posed the question would be familiar with the Environment Protection Act. If he were, he would know that the Minister is completely excluded from direct involvement in these matters and would realize that this question is typical of those which should be placed on the Notice Paper.

PAPERS.

The following papers, pursuant to the directions of several Acts of Parliament, were laid upon the table by the Clerk:—

Education Act 1958—Resumption of land at Nunawading—Certificate of the Minister of Education.

Forests Commission—Report for the year 1972-73.—Ordered to be printed.

Melbourne Underground Rail Loop Authority —Report and Statement of accounts for the year 1972-73.—Ordered to be printed.

Monash University—Report of the Council for the year 1972; together with statutes approved by the Governor in Council during 1972.

Public Service Act 1958—Public Service (Public Service Board) Regulations—Regulations amended—Nos. 554 to 567 (fourteen papers).

Statutory Rules under the following Acts:—

Dried Fruits Act 1958—No. 298.
Films Act 1971—No. 301.
Mental Health Act 1959—No. 299.
Motor Boating Act 1961—No. 296.
Second-hand Dealers Act 1958—No. 300.
Seeds Act 1971—No. 295.
Town and Country Planning Act 1961—No. 297.

Teaching Service Act 1958—

Teaching Service—Primary Schools Division (Classification, Salaries and Allowances) Regulations.

Teaching Service—Primary Schools Division (Classification, Salaries and Allowances) Regulations — Amendment No. 265.

Teaching Service—Professional (Classification, Salaries, and Allowances) Regulations.

Teaching Service—Professional (Classification, Salaries, and Allowances) Regulations—Amendment No. 259.

Teaching Service—Secondary Schools Division (Classification, Salaries, and Allowances) Regulations.

Teaching Service—Secondary Schools Division (Classification, Salaries and Allowances) Regulations—Amendments Nos. 258 and 262 (two papers).

Teaching Service—Technical Schools Division (Classification, Salaries, and Allowances) Regulations.

Teaching Service—Technical Schools Division (Classification, Salaries, and Allowances) Regulations—Amendments No. 261.

Teaching Service (Technical Tribunal) Regulations—Amendments Nos. 260, 263, 264, 266, 268 (six papers).

Town and Country Planning Act 1961—

City of Horsham Planning Scheme 1965, Amendment No. 14, 1972.

City of Knox Planning Scheme 1965, Amendments Nos. 73, 1970; 117, 1972; and 120 (three papers).

Seymore Planning Scheme, Amendment No. 9.

Shire of Kilmore Planning Scheme.

STAMPING OF FURNITURE

Mr. SIMMONDS (Reservoir).—I wish to move the adjournment of the House for the purpose of discussing a definite matter of urgent public importance, namely, the failure of the Minister of Consumer Affairs to enforce the provisions of the Consumer Protection Act 1972 in respect to the stamping of furniture.

Approval of the proposed discussion was indicated by the required number of members rising in their places, as specified in Standing Order No. 8B.

Mr. SIMMONDS (Reservoir).—Legislation providing for the stamping of furniture has been on the statute-book of this State since 1897, and as recently as last year, the

Government saw fit to re-enact it. Furniture standards in Victoria have deteriorated, and the public is currently being sold high-priced junk without any possibility of ascertaining the source of its manufacture. Through the various centres of furniture distribution, resellers and direct sellers of furniture are charging high prices for inferior products. The provisions of the Consumer Protection Act 1972, requiring the manufacturer to stamp his name and address clearly so that the customer can ascertain the source of the material, are not being complied with. The reason for this is obvious. If a manufacturer is required to identify himself with a product, he must justify the method of its production.

I have received from the Furniture Trades Society a great deal of material which indicates that the society has been forced to play the role which the Consumer Protection Bureau should play in this respect. The most recent report of the Department of Labour and Industry contains no evidence that any prosecution alleging a breach of the relevant provisions has been launched in recent years. A question addressed to the Minister of Consumer Affairs has been standing in my name on the Notice Paper for a considerable time. The honorable gentleman has not been able or has not seen fit to answer that question, which relates to prosecutions for breaches of the Consumer Protection Act.

It is not simply a question of value but of safety, and in some respects a matter of life and death. Recent changes in the material used for the manufacture of lounge suites and other furniture have resulted in serious fire risks being caused. This has been proved in Australia and overseas. In the United States of America, 118 fires in lounge suites and other similar articles of furniture have resulted in the death of 33 persons. If consumers knew what was under the lining of materials used by certain furniture manufacturers, they would doubtless think twice about purchasing the commodities. There is no way of knowing what the furniture is made of unless the source of manufacture can be ascertained. Legislation requiring that the name of the manufacturer should be stamped legibly on the furniture should be complied with. The evidence is overwhelming that in many places in Victoria where furniture is sold, there is no means of identifying the place of manufacture.

The Furniture Trades Society, which has a file on this matter, has ascertained the names of some of the worst offenders. In many cases the source of manufacture of material complained of has been traced. I have available some photographs sent to me by the Gippsland consumer protection body. I know that *Hansard* cannot record photographs. This protection body has conducted a survey in the area. The photograph which I now show to the House shows a stool with a hessian undercover. Holes are visible where nails from a packing case have been removed. The combination of packing case and hessian is then covered with material, the legs are stained and the article is sold as a stool. The finished product may be almost presentable, but if a housewife stood on such a stool to try to reach for something in the home, it would be entirely unsafe, quite apart from being poor value. The stool is held together with nails from a packing case and lined underneath with hessian.

Mr. BILLING.—Who made it?

Mr. SIMMONDS.—I shall deal later with that subject. A large number of cases — not all in this category — have been referred to the Furniture Trades Society. Complaints are often made about covering material which has been imported and subsequently found to be defective. The consumer can ascertain from where the material came only if he can identify the manufacturer. The legislation—poor and miserable though it is—is the only method on the statute-book at present by which

the purchaser of household furniture can ascertain the identity of the manufacturer.

On 25th September, the Furniture Trades Society was advised of the purchase for $397 of a Flerena lounge suite from Myer (Melbourne) Ltd., Bourke Street, Melbourne. About eighteen months later the purchasers noticed that the material in the suite, which is two-tone brown, was cracking. They wrote to Fler Co. Ltd. on 1st May, 1972, and received a reply dated 24th May asking for information about the suite. On 1st June, 1972, the purchasers again wrote to Fler Co. Ltd. giving full information about the suite. On 6th June they received a reply from Fler Co. Ltd., quoting a price of $163 for the recovering of the suite.

The purchasers had already paid $397 for the lounge suite to Myer (Melbourne) Ltd. on 1st August, 1969, and by 6th June, 1972, would have had to pay almost half the original price to restore the suite to a usable condition. They complained that their finances would not allow them to accept this quotation. Because the manufacturer of the furniture was able to be traced, the Furniture Trades Society wrote to Fler Co. Ltd. on behalf of the consumers, and was assured by the company that it would restore the suite. The Furniture Trades Society was acting in the role in which the Consumer Protection Bureau ought to have been acting. This is not an isolated case; there have been many other complaints.

Another case concerns a person from Kinglake West who bought a lounge suite manufactured by Wrightbilt. One complaint related to insufficient back support. The design of the product was criticized by the purchaser and again, because it was a reputable firm, the organization was able to obtain satisfaction and have adjustments made.

The situation is entirely different when a suite is purchased from Welbilt Pty. Ltd, which is notorious for selling unbranded suites throughout the metropolitan area and in country centres. Again and again the name of this firm crops up. I have a copy of a letter from a person living in West Ivanhoe. It is dated 28th September and addressed to the secretary of the Furniture Trades Society because people have long given up writing to the Consumer Protection Bureau with their problems concerning the quality of furniture. The writer states—

> We bought a "Carolina" from Welbilt Limited last December and it arrived six weeks later after much "chasing up" of the shop salesman and the factory itself. It seems as though the advertisements were false. Immediate delivery, as promised in the advertisement, was a lie, to get the "mugs in" fast, and the money too.
>
> The one we had ordered was a different pattern to the one we got. We were so fed up with this crowd and their promises we just took it, much to our sorrow. The vinyl split on the corners in three weeks. The sofa base is so loose when anyone sits down it sounds like a grand piano. All it needs is a music conductor. It has more squeaks than Billy Snedden in Parliament. The woodwork appears to be reclaimed packing-case special, the vinyl is so thin it looks as transparent as glass. I rang their office three weeks after taking delivery.

Apparently the writer was dealt with by a person who is experienced at fobbing off callers.

I have many similar letters on file. I also have a further one from a pensioner at West Ivanhoe. This matter was brought to my attention by Mr. Carr, secretary of the Furniture Trades Society, who had had so many complaints that he thought I should examine this case so that I could clearly understand the situation in the industry. In this matter, a woman had purchased a suite from an organization which advertised sales direct to the public. These advertisements appear in the Melbourne *Herald* every Saturday night and perhaps that is one of the reasons why little publicity is given to the problem.

The woman had purchased a suite from United Stocks of Australia, High Street, Northcote. The suite was priced at $270 but she was told she could have it for $200 because they liked to help pensioners. She paid $20 deposit. The suite was delivered on a Friday night, she signed the delivery docket and paid the balance of $180. The following morning she noticed that the suite was not the same as the one she had purchased and that the number on the suite did not match that on the docket. She returned to the shop and was abused by the manager. She went to the local police station for advice and was advised to stop payment of the cheque. On the Monday morning she went to the bank and stopped payment of the cheque.

Mr. ROSS-EDWARDS.—That was not very good advice.

Mr. SIMMONDS.—I agree, and this may well be a lesson to other people as to where they should go for advice. Subsequently the woman was summonsed for a dishonoured cheque. The processes of law took place regardless of whether the person was a pensioner and could afford to pay. She engaged a solicitor at a cost of $60. The case finally came before the court. The case was adjourned but it would cost her a further $69 for the legal costs of the other party.

This pensioner had bought a suite but the one delivered was not the one she had purchased. She went to a place where she thought she would get good advice and she ended up in court and was loaded with court costs. The only reason that it was possible to obtain natural justice for this woman was that the furniture was unbranded and when this fact was drawn to the attention of the solicitors appearing for the company, they were happy to drop the case. The suite was returned and the money refunded.

Mr. WILKES.—What was the name of the firm?

Mr. SIMMONDS.—United Stocks of Australia, High Street, Northcote. It advertises in the *Herald* newspaper every Saturday night. I am advised that officers of the Department of Labour and Industry have visited the establishment on many occasions but have been so threatened by the management that they are now reluctant to continue to visit it.

Members of the Guild of Furniture Manufacturers Limited are concerned that legislative standards should be laid down so that manufacturers who are prepared to produce a decent product and give value for money will be protected from unfair competition by manufacturers who are prepared to use packing-case timber, cheap imported vinyl and other unscrupulous means to decrease the cost of production. Incidentally, often the highest-priced furniture contains the greatest amount of junk. Accordingly, the consumer has to be particularly careful in purchasing furniture.

I do not know what has to be done, but it is necessary to protect the consumer against some of the practices which are indulged in by private enterprise. The basic problem with the consumer protection legislation is that it is administered by a Government which does not interfere with business because its philosophy prevents it from actively participating to the benefit of the consumer.

On 27th June, 1973, the following letter was written to the Consumer Protection Bureau :—

> For more than twelve months we have been on the look-out for a good quality lounge suite of our choice; one having a two-seater lounge and two swivel base rocker chairs with a plinth case. Almost to the stage of frustration we called into J. G. Guest's show-rooms at 1402 Dandenong Road Oakleigh, on the evening of Friday, April 13th.
>
> After explaining our requirements and emphasising that we wanted a good suite, the salesman said that Wrightbilt make such a suite, however they had only one chair in stock. We inspected this, and although rather nondescript, this was similar to what we had in mind.

We then inspected covering materials, and chose one of Dupont material in Centurian Bronze velvet.

According to the salesman, the cost of the suite, together with an additional 1½ yards material for head-pieces and armrest covers would cost Six hundred and Forty Dollars $640.00.. (Actual cost $647.00). We were quite shocked at this figure and suggested that we would think about it, particularly as there was no sample suite available to assess the finished article. Never-the-less, they said nothing would be lost by taking down particulars so that if we did decide, it would simply be a matter of confirming the order and paying a percentage of the value as deposit.

We agreed, then after consideration overnight, gave them a cheque for $147.00 on the Saturday morning, April 14th., with the arrangement that we could cancel if we were not entirely satisfied; as the suite was of standard design.

On Friday, May 4th., the salesman rang to tell us that the suite was finished and was 'absolutely beautiful'. That evening we entered their showrooms and were ushered to their shipping bay 'where we would see it in its worst surroundings'.

It was, to my mind, the worst piece of upholstering and mis-shapen piece of furniture I had ever seen. The manager, Mr. B. Thompson stated that he had not inspected the suite as thoroughly as we had, and that he would insist that the whole thing be remade.

On Thursday, June 14th., the salesman rang to say that the suite was now finished to perfection. We inspected the suite in the evening of June 15th. My wife found what the squab bolster of one chair was not properly finished, and required some further reworking.

On Friday, June 22nd., we again inspected the suite and all appeared satisfactory, and arrangements were made for delivery. They gave us the additional 1½ yards of material to take home. When we opened the roll in our lounge we were quite surprised at the colour and immediately returned to the store to re-check it against the suite. Still unhappy about the match, we finally agreed that the velvet pile was responsible for the difference in appearance; however the salesman convinced us that it was from the same roll as the suite.

When delivered, I checked to ensure that no handling damage had occurred and endorsed the receiving slip accordingly.

Still unhappy about the colour match and its suitability in our own decor, we discussed the matter with a friend who pointed out that the materials appeared to be of a different 'dye lot' and were not from the same 'loom'. He also pointed out that there were no manufacturer's labels and a loose spring was inside the chair — this later fell out when the chair was up-turned. He considered that the suite was second-hand and had been re-covered. He estimated its value at approximately two hundred dollars.

Expert advice was that the suite was second-hand and valued at $200, but Mr. Jolliffe was charged $647 for it.

Mr. BURGIN.—Was the workmanship faulty?

Mr. SIMMONDS.—I can assure the honorable member that wherever union labour is used in the furnishing industry these problems do not occur. The secretary of the Furniture Trades Society has been referring to those areas in which he is not able to exercise maximum pressure because a shop is not union-organized. The letter continues—

On Monday, June 25th., I rang Mr. Thompson, advising him that we were not happy with the colour and insisted he have it removed from our home and refund our money. He advised that he would investigate the matter and ring me back. I have not heard from him at this stage.

I would be pleased if you would follow up this matter on my behalf as there appear to be many unsatisfactory aspects in the whole deal.

This letter was written to the Consumer Protection Bureau on 27th June, 1973, by R. Jolliffe, 8 Oakleigh Street, Oakleigh, 3166. On 10th July he wrote to Mr. Carr, of the Furniture Trades Society—a copy of the letter to the Consumer Protection Bureau was enclosed — drawing attention to his interview on *A Current Affair* and giving some of the details of the case as described to the Consumer Protection Bureau. On 4th August Mr. Jolliffe again wrote to the Consumer Protection Bureau in these terms —

This refers to my previous letter of June 27th. in which I asked your assistance in investigating my complaint against J. G. Guest Pty. Ltd. following my purchase of a lounge suite.

Since writing you, I contacted Furnishers Trade Society of Victoria, who immediately investigated the matter on my behalf. As the result of their investigations the suite was returned to J. G. Guest's and my deposit refunded.

Subsequently, when no action was taken by the Consumer Protection Bureau, the secretary of the Furniture Trades Society was able to have the matter adjusted in the consumer's favour. At that stage there had been no acknowledgment from the Consumer Protection Bureau that any action was being taken to recover the money. I would suggest that when a trade union, which is rendering an unpaid service to the community outside its normal role, is able to perform this task for people in Victoria, the body which has been set up by this Government, allegedly to deal with this service is not fulfilling its functions, especially in view of the amount of money involved. This is also a grave reflection on the ability of the Government and the Minister to administer the Consumer Protection Act.

It would weary the House if I went through case after case and read correspondence on this subject. The evidence is that the legislation is not being enforced, and that the Minister is either unaware or not concerned about that. I shall leave it to the Minister to inform the House which is correct.

Mr. ROSS-EDWARDS.—Is the Act being enforced at all?

Mr. SIMMONDS.—I have no evidence of the launching of any prosecutions for breaches of the Act and if the Minister can provide some, I shall be happy to hear them. There are also hosts of areas where no prosecutions are made under the Labour and Industry Act, but I should be out of order if I raised them in this debate. On another occasion I shall indicate to the House just how general this is within the administration of the Ministry of Labour and Industry in Victoria. The debate this afternoon is about consumer protection and honorable members have heard a great deal of noise by the Minister of Consumer Affairs on the concern of the community, and that the Government has at last taken a decision under which the needs of the consumer will be met.

The evidence is overwhelming in the furnishing trade throughout Victoria that manufacturers are concerned about the amount of shoddy material being used, that consumers are being fleeced because of the materials being used in lounge suites and other furniture, and that they are taking a very grave fire risk into their homes. On three occasions in this House I have mentioned my concern at the use of polyurethane foam. This plastic foam is a major material used in the upholstering of lounge suites. The effect of fire on this foam is that it burns at 1000 degrees Celsius and the fire travels at 120 to 150 feet a minute. It emits fumes which are toxic and which will cause death within 2 or 3 minutes of the outbreak of the fire. Visibility, 10 or 12 metres from the source of the fire, is limited to 2 or 3 metres. Some soft furnishings are made almost completely from polyethylene foam and the problem is particularly serious with these furnishings. Wherever fires occur and furnishings made of this material are in the vicinity the only thing for people to do is to get out quickly.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. K. H. Wheeler).—Order! The honorable member is getting a bit wide of the provisions of his motion. I do not want to stop him. My policy is to allow the movers of adjournment motions to elaborate on the subject-matter.

Mr. SIMMONDS.—I was making the point on the basis that it is necessary for a consumer to be able to contact the manufacturer to ascertain what is being used in furniture. The retailer cannot provide the information because the product is covered with plastic or other material which completely hides what is underneath.

Mr. HOLDING.—Division 3 of Part III. of the Consumer Protection Act relates to furniture regulation.

Mr. SIMMONDS.—Regulations under the Act would certainly cover the material used in the furniture. This legislation should be updated,

and I will have something to say on that subject on a future occasion.

On the subject of fires in homes, I reiterate that fire brigades and manufacturers are gravely concerned because it is impossible to produce a non-flammable foam plastic. This real problem is part of the technological change that is occurring.

Legislation dealing with furniture must be revised. I hope the Minister of Labour and Industry is concerned to remedy the situation. I do not expect him to tell me that he has authorized prosecutions because I do not believe that has happened, but I am concerned that the public of Victoria should be protected from shoddy furniture and fire risk in homes and all the other hazards to which I have referred arising from the production of shoddy furniture.

Mr. RAFFERTY (Minister of Consumer Affairs).—The speech made by the honorable member for Reservoir must be the most pathetic ever heard in the House in support of an adjournment motion. The honorable member read out material and struggled with a few wild assertions without producing any real evidence. I think the honorable member was urged into moving the adjournment motion by his friend, Mr. Carr, a self-proclaimed leader of the trade union movement in Victoria.

Mr. WILKES (Northcote).—On a point of order, Mr. Carr's name was not mentioned in the motion or by the honorable member for Reservoir.

Mr. RAFFERTY.—It was mentioned.

Mr. WILKES.—Whether Mr. Carr is the leader of a group of unions has nothing to do with the motion. The Minister should confine his remarks to the motion.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. K. H. Wheeler).—Order! Earlier in the debate I asked the mover of the motion to confine his remarks to the motion. I must now ask the Minister to do so, but I must correct the statement of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition with respect to the name Carr. I am almost certain that I heard the name Carr referred to.

Mr. RAFFERTY (Minister of Consumer Affairs).—Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate what you have said. I, too, heard the name Carr and I referred to it because the honorable member for Reservoir introduced the eminent gentleman's name into the debate. The motion of the honorable member for Reservoir refers to—

> the failure of the Minister of Consumer Affairs to enforce the provisions of the Consumer Protection Act 1972 in respect to the stamping of furniture.

As I understand the motion, it deals with nothing but the stamping of furniture and the requirement placed on the Minister or the department relating to the stamping of furniture. Division 3 of Part III. of the Consumer Protection Act 1972 is headed, "Furniture Regulation". Section 50 provides—

> In this Division "Furniture" means furniture of which wood forms a part and such as is usually made by cabinet-makers, chair and couch makers, upholsterers, wood-carvers or wood turners.

I emphasize that this section provides that it must be furniture of which wood forms a part.

Section 51, which is important, states—

> All furniture manufactured in or sent out of or removed from any factory shall be legibly and permanently stamped.

Section 52 provides—

> All furniture manufactured or prepared either wholly or partly in Victoria shall as soon as it has been practically completed so as to permit the stamp being placed on it and before it is sent out or removed from the building premises or place in which it is so manufactured or prepared be stamped with a stamp of an indelible permanent ink or stain or impression.

Sub-section (1) of section 53 prescribes how this is to be done and states—

> Such stamp shall set forth in legible type the manufacturer's true name and the address of the place in which such furniture was manufactured or prepared.

The Act clearly makes a prescription, and if that prescription is not followed there is a breach of the Act. The Government accepts that fact and will act accordingly. These provisions, which were taken from the Labour and Industry Act, have a long history. I understand that they were put into the Act many years ago when there were discriminatory provisions against Chinese makers of furniture. Apparently at that time it was thought that the Chinese were placing European labour at a disadvantage and the discriminatory provisions were included in the legislation. About ten years ago those provisions were removed. There is a point of view that the present restrictions in the Act may not be necessary today, but they are in the Act and should be treated in the normal way. The provisions were transferred when the original Consumer Protection Bill was prepared.

It is clear that the honorable member for Reservoir is bent on frustrating the business of the House and the amending Consumer Protection Bill which is on the Notice Paper.

Mr. HOLDING (Leader of the Opposition).—I rise to a point of order. I suggest that the Minister should be ruled out of order on two bases. Firstly, he is clearly anticipating the debate. Secondly, he is casting an improper reflection on the motive of an honorable member in using the forms of this House to move an adjournment motion. The forms clearly indicate what is necessary for a member to move such a motion. You, Mr. Speaker, have ruled the motion in order. In my view, an imputation of other motives is clearly unparliamentary and should be ruled out of order. However, presumably the honorable gentleman is also anticipating another debate and I suggest his remarks should be ruled out of order on that ground as well.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. K. H. Wheeler).—Order! I have to uphold the point of order. I realize that the Minister has the right to answer some of the statements made by the mover of the motion but it does not alter the fact that the debate must keep within the confines of the motion.

Mr. RAFFERTY (Minister of Consumer Affairs).—Thank you for your ruling, Mr. Speaker; that is precisely what I was doing. The honorable member referred to a Mr. Jolliffe and the recovery of money. The honorable member is well aware that the Consumer Protection Bill will give the necessary power on this subject. The honorable member raised the question, not I. I am merely answering the proposition he put. The honorable member knows that as the law is at present there is no power for legal action to be taken with respect to moneys claimed. The Bill to which I have referred provides for that, and the honorable gentleman is frustrating the passage of the Bill. That is my last comment on that matter.

I also refer to another matter which the honorable member raised, and on which you, Mr. Speaker, gave a clear ruling.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. K. H. Wheeler).—Order! The Minister is entitled to answer some of the allegations made. I do not have to be reminded.

Mr. RAFFERTY.—Thank you for your confidence, Mr. Speaker. The honorable member mentioned polyethylene and said that he had referred to it many times. The Government is well aware of his observations and regards the matter seriously, but I remind the House, that the honorable member merely stated his opinion, and put forward nothing to support it. Questions concerning polyethylene have been referred to the Metropolitan Fire Brigades Board and to the Department of Health for expert opinion and advice.

On an odd occasion perhaps the statements of the honorable member for Reservoir are accurate, but in this case it has been thought desirable to refer the matter for proper investigation. If the honorable member's opinion is found to be correct, action will be taken.

Mr. ROSS-EDWARDS.—If a tragedy occurs, your department will be open to criticism.

Mr. RAFFERTY.—What action would the Leader of the Country Party take if a matter of this type were referred to him? Surely he would refer it to qualified people for investigation. We cannot simply say that something is wrong because the honorable member for Reservoir has said so. That is not sufficient. It is necessary that technical information should be obtained.

Concerning action taken in connection with unbranded furniture, I shall inform the House of the department's record. During the past twelve months one shop was visited twice regarding the branding of wooden furniture. The visits related to a complaint regarding the failure of the shopkeeper to repair or replace shoddy lining to upholstered furniture. During the investigation, inspectors from the department found that items of furniture in the shop were not branded with the name and address of the manufacturer. A breach report is being prepared in relation to the offence.

One other complaint received during the year was from a furniture manufacturer against a shopkeeper selling upholstered steel furniture which was not branded in accordance with the provisions of section 34. A breach report is being prepared. The only other complaint was a country one. No breach was found. Of the 3,000-odd written complaints received by the Consumer Protection Bureau in the past twelve months, 160 or more related to furniture of which three related to branding. Only one of these was lodged by a consumer and he did not complain about a breach of the law on branding. He was concerned only to get redress for faulty merchandise.

The same picture appears for earlier years—fewer than 150 furniture complaints were received and of these fewer than three related to the branding of furniture.

During last year approximately 18,000 telephoned complaints were received by the Consumer Protection Bureau as well as approximately 3,000 written or verbal complaints. Of the total of 21,000 complaints, approximately 160 concerned furniture. Included in the 160 complaints, were three relating to the branding of that furniture, which is the subject of the motion. Only one complaint was lodged by a consumer, and he did not complain about branding. He sought redress because he had received faulty merchandise. That is not dealt with in this Act, but will be the subject of another Act which I cannot mention.

I ask the House to consider what task the Consumer Protection Bureau should carry out. Is it better for the department to have officers on call to answer the huge number of inquiries which come forward, or is it better that the men who are doing that job should be sent out to look at possible cases of non-branding of furniture? How many people who have a faulty item go back to the manufacturer? In every case I suggest that the person concerned goes back to the person from whom he purchased the article.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. K. H. Wheeler).—Order! The honorable gentleman's time has expired.

On the motion of Mr. ROSSITER (Chief Secretary), Standing Order No. 8B was suspended to allow the Minister of Consumer Affairs to continue his speech for fifteen minutes.

Mr. RAFFERTY (Minister of Consumer Affairs).—During the Budget debate I said that I was disappointed that insufficient funds had been allocated to permit the development of

the full programme in the field of consumer protection. As the House knows, the position of Director of Consumer Affairs was recently advertised, and when that position has been filled—and there will be legislation concerning this, but I cannot refer to it—additional staff will be appointed.

Mr. HOLDING (Leader of the Opposition).—I rise to a point of order, Mr. Speaker. The honorable gentleman is clearly infringing your earlier ruling. He should not be anticipating a debate in this House and proposed legislation which is on the Notice Paper.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. K. H. Wheeler).—I uphold the point of order.

Mr. RAFFERTY (Minister of Consumer Affairs).—As I have said, it is a matter of what task should be performed by the staff which is presently available in the department. As Minister in charge of the department, I will decide what task is the most important. In my view, it is better that staff should be available to answer the large number of inquiries which are being received. Along with complaints on other matters, complaints about unbranded furniture will be examined. There are not sufficient inspectors to permit premises being constantly visited in an effort to find unbranded articles. I think it is better for specific complaints to be investigated and, where necesary, for action to be taken. That has always been done.

I have already indicated that over the years few complaints have been received about unbranded furniture. The number of complaints received last year was practically identical with the number received for many years. Mention was made of a prosecution but I do not desire to give the name of the firm concerned because full legal proceedings have not been finalized. I suggest that the honorable member for Reservoir has proved absolutely nothing and has moved one of the most stupid and useless motions for the adjournment of the House that I can recall.

Mr. ROSS-EDWARDS (Leader of the Country Party).—I had no intention of joining in this debate because at first sight it seemed an innocuous adjournment motion. However, I have just heard one of the most extraordinary speeches ever made in this House by the Minister of Consumer Affairs. I find it hard to understand how the honorable gentleman can continue to hold his portfolio, when he has a statutory obligation to carry out certain functions. The obligation which has existed under the Act for some years, was renewed when an amendment to the Act was considered in 1972. I could understand the position if the Minister of Consumer Affairs said that because of a lack of staff his department is not enforcing the law as well as it would like. An explanation of that type would be understandable and acceptable to me. However, the Minister endeavoured to rubbish the statutory obligation in the Act and stated that because not many complaints had been received, there was no need for the department to enforce the legislation.

If Parliament provides statutory requirements—honorable members will recall that the Minister was responsible for having them restated last year—the Minister must take full responsibility for what he has failed to do. The honorable gentleman has given no indication that his department takes action in this matter or whether officers visit factories or shops; he made no mention of them visiting factories and gave no evidence of any general routine inspection of shops selling furniture. I could understand some furniture shops never being visited but I also expect the Minister to say that five days or ten days a year the department makes normal routine visits to certain factories and shops.

Mr. WILKES.—Officers from the Weights and Measures Branch do it.

Mr. ROSS-EDWARDS.—Yes, and although health inspectors do not visit every shop, at some stage they visit butcher shops, delicatessens and similar places. The Minister of Consumer Affairs gave no details of any shops or factories visited in a normal routine manner. It is a serious state of affairs because if the honorable gentleman believes such visits are unnecessary, the provision should be removed from the statute-book. So long as it remains on the statute-book, honorable members are entitled to expect the Minister to accept the responsibility for having it policed. Apparently it has never been policed in the past unless a specific complaint was received. From the way the Minister treated the whole subject it appears that in the future he has no intention of directing that routine inspections should take place.

The case put by the Minister of Consumer Affairs must have worried supporters of the Government. The debate started as a minor matter but it has developed into one involving a serious principle, and that is what disturbs me. The Minister has an obligation, but he states that because of a lack of staff he is not interested in the matter.

Mr. RAFFERTY.—I did not say that.

Mr. ROSS-EDWARDS.—I do not want to be unfair to the honorable gentleman but he has given no intention of ensuring that there are routine inspections of shops and factories. Honorable members have no idea whether any shop or factory will be inspected in future. The Minister said that all procedures are carried out but only on the assumption that a complaint is received. Factories which manufacture furniture should be inspected in the same way as are butcher shops.

Mr. RAFFERTY.—They are.

Mr. ROSS-EDWARDS.—With due respect to the Minister no mention was made of that.

Mr. RAFFERTY—You asked a question and the answer is, "Yes, they are".

Mr. ROSS-EDWARDS.—I am disappointed that the Minister of Consumer Affairs in answering the charges made by the Opposition, made no mention of this aspect. I hope the honorable gentleman or some other Government supporter will supply details of the inspections which are carried out, and the names of the factories and shops that are inspected.

Mr. STIRLING (Williamstown).—In relation to the Minister's reference to polyethylene, I point out that if the honorable gentleman makes an inquiry from his department he will find that the two substances that are most commonly used as fillers in modern-day furniture are polyurethane and polystyrene and not polyethylene—that is probably why the honorable gentleman has had no reply from his department. In reply to the points made by the honorable member for Reservoir concerning the use of modern-day fillers, such as polyurethane and polystyrene, the Minister claimed that no evidence has emerged from research that such materials are fire hazards. However, I refer the honorable gentleman to information which has come from the United Kingdom as late as last year following research into the use of modern-day fillers in furniture.

It was reasonable for the Minister to say that the actual stamping of furniture was a procedure which was introduced before the turn of the century and that perhaps these days it is not so important. However, what is important is the amount of plastic material being used in furniture making. This material is used in lounge suites, scatter cushions and the like and this is an area which concerns the Opposition. The community was not so concerned in the

old days when furniture manufacturers used fillers consisting of horse hair, kapok, coconut fibre and other fibres. But there is evidence that polystyrene and polyurethane, which are used today, can easily ignite. Within minutes of these materials catching alight, toxic gases are generated which render people unconscious in a short period of time.

In the House of Commons a statement on these fire hazards was made by Mr. Michael Alison, Under-Secretary of State for Social Services. A report in the journal *Fire*, which is the official publication of the Fire Protection Association of the United Kingdom, states—

> Government investigations into the potential fire risk of furniture containing rubber or plastic foam are continuing, it was announced in the House of Commons by Mr. Michael Alison, Under-Secretary of State for Social Services.
>
> He was replying to a question by Mr. Alec Jones (Rhondda) who said that there was evidence to suggest that fires involving the use of these foam and rubber compounds presented serious smoke and fume hazards, and that such smoke and fumes present in considerable volume in a hospital fire could well prevent the escape of patients.

Reference was made to hospitals where this type of bedding would create a greater hazard to a large number of people. It was then said that a new type of fabric was being developed for mattress covers which would be more flame resistant, that these developments were being pressed ahead as rapidly as possible and that the balance of advantage in both directions had to be considered. The honorable member for Reservoir stated that the addition of flame retardents to plastic materials now in use does not do the job.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. McLaren).—Order! The honorable member should indicate how this can be related to the motion.

Mr. STIRLING.—It is relevant to the reply of the Minister of Consumer Affairs to the honorable member for Reservoir, who pointed out, as I am endeavouring to do, that hazards are involved in modern furniture, and that this furniture should conform to the relevant provisions of the Consumer Protection Act.

A large proportion of modern furniture consists of lounge and bed settees, on which upholsterers work. I am concerned at the type of material used. Section 50 provides—

> In this Division "Furniture" means furniture of which wood forms a part and such as is usually made by cabinet-makers, chair and couch makers, upholsterers, woodcarvers or wood turners.

It will be noted that upholsterers are included in the provision. In former years horse hair was used in much of this furniture, and it presented no problem. The honorable member for Reservoir stated that a number of complaints had been forwarded to the Consumer Protection Bureau, but the Minister did not agree that the number was as large as that stated by the honorable member. I have had some experience of complaints referred to the Consumer Protection Bureau, as a result of which no results have been obtained and it has been necessary to obtain redress elsewhere. The people concerned were happy to speak to Mr. Carr and he was able to get results.

I refer to a complaint of Mrs. Broughton, of Brennan Street, Melton South, who purchased a Durham suite from Waltons Ltd. at Sunshine for $129. The suite became broken at the chair arm and worn at the seat. It was returned to the shop and she was advised that the suite would be repaired. The customer refused to take the suite back and she was offered $62 credit on account. The customer then picked out a new suite the cost of which was subsequently added to the account, and on 24th May, after seven weeks, this suite had not arrived. The customer went back and selected a third suite, delivery of which was promised in seven days—on 21st June. It has not yet arrived.

Mr. BURGIN (Polwarth).—I rise to a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I have not heard the honorable member for Williamstown once mention

furniture in the terms of the motion —that is, the failure of the Minister of Consumer Affairs to enforce the provisions of the Consumer Protection Act of 1972 in respect to the stamping of furniture. I have not heard the honorable member mention stamping.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. McLaren).—Order! I must take note of the point of order. I have reminded the honorable member for Williamstown that the motion relates to the stamping of furniture. He has quoted at some length from a document, but it should relate to the motion before the Chair.

Mr. STIRLING (Williamstown).—As I understand it, a problem arose concerning the stamping initially, from which this matter was raised.

Mr. RAFFERTY.—Read out the part that relates to stamping.

Mr. STIRLING.—I said "I understand". Finally, through Mr. Carr, the matter was resolved. I have endeavoured to relate my remarks to certain aspects of the motion.

Mr. BIRRELL (Geelong).—My remarks will not be lengthy because there is little on which I can comment. The honorable member for Polwarth raised a point of order which covered most of the case, that not much has been said about the stamping of furniture, which is the basis of the debate. The honorable member for Reservoir occupied himself almost exclusively with matters totally unrelated to the subject of the motion. The matter to which the honorable member for Williamstown referred could have been directed to the Minister's attention on the motion for the adjournment of the sitting.

If the debate had covered the range of prices, and the sale and disposal of furniture, it would have been in order for honorable members to speak as they did. All I heard was a tirade against the construction and prices of furniture, the paying for a second suite in the place of a previous one and the non-arrival of an order. It was a matter of the quality of the furniture and not the stamping. Therefore, not a great deal has been said on which I could comment. The trend inherent in the community today is for new products continually to reach the market. The amount of chrome-steel furniture reaching the market today is quite substantial.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. K. H. Wheeler).—Order! The honorable member for Geelong is quite wide of the motion. He should speak basically about the stamping of furniture.

Mr. BIRRELL.—I cannot talk about the stamping of furniture without knowing how furniture is defined.

The SPEAKER.—It is laid down in the Consumer Protection Act.

Mr. BIRRELL.—The honorable member for Williamstown did not confine himself to the motion; 90 per cent of his remarks were irrelevant and should be condemned out of hand. The Leader of the Country Party raised certain matters concerning inspectorial duties under the provisions of the principal Act. It could be said that spot and routine checks are carried out in this sphere of activity.

Mr. WHITING.—The spots are too far apart.

Mr. BIRRELL.—An inspector can work only within the confines of his hours. If there are to be wider inspectorial duties so that shops and factories can be visited every two months, obviously an army of inspectors will be required. There must be a limit to inspections. Spot and routine checking is carried out under the principal Act. There is nothing more to be said.

Mr. HOLDING (Leader of the Opposition).—I did not intend to enter the debate but I do so because of the remarks of the Minister of Consumer Affairs, who is responsible for enforcing the provisions of the Consumer Protection Act. The honorable gentleman was fortunate that the Premier was not present to

hear his reply because any self-respecting Premier in any self-respecting Government—indeed, this House—would have called for his resignation. It is all very well for the Minister of Consumer Affairs to make funny internal noises. This Government holds itself out to be a Government of law and order. When a Minister takes office he takes an oath to uphold and administer the law. The provision to which the motion refers is section 50, which provides—

> In this Division "Furniture" means furniture of which wood forms a part and such as is usually made by cabinet-makers, chair and couch makers, upholsterers, woodcarvers, or wood turners.

In order to escape his responsibilities, the Minister tried to suggest that the definition was narrow. As has been pointed out, it is true that a great deal of furniture is made of stainless steel, but that type of furniture was not included in the subject of the motion moved by the honorable member for Reservoir. This section of the Act clearly deals with the type of furniture in the structure of which wood has traditionally been a component.

There are rigorous standard provisions which require that furniture be stamped. The penalty for not stamping it is $500. The penalty for any retailer who displays or offers for sale any furniture manufactured wholly or partly in Victoria which is not stamped or which he knows to be falsely stamped, is also $500. These matters are not light and should not be treated in the cavalier manner in which they have been treated by the Minister of Consumer Affairs. What was the Minister's comment on the Act that he administers? I was staggered to hear it. The honorable gentleman suggested that, although it was true that the Act was part of the law, many people in the community doubted whether it should be. This was an incredible explanation by the Minister.

The Minister showed some of his amateur knowledge of industrial affairs by saying that for years in Victoria there was discrimination against furniture which was made by non-European labour. The Minister referred to a completely irrelevant situation. He was part of a Government which, to its credit, removed that discriminatory provision from the law, up-dated and reframed the legislation, and eighteen months ago transferred it from its traditional place for many years in the Labour and Industry Act to the Consumer Protection Act. How can the Minister now argue that many people believe this requirement should not even be in the law?

I invite the House to consider the case made out by the honorable member for Reservoir and supported by the honorable member for Williamstown. His first point was that a great deal of shoddy furniture is being manufactured and sold to the general public, which is defenceless against this type of activity. The honorable member's second point was that much of the furniture — apart from its shoddy nature — is a threat to the health and well-being of the people of Victoria. Having made those allegations, the honorable member produced from a file in his possession evidence of a series of cases and gave details of three cases involving complaints about furniture; other honorable members will speak about other cases. Information contained in the file referred to by the honorable member for Reservoir showed that between June and October, 1973, it became the duty of the secretary of a voluntary organization to do what the Minister is incapable of doing.

Mr. BURGIN.—What voluntary organization?

Mr. HOLDING.—The Furniture Trades Society. The backwoodsman in the corner knows nothing about trade unions, and reflects the attitude of his Minister that "ignorance is bliss". The secretary of the Furniture Trades Society took it upon himself to go to manufacturers and retailers to point out what has occurred in a series of transactions.

Some of the people to whom the honorable member for Reservoir referred — and he was not contradicted — are so ruthless that they stand over inspectors from the Department of Labour and Industry. Does any honorable member believe that the secretary of the Furniture Trades Society can say to these people, "I want you to change your ruthless ways, change your habits, and hand the money back"? Nobody believes that. The secretary says, "You had better hand the money back and do the right thing, because you are in breach of the law". That is the motive upon which those people are forced to act.

There is a file in existence which lists details of more than two dozen cases in a matter of months. What is the record of this proud Minister, this champion of private enterprise, this mealy-mouthed exponent of law and order when he is speaking against the trade union movement? It is a record to be proud of! After all its investigations, the Minister's department has one case in which it considered prosecution was justified. Of course, the department has not actually launched a prosecution, but it is thinking of doing so. If the Minister doubles his efforts, by this time next year he will have two cases that he has actually thought about prosecuting.

What is the Minister's answer in terms of his own Act? Have honorable members ever heard such an explanation from a Minister? The honorable gentleman has said that the Consumer Protection Bureau is busy; it receives many telephone calls and staff cannot be sent out to investigate everything. The Minister indicated that he was responsible, so the bureau would not bother about enforcing this section of the law. If the Chief Secretary adopted the standards of this *laissez-faire* Minister, this protector of crooks and gangsters who are preying on the community — that is all they are doing — what would the situation be?

The Minister is prepared, as was his colleague, to use all sorts of terms to describe the secretary of a trade union, but who is preying on the public in this instance? Does the Minister say, "We must do something about this?". No, he says that there are too many telephone calls. If one adopted the standards of the Minister of Consumer Affairs and applied them in other Government departments, one can imagine the wonderful scene which would take place in the Police Department. For example, a person could go to Northcote police station to report that the lady next door had been raped. The police sergeant would say, "There have been ten telephone calls today."

The SPEAKER (the Hon. K. H. Wheeler).—Order! In referring to the Police Department, the Leader of the Opposition is wide of the mark. I ask him to return to the confines of the motion.

Mr. HOLDING.—The motion is directed to the failure of the Minister to administer his own Act, and to his statement in the House that the Act will not be administered because officers of the Consumer Protection Bureau are too busy to do so. If those standards were applied to other Government departments, such as the Police Department, they would be laughed at. Imagine that you, Mr. Speaker, in your previous capacity as the honorable member for Essendon, made the sort of complaint I mentioned, of a lady having been indecently assaulted. What would you have thought if the policeman on duty at the station said, "There have been ten telephone calls today. We might get around to attending to your complaint in the future, but other matters take up more of our time"? If such an attitude by a policeman on the beat were the subject of condemnation — as it would be by yourself, Mr. Speaker, and any other honorable member — what should be done when that is the attitude and philosophy of the

Minister of Consumer Affairs? In essence, that is what has emerged in this debate.

The honorable member who spoke shortly in a somewhat belated attempt to defend the Minister suggested that the honorable member for Reservoir could have raised this matter in another way, but that does not meet the point at issue. The enforcement of the law is the responsibility of the Minister of Consumer Affairs. The Minister does not deny that breaches of this section of the law are continually occurring. The allegations made by the honorable member for Reservoir have been left unanswered and unchallenged. The examples given by the honorable member, on their face, clearly indicate not only gross and reprehensible business practice, but breaches of the law. Did the Minister assure the House that the breaches would now be the subject of investigation and action? Certainly, he did not do so.

The Leader of the Country Party frankly admitted that it was the Minister's attitude that stirred him to enter the debate. The honorable member was quite right, and it was what stirred me to enter the debate. The laws of Victoria cannot be applied selectively. Unless honorable members vote in favour of the motion moved by the honorable member for Reservoir, they will be supporting the selective enforcement of the law. That is precisely the issue which has emerged because of the Minister's handling of this section of the Act.

If a person breaks the law while driving his car, he can expect to be prosecuted. But if a manufacturer of cheap, shoddy furniture makes it difficult to trace the source of manufacture of the furniture by not putting a stamp on it, he has nothing to worry about in Victoria because the Minister of Consumer Affairs believes in selective enforcement of the law.

For that reason I believe all honorable members have no alternative but to support the motion. I condemn the attitude of the Minister. I praise the responsibility of the honorable member for Reservoir in raising this matter, and the actions of the Furniture Trades Society in performing the task which the Government and the Minister are too lazy and incompetent to do. I condemn the Minister who, in the course of this debate, not once raised his voice in protest against the people who are not only damaging this important trade but are engaged in reprehensible practices. The Minister was not once prepared to condemn them as he was prepared, by snide remarks, to take up the cudgels against the trade unions which are acting on behalf of Victoria's exploited citizens.

Mr. REESE (Moorabbin).—I have listened for the past hour and a half to the most pathetic speeches in support of an adjournment motion that I have ever heard in the time I have been a member of this House. The honorable members for Reservoir and Williamstown gave some examples of quality of furniture, but in a number of instances the furniture did not come within the definition of this Act which is being thrown around today; stamping of furniture provisions did not apply to it. The honorable member for Reservoir spoke about the flammable nature of materials under the coverings of lounge suites, but at no time during his contribution or that of the honorable member for Williamstown was I moved to consider that the honorable members had produced evidence of widespread non-stamping of wooden furniture.

The Leader of the Opposition obviously agrees with me that the contribution of his colleagues was pathetic, because he endeavoured to rescue this adjournment motion by saying that there was widespread neglect of this provision, which was not policed by the department, but no evidence to that effect was given. The Leader of the Opposition spoke with his usual fluency, but in no way justified the delay to the business of the House caused by this motion,

which calls on the House to recognize the failure of the Minister of Consumer Affairs in this area. The motion must fail. All it has done is to impede the progress of the House and I, for one, could not have a bar of it.

Mr. WILTON (Broadmeadows).—The honorable member for Reservoir moved what members of the Opposition consider to be a responsible motion to bring to the notice of the House the shocking situation which exists in an industry which comes under the jurisdiction of the Minister of Consumer Affairs. In presenting his reply the Minister had no answer to the strong case put by the honorable member for Reservoir, so he embarked on a long rigmarole of quoting from the Act and attempted to bring extraneous matter into the argument. The honorable gentleman failed to answer the charges, and in fact made a shocking indictment against himself and his department. The honorable member for Moorabbin attempted to extract the Government from its difficult situation by implying that this debate is delaying the House. Obviously, the Government is not in the least concerned about the dreadful situation which exists in the furniture industry. I support the motion.

Mr. WILKES (Northcote).—I, like the Leader of the Opposition, the honorable member for Broadmeadows and the Leader of the Country Party, did not intend to enter this debate until I heard the reply by the Minister of Consumer Affairs. Perhaps it was a sorry day when Parliament allowed the provisions relating to furniture, which are now contained in the Consumer Protection Act, to be taken out of the Labour and Industry Act. It is a distinct disadvantage for these provisions to be contained in the Consumer Protection Act because of the inactivity of the persons responsible for the administration of that Act. Of course, that indicts the Minister. In recent years Victoria has become the mecca of shoddy furniture; crooks who purport to be experts are now making furniture in this State, and selling it on the open market without any interference from the Minister or his department. Until this situation is remedied, the public of Victoria can expect to buy shoddy furniture. Fortunately, furniture of this type is manufactured by a minority in the furniture trade, and it is sold by a minority of retailers. The Guild of Furniture Manufacturers Ltd., of which many retailers are members, goes out of its way to ensure that shoddy furniture is not allowed on shop floors, but the Minister takes no action against the unscrupulous persons to whom I have referred.

The honorable member for Reservoir cited cases involving persons who would sooner sell shoddy unbranded furniture than furniture constructed by reputable manufacturers and branded in accordance with the regulations and the Act. Unless the Minister is prepared to take action against the manufacturers of shoddy furniture, people will be disadvantaged, as has been pointed out by the honorable member for Reservoir. The cases referred to by the honorable member are astounding, but it is not the first occasion on which this situation has been drawn to the attention of the Minister. The definition contained in the Consumer Protection Act should have been amended in 1963. The existing definition protects the Minister; it protects the shoddy manufacturer because it refers only to furniture constructed of wood although furniture is now constructed of many materials other than wood. As a result of his stupidity and inability to amend the definition it does not cover any furniture other than furniture constructed of wood. The definition is simple, and states—

> "Furniture" means furniture of which wood forms a part and such as is usually made by cabinet-makers, chair and couch makers, upholsterers, woodcarvers or wood turners.

That provision has existed for 25 years. If he were sincere in his endeavours to stamp out shoddy furniture the Minister would give his inspectors or the "crummy" Consumer Protection Bureau some better means of controlling shoddy furniture than has been mentioned by my colleagues this afternoon.

I have been associated with the furniture industry for more than 30 years. I appealed on 14th November, 1963, to the then Minister of Labour and Industry to consider an alteration to the definition. My remarks are recorded at page 2116 of volume 272 of *Hansard*. The Labour and Industry Act was then being amended to remove the obnoxious provision relating to European labour only, which contained some racist connotation. I then advised the Minister that loopholes existed in the Act, as did the Furniture Trades Society.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. K. H. Wheeler).—Order! The Deputy Leader of the Opposition is referring to the provisions of the Act and quoting from one of his own speeches in which he put certain suggestions to the Minister. The motion moved by the honorable member for Reservoir refers to the failure of the Minister of Consumer Affairs to enforce the provisions of the Consumer Protection Act 1972 in respect to the stamping of furniture. It does not relate to other matters.

Mr. WILKES.—My point is that the Minister is unable to administer the provision even as it stands in the Act. If it were adequate to cover the present demands the definition would be much wider than it is and of course the Minister would not be able to control the situation at all. Firstly, the honorable gentleman should consider the definition contained in the Act; and secondly, the least he should ensure is that the existing antiquated provisions are enforced. It is now enforced only by reputable manufacturers in Victoria which State, as I said, is the mecca of shoddy furniture in Australia. In other States where the federated furnishing trades have branches the provisions of the Acts are policed with the result that there is much less shoddy furniture sold in those States and it is almost impossible to purchase furniture legitimately if it is not stamped.

In Victoria many people are unaware of the provisions of the Act, and the Minister does not want them to learn because that would indict him and disclose his inability to take action. It is a public disgrace that inspectors should visit the retailer mentioned by the honorable member for Reservoir and not to be able to enforce the provisions of the Act. The Minister stated that he would send inspectors out tomorrow morning to ascertain whether furniture was unbranded and to check the validity of the complaint, which members of the Opposition do not doubt is valid. It is useless for the Minister or the honorable members for Geelong and Moorabbin to assert that the motion is not specific enough. The motion is quite specific: it asserts that the Minister has failed to take action.

I intend to cite one more case to add to those already mentioned by previous speakers in which the Minister failed to take action. The following letter is from the Gippsland Consumer Association, Post Office Box 238, Moe, 3825, and is addressed to Mr. Ken Carr, General Secretary, Furniture Trades Society, Victorian Branch. It states—

We thank you for letter 31.8.73, also enclosures which are very helpful.

We have been in touch with a Shops and Factory Inspector and put the complaints from Welbilt in his hands (Mr. Baret, Warragul).

None of our retailers around seem to be taking any notice of the law "that the name of manufacturer etc. . . . indelibly stamped". What can we do now?

Many complaints are still coming in and we feel that something must be done here locally. We as a consumer association are

quite prepared to make a concerted move from Warragul and Traralgon; our best weapon here is letters to the local papers to make consumers aware of their rights but we must put positive facts not just our own conclusions.

Mr. Balfour, Mr. Amos and Mr. Long have all helped us along the way and are all convinced we should have better standards.

The only person who is not convinced is the Minister. The letter continues—

One small item I would like to bring to your attention is the influx of small stools (no standards at all for these) which are being used very often for standing on and usually collapse as only nails are used in the legs and the carcass made of inferior timber.

The usual procedure is for an article of furniture to be dowelled and glued —not nailed—and in some cases tongued and grooved. The letter goes on—

I am enclosing an example from Welbilt who assured us the suite had been made by Rose Manufacturer Company, North Melbourne, but no name was anywhere marked on this suite or any other suite in this showroom belonging to Welbilt in Traralgon.

We feel we are being taken more notice of here in Gippsland and since our complaints are at point of sale we think legislation in the Consumer Act 1972 must be better implemented but how?

It further states that the Gippsland Consumer Association will also prepare submissions to the National Safety Council in regard to polyurethane stuffing and other matters raised by previous speakers.

Voluntary organizations are making the Minister aware of the situation, doing what they consider to be correct, and they are supported by members of the Liberal Party as well as members of the Labor Party. However, they are not moving this Minister and his department. Was it a correct move to transfer the provisions to which I referred from the Labour and Industry Act? If they had remained in that Act at least honorable members could ask why inspectors of the Department of Labour and Industry were not enforcing them. Inspectors of the Weights and Measures Branch and local health inspectors carry out inspections to guard the health of the community. What is wrong with inspectors of the Consumer Protection Bureau, or indeed anybody whom the Minister likes to scrape up, making inspections to ensure that inferior articles are not manufactured and sold to the public?

I have the highest regard for reputable manufacturers and retailers who have been concerned about shoddy furniture over a long period. The only person who is not concerned is the Minister and, apparently, officers of the Consumer Protection Bureau who, because of their inactivity in this field, appear to have their hands tied behind their backs. It is useless for the Minister to announce that one firm has been prosecuted. The penalty of $500 is insufficient as a deterrent. The honorable gentleman should examine that situation if he desires to stop the manufacture and sale of shoddy furniture. Furthermore, one prosecution in any one year will not do anything to stamp out the practice which has developed in Victoria over the past 7, 8 or 9 years. This is not something of which the Minister is not aware because a similar practice relating to bedding and the use of certain materials was stamped out years ago.

The Minister stands indicted for his inability to take action although the situation has been brought to his attention and that of his department by voluntary bodies throughout the State. Until the honorable gentleman is prepared to take appropriate action the people of Victoria can expect to be fleeced, not by reputable manufacturers or retailers, but my manufacturers of shoddy, badly-constructed unbranded furniture which is made in some instances by persons who are inexperienced in the trade.

Mr. ROPER (Brunswick West).—I had not intended to speak in this debate until I heard the amazing remarks of the Minister of Consumer

Affairs. If the honorable gentleman had told members of the Opposition that there was no need for this motion because he was moving firmly against anyone infringing any parts of the Act, we would probably have been satisfied. However, the honorable gentleman said that the provisions of the Act were not very important and therefore he would not force his over-worked staff to enforce them.

When one looks at the Act, one sees very clearly set out in minute detail the requirement for the inspection and stamping of furniture. If this is such an unimportant matter, why did the Minister, only last year, specifically include in a Bill which came before this House eight clauses relating to this particular activity? The provisions are not as all-embracing as those formerly in the Labour and Industry Act, but nonetheless under them the Minister has a distinct duty to enforce them. The Minister is unprepared to do this and many other of his functions as well, but I shall not go into those.

The main argument used by the Minister against this adjournment motion was that he did not have sufficient staff to enforce the provisions of the Act. If that is not an indictment of the Minister, I do not know what else could be used against him! If one looks at the Budget Papers one finds that sufficient funds have not been made available to finance any one of a wide range of consumer protection activities let alone control over the manufacture of furniture. Last year $64,000 was spent on officers for consumer protection and this year the allocation is $134,000.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. K. H. Wheeler).—Order! I repeat that the motion moved by the honorable member for Reservoir does not entitle the honorable member for Brunswick West to refer to the Budget Papers and so on. I ask the honorable member to return to the confines of the motion.

Mr. ROPER.—The motion deals with the failure of the Minister of Consumer Affairs to enforce the provisions of the Consumer Protection Act 1972. One of the methods by which a Minister enforces an Act is by having adequate staff. A Minister who has to administer a very complex Act must ask the Treasurer for sufficient funds with which to carry out the provisions of that Act. That is why I raised the matter.

The SPEAKER.—Order! If the honorable member reads the motion further, he will see that it refers to the stamping of furniture.

Mr. ROPER.—In regard to the stamping of furniture, it is clearly laid down in the Act that the crucial part of the Minister's responsibility apart from laying charges, is having sufficient inspectors to do the job. I will leave it at that.

Many people in my electorate have complained to me about shoddy furniture. On several occasions I have been able to refer these complaints to the Furniture Trades Society. I did this with much regret because my first reaction was to look at the protection that was available under various Acts. I consulted persons who were knowledgeable about consumer affairs and I discovered that there was virtually no redress under the Consumer Protection Act for people who purchased furniture because there is no enforcement staff. In other words, there was no point in anyone going to the Consumer Protection Bureau. The members of this Parliament and the members of the public were forced to try to remedy defects in their purchases, because of maladministration of this Act by the Minister in the stamping of furniture, by using their own private means or by contacting the trade union involved. It is a severe dereliction of duty by the Minister that members of this House are forced, reluctantly, to take their own action when a remedy should be available under the

Act. That is the main point that annoys me. When one receives complaints about these matters, one knows that it is virtually impossible to expect the requirements of any part of the Consumer Protection Act, and particularly those relating to the stamping of furniture, to be used effectively.

I can now understand that, whereas I could not before; the Minister clearly said that these provisions of the Act would not be enforced because they were not important. That is sufficient reason for honorable members to agree to the motion for the adjournment of the House.

Mr. TREZISE (Geelong North).—I support the motion moved by my colleague and in doing so I point out that the case in reply put by the Minister has been supported only by the honorable members for Geelong and Moorabbin. It is disappointing that the honorable gentleman does not have the support of one of his colleagues on the front bench. It is irresponsible that young couples today, who are finding it hard in this inflationary period to set up house and to buy furniture for homes, are unprotected owing to the laxity of the Minister in carrying out the specific purpose of the Act, to force furniture manufacturers to brand their goods.

Last week I went through a large store in Geelong and I was informed by one of the managers that they had unbranded chairs there which were not assembled and which had been imported. These chairs were selling for approximately $8 each unassembled. I presume they were imported for approximately $3 or $4 each. Similar chairs which I saw in another furniture store in Geelong—I shall not refer to specific names—and which I presume were also imported, had been assembled and coated with varnish, and were being sold for $39 each. This price differential shows the laxity of the Minister. I do not know whether this is the responsibility of the State Government or that of the Federal Government but this is typical of what is occurring in Victoria at present. Furniture is not branded and the people can be exploited, and it seems that they can obtain no redress when they lodge complaints.

Mr. RAFFERTY.—These provisions deal with the manufacture of furniture.

Mr. TREZISE.—Because of the present attitude of the Minister there is nothing to stop any manufacturer in Victoria from making chairs or any type of furniture and not branding them. The Minister has admitted that the furniture should be branded, and the fact that it is not shows that the Minister is failing in his responsibility. That has been the basis of the argument and the complaints in the past and that is why there will be more complaints from people who have bought unbranded furniture. They find too often that it is made from shoddy material. Any manufacturer who does not brand his product must have something to hide. He is merely trying to run away from the consequences of his actions and the Minister should be deemed to be guilty for allowing this to happen.

I support my colleagues and repeat that the Minister has failed in his duty. I trust that he will take steps in the immediate future to overcome the unsatisfactory situation referred to in the motion.

Mr. EDMUNDS (Moonee Ponds).—The motion that the House is debating is whether the Minister of Consumer Affairs has enforced the provisions of the Consumer Protection Act in respect of the stamping of furniture. He has not done so; the matter is as simple as that. I listened to the Minister give a half-hearted defence of his reasons for not carrying out the Ministerial responsibility that the Act clearly states he has, and I was most disappointed. The history of the stamping of furniture goes back to the time

when Victoria was a Colony. The present legislation gives adequate protection to the industry and it advises the public how they can seek redress against the manufacturer.

As a former tradesman I take a particular interest in many of these legislative provisions and when I buy furniture I always have a look to see whether it is stamped. Years ago in my mother's house, I was always intrigued to see furniture with the words "Made by non-European labour" stamped indelibly on the underside of the furniture. When I buy furniture today, I find that it has stuck on it a small plastic or durex tag which carries some definition relating to its manufacture and the name of the manufacturer. That tag can easily be removed and this means that the Act is not being complied with in its true spirit. I suggest that the reason for this is that the Minister is weak in the administration of the Act. He could direct his officers to investigate these matters, or he could issue a Ministerial statement to the industry warning manufacturers that he is going to enforce the provisions of the Act because a lot of shoddy material is being offered to the public and they are complaining. He should also inform the manufacturers that he cannot get from the conservative caucus in the Parliament any tightening up of the provisions of the Consumer Protection Act and that he wants the manufacturers, as responsible businessmen in the community, to tighten up their normal manufacturing procedures. However, the honorable gentleman does not do that.

I have given some of the reasons why the Opposition considers that it is necessary to bring forward examples of the shoddy manufacture of furniture to the attention of the House, and to take the unusual step of moving the adjournment of the House to stress to the Minister and the public the importance of the relevant sections of the Act as a protection for the public.

When the average person goes into Myer's or one of the other big emporia, he expects that what is being offered has been made according to certain standards and according to certain laid-down principles associated with safety and a number of other factors. That normally does happen. However, the honorable member for Reservoir clearly produced enough evidence for the Minister to act upon tomorrow. He should tell one of his more senior departmental officers that this matter is embarrassing and should be remedied as soon as possible. He should tell him to go around to some of these places and see whether shoddy, unstamped furniture is in fact being manufactured and then make a statement to the industry. Quite often he goes to functions attended by leaders of industry and he is asked to make some general comment about the state of the industry. As he is the Minister of Labour and Industry as well as Minister of Consumer Affairs he has a wonderful oportunity to show some initiative and to give a lead to the community. I believe he would be a better Minister for that, but to date he has been most reluctant to act and to give a lead in any way. The former Minister of Labour and Industry was more energetic.

All that the Minister of Consumer Affairs wishes to do is to act under a set of circumstances which provoke confrontation. If the honorable gentleman would listen to what members of the Opposition say I believe the manufacturers of furniture would appreciate his trying to cut out the fly-by-night manufacturers, the manufacturers of shoddy furniture, those who use shoddy materials and those who attempt to cut back the high standards existing within the industry.

All organizations connected with the furniture industry, from the trade union movement to the manufacturers, the wholesalers and the retailers, would be appreciative if the

Minister of Consumer Affairs refrained from blocking propositions advanced from the community with the objective of stiffening the Consumer Protection Act. As honorable members are aware, the Act is a toothless tiger and if ever legislation needed tightening it is that Act. The worst that can happen to a manufacturer or a firm is to be named in the annual report of the Consumer Affairs Council; but what usually happens? In the short time in which I have been a member of this House, the name of one firm has appeared in the annual report on at least half a dozen occasions and yet nothing has happened.

The reason why the Opposition has moved the motion for the adjournment of the House is that the subject-matter is important for the community. The average person buys a large piece of furniture once or twice in a lifetime and expects protection under the Act. If he is not given protection under the Act—it is useless asking the Minister of Consumer Affairs for protection—there is nowhere else that he can turn. The House should support the motion.

The House divided on the motion for the adjournment of the House (the Hon. K. H. Wheeler in the chair)—

Ayes	24
Noes	43
Majority against the motion	19

AYES.

Mr. Amos	Mr. Lind
Mr. Baxter	Mr. Mutton
Mr. Bornstein	Mr. Ross-Edwards
Mr. Curnow	Mr. Simmonds
Mr. Doube	Mr. Stirling
Mr. Edmunds	Mr. Trewin
Mr. Evans (*Gippsland East*)	Mr. Trezise
Mr. Fogarty	Mr. Whiting
Mr. Ginifer	Mr. Wilkes
Mr. Holding	Mr. Wilton.
Mr. Jones	*Tellers:*
Mr. Kirkwood	Mr. Hann
	Mr. Roper.

Mr. Edmunds.

NOES.

Mr. Austin	Mr. Plowman
Mr. Balfour	Mr. Rafferty
Mr. Billing	Mr. Ramsay
Mr. Birrell	Mr. Reese
Mr. Borthwick	Mr. Rossiter
Mr. Burgin	Mr. Scanlan
Mr. Crellin	Mr. Skeggs
Mr. Dixon	Mr. Smith (*Bellarine*)
Mr. Dunstan	Mr. Smith (*Warrnambool*)
Mr. Evans (*Ballaarat North*)	Mr. Stephen
Mrs. Goble	Mr. Suggett
Mr. Guy	Mr. Templeton
Mr. Hamer	Mr. Thompson
Mr. Hayes	Mr. Vale
Mr. Jona	Mr. Wilcox
Mr. Lacy	Mr. Williams
Mr. Loxton	Mr. Wiltshire
Mr. McCabe	Mr. Wood.
Mr. MacDonald	
Mr. McKellar	
Mr. McLaren	*Tellers:*
Mr. Maclellan	Mr. Ebery
Mr. Meagher	Mr. McClure.

PAIR.

Mr. Fordham	Mr. Chamberlain.

LAND TAX BILL.

Mr. HAMER (Premier and Treasurer) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to amend the Land Tax Act 1958 and the Local Government Act 1958, to declare the rates of Land Tax for year ending on the 31st day of December, 1974 and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

YOUTH, SPORT AND RECREATION (STATE SCHOOL PREMISES) BILL.

Mr. DIXON (Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation).—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The main purpose of the Bill is to provide appropriate legislative machinery to further advance the Government's desire to encourage the community use of school facilities, and to enable the expenditure of money on school premises to this end. It had been thought that existing legislative provisions were appropriate for this purpose. However, recent opinions have cast doubt on this understanding and the Bill has been prepared accordingly.

The Government not only has drawn the Bill to correct this situation but also has taken the opportunity of furthering its intention of offering both school and municipal authorities greater responsibilities and the means of putting them into effect. The Government is not advancing these provisions with a view to encouraging community involvement on school premises only. Quite the contrary. They are being advanced to ensure that this involvement can take place. But it is, and has always been, the intention of the Government, my department and I to encourage the involvement of schools in the community as well as the community in schools. In these endeavours it is our aim to encourage the existence of "community" in the true sense of the word.

With the help of existing legislation and the added assistance of the measures now before the House, the Government is providing the lubrication for the machinery which will enable effective co-operation between schools, municipalities and other organizations. This co-operation already exists in many areas where there is the joint use of facilities, particularly of sporting facilities. The Government wishes to give clear legislative sanction to enable these organizations to positively foster and extend this co-operation.

In the promotion of after-hours, week-end and holiday activities, the Government sees schools and municipalities co-operating in two ways. The first is by enabling the community to come into the schools—not simply by providing opportunities for school children to be involved in activities after normal school hours; but by providing opportunities for people of all ages and interests to pursue those interests in activities using school facilities when they are not in demand for normal school purposes.

The second is by ensuring that school children have the opportunity of using municipal facilities wherever practicable. By these ways they will enable the barriers which could or do exist between schools, other organizations, municipal councils and individuals to be broken down. My department will, by a number of means, seek to foster this co-operation with the aid of the measures before the House. The department will be providing the services of its recreation officers and youth workers to assist and advise on projects and programmes. It will subsidize the sessional employment of people to conduct after-hours, week-end and holiday activities. It will also be assisting financially with the provision of capital facilities which will provide recreational opportunities for all sections of the community.

This assistance is, along with other services, spelt out in detail in the department's policy guidelines, which are now being circulated. I take this opportunity of thanking honorable members for the interest they have shown in providing constructive criticism and comment on the original draft of the guidelines. The policies have been substantially revised, taking into account the comments the department has received. They will be periodically reviewed in the light of experience and changing needs.

The Bill has two basic provisions. Clause 2 substitutes a new section for section 16 of the Youth, Sport and Recreation Act 1973. Clause 3 amends section 800B of the Local Government Act 1958. Sub-section (1) of the proposed new section 16 of the Youth, Sport and Recreation Act will enable school councils to authorize persons or organizations to use school premises and facilities for any purposes related to the objectives of the Act. Honorable members will be aware that these objectives are widely drawn. School councils could thus authorize the use, including the provision of new improvements, of school premises for a wide variety of youth, sporting and recreational activities. Pending legislation developing the powers of school

councils, their authority to enter into contractual arrangements with municipalities and voluntary organizations will be provided through regulations drawn under the Education Act.

Sub-section (2) of the proposed new section has been drawn specifically to provide enabling machinery for the involvement of unincorporated bodies in the community use of school properties. There are many such organizations providing important services for many people. This measure will enable a suitable person specified by the school council to enter into agreements and otherwise act as the responsible party for such unincorporated bodies.

Sub-section (3) is a machinery measure to give effect to the aforementioned provisions. Sub-section (4) sanctions the aforementioned provisions being effected by the school council on behalf of the Crown. Sub-section (5) is a machinery measure defining "council" of a State school and "State school".

The proposed new section 800B of the Local Government Act will enable the council of a State school and the council of a municipality to enter into agreements or arrangements for a wide variety of purposes relating to the provision and use of facilities on school properties. Section 800A of the Act already enables the use by schools of municipal lands. The new provision will enable the reciprocity of arrangements. Specific mention is made, among other things, of such facilities being used in relation to the objectives of the Youth, Sport and Recreation Act.

Sub-section (1) of the proposed new section 800B sets out the provisions just referred to. Sub-sections (2), (3) and (4) are machinery provisions identical to those numbered (3), (4) and (5) in the proposed new section 16 of the Youth, Sport and Recreation Act and already referred to. I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of Mr. TREZISE (Geelong North), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Tuesday, November 13.

THE CONSTITUTION ACT AMENDMENT (EXECUTIVE COUNCIL) BILL.

The motion of Mr. Wilcox (Attorney-General) for the second reading of this Bill was carried by an absolute majority of the whole number of the members of the House.

The Bill was read a second time and committed.

Clause 1 was agreed to.

Clause 2 (Increase in sum for Clerk and expenses of Executive Council).

Mr. WILCOX (Attorney-General). —The honorable member for Albert Park raised a question on this Bill during the second-reading debate. The Bill belongs to the Treasurer, but I introduced it for the honorable gentleman. However, the explanation I am about to make should satisfy the honorable member's requirements.

The tables shown in the Estimates under the heading Special Appropriations are submitted for the information of members and do not form part of the Appropriation Bill which, honorable members will recall, was considered recently.

The purpose of the special appropriations is to ensure that certain arms of the Government service are able to continue quite independently of the passage of the annual Appropriation Bill. Section 66 of The Constitution Act Amendment Act provides that the Consolidated Fund is permanently appropriated to the extent of $13,000 for the Clerk and expenses of the Executive Council.

As I pointed out in my second-reading speech, the need to increase the special appropriations has arisen

through salary increases for the Clerk of the Executive Council arising both from the reclassification of that office and from the revision of salary rates for officers of the Public Service.

The salary of the Clerk, who is also Official Secretary to the Governor, increased from $10,224 to $10,859 in August, 1972, when the office was reclassified on the basis of additional duties involving the transfer of the responsibility of staff and maintenance of Government House from the Public Works Department to the Premier's Department. In May, 1973, the salary was again reviewed when all Administrative Division salaries were increased and the Clerk's salary became $12,488. The application of the national wage case increase in June, 1973, further increased the salary for this purpose to $12,868. On 1st July, 1973, the Public Service Board reviewed the salary structure of all officers classified in class "A1", Administrative Division, and the salary of the Clerk of the Executive Council and Official Secretary to the Governor—the same gentleman—was increased to $13,395. As the Clerk of the Executive Council is an officer of the Public Service, the salary increases, which I have just outlined, were decisions of the Public Service Board.

The expenses of the Executive Council are not constant and vary from year to year depending on increases in costs, particularly for printing and stationery, and depending on the nature and extent of the business of the Executive Council in any particular year.

All honorable members will agree that it is essential that the activities of the Executive Council should not be prejudiced by the lack of finance, and, naturally, this is a charge on the revenue of the State.

There has always been an unexpended margin between the total amount of the special appropriation and the actual expenditure for any financial year, and it is the Government's view that this margin should be maintained to reduce the necessity for presenting too many of these Bills for the consideration of the Parliament.

As I have mentioned, the need for the Bill at present before the House arose from salary movements which, it could hardly have been argued, should have been anticipated by the Government when this special appropriation was previously reviewed. Only $9,121 was expended on salary last year—1972-73—because of a vacancy in office.

All I can say to the honorable member for Albert Park and the Leader of the Country Party, who was also interested in this matter, is that the total amount provided in the Estimates is $12,360 and the limit under the special appropriation in the existing legislation is $13,000. If the recent salary increases had been included in the amounts shown against these items in the special appropriations, they would have exceeded the limit set in the legislation which is now dealt with by this amending legislation.

Mr. DOUBE (Albert Park).—I thank the Minister for his explanation. It highlights a matter of considerable importance, that any Minister dealing with a Bill ought to be able to answer any questions which can be asked about it. There is a tendency for a Ministry which has been so long in office to become accustomed just to accept Bills, present them in the House, and expect all honorable members to accept them. The Minister said that he hoped the explanation he gave would be sufficient guidance for honorable members. I thank him for it, but I suggest that it also gave the honorable gentleman some guidance.

Mr. WILCOX.—I understand exactly what it is about.

Mr. DOUBE.—If each Minister took full responsibility for the Bills he introduced, this Bill would have

been passed some weeks ago. It is the duty of the Opposition and, in fact, of all honorable members, to be precisely aware of what a Bill entails. To avoid such inconvenience in future, Ministers should apply themselves to the areas which honorable members may query so that the Ministers may provide the necessary answers. This procedure will expedite the business of the House and I recommend its adoption by Ministers.

The clause was agreed to.

The Bill was reported to the House without amendment, and the report was adopted.

The motion for the third reading of the Bill was agreed to by an absolute majority of the whole number of the members of the House, and the Bill was read a third time.

LAND (METRIC CONVERSION) BILL.

The debate (adjourned from October 17) on the motion of Mr. Borthwick (Minister of Lands) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

Mr. GINIFER (Deer Park).—The Opposition does not oppose the measure which is basically enabling legislation. The Lands Department thought that metric conversion may have been possible by regulation but because some doubts have been cast upon that procedure the Bill has been presented to the Parliament.

Although honorable members may have certain views on the implications of metric conversion, it is now a fact of life. Although the Opposition does not oppose the Bill, I cannot bind its members to the accuracy of the conversions contained in the Bill.

Mr. WHITING (Mildura).—This measure will have far-reaching effects on Victoria for all time. The younger generation will be fortunate to commence with the new terminology, whereas those of us who have grown up under the old Anglo-Saxon terms with its many four letter words such as acre, inch and foot, may have difficulty with the new terminology. The conversion to metric measurements for land will particularly affect estate agents and the old terminologies will be used for a number of years in the description of land tenures.

I notice that a hectare equals 2·47104 acres and undoubtedly anybody trying to convert those sorts of figures by mental arithmetic will experience difficulty. Presumably, the passage of time will enable an inch to be referred to as approximately 2 centimetres and 2·4 acres to a hectare will become the accepted conversion rather than the official definition contained in the Bill.

The Country Party does not oppose the Bill, which contains approximately 246 amendments to the Land Act. It accepts the fact that the Minister and his departmental officers have checked the accuracy of the conversions. Possibly, amending Bills will be introduced on occasions to correct slight errors in this measure. Ultimately, metric conversion will be for the good of the community and we trust that the birth of the new system will be as painless as possible.

Mr. AUREL SMITH (Bellarine).—Although there will be some confusion with the terminology in the measure, in this day of computers and mechanized office systems the metric system will be of great benefit to future generations. It is a pity, as the Deputy Leader of the Country Party has said, that some of the old terms will disappear from our vocabulary. However, it will be only a matter of time before we will become used to the new terminology. Therefore, in the interest of this progressive State this sort of measure must be passed.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was read a second time and committed.

Clauses 1 to 42 were agreed to.

Clause 43—

In paragraph (*a*) of section 239 of the Principal Act—

(*a*) for the words "five miles" (wherever occurring) there shall be substituted the expression "nine kilometres";

. . . . . .

Mr. BORTHWICK (Minister of Lands).—As was mentioned by the honorable member for Deer Park and the Deputy Leader of the Country Party, the intricacy of so many amendments to the principal Act can leave room for error. Apparently, certain errors that another place failed to pick up have been found so that on this occasion this Chamber is acting as a House of review. I move—

That the following sub-clause be added :—

'( ) In paragraph (d) of section 239 of the Principal Act for the word "acres" there shall be substituted the word "hectares".'

Obviously, the amendment will correct an oversight in the Bill.

Mr. WHITING (Mildura).—As the Minister agreed, possibly some amendments will be necessary to a Bill such as this. I have not had the time to check section 239 of the principal Act and I hope the Minister is satisfied that the proposed sub-clause is necessary because a further proposed amendment seems to have the same effect.

Mr. BORTHWICK (Minister of Lands).—Paragraph (*d*) of section 239 refers to tree planting on land held under perpetual leasehold. It provides that the number of acres to be planted and the kind and number of trees shall be prescribed by regulation. With the many references to "acre" in the principal Act, this individual reference was overlooked and the amendment now proposes to substitute the word "hectares" for the word "acres".

The amendment was agreed to, as was a consequential amendment, and the clause, as amended, was adopted, as were clauses 44 to 49.

Clause 50 was verbally amended, and, as amended, was adopted, as were the remaining clauses.

Mr. BORTHWICK (Minister of Lands).—I propose the following new clause to follow clause 1:—

'AA. In sub-section (6) of section 2 of the Principal Act for the words "twenty acres" there shall be substituted the words "nine hectares".'

Sub-section (6) of section 2 of the principal Act states, *inter alia*—

....yearly licences whether the total amount thereof be in excess of twenty acres or not—

The wisdom of the remarks of the honorable members for Deer Park and Mildura has been borne out. It is obvious that one or two references in the Act to "acres" have been overlooked. I hope all the amendments necessary for the conversion of the Act to the new measurements have now been made.

The new clause was agreed to.

The Bill was reported to the House with amendments, and passed through its remaining stages.

STATE FORESTS WORKS AND SERVICES BILL.

The debate (adjourned from September 26) on the motion of Mr. Meagher (Minister of Transport) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

Mr. WILTON (Broadmeadows).—The purpose of the Bill is to give Parliamentary approval to the expenditure of money that has been allocated to the Forests Commission for the carrying out of a variety of works programmes listed in the memorandum provided by the Minister with his second-reading notes.

I shall make one or two comments on the operations of the Forests Commission. In its annual report for the year 1971-72 the commission stated that it was still breaking records in the production of sawn timber and referred to the potential it offers for rural employment. This is interesting because recently, with

other parts of Australia, Victoria experienced a serious recession in rural employment, and this affected primary industry and large rural communities. As on other similar occasions, the Government was able to use the resources and structure of the Forests Commission to provide relief work for a large number of people. The annual report of the commission stated—

> The potential of forestry and the commission's organization to provide gainful employment in decentralized areas was amply demonstrated by the employment of some hundreds of men on rural relief works to the extent of some three-quarters of a million dollars during the year.

This illustrates the important role that this authority plays, in addition to its traditional task of protecting, preserving and developing the natural forestry resources of the State. When an emergency occurs the commission is able to expand its programme as funds are made available.

The annual report also touched on the role of the commission in environmental matters. The commission is becoming more actively engaged in forest park development. The report indicates that forest park acreage has been doubled. The commission is now playing what could be termed a dual role in that its prime responsibility is the development of State's forests on a commercial basis, which involves a variety of programmes — silviculture replanting, and so on.

The Forests Commission is undertaking the responsibility of establishing services which the community expects in a park, whether a forest park or a national park, such as camping areas with public toilets and other facilities. The National Parks Service will develop a close liaison with the Forests Commission in this field. A real problem in the future will be the pressure of the demands of the community that will be applied not only to national parks but also to forest parks. It will be a problem of sheer weight of numbers. This pressure has already been experienced in other countries. It will become a serious matter in Australia unless the problems that have developed in other countries are studied.

Australia is fortunate in being able to observe the mistakes of other countries and benefit from a study of the programmes they have implemented. In common with other authorities in the State, the commission is continually observing what is occurring overseas by sending senior officers there. Visitors come to Victoria from other parts of the world and much interchange of ideas takes place.

The table provided by the Minister shows that for fire protection the sum of $1·05 million has been allocated. For the year ended 30th June, 1973, the commission spent $878,735 on this work, but the proposed expenditure during the year ending 30th June, 1974, will be $425,000. Parliament is being asked to approve a vote of $1·05 million, which is a large sum of money.

By way of interjection, the Minister of Transport has said that it is for eighteen months. Does that mean that it will take the honorable gentleman eighteen months to replace this provision? As I understand the procedures, this happens every year.

Mr. MEAGHER.—That is so. There is an annual review which cancels the unexpired portion of the provision but there is always an overlapping period.

Mr. WILTON.—Does that not mean that this time next year the House will deal with exactly the same legislation?

Mr. MEAGHER.—That is so, but it must be carried through to avoid a lack of continuity.

Mr. WILTON.—I understand that, but a provision of the same kind is considered each year.

The sitting was suspended at 6.32 p.m. until 8.4 p.m.

Mr. WILTON.—Prior to the suspension of the sitting I referred to the fire-protection work which the Forests Commission must undertake as part of its responsibilities. The Bill provides $1·05 million for this purpose. The Minister's second-reading speech makes the point that the Forests Commission again will retain a helicopter on immediate call during the height of the summer for fire observation, the transport of crews, and aerial ignition of fire-breaks to control the spread of major fires. There is no denying that fire protection is an important part of the operations of the commission. The history of forest fires in Victoria over the past 60 years is very grim. In Australia loss of life and widespread damage to Crown and private property have been caused by fires and floods.

I have held the view for some time that the Commonwealth Government should become involved in this work. This has not been the case up to date. I understand that Ministerial discussions have been held on the role that the Commonwealth Government could play. The Commonwealth Government is obliged to maintain a defence apparatus. I feel in this area arrangements could be entered into between the State Governments and the Commonwealth Governments for the use of this apparatus for fire protection. For example, the Forests Commission requires funds to hire specialized aircraft, and the defence forces have similar aircraft purchased by the Commonwealth Government on behalf of the nation. It seems to me that specialized sections of the defence mechanism could be incorporated in fire-protection programmes in which State fire-fighting authorities are involved.

The principle could be extended to the use of defence personnel. When Victoria has experienced disastrous fires or floods the Commonwealth Government has co-operated by providing sections of the defence forces to assist a State authority to cope with the emergency. Specialized equipment belonging to the armed services has been used in particular crises but I should like it to be available every year for use when required. Officers of the Forests Commission have indicated to me that one of the greatest problems is that a fire usually starts in an inaccessible area. I understand the outbreak is usually caused by what is called a lightning strike, which I suppose is an act of Nature. The difficulty confronting the commission is the inaccessibility of the area where the seat of the fire is located.

This has led the commission to conduct research into what is termed water bombing. Experiments have been carried out and a certain degree of expertise has been developed. The commission expends large sums of money on this technique, and it has made agreements with owners of private aircraft prepared to enter into a standby arrangement under which their services can be availed of very quickly if necessary.

Australia has an Air Force and an Army in which there are specialized aircraft and a large reserve of manpower. The Federal and State authorities could enter into an arrangement under which these aircraft could be located in areas where they could be quickly called on to undertake fire-protection work. It could even be extended to organizations like the Commonwealth Aircraft Corporation. Honorable members have heard a lot in recent months about the new Nomad aircraft which has been developed. It has certain characteristics which seem to lend itself to this type of work. In the annual report of the Forests Commission reference is made to the number of airstrips which have been constructed to accommodate aircraft. If aircraft were strategically located around the State for use when it was necessary to use the water bombing technique to cope with a fire problem, much loss of property could be prevented.

I believe the Commonwealth Government has as big a stake in preserving the forestry reserves of any State of Australia as the State itself. I hope the Minister will be able to bring the discussions to a successful conclusion and a comprehensive plan which involves the Commonwealth Government to a greater extent than it has been involved up to date will be produced.

I refer now to the reforestation programme in which the commission is involved. This covers two areas. Reforestation of our indigenous forests is necessary where replanting has to take place in cut-out areas, and also in other areas where certain trees have to be removed in the interest of achieving a better rate of production.

The Forests Commission has large softwood plantations, and as a result of a Commonwealth-State agreement they are expanding at a fairly steady rate. This Parliament has enacted legislation under which the commission contracts with private organizations to continue its plantation programme to ensure a steady flow of softwoods at a regular, controlled rate over a long period. In Ballarat an industry which will use softwood forest products has been developed. It will use forest products over a long period of time. I question the policy of the Forests Commission in carrying out its softwood programme and removing the indigenous forests. I instance the Blackwood forest in recent years, which commences at the foot of Mount Macedon and extends in a southerly direction to Trentham.

The commission has embarked on a planning programme of clearing large areas of indigenous forests and has left a completely unbroken area which has destroyed the ecology of the land. The same objective could have been achieved if the commission had cleared a certain number of acres for softwoods, left small areas of indigenous forests and again planted softwoods. It would have given the ecology of the region a chance to recover rather than completely clearing the land and replanting with pines.

I hope the commission will reexamine this policy and retain more indigenous forests without restricting the softwood plantations. It would not necessarily mean a reduction in softwood plantations. I have commented on the role played by the commission in parks reserves and I hope the amount of money provided in this Bill will enable the commission to carry on with that work. I also mention the role that it has played in fire protection and suppression works in national parks and State forests. Some honorable members may not be aware that it is the responsibility of the Forests Commission to extend its fire-protection works into private land within a radius of one mile of State forests. That area would be considerable and would be in excess of one-third of the area of the State. I am not writing down the importance of fire-protection work, but better use could be made of the total resources of this country by bringing the Commonwealth Government into this area. The Opposition does not oppose the Bill.

Mr. B. J. EVANS (Gippsland East).—This measure is of great significance to the electorate of Gippsland East. Fortunately, the annual report of the Forests Commission was tabled in the House today, and although this did not give honorable members much time to study it, the report is a valuable document setting out the work of the commission for the past twelve months. At page 7 of the report the commission states that—

> The sawn timber to meet the State's traditional import requirements of about one-third of its needs has become difficult and costly to obtain. There are no indications of an improved import availability at reasonable cost.

In a nutshell, there is urgent need for greater activity by the Forests Commission to ensure that, in future, the timber requirements of Victoria

will be met from its own resources. It is apparent that it will be difficult to get timber supplies from elsewhere. The report went on to say—

> Far-sighted legislators framed the Forests Act to charge the commission with the responsibility of undertaking multiple use management of forested land so that, wherever it is possible, yields of wood products should be obtained in conjunction with maintenance of other forest values such as water catchments, forage, wild-life habitat and public recreation, all of which are specifically mentioned in the Act.

That reference should be underlined because the commission does a tremendous job in all of those respects, and its work is often ignored by so-called conservationists who say that the only way the land can be preserved is by the establishment of national parks. The Forests Commission makes a far better fist of looking after forest parks and reserved areas within its control than does the National Parks Service. That may be because of the availability of finance between the two bodies rather than the management policies, although I believe the management policies of the Forests Commission are most important. At page nine of its report the commission states that—

> The commission relied heavily upon manpower made available through rural relief and drought relief schemes for both the execution of scheduled works and for fire suppression. The retrenchment of 67 regular employees was avoided only through the availability of finance from these sources.

That indicates clearly how the Government is failing to provide adequate finance for the Forests Commission to carry out the responsibility with what it is charged. On previous occasions I have endeavoured to demonstrate that the Government is ever ready to provide jobs in the metropolitan area, but it is not so anxious to find the necessary finance to create work in the country.

The general work of the commission is in the interests of the State, not merely in the electorate of Gippsland East or in other electorates in which there are large forest areas. It is the responsibility of the Government to ensure that these areas are properly managed. At the drop of a hat the Government will conduct an inquiry to ensure that adequate works are provided in the metropolitan area, but it will fall short of the mark where country areas are concerned. The report further states—

> Substantial additional facilities have been provided for visitors to forests, in particular from funds for rural relief grants.

These grants, which were made with Commonwealth money, have been discontinued. I wonder what will be the situation now that the funds have dried up. Will the State Government carry the responsibility of ensuring that these works will go on in the future? It is important that it does so, not only from the point of view of the Forests Commission and the electorate of Gippsland East, but of the State as a whole. Low pruning of 1,053 acres as a fire precaution was facilitated by rural relief funds. One wonders how the commission will finance its activities in the coming year from within its own resources and cope with the amount of work that is necessary. On Wednesday, 25th September of this year, as reported at page 542 of *Hansard*, I asked the Minister of Transport, for the Minister of Forests—

> 1. What amount was received by way of revenue from rents, royalties in respect of the sale of forest produce, etc., from the electoral district of Gippsland East during the financial year 1972-73?
>
> 2. What total amount was paid by the Forests Commission for salaries, wages, operating expenses, etc., in the electoral district in 1972-73?

I received the following answer:—

> 1. Revenue from rents and royalties for 1972-73 was $1,590,350.
>
> 2. Payments for salaries, wages, operating expenses etc. in 1972-73 amounted to $1,775,841.

Although the amount spent in the electoral district exceeded the amount received from royalties and so on, it included money from rural relief and drought relief funds. To the

best of my knowledge 104 rural relief workers and 52 drought relief employees were employed providing a pay-roll of approximately $700,000, which would mean that the Forests Commission would have made a profit of approximately $500,000 out of the electoral district. Not many avenues of Government activities exist that makes a profit out of the area in which they operate. The rest of the State is achieving a benefit from the use of forests within the Gippsland East electorate.

It is on this basis that I logically argue that the Government ought to be spending more of its revenue from the Forests Commission in the area from which it has obtained the funds. The commission is not able to regenerate the areas that are at present being logged. A total of 45 per cent of the State's hardwood timber comes from the electoral district of Gippsland East and something like 20,000 acres of forest are logged each year, with 5,500 acres being regenerated in the previous year. Under normal conditions, less than 50 per cent of the area logged is being regenerated. Fortunately, with the advent of the rural unemployment relief scheme and the drought relief scheme, the extent of regeneration this year was increased. In effect, the Government is mining the area of its resources. It is removing timber without replacing it, and in future years the area will not have resources to sustain the population.

Timber is only one of the natural resources which are being taken from the district—I could speak about the water which is being removed. I do not know how voters can believe the Government is sincere in its talk about decentralization when it takes from one part of the State for the benefit of others the resources upon which future populations will depend.

Mr. MACLELLAN.—Does the honorable member believe all the timber should remain where it is?

Mr. B. J. EVANS.—The interjection of the honorable member for Gippsland West is typical of the Liberal Party's attitude. The Country Party asks simply that the revenue obtained from the sale of timber should be used to support employment in the district where it was obtained, in the same way as the revenue from the work of other people comes into their own hands. It is strange that many Government supporters are keen to argue that Victoria is a State and that honorable members should not adopt parochial views on various areas. The natural advantage of the metropolitan area of Melbourne is geographical because of its establishment on a port. Surely, therefore, one should be entitled to capitalize on the natural advantages in one's own electorate, one of which is bountiful supplies of timber. More of the revenue obtained by the Forests Commission should be spent in the area. The report of the Forests Commission stated, in relation to the roads used in the area for timber extraction—

> Applications from municipalities for financial assistance from the Municipalities Forest Roads Improvement Fund, for the improvement of roads leading to forest areas carrying large volumes of forest produce, continue at a rate many times in excess of the funds available.
>
> The fund was established to provide assistance to municipalities on unclassified roads subject to heavy log traffic. Unfortunately, insufficient funds have been provided to meet shire needs where large quantities of forest traffic exist.

The Forests Commission is on record in the minutes of a meeting of the Orbost Shire Council as expressing that viewpoint and agreeing with the council that more funds should be made available for the municipalities in areas where ratepayers are unfairly loaded with the cost of maintaining roads which are damaged substantially by timber traffic, the revenue from which goes mainly to the Government, through the Forests Commission. The local municipalities receive relatively small returns from the industry in relation to the expenditure involved. This year the

Government has increased the rate of royalties, so there will be an even greater amount of revenue coming from the electorate district of Gippsland East in the forthcoming period.

On page 23 of the report, again emphasizing the lack of finance available to it, the Forests Commission, stated—

> However, nearly one-third of the commission's road network received no maintenance during the year due to lack of funds. Lack of adequate finance to mount resurfacing projects on essential forest roads is of serious concern.

It is futile for the honorable member for Broadmeadows or any other honorable member to make speeches about the importance of getting the Army in to help fight forest fires, and about the development of forest areas for recreational purposes and similar projects with which everyone agrees, unless the Forests Commission obtains sufficient finance to maintain adequate roads in the area so that access is readily available when fire occurs.

One of the major avenues which the Forests Commission should pursue to obtain further revenue from the electorate of Gippsland East is the development of softwood plantations. The report contains a table setting out the staff of the commission in various divisions. It is significant that the most favourably situated divisions are in the north-east and the south-west. That is because there are extensive softwood plantations in those areas. To facilitate the availability of men for fire-fighting purposes, they should be employed relatively close to the areas where fires are likely to occur.

Unfortunately, Gippsland East is subject to bad fire conditions and it is essential for the future programme of the Forests Commission to include the development of extensive pine plantation areas in Gippsland East. This would have the dual effect of increasing employment—because pine plantations sustain a large and consistent work force—and having the work force readily available for emergency duty in case of fire. This is an important aspect of the Forests Commission's activities. It is the only way to meet the increasing demand for timber which will be needed in future years.

There are in Gippsland East extensive areas of poor quality eucalypt forests which would be better suited to pine plantations. I hope in the future the Forests Commission will extend its softwood plantations into that area. Whenever I have raised this issue in the past the usual reply has been that these types of forests are planted closest to where they are likely to be utilized. Once extensive areas of pine forest are established, the means of utilization comes to those areas. In Myrtleford, in north-eastern Victoria, where extensive areas of pine forest plantations have been established, a utilization programme has begun.

The importance of forestry to the electorate of Gippsland East cannot be under-rated. Additional funds for the benefit of the area should be made available to the Forests Commission. I hope the Minister can indicate what funds will be made available to replace the rural unemployment relief scheme and drought relief fund, because in the absence of any further funds the commission's silvicultural programme must fall by the wayside or revert to the low level at which it has been operating in recent years.

In remote areas such as Omeo, municipalities are finding it impossible to employ the existing work force for the full period of a financial year, and therefore are losing even more manpower. The commission's aim is to have people available for fire-fighting operations when emergency conditions arise, as they surely will. With all the goodwill in the world bush fires cannot be prevented. One needs only to examine the statistics set out in the report on the causes of bush fires to see that a large proportion of them are caused by lightning. Lightning will always occur and nothing can be done about

that. One can only have the manpower to meet the situation as it arises.

Because of the gradual decline in the populations of remote areas, the Government should stimulate employment by the means to which I have been referring, such as the application of more money to the Forests Commission, and the commission carrying out more works in those areas to provide employment. The Country Party supports the motion, although its members would have liked more time to consider the report of the Forests Commission in detail. However, the report gives a clear picture of the comission's activities.

Another aspect which the Government should examine is the possibility of establishing facilities to carry out research into forest management techniques. This should be done in country areas, and I cannot think of a better place than Gippsland East because it has a wide variety of terrain and a good range of forest species. It would be a suitable place to establish that type of activity.

Mr. CURNOW.—Who is being parochial now?

Mr. B. J. EVANS.—I would never argue against being parochial, because if anyone is entitled to be parochial it is I, and I make no apology for that statement.

I wish to make passing reference to another aspect, because subsequent events may prove that it will be given more consideration in this House. I refer to the future of the operations of the Forests Commission in the light of recommendations in reports brought down by the Land Conservation Council. A report has been presented on the Thomson River catchment area. I suspect that the Land Conservation Council will in due course recommend that that part of the catchment of the Thomson River upstream from the proposed storage to supply the metropolitan area of Melbourne with water will be a reserve catchment area, and the timber value of its mountain ash, which is approaching utilization size, will be lost to Victoria. The Land Conservation Council is examining the use of public lands from a too narrow point of view and overlooking the charter of the Forests Commission to use lands for multiple purposes.

I am a firm believer in the multiple use of catchment areas, of forests and of all lands within the State. As population pressures increase it will become more necessary to engage in multiple use. At this stage I content myself with sounding a note of warning in regard to the activities of the Land Conservation Council because it over-emphasizes landscape preservation rather than the proper management and utilization of the produce of the countryside in the best interests of all the people of Victoria.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was read a second time and committed.

Clause 1 was agreed to.

Clause 2 (Issue and application of money from Works and Services Account for forest works, etc.)

Mr. WILTON (Broadmeadows).—Item 4 of the table contained in this clause makes provision for $3 million to be spent on plantations of softwoods and hardwoods, including softwood planting undertaken in accordance with agreements between the Commonwealth and the State. Can the Minister advise me how much of the $3 million is provided by the Commonwealth?

Mr. MEAGHER (Minister of Transport).—The item relates to plantations of both softwoods and hardwoods. All of these activities are conducted under a series of different arrangements. The softwood agreement, which provides for the plant ing of about 58,000 acres of softwoods over the next five years, naturally comes under that provision of $3 million, but the exact

amount expended depends on how much is planted in any one year. The quantity planted varies to some extent according to seasonal conditions and for other reasons. I have not at my fingertips the exact figures, but I shall be happy to obtain them for the honorable member if he is interested. The simple answer is that portion of the $3 million is provided by the Commonwealth.

The clause was agreed to, as was the remaining clause.

The Bill was reported to the House without amendment, and passed through its remaining stages.

LAND TAX BILL.

Mr. HAMER (Premier and Treasurer) presented a message from His Excellency the Governor recommending that an appropriation be made from the Consolidated Fund for the purposes of the Land Tax Bill.

CONSUMER PROTECTION BILL.

The debate (adjourned from October 23) was resumed on the motion of Mr. Rafferty (Minister of Consumer Affairs)—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

and on Mr. Simmonds's amendment—

That all the words after "That" be omitted with the view of inserting in place thereof the words, "this Bill be withdrawn and a new Bill introduced to bring the recruitment of persons for payment within the definition of 'pyramid selling scheme'."

Mr. RAFFERTY (Minister of Consumer Affairs).—I shall direct my remarks mainly to the amendment moved by the honorable member for Reservoir. At the outset I should say that since the Bill was last debated I had an opportunity of discussing the provisions of the Bill privately with the honorable member for Reservoir and the honorable member for Gippsland South who had raised certain questions. The Bill is fairly complex, and they agreed to discuss those matters with me. I thank both honorable members for the time they devoted to going through the Bill with members of the staff of my department and myself in an effort to clarify the problems which they saw in the measure. It seemed to me to be pretty clear that members of all parties were aiming to achieve the same objective but that the way in which the Government proposed to do it had left some doubts in the minds of some honorable members. I do not know whether I have been able to resolve those doubts sufficiently, but the honorable members will probably speak for themselves. The Leader of the Country Party has indicated to me, also privately, that I have been able to resolve the problems of the Country Party, although no doubt members of that party will explain the situation.

The questions raised previously related mainly to the effect of the definition of "Pyramind selling scheme"—whether it would be wide enough to cover sufficiently those persons who were engaging in pyramid selling and whether it would also drag in persons who might be described as "legitimate" or traders who would be unwarrantedly brought under the provision. Discussions were held on this point. At a later stage I propose to move two minor amendments, which are not the result of our discussions but which I consider strengthen the application of the definition which the Government has already proposed.

The honorable member for Reservoir has moved—

That all the words after "That" be omitted with the view of inserting in place thereof the words, "this Bill be withdrawn and a new Bill introduced to bring the recruitment of persons for payment within the definition of "pyramid selling scheme".

The Government is not prepared to accept the amendment, and I shall state the reasons. In the first place, I consider that the definition as drafted in the Bill already does precisely what the honorable member for Reservoir suggested.

When I explained the Bill, I stated that the Government's object was to ban or outlaw if possible pyramid selling in this State. I realize that in some parts of the world attempts have been made to control or deal with pyramid selling. The Government is attempting in this Bill to ban or outlaw it. From discussions we have had with our legal advisers we believe the Bill will do this.

It is of interest to note that the definition of "Pyramid selling scheme" included in the Bill has been copied almost word for word in the South Australian legislation; it has been copied almost word for word by the Commonwealth Government in its Trade Practices Bill. I noticed in the press yesterday an announcement by the Minister for the Australian Capital Territory that he is proposing to outlaw pyramid selling, and I have no doubt that for the legislation proposed in Canberra he also will copy the definition included in this Bill.

The Government considers that it has made a serious and solid attempt to get rid of pyramid selling in Victoria because it believes the community has demanded it, as have members on all sides of the House. The Government, therefore, has made a genuine attempt to achieve that end in the Bill.

As has been said about the Small Claims Tribunals Bill, this is experimental legislation. If at some future date there appear to be loopholes—some of the people concerned are pretty clever at getting around the law, although the Government believes it has made it as difficult as possible—the Government will be prepared to re-examine the legislation. The Government considers that the Bill as drafted will genuinely, honestly and effectively achieve the objectives which, I repeat, are supported by all members of this Parliament.

Another reason why the Government could not accept the amendment moved by the honorable member for Reservoir is that it would negate the whole Bill. I remind honorable members that the Bill deals not only with pyramid selling but also with four important matters. The first is the reconstitution of the Consumer Affairs Council. I do not propose to go into details, but honorable members are aware of the announcement which I made in this regard. From the debate thus far, I have gained the impression that the reconstitution of the council has the general support of honorable members, and for that reason I consider that the amendment cannot be accepted.

Another important matter—about which some reference was made today—is that provision is made in the Bill for proceedings to be instituted on behalf of consumers by the newly-appointed Director of Consumer Affairs. The Bill provides for the Director of Consumer Affairs to be appointed, for staff to be appointed and for the director to institute court proceedings in certain circumstances on behalf of consumers for redress. The Government would meet the costs involved. That is another reason why the Bill as a whole should not be rejected.

I now come to the contentious area of pyramid selling. I consider that I have dealt with this question sufficiently. The definition and the penalties provided in the Bill will achieve the results which the Government desires, and with which I believe the whole House agrees. I also gleaned from the observations of honorable members that there is no opposition to the clause regarding garment marking in the Bill and that honorable members want that clause passed. If the passage of the Bill is delayed, its provisions will not come into force soon enough. Therefore the Government will not accept the amendment moved by the honorable member for Reservoir.

I wish to make two further short references. Many representations have been made to the Government about this Bill. As I indicated previously, one representation was made by Mr. Miller. An amendment was made in a previous measure as a result of his observations. All of the matters raised by him on this Bill have been examined and no particular amendment arising from them will be made. Strong representations have been made to the Government on behalf of direct-selling agencies. Each one of the representations has been examined by the Government in minute detail, and after due and full consideration the Government will not at this stage accept the proposals. The Government considers that the definition which it is desired to alter is more satisfactory as drafted.

Mr. ROSS-EDWARDS.—Do you think the ordinary legitimate door-to-door seller will be protected?

Mr. RAFFERTY.—That is a fair and good question. I have outlined what the Government has sought to do. We have defined pyramid selling, and, if an organization currently adopts practices which fall within the definition of pyramid selling, it will be outside the law. The definition of "Pyramid selling scheme", which is contained in sub-section (1) of proposed new section 32A, as contained in clause 6, is fairly extensive. Judging by the examples which have been given by honorable members, all the circumstances which must obtain to bring a person within the definition would rarely if ever apply to what I would term the "legitimate operator". However, they would apply to persons who have been operating pyramid selling schemes.

A similar situation arose when the Government introduced legislation relating to unordered goods. Some organizations felt that the legislation which was passed by Parliament impinged upon their operations. On a number of occasions they came and saw me and officers of the department. What they asked, in effect, was: "Will you please alter your legislation to fit our operation?" Our answer was, "On the contrary, we believe you must make a change in your operation to fit the legislation passed by Parliament." The same procedure would obtain here. I believe everybody recognizes that there are many legitimate organizations and persons engaged in door-to-door selling in this State, and I am sure that any one who falls within the definition in the Bill, which I believe has been copied by the other States, will have little difficulty in altering his procedures to comply with the law.

I should like to make one reference to the representations that were made to the Government about altering the definition. It is a quotation from an article in the London *Times* of Wednesday, 27th June, 1973, headed "Ending the Misery of Pyramid Selling". It is a lengthy article but I will read only the following two short paragraphs:—

> The Fair Trading Bill was considered in Committee in the House of Lords on Monday night
>
> Some of the companies trading in this way promptly dropped their practice of paying fees to participants for new recruits or requiring the recruit to pay a fee to the person who recruited him.

It has been suggested to the Government that the reference to this subject should be deleted from the Bill but in retaining it I take great account of this observation. In moving to insert five new sections in the English Act, Lord Drumalbyn, Minister without Portfolio, said—

> Instead, the new participant's initial investment was represented as being payment for an inventory of goods and, in some cases, for training. Recruiting methods continued unchanged. Those aspects of the companies' operations concerned with profiting from the sales of franchises had been abandoned and they now purported to have adopted a system of direct selling of goods rather than the selling of franchises.

That indicates that some of the firms operating under the British legislation would be similar to those

operating in Australia and if the value of the definition is reduced, in another guise possible doorways for pyramid selling in this State which we are seeking to close would be opened.

I repeat that the Government has made a genuine and honest attempt to deal with this insidious practice and I believe honorable members from all parties want the proposals to be brought into being. I have done my best to allay the fears of honorable members who raised these questions. The Government has given deep consideration to what they have proposed but I believe the legislation as drafted will be effective and in the best interests of the community. I repeat that the Government cannot accept the amendment moved by the honorable member for Reservoir.

Mr. LIND (Dandenong).—I have listened with interest to the speech of the Minister, both on the original Bill and on the amendment, but the Opposition intends to persist with its amendment to the second-reading motion. Members of the Opposition realize that there is a good deal of merit in the Bill. A number of the items dealt with are of the utmost importance but we can take no responsibility for this poor attempt to stop pyramid selling. The Minister stated in his second-reading speech that he was making an appeal to all parties in the Parliament to hasten the passage of this legislation because he wished to protect people from the "sharks" in this particular calling. At page 584 of *Hansard* the honorable gentleman is reported as having said—

> I repeat again that these pyramid sellers are completely without ethics or pity. They are a dark blot on our business and community life.

All honorable members agree with that but we believe the Bill as it stands will not stamp out these practices and, although the Minister is desirous of doing this before Christmas, we consider that it would be better if the whole approach were reconsidered.

Pyramid selling has been with us for a considerable time and I have taken a close interest in it because of the ruin and havoc it has caused in homes and the lifelong friendships it has broken up. It has even resulted in fisticuffs and on occasions law suits, but it has been a dreadful thing and the Minister has known about this for a long time. In April, 1971, an advertisement in the guise of an article appeared in the Australian edition of the *Reader's Digest*. Honorable members know the type of stories the *Reader's Digest* publishes. It contains a tremendous amount of American ballyhoo, a good deal about religion and animals and included every month is an article on the "greatest character I have met" or words to that effect. The advertisement to which I refer is headed, "The Greatest Character I Know" and it would bring tears to the eyes to read about this wonderful Ash Marshall and Larry Huff praising each other and one telling the other what a wonderful asset Golden Products was going to be to Australia. They were going to save Australia from all the pollution that it had ever known.

The honorable member for Geelong told the House that there are always suckers waiting to be sucked in. The suckers are in the community and they are duped by articles such as this. The word "Advertisement" appears in very small print at the top of the page. People read it and believe it to be something great and true, and before they know where they are they find themselves enmeshed in this scheme, and instead of being enriched they are made much poorer.

I have said that the Minister and the Government have known about pyramid selling for a long time. The honorable gentleman is reported at page 581 of *Hansard* as having said

that the Bill will outlaw pyramid sellers in Victoria. The honorable gentleman also said—

> Pyramid sellers are unscrupulous and dangerous men. They deliberately crawl into the lives of their unsuspecting victims to trap, cheat and rob them of their savings.

In an article in the *Age* of 11th October, 1971, two years ago to the month, the Minister described pyramid selling as an insidious practice which cannot be allowed to continue unabated. He urged firms engaged in these marketing practices to rationalize their sales methods and then said—

> If they don't, then I shall not hesitate to advise the Government to introduce legislation for the control of pyramid selling.

That was two years ago and now he has brought in a Bill. However, within a few weeks of Christmas he cannot wait long enough to allow the Bill to be amended so that the insidious practice of pyramid selling can be properly killed off.

These people who came to our country and who were described by the Minister as having their last crack at the folks to get all their money out of them before Christmas have wonderful ways of winning people over to sign their agreements. One would need to be a Philadelphia lawyer to understand the agreements. One could think they were documents to buy the town hall or something to that effect. They set out in great detail what Golden Products will do but do not say what Golden Products will do to the people who come into the scheme. I have photostats of their actual agreement documents and they are worth reading.

When pyramid selling was at its height, all sorts of people fell for the "three-card trick" and in my area a school mothers' club, after a talk, decided this would be a good way to raise some money. They were to put $270 into the scheme. One of them telephoned me about it. I told her to wait until I had a look at the documents. She went back to the mothers' club and was able to dissuade the other members from joining the scheme. There are many of these people and one cannot say all the mothers in the mothers' club were suckers waiting to be sucked in. They see headings about getting rich, and they see advertisements which are quite misleading in the paper. The following advertisement appeared in the *Age* on Tuesday 25th September, 1971:—

> Part time men, women and married couples to earn up to $500 a month with Golden Products International in door-to-door sales.

Another pamphlet distributed by these people sets out how much the dealer can earn. It says that he will make 30 per cent profit on one line, 42 per cent on another, and 50 per cent on another.

The honorable member for Reservoir pointed out that, for one scheme in the United States of America, when the thirteenth level of the pyramid was reached, the whole population of the country would be employed. I thought of the story about the chess board from *The Magic of Numbers* by Robert Tocquet, translated by Dennis Weaver. According to the legend, Sessa invented the game of chess and the King of Persia asked him what he wanted as a reward. Sessa said he wanted one grain of corn on the first square of the board with double the number on each succeeding square. The total number of grains could only be expressed in a 20-figure number. To make the concept tangible, it is pointed out that the total production of the earth through several centuries would not be enough to produce such a number of grains and, further, to count them at the rate of five per second, would take 1,170 million centuries.

That is the effect of a pyramid and that is what people who become involved in pyramid selling do not realize. It is the old story of the ten-shillings club, or the chain letter which asks people to send the letter on to so many of their friends and

ten shillings to the person named at the top of the list. But only those at the top of the list receive anything. This happens with pyramid selling. I know people who were dancing with joy because they thought they were becoming rich quickly. They got many of their friends to enter the scheme but then the bubble burst.

From the same source as the story of the grains of corn comes the story about the four horseshoes. If a blacksmith fixed a price of one penny for the first nail, twopence for the second, fourpence for the third, and so on, with each shoe requiring eight nails, by the time he shod a horse and used 32 nails his price would be 4,294,967,295 pennies, or some 17 million pounds. These stories indicate the insidious nature of pyramid selling.

Another pamphlet uses the heading, "New Product for Australia—Australia will be the first". It is a colourful pamphlet introducing a new Golden Products product. People thought it would be good to be in a first venture, but then came the fall. Wonderfully-worded letters were sent out by these people and I have a copy of one in which they offered to buy back the goods one man had bought. They blamed the people who sold the goods at cheap rates to stores which, in turn, sold them at great discounts, for the collapse of their organization. What they said did not matter very much because these people had no intention of going on with the proposal to buy back the goods. When the heat was really on, they sent out a heart-rending letter pointing out how good Golden Products was and how bad everybody else was. They said that really bad people had come into the movement and that the trouble was caused by these parasites who sold their products to retail stores. They blamed everyone else and praised themselves to the sky. People took this as a beautifully-written letter pointing out the facts and explaining how the collapse occurred.

But then Golden Products and others made the mistake of writing to all members of Parliament saying that Golden Products was not a pyramid-selling organization but a multi-level distributor. The letter pointed out that the Australian Association of Multi Level Distributors had been formed. The honorable member for Reservoir referred to this letter but I direct further attention to it. It was dated 20th December, 1971. It states, *inter alia*—

> It is therefore the association's intention to prepare a fully-documented submission which will be presented to the Federal Attorney-General before the end of December, 1971.

I saw nothing of that submission and I later wrote to a Labor senator asking whether he could obtain it for me. After some time had elapsed, he sent the submission to me. I am amazed that anyone would have the impudence to put such a submission to an Attorney-General. The people who made the submission pointed out that they wished to expel people who engaged in what they called "this nefarious practice" and that they did not want to have anything to do with it. They said that they were multi-level distributors and not pyramid sellers. They referred to the criticism that pyramid selling was like a chain letter with everyone eventually becoming a distributor. They stated that the criticism could not apply to them and that it exemplified the difference between multi-level and pyramid selling as the members of the Australian Association of Multi Level Distributors relied for their continued success on the sale of products rather than the unlimited proliferation of distributorships. That statement must have been made tongue in cheek. These people did not sell their products. They did not even try to sell them. I know of no home in which these products were used. Yet these people spoke of the tremendous growth of their business.

They suggested to the Federal Attorney-General that he bring in a Bill and, in an appendix to the submission, set out what the Bill should

do and suggested penalties not exceeding $100 for offences against one provision and a penalty not exceeding $500 for offences against another. They also had the audacity to say—

It is thought that penalties against the company ought more appropriately exceed those against individuals.

At the same time they were issuing glamorous advertisements and pamphlets in many colours. One was entitled, "Operation Expansion", and spoke of such things as "Your expansion year", "A dream come true", "Everything is beautiful", "Leadership expansion—Second Australian general school". Another pamphlet referred to the second annual international general school in Chicago, United States of America, in September, 1971, and invited people to enter a competition to win a "fabulous trip to Chicago", with all expenses paid, and a brand new, custom-built, air-conditioned company car in the "exciting" contest.

It is not much use talking about suckers because these people took in more than suckers. They also put out an "Extra special bulletin" to announce more promotion, and re-produced photographs of these smiling men who were ruining people all the time. A "Special announcement" at the bottom of one pamphlet states—

1 per cent retirement plan doubled.

Because of the growth of Golden throughout the world the company has decided to share its increasing profits with you—our distributors. The 1 per cent retirement plan has now been increased to 2 per cent retrospective to 1st September, 1971.

Another pamphlet is headed "Golden Expands Its Corporate Team". It expanded its corporate team, all right. It built up its get-rich-quick activities and then sent people off to other lands. The two-year wait for this Bill means that many of these rogues will escape the net. Somebody suggested that they would next try to sell, to black people in Africa, soap that would whiten them. I know that some of these people went to Japan and Canada.

One part of the propaganda of these people was directed to the part they said they would play in protecting the environment. I am amazed that the Government did not appoint some of these great men to the Environment Protection Council. One pamphlet states that the overwhelming proportion of detergents and cleansers pose a dreadful threat to the waterways but, that overnight, the picture changed. It states—

Here is the story of how and why it changed, in Lee Drake's words :

"Larry Huff and I founded Golden Products on April 1, 1970. With the help of Ash Marshall and a few other men we began the job of building what was virtually a brand-new industry.

Another pamphlet contains a pledge which should appear on every Environment Protection Authority letter—

Last, but certainly not least, there's the Golden Pledge. In the midst of our success we have not forgotten our fine objectives. For, by always standing by them, we can't help but attain everything we seek.

In the name of our children and our children's children, we are solemnly pledged:—

To combat the water pollution by hard detergents with every means within our power.

To manufacture, distribute and sell only those products which will not harm the environment.

To make available, as widely as possible, satisfactory, safe alternatives to those products which tend to threaten our country's ecology and fauna.

To care for the well-being of mankind, his home and his environment, and to build our business and its policy on that care.

To provide the opportunity for people who share our concern to join in our endeavours.

To generously reward, through our system of free enterprise, those who through their dedication and hard work help us promote the Golden cause.

That's the Golden Pledge. Let's always keep it in mind.

The corporate staff have all asked me to extend their thanks and very best wishes to everyone concerned. Needless to say, my heart-felt thanks and admiration are also with you, and may you continue to see your dreams fulfilled.

God bless you all— LEE DRAKE

It has been known for a long time that these people were in our midst. The Opposition has brought this matter up time and time again. The Labor Party knows that the Minister wants this Bill to go through so that the legislation will be in effect by Christmas. However, it does not believe that this Bill will close the net ; some will escape. Then there will be all sorts of inquiries to find out who is who and what is what. The amendment moved by the Opposition should be accepted by the House. The Government could then bring in a Bill which would completely outlaw pyramid selling or multi-level distribution—whatever it is called. This type of organization should not be allowed to exist. It still flourishes in other countries despite having been banned. The Opposition believes that there is much good in other provisions of the Bill but it is disappointed with the provisions relating to pyramid selling.

I have mentioned only Golden Products but there are other similar organizations. Many decent young people I know, who mortgaged their homes and lost their all in this scheme, have suffered miserably. They were not fools, they were ordinary people who were duped by this colourful literature. The publication of what appeared to be a true story in the *Reader's Digest* must have caused a tremendous amount of heartache. I appeal to the Government to reconsider its attitude on this matter so that, unlike the quote from Shakespeare, "We have scotched the snake, not killed it", we will kill it outright.

Mr. ROSS-EDWARDS (Leader of the Country Party).—Obviously all honorable members are desperately keen to outlaw pyramid selling in Victoria as soon as possible because it is a cancer which has grown and had tragic effects on many people. The main tragedy is that it has taken so long for legislation to be introduced. As the honorable member for Dandenong said, the need for legislation was evident two years ago and yet the Government has waited until the end of 1973 before making a move. The Country Party is in something of a dilemma.

Mr. WILCOX.—You have been in a dilemma before.

Mr. ROSS-EDWARDS.—The Country Party has been in a dilemma in the past, and at times it has been the conscience of the Government. Through being in a dilemma the party has saved the Government from making tremendous mistakes, and if its numbers had been greater it might have saved the Government from even more.

If the amendment moved by the Opposition is agreed to, the delay in passing the legislation will be even longer. The honorable member for Dandenong said earlier that a two years' delay was far too long, and now he says that the Government should wait a little longer. The amendment merely suggests that the Bill should be withdrawn. Perhaps other parts of the measure could wait but I disagree that those provisions relating to pyramid selling should be further delayed because they are a vital part of the Bill. Accordingly, the Country Party has decided to oppose the amendment.

Naturally, like members of the Opposition and of the Government party, members of the Country Party have had many submissions made to them by genuine direct-selling organizations. It would be very serious if people who conducted a legitimate business were penalized by this all-embracing net. At a conference which was attended by members of my party, the Minister gave an undertaking that direct sellers who carried on a legitimate business would have nothing to fear from the measure and would be able to carry on their businesses. Time will tell, and I ask the Minister to keep a close eye on this provision.

Firstly, the Country Party wants to ensure that the genuine direct seller is not unduly affected and that he can continue with his present operations. Secondly, the party wants to ensure that the pyramid seller is caught in the net. I hope the Minister will have sufficient staff to police the legislation. Earlier today the honorable gentleman spoke at some length on how badly he had been treated in the Budget and referred to the shortage of staff. In this case, it is essential that the provisions of the Bill must be policed. Even if legislation has not been policed in the past, this measure must be policed.

The Country Party asks the Minister to give those undertakings, and I am confident that he will give them. The Country Party will oppose the amendment and will watch the implementation of the Bill with the greatest of interest. It is important to the business community that the measure should be effective and that its provisions are properly policed.

Mr. GINIFER (Deer Park).—The Government seeks to prohibit pyramid selling but unfortunately the cumulative effects of the provisions in the Bill will allow loopholes to exist. A better approach would be accurately to define pyramid selling and apply the penalties. The presence of loopholes will leave room for legal argument, and when offences have been reported and appeals are in process pyramid selling will continue until the appeals are decided.

The Minister took some satisfaction from what was inherent in the Commonwealth and the South Australian legislation. Sub-section (1) of section 61 of the Commonwealth Trade Practices Act states—

> A corporation shall not obtain a benefit or seek to obtain a benefit from a pyramid selling scheme.

Something as purposeful as that provision is required in this Bill. There should be no ambiguity or room for legal argument.

I also direct attention to correspondence received by the honorable member for Reservoir from Mr. King, the South Australian Attorney-General. The Minister appeared to take some comfort from the South Australian legislation and led honorable members to believe the provisions of that legislation were included in the Bill before the House. In a letter dated 27th October, 1973, the South Australian Attorney-General states—

> I enclose herewith a copy of the South Australian Pyramid Sales Bill. You will see that it differs from the Victorian Bill in certain respects.
>
> The principal difference is that we have endeavoured to isolate the conduct which is objectionable and to prohibit it outright. We hope that this prohibition, coupled with the regulation making power which will enable us to catch variants on the theme, will be effective to stamp out pyramid selling practices.

The purpose of the amendment to the motion is to enable the Government to reintroduce a Bill which is based on the South Australian legislation and in which the position will be made clear. To give honorable members some idea of the sort of provision that is required, sub-clause (1) of clause 7 of the South Australian Bill provides—

> If a person resident in the State who is or intends to be a participant in a pyramid selling scheme—
>
> (*a*) makes any payment to or for the benefit of the promoter or any of the promoters of the pyramid selling scheme or to or for the benefit of any participant in the pyramid selling scheme;
>
> and
>
> (*b*) is induced to make that payment or any part of that payment by reason that the prospects is held out to him of receiving payments or other benefits in respect of the introduction or participation of other persons who become participants in the pyramid selling scheme,
>
> any person to whom or for whose benefit that payment is made shall be guilty of an offence.

Those are the principles which the Opposition believes should be included in this measure. The problem is not so much that of persons

going from door to door or of the entrepreneur who has a genuine business. The problem in pyramid selling is that people are induced to invest in a scheme with the object of making a profit and when the goods on offer are supplied they are rarely used by the purchaser. Sub-clause (3) of clause 7 of the South Australian Bill provides—

> If the promoter or any of the promoters of a pyramid selling scheme or any other person acting in accordance with the pyramid selling scheme, by holding out any such prospect as is referred to in paragraph (*b*) of subsection (1) of this section, induces or attempts to induce a person resident in the State—
>
> (*a*) if he is already a participant in the pyramid selling scheme, to make any payment to or for the benefit of the promoter or any of the promoters or to or for the benefit of a participant in the pyramid selling scheme;
>
> or
>
> (*b*) if he is not already a participant in the pyramid selling scheme, to become such a participant and to make any such payment as is referred to in subsection (1) of this section,
>
> the person inducing or attempting to induce that person to make such a payment is guilty of an offence.

The omission of these provisions is the weakness in the measure before the House. On this basis, the Opposition would like the Bill to be withdrawn and the Government to give serious consideration to the introduction of a new Bill incorporating those aspects which will do a lot more to get rid of pyramid selling than the present Bill.

Mr. BIRRELL (Geelong).—The Opposition should reconsider its suggestion about bringing the recruitment of persons for payment within the definition of "pyramid-selling scheme". In the definition of a "pyramid selling scheme" in subsection (1) of proposed section 32A of the principal Act, as contained in clause 6, paragraph (*d*) refers to the recruiting of persons for payment on the basis that the prospect is held out to a participant in the trading scheme of receiving payment for the introduction of other persons to become participants in the trading scheme. To put that into another form of English, one could say the prospect is held out to a participant in the trading scheme for the recruitment of persons for payment. I do not know whether my interpretation of English is any different from that of members of the Opposition but I should think that this definition is virtually, in formal language, what the Opposition is talking about.

Mr. GINIFER (Deer Park).—Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I direct your attention to the fact that the honorable member for Geelong has spoken during the second-reading debate since the honorable member for Reservoir moved his amendment.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. K. H. Wheeler).—That is correct and the point of order is upheld.

The House divided on the question that the words proposed by Mr. Simmonds to be omitted stand part of the motion (the Hon. K. H. Wheeler in the chair)—

Ayes	48
Noes	19
Majority against the amendment ..	29

AYES.

Mr. Austin	Mr. Meagher
Mr. Balfour	Mr. Plowman
Mr. Baxter	Mr. Rafferty
Mr. Billing	Mr. Ramsay
Mr. Birrell	Mr. Reese
Mr. Borthwick	Mr. Ross-Edwards
Mr. Burgin	Mr. Rossiter
Mr. Crellin	Mr. Scanlan
Mr. Dunstan	Mr. Skeggs
Mr. Ebery	Mr. Smith (*Bellarine*)
Mr. Evans (*Ballaarat North*)	Mr. Smith (*Warrnambool*)
Mr. Evans (*Gippsland East*)	Mr. Stephen
Mrs. Goble	Mr. Suggett
Mr. Guy	Mr. Templeton
Mr. Hamer	Mr. Thompson
Mr. Hann	Mr. Trewin
Mr. Jona	Mr. Vale
Mr. Lacy	Mr. Whiting
Mr. Loxton	Mr. Wilcox
Mr. McCabe	Mr. Williams
Mr. McClure	Mr. Wiltshire.
Mr. MacDonald	
Mr. McKellar	*Tellers:*
Mr. McLaren	Mr. Chamberlain
Mr. Maclellan	Mr. Wood.

NOES.

Mr. Amos	Mr. Mutton
Mr. Bornstein	Mr. Roper
Mr. Curnow	Mr. Simmonds
Mr. Doube	Mr. Stirling
Mr. Edmunds	Mr. Trezise
Mr. Fordham	Mr. Wilkes
Mr. Ginifer	Mr. Wilton.
Mr. Holding	*Tellers:*
Mr. Jones	Mr. Fogarty
Mr. Lind	Mr. Kirkwood.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was read a second time and committed.

Clause 1 was agreed to.

Clause 2 (Act to be divided into Parts and Divisions).

Mr. RAFFERTY (Minister of Consumer Affairs).—I have taken careful note of the observations made by all honorable members who spoke during the second-reading debate. I am fully conscious of the concern expressed by members of the Opposition and of the Country Party, and their observations will be kept under close scrutiny.

The Leader of the Country Party asked questions relating to two matters. Firstly, he asked whether I would give an undertaking that when the proposed legislation was promulated and took effect it would be kept under close observation and scrutiny. The answer is, "Yes" because the Government is anxious that the proposed legislation should work effectively. Secondly, the honorable member asked whether the legislation would be policed. I am glad that the Premier and Treasurer is present because he is aware, as are other honorable members, that to police the measure and keep it under observation will require the necessary staff. An application will be made to the Treasurer for that purpose.

The clause was agreed to, as was clause 3.

Clause 4 (Consumer Affairs Council.)

Mr. WILTON (Broadmeadows).—I raise with the Minister a matter which has been raised in the past by the Opposition when similar proposed legislation has been before Parliament. Clause 4 amends section 5 of the principal Act by providing for the establishment of a new council. Proposed sub-section (1) of section 5 states, *inter alia*—

> There shall be a council appointed by the Minister to be called the Consumer Affairs Council consisting of a person appointed as Chairman of the Council and at least seven and not more than nine other members of whom—
>
> (*a*) at least one shall be a person experienced in the manufacture of consumer goods;
>
> (*b*) at least one shall be a person experienced in retail trading in consumer goods.

Therefore, the manufacturing section of industry will be represented. The Chamber of Commerce will also be represented. Paragraph (*c*) of the proposed sub-section provides that—

> at least one shall be a person experienced in advertising or sales promotion activities . . .

Therefore, the public relations aspect is covered. Paragraph (*d*) states—

> at least four (including at least two women) shall be persons representing the interests of consumers.

I consider that the best single authoritative body in the State that represents consumers is the Victorian Trades Hall Council. The council, because of its structure and representation, covers every field of the consuming public.

Mr. WHITING.—The honorable member means Bourke's.

Mr. WILTON.—No. The Trades Hall Council—through its affiliated trades and labour councils, which are domiciled in various parts of the State, such as Bendigo, Ballarat and the Latrobe Valley—is the largest single consumer representative group in the State. It would be reasonable for the Minister to invite that body to submit a name to him as one of the four referred to in proposed paragraph (*d*).

I am sure that the Trades Hall Council could provide a suitable female to represent women on the Consumer Affairs Council. I ask the

Minister to give this suggestion serious consideration. There is nothing new about it, for the Trades Hall Council is represented on a variety of bodies; indeed, many statutes provide that the Trades Hall Council shall nominate a representative for various organizations.

In this way the Minister can make a direct contribution towards involving the trade union movement in consumer affairs. It is involved in consumer affairs to some extent already through particular unions which have taken an interest as a result of representations from their members, and within the operations of the Trades Hall Council itself various matters concerning consumer affairs have arisen. It is a responsible organization, which is properly constituted, and which, through the Australian Council of Trade Unions, has national affiliations. If the Minister were to agree to my suggestion, the Consumer Affairs Council would reap the benefit of having the whole of the trade union movement working with it at not only State level but also national level.

The honorable gentleman would bring about a closer liaison between manufacturers, retailers and the Trades Hall Council. The council has a very close relationship with them through unions, wages boards, and so on. Responsible organizations in Victoria would become totally involved, and I am sure they would be prepared to play a serious role in the affairs of the Consumer Affairs Council.

The clause was agreed to.

Clause 5, relating to proceedings on behalf of consumers.

Mr. LIND (Dandenong).—I do not know whether this clause permits organizations which act in the interests of consumers to lodge complaints with the Consumer Protection Bureau. I am thinking, in particular, of the Australian Consumers Association and the Consumers Association of Victoria. The magazine *Choice* often issues warnings to the public concerning certain products and certain trade practices. Unfortunately, the editions of *Choice* for May and August, 1967, are not available from the Library, but I have obtained an extract of an article which appeared in *Choice* of September, 1968. It is entitled "True or False?", and states—

> The "Rena"-ware salesmen have just left. We were told that the use of aluminium cookware is forbidden in seven countries, which include Germany, Belgium, France and Russia. In Russia, the use of aluminium cookware has been forbidden for 25 years.
>
> Furthermore, they stated that doctors advise the patients with arthritis, stomach ulcers, indigestion and a few other complaints not to use aluminium cookware. They gave several names of doctors and patients, and said that complaints had actually disappeared after starting to use the stainless steel cookware.
>
> Could you tell me, and probable other *Choice* readers, how far these statements are true?

The articles which appeared in the publication in 1967 stated, in effect, that if a Rena-ware salesman came to a person's door he should tell the salesman to go away and, if he would not do so, the police should be called because the salesmen were crooked. Can the Minister inform the Committee whether an organization such as the Australian Consumers Association can bring a case on behalf of consumers?

Mr. JONES (Melbourne).—The Minister did not comment upon what I said about the right of the Director of Consumer Affairs to take collective action in the case of a number of people who have been defrauded of a small sum.

It seems that under sub-sections (1) and (2) of proposed section 9B the Bill contemplates that the director shall take action on behalf of perhaps one or two specifically named defrauded consumers where perhaps the total amount involved is a matter of $1,000 or up to $2,500. My point, however, is that there might be a collective action in

which the total sum involved might be well in advance of $2,500—perhaps $10,000 or $15,000—but in which the individual amounts involved were only, say, $5 or $10, although a large number of consumers were concerned. This could happen as a result of a mail fraud.

Mr. WHITING.—How do you spell that?

Mr. JONES.—Either way; the Deputy Leader of the Country Party can choose his option. Because of the small amount involved, the person defrauded normally would not go to a solicitor. I believe the director should be able to take this action as a nominal plaintiff, although I concede that difficulty would be experienced in distributing whatever money is recovered.

Can the Minister inform the House whether he has an effective deterrent in his sights which, if not incorporated in this Bill, would be included in the next amending Bill brought before the Parliament.

Mr. SIMMONDS (Reservoir).—One difficulty is that, in the past, with organizations such as Reid Murray, the directors of the company have not been readily traceable. I think the Director of Consumer Affairs should be empowered to take action to locate the people responsible as well as being empowered to launch prosecutions.

Mr. RAFFERTY (Minister of Consumer Affairs).—In reply to the honorable minister for Dandenong, I think it is spelt out quite clearly that if the director is satisfied, he may institute proceedings. For that reason, I think the association referred to by the honorable member could bring any matter to the attention of the director for consideration and decision as to what, if any, action should be taken.

I am not able to answer the honorable member for Reservoir positively, but I will have the matter he raised examined before this measure reaches another place.

The clause was agreed to.

Clause 6, providing, *inter alia*—

After Division 4 of Part II. of the Principal Act there shall be inserted the following Division :—

32A. (1) In this Division, unless inconsistent with the context or subject-matter—

. . . . . .

"Pyramid selling scheme" means a trading scheme under which—

. . . . . .

(*a*) goods or services are or are to be provided by a promoter of the trading scheme;

(*b*) goods or services provided or to be provided by a promoter of the trading scheme are or are to be provided by a participant in the trading scheme (whether or not as servant or agent of a promoter) to or for another participant in the trading scheme;

(*c*) all or a substantial number of transactions or negotiations for the provision of goods or services are or are to be effected or take a place of business of a promoter of the scheme or of the participant provvding the goods or services; and

Mr. RAFFERTY (Minister of Consumer Affairs).—I move—

That, in paragraph (*b*) of the definition of "Pyramid selling scheme", as contained in sub-section (1) of proposed section 32A, the words "another participant in the trading scheme" be omitted with the view of inserting the words "other persons".

The reason for this amendment is that it is usual for pyramid selling schemes to be organized on several levels of participants and the Bill as drafted envisages that practice. However, it has been brought to notice that promoters of schemes, by reducing the number of levels of participants to one, could put their operations outside the definition in the Bill. Substitution of the words "other persons" for the words "another participant in the trading scheme" will mean that all schemes will be included.

Mr. SIMMONDS (Reservoir).—This matter has been well canvassed. The Opposition was of the view that there would be loopholes in this clause and congratulates the Minister on his having found one. Perhaps of most concern is the period which will elapse between the operations

of pyramid sellers and the launching of a prosecution. By the time action can proceed, it is probable that the seller will have completed his activities.

The CHAIRMAN (Mr. McLaren).—Order! I direct the honorable member's attention to the fact that the Committee is discussing a specific amendment.

Mr. SIMMONDS.—I do not think the amendment does anything to change the situation.

The amendment was agreed to.

Mr. RAFFERTY (Minister of Consumer Affairs).—I move—

That, in paragraph (c) of the definition of "Pyramid selling scheme", as contained in sub-section (1) of proposed section 32A, after the word "services", where first occurring, the words "to other persons" be inserted.

The reason for this amendment is that, from submissions received since the Bill was introduced, it appears that the transactions or negotiations referred to in the clause, which take place at a place other than a place of business of the promoter of the scheme, are being confused with transactions which relate to the recruitment of other participants. The addition of the words "to other persons" makes it clear that the transactions referred to are sales to the final user. The promoters or participants may recruit other participants at their places of business, but an essential feature of pyramid selling schemes is that sales to the end user are to be effected, in the main, away from the place of business of either the promoter or the participant, often on a door-to-door basis.

The amendment was agreed to.

Mr. ROPER (Brunswick West).—Earlier in this debate I asked whether referral selling would be banned under this clause. I was hoping that the Minister would be able to set my mind at rest. Referral selling has been described in many reports of the former Consumer Protection Council, which recommended that it be banned. I should be grateful if the honorable gentleman could explain whether referral selling will be banned under this clause. Over the past few weeks I have had a good deal of experience with these referral schemes, and, not being aware of them previously, I was extremely perturbed when speaking to constituents who have been caught by them. I ask the Minister to give an assurance that referral selling schemes will be banned.

Chain letters have also been mentioned in the reports of the former Consumer Protection Council. I should be grateful if the Minister could inform the Committee of the position of chain letters under this clause.

Mr. RAFFERTY (Minister of Consumer Affairs).—The clause does not deal directly with the matters raised by the honorable member for Brunswick West. He has raised two important matters which are not specifically dealt with in the Bill but they are currently under surveillance by the Government. I have taken a note of what the honorable member has said.

Mr. WHITING (Mildura).—Clause 6, as amended, is a new provision to the Act and is designed specifically to ban pyramid selling. The Leader of the Country Party and the honorable member for Gippsland South who spoke during the second-reading debate informed honorable members that one of the concerns of the Country Party is whether sufficient inspectors to police these provisions adequately will be provided. I appreciate that the Minister is satisfied that the legislation will cover the type of operation to which everybody is completely opposed but it appears that the Consumer Protection Bureau will not have sufficient staff, as it has only five inspectors.

On quickly looking through the Act, one finds the type of inspection work these people are expected to perform. The inspectors are concerned with furniture regulations, merchandise marks, footwear regulations, safe design and construction

of goods, unordered goods, door-to-door sales, trading stamps or coupons, false or misleading advertising, mock auctions, misleading marking of prices and now, on top of that formidable list, there will be pyramid selling activities.

It is fairly obvious from all reports on these operations that in the initial stages there will be a good deal of investigation work for these officers to carry out. I make a strong plea to the Minister and to the Premier to ensure that additional inspectors are appointed for the purpose of implementing the supervision required by clause 6. It will be completely useless if this legislation is enacted and then, as the Minister said when speaking on another matter, it is found that the problem is too big or too small to concern the inspectors from the Consumer Protection Bureau.

On behalf of the Country Party I make a strong plea for additional inspectors to be appointed so that the provisions of this clause can be fully implemented at the earliest possible opportunity.

Mr. RAFFERTY (Minister of Consumer Affairs).—I have listened to the views of the Deputy Leader of the Country Party and I agree with what he has said. I thought I had indicated twice during the debate that a special application has been made to the Premier and Treasurer for the appointment of additional staff for this purpose. I hope additional staff will be forthcoming so that the necessary policing of the proposed legislation can be carried out.

Mr. GINIFER.—Perhaps something will appear in the Supplementary Estimates.

Mr. RAFFERTY.—I am hopeful that an authorization will appear in the Supplementary Estimates, as a special application has been made to the Premier and Treasurer on the basis that additional staff must be provided or the job cannot be done.

I wish to make an observation on paragraph (*b*) of sub-section (3) of proposed section 32B. I again issue a warning to the public about the dangers of pyramid selling. Despite all the publicity that has been given to these schemes in recent weeks and the fact that the Government was introducing legislation which in some form or other would be supported by the House, I heard again last night of people going along to recruiting meetings. I do not know whether it occurred, but I heard that such a meeting was likely to be held. Under the provision I have mentioned, a promoter of, or a participant in, a pyramid-selling scheme under certain circumstances is himself liable to a heavy penalty or imprisonment. I again issue a warning to people in the community to think seriously before they attend these meetings and enter into a commitment which may render them liable to payment of a fine or a term of imprisonment once this Bill becomes law.

Mr. WHITING (Mildura).—Sub-section (1) of proposed section 32E provides—

> The Governor in Council may, by notice in writing published in the *Government Gazette*, declare that the provisions of this Division, other than this section do not apply or did not at a particular time apply to a specified trading scheme or to specified transactions forming part of a trading scheme or to a specified trading scheme promoted by a specified person.

The provision gives the Governor in Council power to declare certain schemes not to be pyramid selling schemes. Whilst it is probably a wise provision to have within the proposed legislation, it is one of which I trust the Minister will be wary. As has been explained in the debate, misleading names could be used for this type of activity, and schemes which should come within the ambit of the Bill could well be exempted. I realize that the Minister cannot reply to my comments but I hope every effort will be made to make sure that exemptions

under this provision are not readily made but will be fully researched before an exemption is granted.

Mr. RAFFERTY (Minister of Consumer Affairs).—Despite the comments of the Deputy Leader of the Country Party about the Minister not being able to reply, the Minister is competent to answer the question. The Governor in Council will take into consideration all relevant forms of administration under the proposed legislation. When the Bill was being drafted, the approach suggested by the honorable member for Mildura was considered. I am able to inform the honorable member that under the normal administration of any Act, what he suggests would be one of the first things that any Minister or any Government would look at and, of course, that will be done on this occasion.

Mr. SIMMONDS (Reservoir).—If an exemption is to be granted by the Governor in Council the Minister of Consumer Affairs will be forced to make a judgment on what is basically a level of exploitation within the present structure of our society. A great deal of exploitation already takes place and legislation of this type will necessarily mean that the honorable gentleman will have to make a judgment on the basis of what is, in his terms, a legitimate enterprise. One of the reasons why the Opposition adopted the stand it did was that it considered there was a need for an improved definition to avoid this situation occurring. I can reiterate only that it is unsatisfactory where the Minister is finally in the position of being able to say what is a pyramid-selling scheme.

Mr. ROPER (Brunswick West).—I wish to add something to the problem I raised earlier about referral selling. I am grateful to the Minister of Consumer Affairs for stating that he would be looking into this problem. I should like to point out that the 1969 report of the former Consumer Protection Council recommended that the practice of referral selling be abolished. In the next couple of weeks I hope to have completed my case histories on the referral selling scheme. When I have completed them I shall make them available to the Minister—I hope other honorable members will do likewise—and then the Consumer Affairs Council will recommend that speedy action follow.

Mr. BURGIN (Polwarth).—If this Bill is to be passed before the Christmas recess the Minister needs to make an accurate assessment of the firms which may be exempted and a rather quick assessment of those firms to be exempted, otherwise many legitimate firms, which are trading as they should trade, will be disadvantaged while these exemptions are being considered. So, I suggest that it is essential that the Minister's department should start investigating these firms now so that when the Bill finally becomes law the department will know whether these firms should be exempted.

The clause, as amended, was adopted, as were the remaining clauses.

The Bill was reported to the House with amendments, and passed through its remaining stages.

MUNICIPALITIES ASSISTANCE BILL.

Mr. HAMER (Premier and Treasurer) presented a message from His Excellency the Governor recommending that an appropriation be made from the Consolidated Fund for the purposes of the Municipalities Assistance Bill.

Mr. HAMER (Premier and Treasurer) moved for leave to bring in a Bill with respect to financial assistance to municipalities in respect of rates deferred or excused under section 298 of the Local Government Act 1958.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

VICTORIAN DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (AMENDMENT) BILL.

Mr. BALFOUR (Minister for Fuel and Power) presented a message from His Excellency the Governor recommending that an appropriation be made from the Consolidated Fund for the purposes of the Victorian Development Corporation (Amendment) Bill.

Mr. BALFOUR (Minister for Fuel and Power) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to amend the Victorian Development Corporation Act 1973 and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

PENSIONS SUPPLEMENTATION BILL.

Mr. HAMER (Premier and Treasurer).—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

Its purpose is to implement the proposal announced in the Budget in relation to the up-dating of superannuation pensions. Last year pensions under the State superannuation scheme were increased in accordance with the change in the cost of living as measured by the movement in the consumer price index between 30th June, 1967, and 30th June, 1972. It is now proposed to increase these pensions on the basis of the change in the index between 30th June, 1972, and 30th June, 1973.

Pensions which commenced on or before 30th June, 1972, will receive an increase of 8·5 per cent payable from the first pension pay period in December next. *Pro rata* increases will be applied to pensions which commenced during the financial year which ended on 30th June, 1973. These will be at the rate of one-twelfth of 8·5 per cent for each month or part of a month for which the pension was paid prior to 1st July, 1973. Similar increases will be made to pensions payable from the Police Pensions Fund to retired police officers and to police widows.

The Bill also provides for the annual adjustment of superannuation pensions, and pensions payable under the Police Regulation Act, in accordance with future changes in the consumer price index. Provision is made for these adjustments to operate from the first pension pay day occurring in December of each year.

As announced in the Budget, the Bill provides that one half of the cost of the proposed up-dating of pensions in 1973 will be met from the Consolidated Fund and the other half will be provided from the Pensions Supplementation Fund. In future years the cost of updating of superannuation pensions will be shared by these funds respectively in the ratio of five to two. This is in accord with the basis on which the cost of pensions is shared under the provisions of the Superannuation Act.

As I mentioned earlier, the pension increases provided for in this Bill are to be paid on the first pension pay day in December next, namely, 13th December, 1973. This will involve some 21,000 pensions. The Bill will need to become law before the payments can be made and I trust that the House will agree to deal with it expeditiously. I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of Mr. KIRKWOOD (Preston), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Tuesday, November 13.

ADJOURNMENT.

DISADVANTAGED SCHOOLS — STAFF LEAVE FOR SPORTING PURPOSES — FLINDERS LANE POLICE STATION.

Mr. THOMPSON (Minister of Education).—I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

Mr. ROPER (Brunswick West).—I direct to the attention of the Minister of Education a matter which stems from the answer he gave to a question I asked of him today relating to the employment of ancillary staff.

The Government is to be commended at least for commencing to employ ancillary staff. But one part of the answer implies that disadvantaged schools will not wish to use their money for the employment of this staff. Many schools in the disadvantaged areas would be able to put money to good use for the employment of casual staff such as bus drivers and interpreters, or to help around the school as teaching aides and so on. They would be specifically employed by the school for a particular purpose.

My concern stems from the fact that consideration does not seem to have been given to the present weakness both in primary and secondary schools that employees are not covered for workers compensation, and that they may suffer disadvantage if something happens whilst they are so employed. I ask the Minister of Education to consider the legal situation if schools employ such people and pay them with the money they are to get from the State and Federal Governments.

Mr. LOXTON (Prahran).—I direct to the attention of the Premier the fact that when members of the Public Service and the Teaching Service are chosen to represent this State in the sporting arena, if they apply for leave on a Friday or a Monday they are automatically docked four days' pay. This is an injustice, and I would like the honorable gentleman to take up the matter.

Mr. JONES (Melbourne).—I should have liked to direct my question to the Chief Secretary if he had been present because it concerns a matter I have spoken about in this House—the proposed closing of the police station in Flinders Lane near Degraves Street. This matter concerns myself, my constituents and the police involved. I raised the matter last week by way of a question without notice and the Minister indicated that there would be an answer. I pointed out that there was urgency, that it was proposed that the police station should be closed down on the last day of the month. Today is 30th October.

The following day I asked the Chief Secretary another question on the same subject, and the honorable gentleman rebuked me for raising the matter and said that it had been referred to him only 24 hours earlier and he had not time to answer. When I tried to raise the question again during question time the following day, I did not get the call. I wanted to raise the matter on the motion for the adjournment of the sitting on Thursday afternoon, but as the Minister was not present it seemed futile to raise it in his absence. When I raised the matter today I was unwise enough to ask a question which permitted an answer with the monosyllable "Yes", with that quickness of wit which made the Minister so popular with primary school children. I still do not know the answer, and we are getting towards the end of the month. Presumably, if the police station is to be closed it will be closed tomorrow and I should like to know the reason why.

The Chief Secretary, who looks much more replete than I feel, is now back in the House. I should like to know what is the position of the police station, which is the only one to serve that particular area of the Golden Mile and which gives service to a large number of organizations. I should like to know the reasons why it is proposed to close it down.

Mr. HAMER (Premier and Treasurer).—The honorable member for Prahran apparently feels that an injustice is being done to public servants who are lucky enough to represent their State in sport—no doubt cricket. I shall investigate why they are docked four days' pay for two days' absence, and let him have an answer.

Mr. THOMPSON (Minister of Education).—In reply to the honorable member for Brunswick West, it is true that earlier this year the Government said that an additional $1 mil-

lion would be made available to assist schools that had fallen behind in the provision of desirable equipment. It would also have no objection to using this money, 40 per cent of which has already been distributed, to engage the services of people in important projects or possibly on a part-time basis. Over recent years, for example, primary schools under the exemption provision of the Public Service Act have been engaging part-time secretarial staff for a quarter or half of the week.

If schools in the honorable member's area desire to use money in this way, the Government will be pleased to hear from them and endeavour to make it possible. The Government is also considering firm proposals for extending the powers of school councils and committees. However, after discussion with the authorities interested in educational administration, including teachers' unions, the Government has been requested to defer a final decision. The proposed legislation to extend the powers of the school committees and councils will be deferred until the autumn sessional period.

Mr. ROSSITER (Chief Secretary).—I would not wish to be desultory in my approach to the question raised by the honorable member for Melbourne. In his usual snide fashion he referred to me as a primary school teacher as though that were a thing of desuetude, a thing of rags, that primary school teachers in this State were not a great force for good in the community. I was never one of those. I hope I have been a force for good in the community in my time. The honorable member should get his facts straight. A letter is winging its way through the post now describing to the honorable member the reasons why the Flinders Lane police station will be closed. I shall not bore the House with the reasons. They will be manifest to the honorable member tomorrow morning.

The motion was agreed to.

The House adjourned at 10.45 *p.m.*

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE.

The following answers to questions on notice were circulated:—

PAY-ROLL TAX.

(Question No. 252)

Mr. WILTON (Broadmeadows) asked the Treasurer—

What amount was collected by the Treasury, for the financial year 1972–73 through pay-roll tax levied on wages paid to staff employed by State school councils?

Mr. HAMER (Premier and Treasurer).—The answer is—

$1,149,547.

ACQUISITION OF BENDIGO LAND.

(Question No. 299)

Mr. McCLURE (Bendigo) asked the Minister of Education—

1. How many properties in the area to be acquired between the State College (Bendigo) and the Bendigo Institute of Technology have been valued for the estates branch of the Education Department, and when it is expected that offers to purchase will be made to the present owners?

2. When the remaining properties to be acquired in the area will be valued, and offers to purchase made?

Mr. THOMPSON (Minister of Education).—The answer is—

1. Seventeen properties being valued and offers will be made after valuation reports have been received and considered.

2. Certain technical material now being obtained, upon receipt of which instructions will be issued for valuations. At this stage, not possible to predict when offers will be made.

EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES FOR DEAF CHILDREN.

(Question No. 300)

Mr. McCLURE (Bendigo) asked the Assistant Minister of Education—

In respect of each of the years from 1964 to 1973—

1. How many children from country areas have been enrolled at kindergartens or schools for the deaf at—(*a*) Melbourne; and (*b*) Ballarat, indicating the number at each kindergarten or school?

2. What was the age of each of these children at the time of enrolment?

3. In which towns or postal districts each of these children lived prior to enrolment, and at which kindergarten or school they enrolled?

4. How many of these children were accommodated in hostels at—(*a*) Melbourne; and (*b*) Ballarat?

5. How many parents moved to—(*a*) Melbourne; and (*b*) Ballarat, following the enrolment of their child at a kindergarten or school for the deaf?

Mr. DIXON (Assistant Minister of Education).—The answer is—

1. Note: In the period 1964 to 1973 some children have been enrolled in more than one school or kindergarten for deaf children.

The table which follows shows the number of children from country areas who have been enrolled at kindergartens or schools for the deaf at (*a*) Melbourne and (*b*) Ballarat in respect of each of the years from 1964 to 1973.

—	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	Totals
(*a*) *Melbourne*:											
Glendonald	16	16	4	6	5	4	8	11	5	7	82
Victorian School for Deaf Children	4	10	4	2	9	7	6	6	6	9	63
Princess Elizabeth Kindergarten	9	6	11	17	9	10	14	12	9	6	103
Monnington	..	..	..	..	..	1	9	13	11	13	47
(*b*) *Ballarat*:											
Ewing House	3	4	4	8	3	8	4	9	3	1	47

In addition hundreds of children throughout the State in normal schools have been assisted by the visiting teacher service for deaf children, the headquarters of which is located in Melbourne, with country centres at Ballarat, Traralgon, Geelong and Shepparton.

2. The table below shows the ages of children from country areas at the time of enrolment in respect to the years 1964 to 1973.

—	Glendonald	Victorian School for Deaf Children	Princess Elizabeth Kindergarten	Monnington	Ewing House
0–11 months	..	..	..	5	..
1–1.11	..	..	..	24	..
2–2.11	..	..	..	12	1
3–3.11	..	..	50	5	17
4–4.11	..	1	39	1	12
5–5.11	3	11	13	..	3
6–6.11	33	31	1	..	4
7–7.11	13	6	..	..	1
8–8.11	4	2	..	..	5
9–9.11	11	3	..	..	..
10–10.11	8	3	..	..	2
11–11.11	4	1	..	..	1
12–12.11	1	1	..	..	1
13–13.11	2	1	..	..	..
14–14.11	2	2	..	..	..
15–15.11	1	1	..	..	..
Total	82	63	103	47	47

3. The following table shows the towns in which children from country areas lived prior to their enrolment at a kindergarten or school for the deaf, in respect of each of the years from 1964 to 1973:—

—	Glendonald	Victorian School for Deaf Children	Princess Elizabeth Kindergarten	Monnington	Ewing House
Ararat	..	..	..	1	1
Arcadia	1	..	..	..	..
Ardmona	1	..	..	..	..
Bacchus Marsh	1	..	..	1	1
Bairnsdale	..	..	1	1	..
Ballarat	..	5	..	5	19
Bandianna	1	..	..	..	..
Bayles	1	..	..	..	..
Beaufort	..	..	..	..	1
Beechworth	..	..	1	..	..
Benambra	..	1	..	..	..
Bendigo	1	1	..	1	3
Bengworden	1	..	..	..	..
Boolara	..	..	..	1	..
Broadford	1	1	1	..	..
Buckrabunyule	..	..	..	..	1
Buninyong	..	..	..	..	1
Burrumbeet	..	1	..	..	..
Carngham	..	..	..	..	1
Charlton	..	..	..	..	1
Cobram	2	..	1	..	..
Cockatoo	..	..	1	..	..
Cohuna	2	1	2	1	..
Colac	..	2	2	1	..
Coldstream	1	..	..	..	..
Coleraine	..	..	1	..	..
Corio	3	1	2	1	..
Corowa	..	..	1	..	..
Corryong	..	..	2	..	..
Cowes	..	..	1	..	..
Cranbourne	1	..	..	..	..
Deniliquin	..	1	1	..	..
Dooen	..	..	..	..	1
Drouin	2	..	1	..	..
Eaglehawk	..	..	..	1	..
Echuca	1	2	2	1	..
Edenhope	..	1	..	1	..
Erica	..	..	..	..	..
Euroa	1	..	..	1	..
Fish Creek	..	1	1	..	..
Foster	..	..	1	1	..
Geelong	7	3	19	5	2
Glenthompson	..	..	..	..	1
Great Western	..	..	..	..	1
Harrietville	..	..	..	1	..
Hastings	1	..	..	1	..
Hay New South Wales	..	..	1	..	..
Healesville	..	..	1	..	..
Heathcote	1	..	..	..	..
Hillside	1	..	..	..	..
Hopetoun	1	..	..	..	..
Horsham	..	1	..	1	2
Hurstbridge	1	..	..	1	..
Inverloch	1	..	..	..	..
Kallista	..	1	1	..	..
Kerang	..	..	..	1	..
Kilmore	..	..	1	1	..
Koo-Wee-Rup	1	..	..	..	..
Koroit	1	..	..	..	..
Korumburra	2	1	1	..	..
Kyabram	2	..	..	..	..
Kyalite	..	..	1	..	..
Kyneton	..	1	..	..	..
Lah	..	..	..	1	..
Langwarrin	1	..	..	..	..
Launching Place	1	..	..	..	..

—	Glendonald	Victorian School for Deaf Children	Princess Elizabeth Kindergarten	Monnington	Ewing House
Laverton	3	1	4	..	..
Leongatha	1	3	1	..	..
Leopold	..	..	1	..	..
Lockhart New South Wales	..	..	1	..	..
Longlea	..	1	..	..	..
Macedon	..	..	1	1	..
Maffrra	..	..	1	..	..
Maryborough	1	..	..	..	..
Menzies Creek	1	..	..	..	..
Mernda	..	..	..	1	..
Merricks North	1	..	..	..	..
Milawa	..	..	1	..	..
Mildura	..	1	1	1	1
Mirboo North	..	1	..	..	..
Mittyack	1	..	..	..	..
Moe	..	2	..	..	..
Monbulk	..	..	2	..	..
Mortlake	..	..	..	..	1
Morwell	..	2	3	1	..
Moulamein New South Wales	..	..	1	..	..
Mount Beauty	1	..	1	..	..
Mount Best	..	..	1	..	..
Mount Evelyn	2	..	..	..	..
Mudgegonga	1	..	1	..	..
Murchison	1	..	..	..	..
Nagambie	..	..	1	..	..
Nar Nar Goon	1	..	..	..	..
Neerim South	..	1	..	..	..
Newborough	..	1	1	..	..
Newham	1	..	..	..	..
Newlyn North	..	..	..	..	1
Noojee	1	..	..	..	..
Numurkah	..	..	1	..	..
Ocean Grove	1	..	..	..	..
Orbost	..	1	1	1	..
Penshurst	..	..	..	..	2
Pirron Yallock	..	..	..	..	1
Portland	..	..	1	3	..
Red Cliffs	1	..	..	..	..
Rochester	1	..	1	..	..
Romsey	1	1	1	..	..
Rosebud	..	1	..	..	..
Rutherglen	..	1	1	..	..
Sale	..	1	2	2	..
Seymour	3	1	1	..	..
Shepparton	..	2	3	..	..
Somerville	..	1	1	..	..
Springhurst	..	..	1	..	..
Stanhope	1	..	..	1	..
Stawell	..	..	..	1	1
Streatham	..	..	..	1	1
Sunbury	1	..	..	..	..
Swan Hill	..	1	..	..	..
Tallangatta	..	..	1	..	..
Tarwin	..	..	1	..	..
Tatura	..	1	2	..	..
Tesbury	1	..	..	1	1
Tongala	1	..	..	..	..
Torquay	..	..	1	..	..
Traralgon	4	1	2	1	..
Truganina	..	1	1	..	..
Tungamah	..	..	1	..	..
Tyabb	1	..	..	..	..
Tasmania	..	..	1	..	..
Upper Beaconsfield	..	2	1	..	..
Wandin	1	..	..	..	..

—	Glendonald	Victorian School for Deaf Children	Princess Elizabeth Kindergarten	Monnington	Ewing House
Wangaratta	..	1	..	..	..
Warragul	..	1	..	1	..
Warrnambool	1	1	..	..	1
Werribee	3	1	2	..	..
Whittlesea	1	..	..	..	..
Wilby	..	1	..	..	..
Willaura	..	..	..	..	1
Willow Grove	..	1	1	..	..
Wingeel	..	1	..	..	..
Wodonga	..	..	1	..	..
Woodend	..	..	1	..	..
Woorak	..	1	1	..	..
Yackandandah	1	..	..	..	..
Yarragon	..	1	1	..	..
Yarram	..	..	1	..	..
Yarrawonga	..	1	1	1	..
Yerong Creek	1	..	..	..	..

4.

(*a*) *Melbourne*
Glendonald (John Cannon House)—82
Victorian School for Deaf Children—62
Princess Elizabeth Kindergarten—95
Monnington—Nil.

(*b*) *Ballarat*—24.

5.

(*a*) *Melbourne*
Glendonald—Nil
Victorian School for Deaf Children—1 (family)
Princess Elizabeth Kindergarten—8 (families)
Monnington—Nil.

(*b*) *Ballarat*
Ewing House—21 (families).

PAY-ROLL TAX CONCESSIONS.

(Question No. 312)

Mr. TREZISE (Geelong North) asked the Minister for Fuel and Power, for the Minister for State Development and Decentralization—

1. Which firms in the Geelong area have applied for pay-roll tax concessions?

2. How many of such applications have been approved?

3. What are the qualifying conditions for Geelong firms to obtain such a concession?

Mr. BALFOUR (Minister for Fuel and Power).—The answer supplied by the Minister for State Development and Decentralization is—

1. To date, 78 industries within the Geelong area have lodged applications for declaration as special establishments within the meaning of sub-section (1) of section 2 of the Decentralized Industry Incentives (Pay-roll Tax Rebates) Act 1972, No. 8383.

However, this number is still subject to increase because the Act provides for applications to be received up until 30th November. No list of applicants can be provided because the Act specifically precluded the divulging of any information relating to the affairs of any firm making application under the Act.

2. Seventy-six will be approved.

3. Subject to the discretionary powers of the Governor in Council, the criteria for declaration as a special establishment are laid down in sub-sections (2), (3) and (4) of section 2 of the Decentralized Industry Incentives (Pay-roll Tax Rebates) Act 1972, No. 8383.

PENTRIDGE PRISONERS.

(Question No. 342)

Mr. JONES (Melbourne) asked the Minister of Agriculture, for the Minister for Social Welfare—

1. How many prisoners were held at Pentridge prison on 1st October, 1973?

2. What were the countries of birth of these prisoners, expressed in numbers and as a percentage of the whole?

Mr. I. W. SMITH (Minister of Agriculture).—The answer supplied by the Minister for Social Welfare is—

1. 1,002.

2. Because of the many prisoner movements—receptions, discharges, transfers, court appearances—on any one day, I am unable to supply the information requested. However, statistics are kept, over the whole year, of the birth places of all prisoners received and the following is the latest such table:—

BIRTH PLACES OF PRISONERS RECEIVED 1ST JULY, 1972—30TH JUNE, 1973.

Birth places	Males	Females	Total	Percentages
Victoria	7,649	290	7,939	59.7
New South Wales..	932	90	1,022	7.7
Other Australian States	1,336	98	1,434	10.8
New Zealand	119	11	130	1.0
British Isles	835	29	864	6.5
Other British possessions	9	16	25	0.2
Europe	1,517	65	1,582	11.9
Asia	36	..	36	0.3
North and South America	28	1	29	0.2
Other countries	225	2	227	1.7
Total	12,686	602	13,288	100.0

EXPENDITURE OF MINISTRY OF ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS.

(Question No. 350)

Mr. A. T. EVANS (Ballaarat North) asked the Treasurer—

Whether he will now supply details of estimated expenditure of the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs as promised by him in answer to the question without notice asked on Wednesday, 19th September last?

Mr. HAMER (Premier and Treasurer).—The answer is—

Details of the estimated expenditure by the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs in 1973–74 are as follows:—

	$
1. Salaries	364,200
2. Travelling and subsistence	24,600
3. Office requisites	10,800
4. Public relations	26,400
5. Incidentals	15,600
6. Postage and telephone	15,600
7. Motor vehicles	18,000
8. Fuel, light and power	6,000
9. Assistance	6,000
10. Education	51,200
11. Lake Tyers and Framlingham	60,000
12. House maintenance	66,000
13. Capital works	135,000
14. Hostels and centres	15,600
	815,000

This estimated expenditure is to be met from:—

	$
Budget allocations—	
Current account: Division No. 690	410,000
Works and services account	310,000
Revenue estimated to be received into the Aboriginal Affairs Fund from rents, loan repayments, house sales and donations	95,000
	815,000

This provision excludes funds to be provided directly to the Ministry by the Australian Government.

MORWELL DISTRICT TOTALIZATOR AGENCIES.

(Question No. 352)

Mr. AMOS (Morwell) asked the Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation—

1. What amounts were invested by punters in the 1972–73 financial year at each Totalizator Agency Board agency within the electoral district of Morwell?

2. What total amount in winning bets was paid from each such agency?

3. Whether it is proposed to establish any further agencies within the electoral boundaries of Morwell; if so, what areas are proposed for this development?

Mr. DIXON (Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation).—The answer is—

	$
1. Mirboo North	101,229
Morwell	143,474
Traralgon	1,253,605
Yallourn	414,642
	1,912,950

2. I regret that there are no payout figures available but they would be approximately 85 per cent. of turnover.

3. I am advised by the general manager that the Totalizator Agency Board does not propose to seek approval to establish any further agencies in this area at present as it is considered that the coverage available is adequate.

ANCILLARY STAFF FOR SCHOOLS.

(Question No. 360)

Mr. ROPER (Brunswick West) asked the Minister of Education—

Further to his letter of 26th September to the honorable member for Brunswick West—

1. Whether he can indicate when the discussions regarding the employment of ancillary staff will be concluded and nominate a date on which he will be able to make a statement on the matter?

2. Whether disadvantaged schools will be able to use special moneys made available as a result of the Karmel report to employ ancillary staff?

Mr. THOMPSON (Minister of Education).—The answer is—

1. The decision to employ additional ancillary staff in schools next year has already been made and details were announced in the Premier's Budget speech. Some 1,000 additional such staff will be provided for the next school year.

2. There should be no need for schools to use the special moneys made available to them as a result of the Karmel report to employ ancillary staff.

COMMONWEALTH SCIENCE LABORATORIES.

(Question No. 365)

Mr. ROPER (Brunswick West) asked the Minister of Education—

Since the introduction of the Commonwealth science laboratory programme—

1. How many State schools have received science laboratories costing in excess of $25,000?

2. What amount has been made available for science facility capital works at Brunswick, Brunswick Girls, Coburg, Strathmore, and Pascoe Vale Girls high schools, Brunswick and Coburg technical schools, and Moonee Ponds central school, respectively?

3. Whether there are plans for expenditure on science facilities in any of the above schools in the near future; if so, what plans?

Mr. THOMPSON (Minister of Education).—The answer is—

1. One hundred and eighty.

2 and 3. Captal funds for science facilities have been made available as follows:—

Brunswick High School: Nill. The school's existing science facilities are considered adequate.

Brunswick High School: Nil. The secondary division is at present considering feasibility plans for additions to this school which will include science facilities.

Brunswick High School: Nil. The technical schools division does not consider it economically desirable to provide new science facilities at this school at present in view of its ultimate aim to replace buildings at Brunswick Technical School.

Coburg Technical School: A contract for additions at this school has recently been let. It includes the provision of one Commonwealth science laboratory.

Coburg High School: Science facilities to Commonwealth standards are included in the new 3-story block currently under construction. The cost is being met from works and services funds.

Pascoe Vale Girls High School: $19,617 to date. It is also proposed to provide a new 2-room Commonwealth science block during 1974–75 financial year.

Strathmore High School: $59,281. No further science facilities are planned at this time.

Central schools do not come under any post-primary provisions for Commonwealth science facilities.

COMMONWEALTH SECONDARY LIBRARIES.

(Question No. 366)

Mr. ROPER (Brunswick West) asked the Minister of Education—

Since the introduction of the Commonwealth secondary libraries programme—

1. How many State schools have received Commonwealth secondary libraries?

2. How many schools had libraries of Commonwealth standard prior to the introduction of the Commonwealth scheme?

3. Whether Brunswick, Brunswick Girls, Coburg, Strathmore and Pascoe Vale girls high schools; Brunswick and Coburg technical schools and Moonee Ponds central school, respectively, have received Commonwealth secondary libraries?

4. Whether there are plans for the construction of Commonwealth secondary libraries in any of those schools and what is their place on the priority list?

Mr. THOMPSON (Minister of Education).—The answer is—

1. Sixty-one State schools have received Commonwealth secondary libraries.

2. None.

3. Of the schools named, Coburg and Strathmore high schools have received Commonwealth libraries.

4. Brunswick High School, Brunswick Girls High School, Pascoe Vale Girls High School and Brunswick and Coburg technical schools will receive Commonwealth libraries in the future. The Moonee Ponds Central School is not eligible for assistance under the States Grants (Secondary School Libraries) Act. Information regarding the priority list for Commonwealth libraries is confidential and it is not proposed to make the list available. Priorities are subject to review from time to time depending upon changing circumstances.

MARYBOROUGH TECHNICAL COLLEGE.

(Question No. 367)

Mr. CURNOW (Kara Kara) asked the Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation—

Whether the Maryborough Technical College is eligible for a grant from the Department of Youth, Sport and Recreation to recondition basketball and tennis courts owned by the Victorian Railways Institute but used solely by the college?

Mr. DIXON (Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation).—The answer is—

I would be prepared to give consideration to such an application upon receipt of details of the proposal, including details of the land tenure of the property. However, it would be necessary for such an application to be submitted through the City of Maryborough which would be required to incorporate it in its priority list of youth, sporting and recreational facility projects which it recommends to the department. The question of priorities is a matter for the municipality and whether a subsidy would be available would depend on the resources of my department and the position of the project on the priority list.

SPEECH THERAPY CENTRES.

(Question No. 384)

Mr. ROPER (Brunswick West) asked the Assistant Minister of Education—

What is the staffing establishment for each of the speech therapy centres?

Mr. DIXON (Assistant Minister of Education).—The answer is—

There is no official staff establishment for speech therapy centres. At present there is a total staff of 43 spread throughout the State.

PEDESTRIAN OVERPASS FOR FOOTSCRAY.

(Question No. 396)

Mr. FORDHAM (Footscray) asked the Chief Secretary—

In view of the decision of the Road Safety and Traffic Authority that a low priority rating be given to the construction of a pedestrian overpass at the intersection of Geelong Road and Barkly Street, Footscray, referred to in the answer to question No. 731 asked on 28th November, 1972, what were the statistical data on which the decision was based in terms of—(*a*) traffic volume; (*b*) the average speed of traffic during the period children are travelling to and from school; (*c*) the number of children crossing the road during this period; (*d*) the age range of the children; and (*e*) the width of the carriageway concerned?

Mr. ROSSITER (Chief Secretary).—The answer is—

(*a*) 1,238 vehicles in the busiest hour when children cross Geelong Road;

(*b*) less than 40 miles per hour when signals are displaying green to Geelong Road;

(*c*) number of children crossing road during period—352;

(*d*) age range—5 to 18 years; and

(*e*) widths of carriageway (skew measurement)—

18-ft. service road
60-ft. carriageway
70-ft. carriageway
24-ft. bus stop
20-ft connection.

MODERN GREEK COURSES AT SCHOOLS.

(Question No. 398)

Mr. ROPER (Brunswick West) asked the Minister of Education—

1. Which schools conduct courses in modern Greek at—(*a*) higher school certificate level; and (*b*) below higher school certificate level?

2. How many students are taking such courses at—(*a*) higher school certificate level; and (*b*) other levels?

3. What are the qualifications in modern Greek of teachers taking courses at—(*a*) higher school certificate level; and (*b*) other levels?

Mr. THOMPSON (Minister of Education).—The answer is—

1.

(*a*) Higher school certificate level: Fitzroy High School.

(*b*) Below higher school certificate level: Collingwood High School
Richmond High School
Richmond Girls High School
Williamstown High School.

2.

(*a*) At higher school certificate level: 12.

(*b*) Below higher school certificate level: 254.

3.

Teaching Qualifications:

(*a*) Higher school certificate, Fitzroy: B.A., Dip.Ed.

(*b*) Below higher school certificate, Collingwood:

1. B.A., Dip.Ed.
2. B.A., Dip.Ed.

Richmond:

1. Dip. of Teaching Modern Greek (Athens).
2. Teachers College Thessaloniki.

Richmond Girls High School:

B.A., T.S.T.C.

Williamstown:

Dip. Modern Greek.

SYNTHETIC ATHLETICS TRACKS.

(Question No. 397)

Mr. ROPER (Brunswick West) asked the Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation—

Whether the Sports and Recreation Council is conducting an inquiry into the provision of athletic tracks, particularly synthetic tracks, throughout Victoria; if so—(*a*) whether the council is receiving submissions from interested organizations; and (*b*) when it is expected that the report will be received by him and whether he will make it public?

Mr. DIXON (Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation).—The answer is—

The Sports and Recreation Council has been requested to conduct an inquiry into the provision and allocation of synthetic tracks throughout Victoria. The Council has requested the Victorian Amateur Athletic Association and the Victorian Women's Athletic Association to assist it in this regard and these organizations are circularizing all affiliated organizations with questionnaires to assist them in their assessment.

It is not expected that the council will be in a position to submit a report for at least another three to four months. I will give favourable consideration to making the report public.

The honorable member will be aware that my department has recently financed the provision of a new synthetic track at Olympic Park. The decision to meet the cost of this track was made after a very detailed investigation of the needs for this track and of the various types of synthetic tracks which are available for construction. These investigations were effected in conjunction with the Sports and Recreation Council and the Olympic Park trustees and after discussions with the Victorian Amateur Athletic Association. There was no doubt at all about the desirability of installing this world class synthetic track which will be one of the best in the world when it is completed. I agreed to finance the construction of the track on the understanding that the Olympic Park trustees would ensure that the track is adequately used to the maximum extent and that it is available generally to responsible athletes and athletic organizations to enable both training and competition to be conducted whenever possible.

LANGUAGE COURSES AT SCHOOLS.

(Question No. 406)

Mr. ROPER (Brunswick West) asked the Minister of Education—

1. Which schools conduct courses in Italian, Serbo-Croat, and Turkish languages at—(*a*) higher school certificate level; and (*b*) below higher school certificate level?

2. How many students are taking such language courses at present?

3. What are the qualifications of teachers taking such courses?

Mr. THOMPSON (Minister of Education).—The answer is—

1. (*a*) No schools teach Serbo-Croat.

(*b*) No schools teach Turkish but one class in Turkish is held at Princes Hill High School Saturday morning classes. There is no higher school certificate examination in Turkish.

(*c*) Italian is taught in eighteen schools. Four of these schools offer Italian at higher school certificate level and fourteen below that level.

2. 1,861 students are taking Italian.

3. The schools, classes and the qualifications of teachers taking Italian are set out on the following page. The teachers are all trained and qualified.

High schools	No. of students I.	II.	III.	IV.	V.	VI.	Total	Highest level	Teacher qualifications
Brunswick ..	29	20	34	30	24	..	142	V.	B.A., Dip.Ed
Brunswick Girls ..	35	28	24	18	10	6	121	VI.	B.A., A.C.T.T., Italian T. Diploma
Essendon.. ..	28	20	29	26	11	..	114	V.	B.A., T.S.T.C.
Fawkner	..	..	51	17	12	..	80	V.	B.A., Dip.Ed.
Fitzroy	27	88	52	21	17	3	198	VI.	B.A., Dip.Ed.
Fitzroy Girls ..	36	44	..	..	..	..	80	II.	B.A., Dip.Ed.
Hadfield ..	..	..	69	48	11	..	128	V.	Six university subjects A.C.T.T.
Glenroy	74	..	..	..	..	..	74	I.	T.S.T.C.
Keilor Heights ..	..	..	..	22	..	..	22	IV.	B.Ed. (Canada)
Moreland ..	..	..	58	32	15	..	105	V.	B.A., Dip.Ed.
Newlands ..	..	..	30	28	22	9	89	VI.	B.A., T.S.T.C., B.A. Hons. Dip. Ed.
Pascoe Vale Girls..	..	35	..	..	..	..	35	II.	B.A., Dip.Ed.
Princes Hill ..	61	62	62	37	..	..	222	IV.	B.A., Dip.Ed.
Richmond Girls ..	27	25	32	10	7	..	101	V.	B.A., Dip.Ed.
Shepparton Girls ..	..	47	..	..	..	..	47	II.	B.A., Dip.Ed.
Swan Hill ..	..	..	64	70	..	..	134	IV.	B.A., Dip.Ed.
Thornbury ..	..	44	..	..	..	6	50	VI.	B.A., Dip.Ed.
Werribee ..	36	32	51	..	..	..	119	III.	B.A., T.S.T.C.
Eighteen schools ..							1,861		

SEWERAGE TREATMENT PLANTS.

(Question No. 408)

Mr. HOLDING (Leader of the Opposition) asked the Minister of Public Works, for the Minister for Local Government—

1. How many sewerage treatment plants the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works has in stock at present?

2. Whether the demand for sewerage treatment plants by land developers is such that all the present stocks are accounted for?

3. What is the current production rate of sewerage treatment plants and how long it takes to produce an individual plant?

Mr. DUNSTAN (Minister of Public Works).—The answer supplied by the Minister for Local Government is—

1. The Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works has seven package waste water purification plants in store and a further fourteen are being manufactured.

2. The seven plants are allocated to be installed.

3. In the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works experience the manufacture of a package plant takes about three months from the date of order. There are at least seventeen firms in Australia making a variety of these plants.

POSITION OF UNDER-SECRETARY

(Question No. 409)

Mr. HOLDING (Leader of the Opposition) asked the Chief Secretary—

Whether he will make available a list of the applicants who nominated for the position of Under-Secretary of the Chief Secretary's Department?

Mr. ROSSITER (Chief Secretary).—The answer is—

No. It has not been the practice to make public the names of applicants for such positions. The applications submitted are treated as confidential and I consider that they should remain so.

REPORT ON LAND TAX ACT.

(Question No. 410)

Mr. AMOS (Morwell) asked the Treasurer—

Whether the inter-departmental committee examining representations made on the Land Tax Act 1970 has completed its report; if so, what recommendations were made concerning the representations of the City of Traralgon, which were presented to the Treasurer by him (the member for Morwell)?

Mr. HAMER (Premier and Treasurer).—The answer is—

The committee has completed its examination of representations and the decisions taken by the Government will be announced when the Land Tax Bill is introduced.

AVONDALE HEIGHTS POLICE STATION.

(Question No. 413)

Mr. GINIFER (Deer Park) asked the Chief Secretary—

In respect of the Avondale Heights police station, whether this station is open 24 hours a day, seven days per week; if so, whether he will investigate why residents are complaining that they have attended at the station both at week-ends and evenings and found the station locked; if not, why?

Mr. ROSSITER (Chief Secretary). —The answer is—

The station is manned for 24 hours each day but, after providing the crew of the divisional van, on some occasions there may be only one man on duty at the station during a particular shift. In cases of emergency, he is required to lock the station in order to give the necessary attention to the call for police services.

I have asked the Chief Commissioner of Police to keep under review the matter of providing additional personnel at the station when manpower resources permit.

BEEF CATTLE.

(Question No. 423)

Mr. AUSTIN (Hampden) asked the Minister of Agriculture—

1. During the last two selling seasons, how many head of beef bred cattle were sold—(*a*) at Newmarket; and (*b*) in each of the major country selling centres, in each of the months of October, November, December and January?

2. How many beef bred cattle are expected to be sold in the corresponding months this year—(*a*) at Newmarket; and (*b*) in each of the major country selling centres?

Mr. I. W. SMITH (Minister of Agriculture).—The answer is—

1. No records are available regarding the sale of beef breeds of cattle as distinct from other breeds of cattle sold in cattle markets in Victoria.

Figures of the total cattle sales (excluding sales of dairy milkers and springers and bobby calves for the markets at Newmarket and the major country cattle selling centres of Dandenong, Wodonga, Hamilton, Bendigo and Ballarat, for each of the eight months requested, are as follows:—

	Newmarket	Dandenong	Wodonga	Hamilton	Bendigo	Ballarat
October, 1971 ..	32,774	12,419	14,015	7,004	9,318	3,298
November, 1971 ..	33,134	17,250	18,627	7,577	7,430	4,990
December, 1971 ..	43,202	13,406	11,867	7,760	4,690	4,014
January, 1972 ..	37,104	18,158	12,586	10,889	4,643	4,641
October, 1972 ..	40,049	21,721	21,428	8,293	13,849	8,245
November, 1972 ..	60,722	21,544	27,774	12,695	9,206	8,794
December, 1972 ..	45,250	20,552	20,457	10,858	7,138	6,402
January, 1973 ..	73,353	26,196	27,501	13,714	6,064	5,453

2. As there are no records available of the sale of beef breeds of cattle in Victoria, it is impossible to forecast likely sales in the future with any degree of accuracy.

Total cattle slaughterings for Victoria in the period from October, 1972, to January, 1973, rose by 41 per cent compared with the same period in 1971–72. This was due to the increase in cattle numbers which had taken place over the previous five years and because of developing drought conditions in many parts of Victoria. Even so, the total cattle population still increased slightly between March, 1972, and March, 1973, and it is estimated by the Australian Meat Board's forecasting committee that there could be an increase in slaughterings of 16 per cent in the period October, 1973, to January, 1974.

The likely increase in cattle sales is much more difficult to estimate because of fluctuations in the sales of store cattle.

ILLEGAL GAMBLING.

(Question No. 424)

Mr. ROPER (Brunswick West) asked the Chief Secretary—

1. Whether the Chief Secretary has received a report on raids led by Detective Inspector F. Silvester to investigate illegal gambling allegedly occurring at premises in Canterbury Road, East St. Kilda?

2. Whether any persons have been charged; if so, with what offences?

Mr. ROSSITER (Chief Secretary). —The answer is—

1. No. Inquiries are still proceeding.

2. No. Again, inquiries are still proceeding.

GOVERNMENT TOURIST BUREAUX.

(Question No. 428)

Mr. B. J. EVANS (Gippsland East) asked the Minister of Health, for the Minister for Tourism—

1. At what locations the Government operates tourist bureaux?

2. How many persons are employed at each location?

3. What was the cost of operating each bureau and what commission was earned by each in 1972–73?

Mr. SCANLAN (Minister of Health).—The answer supplied by the Minister for Tourism is—

1 and 2.

Location	Persons employed
Melbourne, including airport ..	113
Adelaide..	6
Brisbane	4
Sydney	6
Ballarat	4
Bendigo	4
Geelong	5
Mildura	2
	144

3.

	Operating costs	Commission earned
	$	$
Melbourne, including airport	823,963	Not available
Adelaide	61,374	„
Brisbane	42,535	„
Sydney	58,471	„
Ballarat	30,269	„
Bendigo	32,809	„
Geelong	33,579	„
Mildura	20,916	„
	1,103,916	228,720

LAND CONSERVATION COUNCIL.

(Question No. 429)

Mr. B. J. EVANS (Gippsland East) asked the Minister for Conservation—

1. What are the names, addresses and occupations of members of the Land Conservation Council?

2. On how many occasions the council has met, indicating the duration of each meeting, how many members attended on each occasion, and where each meeting was held?

3. What areas or districts have been approved by the Governor in Council for investigation, indicating on what date such approval was given in each case and what stage has been reached in each investigation?

4. On how many occasions each member of the council has visited each area under investigation during the course of such investigation?

Mr. BORTHWICK (Minister for Conservation).—The answer is—

1. The names, addresses and occupations of the members of the Land Conservation Council are as follows:—

Chairman—

Mr. S. G. McL. Dimmick,
Chairman,
Land Conservation Council,
464 St. Kilda Road,
Melbourne, 3004.

Deputy Chairman—

Mr. A. Mitchell,
Chairman,
Soil Conservation Authority,
378 Cotham Road,
Kew, 3101.

Dr. D. S. Wishart,
Director,
Department of Agriculture,
Treasury Place,
Melbourne, 3002.

Dr. F. R. Moulds,
Chairman,
Forests Commission of Victoria,
1 Treasury Place,
Melbourne, 3002.

Mr. C. E. Middleton,
Secretary,
Department of Crown Lands and Survey,
Treasury Place,
Melbourne, 3002.

Mr. A. L. Tisdall,
Chairman,
State Rivers and Water Supply Commission,
590 Orrong Road,
Armadale, 3143.

Mr. E. J. Condon,
Secretary,
Department of Mines,
Princes Gate,
171 Flinders Street,
Melbourne, 3000.

Mr. J. C. F. Wharton,
Director,
Fisheries and Wildlife Division,
632 Bourke Street, Melbourne, 3000.

Dr. L. H. Smith,
Director,
National Parks Service,
240 Victoria Parade,
East Melbourne, 3002.

Mr. C. N. Austin, grazier,
"Willaroo",
Coleraine, 3315.

Mr. J. Landy,
Research and Development Manager,
I.C.I. Australia Ltd.,
Merrindale Research Station,
Dorset Road, Croydon, 3136.

Professor J. S. Turner,
Professor of Botany,
University of Melbourne,
Parkville, 3052.

2. The Land Conservation Council has held 26 regular meetings, two special meetings and has visited areas under study for twenty days. Table A sets out attendances at these meetings.

In addition to meetings of the council, study groups consisting of senior members of the departments represented on council as well as Governor in Council appointees have regularly met to consider the descriptive reports and recommendations which have been prepared by the research staff of the council.

In the case of the south west study area district 1 the council met on five occasions after making a three day inspection of the area concerned in the draft recommendations of the study group. The study group spent three days in considering the draft recommendations prepared by the research staff of the council.

The council held its first meeting in the old Cabinet room, Treasury Place. All other meetings with the exception of visits of inspection have been held at the offices of the Land Conservation Council, 464 St. Kilda Road, Melbourne.

It is not possible to accurately state the duration of each meeting. The council's regular meeting dealing with general matters have usually been morning meetings of approximately four hours' duration. Those meetings dealing with descriptive reports and recommendations usually have occupied at least the whole day.

3. These details are set out in table B.

4. The number of occasions each member of the council has visited a study area during the course of an investigation is not known as members of the council make frequent visits to study areas in the course of their other duties. The council has made detailed field inspections of public land in each study area after submissions on land use have been received and before the council has published its proposed recommendations. The majority of council members also receive regular reports from their officers stationed in each study area.

The council considers draft recommendations prepared by a study group. The council's research staff and other members of the study groups make very frequent visits to the areas under investigation. In many cases these officers reside in (or have resided in) the study area.

TABLE A.

Record of Meetings of the Land Conservation Council.

TABLE B.

Meeting No.	Date	No. attending
1	1st April, 1971	12
2	6th May, 1971	12
3	3rd June, 1971	12
4	1st July, 1971	12
5	5th August, 1971	12
6	7th October, 1971	12
Special meeting	28th October, 1971	11
7	2nd November, 1971	12
8	2nd March, 1972	9
9	4th May, 1972	11
10	6th July, 1972	10
Special meeting	24th July, 1972	10
11	7th September, 1972	10
12	20th September, 1972	10
13	11th October, 1972	10
14	22nd November, 1972	10
15	27th November, 1972	12
16	1st December, 1972	12
17	7th December, 1972	11
18	7th March, 1973	12
19	5th April, 1973	11
20	17th April, 1973	11
21	3rd May, 1973	10
22	7th June, 1973	11
23	21st June, 1973	11
24	2nd August, 1973	9
25	6th September, 1973	12
26	4th October, 1973	11

This does not include meetings of committees of the council.

Study area	Date of approval by Governor in Council	Investigation commenced	State of progress
1. Melbourne area	16th June, 1971 (Reapproval 16th May, 1972)	23rd June, 1971	A descriptive report is expected to be published early in 1974
2. North-eastern area—			
District 1	16th June, 1971 (Reapproval 16th May, 1972)	23rd June, 1971	Final recommendations will be presented in November, 1973
District 2	16th June, 1971 (Reapproval 16th May, 1972)	23rd June, 1971	Descriptive report published in August, 1973. Proposed recommendations are being prepared
Districts 3, 4 and 5	16th May, 1972	28th March, 1973	A descriptive report is expected to be published in 1974
3. South-western area—			
District 1	16th June, 1971 (Reapproval 16th May, 1972)	23rd June, 1971	Final recommendations presented in April, 1973
District 2	2nd October, 1973	..	Not commenced
4. South Gippsland area—			
District 1	16th June, 1971 (Reapproval 16th May, 1972)	23rd June, 1971	Final recommendations presented in October, 1973
5. East Gippsland area— Districts 1 and 2	16th June, 1971 (Reapproval of investigation 16th May, 1972)	28th March, 1973	A descriptive report is expected to be published early in 1974
6. Mallee area	16th June, 1971	24th May, 1972	A descriptive report is expected to be published early in 1974
7. Gippsland Lakes hinterland area	16th June, 1971 (Reapproval 16th May, 1972)	..	Not commenced
8. Alpine area	16th June, 1971	5th September, 1973	A descriptive report is expected to be published in 1975
9. Corangamite area	2nd October, 1973	..	Not commenced
10. North central area	2nd October, 1973	..	Not commenced

DECENTRALIZED INDUSTRIES IN RODNEY ELECTORATE.

(Question No. 431)

Mr. HANN (Rodney) asked the Minister for Fuel and Power, for the Minister for State Development and Decentralization—

1. How many industries in the electoral district of Rodney have been approved as decentralized industries?

2. Which industries in the electoral district have been declared as decentralized industries?

Mr. BALFOUR (Minister for Fuel and Power).—The answer supplied by the Minister for State Development and Decentralization is—

1. Thirty-seven.

2. The approved decentralized secondary industries in the electoral district of Rodney are as follows:—

Cohuna

McGione, Stan Pty. Ltd.
Mawson, E. B. & Sons Pty. Ltd.
Mid-Murray Dairy Co. Ltd.

Echuca

Bowerings and Ramuda Battery Service.
Kevin Brown's Motors and Body Works.
Dench Smallgoods (Echuca) Pty. Ltd.
Echuca Flour Mills Pty. Ltd.
Echuca Foundry and Engineering.
Echuca Masonry Brick Works.
Freeman Bros.
Healey, C. P. & Sons.
Humes Ltd.
Manger and O'Neill Pty. Ltd.
Ricegrowers Co-operative Mills.
Scott's (Echuca) Builders and Plumbers Supplies Pty. Ltd.
Tracey's Echuca Welding Service.
United Bearing Corp. Pty. Ltd.

Girgarre

Girgarre Cheese Co. Pty. Ltd.

Kyabram

John Brown Industries Ltd.
Containers Ltd. (Open Top Group)
Dron Ceramics.
E. & I. Engineering.
Hunter, W. B.
Kyabram Preserving Co. Ltd.
Woodcraft Toys.

Leitchville

Kraft Foods Ltd.

Merrigum

Carnation Company Pty. Ltd.

Mitiamo

Pickles, R. R.

Rochester

Hart, W. G. & Son.
Lawford Engineering Co.
Neat n'Trim Manufacturers Pty. Ltd.
Nelson, Lindsay F. Manufacturing Pty. Ltd.
Permewan Wright Ltd.
The Rochester Co-op. Butter & Canning Co. Ltd.
D. K. Stop Co.

Tongala

Australian Artificial Breeders Pty. Ltd.
Tongala Milk Products Pty. Ltd.

FINANCE FOR NATIONAL PARKS.

(Question No. 433)

Mrs. GOBLE (Mitcham) asked the Minister for Conservation—

1. What amount of money has been allocated each year during the past five years for the acquisition and maintenance of national parks in Victoria?

2. What amount of money will be allocated for this purpose during the current financial year?

Mr. BORTHWICK (Minister for Conservation).—The answer is—

1. Government allocations for national parks purposes during each of the last five years have been as follows:—

—	1968–69	1969–70	1970–71	1971–72	1972–73
(*a*) Allocations to National Parks Fund—	$	$	$	$	$
(i) From Consolidated Revenue ..	97,500	108,500	117,000	145,000	204,710
(ii) From Works and Services Account—					
For land purchase	1,183	161,679	42,352	34,428	201,000
For other purposes	218,243	243,200	245,500	327,750	326,000
(*b*) Allocations to Country Roads Board for roadworks in national parks ..	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000
Total	416,926	613,379	504,852	607,178	831,710

2. Allocations made by Treasury at this stage of the current financial year are as follows:—

	$
(*a*) Allocations to National Parks Fund—	
(i) From Consolidated Revenue	300,000
(ii) From Works and Services Account—	
For land purchase ..	120,000
For other purposes ..	426,000
(*b*) Allocations to Country Roads Board Fund for roadworks in national parks	100,000
	946,000

In addition the National Parks service has participated in the Rural Employment Scheme and Government allocations for this purpose have been as follows:—

1971–72— $75,250
1972–73—$266,000
1973–74— $36,000

HOUSING COMMISSION ACCOMMODATION.

(Question No. 437)

Mr. EDMUNDS (Moonee Ponds) asked the Minister of Transport, for the Minister of Housing—

1. How many applicants were on the Housing Commission waiting lists for the various types of accommodation offered by the commission in the past ten years, including this year to date?

2. How many applicants in each of those years were housed by the commission?

3. How many various units of accommodation were constructed in each of these years, and in this year to date, and what is the projection of constructions for this year?

4. What are the commission's projections of requirements of construction to accommodate applicants for the next three years in each of the types of accommodation, including dependent person units, provided by the commission?

Mr. MEAGHER (Minister of Transport).—The answer supplied by the Minister of Housing is—

1. As at the date quoted, the following number of applications were held by the Housing Commission:—

30th June, 1964	10,718
30th June, 1965	13,778
30th June, 1966	10,799
30th June, 1967	12,809
30th June, 1968	15,301
30th June, 1969	14,295
30th June, 1970	17,182
30th June, 1971	15,774
30th June, 1972	13,663
30th June, 1973	15,866
25th October, 1973	16,428

Details as to categories are not available.

2. This information is not available; however, during the same periods, accommodation in various forms was provided to the following extent:—

1963–64	3,500
1964–65	3,293
1965–66	3,293
1966–67	4,073
1967–68	4,422
1968–69	4,103
1969–70	5,099
1970–71	4,823
1971–72	5,213
1972–73	4,983

1st January, 1973, to 25th October, 1973—

1,602

3. (*a*) Units constructed—

Financial year	Houses	Flats Elderly persons	Flats Family	Excess Accommodation	Total
1963–64	1,563	259	502	..	2,324
1964–65	1,898	483	307	..	2,688
1965–66	1,793	430	473	..	2,686
1966–67	2,260	700	156	..	3,116
1967–68	1,187	21	1,006	..	2,214
1968–69	1,289	302	540	..	2,131
1969–70	1,459	206	885	100	2,650
1970–71	1,967	381	509	30	2,887
1971–72	1,505	627	601	..	2,733
1972–73	805	559	602	20	1,986
1st July, 1973, to 30th September, 1973	225	19	..	..	244
Total	15,951	3,977	5,581	150	25,659

(*b*) Projection of construction for this year—

—	Houses	Flats Elderly persons	Flats Family	Total
Estimated completions 1973–74	1,410	285	413	2,108

4. This information is not available. Each year the commission formulates its building programme for the ensuing twelve months having regard to the funds available to it, and having due regard to the number of applications on hand for each type of accommodation.

VANDALISM AT WALHALLA.

(Question No. 440)

Mr. AMOS (Morwell) asked the Minister of Education—

Further to his answer to question No. 394 asked on 23rd October, 1973, whether he will ask the Education Department to request the applicant school to inform the Walhalla Improvement League of its intended visit?

Mr. THOMPSON (Minister of Education).—The answer is—

I would regard it as part of the normal organization of any school excursion that the appropriate authorities be notified of the intended visit. A notice to this effect will be placed in the *Education Gazette.*

CHURCHILL TOWNSHIP.

(Question No. 441)

Mr. AMOS (Morwell) asked the Minister of Transport, for the Minister of Housing—

What are the total costs to the Government of establishing the Churchill township, indicating—(*a*) land acquisition costs; (*b*) present housing costs; (*c*) the cost of pro-

viding services such as sewerage, water supply and roads; and (*d*) the cost of educational and other facilities?

Mr. MEAGHER (Minister of Transport).—The answer supplied by the Minister of Housing is—

Costs as at 30th June, 1973, were— $

(*a*) Land acquisition costs .. 910,432

(*b*) Present housing costs (includes shopping centre) 5,449,800

(*c*) Costs of providing services such as sewerage, water supply and roads .. 4,734,540

(*d*) Not known.

MELBOURNE HARBOR TRUST EQUIPMENT.

(Question No. 446)

Mr. STIRLING (Williamstown) asked the Minister of Public Works—

Whether the Melbourne Harbor Trust has a new equipment programme for floating plant; if so, whether tenders for such plant will be called for locally?

Mr. DUNSTAN (Minister of Public Works).—The answer is—

1. Melbourne Harbor Trust does have a new equipment programme for floating plant. Two tugs are at present under construction in the Melbourne Harbor Trust Williamstown workshops and slipways, and tenders will shortly be called for the construction of a bucket ladder dredge.

2. Tenders for the construction of the bucket ladder dredge will be called for locally.

UNIVERSITY HIGH SCHOOL.

(Question No. 447)

Mr. JONES (Melbourne) asked the Minister of Education—

1. Whether it is the intention of the Government to retain University High School as an elitist school, or whether it will become a local high school intended to serve the needs of children residing in the immediate vicinity?

2. Whether this school offers a purely academic course at present?

3. What proportion of form I. entrants who are resident in the area drop out of the school by form V.?

4. Why there is no physical provision for the teaching of practical subjects at the school?

Mr. THOMPSON (Minister of Education).—The answer is—

1. University High School may revert to a four-year high school in 1975.

2. Yes.

3. First form I. intake was in 1972, it is therefore not possible to answer the question at this date.

4. Until recently there has been no demand for practical subjects, but at the moment consideration is being given to the provision of facilities for teaching of practical subjects.

SOCIAL WORKERS.

(Question No. 452)

Mr. JONES (Melbourne) asked the Minister of Agriculture, for the Minister for Social Welfare—

1. Whether the Minister is currently seeking recruitment of social workers in overseas countries for the Social Welfare Department; if so, in which countries?

2. Whether the current limit of social welfare cadetships is fourteen; if so, whether the Minister will give consideration to raising the number of these cadetships?

Mr. I. W. SMITH (Minister of Agriculture).—The answer supplied by the Minister for Social Welfare is—

1. No. The department has, however, already this year recruited twenty social workers from the United States of America and three welfare officers from England.

2. No. Treasury funds provide for the employment of up to 26 cadets in the Social Welfare Department at any one time.

DAYLESFORD POLICE STATION.

(Question No. 456)

Mr. A. T. EVANS (Ballaarat North) asked the Chief Secretary—

1. Whether plans have been completed for a new police station at Daylesford?

2. Whether funds have been allocated for building the station in this financial year, if so, when tenders will be called for the construction?

Mr. ROSSITER (Chief Secretary).—The answer is—

1. Yes.

2. Yes. Present indications are that tenders will be called during November, 1973.

PATTERSON LAKE DEVELOPMENT.

(Question No. 457)

Mr. GINIFER (Deer Park) asked the Minister of Public Works, for the Minister of Water Supply—

If he will make available the detailed proposals of the projected Patterson Lake development by Gladesville Developments Pty. Ltd. together with all available reports, documents, and records relating to such scheme?

Mr. DUNSTAN (Minister of Public Works).—The answer supplied by the Minister of Water Supply is—

Yes. The files and supporting documents of both the Water Commission and the Dandenong Valley Authority will be made available.

PORT WELSHPOOL PIER.

(Question No. 458)

Mr. WILTON (Broadmeadows) asked the Minister of Public Works—

1. What action has been taken by the Government to recover costs of repairs to the outer berth at Port Welshpool arising out of the explosion and fire on the M.V. *Western Spruce?*

2. Which person was proceeded against and whether the action was successful?

3. What was the actual cost of the above repairs?

Mr. DUNSTAN (Minister of Public Works).—The answer is—

1. The Crown Solicitor has instituted proceedings on behalf of the Public Works Department by the service of a writ.

2. The writ was served on Western Geophysical Company of America, Commonwealth Industrial Gases Ltd., and New Zealand Industrial Gases Ltd. The action has not yet been concluded.

3. The actual cost of repairs was $34,350.13.

M.V. "WESTERN SPRUCE".

(Question No. 460)

Mr. WILTON (Broadmeadows) asked the Attorney-General—

Whether the Government has taken legal action against any person or persons as a result of an explosion and fire on the M.V. *Western Spruce* at Port Welshpool on 22nd March, 1969; if so, against whom the action was taken and what was the outcome of that action?

Mr. WILCOX (Attorney-General).—The answer is—

Yes. A Supreme Court writ was issued on 9th July, 1971, on behalf of the State of Victoria against Western Geophysical Company of America, Commonwealth Industrial Gases Ltd. and New Zealand Industrial Gases Ltd. The case has not yet been determined.

Legislative Council.

Wednesday, October 31, 1973.

The PRESIDENT **(Sir Raymond Garrett)** took the chair at 4.28 p.m., and read the prayer.

PAPERS.

The following papers, pursuant to the direction of an Act of Parliament, were laid upon the table by the Clerk:—

Public Service Act 1958—Public Service (Public Service Board) Regulations—Regulations amended (Nos. 568 to 573) (six papers).

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (APPLICATION) BILL.

The Hon. I. B. TRAYLING (Melbourne Province) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to amend section 16 of the Local Government Act 1958 with respect to the application of Part II. of the said Act to the City of Melbourne.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (SUBDIVISION OF LAND) BILL.

The Hon. A. J. HUNT (Minister for Local Government) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to make provision with respect to sewerage drainage and water supply and to amend the Dandenong Valley Authority Act 1963, the Local Government Act 1958, the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works Act 1958, the Mildura

Irrigation and Water Trusts Act 1958, the Sewerage Districts Act 1958, the Transfer of Land Act 1958 and the Water Act 1958 and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

CONSUMER PROTECTION BILL.

The Hon. F. J. GRANTER (Minister of Water Supply).—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

This is a Bill to provide for an enlarged Consumer Affairs Council, to enable the Director of Consumer Affairs to take or defend proceedings on behalf of consumers and to prohibit pyramid selling.

When introducing the Ministry of Consumer Affairs Bill earlier in this sessional period of Parliament, the Minister of Housing outlined the history of consumer protection legislation in Victoria. He also gave notice of the intention of the Government to introduce further Bills concerning substantive matters connected with consumer protection and asked for suggestions for improving the consumer protection law from both inside and outside this Parliament. The suggestions received were very few in number, indicating confidence in the action taken by the Government so far to ensure continuing progress in this field. No comment whatever was received from either the Opposition or the Country Party. Two bodies, namely, the Public Interest Research Group and the Direct Selling Association of Australia, put forward useful proposals which the Government was able to take into consideration in formulating the clauses in this Bill. Since the time of creating the new Ministry the Government has introduced the Small Claims Tribunals Bill, has provided in the Budget Estimates for additional staff for the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, and has taken action to appoint a Director of Consumer Affairs.

In other words, the Government has been "delivering the goods" to the consumer in order to honour its promises. It has also seen the need for legislation to protect buyers of second-hand motor cars in the Motor Car Traders Act 1973 which provides for the licensing of car traders. Licences will be cancelled where fraudulent practices are detected. The Act also provides for defects appearing in second-hand cars valued at $1,000 or more within three months of the date of sale to be rectified at the motor car trader's expense. Under the Health Act 1958, the Government has introduced the Pest Control Operators Regulations 1972. Certificates of registration will be granted to operators, who must possess an adequate knowledge of pesticides used and the dangers involved to the public and themselves in their use. As a concomitant the licensing arrangement will also deal with bogus operators who prey on unsuspecting house owners by stating to them that spraying or fumigation is necessary to control non-existent pests.

There are other matters which the Minister of Consumer Affairs is keeping under close scrutiny, and the honorable gentleman will have the support of the Government if existing legislative powers are ineffective. One of those matters is the standard of advertising. The provisions contained in the Consumer Protection Act 1972 on false and misleading advertising are clear. However, in spite of these provisions the Minister is not happy about the general standard of advertising—a matter frequently referred to by the Consumer Affairs Council. I refer here to practices which may not be false or misleading so as to attract criminal prosecution, but which make claims that cannot be justified. The Minister is watching, with interest, developments following the formation of the Australian Advertising Standards Advisory Panel.

As a further step he is looking closely at the existing powers of officers of the Consumer Protection

Bureau in relation to their gaining access to business records of companies and individuals supplying goods and services to consumers. This is another matter that has been referred to by the Consumer Affairs Council.

Also under consideration by the Government is a proposal to require the compulsory date marking of containers of certain foodstuffs. Because a uniform approach by all States is desirable in this area, my colleague, the Minister of Health, to whom this subject has been referred, is awaiting the report of the National Health and Medical Research Council. When his advice is received the Government will take appropriate action.

In addition, my colleague, the Attorney-General, is examining proposals for the further strengthening of consumer credit laws.

As well as its continuing quest for the best possible legislative protection for consumers in this State, the Government is looking at other ways of involving itself in the world-wide consumerism movement. It must be sure that where possible it has advance knowledge of new trends, new schemes and new protective measures used interstate and overseas. To this end the Government now has membership of the International Organization of Consumer Unions through the Consumer Affairs Council and it will be represented at the next international conference of consumer bodies to be held in Sydney in 1975.

This year, Victoria will be host to a conference of consumer affairs officers to discuss final proposals for regulations, which will be introduced by all States to have effect from 1st January, 1974, on labelling of flammable children's nightwear. Other proposals to be examined at this meeting are the size labelling and care labelling of garments. Power to make regulations governing these two matters has been included in clause 7 of the Bill.

The agenda of the conference will not be limited to these three matters. The discussions between officers can be expected to be fruitful and a meeting of Ministers from all States will be arranged to follow soon after to give effect to any recommendations.

One matter requiring the attention of Ministers in other States is inertia selling. Victoria has clear laws against the practice of demanding payment for unordered goods and services, including business directory entries. The law, however, is ineffective if the transactions originate in other States.

Legislation by all other States is desirable to support Victoria's stand against promoters of these schemes who rely on the gullibility of the unwary. The Government is conferring with other States to press for the introduction of similar enactments by their legislatures.

I will now deal with the broad aims of the Bill. It is proposed that the Consumer Affairs Council shall be enlarged to include two additional appointees who will not be tied to any of the four classifications contained in sub-section (1) of section 5 of the principal Act, which are repeated in clause 4 of the Bill. The Minister of Consumer Affairs has in mind the appointment of persons with qualifications in, say, law, economics or commerce who can offer their special skills as members of the council to help it in its deliberations.

The Government is determined to have a vigorous and active body as its adviser on consumer matters. This is not to deny the excellent work of those members of the council who have served and are serving at present. The record of the advancement of consumer interests so far in Victoria is a tribute to their efforts and advice.

Clause 5 deals with civil proceedings. There are cases where, in the public interest, it is appropriate that the Government should, through the Director of Consumer Affairs, be able to take or defend civil proceedings on behalf of consumers. It is not expected that many such cases will be taken and those that are will be only with the approval of the Minis-

ter and agreement of the consumer. Amounts recovered on behalf of the consumer will be payable to him, and in cases where the action is unsuccessful the Government will bear the costs of the action, if any, but the consumer will be liable to pay amounts other than costs awarded against him. A limit of $2,500 has been placed on the amount claimed or involved in the action. This is considered to be the upper limit of the sorts of actions contemplated. The same limits exist in similar legislation in Western Australia and South Australia.

I turn now to the subject of pyramid selling. A pyramid selling scheme might not be thought to be a consumer matter. Participants are persons who hope that by entering a scheme they will make profits from their efforts. They are in effect entering into a business enterprise. However, in spite of repeated warnings, many people are still being recruited into schemes, only to lose most of the money they have invested in the ventures. Some have borrowed money at high interest rates to pay for their entry and now are left with heavy repayments to be made to loan companies with no income from the scheme to assist them. The disappointed prospective entrepreneur, the participant, as a victim of an unconscionable practice, deserves protection, and the Government has determined that the most appropriate way to give that protection is by amendment of the Consumer Protection Act 1972.

The Bill will outlaw pyramid selling in Victoria. Pyramid sellers are unscrupulous and dangerous men. They deliberately crawl into the lives of their unsuspecting victims to trap, cheat and rob them of their savings. The whole scheme of pyramid selling is insidious.

In some cases people have been left broken and penniless. The public have been warned again and again of the activities of these highly organized professionals, who in some cases, because of these warnings, have been forced out of business. But others are still operating, some underground, issuing grubby little invitation cards to attend so-called opportunity meetings to people who still believe they can make a quick "buck". Meetings are held clandestinely, the bona fides of visitors are checked and rechecked and then adroitly and rapidly they are parted from their money.

Although the venue has often changed, the pyramid sellers go about their nefarious business in the same way, leaving behind them a trail of misery and hopelessness. The Bill is aimed at flushing them out and stopping their operations.

The Bill will impose heavy penalties on persons who promote these schemes or invite or induce persons to participate in the schemes. It prohibits the lending of money to persons to allow them to participate in a scheme. Where a company is convicted of an offence committed with the consent of or facilitated by any neglect by a director or officers of the company, the director is also guilty of an offence. Provision has also been made for persons to take civil action to recover moneys paid to promoters of schemes.

I now come to the final matter dealt with by the Bill. Besides help against unfair practices, the consumer needs help in other ways. The non-standard size marking of garments has plagued buyers for years. The Standards Association of Australia has prepared standards covering the size coding of children's, women's and men's clothing. These have not been adopted by the trade voluntarily, so the Government is proposing to introduce regulations to make the standards mandatory. The Bill will give the power to make appropriate regulations and to incorporate or adopt published standards.

Similar action is proposed for the care labelling of garments. With the advent of so many types of synthetic fibres, each requiring special attention for its care, regulations

regarding care labelling are clearly necessary. The Bill will give power to introduce such regulations.

I might add that, as was the case with the labelling of flammable children's nightwear, discussions will take place between the States to ensure a degree of uniformity. However, if it is thought appropriate, Victoria will not hesitate to take its own independent action.

I shall now explain the several clauses of the Bill. Clause 1 provides that the several provisions shall come into operation on a day or days to be fixed by proclamation, clause 2 updates the table of contents of the principal Act and clause 3 is the interpretation clause.

The first substantive provision, which is to reconstitute the Consumer Affairs Council, is contained in clause 4. Although the two additional members to be appointed are not required to possess any particular qualifications, the Minister of Consumer Affairs has in mind the addition of one member who might be an economist and another who might be a lawyer. Both should be of great benefit to the council. The term of office of the present members of the council has a few months to run and, in the meantime, the Minister will be giving consideration to their re-appointment under this new legislation.

Clause 5 contains the provisions authorizing the Director of Consumer Affairs to institute or defend proceedings on behalf of consumers in civil actions where it is in the public interest that he do so. In the proposed section 9A, it will be seen that this service does not extend to companies.

The proposed section 9B sets out the basis upon which the director may act, and it will be noted that consent in writing by the Minister is required in every case. The consent of the consumer is, of course, also required, but when the consumer has given his consent he may not revoke it without the consent of the director. This provision is included in order to prevent the lodging of frivolous applications.

The proposed section 9C refers to the conduct of proceedings in these cases. It should be remembered that, on the one hand, if a judgment is obtained in favour of the consumer, the consumer gains the benefit, and, on the other hand, if the judgment goes against the consumer, the consumer is liable for whatever the court awards against him. The benefit that the consumer obtains is in being relieved of the costs of the proceedings.

Clause 6 contains the provisions about pyramid selling schemes. The Minister of Consumer Affairs has said all along that the drafting of legislation to prohibit the carrying on of these schemes is extremely difficult. Some honorable members appeared not to have believed the honorable gentlemen at times, but when they read this part of the Bill I am sure they will see what the Minister means. Difficulties have been experienced not only in this State but in all States of Australia and indeed overseas; for example, the United Kingdom Government was examining the matter for two and a quarter years. Victoria is so far the only State in Australia to produce a definition. Much of the thinking behind this part of the Bill is based on the recent British legislation, but whereas the British legislation merely regulates pyramid selling schemes, the Bill now before this House seeks to prohibit them entirely.

The proposed section 32A contains the interpretations. It will be seen that a distinction is drawn between what is called a promoter and what are called participants. The definition of a pyramid selling scheme is an attempt to characterize the sort of operation at which the Bill is directed. Thus, goods or services are provided by a promoter, they are provided to or for other participants, transactions are effected away from the promoter's place of business and prospects are held out

to participants of receiving payments for other persons who become participants.

Proposed section 32B contains the offences and here therefore are to be found the teeth in the legislation. By sub-section (1), it is an offence to promote a scheme or grant rights in a scheme to a participant or induce a person to become a participant and the penalty is $5,000 or imprisonment for one year or both. By sub-section (2) it is an offence to receive benefit from a payment made by a participant and the penalty provided is $5,000 or imprisonment for one year or both. By sub-section (3) it is an offence to attempt to induce a person to become a participant or to make a payment for the benefit of a promoter and the penalty is a fine of $5,000 or imprisonment for one year or both. By sub-section (4) it is an offence to lend money to a person to enable him to become a participant. The penalty is a fine of $5,000 or imprisonment for one year or both.

The provisions of the Bill are aimed at causing promoters of nefarious schemes to think twice about staying in business in Victoria and it is hoped the lead given by this State will be followed by all other States of Australia.

Proposed section 32C provides that all promoters of the scheme are guilty if one promoter commits an offence and if an offence is committed by a company, with the consent or connivance of or facilitated by neglect on the part of a director or officer, the director or officer is guilty of an offence. In this case, the penalty is a maximum fine of $2,000 or imprisonment for six months or both. This is an additional penalty to any that might be imposed on the company.

Proposed section 32D is included to allow a participant to take action for recovery of money paid to the promoter. I am sure that honorable members will agree that this is a fair and just provision.

With respect to proposed section 32E, I have already referred to the difficulty of defining a pyramid selling scheme. In spite of the care and attention paid to the definition, there are bound to be borderline cases. It is therefore proposed that in any such case, where appropriate, the Governor in Council may declare a particular scheme not to be a pyramid selling scheme within the meaning of the Act.

Clause 7 contains the regulation-making provisions to which I have referred with respect to care labelling and size labelling of clothing. Clause 8 permits the regulations to incorporate references in other writings. In this regard, of course, consideration is being given to the incorporation of standards published by the Standards Association of Australia. I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of the Hon. D. G. ELLIOT (Melbourne Province), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Tuesday, November 13.

ROSEBUD INSTITUTIONS BILL.

This Bill was received from the Assembly.

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. R. W. Garrett).—I have examined this Bill, and in my opinion it is a private Bill.

The Hon. A. J. HUNT (Minister for Local Government).—In another place, this Bill was also ruled to be a private Bill, but was treated as a public Bill, and it is proposed that the same procedure be followed in this House. Therefore, on behalf of the Minister of Housing, I move—

That this Bill be dealt with as a public Bill.

The motion was agreed to.

On the motion of the Hon. A. J. Hunt (Minister for Local Government), for the Hon. V. O. DICKIE (Minister of Housing), the Bill was read a first time.

CRIMES (INHUMANE PUNISHMENTS ABOLITION) BILL.

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY (Melbourne North Province).—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

Flogging the convicted ruffian is as profitless as flogging a dead horse. Both are angry frustrations, the one by the community and the other by the sick rider. The noose and the lash are terrible reminders of the insignificant progress which has been made towards an enlightened criminal justice. Christ was scourged and then crucified 2,000 years ago—a judgment which is wholly condemned. The attitude of society to crime and punishment is up for judgment today. Generally speaking, it has not changed throughout the centuries, but it ought to change.

I applaud the introduction of a Bill by the Government which is designed to abolish solitary confinement. It is part of a Bill which I read to the House on a previous occasion; but, needless to say, I give way to the Government's measure. I would have been happy if a Bill had also been introduced to abolish flogging.

Flogging is rarely used by judges as a punishment; and a law which has fallen into disuse is a bad one. This form of punishment was last used on O'Meally and Taylor. So far as I can recall, they were the only occasions on which flogging has been ordered since the second world war. There might have been some cases prior to the war.

I shall not waste the time of the House by reading it, but the judgment of three distinguished judges—the late Sir Charles Lowe, the late Sir Gavin Duffy and Mr. Justice Smith—who is to be appointed Law Reform Commissioner, and I applaud that choice—is contained in the *Victorian Reports* of 1958. Mr. Justice Smith dissented. It was a case in which Dr. Norval Morris appeared for one of the defendants and I appeared for the other. The flogging was carried out. It had been ordered by the trial judge, Mr. Justice Hudson, and the Full Court, by a majority of two to one, dismissed the appeal. Mr. Justice Smith read a judgment which, really, is a denunciation of flogging. It is written in a scholarly, restrained manner, and I commend it to the House.

I believe all physical violence between one person and another is wrong and that violence by the State is also wrong. That is the principle upon which I enunciate my contention that the punishment of flogging should not be used.

Flogging is a unique evil, a deliberately calculated torture where the victim is strapped to a triangle and lashed with an instrument that produces the equivalent of a series of electric shocks. For his crime he may justly be called a brute, because it was a crime of violence that led to the infliction of the punishment. For his punishment the State prescribes the same violence for which the wrongdoer was condemned. In essence, the wrongdoer is hit because he has been found guilty of hitting; the big brother of this punishment is capital punishment—the murderer has killed, so let him be killed. Our attitude is that when a wrongdoer has committed violence, the State will do the same thing. It is simple and understandable, but evil.

Flogging may have been necessary in simple, primitive societies in which there were no sophisticated police forces and in which it might have been necessary at times to use this barbarous form of punishment as a deterrent to others. If it could be shown that flogging deters wrongdoing, that might be an argument for retaining it, but it does not. Experience over the years clearly shows that to be true.

Sir Justice Hawkins, a distinguished English judge, said, "If you flog a man you make a perfect devil of him". A man who has to undergo a trial and then be sentenced and wait to be flogged must become

brutalized, for it is an act of pure vengeance. The victim of the "cat" is a worse man in every sense after he has been punished. Flogging does not protect the community, and it is degrading and brutalizing to prison officials who have to take part in this drama or obscene spectacle. It is also degrading to the community which causes the wrongdoer to be flogged.

Brutality breeds brutality. Flogging has failed as a deterrent in the same way as, I am sorry to say, the whole processes of criminal justice have failed, as we are now finding out. I applaud the Government, for it too, is trying to find out why these processes have failed. Regrettably, gaols have not served the understandable purposes for which they were provided. The purpose was to put a man into a cell where he would lament and, in a contrite fashion, promise to offend no more. But that has not been the result of prisons. Those ten gentlemen of Pennsylvania thought that if people were locked up and given bread and water and a Bible, and left for a few months or a few years they would come out with a saint-like attitude to society.

Throughout the world today, flogging has been rejected. More than 100 years ago, the Commissioners on the Criminal Law rejected the punishment of whipping. They said that it was a punishment which was uncertain in severity. We all know that, because a doctor has to stand by when the victim is being flogged to see how he takes it. It does not need me to tell the House that there have been plenty of instances in Australia where men have died under the lash. It was once a daily spectacle, particularly in New South Wales. Let me say that the people of that State seem to have abandoned the lash and the noose. Now, they have done something really great in building the magnificent opera house. They are looking to the stars, man's proper destiny. That is better than a ghetto-like atmosphere which prevails in Victoria, where we still believe, after 2,000 years, in the efficacy of the noose and the lash.

One may be assured that, if a person wears a white collar, at no stage of our civilization will or would he be flogged.

The PRESIDENT (Sir Raymond Garrett).—I gather that I am safe.

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY.—I can assure you, Sir, that you are, and always were, and so were your ancestors, because flogging is a punishment reserved for the lowly classes. That cannot be disputed. I do not often look for help on these matters but I think Mr. Hauser will agree with me when I say that white collar crime is the fastest growing industry in Australia. It ought to be stopped. Does anybody suggest that these so-called financiers who rob people, including widows and the like, of millions of dollars, ought to have the moral and spiritual purification of a gaol sentence accompanied by a flogging?

The Hon. C. A. M. HIDER.—I think it has been suggested.

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY.—The suggestion would not get very far. Then there is the terrible wrongdoer, morally and socially in modern society, the drug pedlar, who causes immense destruction. What about flogging him? That would be all right if it did any good, but statistics do not suggest that it does. What about the aeroplane hijacker and the kidnapper?

I am as concerned as anyone in the community to lower the crime rate. As a legal practitioner at Collingwood during the depression, I used to think that, if there was bread and work for all, crime would not disappear but would decrease. That is no longer true. Some of the most terrible crimes, including murder, are motiveless and, to use a modern expression, the perpetrators "do it for kicks". The Commissioners on the Criminal Law also said that whipping

was a punishment which inflicted an ignominious and unedifying disgrace on the offender, and it tended, they believed, to render him callous and greatly to obstruct his return to any honest form of life.

In 1934 approval was given by the Assembly of the League of Nations to a code of minimum standard rules formulated by the International Penal and Penitentiary Commission. That code was accepted by the Government of the United Kingdom. It provides that it is desirable to reach a stage where corporal punishment is no longer included in disciplinary punishment. As honorable members know, flogging has long since been abandoned in the United States of America, in Britain, and throughout Australia. I am not certain, but I believe that Victoria is the last State to have flogging on its statute-book.

From time to time, Attorneys-General have made statements on flogging and there was one instance in which the Chief Justice was minded to say something. While this punishment remains on the statute-book, it is an invitation to be used. This promotes floods of correspondence to the newspapers from people who are naturally concerned about terrible crimes which are committed and who are minded to advocate the return of the lash. If the lash would do any good, none of us would object to it. But we can only go by the statistics.

I do not want to be told by some honorable member—I do not say this in anger—that he knows of a case where flogging did someone the world of good. I have heard that here before. Those observations do a great deal of harm and are untrue. We must go on statistics from all over the world and not on some personal impression. I refrain from giving my personal impressions on these matters but I have seen the behaviour of some men who were ordered floggings and their attitude to society afterwards.

The Hon. J. W. Galbally.

Instead of reviving and fortifying our attitude to crime and punishment by using the old tortures, we must do some real thinking about crime in the community. I see the Minister for Social Welfare looking at me. If I can be of any assistance to him in the task he is undertaking, I will be glad to help. We are losing far too many young people, for no obvious reason, to a life of crime and incarceration in gaol.

Again I say that the Bill will not provide a solution to the problems I have just been discussing, but it will wipe off the statute-book a useless cruelty.

On the motion of the Hon. C. A. M. HIDER (Monash Province), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Wednesday, November 14.

COUNTRY FIRE AUTHORITY (AMENDMENT) BILL.

This Bill was received from the Assembly and, on the motion of the Hon. W. V. Houghton (Minister for Social Welfare), for the Hon. A. J. HUNT (Minister for Local Government), was read a first time.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (APPLICATION) BILL.

The Hon. I. B. TRAYLING (Melbourne Province).—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

This is a small Bill but its purpose is important. It simply provides an opportunity for the voters of the municipality of Melbourne to bring about a change in ward boundaries in the way in which that can be done in other municipalities. It introduces a little democracy. The present ward boundaries in the municipality are hopelessly outdated, inequitable, unfair, and unjust, and, unless action is taken, will continue to be so in perpetuity and become even more so as time goes on. The Bill will provide at least some power to residents of Melbourne to change these unfair boundaries.

There is nothing democratic in a municipality which allows 30 per cent of the voters to elect half the council and the other 70 per cent to elect the other half. That is the position across the board, but inequities are greater at the extremities. On the 1972 figures, of voters enrolled in Melbourne, the Hopetoun ward, which elects three councillors, had 6,631 people registered as voters. In contrast the Hoddle ward has only 1,674 voters on the roll. In other words, Hoddle ward has only 25 per cent of the number of voters in Hopetoun ward to elect the same number of councillors to represent the ward on the Melbourne City Council. Not even the Country Party could support that sort of weighting in favour of the representatives of the central business district of the municipality.

The Hon. V. T. HAUSER.—Is the area of the outer wards perhaps greater than that of the inner wards?

The Hon. I. B. TRAYLING.—I am speaking about people; Mr. Hauser is taking the Country Party line of reasoning, with which I do not agree and therefore he will not get anywhere with me on that argument. The weighting is in favour of those people who operate large and small businesses, most of whom do not live in the municipality. Of course they are entitled to a vote the same as the people who live there, but the value of one vote should not be greater than the other.

The present system can be described only as a property franchise which gives a heavy loading to the businessmen in the community. I am not sure that businessmen's representatives have done a very good job for the municipality. Many Victorians, including residents of Melbourne and the metropolitan area, consider that Melbourne is an ugly city. No one will deny that there are aspects of the municipality which have been badly planned, totally lacking in aesthetic appreciation and certainly need some attention.

Without prejudice to my own attitude concerning the possible union with other municipalities, I would have to view with the gravest suspicion any Government support for such a merger if goodwill is not evidenced by the Government to correct the present inequity of ward boundaries and show faith that in any new scheme to incorporate other municipalities the residents would have a fair go and would not be subject to the desires or whims of businessmen from the central business district. The Government has a wonderful opportunity to show that sort of faith and to show some concern for the residents of the municipality and areas around it.

The Bill does not ask for much. It merely seeks to correct something that is wrong. It has been wrong for decades but the position has worsened over recent years. Perhaps it is one of those oversights that has been allowed to go on. The opportunity is now available to right it and members of the Labor Party will be pleased to see, as will residents of the municipality and nearby municipalities, a change in the present attitude of the Melbourne City Council and the Government with an indication of how serious they are in claiming integrity and honesty of intention. I urge the House to support the Bill.

On the motion of the Hon. A. J. HUNT (Minister for Local Government), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until the next day of meeting.

ROSEBUD INSTITUTIONS BILL.

The Hon. V. O. DICKIE (Minister of Housing).—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

It is necessary because of certain difficulties which have developed in regard to the future operation of services for the aged in the Mornington Peninsula area.

The Lotus Lodge Hostel for the Aged was established in what originally was a holiday camp at Rosebud, comprising a number of small bungalows, purchased by the Government in June, 1951. The hostel was put under the control of a committee of management although it was not formally incorporated under the Hospitals and Charities Act. Property was held by trustees on behalf of the hostel.

In 1958, with the approval of the Hospitals and Charities Commission, the management of the Lotus Lodge hostel, together with ownership of all property and assets, was transferred to the Southern Peninsula Hospital at Rosebud, an institution incorporated under the Hospitals and Charities Act 1958.

About nine years later—in July, 1967—the Hospitals and Charities Commission sought the advice of the Crown Solicitor as to the means whereby the Lotus Lodge Hostel for the Aged could be separated from the Southern Peninsula Hospital. The Crown Solicitor was not able to give this advice as it appeared that the purported amalgamation of the Lotus Lodge hostel with the Southern Peninsula Hospital had not been carried out in accordance with the Hospitals and Charities Act.

He reiterated this advice in September, 1968, and stated that a short Act of Parliament should be passed validating amalgamation and providing for the reconstitution of the two bodies into separate institutions—that is the Southern Peninsula Hospital and the Lotus Lodge hostel. At about the same time a proposal was being developed to establish the Mt. Eliza Geriatric Centre on the site formerly used at Mount Eliza for the purposes of the Royal Children's Hospital.

A number of different drafts of a Bill to reconstitute the Lotus Lodge hostel as a separate entity have been considered, and at one stage a proposition to constitute the Mount Eliza Geriatric Centre by Act of Parliament and attach thereto the Lotus Lodge hostel was proposed. However. the Hospitals and Charities Commission proceeded with the incorporation under the provisions of the Hospitals and Charities Act 1958 of the Mount Eliza Geriatric Centre and this incorporation is now an accomplished fact.

In order to formally link the Lotus Lodge Hostel for the Aged with the Mount Eliza Geriatric Centre, it is first necessary to re-establish the Lotus Lodge hostel as a separate entity and this the Bill seeks to do.

The Bill of seven clauses proposes to establish the Lotus Lodge Hostel for the Aged as a separate corporation set up under the Hospitals and Charities Act so that in due course it will be possible to combine it with the Mount Eliza Geriatric Centre under the provisions of sections 29 and 30 of the Hospitals and Charities Act 1958.

In the first instance, the committee of the Southern Peninsula Hospital shall be regarded as a separately appointed committee of the Lotus Lodge hostel. This is done merely to enable the legal amalgamation of the two corporations.

Clause 5 specifically indemnifies any former member of the committee of the Lotus Lodge hostel or one of the trustees of that hostel from any liability or any breach of trust in resigning from his office or in purporting to transfer any of the property of the Lotus Lodge hostel to the Southern Peninsula Hospital. Clause 6 gives wide-reaching powers to the Governor in Council to make orders providing for any necessary adjustment of funds as between the Southern Peninsula Hospital and the Lotus Lodge hostel and for the transfer of any property from the hospital to the hostel.

Although it appears to be a complicated measure, its purpose is comparatively simple; that is, to re-establish the Lotus Lodge Hostel for the Aged as a separate entity so that

it may be amalgamated in due course with the Mount Eliza Geriatric Centre. I commend the Bill to the House.

The Hon. D. G. ELLIOT (Melbourne Province).—It is a time-honoured procedure in most cases, except where a Bill has some degree of urgency, to request an adjournment of the debate but I see no reason why this Bill should not be passed immediately. This seems to be another demonstration of a chess game to bring about something which is wholly desirable for the Mornington Peninsula.

Quite often I have been contacted by old friends of mine who have retired to the Mornington Peninsula and who have experienced difficulty in obtaining urgent medical attention, particularly during the night or the week-end. Perhaps it might not be a bad idea if elderly people on the peninsula were able to contact the Mount Eliza Geriatric Centre or the Lotus Lodge Hostel for the Aged by telephone when they feel that they need urgent medical treatment and ascertain where they may obtain attention.

I do not wish to cite specific cases but there have been some tragedies and near tragedies on the peninsula through the non-availability of medical treatment. As so many of our elderly citizens now reside on the peninsula, medical attention should be available. I ask the Government to give some sort of immediacy and some sort of consolation for the elderly citizens in the area. Of course, the need for medical treatment can also apply to the general populace on the peninsula.

As the Minister for Local Government represents the area perhaps the honorable gentleman might note my statement as I am sure he has had similar experiences. The Minister may wish to speak about the matter. The Labor Party sees no reason to oppose the measure and indeed wishes the institutions well in their future efforts.

The Hon. S. R. McDONALD (Northern Province).—The Country Party also supports the Bill. I agree with Mr. Elliot that when a measure is not controversial, has been clearly outlined and the reasons for its presentation supplied, the House should pass the Bill immediately.

The Minister of Housing has outlined the reasons for the measure and has pointed out that the Bill is submitted on the advice of the Crown Solicitor. The Country Party also supports the measure and gives it its blessing.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was read a second time and committed.

Clause 1 was agreed to.

Clause 2 (Interpretation).

The Hon. V. O. DICKIE (Minister of Housing).—I appreciate the action of the Labor Party and the Country Party in facilitating the passage of this proposed legislation through Parliament. I have noted Mr. Elliot's comments relating to the problems of the Peninsula and the possibility that the two institutions could be a point of contact for aged persons in need of assistance. I shall bring the comments of the honorable member to the notice of the Minister of Health.

The clause was agreed to, as were the remaining clauses.

The Bill was reported to the House without amendment, and passed through its remaining stages.

COUNTRY FIRE AUTHORITY (AMENDMENT) BILL.

The Hon. A. J. HUNT (Minister for Local Government).—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The purposes of the Bill are to—

(*a*) enable compensation to be paid to volunteer firemen for injuries sustained whilst giving assistance to any person or the protection of any

property involved in any accident or emergency not connected with the suppression or prevention of fire;

(*b*) provide power for the Governor in Council to prescribe forms for the purposes of the Country Fire Authority Act 1958; and

(*c*) enable regulations to be made in respect of the prevention of fire in tobacco kilns.

Honorable members will agree that the first of the purposes I have outlined is most desirable and is consistent with many similar Acts recently passed in this Parliament.

From time to time, Country Fire Authority brigades are called upon to assist in emergencies quite distinct from and unconnected with the fighting of fire. In many cases similar risks to those incurred in fire-fighting are involved in these emergencies, such as search and rescue operations. Other classes of volunteer workers are entitled to compensation, and it is naturally desirable that members of these worth-while fire-fighting services should be similarly covered when assisting on emergency operations, as they are when actually fighting fires. The Bill achieves that result.

A permanent fireman injured in the course of his employment, would be compensible as a worker under the provisions of the Workers Compensation Act 1958.

I refer to the second purpose of the Bill. Since the inception of the Country Fire Authority in 1944, permits and other forms have been prescribed by regulation. The standard permits have greatly facilitated the work of the issuing officers and are easily identifiable. Although the permits have been prescribed for many years, there is in fact no power in the Act to permit the Governor in Council so to do and the Subordinate Legislation Committee has drawn attention to the fact and asked that the appropriate powers be sought.

The Hon. A. J. Hunt.

Mr. Acting President, I notice you smiling at the idea that forms have been prescribed without any regulation-making power. I know this would be anathema to you, Sir, and the Bill seeks to correct the anomaly and provide the necessary power. I hope you will not be too hard on the Government, Sir, for failing to notice this omission earlier. Perhaps when you leave the chair, Sir, we shall hear something from you on the matter.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (the Hon. G. J. Nicol).—I assure you, Mr. Minister, that I shall be only too happy to facilitate the passage of the Bill.

The Hon. A. J. HUNT.—The third matter relates to tobacco kilns. I regret Mr. Swinburne is not present because he has specialist knowledge on the subject. It is sufficient to say that fire risks exist in tobacco kilns as they do in many other kilns. Following discussions with representatives of the State Electricity Commission, the Forests Commission, the Department of Agriculture and the Victorian Tobacco Growers Association, the authority has recommended that the Governor in Council should be empowered to regulate in respect of kilns, and the Bill so provides. I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of the Hon. A. W. KNIGHT (Melbourne West Province), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until the next day of meeting.

GAS AND FUEL CORPORATION (AMALGAMATIONS) BILL.

The debate (adjourned from October 24) on the motion of the Hon. W. V. Houghton (Minister for Social Welfare) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

The Hon. A. W. KNIGHT (Melbourne West Province).—During an earlier debate on this subject, with the indulgence of the President and honorable members, I put on record

the fine attributes of Colonial Gas Holdings Ltd. Having lived in an area in which the Colonial Gas Association Ltd. and its subsidiaries have played an important role and provided employment for many of my constituents, it is only right that the record of these subsidiaries of the Colonial Gas Holdings Ltd., which will be wound up under the provisions of the Bill, should be incorporated in *Hansard* for posterity. These remarks are of historical interest to this State, not only in peace but also in war. At the outset, I say that the Labor Party does not oppose the Bill.

As I stated, in an earlier debate I outlined the part played by the Colonial Gas Association Ltd. in the development of the gas industry both in Victoria and other States of the Commonwealth. I now propose to record some of the subsidiary operations of the company which were implemented in Victoria.

Prior to the first world war many by-products from the manufacture of gas were disposed of as raw materials or allowed to run to waste. The period of the emergency necessitated the production of substantial tonnages of ammonium sulphate as a valuable nitrogenous fertilizer, but shortly afterwards a gradual decline in price made the production of this material uneconomic.

The Colonial Gas Association Ltd., having been engaged in the production of ammonium sulphate, considered there was a valuable outlet for many of the by-products of coal carbonization in the form of refined materials, and therefore in 1921 formed a subsidiary enterprise, Ammonia Products Pty. Ltd., to manufacture aqua and anhydrous ammonia. The company devised original methods for the treatment of waste ammoniacal liquor from the gas works plant which, when mixed with lime under conditions of high temperature and pressure, released crude ammonia as a gas. The ammonia gas was then purified and elevated to a high pressure through powerful compressors. Under these conditions the ammonia liquefied and it was then compressed into high pressure steel cylinders for despatch to customers.

A side stream of ammonia was converted to the aqueous product which is still used in a wide cross section of industry. The compressed product was also widely used as a chemical but its principal demand was for use in large refrigeration plants, such as meat works and milk processing plants. As the availability of ammoniacal liquor became greater through the expansion of the Melbourne gas works, greater quantities of ammonia were manufactured and this reached its peak during the period of the second world war when ammonia was in great demand for a wide variety of defence requirements. During the latter years of the war, large quantities of ammonia were exported to many locations in the Pacific area for use by the Armed Forces of both Australia and the United States of America.

With the cessation of coal carbonization following the introduction of natural gas to Melbourne, the availability of raw material increased, but the company has been able to continue its sale of products through the availability of synthetic ammonia, purchased in bulk quantities. Unfortunately, ammonia has been replaced in many industrial processes and apart from its large-scale use in plants manufacturing fertilizers, its sales represent only a small part of the sales of earlier years.

Ammonia Products Pty. Ltd. also had, for many years, shareholdings in both Nitrogen Fertilizers Pty. Ltd. and Consumers Ammonia (1930) Ltd., but its interests were sold in 1959 when a rationalization of the ammonia manufacturing facilities in Victoria was effected. In 1927 it was decided to embark on a new venture to distil and market products available from the gas works' tar. A company, Duratar Pty. Ltd., was formed to distil vertical retort tar

manufactured in the Colonial Gas Association's gas works. By a patented process, a specialized road tar "Duratar" was produced, and this material was used with favour by road construction authorities until the competition from imported bitumen made the process uneconomic.

Concurrent with the manufacture of road tars, large quantities of creosote were manufactured. For many years this provided the total requirement of the State for preservation of timber in particular, for many thousands of poles used for supporting telephone and electricity lines. Many other products were manufactured in quantity, including benzol, which was used as a solvent and as a base product for the manufacture of explosives, dye-stuffs, phenols for use as disinfectants, creosols as a base for many chemical products, as well as large quantities of pitch which has been used for the production of protective enamels and as a raw material for the production of carbon black and many other uses, both in Australia and overseas. The company continued as a successful venture until the advent of natural gas restricted the availability of raw materials and it ceased to operate as an active venture in 1971. At present, its assets are being sold and it will, in due course, be liquidated.

The operations of both Ammonia Products Pty. Ltd. and Duratar Pty. Ltd. proved to be most successful, and in 1930 extensions of both companies were made to serve the Queensland market, using as a raw material by-products from the Colonial Gas Association's gas works in that State. A plant for the manufacture of aqua and anhydrous ammonia was established at South Brisbane and a controlling interest was acquired in the Australian Chemical Co. Ltd. of South Brisbane, which was carrying on the business of tar distillation and manufacture of creosote, cresylic acid, carbolic disinfectant and other tar products. Today, the Australian Chemical Company is a viable operation, still conducting the business for which it was formed. At about the same time, Ammonia Products Pty. Ltd. acquired the undertaking of the Co-operative Ammonia Co. Ltd. of Sydney and this company continued its operations until the ammonia industry was rationalized on a national basis.

Also in 1930, the Colonial Gas Association increased its interest in tar distillation by the purchase of the whole of the shares in James Forbes (Tar Distillers) Pty. Ltd., which operated a profitable tar distillation plant at Port Melbourne. With the increasing use of bitumen as a road surfacing material, this company commenced the manufacture under licence of the well-know "Vialit" road-making emulsion. This operation continued for about 30 years until competition from bitumen manufactured in local oil refineries made the process uneconomic. The operations of James Forbes (Tar Distillers) Pty. Ltd. were then incorporated with those of Duratar Pty. Ltd., each company selling its products under its registered brand names. As was the case with Duratar, James Forbes became a non-operating company following the cessation of raw materials from the gas manufacturers process when natural gas was introduced to the Melbourne area. The company is now in the process of liquidation.

Shortly after ammonia became available from the Colonial Gas Association's subsidiary, it was decided to enter the field of domestic cleaners which were to use ammonia as a basic material in their manufacture. For this purpose, a company—Clensel Products Pty. Ltd.—was formed, and for many years manufactured the popular Clensel domestic cleaning fluid, together with its similarly branded industrial and agricultural products. No doubt, honorable members have seen these products around their household. The scope of this company was broadened by the acquisition of Dai-Zone Products Pty. Ltd., which manufactured a wide range of domestic bleaches

and similar products. With this acquisition and that of the Sunshine Bleach Co. Pty. Ltd., it was decided to rename Clensel Products Pty. Ltd. as Colgas Products Pty. Ltd., this company being responsible for the manufacture and sale of the products manufactured by the three companies previously mentioned.

In 1963 an offer was received from a competitor in the field of domestic cleaning agents, and it was decided to sell the registered names and processes for the manufacture of the proprietary products. As a result of this transaction, Colgas Products Pty. Ltd. became a non-active company, but in 1969 it was revitalized to undertake a new venture concerned with the treatment of brown coal briquettes in the gas manufacturing plant which was to become redundant when conversion to natural gas was completed. At this time the name of the company was simplified to Colgas Pty. Ltd. The company embarked on a long-term research project to investigate means of treating brown coal briquettes to produce products which it believed could be marketed both in Australia and overseas.

The company relied on the expertise of its staff who were skilled in coal carbonization processes and a number of interesting products emanated from the research programme. One of these was brown coal char, a most sophisticated form of carbon, which, but for its cost structure, could produce a valuable material for use in the chemical and metallurgical industries, both in Australia and overseas. Concurrently with the Colgas research, work had been done by others, and following the formation of a competitive industry in the Latrobe Valley to supply a limited market, it was decided not to proceed with this particular development.

Further attention was therefore paid to an associated product of brown coal char—activated carbon, which, through the unique facilities available at the Footscray works, could be produced without secondary treatment. With the awakening of the public to environment issues, it was apparent that the demand for material such as activated carbon would grow as treatment of both gaseous and aqueous effluents became necessary. Therefore it was decided to devote the whole of the research effort to the manufacture of this product. Significant success has been achieved and commercial production quantities of various grades of activated carbon are now being produced to supply both the home and overseas markets.

As at 1973, the treatment of effluents in Australasia and South-East Asia is in its infancy, but there is no doubt that the demand for such treatment plants will grow rapidly as legislative pressures are brought to bear to ensure that the environment is protected to the fullest extent possible. Although operating on a small scale at the present time, there is considerable confidence that the demand for the products of Colgas Pty. Ltd. will grow significantly in the years to come.

Thermal Traders (Vic.) Pty. Ltd. was incorporated in the Australian Capital Territory as a joint venture between the Colonial Gas Association and the Australian Gas Light Co. of Sydney, to market liquefied petroleum gas in Victoria and New South Wales under the trade name "Porta-Gas". In its early years, the company's operations were most successful, and the business grew to proportions which indicated the desirability of segregating operations in the respective States. At this stage the gas is still known as "Porta-Gas". It has an advantage over gases marketed under other names by the Gas and Fuel Corporation. It is clear that the Gas and Fuel Corporation has had considerable headaches in the marketing of its product in competition with "Porta-Gas". In 1962 this reorganization was put into effect—the New South Wales operation coming under the control of the Australian Gas Light Co., and the Victorian operation under Thermal Traders (Vic.) Pty. Ltd. as a wholly-owned

subsidiary of the Colonial Gas Association. Since that time most of its endeavours have been within the State of Victoria and the business has grown to become one of the largest distributors of liquefied petroleum gas for domestic use in Australia. Now, under the control of the Gas and Fuel Corporation the company will continue to trade under its well-known trade name "Porta-Gas" although the administrative and service sections of the company will be incorporated with those of the corporation.

During its 85 years of existence, Colonial Gas Holdings Ltd. and its predecessors have engaged in a wide range of diversified activities. Many of these have been started in Victoria, but the name of the Colonial Gas Association has been known in virtually every State of the Commonwealth. Many of these ventures have been and continue to be successful, while others for various reasons have been terminated. One of the minor companies still in existence is Bitural Pty. Ltd., which was originally formed to exploit other by-products of gas manufacture. Many years ago this company ceased to be an active manufacturer and became a property-owning company, which role it plays today.

The information I have supplied sums up the attitude of the Labor Party to this measure. Statements have been made not only in Parliament but outside about the role of the Gas and Fuel Corporation. However, many people in the community are ignorant of the corporation's operations in respect to liquefied petroleum gas which is now being used to power forklifts and taxis in my area, and probably in areas represented by all honorable members. It is known to me and to my colleague, Mr. Thomas, that in the area we represent the use of liquefied petroleum gas, now marketed by the Gas and Fuel Corporation, will play a valuable contribution to the protection of the environment. I hope my colleagues in Canberra do not impose a tax on the use of liquefied petroleum gas. I say that for obvious reasons because the community wishes to overcome environmental problems. Exhaust gases from motor vehicles is one form of pollution which can be eliminated by the use of liquefied petroleum gas. If the Federal Government imposes a tax on the use of liquefied petroleum gas in motor vehicles, it will mean that people will revert to the fuel which they normally use in their motor cars.

The Hon. S. R. McDONALD.—Mr. Knight had better talk to his colleagues in Canberra.

The Hon. A. W. KNIGHT.—I have spoken to my colleagues in Canberra and I know that Mr. Connor, the Minister for Minerals and Energy, is on the right tram. I hope he does the right thing and does not do what the previous Liberal–Country Party Government did; it sold out this country to the vested interests overseas. That Government's policy inhibited developments of this nature but the present Federal Government will rectify the position.

The Labor Party knows that the Gas and Fuel Corporation has done a magnificent job for Victoria. I recognize that its establishment was engineered by the Country Party but it was achieved only with the support of the Labor Party, which envisaged that the corporation would attain greater heights. Since the Liberal Party has given stabilized Government to this State, the Gas and Fuel Corporation has reached the heights predicted for it by the Labor Party in its early days.

I believe there is no need to worry about the shares which have been given to shareholders in Colonial Gas Holdings Ltd. as a result of the takeover because I have no doubt that in due course they will revert to the Gas and Fuel Corporation. My assertion is supported by what has taken place following earlier takeovers by the Gas and Fuel Corporation.

The Labor Party congratulates the Gas and Fuel Corporation for its past endeavours. The corporation's officers, from the top of its executive to the men in the labour force in the field are doing magnificent work for the State by bringing natural gas to far-away places, even though problems have occurred in Castlemaine and the area represented by the Minister of Water Supply. However, that was one of those unfortunate happenings which I believe has now been overcome. The Labor Party wishes the Gas and Fuel Corporation well for the future. As it will now control the complete distribution of gas throughout Victoria, the ideals envisaged when the legislation setting up the corporation was introduced, have now been brought to fruition.

The Hon. A. K. BRADBURY (North-Eastern Province). — The Country Party has pleasure in supporting the Bill, particularly in view of the fact that it was the initiator—certainly with the support of the Labor Party—in the establishment of the Gas and Fuel Corporation. It was intended at that stage many years ago that the Gas and Fuel Corporation would be the one distributing gas organization in Victoria. It has been the objective of succeeding Governments to give the Gas and Fuel Corporation power to acquire other companies which operate in opposition to the corporation. As the Minister said in his second-reading speech, in the autumn sessional period, legislation was enacted to ratify the takeover of the Colonial Gas Holdings Ltd. One can only say that this Bill is a tidying-up measure to put into complete effect what was required.

The Colonial Gas Association Ltd., which is a subsidiary of Colonial Gas Holdings Ltd., is still operating in five major centres in country areas, two of which, Benalla and Wangaratta, are in my province. For many years, people in that area have been striving to have the supply of natural gas extended to the country centres, and particularly to the north-eastern part of the State. This is more necessary today than it was three years ago, in view of the proposed Albury–Wodonga complex. The Government is playing its part in that development.

There is urgent need for the extension of the supply of natural gas so that this complex, which has been singled out for accelerated development on a large scale, can give industry this added attraction. It has been stated that some large industries are showing keen interest by indicating a desire to establish an enterprise, particularly in Wodonga. I am sure that the supply of natural gas to Wodonga would be an added attraction. As I said at the outset, this is merely a tidying-up amending measure following the legislation that was enacted in the autumn sessional period. Members of the Country Party have pleasure in supporting it.

The Hon. O. G. JENKINS (South-Western Province).—Paragraph (*b*) of clause 9 refers to the Geelong Gas Co., the Queenscliff Gas and Coke Co. Ltd. and the Australasian Temperance and General Guardian Corporation Ltd. It is a general tidying up of the merger between the Gas and Fuel Corporation, the Geelong Gas Co. and the Queenscliff Gas and Coke Co. Ltd. I support the Bill and I add my congratulations to the directors and in particular to the Chairman of the Gas and Fuel Corporation, Mr. Neil Smith, and his staff. I wish them continuing success.

The discovery of natural gas and its successful introduction into the domestic and industrial gas markets of Victoria was the factor which gave impetus to the corporation's success. Honorable members will recall that, in April, 1971, Parliament passed a Bill to enable the Gas and Fuel Corporation to make an offer to the shareholders of the Geelong Gas Co., and

subsequently the offer was made and accepted by those shareholders. At that time some discussion arose in the House and in another place on the price paid for the shares. Some doubt was raised whether the offer was generous. This will be the last opportunity on which the figures for the Geelong Gas Co. will be produced and will be made available as a separate entity. Therefore, I desire to place on record that the takeover of the Geelong Gas Co. and its subsidiary has proved to be an outstanding success.

On 9th October, 1973, I asked a question of the Minister for Social Welfare, for the Minister for Fuel and Power, on the results of the Geelong Gas Co. and its subsidiary for the previous two financial years. The answer showed that the operating profit in 1972 was $384,067; and for 1973, $374,494. After providing for interest incurred by the corporation on the previous profit, the figure for 1972 was $206,260 and for 1973, $209,078. The net profits of the Geelong Gas Co. and its subsidiary in 1972 were $177,797, and for 1973, $165,416.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (the Hon. G. J. Nicol).—I think the thread that Mr. Jenkins is drawing between the Bill and his comments is very slender.

The Hon. O. G. JENKINS.—I agree that it is rather tenuous, but it will be the last opportunity to refute in this House certain matters that were raised in 1971. Immediately after the Bill is passed, no opportunity will be provided to show the results of the company. Page 9 of the report of the Gas and Fuel Corporation indicates that in 1973 the Geelong Gas Co. had a most satisfactory year of operation, during which the total gas sales increased dramatically to 37·8 million therms, which was almost 500 per cent higher than for the previous year. A large part of this was due to the extension of a contract to the Australian Portland Cement Ltd. The report generally indicates that this aspect of the activities has been most successful.

Reference has been made to the extension of the activities of the corporation to Bendigo, Ballarat and Castlemaine. It would be relevant to point out that, in the Geelong area, the corporation is at present extending the mains to provide a service to Lara and it also proposes to extend the natural gas system to Leopold. The takeover of the Geelong Gas Co. has been successful and it has enabled the Gas and Fuel Corporation to make a reduction of 21 per cent or 22 per cent in over-all costs, which has been welcomed by the Geelong community. I assure the House that the residents in the Geelong area and surrounding districts appreciate the activities of the corporation and support this measure.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was read a second time and committed.

Clause 1 was agreed to.

Clause 2 (Interpretations).

The Hon. W. V. HOUGHTON (Minister for Social Welfare).—I shall comment on two matters raised in debate. Mr. Knight said that Mr. Connor, the Federal Minister for Minerals and Energy, was on the right tram. I remind the Committee of the story of the platoon marching with only one man in step. The sergeant major thought that he was the only one in step. If Mr. Connor is on the right tram, he is a pretty lonely passenger. The contribution to the debate by Mr. Jenkins indicates that the mantle of his predecessor is now fitting snugly on his shoulders and I congratulate him on his contribution.

The clause was agreed to, as were the remaining clauses.

The Bill was reported to the House without amendment, and passed through its remaining stages.

The sitting was suspended at 6.30 *p.m. until* 8.4 *p.m.*

STAMPS BILL.

The debate (adjourned from October 23) on the motion of the Hon. Murray Byrne (Minister for State Development and Decentralization) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY (Melbourne North Province).—Governments are perennially short on money and long on words. One sympathizes with efforts of Governments to raise more money to meet the growing requirements of the State. This Bill has been launched in an attempt to solve some of the Government's fiscal difficulties, but its philosophy is repugnant to me.

Much is said about young married couples with growing families and their worthy desire to own homes. This Bill hits those people on the head with a sledge hammer, because it raises the duties payable on the sale of land. Young couples must first buy a block of land. Certificates for municipal and Board of Works rates —which once cost a shilling—must be obtained. After purchase, transfer of land must be embarked upon, and the Government imposes a percentage on the transfer document. It was once 2 per cent, but under this Bill it has been raised to such an extent that in an ordinary transaction for the purchase of a humble piece of land, the duty will amount to hundreds of dollars.

That is not the end of it. The registration fee payable on the transfer has been increased. Because money does not grow on trees, the sum which has been saved after hard toil, representing a portion of the value of the land, must be supplemented by a mortgage. What has the Government done to assist young married people, who are the backbone of the community? It has raised the stamp duty and increased the registration fee on mortgages. A small block of land which could once be acquired for about $2,000 now costs from $10,000 to $15,000. Rates and taxes must be increased, but it is a shoddy method for the Government to adopt by penalizing young people trying to raise a family.

The Hon. W. G. FRY.—The Government in Canberra is doing all right on the interest rates too.

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY.—There is another example. It is no wonder that people shrug their shoulders and say that Governments are not to be trusted.

The Hon. M. A. CLARKE (Northern Province).—This is a Bill to increase stamp duties, and Mr. Galbally has rightly painted a depressing picture of the effect the increases will have. This form of taxation has been forced upon the States, which have no other means of raising revenue. Income tax, sales tax and excise duty—which are probably fairer to the community than stamp duty—are barred from the manipulations of the State Treasurer. Therefore, the Stamps Bill of 1973 contains a large range of increases. I do not like the measure, but unfortunately this House can do nothing but accept it. It could be rejected, but the numbers are not great enough to do so. Even if they were, that course would not be taken because the Treasurer needs money to supply the requirements of the constituents and taxpayers of Victoria.

Stamp duty has a long history of turbulence. The Stamps Act of 1765 led directly to the American War of Independence. Colonists in the States which then bordered the Atlantic Ocean rose up in revolt against stamp duty which was imposed on newspapers, playing cards, dice and pamphlets. Although the law was later repealed in England, the smart which was inflicted on the American colonists over the following ten years led to unrest, which grew into a war of independence. The United States of America subsequently became a separate entity from the United Kingdom. I do not

suggest that the ratepayers, taxpayers and stamp duty payers of Victoria will rise up in revolt against the Government.

The Hon. S. E. GLEESON.—Speak for yourself!

The Hon. M. A. CLARKE.—If Mr. Gleeson feels so revolutionary, perhaps he will condemn the measure! This year there has been more than a mouthful of increases. One could take the example of the increase in stamp duty on cheques. Recently I found an old cheque book with several unused forms, and the stamp duty on each cheque was twopence. The duty is now being increased from 6 cents to 7 cents. I remind the Treasurer, through the Minister, that bills of exchange were once the common medium of exchanging money, not only between countries, but between commercial houses and individuals. Early last century the rate of stamp duty on bills of exchange was raised to such an extent that their use by private individuals was taxed out of existence.

I consider the raising of stamp duty on cheques to be an unfortunate development. A number of debates have taken place in this House on the desirability of paying wages and salaries by cheque rather than by cash. There is a growing tendency in the community to seize money by force because people do not want to go out and earn it. There have been bank robberies, armed robberies, Totalizator Agency Board robberies and a large number of pay-roll robberies. If business houses were not only allowed but encouraged to pay the wages of their employees by cheque instead of cash, criminal intents would be defeated. The Government is making it even more difficult to pay by cheque by increasing the duty.

I also deplore the increased rates of duty being levied on life assurance policies. I regard life assurance as one of the best forms of saving and it should be encouraged at all costs by the State. Mr. Galbally has referred to the increased duty on mortgages, on the transfer of motor cars and so on. The only increase of which I approve is the rise in the duty on hire-purchase transactions. As I said last night, I am not in favour of money lending or hire-purchase.

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY.—Unfortunately, it is not the hire-purchase company which pays but the client.

The Hon. M. A. CLARKE.—Mr. Galbally has virtually taken the words out of my mouth. The people who will pay are not the insurance companies, the hire-purchase companies or the rental companies—the credit and rental business is dealt with in clause 14—but the customers.

This type of taxation is inflationary and unfair, and I would go even so far as to say that it is vicious, but we have to put up with it. Members of the Country Party do not approve of the measure, but we cannot oppose it.

The House divided on the motion (Sir Raymond Garrett in the chair)—

Ayes	23
Noes	8
Majority for the motion..	15

AYES.

Mr. Byrne	Mr. Hider
Mr. Campbell	Mr. Houghton
Mr. Clarke	Mr. Hunt
Mr. Crozier	Mr. Jenkins
Mr. Dickie	Mr. Long
Mr. Dunn	Mr. McDonald
Mr. Fry	Mr. Nicol
Mr. Gleeson	Mr. Wright.
Mr. Granter	
Mr. Grimwade	*Tellers:*
Mr. Gross	
Mr. Hamilton	Mr. Block
Mr. Hauser	Mr. Bradbury.

NOES.

Mr. Galbally	Mr. Walton.
Mr. Knight	
Mr. Thomas	*Tellers:*
Mr. Trayling	Mr. Eddy
Mr. Tripovich	Mr. Kent.

Pair.

Mr. Storey	Mr. Elliot.

The Bill was read a second time and committed.

Clause 1 was agreed to.

Clause 2, relating to bills of exchange and promissory notes.

The Hon. MURRAY BYRNE (Minister for State Development and Decentralization).—Both Mr. Galbally and Mr. Clarke have said that they do not like this Bill, and neither does the Government. We do not favour it for a number of reasons, not only those raised by Mr. Galbally. Stamp duty is a form of indirect taxation. The most unfair form of taxation is indirect taxation because it bears no relationship to the ability of a person to pay. Mr. Clarke put the position in a nutshell when he said that States have no real power to levy income tax, which is the only fair method of imposing taxation.

The Hon. J. M. TRIPOVICH.—What about land tax?

The Hon. MURRAY BYRNE.—Does Mr. Tripovich consider that land tax is fair?

The Hon J. M. TRIPOVICH.—It is as fair as stamp duty.

The Hon. MURRAY BYRNE.—The Government is in good company in its dislike of stamp duty because the Labor Premier of South Australia, the Labor Premier of Western Australia, and Mr. Reece, the respected Labor Premier and Treasurer of Tasmania, share our view. Mr. Reece stated that it is unfair under the present Constitution that the States, which are responsible for the "bread and butter" issues, have to raise money by way of indirect taxation because they are allocated less money for the responsibilities of Government than ever before. I have mentioned only the Labor Party Premiers because at least on this issue they are not prejudiced.

I was particularly interested in a matter on which Mr. Galbally spoke with great sincerity and a certain amount of courage. He said that one aspect of this Bill which he did not favour was that it increased to some extent the costs which have to be met by persons who borrow money for housing. I do not think any member of this House would willingly inflict extra taxes upon people who are purchasing homes. In fairness to the Government, one point about the Bill should be made clear. It is that there is no increase in duty on loans for the purchase of homes or, as I understand it, on borrowings of less than $40,000.

I realize that Mr. Tripovich takes an interest in the cost imposed upon the average working man in the community who owns his own home. Mr. Galbally said courageously to an interjector, "Let us consider what the Federal Labor Government has done in the past nine months". I intend to inform honorable members what it has done to the poor unfortunate working man who owns his own home. In the past nine months there has been an increase of $1,780 in the purchase price, not of a $30,000 or a $40,000 home as mentioned in the Bill, but of a home previously valued at $15,000.

An honorable member asked about interest rates. The highest interest rates ever recorded in this nation have been inflicted by the Federal Labor Government on young couples who are trying to buy their own homes. Mr. Galbally asked, "Is it any wonder that people distrust Governments?"

The CHAIRMAN (the Hon. G. J. Nicol).—Does the Bill impose a stamp duty on Governments?

The Hon. MURRAY BYRNE.—It imposes a duty on the purchase of houses and on the borrowing of money. At all events, I think I have made my point.

Stamp duty is indirect taxation. The States receive 40 per cent of their revenue from the Commonwealth Government. The State Governments have no power to levy income tax. It is unfortunate that the Government has to impose indirect

taxation, but, as Mr. Clarke rightly said, every member who spoke on the Appropriation Bill demanded that the State Government should spend more money on the essential responsibilities of government. Nobody who criticizes the Government for raising indirect taxation is able to advise it where it should not spend money or how it should raise finance. Until we get that answer there is no alternative but to impose indirect taxation.

The Hon. J. M. TRIPOVICH (Doutta Galla Province).—This Bill merely adds to duties which are increased each year. It is all very well for the Minister to refer to Labor Premiers of other States.

The Hon. MURRAY BYRNE.—They are taking the same action.

The Hon. J. M. TRIPOVICH.—That does not make it right. Certain people are making millions of dollars from the inflated value of land.

The Hon. W. M. CAMPBELL.—What has that to do with this Bill?

The Hon. J. M. TRIPOVICH.—I will tell that story on another occasion. Interest rates in this country are the lowest in the Western World today.

The Hon. MURRAY BYRNE.—But they are the highest in the history of this nation.

The Hon. J. M. TRIPOVICH.—That is so, but they are the lowest in the world.

The CHAIRMAN (the Hon. G. J. Nicol).—Order! The debate is developing rather wide of the limit permitted in the Committee stage. At present the Committee is debating clause 2, which deals specifically with cheques.

The Hon. J. M. TRIPOVICH.—I shall discuss cheques. As a result of this type of measure the bank credit card system will become popular in the near future. To write out a cheque costs 7 cents; so if a person has several debts to pay he will probably write one cheque and pay the debts in cash. It will not be long before the credit card system is in vogue in Australia. The banks' current proposals do not include any deduction from a person's account for providing a credit card service. The Government would be better off to examine other sources of revenue rather than to criticize other Governments.

The clause was agreed to, as were the remaining clauses.

The Bill was reported to the House without amendment, and passed through its remaining stages.

ESTATE AGENTS (FEES) BILL.

The debate (adjourned from October 23) on the motion of the Hon. Murray Byrne (Minister for State Development and Decentralization) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

The Hon. J. M. WALTON (Melbourne North Province).—This measure imposes a burden on a certain section of the community, and I think that a number of similar Bills remain to be considered. The purpose of the measure is to increase fees payable by estate agents. It increases an estate agent's licence from $30 and a renewal of licence from $20 to $100 in each case; an estate agent's licence for a licensed auctioneer from $12 for a new licence and renewal to $25 in each case; each estate agent's licence of a corporation from $60 for a new licence and $40 for a renewal to $200 in each case; and a sub-agent's licence from $4 each for a new licence and renewal to $10 in each case. They are quite vicious increases, but I suppose it can be said that the fees are being paid by a section of the community which can well afford them. A former member of this House, the late Mr. O'Connell, referred to this Government as the "100 per cent increase Government" but the increases envisaged in this measure far exceed 100 per cent.

The Hon. K. I. WRIGHT (North-Western Province).—The Country Party supports this Bill. I declare an interest in the measure because I am the holder of an estate agent's licence. Like my colleagues, I am working from 75 hours to 80 hours each week carrying out my duties to my province and I have neither the time nor the inclination to continue real estate work. However, because of the uncertain nature of being a member of Parliament, I feel inclined to continue to hold my licence.

In passing, I might say that I am a member of Rotary, which does not provide a classification for a member of Parliament because of the tenuous nature of that occupation. The position seems to be the same throughout the world.

The PRESIDENT (Sir Raymond Garrett).—The Bill does not refer to the Rotary Club.

The Hon. K. I. WRIGHT.—That is so, Mr. President. Some aspects of this Bill cry out for explanation. Mr. Walton, who represents the Melbourne North Province, spoke of increases of 100 per cent but some increases included in this Bill are of the order of 500 per cent—for example, the increase of the renewal of an estate agent's licence from $20 to $100.

Mr. Walton said that estate agents can afford to pay this amount but I remind honorable members that it will be the client who eventually meets this increase in fees.

There will be a huge increase in Government revenue, which will rise from $100,000 to $300,000 per annum. However, that percentage increase in Government revenue does not match the percentage increase of estate agents' operating expenses.

Licence holders have to work long hours in order to pay this fee, and that is only one of the many costs they have to meet. In general, the Bill is acceptable, but there are some aspects of it which should be discussed and queried. Prices are rising at such a rate that agent's commissions, which are calculated on a percentage basis, enable them to pay the fees which are provided in this measure. Also, the Estate Agents Committee in this State recently increased commissions to the rate applicable in most other States and the Australian Capital Territory, 5 per cent on the first $8,000 of the purchase price and 3 per cent thereafter. In respect of the sale of a house of $15,000 commission has been increased from $510 to $610.

My party has two reservations regarding the proposed legislation. The first is that because of a smaller turnover a small country estate agent is less able to pay the increased fee, and the second is that there appears to be a discrimination against agents in border cities, such as Mildura, Swan Hill, Echuca and Wodonga. Their operating radius is cut by 180 degrees, because half of the area is in New South Wales, yet they pay full fees to the Victorian Government. If an estate agent wishes to obtain a New South Wales licence it will cost him $135 a year. It is a complicated procedure, as well. I have received a letter from the Mildura branch of the Real Estate and Stock Institute, the president of which is Mr. R. D. Massey and the secretary, Mr. N. T. Cahill. The letter reads—

Re : Proposed increase in estate agent's fees.

You are possibly aware that the proposed increase in real estate agent fees as high as they are will particularly hit Victorian agents who trade from border towns as do members of the Mildura Branch of the Real Estate and Stock Institute.

You may know that in addition to the Victorian fees all estate agents trading across the border in New South Wales must pay the prescribed fees of that State, notwithstanding the fact that due to isolation the amount of business that can be transacted in New South Wales is limited but very necessary for us because of our restricted trading area in Victoria.

This fact is also very noticeable even with our Victorian fees when you compare the area and population that estate agents in Melbourne, Ballarat, Geelong and Bendigo can service against our area and population.

My branch contends that estate agents trading in small isolated areas as the Sunraysia district and in particular where that district is a border town are entitled to relief in payment of fees.

We would therefore appreciate it should you be able to make representation on our behalf to the appropriate Minister with view to estate agents fees be calculated on a more equitable basis and having in mind our particular problem of double fees.

Perhaps fees should be based on the population density within a reasonable distance where an estate agent has his registered office.

We await your representation with interest.

It seems to be abundantly clear that there could be some reciprocity concerning licence fees between border States or lower licence fees for agents paying fees in two States.

I have discussed this proposed legislation with the General Secretary of the Real Estate and Stock Institute of Victoria, Mr. Lyall Evans, who advised that the increases had the support of the institute.

The institute believes that the Registrar of Estate Agents should have more staff or be divested of some of his responsibilities. At present, he is concerned with the administration of the Money Lenders Act 1958, the Finance Brokers Act 1969, the Auction Sales Act 1958, and the Estate Agents Act 1958. Preferably, the problem could be resolved by removing the first two Acts from the administration of the registrar. Presently, the staff consists of the registrar and his deputy, one class C.1 officer, one class C. officer, two class E. officers, four inspectors, and two typists, a total of twelve.

The Real Estate and Stock Institute of Victoria believes there is no possible hope of the registrar and his staff properly policing the Act and detecting breaches. A while ago, a completely unlicensed man was operating and advertising but it took some considerable time to track him down and advise him that he was doing the wrong thing.

The Country Party considers that the principal Act was good and that it resulted in the weeding out of a lot of bad agents. The sum of $50,000 stands to the credit of the Estate Agents Guarantee Fund. From this fund, money is paid to people affected by the activities of the occasional bad agent, but I understand that in no one year has the full $50,000 been completely used. Members of the legal fraternity in the House would probably look on this state of affairs with a good deal of admiration.

There is an anomaly in the principal Act and, as this Bill relates to fees, it has a bearing on the situation. An agent defaulted. Numerous people were left lamenting. Unfortunately, they could not collect a single $1. The agent had not paid the deposits and amounts concerned into his trust account and it transpired that unless these moneys were paid into that account it was not obligatory for the Estate Agents Guarantee Fund to make good the losses. I understand that this has not been adjusted and I ask the Minister to examine the situation which is crying out for correction.

This is a short Bill but its ramifications run so deep and, in many instances are so involved, that the Country Party believes that the matters I have mentioned should be aired.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was read a second time and committed.

Clause 1 was agreed to.

Clause 2 (Fees).

The Hon. MURRAY BYRNE (Minister for State Development and Decentralization).—It is pleasing to note that the Bill has the unanimous support of the House. A defence should be raised to some of the points made. These fees were last increased in 1956. I compliment Mr. Wright for the straightforward and honest way in which he spoke. I did not intend to mention it, but, as Mr. Wright pointed out, at least one section of the community—other than the Commonwealth Government—is

benefiting from inflation. That section comprises the estate agents. With the increase in land values, their commissions have also increased.

Mr. Wright raised a number of pertinent matters such as border hopping and gave some advice on how the office of the registrar could be improved to enforce the Act. I understand the problems in relation to border hopping but this is a matter for the Victorian and New South Wales associations to sort out between them. Undoubtedly, Victoria's Estate Agents Act is the best in Australia. It gives better protection and security than any other State's Act, not only to those engaged in an occupation which has been raised to the status of a profession in recent years, but also to people dealing with them and through them.

I have had dealings with the registrar over the years. His office has done a first-class job. In fairness to the organization of which Mr. Wright is a member, I point out that I have also had a lot to do with Mr. Foy, the secretary, and I have found that the Real Estate and Stock Institute is a responsible body whose members control its affairs. That probably accounts for the success of the profession in Victoria. The matters raised by Mr. Wright will be directed to the attention of the responsible Minister.

The clause was agreed to.

The Bill was reported to the House without amendment, and passed through its remaining stages.

AUCTION SALES (LICENCE FEES) BILL.

The debate (adjourned from October 23) on the motion of the Hon. Murray Byrne (Minister for State Development and Decentralization) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

The Hon. J. M. WALTON (Melbourne North Province).—This is another Bill which increases fees to allow the Government to carry on its job. In this case it is the fees of auctioneers which are being increased, and again the increases are steep. The fee for an auctioneer's licence will be increased from $50 to $100 and the fees for temporary licences and the transfer of licences will be increased from $2 to $4. So, in all cases, the increase is 100 per cent. The Labor Party does not oppose the Bill.

The Hon. K. I. WRIGHT (North-Western Province).—The Country Party supports the Bill. As I did with the previous Bill, I declare an interest. I hold a current licence but, in view of the increased fees which will operate, I believe I shall cease to do so after the 31st December. The Minister's second-reading notes are brief but they clearly indicate that the fees will be increased by 100 per cent.

There are several points which I should bring to the attention of the Minister. There are at least three classes of auctioneers who enjoy varying degrees of profitability, but the fees are the same for all types of auctioneers. Further, the fees are the same, no matter where the auctioneers are located. The first type of auctioneer is one who conducts auction sales of real estate; the second sells livestock by auction; and the third auctions furniture and chattels. It is unrealistic and unfair to have one licence fee for all auctioneers in all parts of Victoria.

There is an interesting restriction in the Auction Sales Act. Music cannot be played during a sale in premises. I have often wondered why that is so but I have never been able to find out.

A 100 per cent increase in the fee for an auctioneer in the first category I mentioned is unreasonably severe on auctioneers in country cities and towns. Only a fraction of the sales of real estate in the country are by auction; most sales are by private treaty. If an

auctioneer who is an estate agent in the country sold two houses a year by auction, he would be doing well. However, an auctioneer in a similar business in Melbourne or its suburbs would probably sell two properties a week.

Government members are laughing but they should put themselves in the shoes of a single trader with a small business struggling to make ends meet at the time when costs are rising. There is one good advantage for the agent in selling a property by auction. The client pays the advertising costs. In the country they would probably amount to $125 or $150. In the city, with higher advertising charges, they would probably amount to $250 to $300.

A second restriction relates to the River Murray towns which I mentioned earlier tonight. The operating radius is cut by half. Another restriction is that auction sales cannot take place before sunrise or after sunset. I am wondering why this restriction should apply. A person who proposes to buy a farm or a house would look at it beforehand and not make a last-minute inspection. Perhaps this provision could be deleted when the principal Act is amended in the future.

Earlier, I referred to livestock auctioneers who usually operate at sale-yards. My party is particularly concerned that any auctioneer will be restricted by the buyers from the Victorian Meatworks Association boycotting some country sale-yards, for example, Donald. The *Donald Birchip Times* of Tuesday 23rd October, 1973, published a letter from the Minister for Local Government to the honorable member for Kara Kara in another place which stated, *inter alia*—

> In discussion with a representative of the Victorian Meatworks Association, I have made it quite plain that the Government's policy is to have regard to all aspects of the situation with respect to individual sale-yards, including their importance to the commercial life of the town in which they are situated in determining its attitude to financial support for any capital works required of them.
>
> In consequence, I have received assurances that no precipitate action will be taken by the association to discourage its buyers from attending fat cattle sales at the smaller yards.
>
> On the other hand, the Government has no legislative backing to cause buyers to attend sales, nor has it any intention of acquiring such powers. Livestock producers have a free choice as to where they market their stock and this must always be so, obviously they will patronize the market which offers the greater return irrespective of its location.

It is feared that some of the auctioneers who will have to pay the substantially higher fees will be restricted in their activities. With the reservations that I have mentioned, the Country Party supports the Bill.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was read a second time and committed.

Clause 1 was agreed to.

Clause 2, relating to amendments to the Third Schedule of the principal Act.

The Hon. MURRAY BYRNE (Minister for State Development and Decentralization).—The complete defence to the charges levelled during the second-reading debate is that this is the first occasion since 1890 on which any increase has been proposed in these fees. Whether the Federal Government or any Government is to blame, the increase is fair enough. The poor unfortunate auctioneer will have to pay an additional $2 for a temporary licence, making the total fee $4.

It was interesting to hear the remarks of Mr. Wright and no doubt his experience of spruiking at auction sales qualifies him as an able speaker in this Chamber. Many of the matters that he raised could have easily been answered by him because he certainly has more knowledge of the subject than I have. He mentioned music and darkness. Many statements to which I do not subscribe are made about auctioneers, but if an auction were being held in the dark whilst music was playing, what hope would the poor unfortunate bidder have of getting his bid across, and how would the auctioneer know which bid to accept?

The matter that really affected me as Minister for State Development and Decentralization was the letter that the honorable member read from an interesting member of the Government and his comments about the possibility of country auctioneers being adversely affected. Many country auctioneers are good friends of mine. They appear to have been fairly successful and to be reasonably happy. However, in view of the comments by Mr. Wright, as Minister for State Development and Decentralization perhaps I should investigate the introduction of some incentive scheme for these auctioneers.

The clause was agreed to, as was the remaining clause.

The Bill was reported to the House without amendment, and passed through its remaining stages.

MOTOR CAR (FEES) BILL.

The debate (adjourned from October 23) on the motion of the Hon. A. J. Hunt (Minister for Local Government) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

The Hon. J. M. WALTON (Melbourne North Province).—As Mr. Galbally said when speaking to the Stamps Bill earlier this evening, the Government is again placing an undue burden on young people who want to buy a home and my Leader explained the various taxes that are imposed on them before they actually get the home. The Bill is another attack on young people because they, in the main, apply for drivers' licences. The Bill proposes to make the sky the limit with regard to fees, depending upon the whim of the Governor in Council, the Minister or whoever represents the Government in this sphere of activity. After the Bill is passed, whoever it is will be able to impose any fee that he likes for the making of an appointment for a test and for undertaking a test. The current maximum is $2 for the making of an appointment and $4 for the test.

The Bill will take away from Parliament the right to fix the fees mentioned—this power will then reside with the Governor in Council.

The Hon. A. J. HUNT.—Mr. Walton does not like that?

The Hon. J. M. WALTON.—I do not like it and on numerous occasions I have spoken about this subject.

The Hon. A. J. HUNT.—And neither do I. I agree with Mr. Walton and I will be proposing an amendment.

The Hon. J. M. WALTON.—Whether the fee is $10 or $20, at least the Government should have the courage not to take the power for fixing fees out of the hands of Parliament.

The Hon. A. J. HUNT.—Do not go any higher than $10; that will be enough.

The Hon. J. M. WALTON.—The Minister for Local Government seems to be sensitive about the matter and wants to stop me from explaining how the powers of Parliament are being whittled away. If ever there was an argument for the Commonwealth Government to take over State powers, this sort of legislation is it. The Government continues to present legislation designed to lessen the powers of Parliament and to hand them over to the bureaucrats. This Bill is a typical example of that sort of action.

The proposed new fees will hit mainly young people. Many thousands of persons who drive motor vehicles do not have a licence and therefore will not have to pay the fee. They do not bother to obtain a licence. The Labor Party has told the Government this on many occasions, as has the Road Safety Committee. Unfortunately, the Government has continued to do nothing about it.

Whilst the Labor Party does not oppose a reasonable increase in fees because costs are soaring, it does oppose the principle of taking out of the hands of Parliament the power and the right to set maximum fees.

The Hon. B. P. DUNN (North-Western Province).—Where are the Liberal champions of democracy and Parliamentary rights? They are certainly not in the House tonight; if they are, honorable members want to hear from them.

The Hon. A. J. HUNT.—You have already heard.

The Hon. B. P. DUNN.—By presenting this Bill the Government is deliberately denigrating the establishment of State Parliament and the authority and the rights of members of this Parliament. Members of the Country Party challenge any Government member in this House, if he feels strongly about it, to say so. It would be a change to hear from members of the Liberal Party because Bill after Bill is passed by this House without them saying anything. It is about time the House heard from some of them. One would think that Mr. Storey would oppose the adoption of the principle enunciated in the Bill.

It proposes to take out of the Act the provision for the maximum fees which may be charged for making an appointment for a licence test and for taking the test. Last year, Parliament passed legislation to provide for learner-driver permits. The fee for making an appointment for a test for a learner-driver permit was $2 and for carrying out the test it was $4. Therefore, it costs a person $12 before he becomes eligible to obtain a driver's licence.

I should like to know what the Government intends to do with the additional income because the Bill includes a provision that most of the money will go into the Consolidated Fund. I should like to know for what purpose the money will be used, how much the proposed fees will bring into the Consolidated Fund and whether the funds will be spent on road safety measures. Members could also ask what increases are proposed.

The Hon. V. T. HAUSER.—Are you supporting the Bill?

The Hon. B. P. DUNN.—No, we are definitely not supporting it; we intend to throw it out. If sufficient members of the Government party will vote with the Country Party on this matter, this House will be successful in tossing out the Bill.

The Hon. A. J. HUNT.—The House has been informed that an amendment will be moved at a later stage.

The Hon. B. P. DUNN.—The House has not received copies of any amendments. The Bill does not indicate what the increases will be in these fees. It also removes any limit on the fees. I am concerned about this and about young people. Many do not get their licences at the first attempt and they have already paid $12 to make an appointment and to have their test. If the Bill is passed this amount could easily be doubled and Parliament will have no control over it. Members of the Country Party disagree with the words which were clearly written into the Minister's second-reading speech, as follows:—

> The amendment will remove from the section the maximum level at which fees may be set. The effect of the amendment will be to permit the Governor in Council from time to time to prescribe such fees as he thinks fit.

This has happened time and time again. Parliament should set these fees from time to time as necessary.

The Hon. A. J. HUNT.—I have stated that an amendment will be submitted to ensure that result.

The Hon. B. P. DUNN.—Members of the Country Party would like to see that happen and I am pleased that the Government has got the message.

The Hon. K. S. GROSS.—It was not as a result of the honorable member's actions.

The Hon. B. P. DUNN.—Perhaps members in another place brought to the notice of the Government the anomalies that exist in this insignificant Bill. Members of the Country Party oppose the whole principle espoused in the Bill. It downgrades

the establishment of Parliament and we intend to vote against the Bill in its existing form.

The Hon. K. S. GROSS (Western Province).—As a member of the Government Party, I accept the challenge offered by Mr. Dunn and the Country Party. I also do so as chairman of the Subordinate Legislation Committee.

The Hon. J. M. TRIPOVICH.—But the committee would not understand it either.

The Hon. K. S. GROSS.—If anyone should take the credit for drawing this clause to the notice of Parliament, in this House and another place, it should be the Subordinate Legislation Committee.

The Hon. J. M. TRIPOVICH.—Why was this not done in the party room?

The Hon. K. S. GROSS.—I am not discussing what was done in the party room. I will make this speech in my own way. Paragraph 14 of a general report submitted by the Subordinate Legislation Committee in 1970 contains a submission dealing with the type of clause which the House is debating tonight. I do not propose to quote that paragraph verbatim to the House. In that report the committee stated that it had heard evidence from various parts of Victoria and other States of Australia on the matter of fees being prescribed by regulation with no ceiling specified in the Act. Members of the committee viewed this matter very strongly, and nothing has happened since to change their attitude. We do not object to fees being raised by regulation when a ceiling is prescribed in the Act. Unless a ceiling is prescribed in the Act, this Parliament and any other Parliament might as well go out of existence because members will have no say in any change which might take place. Members of all parties should appreciate this important principle. I am not so interested in what the Government or anyone else does. As a member of the Subordinate Legislation Committee, an all-party committee, of which I am proud to have been the chairman for a number of years, I am concerned at upholding the privileges of members of Parliament and of this Parliament. For that reason alone, I will at all times oppose a principle such as that which is contained in this Bill. I sincerely implore all members to do likewise. If they do not, they might as well go out of existence in the short space of five or six years or even less.

The Hon. J. M. TRIPOVICH (Doutta Galla Province).—The remarks of the honorable member who has just resumed his seat astound me. Is he speaking as chairman of the Subordinate Legislation Committee or as a member of the Government party? The Bill gives the Governor in Council the right to fix fees without reference to the House.

The Hon. A. J. HUNT.—I have given an undertaking that an amendment will be submitted.

The Hon. J. M. TRIPOVICH.—Honorable members should disregard the Minister's undertaking. The business before the House is that the Governor in Council will fix the fees. It is all very well for the Minister to interject and say, "Do not say anything about it; we are going to move an amendment". This proposed legislation no doubt was taken to party meetings, at which the chairman of the Subordinate Legislation Committee apparently remained silent. The Bill went to another place and when the Opposition realized that it meant that the Government will set the fees through the Governor in Council without reference to the House, honorable members became mealy-mouthed about it. Let us not be hypocritical.

The business before the House is a Bill from another place which provides that fees will be fixed by the Governor in Council. Mr. Hauser and Mr. Gross no doubt attended the party meeting that approved of the measure. They would not allow their Cabinet to

introduce anything with which they disagreed. Therefore, the statement made by the chairman of the Subordinate Legislation Committee astounds me. With great respect, it is the biggest exhibition of hypocrisy I have seen in this House for many years.

The Hon. K. S. GROSS (Western Province).—Mr. President, I object to that remark.

The PRESIDENT (Sir Raymond Garrett).—That is a comment to which the honorable member could take objection, and I think it should be withdrawn.

The Hon. J. M. TRIPOVICH (Doutta Galla Province).—I am astounded at the objection but if it is genuine I withdraw the remark.

The Hon. S. R. McDONALD (Northern Province).—I wish to make some brief comments on the Bill and to endorse the comments of my colleague, Mr. Dunn. A moment ago I heard Mr. Hauser interjecting that the Opposition and the Country Party were introducing party politics into the debate. When an important issue such as this is debated, honorable members have every right to refer to it in the strongest terms. I take the point made by Mr. Tripovich and I accept the interjection of the Minister for Local Government that he intends to introduce an amendment at a later stage. However, the important point is that the Bill apparently went through another place and came into this House in the same form as when it was originally introduced in another place.

The Hon. J. M. TRIPOVICH.—They did not wake up to it, and Mr. Hauser did not understand it when it was in the party room.

The Hon. S. R. McDONALD.—It appears that the minds and mouths of some members of the Government only come into gear when they are in this Chamber. In the party room when they were assessing the proposed legislation they must have been silent. I am sure that if my Leader, Mr. Swinburne, had been present, he would have taken exactly the same stance as we are taking. No doubt on a number of occasions since becoming a member of the Subordinate Legislation Committee, he has brought this type of matter to the attention of the committee.

Members of the Country Party are opposed to the basic principle that these legislative powers should be taken away from this Parliament and given to the Executive.

The Hon. R. J. LONG.—So are we.

The Hon. S. R. McDONALD.—I am pleased to hear that. We will wait and see. Similar Bills will be introduced in the near future and I hope members of the Government will adopt a consistent attitude.

The House divided on the motion (Sir Raymond Garrett in the chair)—

Ayes	17
Noes	13
Majority for the motion	4

AYES.

Mr. Block	Mr. Hider
Mr. Byrne	Mr. Houghton
Mr. Dickie	Mr. Hunt
Mr. Fry	Mr. Jenkins
Mr. Gleeson	Mr. Long
Mr. Granter	Mr. Nicol.
Mr. Grimwade	*Tellers:*
Mr. Hamilton	Mr. Campbell
Mr. Hauser	Mr. Crozier.

NOES.

Mr. Bradbury	Mr. Trayling
Mr. Clarke	Mr. Tripovich
Mr. Dunn	Mr. Walton
Mr. Eddy	Mr. Wright.
Mr. Galbally	*Tellers:*
Mr. Kent	Mr. Knight
Mr. McDonald	Mr. Thomas.

PAIRS.

Mr. Storey	Mr. Elliot
Mr. Ward	Mr. Swinburne.

The Bill was read a second time and committed.

Clause 1 was agreed to.

Clause 2, providing, *inter alia* —

(1) In sub-section (8) of section 22 of the Principal Act for the expression "not exceeding $2 for each appointment made for testing and not exceeding $4 for that test" there shall be substituted the words "for each appointment made for testing and for each test".

The Hon. A. J. HUNT (Minister for Local Government).—Honorable members have witnessed tonight the Legislative Council performing its proper function and maintaining the supremacy of Parliament by refusing to surrender control to the Executive and this is as it should be, as I interjected when Mr. Walton first raised the matter. There is possibly unanimity on all sides of the Chamber on this question with which I fully concur. It is obvious that the Committee will support with unanimity the amendments which I have circulated. The amendments will give effect to the undertaking I gave earlier during the debate to maintain the principle which has been supported by all honorable members who have spoken in the debate. I move—

That, in sub-clause (1), the expression '"not exceeding $2 for each appointment made for testing and not exceeding $4 for that test" there shall be substituted the words "for each appointment made for testing and for each test"' be omitted with the view of inserting the expression '"$2" there shall be substituted the expression "$5" and for the expression "$4" there shall be substituted the expression "$10"'.

The Hon. J. M. WALTON (Melbourne North Province).—I applaud the Government for having taken heed of members of the Labor Party and the Country Party. It is ridiculous for the Government which has the responsibility of introducing a measure, firstly to draw it up in a department, secondly, to examine it in the Cabinet room, thirdly, to consider it in the party room, and fourthly, to introduce it in the Legislative Assembly and when the measure finally reaches this place, for a matter of principle to be then raised by honorable members on the Government side of the House.

I had a great deal of respect for Mr. Gross tonight when he said that he would vote against proposed legislation of this type. However, when Mr. Gross had the chance either to vote against the Bill or to walk out, he walked out. I do not want to hear any more from him.

The Hon. K. S. GROSS.—I did not vote for it.

The Hon. J. M. WALTON.—But Mr. Gross said that he would vote against it.

The Hon. K. S. GROSS.—I did not say that I would vote against it.

The Hon. J. M. WALTON.—The words you used will appear in *Hansard* and I wrote them down at the time.

The CHAIRMAN (the Hon. G. J. Nicol).—Order! I ask Mr. Walton to address the Chair and not to direct his remarks to an honorable member opposite.

The Hon. J. M. WALTON.—I am sorry, Mr. Chairman. I am objecting to Mr. Gross interjecting after being absent from the Chamber when a vote was taken.

The CHAIRMAN.—Mr. Walton should voice his objection through the Chair.

The Hon. J. M. WALTON.—By interjection the Minister for Local Government indicated to me when I was speaking, that he intended to move an amendment to the Bill. That is no way for a Government to amend a Bill which has been introduced in a slap-happy fashion. The Government can move an amendment to a Bill, but the appropriate time is not when an honorable member is speaking. It is not proper for a Minister, by interjection, to indicate that a mistake has been made and that it will be remedied. The Minister must await his turn, just as members of the Labor Party have to wait their turn. The Minister was trying to prevent members of the Labor Party from speaking against the measure. The Government could see that criticism

was to be levelled at it and it was trying to soften the blow by saying that it intended to amend the Bill.

The Hon. MURRAY BYRNE.—What is wrong with that?

The Hon. J. M. WALTON.—There is nothing wrong with it, but it should be done at the appropriate time.

The CHAIRMAN (the Hon. G. J. Nicol).—Order! In developing that line of argument, I do not think Mr. Walton is really giving consideration to the amendment under discussion.

The Hon. J. M. WALTON.—I will conclude by repeating what I said to the Leader of the House, namely, that I applaud the Government for moving the amendment. Perhaps the honorable gentleman was not in the Chamber when I commenced my remarks. I stated that it was wonderful that even after the Bill had gone through all the various stages, at the last moment the Government was prepared to take notice of remarks of members of the Labor Party and the Country Party.

The Hon. B. P. DUNN (North-Western Province).—Like Mr. Walton, I commend the Government for taking a statesmanlike action. However, it was too late, because the principle had already been put forward by members of the Labor Party and the Country Party and a couple of Government supporters. In fact, I give credit to Mr. Gross for saying his piece.

The Hon. A. J. HUNT.—Mr. Birrell in another place was the first to raise it.

The Hon. B. P. DUNN.—I do not deny that, but all honorable members have had their say. Although the Government has moved an amendment, I am still concerned about the principle that is involved. The Bill will be better than the one on which honorable members voted at the conclusion of the second-reading debate. Honorable members must realize that under the amendment, the fees are now being increased from $2 to $5 when an appointment is made for a test, and from $4 to $10 when the test is taken. In other words, it could cost an applicant $15 for a licence to drive, and no doubt a similar fee will be charged for learner-driver permits, which makes a total of $30.

The Hon. R. J. EDDY.—It is robbing the young people.

The Hon. B. P. DUNN.—Yes, and I am concerned about this because after the Bill is passed by Parliament the fees will have reached the levels of $5 and $10. I sound a note of warning to the Government. The Country Party is not prepared to accept the principle that a maximum fee shall be set in a Bill. The Country Party is not necessarily prepared to go along with proposed increases in charges for the appointment and the test. However, the Country Party is pleased that the amendment has been moved, as it was not prepared to support the Bill as originally drafted. The Country Party intended to vote against the clause, as it voted against the second-reading motion on the basis of the principle it put forward. We do not intend to oppose the amendment.

The Hon. K. S. GROSS (Western Province).—At one stage during the second-reading debate I was called a hypocrite, and I successfully asked for the expression to be withdrawn. I strongly deny that at any stage did I suggest that the action I took tonight was contrary to what I believed in or anything else.

The CHAIRMAN (the Hon. G. J. Nicol).—Order! I remind Mr. Gross that the Committee is not dealing with the second-reading motion.

The Hon. K. S. GROSS.—With respect, Mr. Chairman, I am dealing with the principle involved in the amendment now before the Chair.

The CHAIRMAN.—Does Mr. Gross wish to deal with the amendment or make a personal explanation?

The Hon. K. S. GROSS.—No, I shall deal with the amendment. Notwithstanding what was said in second-reading debate and in Committee up to this stage, the amendment has been moved as a result of the workings of the Subordinate Legislation Committee, which is an all-party Parliamentary committee of this House and another place. I challenge any member in this Chamber or another place to say that what I have said is incorrect. Two or three Bills presently before the Parliament have been drawn to the attention of Parliament and the Minister concerned by the Subordinate Legislation Committee. The committee emphasized that having regard to the report which it presented in 1970, the principle enunciated in the relevant Bills was objectionable. I am certain every honorable member of this Parliament will support the committee in this respect.

I deplore the suggestion that I was a hypocrite. I walked out of the Chamber when a vote was taken because I did not support the principle embodied in the Bill. However, I did not want the Bill to be defeated because I knew what the amendment contained and it was in accord with the principle which I wished to uphold.

The Hon. B. P. DUNN.—But we did not know.

The Hon. K. S. GROSS.—I agree that all honorable members did not know what was proposed. Honorable members may not have known the exact terms of the amendment but I was fortunate in that I knew about the amendment which would be moved. That is the reason why I absented myself when the vote was taken. It cannot be said that I was a hypocrite at any stage.

The amendment was agreed to, and the clause, as amended, was adopted.

Clause 3 providing, *inter alia* —

In sub-section (1) of section 3 of the Motor Car (Learner Drivers' Permits) Act 1972 for the expression—

" (4) The applicant shall pay in advance such fees as are prescribed, which shall not exceed—

(*a*) for making an appointment or appointments for the tests $2

(*b*) for carrying out the tests .. $4"

there shall be inserted the following :—

" (4) The applicant shall pay in advance such fees as are prescribed for each appointment made for testing and for each test.

The Hon. A. J. HUNT (Minister for Local Government).—I have circulated among honorable members two inter-related amendments to this clause. I now move —

That the expression ' " (4) The applicant shall pay in advance such fees as are prescribed, which shall not exceed— ' be omitted.

The amendment was agreed to.

The Hon. A. J. HUNT (Minister for Local Government).—I move —

That the expression—

' there shall be inserted the following:—

" (4) The applicant shall pay in advance such fees as are prescribed for each appointment made for testing and for each test.'

be omitted with the view of inserting the expression—

there shall be substituted the expression—

" (*a*) for making an appointment or appointments for the tests .. $5

(*b*) for carrying out the tests .. $10 " '

The Hon. B. P. DUNN (North-Western Province).—I sound a note of warning relating to the charges for learner drivers. I hope the Government will keep the fees at a reasonable level for young people of seventeen years of age who, in the main, are the persons seeking learner-driver permits. No explanation has been given of where it is proposed to spend the money so gained. I appreciate the intention of the Government and members of my party accept the amendment. However, we sincerely hope that the Government will keep learner-driver charges to a reasonable limit.

The Hon. R. J. EDDY (Doutta Galla Province).—I also sound a note of warning. It is now proposed

to increase the fees from $2 to $5 and from $4 to $10, increasing the charge for a learner-driver's permit to $15. An amendment to the previous clause also increased the charges to $15 so that a learner driver will now have to pay $30 to obtain his permit. This is fast outreaching the pocket of a person of seventeen years of age. As Mr. Walton has said, many young people will not bother to obtain a licence but will drive around the city without one.

The amendment was agreed to, and the clause, as amended, was adopted.

The Bill was reported to the House with amendments, and passed through its remaining stages.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (SUBDIVISION OF LAND) BILL.

The Hon. A. J. HUNT (Minister for Local Government).—I move —

That this Bill be now read a second time.

In April last I introduced a substantially similar measure and I informed the House that extensive representations had been made even during the drafting stage and that consultation had been taking place between numerous Government departments and instrumentalities that were affected in one way or another. Suggestions for improvements had been received until the day the Bill was introduced.

When the sessional period was drawing to a close, I informed the House that because of the importance and complexity of the measure, the Government was not prepared to rush it through during the dying hours of Parliament. This was on the basis that it would be in the general interests that municipalities, developers, interested organizations and individuals should be given a full menting on the proposals with a view opportunity of considering and comto making the Bill as good as possible. As a result further substantial improvements have been made to the Bill that was circulated and made publicly available during the last sessional period. The Bill submitted to honorable members may be called a revised version.

The Hon. J. M. WALTON.—Some may not agree with the revised Bill.

The Hon. A. J. HUNT.—That could be so. It incorporates the improvements that arose from constructive criticisms and suggestions received during the past six months. The Bill gives effect to the recommendations of the State Development Committee in its "Report on the Provision of Water and Sewerage Services to New Subdivisions" which was laid before Parliament in September, 1972. The report described these services as —

An essential adjunct to modern living.

The committee drew attention to the fact that —

Untreated septic tank effluents and sullage wastes emanating from unsewered residential, commercial and industrial premises, particularly in the metropolitan area, represent a significant source of pollution of street channels, drainage systems, watercourses and receiving waters generally, with all the accompanying dangers to public health and despoliation of the environment.

As I pointed out at the time in my Ministerial statement, in summary the report recommended, firstly, that the provision of water supply and sewerage services, at the cost of the subdivider, should be a compulsory condition of the subdivision of land in existing and prospective urban areas and even outside those areas where pollution control requirements or environmental considerations render it desirable.

Secondly, it was recommended that as a prerequisite to the sealing of any plan of subdivision a municipality be obliged to obtain and act upon the reports of appropriate water supply and sewerage authorities or, where there are none or more than one authority has an interest, the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission.

A further recommendation was that municipal councils should continue to be responsible for the co-ordination and control of the carriage of proceedings with respect to the sealing of plans of subdivision. Honorable members will recall that I said in the Ministerial statement that the Government would accept and act upon those recommendations. The Bill accordingly retains the existing principle of municipal control of the subdivision of land, as set down in the Local Government Act, and makes the necessary amendments to that Act and consequential amendments to the legislation dealing with the various water supply, drainage and sewerage authorities.

Provisions have also been included to ensure adequate drainage for subdivisions. Drainage was not of itself included in the terms of reference under which the committee operated but it is also an essential element in the proper development of land. The Bill thus includes as major proposals for amendments relating to water supply, sewerage and drainage, provisions for these authorities, the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works, and the various other water supply and sewerage authorities throughout the State, to refuse to consent to a plan of subdivision of land in the district of any such authority when the plan is submitted to the appropriate municipal council for sealing on the ground that adequate provision has not been made for works of water supply, sewerage and/or drainage. The present limited area in which the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission may exercise its powers in respect of such plans has been widened and provision has also been made for councils to refer any plan of subdivision to a responsible authority, not being the council itself, which is administering an interim development order or planning scheme under the Town and Country Planning Act 1961 for the area in which the land is situated.

The present legislation requires a council which has been requested to seal a plan of subdivision of land to refer the plan to certain authorities if they operate in the area in which the land is located. These authorities are the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works, the Dandenong Valley Authority, the Country Fire Authority and the Country Roads Board. Where the municipal engineer considers it necessary, the plan is also referred to any statutory authority supplying water, gas or electricity or providing sewerage services or telephone services in the vicinity of the land. A council is currently required to refuse to seal a plan of subdivision if the plan has been referred to the Country Fire Authority, the Country Roads Board or the Dandenong Valley Authority and any of those bodies has refused to consent. However, in the event of such a refusal, the Governor in Council may consent to the sealing of the plan.

A council must also refuse to seal a plan of subdivision unless it is satisfied that every proposed allotment is capable of being used for a purpose permitted by any planning scheme in force and that any permit required under an interim development order has been obtained. A further requirement for refusal arises if the land is in an irrigation district or drainage district under the Water Act or under the Mildura Irrigation and Water Trusts Act. In this event the council cannot seal the plan unless it has first been sealed by the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission or the First Mildura Irrigation Trust, as the case may be.

The amendments now proposed will mean that within the metropolis, as defined in the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works Act, the consent of the board will be necessary for any new subdivision of land or, in the event of a refusal by the board, the consent of the Governor in Council. Outside the metropolis the consent of the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission will be necessary, as also will

be, where the land is within the district of any water supply or sewerage authority, the consent of such authority. Again any refusal by the commission or an authority will be subject to review by the Governor in Council.

The second proposal in the Bill is that councils shall have power to refuse to seal a plan of subdivision if provision is not made for a water supply or a sewerage scheme, or both. However, this power may not be exercised if the plan has been referred to a water supply authority or a sewerage authority or both and the authority has or authorities have consented to the sealing of the plan. In effect, this means that the council may refuse to seal the plan on these grounds without the need to refer to an authority, but if it does so and the authority consents to the plan, this may not itself substitute a refusal. An amendment for this purpose has been sought by councils outside the metropolitan area and is supported by the Municipal Association of Victoria and the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission. These councils are concerned about the huge financial problem of providing sewerage for existing subdivisions and are very much aware that every new subdivision permitted without sewerage is making the matter so much worse. The protection of the environment is also made more difficult and expensive.

The third proposal in the Bill will add to the existing powers of councils and enables them to require a subdivider to carry out street construction and easement drainage works as a condition of the sealing of his plan of subdivision; any such requirement may be endorsed on the plan when it is sealed and the Registrar of Titles will not approve the plan until the council advises him that the requirement has been complied with or has been withdrawn. It is now proposed that a council may also require a subdivider to carry out such works of water supply, sewerage and drainage as are specified by the council under the same conditions as now apply to street and easement drainage construction. Where a plan has been referred to a water supply authority or sewerage authority, the council may be required by either or both authorities to impose an appropriate requirement on the subdivider. Where such a requirement has been imposed at the request of an authority the council may not advise the Registrar of Titles that the requirement has been satisfied or withdrawn unless the authority concerned has consented.

The fourth proposal in the Bill will enable municipal councils and the various water supply, sewerage and drainage authorities to enter into agreements with subdividers for the provision of services to subdivisions. The subdivider may be required to pay the whole of the cost or such part of the cost of the works as is proportionate to the benefit of his land. A proportion of the cost of any service so provided may be recouped from future subdividers whose lands benefit from the works. When a plan of subdivision is submitted to a municipal council or referred to any other authority the council or the authority may require the subdivider to enter into such an agreement. The bodies which may enter into these agreements are—

(*a*) Muncipal councils in respect of land not in the metropolis or in the district of any other sewerage authority; these councils may enter into agreements for the provision of sewerage services—and, if necessary, ancillary water supply services—and for this purpose they will be given the necessary power.

(*b*) The Dandenong Valley Authority; the authority may enter into agreements for the construction, reconstruction or improvement of drainage works.

(*c*) The Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works; the board may enter into agreements for the provision of water and sewerage services and for the construction, reconstruction and improvement of drainage works.

(*d*) The first Mildura Irrigation Trust and the the Mildura Urban Water Trust; the trusts may enter into agreements for the provision of water and construction of water supply works.

(*e*) Authorities under the Sewerage Districts Act 1958 and the Geelong Waterworks and Sewerage Trust; these authorities may enter into agreements for the provision of sewerage services.

(*f*) Authorities under the Water Act 1958, including the Geelong Waterworks and Sewerage Trust; these authorities may enter into agreements for the provision of water and for the construction of water supply works.

All these agreements will, in general, provide for—

(*a*) Payment by the subdivider of the whole or part of the cost of the works and the cost of operating any pumping station or sewerage treatment plant for a period not exceeding five years together with a contribution towards the cost of, in the case of water supply, the headworks and distribution system outside the land, or in the case of sewerage, the cost of the outfall sewers and disposal system outside the land and, in the case of drainage, the cost of development of the drainage system outside the land.

At this stage I should interpose to explain one feature of the Bill to the House. It may have been noted that I have referred to appeals to both the Governor in Council and the arbitrator. Some honorable members may consider that one type of appeal would suffice. The two types of appeal to which I have referred have different functions. The appeal to the Governor in Council—which in effect means the appeal to the Minister for Local Government and any other Minister affected—relates to the refusal of consent by a statutory authority to whom the plan is required to be submitted. Those consents are at times withheld. The usual reason for that withholding of consent is a matter of policy. Thus, policy is determined by the Minister —or more often, the two Ministers —affected, who will make a recommendation to the Governor in Council.

The appeal to the arbitrator, however, is on matters of a different nature, that is, the exercise of the discretion of the council and whether it has been exercised unduly harshly. Appeals to the Governor in Council are mainly on matters of policy. Appeals to the arbitrator are usually on matters of equity and hardship. Both types of appeal are necessary and each fulfils a slightly different function.

The most recent appeal to the Governor in Council was one determined by Mr. Dunstan, then the Minister of Water Supply, and myself. The Dandenong Valley Authority had refused consent to a subdivision. The authority sought to specify both the quality of the effluent which it would accept and the means by which that quality should be achieved. Mr. Dunstan, the Minister responsible for the Dandenong Valley Authority, and I, as Minister responsible for local government, jointly heard the appeal. In the circumstances of the case we supported the Dandenong Valley Authority on the question of the standard of effluent but overruled it on the setting of requirements on how this was to be achieved, which we thought was a matter for the appropriate sewerage authority. The appeal was allowed and the subdivision proceeded. So it can be seen that appeals to an arbitrator are on quite a different basis.

The agreements will also provide for—

(*b*) Payment by the subdivider of a reasonable proportion of the cost of the works, installed or to be installed under an agreement between the authority and another subdivider, which will be available to serve the land or part thereof.

(*c*) The construction of all or any part of the works required by and at the cost of the subdivider.

(*d*) The amount to be advanced to the authority by the subdivider towards any remaining part of the cost of construction of such works.

(*e*) The repayment to the subdivider by the authority of the whole or any agreed part of any such advance.

(*f*) Security which may be lodged with the authority in lieu of any payment or advance.

Provision is also made in the Bill for the subdivider to appeal to the arbitrator on two grounds, namely, that the proposed works are necessary or that the terms and conditions of an agreement are unreasonable. The arbitrator has the power to approve or modify the agreement.

Where the works being constructed pursuant to an agreement will serve the land of another owner, the servicing authority may request such owner to contribute towards the cost of such works. The other party must accept or refuse such request within three months. In the event of a refusal and the subsequent subdivision of that land, the owner may be required to pay a contribution towards the works based on costs applicable at the time of the subdivision.

The fifth proposal contained in the Bill affects drainage and will clarify the powers of the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works and the Dandenong Valley Authority to control connections to their drainage systems. The amendment will permit connections to these systems only if the board or the authority, as the case may be, certifies that the receiving drain or watercourse is adequate or suitable for the acceptance of the additional water likely to enter from the connecting drain, having regard to the area which it drains.

The sixth amendment proposed does not arise out of the report of the State Development Committee but it has been included because of its importance in relation to the subdivision of land. The amendment became necessary following a recent decision of the Supreme Court relating to the sealing of a plan of subdivision by a metropolitan council. The plan was referred to the Dandenong Valley Authority pursuant to sub-section (*ba*) of section 569B (7) of the Local Government Act, and the authority declined to consent to the sealing of the plan unless certain requirements were complied with. Although the requirements were not fully complied with and the authority did not consent, the council sealed the plan and it was in due course lodged at the Titles Office. The Registrar of Titles refused to approve the plan because the authority had not given its consent. The decision of the Supreme Court in the subsequent legal proceedings was that the sealing of the plan was invalid because it was in breach of the provision requiring consent of the authority. So the plan had been sealed and considerable work had been done on the project. The unfortunate developer in that case was left lamenting and the plan was held never to have been validly sealed. The effect of the judgment is that rather serious burdens have been imposed on the Registrar of Titles and on subdividers of land. The registrar must, before approving a plan of subdivision, satisfy himself that the sealing by the council is a proper sealing and, in particular, must satisfy himself that mandatory requirements of sub-sections (7) and (7A) of section 569B of the Local Government Act have been complied with. A subdivider acts at his peril

if, relying on the sealing of his plan by a council, he expends money in development works.

I am happy to say that the very harsh consequences of that decision were overcome by the joint appeal to Mr. Dunstan and myself to which I referred earlier. Justice was done to somebody who had acted in good faith on the basis of a mistake made by the council.

Since in many cases the subdivider must satisfy a requirement under section 569E of the Local Government Act and because the plan cannot be approved by the registrar until that requirement is satisfied or withdrawn, a subdivider must also satisfy himself that the sealing is a proper sealing and that the mandatory requirements of the Local Government Act have been satisfied. This is an impossible situation and the proposed amendment will deal with it in the only satisfactory way, that is, by providing that the sealing of a plan of subdivision shall be conclusive evidence for all purposes that the sealing is a proper sealing.

The seventh and final amendment in the Bill does not arise from a specific recommendation from the State Development Committee but from the concern it expressed on the situation whereby many residential properties within existing subdivisions were not connected to, or sometimes even served by, sewerage works. The Bill proposes a scheme for the provision of sewerage as well as water supply and drainage services to such properties, which are usually located in areas insufficiently developed to justify the provision of these services on the basis of the payment of rates only.

The Bill enables the appropriate water, drainage or sewerage authority to prepare a scheme setting out the proposed supply works and the amounts to be paid by the owners of lands which will benefit from the scheme. The schemes will be similar in many respects to a drainage construction scheme as provided for in the Health Act 1958; they will however be exhibited and affected land owners will be notified, thus the schemes could be affected by objections. One specific provision of the scheme will be that the Crown must pay its share in respect of Crown lands which will benefit. Here there is a departure from practices which have applied in respect of private street construction.

Another provision will enable owners to pay their contribution by quarterly instalments over a period of ten years, or over a longer period where this is already provided for in existing legislation.

It is obvious that this Bill imposes heavy burdens on those desiring to subdivide land for urban purposes. However, those who undertake that activity have in recent years also made or tended to make substantial profits. It is in the interests of the community that they should bear these burdens. Subdivisions allowed without proper water supply, sewerage and drainage facilities pose potential problems of pollution which will be costly indeed for the community to solve in the long term. It is much cheaper from a community point of view that they should be solved by the provision of water supply, sewerage and drainage at the time of subdivision. This policy has been implemented by the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works for some time under its planning powers relating to land for reserved living. It has been impossible for the board under its planning powers to impose similar conditions on land already zoned for residential purposes. The board has been able to do this only with land for reserved living and land under interim development orders. The policy it has adopted has proved worth while.

The purpose of the Bill is to extend that policy to urban subdivisions generally, regardless of existing zoning. The Government is adopting as

a principle, and has invited Parliament to adopt it as a principle in the long-term interests of the community, that these services should be provided at the time of subdivision. There is no doubt that the provision of these facilities increases the initial cost of land. However, it reduces the ultimate cost. Making land available in this way is cheaper by far both in terms of money and in terms of protection of the environment than in making it available at a later date after roads and houses been built and gardens and other facilities have been laid out.

The Government regards the measure as essential and hopes that it will pass into law with the full support of this Parliament without undue delay. I congratulate and thank the Minister and the many officers who have worked upon the Bill. It is not a simple measure which a Minister could have done alone with the aid of a single draftsman; the co-operation of many has been needed.

Because of the complexity of the Bill, I have prepared, with the assistance of officers of the departments, detailed notes upon the individual clauses. I have this evening explained to the House the purposes and objectives of the measure and the broad outlines of the amendments introduced in it. I do not propose to weary the Chamber with a detailed explanation of each individual clause. The detailed explanation clause by clause has been prepared, is currently being typed and will be available in the Papers Room from the commencement of business on Friday morning. I have no doubt that members who are interested in the Bill. land developers, municipalities and others will be interested not only in the broad purposes and objectives but also in the detailed explanation of the clauses. I invite those honorable members who desire to study the Bill in detail to avail themselves of the oportunity of perusing the clause-by-clause explanation lodged with the Clerk of the Papers and I indicate to those other persons and organizations who may be interested that these explanations will also be available to them through the Clerk of the Papers free of cost. I am confident that the House will support the measure and I therefore commend it.

The Hon. I. B. TRAYLING (Melbourne Province).—On behalf of Mr. Walton, I move—

That the debate be adjourned until Wednesday, November 14.

As usual the Minister has done his best to assist all honorable members to obtain as much information as possible to enable them to debate the measure.

The Hon. S. R. McDONALD (Northern Province).—If the notes are to be available in the Papers Room on Friday, it will be next week before they are available to the persons who need them and I doubt whether an adjournment of the debate for fourteen days would be adequate. If either party is not able to go ahead at that stage, will the Minister be prepared to agree to a longer adjournment?

The Hon. I. B. TRAYLING (Melbourne Province) *By leave*—May I suggest an adjournment of 21 days?

The Hon. A. J. HUNT (Minister for Local Government).—I suggest that it be left at fourteen days. I do appreciate the vital importance of the measure. Two things flow from it. On the one hand, it is important that the Bill should pass into law as soon as is reasonably practicable and on the other it is equally important that the House should have adequate opportunity of studying it and ensuring that it does what the Government proposes in the best way possible and does not carry undesirable or unforeseen effects. I realize that whoever is charged with debating the measure for his party will have a mammoth task studying the Bill. To assist in that study I freely offer to make the services of the officers of my department, the Board of Works, and the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission available.

That will assist greatly with the study of the Bill. If the two parties opposite desire to make separate appointments, I shall certainly arrange that. If they desire to assist in expediting the passage of the Bill by arranging for their counterparts in another place to be present at the time of that study, I shall co-operate fully to ensure that that can be done.

This is not a political measure. It has been introduced in the interests of the community and I am sure honorable members generally desire to have it passed as soon as practicable. I further point out that the basic framework of the measure has been tabled for more than six months. Admittedly, it has been supplemented to a substantial degree by further sophistications and improvements and that entails further study. In those circumstances, if either party is not ready to proceed in a fortnight's time, the Government will certainly agree to an adjournment of a further week but hopes that every effort will be made to resume the debate in a fortnight and to expedite the passage of the Bill to another place to enable it to pass into law during the current session.

The motion for the adjournment of the debate was agreed to, and the debate was adjourned until Wednesday, November 14.

MINES (FEES) BILL.

The debate (adjourned from October 23) on the motion of the Hon. F. J. Granter (Minister of Water Supply) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

The Hon. A. W. KNIGHT (Melbourne West Province).—The purpose of the Bill before the House is to increase the charges for the purchase of a miner's right. One does not have to remind the House of the revolt that took place in Ballarat over the cost of miners' rights. I refer, of course, to the Eureka uprising. Many honorable members would know from their earlier studies of history at school and their reading later on what caused the reduction in the miners' fees. It is proposed by the Bill to increase the fees by approximately 800 per cent. In 1897 the fee was reduced from five shillings to two shillings and sixpence because of the agitation which arose and which culminated at the Eureka Stockade.

The Labor Party opposes the Bill because of the manner in which the Government intends to implement the increases. Instead of Parliament setting the fee, it will be prescribed by the Governor in Council. That is government by regulation and not government by Parliament. I remind honorable members of the slogan used by the Liberal Party at the recent election; Hamer is certainly making it happen in this matter.

The report of the Subordinate Legislation Committee in 1970, which was referred to in a previous debate, is worthy of perusal. I intend to quote from the report of the committee, before which Mr. Nicol gave evidence. The report on the general inquiry into subordinate legislation was ordered by the Legislative Council to be printed on 18th March, 1970. Clause 2.3 on page 1 of the report stated—

> In a research into the history of administrative law, the Honorable G. J. Nicol, M.L.C., in a submission to the Committee, has drawn the Committee's attention to the following extract from "Government by Decree" by M. A. Seighart, in which she states :—
>
> "In English law, the power of issuing ordinances, called the ordaining power, is based either on the Constitution or on statutory delegation. As a remnant of absolute government, such a power is vested in the King by the Common Law and forms part of his prerogative ; as a result of delegation, the ordaining power of the Executive is exercised in the form of delegated legislation. There are thus two main types of ordinance ; the ordinance based on the prerogative and the ordinance based on statute. The prerogative ordinance played a very important role in early times, and it may be said that the history of English constitutional law is to a great extent the history of the struggle between the rights based on the prerogative and the rights of Parliament, a struggle which was brought to a conclusion by the revolution in favour of Parliament. In the next two hundred years Parliament exercised these rights to the full. But in modern times there is an ever-increasing tendency

to dispense with them, to whittle them away, to delegate them more and more freely, without even creating effective controls".

Paragraph 2.4 of the report of the Subordinate Legislation Committee states—

> The only adequate way in which Parliament exercises control is by legislation. It follows that the more decisions Parliament reserves to itself, and the less discretion it allows the Executive through delegated powers, the more Parliament can be said to control administration.

How right that is. At page 12 of the report under the heading "Fees and Charges", the report says—

> Some witnesses argued that the demands of administration call for an open ceiling for fees to be fixed by regulation.
>
> The Committee disagrees. It believes that Parliament should delegate no more than the authority to fix fees and charges within certain standard limits, with the maximum amount clearly standard. In all cases clear authority must exist in the Act for any prescription of fees by regulation.

I commend the study of the committee's report to all honorable members. The committee does a magnificent job in playing the role of watch dog in connection with the rights of the Parliament. It must be remembered that our system is government by the people, and not government by Executive control.

I fully support the recommendations contained in the report, and advise the House that the Labor Party will oppose the second-reading motion because of the principles that I have enunciated. We believe that providing for the fixation of fees by the Executive does an injustice to the people of this State. We think the fees are too high. I trust that members on the Government side of the Chamber will heed what I have put forward as the view of the Labor Party, and that measures of this kind will not be introduced again.

The Hon. A. K. BRADBURY (North-Eastern Province).—One cannot dispute that the principal Act requires to be brought up to date. It has been on the statute-book for 76 years and, in the light of present-day values, it needs to be amended.

The mining industry is possibly the oldest industry in this country. It played a tremendous part in achieving decentralization of the population of Australia in the early days of our country's settlement. Many migrants came to Australia; in fact, I am a descendant of one who came to this country as a miner to prospect for gold.

The Hon. I. B. TRAYLING.—Did he find any?

The Hon. A. K. BRADBURY.—No, but he reared a family of five on 37 shillings and sixpence a week. The Country Party disagrees with the Government. The powers of this Parliament should not be delegated to the Executive Council. It appears that the Government has not heeded the report of the Subordinate Legislation Committee. The committee was established with the intention of its being a watch dog in relation to the rights of the Parliament, and it has repeatedly drawn attention to the increasing practice of delegating responsibility to the Executive. The House has dealt with two such delegations of authority tonight.

In his second-reading speech the Minister said that the present fee for a miner's right is 25 cents and that the Government proposes to recommend to the Governor in Council that it should be increased to $2. In the light of reports which have been prepared by the Subordinate Legislation Committee recommending that legislation of this kind should not be enacted, the present situation is astounding. The Government is proposing a fee of $2.

The Hon. MURRAY BYRNE.—The licence itself costs more than $2.

The Hon. A. K. BRADBURY.—Yes, but the fixing of the fee is at the whim of the Executive Council. The Executive might say in future that the licence costs more than $2 and it will increase the fee to perhaps $5, $10 or $15. That would be the result of Parliament handing over its powers to the Executive Council.

The Government has ignored the recommendations of the committee. The Government is responsible for the drafting and introduction of legislation, but it also has an obligation to take note of recommendations of committees which it has established to advise it; and the Government must pay particular attention to protecting the rights of the Parliament and the people. The Government has not done so.

The Hon. MURRAY BYRNE.—I have been in your electorate helping you.

The Hon. A. K. BRADBURY.—Yes, but we are not discussing that at the moment. We are discussing a specific measure, and one of the most important aspects of it is that it proposes to transfer a power of the Parliament to the Executive.

I pay tribute to Mr. Nicol who has long been a champion of the rights of the Parliament and who has consistently objected to legislation of this kind. Mr. Gross has also acted in that way. However, the Government is unmoved. It is about time the Government realized that this Parliament will not be a rubber stamp. Members of the Country Party will ensure that the rights of this Parliament are protected, particularly when it is proposed to impose or increase fees, costs and charges. Parliament must have the ultimate say on these matters.

If I had time, I would have prepared an amendment aimed at preventing the Government from recommending to the Governor in Council that the fee levied under this legislation be increased to $2. Why does not the Government announce that it intends to increase the fee to $2? The amount should be stated in the Bill; it should not be left to a decision of the Governor in Council, who could increase the fee according to his whim. Members of the Country Party object to that procedure and with our friends of the Labor Party we intend to oppose the second reading of the Bill. If the Government is not prepared to amend the Bill, I propose to ask during the Committee stage that progress be reported so that I can draft an appropriate amendment. The Country Party opposes the Bill.

The Hon. G. J. NICOL (Monash Province).—From time to time in this Chamber there has been a debate on this subject and I must admit that the debate tonight is like a breath of spring air. It confirms and strengthens my belief in the institution of Parliament and I trust that the traditions of this House will be most carefully cherished and will never be lost. I agree entirely with the remarks made by those honorable members who have spoken up to date in the debate. I do not propose to elaborate further at the moment or to vote against the second reading of the Bill in the hope that during the Committee stage amendments will be moved and agreed to which will render that course unnecessary.

The Hon. K. S. GROSS (Western Province).—As chairman of the Subordinate Legislation Committee for a number of years, I cannot allow a Bill containing a provision such as this to be debated without passing a few remarks on it.

Mr. Knight quoted one or two sections from the report of the Subordinate Legislation Committee in 1970 in regard to this matter. I was a member of the committee at that time and I still am. I shall not reiterate what Mr. Knight said, but I point out that the words of the report were decided upon after the committee had heard a great deal of evidence and given it a lot of consideration. Even before then I had, and since then I have had, an abhorrence of this type of measure. I do not, and neither does the committee, object to fees being raised by regulation, provided that the parent Act fixes a ceiling.

If this procedure is not followed, the Parliament will have the affairs of government taken from it, and honorable members might as well give up and not take any interest

in the running of the State. It is all very well for fees to be raised by regulation, but it is the member of Parliament, whether he is a Government back-bencher or a member of the Labor Party or the Country Party, who receives abuse from his constituents who are aggrieved. If a member of Parliament cannot do anything about the complaints made to him, what is the use of Parliament? If this attitude were adopted throughout the land, all the affairs of government might as well be left to the Executive. As an individual, and as a member of the Subordinate Legislation Committee, I cannot condone this type of measure. I cannot and will not support this Bill.

The House divided on the motion (Sir Raymond Garrett in the chair)—

Ayes	16
Noes	12
Majority for the motion ..	4

AYES.

Mr. Block	Mr. Houghton
Mr. Campbell	Mr. Hunt
Mr. Crozier	Mr. Jenkins
Mr. Dickie	Mr. Long
Mr. Granter	Mr. Nicol.
Mr. Grimwade	
Mr. Hamilton	*Tellers:*
Mr. Hauser	Mr. Fry
Mr. Hider	Mr. Gleeson.

NOES.

Mr. Bradbury	Mr. Tripovich
Mr. Clarke	Mr. Walton
Mr. Eddy	Mr. Wright.
Mr. Kent	
Mr. Knight	*Tellers:*
Mr. McDonald	Mr. Dunn
Mr. Thomas	Mr. Trayling.

PAIRS.

Mr. Byrne	Mr. Galbally
Mr. Storey	Mr. Elliot
Mr. Ward	Mr. Swinburne.

The Bill was read a second time and committed.

Clause 1 was agreed to.

Clause 2, providing, *inter alia*—

(1) In sub-section (1) of section 14 of the Principal Act for the expression "a sum at the rate of Twenty-five cents ($0.25)" there shall be substituted the words "the fee prescribed by the regulations".

(2) In section 22 of the Principal Act for the expression "at a fee of Ten cents ($0.10)" there shall be substituted the words "on payment of the fee prescribed by the regulations".

The Hon. F. J. GRANTER (Minister of Water Supply).—What appeared to be a small Bill when it came into my hands a little over a week ago has become controversial and important, and has stimulated an interesting debate in the House. The Eureka Stockade is part of our history. This Bill, which raises fees for miners' rights, could also become part of our history, as it was hotly debated both here and in another place. I agree with what was said by all honorable members who spoke with a great deal of feeling and concern.

The Minister for Local Government had the privilege of speaking on a similar Bill some time ago, and I share with him and other honorable members who took part in the debate concern about the raising of fees by regulation. We are all agreed that this must not be done. In this respect, this House has proved that it is right. The Bill went through another place and the words of members who spoke there were not acted upon, but notice has been taken of what was said in this House. If there were only one House, the Bill would have become law in its original form. However, I shall propose amendments to the measure.

Mr. Knight spoke about the Eureka Stockade and what happened some 76 years ago when the miner's right fee of five shillings was reduced to two shillings and sixpence. Two other honorable members could have said a lot more about the Eureka Stockade. The Minister for State Development and Decentralization and the Minister of Housing would probably know more about that than all other honorable members.

The Hon. J. M. WALTON.—The Government would know a lot about Ned Kelly, too.

The Hon. F. J. GRANTER.—We all know a little about Ned Kelly and he probably served his purpose, too, in enlightening a lot of people. Mr. Gross and Mr. Nicol both expressed their views on this matter. Mr. Nicol has made his views known on many occasions. I now move—

That in sub-clause (1) after the word "fee" the expression "not exceeding Four Dollars ($4.00) as may be" be inserted; and

That in sub-clause (2), after the word "fee", where second occurring, the expression "not exceeding One Dollar ($1.00)" be inserted.

These amendments will fix a maximum fee of $4 for a miner's right. I venture to say that the cost of a miner's right may never reach that sum. Throughout Victoria, there are about 9,469 miners' rights in existence. However, as many purchasers buy rights for two years or a longer period up to, perhaps, fifteen years, which is permissible, it is estimated that the revenue would represent about 5,500 separate purchasers. In the past financial year, the sum of $2,367.25 was paid for miners' rights. As has been indicated, a fee of $2 for a miner's right is probably justified to cover administration costs. It is doubtful whether it will be increased in future because whilst it remains at this figure many young people will be enabled to take out a miner's right and pan for gold. Undoubtedly, many people who now pan for gold do not have miners' rights. Nevertheless, there is great interest in this activity in central and northern Victoria.

I commend the amendments and trust that they will satisfy those honorable members who have expressed concern about the fee proposed to be levied in future.

The Hon. A. W. KNIGHT (Melbourne West Province).—At last wisdom and sense have prevailed and Parliament has been supreme in making the Government see the light. If Mr. Nicol were in his place, I am sure that he would also be pleased about the amendments that have been moved at the insistence of the Opposition parties.

The Hon. A. K. BRADBURY (North-Eastern Province).—Belatedly, the Government has seen fit to adhere to the recommendations of the Subordinate Legislation Committee on the fixing and prescribing of fees. Again the Government is not consistent because in the Minister's second-reading notes it is stated that the Government proposed to recommend to the Governor in Council that the fee be $2 whereas the amendment which has been moved provides for a fee not exceeding $4. Apparently, when the Bill was introduced it was in the mind of the Government that a fee of $4 would be prescribed by regulation. This bears out conclusively what I said during the second-reading debate concerning the fees continuing to increase. It is unfortunate that the Government did not adhere to its proposal of fixing the fee at $4.

Honorable members hope that as the result of the debate on this measure and on a previous measure, this will be the last occasion on which the Government will introduce a measure embodying the principle which has been debated, and that it will follow the will of the Parliament and the recommendations of the Subordinate Legislation Committee.

The Hon. S. R. McDONALD (Northern Province).—I support the final remarks of Mr. Bradbury. In this Chamber tonight, a clear principle has been adopted and it would be in order for the Leader of the House and the other Ministers to issue a firm directive to those involved in preparing legislation to adhere to the principles that have been adopted. If this advice is followed, honorable members will not again have to debate this principle.

I ask the Minister of Water Supply to take note of what Mr. Bradbury has had to say and of my remarks and to ensure that this undesirable practice will not be adopted again in future Bills.

The Hon. F. J. GRANTER (Minister of Water Supply).—I have noted the remarks of Mr. Bradbury and Mr. McDonald. Honorable members should not be confused. A ceiling of $4 has been placed on a miner's right and, as the Government indicated in the Minister's second-reading notes, a fee of $2 will be recommended to the Governor in Council. The general opinion would be that the fee is unlikely ever to rise to $4.

The Hon. J. M. TRIPOVICH.—Why does the Minister say that?

The Hon. F. J. GRANTER.—I cannot see that any great necessity will arise. In other areas of activity there may be a case for fee increases, but not in this instance. It is not unreasonable to provide for a maximum fee instead of the matter having to come back before Parliament in two or four years' time. It is not an unreasonable ceiling that has been fixed.

A lot of wisdom has been exhibited during the debate on the Bill and I have taken a note of the remarks of honorable members. Although I did not intend to do so, I remind honorable members that certain other fees under the Mines Act are fixed by regulation. The annual fee of $5 a square mile for a mineral search licence was fixed by regulation as was the $2 fee for tailings. These fees were fixed some time ago.

The Hon. B. P. DUNN.—What is the revenue used for?

The Hon. F. J. GRANTER.—It is used in administering the Mines Act and any surplus would be paid into the Consolidated Fund, although I cannot imagine there being a great surplus. A fee of $2 for a miner's right would meet only administration costs.

The Hon. J. M. TRIPOVICH (Doutta Galla Province).—I cannot understand why the precaution is taken of providing for a 100 per cent increase in the fee if there is little or no likelihood of such an increase.

The Hon. A. K. BRADBURY.—It will allow flexibility.

The Hon. J. M. TRIPOVICH.—The Government is certainly being flexible in providing for a 100 per cent increase. Although the Government and its supporters may have moved away from the fixing of maximum fees by regulation, they have not moved very far when they provide flexibility for a 100 per cent increase. I am not satisfied with the Minister's explanation or with the record of the Government on this Bill or the previous measure. It astounds me that a Bill can reach this stage before offence is taken to a principle.

The amendments were agreed to, and the clause, as amended, was adopted.

The Bill was reported to the House with amendments, and passed through its remaining stages.

ADJOURNMENT.

LAND FOR PRAHRAN PRIMARY SCHOOL —YALLOURN TOWNSHIP—SALE OF OTIC INSTRUMENT BY CHEMISTS.

The Hon. MURRAY BYRNE (Minister for State Development and Decentralization).—By leave, I move—

That the Council, at its rising, adjourn until Tuesday, November 13.

The motion is in accordance with usual Parliamentary practice and in keeping with procedures of most Parliaments in Australia.

The motion was agreed to.

The Hon. MURRAY BYRNE (Minister for State Development and Decentralization).—I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

The Hon. I. B. TRAYLING (Melbourne Province).—I refer to a property at 45–47 High Street, Prahran, which is the estate of the late Agnes Doherty. The estate is now the responsibility of her

daughter, Mrs. Pinnock. The Education Department is acquiring the property and negotiations have been under way for some time. Originally the department offered $24,000 and has since refused to change the offer. At that time, the market value was assessed by one valuer at $24,000 although an offer of $28,000 had been made to Mrs. Pinnock. The current market value would be about $40,000.

Mrs. Pinnock has never contested the fact that the department should have the property to enable extensions to be carried out at the Prahran Primary School. Other properties in the area have been acquired by the department and in those cases the department has increased its offers following submissions by the owners.

The Hon. MURRAY BYRNE.—Has she had a valuation on the property?

The Hon. I. B. TRAYLING.—Yes. I wrote to the Minister and received a terse reply from the Assistant Minister. I ask the Minister to have another look at the matter. I have been advised by counsel that costs could run into a large sum of money. This woman has been left with this property. I investigated the matter and checked the valuation with the Prahran council, and I have no doubt that the offer was low. It was certainly not high enough, and because of the delays that have occurred it is under-valued at this stage.

This woman is not asking for the world. She merely wants justice. I think the department could be a little more flexible in dealing with her and not put her through the courts or arbitration, because she is not in a position to afford the fees involved. She is at the mercy of a decision without being able to put up a defence for her proposition. I ask that the matter be examined with a view to an understanding of her problem. I believe the circumstances are deserving of a little more sympathy.

The Hon. D. E. KENT (Gippsland Province). — I raise a matter of great concern to the electors in the Yallourn area, to the people of Gippsland and to the whole Victorian community. I refer to the proposals to remove the township of Yallourn. These proposals have been put forward because of changes in the policies of the State Electricity Commission, which is, of course, a Government instrumentality. The concern of the people in the area has been stimulated by the fact that the State Electricity Commission has called tenders for the removal of nine homes. This in itself is not significant but is an indication of things to come and that it is proposed that the township of Yallourn should be completely removed with the exception of a few homes which would be isolated by 1983.

In 1971 the Public Works Committee, in the light of evidence submitted to it, recommended that the township of Yallourn should ultimately be removed. Following the evidence submitted to that inquiry, it was assumed and stated by the State Electricity Commission that the town would finally be removed by approximately 1995. It may be claimed that the evidence submitted to the Public Works Committee was sound and I am sure it was given in good faith with all the knowledge available at the time. However, I believe it should not be considered to be unchangeable because, in fact, the plans of the State Electricity Commission have changed drastically since the findings and recommendations of the Public Works Committee were released in 1971.

There is no purpose in going into the mistake that was made, perhaps with the best intention, in building the town of Yallourn over coal. There is no dispute on the quantity of coal which lies under the township of Yallourn.

The PRESIDENT (Sir Raymond Garrett).—At this stage, the honorable member should be getting to the point. This is almost a speech.

The Hon. D. E. KENT.—I am getting to the point, Mr. President. There are 128 million tons of coal under the township of Yallourn. The accessible coal in the Morwell area amounts to 85,000 million tons of coal. Knowing how responsive the Leader of the House is to the balanced development of Victoria, I believe the Government should look at the new evidence before it and once again assess the relative values, taking into account the words of His Excellency the Governor when opening Parliament that the emphasis will be on the quality of life, on the protection of the environment, and the total welfare of Victoria with particular concern for the rights of the individual. Yallourn is one of the finest towns in this State.

The PRESIDENT (Sir Raymond Garrett).—I must ask the honorable member to come to the matter which concerns Government administration.

The Hon. D. E. KENT.—I appeal to the Leader of the Government in this House to use his undoubted skill to persuade the Government of Victoria to reconsider its priorities and have another look at whether the township of Yallourn with all its community facilities, which perhaps are irreplaceable, can be saved.

The Hon. MURRAY BYRNE (Minister for State Development and Decentralization).—Mr. Trayling referred to a matter concerning the acquisition of land by the Education Department. I shall be grateful if Mr. Trayling will give me the valuation report on the land in question. I shall be happy to take the matter up with the department. I should like to emphasize that under the lands compensation provisions this woman should not have to be involved in large litigation expenses. All she requires is a valuation report which she submits to the valuers or an independent chairman. If the honorable member will be good enough to give me that valuation I shall be happy to discuss the matter with the department.

Mr. Kent struck a responsive note. I understand that the nine houses to which the honorable member referred are in bad repair and tenders have gone out for their removal. I think Mr. Kent has correctly and fairly stated the position regarding Yallourn. An all-party committee unanimously brought down a decision eighteen months or two years ago relating to Yallourn. At the time there was legislation which more or less endorsed the recommendations of the all-party committee. It is also accurate to say that remarkable industrial development is taking place and certainly will take place in that area and elsewhere in the Latrobe Valley. I should like to think that by 1995 there will be well planned new cities in the area. However, I will certainly investigate the matter and I will be interested to see the report of the debate that took place in another place.

The Hon. G. J. NICOL (Monash Province).—Many people suffer from an excessive deposit of wax in the ears. The customary method of dealing with this, as recommended by medicos, is to wash out the ears with a fluid. I produce an interesting device which is being sold in many chemist shops in the city, and perhaps also throughout the metropolitan area, for use in digging wax out of ears. Dr. Donald, the medical officer of the Gas and Fuel Corporation, a senior medical officer with the Citizen Military Forces, and in his own right a prominent surgeon in Collins Street, says that this implement is exceedingly dangerous and should not be sold or used by people for digging wax out of their ears. May I submit to the Minister of Health that the matter receive urgent attention from the Department of Health with a view to banning the sale of this instrument?

The Hon. MURRAY BYRNE (Minister for State Development and Decentralization).—I am grateful to Mr. Nicol, concerned as he is about the ears of members of the

House and the ears of the people of Victoria. I will be happy to pass this dangerous instrument on to the Minister of Health and see that the matter is directed to the attention of the appropriate officers in the Department of Health.

The motion was agreed to.

The House adjourned at 11.26 *p.m. until Tuesday, November* 13.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE.

RAIL FREIGHTS.

(Question No. 130)

The Hon. B. P. DUNN (North-Western Province) asked the Minister for Social Welfare, for the Minister of Transport—

Has the Railways Board recently increased freight on wheat, barley and oats; if so—(i) what are the percentage increases, (ii) what extra revenue is expected to be returned during the current financial year; and (iii) why were increases necessary?

The Hon. W. V. HOUGHTON (Minister for Social Welfare).—The answer supplied by the Minister of Transport is—

The Victorian Railways Board has informed me that freight rates on wheat, barley and oats were increased from 29th October—

(i) Five per cent rounded off to the next 5 cents a tonne.

(ii) The railways expect to earn an extra $480,000 this financial year as a result of the increases.

(iii) The increases are necessary as a contribution towards the additional costs incurred since the rates on these commodities were last adjusted.

MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS.

(Question No. 135)

The Hon. J. M. TRIPOVICH (Doutta Galla Province) asked the Minister of Housing, for the Minister of Health—

(*a*) How many medical practitioners were recruited from overseas during each of the financial years 1971-72 and 1972-73?

(*b*) To which rural towns were the doctors allocated in each of those years and of those placed in 1971-72, how many are still practising at the town of allocation?

(*c*) What was the total cost of each recruitment project, and what countries were involved?

The Hon. V. O. DICKIE (Minister of Housing).—The answer supplied by the Minister of Health is—

No medical practitioners have been recruited from overseas through the Ministry of Health during the years named.

RAIL FREIGHTS.

(Question No. 142)

The Hon. K. I. WRIGHT (North-Western Province) asked the Minister for the Social Welfare, for the Minister of Transport—

(*a*) What new railway freight rates per bushel will apply from 29th October, 1973, for the Murrayville, Werrimull, Manangatang and Kaniva areas?

(*b*) What was the profit or loss to the Railways Board in the transport of wheat in each financial year from 1967-68 to 1971-72?

(*c*) What was the profit or loss to the board's suburban passenger operation in each of those years?

The Hon. W. V. HOUGHTON (Minister for Social Welfare).—The answer supplied by the Minister of Transport is—

(*a*) The freight rates for wheat from the following stations to the Grain Elevators Board's terminal at North Geelong are now:—

	In wagon loads per tonne	Per bushel (based on 27 kilograms per bushel)
	$	cents
Murrayville	8.75	23.6
Werrimul	9.00	24.3
Manangatang ..	7.90	21.3
Kaniva	7.90	21.3

(*b*) The railways did not make assessments of the results of particular classes of freight traffic.

(*c*) The operating loss on suburban passenger traffic in each of the years mentioned was as follows:—

	$
1967-68	5,120,298
1968-69	5,943,550
1969-70	5,921,366
1970-71	8,782,406
1971-72	8,413,762

PILGRIM STREET, FOOTSCRAY.

(Question No. 144)

The Hon. A. W. KNIGHT (Melbourne West Province) asked the Minister for Local Government—

(*a*) What sections of Pilgrim Street, Footscray, are affected by proposed road alterations, and how many homes will be affected?

(*b*) What compensation has been provided for homes being acquired, and what consideration has been given to compensation for loss of value to homes not directly affected by these proposals?

(*c*) When will the road works be commenced?

The Hon. A. J. HUNT (Minister for Local Government).—The answer is—

(*a*) The Melbourne Metropolitan Planning Scheme includes a reservation for a proposed main road along Pilgrim Street, Footscray, extending from Williamstown Road to the Williamstown railway line.

The reservation has been continuously in plans exhibited to the public since 1954.

The number of properties affected is as follows:—

Houses	154
Shops	9
Factories	1
Vacant land	11

(*b*) As a consequence of the operation of the planning scheme, the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works, at the request of owners, has purchased nine properties for a total compensation of $45,400 and paid "loss on sale" compensation concerning a further 23 properties for a total compensation of $42,975.

The board has no authority to pay compensation to property owners not directly affected by the planning scheme reservation.

(*c*) This will be determined in the light of over-all priorities and availability of funds.

WOODBINE CENTRE FOR MENTALLY RETARDED CHILDREN.

(Question No. 145)

The Hon. B. P. DUNN (North-Western Province) asked the Minister of Housing, for the Minister of Health—

Will the Woodbine centre for mentally retarded children at Warracknabeal be registered as a day-training centre, allowing a sheltered workshop to be established; if so, when will such registration take place; if not—(i) why were honorable members representing the area advised by the then Minister of Health on 15th May, 1973, that registration as a sheltered workshop had been approved for a trial period of fifteen months; and (ii) why has registration not been agreed to?

The Hon. V. O. DICKIE (Minister of Housing).—The answer supplied by the Minister of Health is—

The Woodbine centre at Warracknabeal is a residential centre. It cannot be regarded as a day-training centre also, as under the provisions of the Mental Health Act the latter type centre is one which does not provide residential accommodation.

The Minister of Health, on 14th August, 1973, received a deputation from the committee of the Woodbine centre which was attended by the Chairman of the Mental Health Authority and at which the problems of the centre were discussed.

It was agreed that the establishment of a sheltered workshop for a short period would serve little purpose as it would take the committee from one to two years to establish the feasibility of conducting sheltered workshop activities because of the lack of light industry in the vicinity.

Officers of the authority were to visit Warracknabeal to survey the needs of the area for further training facilities. This has been done and the Mental Health Authority is now considering the possibility of enlarging class-room accommodation at the Woodbine centre to enable training on a day-to-day basis to be given to a number of retarded persons resident in the area in addition to those persons resident in the centre now receiving training.

Legislative Assembly.

Wednesday, October 31, 1973.

The SPEAKER **(the Hon. K. H. Wheeler)** took the chair at 2.50 p.m., and read the prayer.

ABSENCE OF MINISTERS.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. K. H. Wheeler).—I have to announce that the Attorney-General will be absent from the House during question time and that the Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation will be absent for some time.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE.

AMALGAMATION OF MUNICIPALITIES.

Mr. EDMUNDS (Moonee Ponds).—I direct a question to the Premier. Does the Government intend to examine what effect the amalgamation of various municipalities with the City of Melbourne, if the proposal is implemented, will have on the City of Melbourne Strategic Plan which has been recently produced at the high cost of half a million dollars?

Mr. HAMER (Premier and Treasurer).—We have before us at present a report with recommendations from the Local Government Advisory Board based on the task which was given to it as long ago as 1969, long before the City of Melbourne Strategic Plan was thought of. In considering that report and in welcoming submissions from the councils concerned, the Government will try to give full weight and consideration to the City of Melbourne Strategic Plan, as well as many other factors. We do not propose to make a quick decision. It has been a long time in the gestation period and it will be a little longer before our final decision is made. I understand that the Minister for Local Government has invited the constituent councils to make representations until some time in January, so it is certain that we will not make a decision until those submissions have been fully considered.

PROPOSED POINT ORMOND RESTAURANT.

Mr. ROSS-EDWARDS (Leader of the Country Party).—In view of the announcement that the construction of a restaurant at Point Ormond is not to proceed, could the Minister for Conservation inform the House whether compensation will be paid to either the St. Kilda City Council or the person who proposed to build the restaurant? If so, could the honorable gentleman give the House some idea of what the amount of compensation will be?

Mr. BORTHWICK (Minister for Conservation).—In his public announcement this morning, the Premier indicated that the Government would consider compensation for the company which successfully tendered to the St. Kilda City Council under the requirements of the Act. The question of compensation to the St. Kilda council is not quite so clear because under other sections of the Act St. Kilda City Council receives considerable sums of money for use on foreshore works.

Mr. ROSS-EDWARDS.—How much?

Mr. BORTHWICK.—I am not able to indicate what the tenderer's expenses have been during this period.

AMALGAMATION OF MUNICIPALITIES.

Mr. BORNSTEIN (Brunswick East).—Was the Premier the Minister for Local Government in 1969 when a request was made to the Local Government Advisory Board that the advisability of the union of the municipalities of Melbourne, Port Melbourne, South Melbourne and Fitzroy should be investigated? If so, on what basis were those terms of reference decided? Why was the decision made strictly in relation to those municipalities?

Mr. HAMER (Premier and Treasurer).—It is not accurate to treat this as a single inquiry. The Melbourne City Council made a submission to the Government seeking an inquiry by the Local Government Advisory Board. The council put it on a double basis. One proposition was that eight municipalities should be amalgamated, and the other was that these four should be amalgamated. The Government considered the submission and decided that it was not prepared to submit to the advisory board the proposition of eight municipalities amalgamating, which seemed to the Government to create a unit far too large, but it was prepared to have investigated the alternative of four municipalities amalgamating.

The honorable member may recall that at the same time the Local Government Advisory Board was asked to investigate the advisability of the amalgamation of the cities of Richmond and Collingwood, and also three cities in the centre of Geelong, two in Ballarat, and two in Bendigo, as part of an over-all approach to ascertain whether any efficiencies, savings or economies would be effected by the amalgamation of some of the smaller municipalities in the centre of the main cities, including Melbourne.

That was the background of the matter, and now we have the last of the reports from the Local Government Advisory Board in relation to the four central municipalities in Melbourne.

FLINDERS LANE POLICE STATION.

Mr. LACY (Ringwood).—Further to a question asked yesterday by the honorable member for Melbourne, is the reason for the closure of the Flinders Lane police station the fact that the lease for the building expires on 18th September and is not renegotiable because the building is to be demolished? As the closure of this station is of great concern to local shopkeepers and businessmen, can the Chief Secretary assure the House that it is the Government's intention to open another station in the vicinity as soon as possible?

Mr. ROSSITER (Chief Secretary).—The answer to both questions is, "Yes".

WHEAT SALES TO EGYPT.

Mr. WILTON (Broadmeadows).—In view of the fact that under the former Federal Liberal–Country Party Government, the sale of wheat to Egypt was under a three-year contract, and in view of the fact that the sale of wheat to Egypt is currently being negotiated and the Federal Labor Government has agreed to carry 75 per cent of the risk, on what grounds did the Minister of Agriculture inform the House yesterday that the Australian Government was jeopardizing the income of Australian wheat growers?

Mr. I. W. SMITH (Minister of Agriculture).—In the past the Federal Government has given approval to the Australian Wheat Board to negotiate contracts with Egypt. Egypt has proved to be a difficult customer in that its payments have nearly always been late, and a good deal of diplomatic effort has had to be exercised to extract the correct payments from the Egyptian Government. The Australian Wheat Board is charged with the responsibility of disposing of the crop. It was against the board's commercial judgment to have further contracts with Egypt. The Australian Government instructed the Australian Wheat Board that it would sell, and stated that the Government would bear 75 per cent of the risk. My personal opinion, which I think is shared by wheat growers in Victoria, is that if the Commonwealth Government wishes to go against the commercial judgment of the Australian Wheat Board, which is a representative body, it should take the risk itself.

I do not mind to what country wheat is sold, but the wheat growers' money should not be jeopardized when they have no control over what happens in other parts of the world. Wheat-growing nations throughout the world are expressing the same opinion.

PARLIAMENT HOUSE.

Mr. CHAMBERLAIN (Dundas).—I ask Mr. Speaker to inform the House, firstly, whether it is proposed to rectify the poor acoustical qualities of this Chamber, by the use of modern electronic devices; secondly, whether it is proposed to air-condition the Chamber during the summer; and, thirdly, whether it is proposed to replace the vinyl seat coverage with woollen coverings?

The SPEAKER (the Hon. K. H. Wheeler).—In reply to the honorable member, who represents a wool-producing area, I shall answer the

last part of his question first by saying that at the moment there is no plan. However, I am considering plans to improve general facilities inside and outside this Chamber.

VICTORIA INSTITUTE OF COLLEGES.

Mr. LIND (Dandenong).—Can the Minister of Education inform the House whether the Victoria Institute of Colleges is about to approve of a degree course in general studies at the Swinburne Institute of Technology and whether sociology has been chosen as a compulsory subject? If so, does it not act harshly against those who, during their diploma course, have taken languages or psychology, and are there any plans to accommodate people who have reached the third-year stage of their diploma courses?

Mr. THOMPSON (Minister of Education).—On the recommendation of the Board of Studies, the Victoria Institute of Colleges has progressively approved of degree courses in the various colleges affiliated with it. Already approximately 30 or 40 have been approved. I understand that there is another course being considered at Swinburne. I have not heard of the particular course to which the honorable member referred, but I will ask the Victorian Institute of Colleges to refer the problem to its Board of Studies for consideration.

WHEAT SALES TO EGYPT.

Mr. CURNOW (Kara Kara).—Is the Minister of Agriculture aware that the Australian Wheat Board was committed to sell wheat to Egypt under an existing agreement and that in the past the growers have always carried the risk to the extent of at least 25 per cent? If he is not aware of that fact, will he acquaint himself with it so that he can provide the House with accurate information?

The SPEAKER (the Hon. K. H. Wheeler).—Order! The latter part of the honorable member's question is not in order.

Mr. I. W. SMITH (Minister of Agriculture).—I do not know what it is that concerns the honorable member for Kara Kara every time I rise; but I am hopeful that the Commonwealth will agree to a grain infestation programme which will get rid of the weevil from Kara Kara.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. K. H. Wheeler).—Order! I call on the Minister of Agriculture to answer the question asked by the honorable member for Kara Kara.

Mr. HOLDING.—What about——

The SPEAKER.—I think the statement of the Minister is a reflection on the honorable member for Kara Kara, and I ask him to withdraw it.

Mr. I. W. SMITH.—In view of your observation, Mr. Speaker, I am happy to withdraw that comment. The honorable member for Kara Kara ought to understand that under the previous Government the Australian Wheat Board had powers which it exercised freely in the market place. It could choose customers as it saw fit. It reached a decision that trading with Egypt was not in the best interests of wheat growers, and therefore refused to renew any contracts with that country until it was directed by the Commonwealth Government to do so. That is the bone of contention. The wheat industry did not want to continue to sell to Egypt, and is not bound to sell to Egypt except by direction of the Federal Minister for Primary Industry. That is the point.

ENVIRONMENTAL STUDY OF GIPPSLAND LAKES.

Mr. B. J. EVANS (Gippsland East).—Can the Minister for Conservation inform the House whether the Government is in a position to carry out an environmental study of the Gippsland lakes and, if so, how long is it expected that this study will take? Further, can the Minister give an assurance that no further work will be undertaken to divert water

from the Thomson River to the metropolitan area until such a study is completed?

Mr. BORTHWICK (Minister for Conservation).—The Government is not committed to carrying out an environmental study of the Gippsland lakes. I am sure the question of the honorable member for Gippsland East is directed following an accurate report of a statement I made and which appeared in the *Sun News-Pictorial* last Saturday. I was asked to give my views on whether or not an environmental study would be required of the Gippsland lakes and I said, "Yes", and I firmly believe that.

One of the problems confronting the Government in carrying out further major environmental studies in Victoria is that the Government is already heavily committed with two very large environmental studies. I might add that the environmental study of the Westernport region is unique in Australia, and indeed in the world, for its magnitude. It is very difficult in a country the size of Australia to have sufficient skilled people for environmental studies of the magnitude of the Westernport study. One of the reasons why the Government brought Professor Shapiro from the United States of America was not merely that he was a world leader in this field but that the Government realized that through his contact with the field workers here, much expertise and know-how in the conduct of the studies would wash off among our own staff. So although it is primarily a question of considerable funds being made available, it is also a question of the availability of experts, of whom there is a shortage.

The honorable member for Gippsland East further asked how long a study would take if one were conducted. Experience gained from the Port Phillip Bay study and also the Westernport region study indicates that because of the size of the catchment and the number of contributory streams and lakes, a study of the Gippsland lakes would possibly take up to five years to complete.

ROAD BLITZES.

Mr. WILKES (Northcote).—Is the Chief Secretary aware of the statement made in this morning's press by Mr. McLaren concerning the road toll and advising that future blitzes on motorists will not be advertised and that the police will be asked to concentrate on the more serious road offenders rather than the family man who commits one small traffic misdemeanour? Is this a change in Government policy, and is the Government now prepared to accept what members of the Opposition have been telling it for the past ten years?

Mr. ROSSITER (Chief Secretary).—That long-winded, introverted question requires a little simplicity.

Mr. HOLDING.—You have the qualifications for that.

Mr. ROSSITER.—I am always a clear thinker, which is perhaps not an attribute of the Leader of the Opposition, especially when he loses elections. The answer to the first part of the question is, "Yes". The answer to the second part of the question cannot be given because the question was not clear. I invite the Deputy Leader of the Opposition to place it on notice.

INSPECTION OF FURNITURE FACTORIES.

Mr. SKEGGS (Ivanhoe).—Can the Minister of Consumer Affairs inform the House whether he is in a position to confirm or deny the suggestion raised yesterday in debate on the marking of furniture that he had sent inspectors to a factory in Northcote and that they had been threatened? Further, has the Minister had an opportunity of considering the inspection of furniture factories in the meantime?

Mr. RAFFERTY (Minister of Consumer Affairs).—From the information available in the office to date,

there is no truth in the allegations made by the honorable member for Reservoir that inspectors were sent to a factory in Northcote and that they were threatened. It is true that inspectors visited a factory in Northcote—United Stocks of Australia—to deal with the question of the branding of furniture. The inspectors were received by the management with considerable courtesy. The branding of the furniture had been carried out, but it was not carried out in accordance with the stamping requirements of the law. This was drawn to the attention of the management, which was told that these requirements had to be met in future.

The honorable member for Reservoir should report his allegations, together with evidence, to me, and if he does so I shall have the matter examined. So far, no evidence is available in my office that inspectors have been threatened by any factory management in Northcote.

As for the second part of the question, today I have directed that inspectors of the Consumer Protection Bureau should go out to Northcote, as I promised the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, to examine furniture made in three factories—United Stocks of Australia, J. G. Guest & Sons Pty. Ltd., and Welbilt Furniture.

MOBILE TRAFFIC BRANCH.

Mr. WHITING (Mildura).—Can the Chief Secretary inform me whether the Mobile Traffic Branch of the Police Department is yet using the Vascar speed detection device; and if not, when is it expected that this unit will be in effective operation?

Mr. ROSSITER (Chief Secretary).—The answer to the first part of the question is, "No". I ask the honorable member to put the second part of the question on notice.

EXPENDITURE ON EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES.

Mr. FORDHAM (Footscray).—In view of the vast sums of money to be made available by the Commonwealth Government for educational purposes in the State, will the Minister of Education consult representatives of architects and builders in Victoria with the view of ensuring that this money can be spent within the period allocated and if necessary, ensure a reallocation of these professional services in areas where it is needed to be used?

Mr. THOMPSON (Minister of Education).—Through the Minister of Public Works, I requested that a conference be arranged with builders and architects to ensure that any additional money can be spent effectively, and also to obtain ideas and suggestions from them how it might be more effectively spent and how efficiencies can be introduced, so that greater value might be obtained from the money. For the current financial year the additional money will total only $19 million, of which $8 million will be in the capital area. This lifts the total of capital expenditure to $62 million, so the increase this year is small. There will be a more substantial increase next year.

What would help most of all is flexibility in the spending of the money. Large sums of money are tied up in the technical training area at present, awaiting approval from Canberra on projects such as that at the Collingwood Technical School, and others at Swinburne, Moorabbin and Dandenong. It would be a great advantage if the State had flexibility to swing this money into the ordinary technical school building field where it could be used immediately.

INSPECTION OF FURNITURE FACTORIES.

Mr. HOLDING (Leader of the Opposition).—In view of his expedition in acting on the matters

raised by the honorable member for Reservoir, is the Minister of Consumer Affairs prepared to give the House an unequivocal assurance that any manufacturer of unstamped furniture or any retailer who sells furniture which is not stamped will be subject to prosecution?

Mr. RAFFERTY (Minister of Consumer Affairs).—Any information that is brought to my attention will be examined. Any allegations made by any honorable member in regard to the stamping of furniture, or any other circumstances brought to the attention of the department, will be examined in the normal way by the department and such action as is deemed to be necessary will be taken.

EXPORT OF LIVESTOCK TO CHINA.

Mr. TREWIN (Benalla).—Would the Minister of Agriculture inform the House whether he or any member of his department has had dialogue with any other department concerning the export of bull to China?

Mr. I. W. SMITH (Minister of Agriculture).—I am not quite sure whether I heard the question correctly. It seems to me that it is not only Murray Grey bull that has gone to China.

I commend the initiative of the Prime Minister in sending this bull to China. It opens up the prospect of a new market. I only hope the practice will continue when there are other potential new markets. Some safeguards ought to be taken—I understand they were in this case—with consultation between the Federal Department of Primary Industry and the Victorian Department of Agriculture because of quarantine regulations and so forth.

There is a potential for the sale of stud stock to China and I should like to think that this initiative will bear fruit, particularly for Victorian breeders.

BUILDING COSTS.

Mr. MUTTON (Coburg).—I direct a question to the Minister representing the Minister of Housing. Is the honorable gentleman aware of a statement which appeared in this morning's press that the price of an average $15,000 home is increasing at the rate of $34 a week because of rises in building costs? If so, what action has the Government taken to control building costs?

Mr. MEAGHER (Minister of Transport).—I am aware of the increasing costs of building homes. I am also aware that the efforts of the Victorian Government to prevent the Commonwealth Government from contributing to these costs by increasing costs to builders and to homeowners were unsuccessful.

SEWERAGE IN DANDENONG.

Mr. LIND (Dandenong).—I direct a question to the Minister representing the Minister of Housing, as I have not had a reply from the Minister of Housing to a letter I wrote to him on the 8th of this month. In view of the fact that the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works negotiated with the Dandenong Sewerage Authority to take raw sewage by tanker to the authority's treatment plant as a temporary measure, and in view of the fact that there are completed Housing Commission houses vacant in Hampton Park, will the honorable gentleman investigate whether similar arrangements can be made between the Housing Commission and the Dandenong Sewerage Authority?

Mr. MEAGHER (Minister of Transport).—I will have pleasure in referring the matter to the Minister of Housing.

GAY LIBERATION VISITS TO SCHOOLS.

Mr. BIRRELL (Geelong).—Is the Minister of Education aware that visits are being paid to schools by certain gay gentlemen? What will the Minister do to either support or stop these visits?

Mr. THOMPSON (Minister of Education).—I have already announced that I have asked for a report from Dr. Shears, the Director-General of Education, on these reported visits. It is not the policy of the Government to encourage visits of this type. The aim would be to stress to principals the importance of handling delicate subjects such as politics, sex, and religion in a manner which ensures the full support of all parents.

MELBOURNE-GEELONG TRAIN SERVICES.

Mr. TREZISE (Geelong North).—Is the Minister of Transport aware of a statement made earlier this week by his predecessor, the present Attorney-General, that it is absurd in 1973 to have the Geelong–Melbourne train service still operating on a single track, and that the honorable gentleman could foresee within twelve years a modern service with trains travelling at up to 150 miles an hour operating on the same line? Have the Victorian Railways a definite plan to make this modern service a reality, or is it just the usual pipedream about the Melbourne-Geelong railway?

Mr. MEAGHER (Minister of Tranport).—The Attorney-General was seriously misquoted in that article in the press. What he said was——

Honorable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. K. H. Wheeler).—Order! I have repeatedly requested honorable members, when asking questions, to listen to the answers. It is my desire that as many questions as possible should be answered in this half hour. Honorable members are only taking away from their own time and their own opportunities.

Mr. MEAGHER.—The article referred to by the honorable member for Geelong North was based on an answer which the Attorney-General gave to a question whether he could visualize trains travelling at 150 miles an hour running between Melbourne and Sydney. The Attorney-General said that he thought that was unlikely, but he could visualize high-speed trains operating between places like Melbourne and Geelong. The Ministry is examining the whole question of services between Melbourne and Geelong and similar services, and I hope in the near future to be able to make some interesting announcements.

NORTH WING OF PARLIAMENT HOUSE.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. K. H. Wheeler).—Order! Yesterday I was asked a question on the availability for viewing of plans of the proposed north wing of Parliament House. I have made arrangements, in consultation with the Minister of Public Works, for the plans to be made available for viewing in Queen's Hall today between 3.30 p.m. and 4.30 p.m., and again tomorrow between 2 p.m. and 3 p.m. The Secretary of the House Committee will be present to explain certain features of the plans to honorable members.

PAPERS.

The following papers, pursuant to the directions of an Act of Parliament, were laid upon the table by the Clerk:—

Public Service Act 1958—Public Service (Public Service Board) Regulations—Regulations amended—Nos. 568 to 571 (four papers).

ATTORNEY-GENERAL AND CHIEF SECRETARY (ADDITIONAL FUNCTIONS) BILL.

Mr. HAMER (Premier and Treasurer) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to amend the Auction Sales Act 1958 and the Estate Agents Act 1958 in relation to the transfer of the administration of those Acts to the Chief Secretary and the Money Lenders Act 1958 in relation to the transfer of the administration of that Act to the Attorney-General and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

MONASH UNIVERSITY (AMENDMENT) BILL.

Mr. THOMPSON (Minister of Education) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to amend the Monash University Act 1958 and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

REVOCATION AND EXCISION OF CROWN RESERVATIONS BILL.

Mr. BORTHWICK (Minister of Lands) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to revoke the Crown grants of certain lands and the permanent reservations of certain lands and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

Mr. BORTHWICK (Minister of Lands).—I move—

That the Bill be printed and, by leave, the second reading be made an Order of the Day for later this day.

Mr. WILKES (Northcote).—Leave is refused because no arrangements have been made.

It was ordered that the Bill be printed and the second reading be made an Order of the Day for next day.

FLEMINGTON LAND BILL.

Mr. BORTHWICK (Minister of Lands) moved for leave to bring in a Bill relating to certain Crown land in the Parish of Doutta Galla.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

COUNTRY ROADS (AMENDMENT) BILL.

Mr. MEAGHER (Minister of Transport) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to amend the Country Roads Act 1958.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

HOSPITALS AND CHARITIES (INSTITUTIONS AND BENEVOLENT SOCIETIES) BILL.

Mr. SCANLAN (Minister of Health) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to amend the Hospitals and Charities Act 1958 in relation to the powers of institutions and benevolent societies and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

EDUCATION (HANDICAPPED CHILDREN) BILL.

For **Mr. DIXON** (Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation), Mr. Scanlan (Minister of Health) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to amend Part IV. of the Education Act 1958 and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

HEALTH (FLUORIDATION) BILL.

Mr. SCANLAN (Minister of Health).—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

It is introduced for the specific purpose of enabling and, when so directed by the Commission of Public Health, requiring water supply authorities in Victoria to add fluoride to public water supplies so as to bring the fluoride content to a desirable level from the dental health point of view.

At the twelfth plenary meeting of the Twenty-second World Health Assembly on 23rd July, 1969, a draft resolution relating to fluoridation of water supplies and dental health was approved unanimously. This decision was made after consideration of a report of the Director-General of World Health on fluoridation. The resolution recommended all member States—

to examine the possibility of introducing and where practicable to introduce fluoridation of those community water supplies where

the fluoride intake from water and other sources for the given population is below optimal levels, as a proven public health measure; and where fluoridation of community water supplies is not practicable to study other methods of using fluorides for the protection of dental health—

and requested the Director-General—

to continue to encourage research into the etiology of dental caries, the fluoride content of diets, the mechanism of action of fluoride at optimal concentrations in drinking water and into the effects of greatly excessive intake of fluoride from natural sources and to report thereon to the World Health Assembly

and—

to bring this resolution to the attention of all member States.

The standard of dental health in the Victorian community is a matter of considerable concern to many health authorities in the State. It is considered to be the worst in Australia and has been described by the Victorian Branch of the Australian Dental Association and the Commission of Public Health as a State calamity. As an example, a recent survey in Geelong showed that in the average fourteen-year-old child, approximately 13 teeth were affected; of this number, 2 had been extracted, 4 filled and 7 were decayed. Perhaps the worst feature of the result of this survey is that of the 13 teeth affected, on the average only 4 had been given any adequate restorative treatment.

Perhaps it will give a clearer picture of the state of the teeth of young Australians if I point out that in a 1964 survey of the mouths of almost 1,000 young males, aged 21 years, called up for the military forces, it was found that the average per mouth of the total numbers of teeth decayed, missing or filled was almost twenty. At least a quarter of those examined had artificial dentures. The average number of teeth missing was 7·6 per person; that is, the average young male aged 21 years had lost almost a quarter of his permanent teeth by that age.

Although it is difficult to get exact comparisons, figures published in the *Epidemiology and Oral Health Journal* of 1966 show the decayed, missing and filled teeth average for the age group 20 to 24 years in various countries to be as follows:—

Thailand	3
Jordan	3
Lebanon	5
Colorado Springs, U.S.A. (fluoridated water) ..	5
Trinidad	9
Chile	12
Colombia	13
Baltimore, U.S.A. (white population only)	14
Alaska	17

In another survey of first-year Australian university students an average of five decayed teeth per student was found while 13 per cent of the total examined had ten or more teeth requiring treatment.

I am indebted to Sydney University which forwarded to me, as a gesture of appreciation and congratulations, a can of Sydney's fluoridated water supply. For some time Sydney University has sent cans hopefully to Victorians to assist us in improving our dental health. The label on the can rightly states that fluoridation is advocated by the World Health Organization, the Federation Dentale Internationale, the National Health and Medical Research Council of Australia, the Australian Medical Association and the Australian Dental Association.

The Royal Dental Hospital, Melbourne, does a lot of work with pre-school children. In a total of 33,000 children of pre-school age examined and treated, a total of 130,000 extractions were required, while each year between 25 and 30 sets of artificial dentures are made for pre-school children who have lost all their teeth.

The Government is aware of the low level of dental health in this State and has already embarked upon a programme for improvement. This programme includes—

(1) fluoridation of water supplies;

(2) increasing the student intake at the Royal Dental Hospital;

(3) establishing a dental health branch within the Department of Health; and

(4) establishing a school of dental therapy with a view to providing an adequate number of school dental therapists to carry out preventative and restorative work with school children.

The Premier, in his policy speech, spoke of the need to develop and extend the Royal Dental Hospital with a view to producing a large number of dentists each year. Substantial agreement has now been reached between all interested parties to increase progressively the output of trained dentists from the dental school associated with the hospital.

Victoria is also developing a school for dental therapists who will work in schools with the School Dental Service. These school dental therapists will be trained to the point where they can undertake comparatively simple procedures in regard to restoration work on the teeth of young children, carry out straightforward extractions and generally advise school children and their parents on all matters pertaining to dental hygiene. They will work under the broad supervision of qualified dentists.

By arrangement with the Federal Government, a dental therapy training school is to be built on the site of the School Dental Centre in St. Kilda Road, Melbourne. The Federal Government will provide $3·6 million towards the cost. When completed, the school will train 58 dental therapists each year and it is expected that it will open early in 1975. The approval of the Commonwealth Government which was announced recently followed the submission on 17th July of plans and full specifications together with quantity surveys to the Australian Minister for Health for his approval. The State has already let a contract for demolition of the old building.

In order to achieve training of the full number of dental therapists required, plans and specifications for a second school on a site to be determined will also be submitted to the Commonwealth. Ultimately it is probable that a third school will be established, possibly in a country centre, but this will be dependent upon the ability of the Department of Health to recruit proper teaching staff to operate the school.

The full development of these plans for the improvement of the Royal Dental Hospital and the establishment of training schools for school dental therapists will go a long way towards providing a good dental service for school children throughout the State. At present the activities of the School Dental Service are limited for a variety of reasons so that only children from certain of the inner-metropolitan suburbs and some of those living in outlying country districts, remote from dentists in private practice, receive attention.

The object of a school dental service must be to ensure that during the life of all children up to school leaving age, at least, proper dental health is maintained. Of course, the provision of an adequate restorative dental service is only a part of the answer to the dental problem of people in this State. As in the wider fields of mental and physical health, prevention is more important than cure and for many years, principally in overseas countries, studies have been undertaken to determine some means whereby there may be brought about a reduction in the number of carious teeth in young persons. Notwithstanding these measures to improve dental health, fluoridation is essential to success in this field.

It has been noted by research workers, as far back as 1927, that there was a low prevalence of dental caries among populations which suffered from some mottling of the enamel of teeth due to the presence of high fluoride concentrations in

drinking water and it had been repeatedly stated in older dental literature that fluoride salts afforded protection against dental caries. However, little work had been done to prove the matter one way or the other until the early 1950s, by which time the conditions under which mottling in tooth enamel had been elucidated. An article in the World Health Organization publication, *Fluorides and Dental Health*, stated—

As a rule, mottling is caused by the consumption of drinking water which is too rich in fluoride. The minimal threshold value at which a just perceptible change appears in the developing enamel of the permanent teeth was found to be 1.0–1.1 ppm for the people in the United States of America living in the temperate zone. At this concentration a small number of spots, gleaming like mother of pearl and hardly differing in colour from the rest of the enamel, develop on a limited number of teeth in scattered individuals. These spots are not noticeable to the layman and are in no way disfiguring. It is only after the flouride concentration in drinking water exceeds 1.4-1.6 ppm that the first signs of more serious dental fluorosis appear.

It was stated at the time that this applies only when dentition is permanently exposed to excessive fluoride in cases such as where the drinking water contains a high proportion of fluoride salts.

I do not propose to quote extensively from statistical summaries published by various research teams, but the following figures are significant. These figures relate to a number of areas in the United States of America and show the loss of permanent teeth in children aged twelve to fourteen years:—

		Lost teeth per 100 children
Aurora	Water naturally fluoridated to 1·2 parts per million	25
Stratford	Natural fluoridation to 1·3 parts per million	22·5
Brantford	Fluoride added to 1·2 ppm. over 14 years	22·3
Grand Rapids	Naturally fluoride deficient	84
	Added fluoride to 1 ppm.—	
	over 10 years	41
	over 15 years	27
New Britain (Connecticut)	Naturally fluoride deficient	93
	Added fluoride to 1 ppm. over 10 years	23

Similar improvements have been obtained in Australia in those areas where fluoride has been introduced to the drinking water. For example, at Bacchus Marsh, after ten years of fluoridation eight-year-old children have had the decay rate reduced by 49 per cent, while the percentage of children in this age group who were absolutely decay free improved from 4 per cent to 29 per cent.

In Canberra, decay incidence in six-year-old children has decreased by 66·3 per cent after six years of fluoridation, while in Tamworth, New South Wales, after eight and a half years of fluoridation only an average of 5·7 teeth per six-year-old child required attention compared with 12·4 teeth for the same age group before fluoridation was introduced.

Although the effects of fluoridation on children's teeth is what has concerned research workers primarily, certain studies in England have shown that fluoridation also has long-term effects on the dental health of the community. It has been noted that in Hartlepool, where drinking water for generations past has contained 1·5 to 2 parts per million of fluoride, the dental health of the older age groups is better than it is in other areas of England where the water supply contains little if any fluoride despite the fact that there is, in Hartlepool, one of the lowest

dentist to population ratios in England. These benefits have been noted in all ages up to 65 years.

Fluoridation of town water supplies has been adopted in four different areas in Victoria—Bacchus Marsh, Melton, Tongala and Yallourn—but until the introduction of this Bill it has not specifically been encouraged. The most important provision is in clause 5 which states that any water supply authority, as defined in clause 2, may and when required by the Commission of Public Health add fluoride to the water supply until it is controlled in the manner determined by that commission for dental health purposes but so as not to sustain an average maximum concentration of fluoride in water in excess of 1 part per million.

Water supply authorities will be indemnified against any legal action where they fluoridate a water supply in accordance with the provisions of clause 4 of the Bill, and clause 8 authorizes the payment to water supply authorities, on the recommendation of the Commission of Public Health, of a contribution towards the full capital cost of installation of equipment.

To ensure that fluoridation will be carried out properly a formal procedure to be followed by water supply authorities has been set out in clause 6. Firstly, plans and specifications relating to the scheme are to be submitted to the Commission of Public Health with such other information as the commission may require. Secondly, the Commission of Public Health will determine the concentration of fluoride that may be established in the water supply and the means of achieving that concentration and in making its decision will take into account the ability of a water supply authority to put the scheme into effect. Thirdly, the water supply authority is required to adhere to the decisions of the commission.

Provision is made for the commission's inspectors to supervise the fluoridation system established by any water supply authority and to take samples of water for analysis at any point. Penalties for any offences against the provisions of the Health (Fluoridation) Act are fines of between $200 and $1,000 with, in the case of a continuing offence, a further daily penalty of $40. Adequate regulation-making provisions are also included in clause 11 of the Bill.

Special provision is also included in clause 7 of the Bill to ensure that those few water supply authorities in Victoria which have already installed fluoridation are able to bring themselves under the protection of this Bill. As soon as the Bill becomes operative they must submit plans and specifications of their equipment and of the scheme generally but they may continue to operate the present scheme until formal approval has been given.

Before submitting this Bill, all shades of opinion have been studied. Some of the most frequent arguments against proposals to add fluoride to town water supplies were those suggesting fluoridation is interference with natural water and will pollute pure water. The reply to all these charges is best summed up by the following statement by the Environment Protection Agency of the United States of America which was published in *Dental Abstracts of the American Dental Association* of July, 1973:—

> Since the safety and efficiency of water fluoridation have been well established, the Environment Protection Agency endorses the principles of such practice. The Environment Protection Agency does not consider the adjustment of the fluoride content of drinking water for purposes of (reducing) dental decay to be a form of pollution. By definition, water pollution is the addition of a substance to water which makes such water unfit for its intended use. Since adjusting the natural fluoride content of drinking water to a level which is optimal for the reduction of dental decay does in no way make the water unfit for drinking, water fluoridation cannot be considered to be pollution . . . Flouride is a natural constituent of fresh water, soil, sea water, and most living organisms, often at higher concentrations than are used in water fluoridation.

The Government is also considering measures to provide fluoride in areas not serviced by town water supplies. I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of Mr. LIND (Dandenong), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Tuesday, November 20.

MUNICIPALITIES ASSISTANCE BILL.

Mr. HAMER (Premier and Treasurer).—I move —

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The purpose of this Bill is to give effect to the policy speech proposal to introduce a scheme of municipal rates assistance for pensioners. The Government's proposal was that the cost of this scheme should be shared at least equally with the Commonwealth, but pending clarification of the extent of financial involvement by the Commonwealth, the Government is taking the first step in implementing this proposal from the beginning of the 1973-74 municipal year, which commenced on 1st October last.

Section 298 of the Local Government Act at present gives a discretion to municipal councils, upon application, to defer rates payable by persons receiving the maximum rate of social service pension, and to defer or excuse the payment of rates payable by persons who, in the opinion of the council, are in necessitous circumstances.

The Government does not propose any amendment to this provision. However, where the council, pursuant to this section, defers or excuses the payment of any general or extra rate by persons coming within the definition of a pensioner, as included in the Bill, the Government will make certain payments to the council concerned.

For the purposes of the Bill a pensioner is —

(*a*) a person who holds a Pensioner Medical Service Entitlement Card issued by the Commonwealth Department of Social Security and who is in receipt of the maximum rate of one of the following pensions: (1) Age, invalid and widows pensions payable under the Social Services Act 1947; (2) service pensions payable under the Repatriation Act; (3) pensions payable under the Repatriation Act to widows of members of the forces and to a widowed mother or an unmarried mother of a deceased unmarried member of the forces;
or,

(*b*) a person receiving the maximum rate of special pension payable under the Repatriation Act to totally and permanently incapacitated ex-servicemen.

Where a council excuses or defers the whole or part of the rates payable by a pensioner in respect of his sole or principal residence the Treasurer, upon application, will pay to the council an amount equal to one-half of the amount of the rate excused or deferred or $40, whichever is the lesser amount. This payment will also be made in a case where the only other person liable to pay the rate is the spouse of the pensioner. Provision is made in the Bill to cover situations where the payment of rates is the joint responsibility of a pensioner and one or more other persons. Sub-clause (4) of clause 2 provides that the Treasurer shall not pay more than $40 in respect of rates payable on any one rateable property in any one year.

Where a council defers the whole or part of the rate of a pensioner, provision is made in sub-clause (6) of clause 2 that when the council collects the deferred amount of rate

it shall repay to the Treasurer an amount equal to the amount received by it from the Treasurer in respect of that rate.

Sub-clause (7) of clause 2 of the Bill provides that where a payment has been made by the Treasurer to a council in respect of a deferment of rates interest will not be charged by the council on that part of the rates deferred which is equal to the payment made by the Treasurer in respect of that deferment.

Provision has been made in the Budget for payments to councils under this proposal during the current financial year. At this stage it is not possible to estimate these payments with any fine precision, but the Appropriation Act has provided an amount of $3 million. I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of Mr. KIRKWOOD (Preston), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Wednesday, November 14.

VICTORIAN DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (AMENDMENT) BILL.

Mr. BALFOUR (Minister for Fuel and Power).—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The purpose of this small Bill is to provide a further method to enable both country industry and the tourist industry to raise funds for their very important purposes. Honorable members will recall that when the principal Act was originally before this House earlier this year, it was indicated that the widest possible charter was being given to the Victorian Development Corporation so that it would be able to provide worth-while assistance of almost every kind to country industry and to the tourist industry.

Since that legislation was passed, some drastic changes have occurred in the availability of finance, and more unfortunately, interest rates have risen sharply.

The borrowing power of the Victorian Development Corporation is, of course, governed by Loan Council arrangements and the current situation is that the corporation's activities are being seriously restricted. Additional means therefore need to be implemented so that funds are available in sufficient quantity to enable the Government to make the progress it has planned with decentralization of industry and assistance to the tourist industry. It is proposed that this be done by way of supplementary authority to execute guarantees.

The principal Act, as it now stands, gives the corporation power to guarantee loans. This Bill provides for additional powers of guarantee to be vested in the Treasurer who, after considering a report from the corporation, may execute a guarantee for the repayment of moneys directed to the acquisition of land, construction, improvement or alterations of buildings, and the acquisition of plant or other equipment used or to be used for a country industry. The Treasurer may also execute guarantees for moneys directed to the construction of accommodation and other facilities for tourists. Honorable members can see that this will be another type of security available to support the loans raised by clients of the corporation.

The principal Act, in paragraphs (*j*) and (*m*) of sub-section (1) of section 11, provides for guarantees to be executed by the corporation and this Bill enables the Treasurer to do likewise.

There are some other minor amendments referred to in clause 3 which are merely machinery matters and will enable the corporation to establish a registry for debentures and inscribed stock at locations other than its own office, for example, at a bank with which it has arrangements, and to appoint officers, whether they are officers of the corporation or not, to be duly authorized registrars or their deputies.

I am pleased to report that the Victorian Development Corporation is now beginning to make its presence felt. It has acquired a small specialist staff, a location for its headquarters and to date it has approved loans in excess of $3 million.

The setting up of an organization of this nature is not the simplest of tasks, but I am happy to report that although only a few months have elapsed since it was established, it is making a very worth-while contribution to the Government's plans for the decentralization of industry. I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of Mr. WILTON (Broadmeadows), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Wednesday, November 14.

ROSEBUD INSTITUTIONS BILL.

The Order of the Day for the resumption of the debate on the motion for the second reading of this Bill was read.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. K. H. Wheeler).—I have examined this Bill and am of the opinion that it is a private Bill.

Mr. SCANLAN (Minister of Health).—By leave, I move—

That all the private Bill Standing Orders be dispensed with, and that this Bill be treated as a public Bill.

The motion was agreed to.

The debate (adjourned from September 19) on the motion of Mr. Scanlan (Minister of Health) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

Mr. LIND (Dandenong).—The Opposition supports this Bill which it believes is a step forward. The creation of geriatric hospitals and geriatric day centres, such as the Mount Eliza Geriatric Centre, is most important in the community. It is pleasing that such creations are gaining support.

The Lotus Lodge Hostel for the Aged was previously an old people's residence attached to the Southern Peninsula Hospital at Rosebud. However, it is easy to see, as the Minister pointed out, that its proper attachment is with the geriatric centre at Mount Eliza. On this occasion, as on a number of other occasions, the situation has arisen, as with previous enactments which have not been enacted as intended, that something has to be undone before something different can be done. As I said to the Minister of Health privately not long ago, it is like Napolean's famous saying, " You must break eggs to make an omelette ". This Bill attempts to restore the *status quo* of the Lotus Lodge Hostel for the Aged and then to combine it with the Mount Eliza Geriatric Centre.

I have visited the Lotus Lodge hostel and found it to be a most remarkable place. I am acquainted with Dr. Mal. Scott and Mr. Harding, and have contacted both about this Bill. I have also spoken to one or two persons residing on the Mornington Peninsula. All those with whom I have conferred are delighted that the Bill has been introduced but they ask that the Minister be more specific on how the proposed amalgamation will take place. It is all very well for the Minister to say that under sections 29 and 30 of the Hospitals and Charities Act adequate provision is made for the amalgamation to occur, but people in general do not understand that. Those sections of the Hospitals and Charities Act cover several pages. They provide, among other things, that the Minister may refer a recommendation to the Governor in Council. It is quite clear from a study of the legislation that it covers amalgamations such as that proposed in the Bill, but if the Minister could set at ease the minds of the persons concerned he would be doing them a good turn.

A common impression in the community is that a section of a Government department harbours jealousies and is opposed to thoughts which emanate from another department.

The people to whom I have spoken feel that something could arise between two Government departments which may prevent the rapid attachment of the Lotus Lodge Hostel for the Aged to the Mount Eliza Geriatric Centre. If the Minister could assure the people concerned that their feelings are unfounded, the honorable gentleman would earn their praise.

The sooner this Bill is enacted the better it will be for all concerned. Perhaps I am being selfish in saying that because several residents of my electorate are served by the Mount Eliza Geriatric Centre. I hope eventually other geriatric day centres will become attached to the Mount Eliza Geriatric Centre because I am sure they would learn from Dr. Scott and Mr. Harding and their staffs. The Opposition hopes the Bill will be as successful as the residents of the area desire it to be.

Mr. McINNES (Gippsland South).—The Country Party supports the Bill. It is a strange reflection on this legislation that since 1951 when it was originally enacted, further measures were introduced in 1958 and in 1967 and now Parliament is trying to "unscramble the eggs", as the honorable member for Dandenong has put it. It occurs to the Country Party that in this Bill, containing wide-ranging clauses, provision could also be included for the amalgamation to take place immediately. I know of no reason for this omission and perhaps the Minister of Health could elucidate this point because I believe the people in the area are keen that this should be done. There does not appear to be any guarantee that once the setting aside has been carried out there will not be a delay before the subsequent amalgamation with the Mount Eliza Geriatric Centre takes place.

The Lotus Lodge Hostel for the Aged at present houses about 60 people who are able to come and go. They are housed in five brick-veneer cottages, each containing twelve rooms. The residents have bed-sitting rooms, and over the years, with Government assistance, an amount of $250,000 has been expended in making the hostel an attractive place to which elderly people can retire.

Even though Lotus Lodge is adjacent to the Southern Peninsula Hospital—it is only a couple of hundred yards away—the immediate benefit to be obtained by placing Lotus Lodge under the jurisdiction of the Mount Eliza Geriatric Centre is that a geriatric day centre will be available to cater for people in the area. It will be under the control of a full-time manager, instead of a part-time manager as at present, and additional staff will be appointed. It also means that although Lotus Lodge is about 15 miles from Mount Eliza, this unit will provide an additional facility for geriatric treatment together with the housing of elderly people at the Rosebud section of the peninsula. This appears to be a most desirable move.

I repeat that there does seem to be concern that the Minister has not seen fit to incorporate further amalgamation proposals in the Bill. Perhaps this was done on the advice of the Law Department, but the Bill does contain wide-ranging provisions. The minds of the people concerned would be put at rest if the Minister agreed to include an additional clause providing for the amalgamation to take place immediately.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was read a second time and committed.

Clause 1 was agreed to.

Clause 2 (Interpretation).

Mr. SCANLAN (Minister of Health).—I thank the two honorable members who have supported this Bill. It is the intention of this Parliament and the honorable members in it to ensure the best possible care for the aged who are, after all, one of the handicapped groups of the community that most deserve support and help.

The subject-matter of the Bill was referred to the Crown Solicitor's office for opinion. The Crown Solicitor at the time, Mr. Mornane, advised that the Bill as presented was the best possible method of achieving the desirable amalgamation of the Lotus Lodge Hostel for the Aged with the Mount Eliza Geriatric Centre and of severing Lotus Lodge from the Southern Peninsula Hospital.

As the honorable member for Dandenong has rightly pointed out, sections 29 and 30 of the Hospitals and Charities Act empower the commission to make recommendations to the Minister in regard to subsidized institutions, the rationalization and amalgamation of institutions, and subsidized benevolent societies. It is my intention, as quickly as possible after the transmission of this Bill through the Legislative Council, to arrange for the necessary Orders to be presented to the Governor in Council to give full effect to the proposals contained in the measure.

I believe it is important and urgent that this action be taken in view of the fact that the Government has proposals, as the honorable member for Dandenong knows quite well, for an increase in the size of the Frankston Community Hospital and for the addition of a geriatric day centre there. After changes have been made to the structure of the Mount Eliza Geriatric Centre, there will be three geriatric centres on the Mornington Peninsula—at Mount Eliza, Rosebud and the Frankston Community Hospital. For those reasons I give an assurance to honorable members and to the committee of the Southern Peninsula Hospital that the necessary Orders of the Governor in Council will be expedited with the transmission of the Bill through the Legislative Council.

Mr. LIND (Dandenong).—I thank the Minister for his assurance that he will expedite the amalgamation of Lotus Lodge with the geriatric centre. I wish he had gone a little further and said that he would provide a geriatric centre at Dandenong too.

The clause was agreed to, as were the remaining clauses.

The Bill was reported to the House without amendment, and passed through its remaining stages.

MONASH UNIVERSITY (AMENDMENT) BILL.

Mr. THOMPSON (Minister of Education) presented a message from His Excellency the Governor recommending that an appropriation be made from the Consolidated Fund for the purposes of this Bill.

COUNTRY FIRE AUTHORITY (AMENDMENT) BILL.

The debate (adjourned from September 22) on the motion of Mr. Rossiter (Chief Secretary) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

Mr. CURNOW (Kara Kara).—If there is anything which all country towns and hamlets in Victoria have in common, it is a Country Fire Authority brigade or branch thereof. The Bill seeks to amend certain sections of the Country Fire Authority Act. The changes will affect the men who make up the fire brigades and their operations. The most important provision in the Bill extends workers compensation cover to the men if they are called out on authorized jobs not connected with fighting fires. In other words, they will be covered when they are called upon to help in flood control, search and rescue operations, and so on. These men have been participating in these activities for some time but, until now, if, in rescuing a cat belonging to an age pensioner from a tree, one of them fell and broke a leg, he would have had no redress unless he had a private insurance cover.

All that worries me is that the emergency must be authorized. Sub-section (2) of proposed section 20A to be inserted in the Act by clause 2 provides—

> No attendance or action shall be made or taken by any group of brigades or any brigade pursuant to sub-section (1) unless the approval of the Chief Officer or the officer exercising the powers of the Chief Officer has been obtained or in any case where this is not practicable the officer-in-charge of any brigade involved has caused the attendance of such brigade to be subsequently reported to the Chief Officer or officer exercising the powers of the Chief Officer for his approval.

The last three words of the provision, "for his approval" go to the crux of the matter. It may happen that someone falls down a mine and the local brigade is called to rescue him and starts work before there is time to obtain the approval of the Chief Officer. The matter may subsequently be reported by the captain of the brigade, but the Chief Officer may not give his approval. What happens in those circumstances? This seems to be the only weakness of the provision which will be generally welcomed.

The rest of the Bill mainly brings in new regulations. The Governor in Council must be sitting full time for seven days a week. So many things are done by regulation that it is just not funny. Only last week I received two volumes of statutory rules which were introduced within the past twelve months. One has to see something like them to realize how much the State is run by regulation. Further regulation-making powers should not be granted to the Government.

However, there cannot be much argument about giving the Governor in Council proper authority to prescribe the types of forms necessary for the operations of the Country Fire Authority and the issuing of permits. This was done previously but, apparently, there was no proper authority.

The second part of the regulation-making power relates to prescribing regulations in relation to the curing and reconditioning of tobacco leaf. In his second-reading speech, the Chief Secretary stated that, since 1968, 75 fires started directly at, or were attributable to, curing fires at tobacco kilns, causing losses amounting to $200,000. At first that seems to be a most serious matter, but all the losses were of tobacco leaf. In other words, the operator whose fault it was that the tobacco leaf was lost was the one who suffered. The losses were in no way connected with any fire in a building or around a building or any other damage resulting from the operation of a kiln. The losses were sustained purely because of mismanagement of the operators.

By regulation, the Government will now force tobacco growers who cure their own leaf to do all sorts of things which Parliament will know nothing about. Regulations will be prescribed for the control and use of buildings and appliances and the storage of fuel and for fire-protection measures to be taken in the vicinity of any building, appliance, or fuel storage. The provision has wide scope. Why is it necessary to go this far? The tobacco growers will not like having these regulations—about which they will know nothing—thrust upon them. To make this type of regulation will be a violation of the liberty of the tobacco growers. Surely they should have some freedom in the way they use their buildings.

Tobacco growers are willing to accept regulations—which they see beforehand, of course—to keep their kilns clean and in proper working order. Regulations of that type would overcome the problem. But the Government has seen fit to introduce a Bill to give the Governor in Council power to make these wide regulations. They will be able to do anything to the poor old tobacco grower.

Part of the principal Act makes specific provisions on fire prevention when charcoal is being burnt. Section 38 provides that during the summer period no person shall light a

fire to convert wood into charcoal unless he has a permit, and subsection (2) provides that—

(2) Every such permit shall contain—

(*a*) a condition that the ground within a radius of fifty feet of the site of any kiln retort or pit used for the purpose aforesaid shall be thoroughly cleared of any inflammable material whatsoever, whether growing or not growing, before the fire is lighted.

If that can be done in that instance, why is it not possible for specific conditions relating to tobacco growers to be incorporated in the Act so that Parliament knows what they are and the growers have some protection. I am sure that the honorable member for Benalla will have something to say about this because I know that he is not happy with certain provisions relating to the making of regulations.

In any case, most people are sensible enough to take fire precautions. Tobacco growers have only small areas of land; the farms are not vast. A regulation may prescribe that the land for 100 feet around the kiln must be clear. That could take a high proportion of a tobacco grower's land and he just could not afford it.

I am sick to death of the Government ruling by regulation. I predict that soon there will be a new television show *The Regulators* starring the Chief Secretary. This Parliament is adopting a "Mr. Big" attitude. The members of the Government want to do all sorts of things behind Parliament's back. They say "We will do this, and it will be the law". I am tired of it.

Overall, the operations of the Country Fire Authority are, to say the least, marvellous. The authority is the finest, most conscientious, and most efficient fire brigade in the world. Its members do not need to be told by regulation that they must force tobacco growers to do certain things. They are sensible enough to work things out for themselves, as they have done in the past. It is a gross insult to thrust this type of provision upon them.

This financial year, the Country Fire Authority will spend a record sum on fire protection. Its funds from the Budget and from insurance companies have increased substantially. This will benefit the authority and the State. The authority will spend the extra money wisely and well and will look after the State as it has done in the past. It does not need stupid regulations from this bung Government.

Mr. TREWIN (Benalla).—The Bill has three main purposes, which are—

(*a*) to enable compensation to be paid to volunteer firemen for injuries sustained whilst giving assistance to any person or protecting any property involved in any accident or emergency not connected with the suppression or prevention of fire;

(*b*) to provide power for the Governor in Council to prescribe forms for the purposes of the Country Fire Authority Act 1958; and

(*c*) to enable regulations to be made in respect of the prevention of fire in tobacco kilns.

It is pleasing to note that the Government is introducing the payment of compensation to volunteer firemen who are called out to assist in saving a person from injury or death and for many other incidents which are not involved with suppression or prevention of fire. A small boy may be trapped in a tree and as the fire brigade has the longest ladder in the town, naturally firemen are called out to effect a rescue. If a volunteer fireman is injured in these circumstances it is only reasonable that compensation should be paid. The provision relates only to a volunteer fireman who sustains an injury whilst undertaking a voluntary duty.

Although permits to burn off or for charcoal burning in the fire danger period have been issued over the years, apparently doubt has

arisen as to the validity of those documents. Accordingly, it is proposed to make appropriate adjustments to the relevant sections of the principal Act to overcome the doubts. The alteration will have little effect on the issuing of permits and I know of no reason for the proposal. However, I cannot dispute the Minister's wisdom or the Parliamentary Counsel's desire to make the provisions of the Act watertight to ensure that those who issue permits and the recipients of the permits are covered in every way.

The form of the permit is prescribed by regulation. A permit is issued by the proper officer in any municipality. He is usually the shire engineer, and he may add additional requirements to the permit. Either last year or the year before, following the introduction of daylight saving, it was necessary to alter the times appearing on the permits so that persons would not be burning off during the heat of the day. Other bodies and authorities such as the Country Roads Board, the State Electricity Commission, and sewerage authorities can also issue permits. The officers who issue the permits also have the power to impose additional conditions.

The Divisional Engineer of the Country Roads Board issues permits to allow fire breaks to be burned along the south side of the Hume Highway and to remove serious fire hazards. The Hume Highway is probably the busiest in the State and carries all types of motor traffic. Residents and farmers on the south side dread the possibility of a fire starting by accident—they trust not by design—and burning into the low hills before reaching the Great Dividing Range south of the highway.

The Country Roads Board has changed the conditions of the permits in that it is now permissibe to burn only up to 20 feet from a guide post on the side of the road. About three years ago, the permit enabled the local fire brigade to burn almost to the edge of the roadway and this was considered adequate in the circumstances. Conservationists have brought pressure to bear on the divisional engineer, and the power to clear the fire hazard right up to the highway has now been taken away from the fire brigade. Although discussions are currently in progress in an endeavour to rectify the position, undoubtedly the Chief Secretary will receive a communication from the local fire brigade stating its wishes. The conditions on the permit should enable all fire hazards to be adequately cleared and thus provide protection for both landholders and State forests on the south side of the highway.

Clause 5 will enable regulations to be made concerning the operation of tobacco kilns. The honorable member for Kara Kara referred to the need for charcoal burners to obtain permits under the present Act, but, I suggest that there is no precedent for the introduction of regulations to cover tobacco growers.

As tobacco growers will now be embraced under regulations made pursuant to the Country Fire Authority Act, I ask the Chief Secretary to make available copies of the proposed regulations so that the tobacco growers can understand what is proposed and take what they consider to be reasonable fire precautions in their tobacco kilns.

Tobacco is a primary product which is processed on the farm. It is cured in a 12 feet by 15 feet building which is approximately 20 feet high. It is usually constructed of timber and corrugated iron. Racks are placed in the building and the tobacco leaf is tied in bunches to a wooden stick and placed on the racks. The kiln is then charged and ready to be used for curing. Up to 2 tons of tobacco can be cured in one kiln.

The leaf is green when it is tied and the string is damp. In the curing process, the leaf shrinks and the string stretches which means it may be possible for a leaf to fall on

to the floor and cause a fire. Previously, a wood fire was set up outside the kiln and heated air pumped into the building. With this system, there was no danger of the leaf causing a fire. The modern system uses oil burners inside the kiln; the heat rises from the floor and cures the tobacco. There is a danger that a leaf will fall on to a burner but the tobacco growers protect themselves against this problem.

Although in five years just over 70 fires have been started by tobacco kilns, with the thousands of burners and hundreds of kilns, the number of outbreaks is not so great. Naturally, the growers take precautions in their own interests. It is almost impossible to obtain an insurance cover for a kiln because most insurance companies will not take it on. All the tobacco growers recognize that prevention is better than cure and they take every opportunity to protect themselves from fires during the curing process.

Despite the occurrence of 70-odd fires, I advise the honorable member for Kara Kara that not one fire has reached adjoining properties or moved outside the isolated area in which a kiln is established. Many of the fires have occurred at night when the danger of fire is less severe. Invariably, tobacco farms are situated close to the King, Ovens and other rivers in north-eastern Victoria and therefore the danger of the fire getting out of hand and damaging the countryside is almost non-existent.

Other property has not been damaged and that is why I suggest that the Government should not be too hard on the tobacco growers because their kilns do not operate like the charcoal burners which are used outside under very different conditions. I seek an assurance from the Chief Secretary for regulations which will be effective for regulating and controlling the use of buildings and appliances and the storage of fuel. I do not think the tobacco growers will reject a reasonable regulation for the storage of fuel. Fuel cannot be stored satisfactorily underground because if it is put underground, a pressure pump is necessary to inject the oil through the burner. This must not happen. The oil containers are approximately 4 to 8 feet above ground level and the flow of oil is not under pressure. All oil burners are placed several feet away from the kiln and they are fitted with a tap so that the oil can be turned off. If a fire occurs at the kiln the first person to reach the fire turns off the oil and therefore the fire is not supplied with added fuel.

Regarding the control of fire-fighting appliances, wet or dry extinguishers are available on the market today. The Country Fire Authority does not recommend a certain brand of fire extinguisher but there are several suitable types available. As honorable members will be aware, both dry and wet chemicals are used in fire extinguishers. Dry extinguishers are used in fires involving electrical appliances; in other instances wet extinguishers are used.

Tobacco kilns are used for curing tobacco in winter and for storing small farm equipment in summer. Sometimes tobacco must be reconditioned when it is taken from the kiln. Tobacco dries out quickly and, to facilitate its handling, moist air is provided in one form or another—usually through steam—and the tobacco becomes pliable like a piece of rag. The tobacco is then handled in the grading sheds. The sheds are used for the curing and reconditioning of the tobacco leaf, and this is usually done in January, February and March. The tobacco dries out very rapidly and cannot be handled again until the rains come in May or June when it is graded. At the most, the tobacco is in the sheds for five or six months. The sheds are used as part of the farm area. The tobacco growers do not want the sheds to become subjected to regulations. No danger is

involved in the reconditioning process—it is present only during the curing. I know the Minister will understand the point I am making and will appreciate that the tobacco growers ought to be consulted before the regulations are prescribed.

Mr. BURGIN (Polwarth).—I congratulate the Chief Secretary on introducing this Bill. Approximately eighteen months ago, an opinion was given that volunteer firemen who were injured were perhaps not entitled to instant compensation unless they were engaged on a natural training exercise, burning-off operations or fighting a fire. Since then, a tremendous amount of work has been done in an endeavour to formulate this Bill.

Mr. CURNOW.—Why has it taken so long?

Mr. BURGIN.—Problems have been encountered because within the Country Fire Authority there are two schools of thought on the matter. One school of thought considers that it would be wrong for the Country Fire Authority to become involved in straight-out rescue work. I disagree with that opinion. I am pleased that the Chief Secretary has accepted the alternative point of view because there is a wonderful disciplined body of volunteer firemen in the country who are dedicated to the work they are doing. There are massive quantities of equipment throughout the country areas and in many cases the equipment of the Country Fire Authority is the only equipment available for rescue work. A small band of people in the Port Campbell area have formed a cliff rescue squad and made many dangerous rescues on the cliffs around the coastline. The Country Fire Authority unit has always been used as a base radio to communicate with the nearest doctor.

On occasion, a fire brigade has been called to attend an accident on one of the highways because of the danger of a fire. If during the past eighteen months a fire unit attended a highway accident from which a fire did not eventuate and one of the fire fighters was injured, on the strength of the opinion to which I referred, he would not receive compensation.

Mr. CURNOW.—That is wrong because a person involved with the prevention of fires is covered, and work of the type to which you referred is regarded as prevention.

Mr. BURGIN.—If no fire occurred, there would be nothing to prevent. There is a legal doubt on that point and while the doubt exists it would be wrong to subject volunteer firemen to the risk. The Bill provides for Country Fire Authority volunteers to work on any type of emergency that occurs in country areas. As soon as the Bill is passed by Parliament it will ensure that whatever contingency arises these people will be covered for injury. This should always have been the case. There should be no argument about that.

The second proposal in the Bill was considered necessary, again because of a doubt on the legal aspects of the permit system. There appears to be no major alteration to the wording of the relevant section and I accept that it is simply intended to make the permit system legal. The honorable member for Benalla, who is much better informed on the tobacco industry than I am, has explained it fully. I would not attempt to add to his remarks. I accept what the honorable member for Benalla has said and I ask the Minister to closely examine the points he has raised.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was read a second time and committed.

Clauses 1 to 4 were agreed to.

Clause 5 (Amendment of No. 6228 s. 110 (1)).

Mr. ROSSITER (Chief Secretary).—The honorable member for Benalla has commented on the ramifications

of clause 5. He is an expert, who knows the area concerned. He has lived all his life in a primary producing area.

Mr. WILTON.—What is an expert?

Mr. ROSSITER.—I am endeavouring to define one. The honorable member for Benalla realizes the intricacies of the tobacco industry. I accept his remarks as an indication that some of the ramifications of the regulations should be examined before they are referred to the Governor in Council and are promulgated. I assure the honorable member that the Country Fire Authority and the Chief Secretary's Department will have discussions with the tobacco growing industry on the regulations that are necessary to prevent fires. The only reason why the regulations have been provided for in the Bill is to prevent damage to life and property in matters that may or may not be within the control of the tobacco grower or the industry.

I do not believe danger exists in the tobacco reconditioning sheds but the matter will be discussed with the industry when the regulations are being formulated.

Mr. TREWIN (Benalla).—I thank the Minister for his comments and his assurance that tobacco growers will be afforded the opportunity of looking at the regulations before they are placed before the Governor in Council. The industry will doubtless appreciate that some control will be necessary. I am sure that representatives of the industry will be prepared to meet the Country Fire Authority, the State Electricity Commission and the Chief Secretary's Department to consider the matter. Over many years the industry has been able to adopt good preventive measures. As a result a fire from a kiln has never devastated the countryside. This indicates that the kilns are located in areas where the danger of fire spreading is almost non-existent. I thank the Minister for his assurances.

The clause was agreed to.

The Bill was reported to the House without amendment, and passed through its remaining stages.

CO-OPERATIVE HOUSING SOCIETIES (AMENDMENT) BILL.

The debate (adjourned from October 11) on the motion of Mr. Dunstan (Minister of Public Works) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

Mr. EDMUNDS (Moonee Ponds).—This Bill has been transmitted from another place where it was adequately debated. It makes two amendments to the Co-operative Housing Societies Act. It substitutes as the nominee on the Co-operative Housing Advisory Committee a representative of the Victorian Division of the Building Societies Institute Incorporated in lieu of a representative of the Institute of Building and Housing Societies Secretaries (Aust.), who is mentioned in paragraph (*f*) of sub-section (2) of section 72 of the principal Act. The Bill also protects the prior appointment of any member on the Co-operative Housing Advisory Committee who may be affected by the change of name of the nominating organization. The Bill further increases from $11,500 to $13,500 the limit for which the Treasurer can indemnify a society against loss.

I am surprised that the introduction of the Bill was used by the Minister of Public Works, who was handling it on behalf of the Minister of Housing, to point out what were, in his opinion, deficiencies in the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement, when the House had not seen the agreement. All that honorable members knew of the agreement was gleaned from a number of press statements designed to confuse the public at large. The Minister of Public Works even went to the extent of saying, at the end of his second-reading speech, when referring to

the means test applied to applicants for loans from co-operative housing societies—

> ... but obviously as the whole agreement is orientated against home ownership this must have been its only reason and I believe co-operative housing must suffer accordingly.

I throw that statement back to the Government because it does not adequately describe the agreement, which will be debated later in the proceedings today. I hope then to be able to adduce more evidence on that than I can within the confines of this Bill.

The Opposition is not opposing the measure because it is a relatively small series of amendments. The Government is taking the opportunity of increasing the indemnified advance that a society may make. A long time ago when funds were first allocated from the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement to co-operative societies, there was considerable opposition from the Liberal Government of the day to the proposal. The Government asserted that the money which the co-operative societies were offering to their members ought to have been obtained on the open market and it resisted the proposition that money made available by the Commonwealth Government to the State Government be allocated to co-operative societies.

The wheel has turned full circle and the Government is now a defender of the policy of making this money available to co-operative societies; so much so that all sorts of propositions have been put forward and decisions made about the agreement that is currently to be approved by this Parliament. I shall have more to say about that at a more opportune time. The Opposition knows of no reason why the passage of this measure through the House should be delayed.

Mr. HANN (Rodney).—The Country Party supports the amendments to the Co-operative Housing Societies Act. As was pointed out by the honorable member for Moonee Ponds, the Bill makes provision for the change of the name of the Institute of Building and Housing Societies Secretaries (Aust.) to the Victorian Division of the Building Societies Institute Incorporated so that the society can still be represented on the Co-operative Housing Advisory Committee. It also makes changes to the indemnity provisions contained in section 76 of the principal Act.

By section 76, the Government undertakes to guarantee payment of advances made by co-operative housing societies in the event of the loans not being repaid by the borrowers provided that the loss is not in excess of 80 per cent of the valuation of the security. It is significant that over the years the co-operative housing societies have made only five claims under this scheme. This is a relatively small number when compared with the number of loans which have been settled. The advance limits currently fixed are $10,000 for advances generally and $11,500 for members with larger families. The amount is to be increased to $13,500.

It is interesting to note the increases which have occurred in building costs and which were referred to in an article in the *Herald* yesterday. I realize I got into some difficulty yesterday afternoon in raising this matter in the House but there has been an increase of 13 per cent in the cost of material for houses in Victoria over the past twelve months. There has also been an increase in the cost of labour during that period. The article states that costs have increased to cover the inflation present in the community. The proposed increase in the advance limit to $13,500 in actual fact just meets the increased costs due to inflation and this is an unfortunate state of affairs.

I am not criticizing the Government for this unfortunate state of affairs. The Government will appreciate that it is particularly hard for

young people to purchase homes because of the enormous increases in housing costs in the past few years. Just how the Government will overcome these problems is exercising the minds of members of the Victorian Parliament and of the national Parliament. I notice that the Federal Government is calling for a conference later in November with a view to trying to formulate a national policy to reduce the cost of homes for people in Australia. Mr. Johnson, the Federal Minister for Housing, is reported in an article appearing in the *Herald* last night as having said—

> The need for a national approach to reduce costs and at the same time set standards of safety, health and amenity in housing is urgent. The scope for saving is immense.

It has been estimated that uniformity in housing regulations could reduce housing costs in Australia by 6 per cent a year, which represents a potential saving of $125 million a year. It is hoped that uniform regulations can be introduced and that other measures can be taken to reduce the enormous costs of housing in Australia.

The situation is being reached—I say this as a young man—where many young people will not be able to buy homes in the next few years. In fact, that stage may have been reached already, particularly because of the high interest rates now being imposed on the community.

One wonders about the intention of the Government to reduce the pressures on the building industry. It is the young people in the community who are doing their best to build this country and to take their place in the community, but they are forced to live in sub-standard dwellings, in flats and over-crowded conditions because of the enormous pressures on the home building market.

I hope the State Government and the national Government will give consideration to introducing measures to reduce the cost of home building and to help solve these problems. The Country Party supports the Bill and hopes the Government will continue to look for ways and means to help young people to obtain their own homes.

Mr. LOXTON (Prahran).—I preface my remarks by saying that the name of the game was once home-ownership but now, because of the activities of the Federal Labor Government, it is home-ownership under great hardship.

I support the Bill, but I have some severe criticisms of it. Basically, the Bill provides for a maximum advance by co-operative societies of $13,500 for the purchase of a home. The prospective owner can have no interest in any other home. The interest rate is 5 per cent and the size of the home is limited to fifteen squares. It is important to realize that anybody accepting an advance of $13,500 is committed to a monthly repayment of $79.65 just to service the advance and nothing else.

At this stage, I believe there is a mistake in the second-reading notes, and I shall prove my contention. At the bottom of page 908 of *Hansard*, the Minister of Public Works in his second-reading speech was reported as having said—

> Clause 3 reflects the new limit of $13,500 to be applied to indemnified advances. As that figure is a substantial increase on the previous limit and requires an income of $80 per week, excluding overtime, to service the advance . . .

I need not read any further. I believe an income of $80 a week is totally inadequate—to service a loan repayment of $79.65 a month. I will now prove why the statement by the Minister is incorrect. According to the regulations and the Registrar of Co-operative Housing Societies there is an epitome of the advance form which clearly indicates what is to happen.

The advance requires a repayment of $79.65 a month, or $18.38 a week, to which must be added an allowance of $3 a week for rates, taxes, insurances and maintenance.

As the income must not exceed 25 per cent of the outgoings of a member, the amount of $21.38 is multiplied by four, giving a total of $85.52.

No board of directors is permitted to make an advance to a member when that amount exceeds his weekly salary. My point is that a person who asks for maximum finance of $13,500 is limited at one end to a salary of $85.52, and at the other end is limited by the Federal Government to $100, which must include overtime. That is a ridiculous situation.

Mr. EDMUNDS.—Vote against it.

Mr. LOXTON.—We cannot vote against it because the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement specifies a maximum of $100.

Mr. EDMUNDS (Moonee Ponds).—I rise to a point of order. The honorable member for Prahran is now criticizing the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement, which has not yet been brought before the House. I cannot see how it can be related to this amending Bill.

Mr. MACLELLAN (Gippsland West).—I speak to the point of order. I have been listening carefully to the honorable member for Prahran, and he has not been criticizing. The honorable member has been using the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement to illustrate part of his argument, but in that argument he has not been criticizing other than to say that he cannot vote against the Bill because it includes part of the agreement. The honorable member for Moonee Ponds is using the word "criticizing" in the sense that the agreement has been under attack. It has not been under attack by the honorable member for Prahran.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. K. H. Wheeler).—Page 909 of *Hansard* of 11th October of this year refers to Commonwealth legislation incorporating the terms of the new Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement. The honorable member for Prahran must be permitted to make some reference to the agreement in passing but he may not canvass his argument on that issue continually or at length.

Mr. LOXTON (Prahran).—Thank you for your guidance, Mr. Speaker. I do not propose to canvass that argument further. I have supporting evidence in the report of the president of the Federation of Co-operative Housing Societies of Victoria which states—

> We do have difficulty with certain aspects of the agreement.

I did not say that—they are the remarks of the president of the Federation of Co-operative Housing Societies of Victoria, who went on to say—

> The $100 including overtime income limit is unfair when the Housing Commission figure of $90 excluding overtime is taken into account.

No honorable member could deny that I have a genuine interest in co-operative housing societies. I have been associated with that movement virtually since its introduction into Victoria. Since I have been a member of Parliament I have made genuine endeavours to assist anybody and everybody who has wanted to obtain co-operative housing society finance. Members of my party will agree that I have been a fighter for the lifting of the base amount that a person can earn to become a member of a co-operative housing society because, even at $85 a week, in this day and age, unless a person has been lucky, or has won Tattersall's, he would have extreme difficulty in repaying his loan.

The Housing Commission, the co-operative housing society movement, the State Savings Bank and the Crédit Foncier, are so close that the societies are in real difficulties. I am associated with a group of societies which in twenty years have received from the Home Builders Account and from the Commonwealth Bank —I shall say more about that in a moment—the sum of $3·075 million. During that time and with the inclusion of the amount that will be received from the Home Builders

Account this financial year, the group with which I am associated has been able to service 409 members.

In a period from the start of those societies to the present day, 124 members have moved out so at present there are 285 members currently under mortgage and of that number 51 or 16 per cent are in arrears. The figures include people who, back in the old days, received an advance of $4,800. The area of repayment is now $13,000 and if the breadwinner is out of work for a month or two months he is "looking down the barrel" of $160 in arrears. This could almost break a young man today. This is an area in which co-operative housing societies must be extremely careful in their choice of applicants.

I have the greatest sympathy for these people. I shall illustrate several applications that have come to me in recent times. One was from a very young man and his wife. Both are employed at this stage and the husband's income is $90. His contract for the purchase of a house and land is $18,149. He has savings of $4,649 and he will receive a loan of $13,500. It is nice and clean; all he has to do every month is to make a repayment of $79.65.

Mr. WILTON.—How many years has the restriction been operating?

Mr. LOXTON.—Perhaps the honorable member for Broadmeadows did not hear me.

Mr. WILTON.—I heard you all right! It is the greatest lot of tripe that I have ever heard. For how long have the restrictions applied?

Mr. LOXTON.—As I indicated earlier, I have resisted the restriction on behalf of the people interested in co-operative housing. Now we are aided and abetted by the Commonwealth Labor Government which has fixed a maximum income of $100 for co-operative housing societies—for the real triers, the people who believe in their own individuality, who may or may not want to go to Doveton to buy their own homes. The Housing Commission limit can be $90 plus $20 overtime. The State Government will give tenants the opportunity of buying homes on no deposit. Before the honorable member for Broadmeadows says anything about that, I point out that 78,000 homes have been sold through the co-operative housing societies and half as many have been sold to willing buyers in Housing Commission homes.

I instance another young man who has contracted for $19,900. He has a loan of $13,500 and a second mortgage of $2,500. He has savings of $3,911. He is already committed for $79.65 a month but he is also committed for the repayment of the second mortgage which, on an interest rate of 8 per cent, is $4 a week. Before I forget it, the Commonwealth Labor Government has "knocked" the $750 home advance!

Mr. EDMUNDS.—It did not.

Mr. LOXTON.—It has, and it proposed an income tax deduction. I did not see that in the Budget. The Federal Government has also increased interest charges but not on the Home Builders Account at 5 per cent. I am associated with two co-operative housing societies under the control of the Commonwealth Savings Bank and that bank wrote a polite letter recently saying that, as from 1st October, the interest for two of the societies would be increased to 7·25 per cent. This is an amazing piece of strategy.

Mr. EDMUNDS.—What was the rate of interest before?

Mr. LOXTON.—The interest has increased by 1 per cent. I can understand the Commonwealth saying, "In the ultimate interest of the home-owner, we will make money harder to get now and we will increase the interest rate." But these societies have been operating for fifteen years and eight years respectively. This will not make money tight; it will only give the Commonwealth Savings Bank an extra

1 per cent interest rate for the remainder of the terms of the societies.

I was interested to hear the honorable member for Moonee Ponds comment that at an early stage, this Government did not want portion of the money that would be provided for State housing. Of course this Government wanted it and when the Commonwealth Government wanted to cut back the amount recently, the Victorian Minister of Housing fought strenuously to retain it. Liberal Party members, particularly myself, will continue to urge to have the weekly income limit increased to permit a member of a co-operative housing society to obtain an advance. At the same time I hope the Commonwealth Government will look realistically at the problems that can befall young people in the community in being granted an advance that requires repayment of $79.65 a month. Taking into account the purchase of a car, furniture and other necessary household items, hospital benefits contributions, and the baby, when it comes along, I do not believe people can manage on a maximum of $85.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was read a second time, and passed through its remaining stages.

HOUSING (COMMONWEALTH-STATE AGREEMENT) BILL.

The debate (adjourned from October 23) on the motion of Mr. Meagher (Minister of Transport) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

Mr. EDMUNDS (Moonee Ponds).—This Bill to ratify and approve a housing agreement is probably one of the most important measures that the Parliament is being asked to debate and give its sanction to during the current sessional period. Since 1945 there have been Commonwealth-State Housing Agreements. The first agreement extended from 1945 until 1956, and further agreements were entered into in 1961 and 1966. Almost at the termination of the 1966 agreement a proposition was put by the then Liberal-Country Party coalition Federal Government to extend the agreement for a further two years.

The House now has before it an agreement negotiated between all the States and the Commonwealth to run for a further five years. During the negotiations, the Opposition in the Victorian Parliament has been at a distinct disadvantage because the negotiations were used in an unorthodox manner by the Minister of Housing to ingratiate himself with his colleagues, to confuse the public and to distort the facts. Whenever the Opposition attempted to refute any of these allegations, it was denied space in the media. Therefore, the public believes, with the connivance of the Government, that the new agreement is a complex document.

Mr. ROSS-EDWARDS.—What did the Government say that was wrong?

Mr. EDMUNDS.—I am giving only a sketchy outline. I shall go into the manner in detail for the benefit of the Leader of the Country Party and his colleagues.

The second-reading speech of the Minister of Transport is an illuminating document. It certainly was not written by the Minister of Transport, who was speaking on behalf of his colleague in another place.

Mr. MEAGHER.—Yes, it was.

Mr. EDMUNDS.—I am disappointed at the response to that statement, because the Minister admits he wrote the speech.

Mr. ROSS-EDWARDS.—The honorable member said that the Minister did not write the speech.

Mr. EDMUNDS.—I said I did not think he did, and the Minister, by interjection, said that he did. I am disappointed in the speech presented to the Parliament, and I shall be interested to read the speech of the Minister of Housing in another place when the Bill is explained there.

In his second-reading speech, the Minister of Transport said that it was with the greatest reluctance that he moved that the Bill be read a second time.

Mr. ROSS-EDWARDS.—Honorable members have all read the second-reading speech.

Mr. EDMUNDS.—No, they have not. If the Leader of the Country Party is trying to prevent me from going through the second-reading speech in detail, he will be disappointed. The Minister continued —

> I make it clear at the outset that the document referred to in the Bill as an agreement is in fact not an agreement in the sense of being the result of reasoned acceptance between the parties.

I refute that allegation. The agreement was the result of a reasoned argument finally put into writing by all the negotiating parties, because negotiations are only a series of positions adopted by the parties who are attempting to hammer out a decision to their own advantage.

This measure creates circumstances which have not previously existed in Victoria. Bluntly, it provides that more money than ever before will be made available for welfare housing in Victoria. I have the facts to prove this. There will not be any rhetorical rubbish with respect to the facts which I will present to the House on what the measure will provide for the needy people of the community for the purchase and rental of homes.

Mr. STEPHEN.—Nonsense!

Mr. EDMUNDS.—The honorable member for Ballaarat South sits on the back bench sniping away, and has done so throughout the time that I have been a member of this House. If the honorable member investigated in detail the needs of his own constituents, he would discover that many people are waiting for Housing Commission accommodation, but the honorable member has done nothing to help them obtain it. He supports the Government, which has no interest in providing welfare housing.

The second-reading speech of the Minister proceeded —

> It is a dictated settlement of a very strongly disputed proposition....

These are strange words to hear from the Minister, because the Government need not accept the measure if it does not want to do so. The Government is not game not to accept the measure.

Mr. MACLELLAN.—What happens to the needy people if the measure is not accepted?

Mr. EDMUNDS.—The point is: What happens to the needy people if the Government substantiates all the rubbish contained in the second-reading speech? The honorable member for Gippsland West will have an opportunity of refuting any statement which he believes to be incorrect. The Minister's speech continued —

> Past housing agreements have been negotiated on the basis of the amounts required and the terms upon which loan moneys would be provided to the States which then applied these moneys as seemed best suited to their local needs.

An interesting set of circumstances exists, because about 17,000 people are waiting for Housing Commission homes in Victoria. The Government's record — which I will go through in detail — exhibits a lack of concern for welfare housing in the community. In the past the funds provided by the Commonwealth have been used for political purposes to promote housing in certain areas where little real need exists, to guarantee that seats are won by the Government. I have evidence of this and will present it to the House.

In the metropolitan area a person cannot rent a Housing Commission home; he can only offer to purchase a house as it becomes available. In the country a person can rent or buy a Housing Commission home built with funds supplied by the Commonwealth. Why is that so? What Government policy decision makes that a valid set of circumstances and why are applicants for welfare housing in metropolitan areas discriminated

against in this manner? Only the Minister and his colleagues in the Government can give the real answer to that question, and it is a political decision. The Government wanted to force people to go into high-rise flats in the inner-metropolitan area. That is how its building programme has been planned over the past ten years.

The Minister went on to say in his second-reading speech that he was concerned that the new agreement imposed upon this State and the other States the need to review rents annually. Can anybody deny that that is a reasonable proposition? Since 1955, whenever the Liberal Party Government has been re-elected to office, it has increased the rentals paid by tenants of Housing Commission homes immediately after the elections. The Government denies flatly prior to an election that it has considered raising rents. During the campaign prior to the election in May of this year the Government was asked whether Housing Commission rents would be raised, and the Minister evaded the question. As soon as the Government was re-elected, it raised the rentals of Housing Commission homes, in some cases imposing hardship on needy tenants.

If a person gets a 50 cents or $1 increase in his pension, there is an immediate increase of 50 cents in his rent, which negates by half the increase in the pension. That is the Government's record; every three years it substantially increases rents. Under the new agreement, the most reluctant Victorian Government will be forced to review rents every twelve months.

Mr. STEPHEN.—To increase them?

Mr. EDMUNDS.—To review them, whether or not there is a pension rise. The Minister concluded his dissertation on the Bill by referring to the interest rates in these words—

> This increased rate of interest would have placed an intolerable burden on the shoulders of low-income earners for whose benefit the money was ostensibly provided.

The Commonwealth Government's proposal is that housing authorities will obtain money at 4 per cent and housing co-operatives will pay 4½ per cent. The Victorian Government was reluctantly dragooned into accepting that proposition.

The Minister further said—

> This blackmail—

that is a strange word to use between two Government negotiators—

> was directed not directly at the Government of Victoria but at the unfortunate low-income earners who depend on Governments for assistance in obtaining accommodation.

Let us look at the facts before I proceed. How much money was provided by the McMahon Government for welfare housing in Victoria in the period 1972-73?

Mr. ROSS-EDWARDS.—What do you mean by "welfare housing"?

Mr. EDMUNDS.—Housing Commission type accommodation.

Mr. ROSS-EDWARDS.—That is not welfare accommodation.

Mr. EDMUNDS.—Evidently other honorable members are most anxious to join in this debate but I intend to exercise my right and to speak for some time on this measure. I have much more to say.

In 1972-73 the McMahon Government lent the Victorian Government $29·25 million for the Housing Commission and provided a further $11 million for co-operative housing in general. An amount of $400,000 was made available as an interest free grant to lower the interest rates for co-operative housing societies to about 5 per cent. These figures are freely available to the Government.

For the 1973-74 period, the Australian Government, which was elected with such an overwhelming response from the community, endeavoured to make up for the uselessness of the previous Government and its long era of lethargy. The Whitlam Government is providing $38·25 million—an additional amount of about $9 million in the first year

of the five-year period of the agreement—for welfare housing and Housing Commission type activity. I regret that the honorable member for Prahran, who is interested in co-operative housing, is not present to hear that the Commonwealth Government is providing about $16 million—an additional $5 million—for co-operative housing in Victoria in the first year of the agreement.

Mr. AUREL SMITH.—At what rate of interest?

Mr. EDMUNDS.—The rate is 4½ per cent, and borrowers are charged 5 per cent to cover the administrative costs of co-operative housing societies. Government supporters are prepared to listen to what their Canberra colleagues have said, but they do not like to have the facts about this generous agreement thrown back in their faces.

The Minister concluded his second-reading speech by saying—

> In these circumstances—

that is, the Whitlam Government making available an additional $9 million for Housing Commission accommodation and an extra $5 million for the co-operative housing movement—

> the Victorian Government's sense of responsibility to its disadvantaged constituents out-weighed its sense of outrage at the dictatorial attitude of the Commonwealth, and it accordingly presents this Bill to the House under duress.
>
> For these reasons I present the Bill for formal passage but without enthusiasm and with the deepest regret for its necessity.

Where is the compassion that the Minister of Transport displayed so often when he was Minister of Housing? He was prepared to read that speech to the House and now confesses that they are his own words, but the finance being provided by the Commonwealth under the terms of the agreement is far in excess of the amount the previous Government provided. Where is the justice in the honorable gentleman's statements? It is just further evidence of the Government's determined attempts to smother any efforts from Canberra under a smoke-screen of rhetorical nonsense for which there is no support.

The Minister for Housing in the Federal Parliament is reported in Commonwealth *Hansard* as having said, when introducing the Housing Agreement Bill—

> The Agreement provides that, during each of the five years commencing in 1973-74, the Commonwealth will make advances at low rates of interest to the States for welfare housing purposes. Unlike the housing assistance offered to the States by the former Government, we propose, and the Agreement provides, that our assistance will henceforth be directed towards those families and persons most in need of it.

Is that not a reasonable proposition? Where is the justification for the screeches of the Victorian Government when the negotiations commenced? The "bull in the china shop" from another place, the Minister of Housing, went to Canberra and caused all sorts of upheavals. When Government members came from Canberra to negotiations in Queen Street the Victorian Minister of Housing was not prepared to listen to reason or logic, as honorable members were informed in a previous debate. He expressed his own opinions which could not have been further removed from what is needed for people in necessitous circumstances.

Mr. THOMPSON.—Whose responsibility is housing under the Constitution?

Mr. EDMUNDS.—It is the responsibility of the States under the Constitution which has existed for 70-odd years. In the period leading up to the second world war it was fairly obvious that all States were having great difficulty in providing the basic needs of the community, and a Labor Government then introduced the first Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement.

Mr. THOMPSON.—After the Commonwealth pinched the States' taxing rights.

Mr. EDMUNDS.—It did not pinch them. It is amazing that a supposedly responsible Minister is suggesting that in the circumstances of the war-time emergency the Commonwealth pinched certain powers from the States. The fact is that the powers were ceded to the Commonwealth willingly by the States.

Mr. THOMPSON.—The Commonwealth was challenged in 1942 by three States in the High Court.

Mr. EDMUNDS.—Does the Minister suggest that the States should have argued the point between themselves and the Commonwealth while the war went on?

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr. A. T. Evans).—Order! The matter under discussion is not the Commonwealth-State taxing powers. The honorable member should confine his remarks to the Bill.

Mr. EDMUNDS.—I was making a passing reference to an interjection from the Deputy Premier who required some enlightenment because he seemed to have forgotten the circumstances that brought about the situation.

The ACTING SPEAKER.—I ask the honorable member to ignore interjections not related to the matter before the House.

Mr. EDMUNDS. — Government members were horribly nervous about the outcome of the last State elections. There were all sorts of nervous characters in the Government at the time, ranging from Ministers to back-benchers, and they were cheered up by the "bull-in-the-china-shop" attitude adopted by the Victorian Minister of Housing because he provided a vehicle by which the Government could use every opportunity to distort the Commonwealth's proposals. To test the accuracy of the statement one only has to look at some of the press releases at the time.

The Federal Minister for Housing stated that more than 93,000 separate families in the Commonwealth were awaiting welfare housing of some sort. Some persons wanted houses, others lone-person accommodation, and so on. That is the situation which faced the Commonwealth Government following its election. As it had inherited this difficulty, the Federal Minister said it was the new Government's intention to take positive steps to give needy persons in the community an opportunity as soon as practicable of obtaining their own homes and that the Government would provide more money generally for housing purposes. Additional finance was to be made available for rental home construction, and even the honorable member for Ballaarat South could not deny that there is a need in that area if he is aware of some of the rackets going on at present.

The need for private homes was recognized, as was the need for more homes for people in lower-income groups and for more rental accommodation. Announcements were made in the press following the proposal that there should be a new housing agreement. Initially, the Victorian Minister of Housing spoke of the many difficulties which the community was experiencing in obtaining housing and stated that if the Comonwealth Government provided finance, Housing Commission homes would be cheaper, rents would be lower, and it would be a good thing if the Commonwealth Government provided more money for welfare homes and housing.

The honorable gentleman made many silly statements on the subject, although I think he was expressing views which he genuinely held. In doing so, he confused himself and his colleagues. After reflection, he stated that he would fight the Commonwealth proposal in the High Court, if necessary.

In an article which appeared in the *Sun News-Pictorial* on 27th February of this year, following a meeting of the Cabinet——

Mr. BILLING.—Was this before or after the election?

Mr. EDMUNDS.—It was before; it was 27th February, 1973. The article stated—

Mr. Dickie said Australians had had their "D Day" when the Federal Labor Government was elected.

"We are now fighting on the beaches and we will be going out to win it," he said.

He believed the Federal Government's approach was a "bluff" and Victoria would test it in the High Court if necessary.

I remind the House that the Minister was talking about the Federal Government's proposal to provide more money for housing under more stringent conditions than had applied in the past. The article continued—

But Mr. Dickie said the terms would also mean:

Tenants would no longer be able to buy their homes.

The means test on income for applicants would be raised from $80 to $90 a week, but once the breadwinner earned more a family would have to find other housing.

The Housing Commission would not be allowed to build in country areas to help decentralized industry.

What rubbish that is.

Mr. THOMPSON.—It is right.

Mr. EDMUNDS.—It is not. I remind the House of what the Commonwealth Minister for Housing had to say in speaking about the proposed housing agreement in the Federal Parliament. It is recorded in Commonwealth *Hansard* of 16th May, 1973, as follows:—

I wish to make it perfectly clear, Mr. Speaker, that despite this emphasis there is no thought that a person who has been allocated accommodation by a State housing authority will be asked to vacate his dwellings if his income subsequently rises above the needs test level. There is absolutely no truth in statements that have been made to this effect.

Mr. THOMPSON.—Where is there a change?

Mr. EDMUNDS.—There is none. The Deputy Premier is attempting to confuse the House over this issue just as his colleague has attempted to confuse another place. I want to make it clear that where a person has gone into a Housing Commission home and his circumstances have changed to the extent that he is now much more affluent, he does not have to vacate his home. That simply does not happen. In some way it became a matter of public debate that the Commonwealth would change this situation and that people would be forced to leave their homes because they were receiving higher incomes. That is not so.

Mr. JONA.—The Commonwealth Minister withdrew that statement at the request of the Victorian Government.

Mr. EDMUNDS.—The Victorian Government is a joke.

Mr. STEPHEN.—The Federal Minister changed his mind, and the honorable member knows it.

Mr. THOMPSON.—He somersaulted.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr. A. T. Evans).—Order! I invite members on the Government side of the House to refrain from interjecting. They will have an opportunity later of contributing to the debate.

Mr. EDMUNDS. — Government supporters are prepared to use the forms of the House to prevent me from referring to the facts of the matter. It is merely a move to cover up their ineptitude.

During the last election campaign, a pamphlet was distributed in Housing Commission areas in the Dandenong electorate. It was authorized by J. Crayling of Noble Park, printed by News Today Publications of Dandenong, and stated, *inter alia*—

URGENT WARNING TO HOUSING COMMISSION RESIDENTS:

The right of every Victorian to own his own home is a major election issue.

80 per cent of all Victorians are home-owners! The highest percentage in the world!

Under Liberal Government 33,000 Housing Commission tenants have become home owners.

The Liberals encourage home ownership!

This policy is under threat from Canberra and Victorian Labor!

. . . . . .

There are three vital issues for Housing Commission residents—

1. Labor's Federal Housing Minister Johnson has said that the sale of Housing Commission homes will be "severely

restricted if not entirely prohibited". The Hamer Government rejects this policy and will help you buy your home on no deposit.

2. Labor's policy of no home ownership for commission residents leaves your family unprotected. Under the Liberal Government the purchaser of a Commission home can ensure that his widow gets the home free from debt through the death benefit scheme.

3. Labor's Mr. Johnson wants to evict Housing Commission tenants whose incomes rise above the means test. The Liberals won't have a bar of this. They believe you have the right to better yourself and increase your income without fear of eviction!

Mr. JONA.—Where does Labor Party policy differ from that?

Mr. EDMUNDS.—I admire the courage of the Secretary of the Cabinet. He does not know the facts but he still makes statements. Those pamphlets were designed to deceive the public; they were not based on fact.

Mr. THOMPSON.—They were based on fact.

Mr. EDMUNDS.—They were not, because at that time negotiations were in train. The Government is attempting to cover up the ineptitude of the State's negotiators. It is obvious that the Secretary of the Cabinet does not understand the agreement. The honorable member looked to see who signed the agreement. It was "R. J. Hamer" and the witness to his signature was "S. W. Kelleway". The Minister of Housing did not sign it. The Minister said that he would not sign it, but the signing of the agreement was for the Premier and not for the negotiator who engaged in all kinds of posturing but had no final say on whether the agreement was to be signed. He was still arguing about the merits and demerits of the agreement when the Premier announced that he had signed it. This followed the Liberal Government's posture that negotiations between the Commonwealth and the State, at which a housing agreement was being hammered out, were being held.

All of the statements that have been made by the Minister of Housing have only been part of an exercise in semantics. This situation has arisen, largely, from the actions of the previous Federal Minister for Housing, Mr. Kevin Cairns, who decided that there would be no further five-year agreements and that in future agreements would be for two years.

Mr. JONA.—That was by negotiation, and not by dictation.

Mr. EDMUNDS.—That is so; there was no dictation. There were supposed to be delicate negotiations between gentlemen of the Commonwealth and gentlemen of the States, and the matter was to be resolved without the ugliness that had attended past negotiations. Let us examine how these people reacted when they engaged in negotiating the two-year agreement. Under the banner headline, "Angry State Ministers Plan Fight in Canberra," an article in the *Sunday Australian* of 22nd August, 1971, stated—

The Victorian Housing Minister, Mr. Meagher, has accused the Federal Government of deceit in its Budget provisions for housing assistance for the States.

Mr. Meagher's accusation sets the tone for a hostile confrontation between the Commonwealth Housing Minister, Mr. Cairns, and State Ministers in Canberra on Friday.

That was the colleague of the Secretary of the Cabinet, now the Minister of Transport, speaking about his colleague in Canberra. The Secretary of the Cabinet said that those negotiations were more satisfactory than the ones which took place recently. For the edification of the Secretary of the Cabinet I direct attention to a report in the *Age* of 19th August, 1971, which stated—

HOUSING PLAN BEWILDERS
VICTORIAN MINISTER

Victoria's Minister for Housing (Mr. Meagher) last night clashed with his Federal counterpart (Mr. Cairns) over Commonwealth plans to scrap the traditional Federal-State Housing Agreement.

Under the old scheme Canberra provided concessional loans to the States amounting to $683 million over the past five years for low-income housing and subsidies for loans to private home builders.

Mr. Meagher said his reaction to the new scheme—which involves outright grants to the States roughly equivalent to the value of the previous one per cent. interest concession—was one of "complete bewilderment".

The Minister did not understand what it was all about then, and I doubt whether Mr. Cairns understood what it was about, either. Mr. Cairns was wound up like clockwork by the Commonwealth Housing Department. There was great confusion in the community. The story about housing negotiations between a State Liberal Party Government and the Commonwealth Liberal Party Government being amicable and the agreements being satisfactory to both parties is a lie. That never occurred in the history of this Victorian Government. I direct attention to a report in the *Australian* of the 28th August, 1971, under the heading, "Ministers Split on Grants for Housing", which stated—

Commonwealth and State Housing Ministers yesterday failed to reach agreement in Canberra on new financial arrangements proposed in the Federal Budget.

Under the new arrangements the Commonwealth will no longer make advances at concessional interest rates to the States but instead will offer them direct grants.

"The State Minister made it clear that they needed time to consider the new propositions," the Federal Minister for Housing, Mr. Cairns, said.

. . . . . .

The Victorian Minister for Housing, Mr. Meagher, said that the Commonwealth proposals had been totally unacceptable to the States.

In what he described as a lively meeting Mr. Meagher said that the Commonwealth proposals had been arrived at without promised consultations with the States.

"The proposals were made in secret," he said.

The situation was different when the proposals were made early this year by the Commonwealth to the State. There is a continuing story of the Victorian Government's inept handling of negotiation with all Commonwealth Governments, irrespective of which party was in power. On the 28th September, 1971, at the time these press reports were appearing and confusing the real purpose of the negotiations of what were then the new proposals of the Commonwealth, I asked the Minister of Housing whether discussions had been completed for the new Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement. My question was—

Is it a fact that these arrangements have been concluded, and that Housing Commission rentals could rise because of the new financial arrangements?

In answer, the Minister of Housing, now the Minister of Transport, stated—

The last conference between Ministers of Housing of the States and of the Commonwealth was held last Friday week in Sydney. The attitude of the Commonwealth was that there was to be no new agreement, that there was to be no 1 per cent reduction of the interest rate for moneys raised for housing which would, in future, be lent at the long-term bond rate, but that, instead, there would be a Commonwealth grant of $2·75 million a year for five years, current for 30 years on each loan, and that these proposals were not negotiable.

The purpose of the grant was to lower the effective interest rate. The Minister went on to say—

If the State increases its loan raisings for housing because of population pressures or increased cost of housing, those increased raisings would be repayable at the higher rate of interest, whilst Commonwealth grants will remain at a fixed rate. Obviously, the State would be paying more for its money and accordingly the cost of housing must increase. On the other hand, if the bond rate were decreased in that time, the State would show a profit. Only the Commonwealth Government can say whether it is likely that the bond rate will increase, decrease, or remain static.

. . . . . .

At the moment, my feeling is that rents may rise unless the Commonwealth is good enough to reduce the long-term bond rate, in which case the existing rents may be held.

One of the difficulties facing the Opposition in this debate is that it must attempt to refute all the allegations made during the period of the negotiations leading up to the agreement set out in the schedule to the Bill. To do this, one must go back in time to show how this matter became confused in the minds of the

public, particularly as the Bill was not seen in detail until months after the negotiations started.

I intend to make a number of references to the schedule to the Bill because it contains the terms of the agreement. There is no other way to point out some of the provisions of this agreement which are better than those of previous agreements, and some of the provisions which were not included in previous agreements. In this way I will demonstrate that better opportunities will be provided for those in need of welfare-type housing and Housing Commission accommodation.

I direct attention to clause 12 of Schedule Six C to the Bill. The interest rates for the next five years are written into the schedule. For housing authority advances, the rate will be 4 per cent per annum, and for Home Builders Account advances the rate will be 4½ per cent. Previously, the interest was the bond rate, of 6 per cent or 7 per cent, but subsidies were paid to reduce the rate. Now, for the first time, the rate for the five-year period is specifically stated.

I next direct attention to Part IV. of Schedule Six C, which relates to housing authority advances. Clause 14 is a new provision and it sets out how the money can be used. Paragraph (*a*) of the clause states that it may be used—

> To meet the costs of acquisition and development of land primarily for residential purposes;

That spells out what has been accepted practice in the past. The clause continues—

> (*b*) to meet the cost of construction of dwellings;
>
> (*c*) to meet the cost of purchase and upgrading and renovations of dwellings, and of substantial improvements to its existing dwellings but not so as to include the cost of maintenance of any dwellings.

These provisions have been written into the agreement for the first time. The Minister of Housing can use this money for purposes which the Opposition has often advocated in this Parliament. In the past, there was doubt whether the Housing Commission had power to use this money to provide funds to the community to upgrade homes and dwellings. There are many thousands of sub-standard homes which will have to be pulled down if they are not renovated over the next 30 years.

Mr. MEAGHER.—But that relates only to Housing Commission houses, not to those owned by the general community. I direct attention to the word "its".

Mr. EDMUNDS.—From discussions with the people concerned, I understand that the funds can be used to purchase, update and renovate dwellings.

Mr. MEAGHER.—That is not what it means.

Mr. EDMUNDS.—I put a specific question to a senior officer of the Housing Commission who reads the provision as I read it; it gives power to purchase, upgrade, and renovate dwellings. How else can it be taken, except as giving power to buy a house, upgrade it, and offer it back to the public? I suggest that that is the intention of the Commonwealth Government. Paragraph (*d*) of clause 14 provides that the money may be used—

> subject to the approval of the Minister, to provide bridging finance for community amenities that are not the responsibility of the housing authority.

The Minister knows that, in the past, there was no reason why the Housing Commission could not have provided finance for that purpose but, until the past couple of years, it was most reluctant to do so. Anybody involved with a Housing Commission project knew that the commission remained aloof from community welfare projects. With the authority of the Government behind it, the Housing Commission said that this was the responsibility of municipalities. That may be true but, in the past, it was always possible for the Government to allow the commission to

provide these facilities from its own funds. It is now clearly stated that housing funds provided by the Commonwealth Government may be used to provide community amenities.

The sitting was suspended at 6.28 *p.m. until* 8.4 *p.m.*

Mr. EDMUNDS.—Prior to the suspension of the sitting I had demonstrated how the State Government had acted with duplicity in advising the media and the general public about the agreement between the Commonwealth and State Governments on the proposed new Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement. The responsible Victorian Ministers did not state all the facts associated with the agreement. I mentioned a couple of examples of new provisos and new initiatives which the Victorian Government had been most reluctant to ventilate or to publicize. It has acted in this way for the dubious reason that it wants to deceive the public about the real merits of the new agreement.

If honorable members examine the agreement carefully they will find that it is a most illuminating document. For the benefit of the Deputy Premier and the Leader of the Country Party, I shall cite where the agreement is better than previous agreements. In one aspect it is better to the tune of $9 million in its first year of operation. Under the previous agreement the Commonwealth Government provided $29·25 million for welfare housing whereas under the new agreement $38·25 million will be provided for this purpose. Under the McMahon Government, $11 million was provided for co-operative housing whereas the new agreement for 1973-74 allocates $16 million for this purpose. That is an important difference between the old and the new agreements. A great deal of public money will be used to help those people who are seriously disadvantaged and unable to obtain their own homes.

Government supporters who are so concerned about the provisos in the agreement will have the opportunity of voting against the Bill, but I confidently predict that as usual they will remain silent when it comes to the vote and that they will not call for a division. The Bill will proceed through the Parliament under its own impetus because it is a worth-while measure, despite the criticisms that have been offered by supposedly responsible Victorian Ministers. This Parliament is notorious for its conservatism about agreements.

Sub-clause (5) of clause 19 of the agreement contains a proviso which has not appeared in previous agreements and honorable members opposite are disappointed about it. Their Federal colleagues agreed to the proviso and undoubtedly they will also accept it. The sub-clause states—

> The State shall ensure that a purchaser of a family dwelling will not be entitled to dispose of the dwelling (except by release or resale to the housing authority of his interest in the dwelling) during the period of not less than five years after the date of sale and that after the expiration of that period a purchaser who proposes to sell a family dwelling may be required by the housing authority to offer to the housing authority the release or resale of his interest in the dwelling on the basis of the fair market value of the dwelling and the land on which it is built at the time of the offer.

Mr. ROSS-EDWARDS.—What is the virtue in that?

Mr. EDMUNDS.—It has been an unwritten rule that when the Housing Commission sells a house that has been built under the financial arrangements of previous agreements the restriction which has been spelt out in this agreement has applied. If the purchaser of the house wants to sell it within two years of buying it, he must sell it back to the housing authority.

Mr. ROSS-EDWARDS.—The honorable member means five years.

Mr. EDMUNDS.—I thank the Leader of the Country Party for his interjection because under the old arrangements the Government was

adamant that if a person wanted to sell a house after only two years, he had to sell it back to the authority. I agree that that is fair enough because the unit has been erected with public money at special rates of interest. If a person paid out his contract, he could dispose of the property in any way that he liked. Criticism had been levelled at that aspect because the system left itself wide open to nefarious activities. People wishing to buy a home have approached the occupier of Housing Commission houses saying that they could offer a better contract, that he would make a profit and be able to move out of the place. The honorable member for Broadmeadows has evidence of numerous instances of that type of activity.

The new agreement spells out what can and cannot be done with a dwelling. It contains much more equitable and worth-while terms in the public interest.

Mr. ROSS-EDWARDS.—It will create hardship.

Mr. EDMUNDS.—I do not agree with the Leader of the Country Party. The agreement will ensure that the purchaser of a Housing Commission home is not given a greater advantage than any other member of the community to provide himself with a home. The seriously disadvantaged in the community, the young families who enjoy only basic standards of living, will have an excellent opportunity of obtaining a home of their own. If their circumstances change, some responsible arrangement should be made so that they cannot make an undue profit from the sale of a commission home within a certain time. This proposed agreement spells out conditions that have not been spelt out before and the agreement is better for their inclusion.

A most important provision appears in paragraph (a) of clause 22 of the agreement. It states that, to the maximum extent reasonably practicable, dwellings built with housing authority advances shall be intermingled with dwellings privately constructed. In the past, the Government has been reluctant to accept this principle. Areas in Broadmeadows, Werribee and Paisley contain large developments of nothing but Housing Commission dwellings. As those honorable members who are interested in social welfare will know, the difficulty in these areas is that all the residents are on low incomes, and therefore their ability to provide their skills or surplus cash to assist in the provision of community facilities is restricted. Accordingly, in those areas children continue to be disadvantaged, and do not get the same opportunities as other children, and the parents cannot take advantage of the $1 for $1 subsidy schemes offered by the Government. It is clear that during the next five years under the agreement the Government must take cognizance of that clause. Paragraph (*b*) of clause 22 of the agreement provides—

> a State Housing Authority will acquire some blocks in areas developed or to be developed privately and will construct and let dwellings on those blocks.

As I envisaged, under the terms of the agreement which the Premier has signed, and which Parliament will ratify in the next day or two, the Minister of Housing will have to purchase land at auction, in common with the public, and land in subdivisions to ensure that some people who are eligible for Housing Commission accommodation will be housed in the subdivisions. That is good. It may improve the standard of the lower income earner and encourage other people in some of these new developments to take an interest in those who are less fortunate than themselves. I hope some supervision is exercised to ensure that the Government recognizes that proposal which is contained in the schedule to the Bill.

Finally, I refer to sub-clause (3) of clause 24 of the agreement. It has been said that the Minister of Housing had the agreement rammed down his neck. It has been emphasized by the Minister that

the Bill was presented to the House under duress as a result of the dictatorial attitude of the Commonwealth Government. However, the honorable gentleman overlooked sub-clause (3), which states—

At the initiative of the Minister and with the concurrence of the State Minister or Ministers concerned or at the request of the State Minister or Ministers concerned, the Minister may at any time—

that refers to the Commonwealth Minister for Housing, Mr. Johnson—

vary the needs test——

Mr. MEAGHER.—That is the point.

Mr. EDMUNDS.—This may be a facetious matter to the Government but it is serious to me. The Deputy Premier, who is snapping away, states that the previous agreements drawn up under a Liberal Government did contain this proviso but the present Minister of Housing says that he had this rammed down his throat.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. K. H. Wheeler).—Order! I am having difficulty in hearing the honorable member because there are too many interjections. Furthermore, if the honorable member addressed the Chair I would have a better opportunity of hearing him.

Mr. EDMUNDS.—Mr. Speaker, I have addressed the Chair throughout this debate. If I have offended you, Sir, by looking around to see where the disorderly interjections are coming from, I apologize. By a disorderly interjection, the Deputy Premier brought to my attention that the proviso to which I refer was not contained in previous agreements. For the information of honorable members I shall read the whole of sub-clause (3) of clause 24 of the agreement. It provides—

At the initiative of the Minister and with the concurrence of the State Minister or Ministers concerned or at the request of the State Minister or Ministers concerned the Minister may at any time vary the needs test provided for by sub-clause (1) of this clause either generally in respect of a State or States or specifically in relation to specified categories of persons or to localities or locations.

In the past the Government has by subterfuge avoided the provisions of the agreements to provide money for homes for executives of decentralized industries. An example that immediately comes to mind where the Government adopted this policy was the transfer of Franklin Caravans into the Ballarat area. That firm stated that it required a number of houses and claimed that the employees who would occupy the houses that the Housing Commission was asked to build would be at a certain wage level which would ensure that they were eligible for this accommodation. What has happened is simply that because of wage rises the employees are earning more than the maximum that is permitted under the old arrangement for them to be eligible for Housing Commission homes. Therefore, by arrangement, they were able to obtain the houses when they became available. The honorable member for Ballaarat South has been strangely silent.

Mr. STEPHEN.—Does the honorable member not approve of this arrangement?

Mr. EDMUNDS.—Of course I do! Even the most backward member of the Liberal Party would realize that arrangements must be elastic to enable this sort of thing to be done. According to the strict letter of the law the Government was not able to do this under the old arrangement. Under the new arrangement the provisions are negotiable with the Federal Minister. This will enable the Government, with its supposed decentralization programme, legally to use the Commonwealth allocation of money in the future. I have outlined certain matters sketchily because obviously with a Bill of such magnitude it is not possible to cover all the ground. I have not referred to the various clauses which will amend

the Housing Act in regard to the keeping of accounts, but these are basically machinery provisions.

I wish to refer to the Government's past activities in the housing field. A great song and dance has been made in the public media about the operation of the new arrangement for individuals who will receive the benefits of the new agreement. What are facts relating to the history of the Government in the provision of public housing? There are at least two former Ministers of Housing in this House. Honorable members are familiar with the difficulties with which the honorable gentlemen were confronted in the past owing to the niggardliness of the Liberal Government in Canberra in providing funds for public housing.

Mr. THOMPSON.—The Commonwealth Government is denying people the right to own their own homes.

Mr. EDMUNDS.—The myth about the right to own one's own home needs to be laid to rest. I presume this refers to the homes provided through funds under the Commonwealth–State Housing Agreement. It is interesting to consider how sensitive the Government, and particularly the Deputy Premier, has been on this question. Over the years the Government has built with the Commonwealth allocation fewer and fewer homes for sale to the public. Last year the Government provided for sale to the public a total of 1,505 houses. Next year 1,106 villa homes will be completed, of which 720 will be in the country. That is the smallest number of homes of this type provided in the State in the past ten years. The Government may attempt to explain this when one of its Ministers rises to rebut my arguments, but the figures I have quoted were provided by the Minister of Housing in answer to a question I asked on 30th October. My question was—

How many various units of accommodation were constructed in each of these years, and in this year to date, and what is the projection of constructions for this year?

In 1963-64 the Government, which is so concerned about home ownership, built 1,563 homes, and in 1971-72, it built 1,505 homes.

Mr. THOMPSON.—That is another point altogether.

Mr. EDMUNDS.—It is another point that the Minister does not like.

Mr. THOMPSON.—We did not restrict the sale of homes.

Mr. EDMUNDS.—I agree that the Government did not restrict the sale of homes; it just built fewer homes. It is easier to build fewer homes than it is to offer more homes for sale. The highest number of homes that this Government built and offered for sale to the public was in 1966-67, when 2,260 homes were built.

Mr. WILTON.—In 1955-56, more than 4,000 homes were built.

Mr. EDMUNDS.—I am reliably informed by the honorable member for Broadmeadows that more than 4,000 homes were built in 1955-56. By interjection the Deputy Premier is still harping like a school boy on whether his Government has built fewer homes for sale in the past year. The Government stands condemned for its attitude to public housing. It makes a great song and dance about providing homes for private ownership, but under the Liberal Government in this State fewer homes are being provided for home ownership than were provided in 1955. It is as simple as that.

It would be interesting to know how many people are demanding houses of this type. The Deputy Premier will become excited and say that the figures I have quoted do not represent facts and so on, but they were supplied by the Minister of Housing and I can only vouch for them in that context. On 30th October, of this year, I asked the Minister—

How many applicants were on the Housing Commission waiting lists for the various types of accommodation offered by the commission in the past ten years, including this year to date?

Unfortunately, the answer is not entirely relevant to the debate, but it is interesting to note that on 30th June, 1964, 10,718 people were waiting for Housing Commission accommodation. According to the answer supplied to me by the Minister of Housing, that is the smallest number on the commission's waiting list in the ten-year period. The answer is in *Hansard* for honorable members to read. It will be noted that during the same period the highest number of applications for Housing Commission accommodation was recorded on 30th June, 1970, when 17,182 names were on the waiting list for welfare accommodation. Up to 25th October, 1973, there were 16,428 applicants for this type of accommodation. That waiting list represents a lot of people in the community because family groups are involved. The Government does not refute that figure.

The Government's projected building programme is for the construction of more homes this year than last year, but only an extra 300 will be built. With conventional Housing Commission accommodation, that does not seem to be a large increase. From the figures I have been able to obtain, it is estimated that during 1973-74 the Government will construct 1,410 dwellings, including homes for elderly persons and families. That figure represents no more than 2,108 units to satisfy the 16,428 applicants for accommodation. Some of the remaining 14,320 applicants will have to wait at least ten years if the present building programme is maintained.

The Bill ratifying the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement will be passed because, despite the second-reading speech of the Minister of Transport and the views expressed by the honorable member for Ballaarat South, all Government supporters will finally vote for the Bill. However, the Government is still lagging miles behind with its building programme. I invite honorable members to consider the area represented by the honorable member for Ballaarat South where he contends there is a fairly substantial waiting list for accommodation. The latest figures provided by the Housing Commission indicate that there are 42 people waiting for lone male person and lone female person accommodation, and they have been waiting at least nine months.

Mr. STEPHEN.—Plans have been approved for the construction of 42 units.

Mr. EDMUNDS.—That will accommodate them, and I wager that the finance is being provided from Commonwealth funds. Five people have been waiting six months for pensioner-couple accommodation. One-bedroom accommodation for childless couples is requested by two persons, and there is a waiting period of twelve months. For a 2-bedroom house—that is for a family with one or two children of the same sex, according to the information I have been provided with—there are fourteen applicants and they have to wait four months. There are 24 persons waiting for a 3-bedroom house and the waiting time for that type of accommodation in the Ballarat area is six months.

I often wonder why the Ballarat area is so favourably possessed of this type of activity; in the city area 850 persons are waiting for lone-person accommodation. In the metropolitan area 7,158 families with one to four children and 350 families with five or more children are waiting for accommodation. The waiting period for a 3-bedroom house is three and a half years to four years in the metropolitan area and the applicants cannot obtain a house to rent—only one to purchase.

It seems that in drawing up priorities the Government sometimes is befogged with its desire to remain in office. However, the new agreement gets around the old machinations of the Government. The Whitlam Government received a mandate from the people on 2nd December,

1972, to do something about welfare housing, to get at the crux of the problem under which 93,000 people were waiting for basic housing in various communities of the Commonwealth. Even more people will be waiting now.

I do not want to delay the passage of the Bill because I believe it is an important measure—one of the most humane measures ever to come before this Parliament. Many Government supporters will want to shuffle about to substantiate what occurred in another place, but in the end they will vote for the Bill. The Opposition believes the Government has shown expertise in duplicity over this measure. Leading up to the election, the Government engaged in an exercise in semantics and did everything possible to confuse the public over what the Australian Government wanted to do in providing welfare housing. It even went to the length of allowing its candidates to tell deliberate lies about the measure. The honorable member for Ballaarat South does not like the words "deliberate lies" but the deliberate lies are there and are tabled for him to see. It is the same with the duplicity of this Government with respect to cheating.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. K. H. Wheeler).—Order! There is far too much conversation and interjection from the Government benches.

Mr. EDMUNDS.—A deliberate lie is contained in pamphlets placed in the letter boxes of Housing Commission tenants in the Dandenong area with the object of confusing and deceiving the tenants into voting for a candidate at the election.

Mr. THOMPSON.—Those statements were made by Mr. Johnson.

Mr. EDMUNDS.—Mr. Johnson did not make the statements. The document to which I refer contains deliberate lies in an attempt to confuse the people in the Dandenong area and induce them to vote for the Government candidate. The Government is not prepared to produce any evidence to substantiate the statements contained in the document. The honorable member was so concerned about this matter that he took it up with the Opposition shadow Minister of Housing, who happened to be myself.

Mr. BILLING (Heatherton).—I take a point of order that there are no officers within this Parliament known as shadow Ministers. The honorable member should be reminded that the Government does not acknowledge the position of shadow Minister.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. K. H. Wheeler).—Order! There is no point of order. I cannot allow interjections and conversations to continue on both sides of the House. Any honorable member is entitled to put his case to the House without the regular interjections that are coming at the moment.

Mr. EDMUNDS (Moonee Ponds).—Before the honorable member for Heatherton raised his point of order, I was informing the House that the honorable member for Dandenong was most concerned about the lies contained in a document supporting the Liberal Party candidate for the electorate of Dandenong. The document attempted to deceive the electors of the area and copies were placed in the letter boxes of Housing Commission tenants. I replied to my colleague, the honorable member for Dandenong, in these terms, which I consider relevant to this debate—

Dear Alan,

In reply to your request for comments on a Liberal sponsored leaflet distributed in the Dandenong area on election eve.

The leaflet alleges certain public housing matters, and from the most cursory examination it is apparent that it is a farrago of meaningless and baseless untruths founded on the imagination of certain supposed responsible persons in the Hamer Ministry.

There is no relevance whatsoever to the negotiations between the Federal Minister for Housing Mr. Len Johnson, and the Victorian Minister and the matter raised by the leaflet. The inventions and exaggeration of the leaflet have no bearing at all on the facts of these deliberations designed by the Labor Government to provide homes for persons in extreme circumstances.

All the allegations have been refuted repeatedly by Mr. Johnson and myself and the only positive matter that can be found in the document is the fact that it shows to what length some candidates will stoop in efforts to confuse the public at election time.

The Minister of Housing and the Government that supported him during the negotiation of the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement were deliberately attempting to confuse the public on the merit of the new agreement. The facts speak for themselves—I refer in particular to the funds provided in the first year for welfare housing and for co-operative housing. No honorable member in this Chamber or in another place will vote against the Bill.

The negotiations which led to the introduction of the measure have put to the test the sincerity and supposed concern of this lethargic and inept Administration to provide Housing Commission type of accommodation. The Government has been found wanting. Its Federal colleagues were reluctant to provide the necessary funds to catch up with the backlag of this type of accommodation. The present Federal Labor Government has now provided the funds, but the State Government still wishes to procrastinate about the agreement. The only positive action that the Government has taken concerning welfare housing since its re-election has been to increase rents. Thousands of needy Victorians are waiting for accommodation.

The speedy passage of this Bill will ensure that people will not have to wait as long as they have had to wait in the past. The provisions of the schedule contained in clause 6 will ensure that money is provided in those areas where welfare housing is most needed. The tactics of the negotiators on behalf of the Government in the negotiations have been a disgrace to this Parliament and to Victoria. I was incensed to read in the press about some of the facades deliberately maintained by the Minister of Housing. He attempted to squeeze the last ounce of publicity out of these negotiations before they had been concluded. I concede that it is a political trick and a device of politicians, but when one is dealing with 17,000 needy families one should adopt a more sensible attitude. Naturally, members of the Opposition commend the Bill and its schedule, which contains the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement, to the people of Victoria because they are positive in their attitude, and over the period of five years that this agreement will run it will ensure that those seeking welfare and co-operative housing will get a far better deal than they have ever had before.

Mr. ROSS-EDWARDS (Leader of the Country Party).—The Bill proposes to amend the Housing Act and to ratify the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement between the Commonwealth of Australia and the various States. One outstanding virtue of this amending Bill is that increased amounts of money will be allocated to the States for housing. In all fairness, that action must be commended because the amount of money made available has increased from $40 million to $54 million, which more than covers the rate of inflation and enables more houses to be built and the backlog of housing to be reduced.

It is disturbing that the honorable member for Moonee Ponds, who is the spokesman for housing for the Opposition, spoke at great length but did not refer to any deficiencies in this amending legislation. In all fairness to the Minister of Housing and his predecessors, two of whom are in this House, they had the courage to criticize their Federal colleagues in Canberra when they considered that Victoria was being unfairly treated. Members of the Country Party have had an obligation to criticize the Federal Government whether it was formed by the Australian Labor Party, the

Country Party or the Liberal Party. We are all members of the Victorian Parliament and to do nothing but praise this agreement is not in the interests of the State and in not criticizing it a front-bench member of the Opposition falls far short of his responsibilities.

Various matters have been put in writing which in the past were planks of the Government's platform. Perhaps some of these matters had to be faced. It could be dangerous for too many circumstances to be detailed. A certain amount of latitude and discretion should be allowed in deciding particular cases, especially when a person leaving an area or his employment has to sell his home. The Housing Commission has a policy in this regard. All honorable members have had occasion to go to the Minister of Housing with particular cases and, on occasion, their representations have been acceded to. Once a matter has been put in writing, it is binding and discretion goes by the board. I suggest to members of the Opposition that in future their representations will be refused because the Minister of Housing will say, "I am bound by the agreement; I have no discretion; it is Government policy".

Mr. WILKES.—The Government's policy is high-rise slums.

Mr. ROSS-EDWARDS.—I have been an outspoken critic of high-rise flats; I am glad that no more will be built. I have spoken at length on the mistakes of this Government. I could spend much time saying how many people are waiting for Housing Commission homes.

Mr. EDMUNDS.—Are they not important?

Mr. ROSS-EDWARDS.—They are important. As a result of this agreement between the Commonwealth Government and the States, a certain amount of money will be allocated for the building of homes.

Mr. WILKES.—The Leader of the Country Party has previously said that other Ministers were prepared to stand up to the Federal Government.

Mr. ROSS-EDWARDS.—Previous Ministers of Housing were prepared to criticize the agreement if they considered that it was not in the interests of Victoria. But the spokesman for the Opposition has not said one word of criticism in one and a half hours.

Mr. WILTON.—What is wrong with the agreement?

Mr. ROSS-EDWARDS.—If he gives me time I shall tell the honorable member what is wrong with the agreement.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. K. H. Wheeler).—Order! I did my best to give protection to the honorable member for Moonee Ponds. I now give the same protection to the Leader of the Country Party. I call on the honorable member, without interjection.

Mr. ROSS-EDWARDS.—I have criticized this Government at length on other matters but this is not the time to mention such matters as the number of homes being built in the country or in the metropolitan area. The Bill concerns the total amount of loan money allocated to Victoria, and this in turn determines the number of homes that are to be built in Victoria. Where they are built and who gets the priorities can be debated at the proper time.

As has been said previously in this debate, this is not an agreement in the real sense. The honorable member for Moonee Ponds did not mention that all six State Ministers of Housing opposed certain clauses. They were three Labor Party, one Country Party and two Liberal Party Ministers. I am trying to get through to members of the Opposition that, in the past, Victoria has been under pressure from the Federal Government. Successive Ministers have criticized that Government and they

have been joined in their criticism by members of the Opposition. But because there is a Labor Party Government in Canberra, members of the Opposition are now deathly quiet.

Past housing agreements have recognized the difficult conditions applying in different States. Victoria has had a means test on the sale and rental of homes which has not applied in other States. Any means test is only rough justice and from time to time the amount that a person could earn has varied. The means test was varied five months ago and the maximum income was increased to $90. Most honorable members would agree that that is a fair figure.

The centralist Government is trying to lay down firm conditions that should apply to every part of Australia. It has not understood that one State is more efficient, one builds houses cheaper and one charges less rent than others. Under the agreement, a means test will apply to the purchase of a home. Not many honorable members have had more to do with Housing Commission tenants than I have. I represent the area with the longest waiting list in country Victoria and one of the largest Housing Commission building programmes.

Mr. CURNOW.—Are you proud of that?

Mr. ROSS-EDWARDS.—I am proud that every year the number of homes being built in my electorate is increasing.

Mr. CURNOW.—What about the waiting list?

Mr. ROSS-EDWARDS.—I am ashamed of the waiting list.

Mr. CURNOW.—You should be ashamed.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. K. H. Wheeler).—Order! I have pleaded continually with the honorable member for Kara Kara to cease interjecting.

Mr. ROSS-EDWARDS.—I represent the fastest growing country electorate in Victoria, and the the honorable member for Kara Kara represents an electorate whose population is decreasing. It is an interesting comparison. Often people who go into new Housing Commission Homes are comparative new comers to the area and they are uncertain whether they will stay or will keep the same employment. Therefore, for a year or two they become tenants of the Housing Commission. At the appropriate time they may decide to buy the home. At present, if they are in homes and want to buy them, they can do so without any new means test being applied. The danger under the new agreement is that if they wait a year or two and decide to buy the homes, they could be disqualified because they will have exceeded the means test provision. This is a dangerous provision because a person would not want to jump into the purchase of a home when he has just moved into an area and does not know what the future may hold for him in the town.

In the past Victoria has had the proud record of having the most sales of Housing Commission homes. The Government claims that it is in the vicinity of 50 per cent. In future this will be limited to approximately 30 per cent. It has been my experience that almost every young couple who move into a Housing Commission home aims to buy it. Some cannot do so for various reasons. That the overwhelming majority of the people want to buy a home is an old Australian tradition of which we are proud. I am sure that every member of the Opposition would agree with that statement and applaud it. We do not now hold with the capitalistic story of 25 or 30 years ago. The more sensible of the honorable members will agree that the ultimate aim of every family is to purchase a home and that the man who owns his own home is generally a better citizen.

I hope this new agreement does not run for its term of five years—there is every chance that it will not do so for a variety of reasons. If it does, it will mean that fewer people will become new home-owners in Victoria. That would be a sad thought and a serious situation. Rentals will be reviewed annually. I do not suppose it would make that much difference whether they were reviewed annually or every three years because the total increases would be the same. The dangerous position will be that Victoria will not decide what the increases will be because that will be the prerogative of the Federal Minister for Housing. I should be interested to hear members of the Opposition rebut that view. As a State member of Parliament I find that a most unsatisfactory state of affairs because it should be the right of the State Government of the day to make that decision.

Why did the Government support the agreement and why did the Premier sign it? The answer is elementary. The money is available at 4 per cent interest if the agreement is signed, and at 8 per cent if it is not signed. The Minister went on with a lot of nonsense about not signing the agreement. I agree with the Opposition that the honorable gentleman had no choice but to sign it, because the Government cannot afford to refuse to accept money at 4 per cent interest.

One of the most serious effects of the Bill is the blow it will deal to co-operative housing societies in Victoria. A person who earns more than $100 a week, including overtime, is precluded from borrowing money from co-operative housing societies. In order to borrow $13,500, a person must have an income of more than $100 a week. If he does not have such an income, or a prospect of earning it soon, he will be in diabolical trouble. The Opposition does not seem to realize that this will force a number of people, who would otherwise have bought homes through the co-operative housing movement, into the Housing Commission category. It will make it more difficult for those requiring what the Opposition terms "welfare housing". I do not like the term "welfare housing", because the majority of people who buy Housing Commission homes do not regard themselves as receiving welfare. Some people cannot buy a home, but they have the ambition to do so, and when they enter into the purchase of a Housing Commission home, that is not welfare housing. The Victorian Teachers Union has a co-operative housing society.

Mr. LOXTON.—It has not received any money from this lot.

Mr. ROSS-EDWARDS.—How can it receive any money? A teacher in Victoria is automatically ineligible to buy a home under the co-operative housing scheme because he is considered to be in the middle stratum of the income-earning public.

Mr. WILKES.—Teachers have always been ineligible to receive co-operative housing society loans.

Mr. ROSS-EDWARDS.—The Victorian Teachers Union for years has had its own co-operative housing society. This has been one of the few occasions when the Opposition has not debated a Bill fairly because of the fear of falling out with its colleagues in Canberra. The handling of the Bill in this way is causing a disservice to the State. There is a deadly silence on the Opposition benches. If the Federal system is to be made to work and honorable members do not agree with something the Federal Government is doing, constructive criticism must be made.

I applaud the increase in funds from $40 million to $54 million, but I strongly object to the conditions laid down by the centralist Government. If I have made my point to the Opposition, I have had a very successful night.

Mr. WILTON (Broadmeadows).—I should like to make one or two comments about this Bill. I congratulate the honorable member for Moonee Ponds, because he has clearly shown

that a series of Liberal Ministers of Housing have engaged in political hypocrisy by talking about the great pride of home-ownership. The idea of home-ownership held by the Deputy Premier and the Leader of the Country Party amounts to the placing of a millstone around a person's neck for 45 years. This idea is supported by Liberal Party spokesmen. The honorable member for Moonee Ponds referred to the circulation in the Dandenong electorate during the last State election campaign of a document which stated that 85 per cent of all Victorians were home-owners.

My idea of a home-owner is a person who has clear title to his property, not one who is struggling under the enormous weight imposed on him by the Government during its eighteen years in office. The Federal Minister for Housing has brought some humane elements into the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement. During the years in which I have been a member of this House, I have heard speeches on this subject by the previous Minister of Housing and by the previous Premier, who screamed, ranted and raved about the fiscal straightjacket which he asserted the Commonwealth put on the States. The honorable gentleman turned the Ministerial table into his own private wailing wall and howled his eyes out, referring to members of the Commonwealth Government as money lenders and usurers. That was the sort of expression he used to describe his own party colleagues in the Federal Parliament.

Mr. Johnson has revealed the fraudulent practices that have continued over the years under Liberal-Country Party coalition Governments. That is what hurts Government supporters more than anything else, because the Labor Government in Canberra has shown what can be done to provide homes for low-income earners. That is what stung the Liberal-Country Party and the Minister of Housing into making the outrageous statements one has heard from them in recent weeks.

Mr. THOMPSON.—The honorable member should tell that to home-owners in Jacana.

Mr. WILTON.—The Deputy Premier speaks about home-ownership in Jacana, but I shall refer to figures used by the Liberal Party Government in its contracts of sale. I support the honorable member for Moonee Ponds in his statement on ownership of homes in the metropolitan area. When people whose names have been on the Housing Commission waiting list are advised that a home is available for them, they have no other choice but to purchase the home. That has been a deliberate policy followed by the Liberal Party for a number of years. In the metropolitan area no homes have been built for rental for a considerable time. I support that statement by relating to the House answers to my questions supplied by the Chief Secretary on behalf of the Minister of Housing. On 20th March of this year I asked—

How many villa-type homes were completed by the Housing Commission in each of the years 1970 to 1972 inclusive?

The answer was that, in 1970, 1,671 homes were completed for the whole of Victoria. In 1971, 1,882 homes were completed. More than half of them are in country areas, so the figure refers to the entire State, not only to the metropolitan area. In 1972, 1,022 homes were completed. The second part of my question read—

How many were located in the metropolitan area, indicating the number sold and rented, respectively, for each year?

The answer was—

1970	579
1971	794
1972	252

That was at a time when the number of applicants awaiting welfare housing in Victoria was 15,000 to 16,000. The number of new homes would make a great impact on that waiting list! The Liberal Party adopted a moralistic policy on home-ownership, but 15,000 to 16,000 people were seeking assistance. The Government produced 252 homes and tried to tell the Parliament that it was conscious of the housing needs

of Victoria. That is absolutely ridiculous. I also asked the Minister to indicate the number of houses that were sold and the number available for rent. The Minister's answer was that all villas constructed in the metropolitan area for civilian purposes were sold. None of them were offered for rent.

It has been a long time since any applicants for Housing Commission homes in the metropolitan area have had a choice of home. When confronted with the situation, the people must purchase the house or not obtain it. My own electorate contains the largest Housing Commission estate in Victoria. Figures that have been provided to me indicate that at 24th June, 1971, the average income of purchasers was $70 to $90 gross a week and the average monthly instalment payable was $83.22. That is the Liberal Party's idea of home-ownership. I have never heard the Minister of Housing mention that, added to the cost of a home, rates must be paid to the Melbourne Metropolitan Board of Works and the municipality. In 1971 in the City of Broadmeadows that would have amounted to $10 a month or $2.50 a week. Therefore the total commitment of these persons is about $21.50 out of a gross income of $70 a week. Where are all the crocodile tears shed by the honorable member for Prahran when he spoke earlier on another measure about the problems confronting home owners? He did not mention those facts.

Much has been heard from the Minister of Housing through the press, and the Minister of Transport made certain comments when he explained the Bill to the House. It seemed to me that he skirted around the real issue which is simply that under this agreement, in its first year of operation, the Commonwealth Government has substantially increased the allocation to Victoria and reduced the interest rate. In 1971 under Liberal Governments in both Canberra and Victoria, the interest rate charged by the commission was 6½ per cent. If a person took out the death benefit provided by the commission, the interest rose to 7½ per cent, and the repayment period was reduced from 45 to 30 years. The payment was $83.22 a month at 6½ per cent but, if a person took advantage of the death benefit to protect his family, his interest rate increased by 1 per cent, and the repayment period was reduced to 30 years. His monthly payments jumped from $83.22 to $96.48 without municipal and other rates being added. If the rates were added, the monthly payment would increase to more than $100 a month, out of a gross weekly income of $70.

That is the Liberal Party's version of home ownership! That is how it considers it is doing something worth while in the interests of providing low cost homes. It is sheer nonsense for members of the Government to criticize the present agreement proposed by the Commonwealth Government because, as the honorable member for Moonee Ponds pointed out, the main ingredients in this agreement—which was made possible by the election of the Labor Government in Canberra—are a substantial increase in the funds provided for both the State housing authority and co-operative housing societies at a lower rate of interest.

Surely the Minister and the Government ought to be prepared to accept that at long last they are making some progress, which was not possible when the Liberal Party, in coalition with the Country Party, formed the Government in Canberra. The honorable member for Moonee Ponds spoke of the sort of running fight that was going on between the State Minister of Housing and the then Federal Minister for Housing. The present Minister of Transport got on his high horse with his own colleague and started to throw his weight around and make all sorts of noises and suggestions about what the Commonwealth Government could do.

Over the years the major problem that has concerned me is the waiting time for housing. I have on file many letters, not only from the present Minister of Housing, but also previous Ministers of Housing, replying to representations that I have made on behalf of people who sought my assistance to obtain accommodation. I realize that people have approached all honorable members and I do not suggest that I am the only member who made representations. Honorable members continually receive what has become almost a stereo-typed reply, to the effect that the case is being investigated but that, because of the long waiting list, the commission is unable to house the family concerned within three years and that there is a waiting list of up to four years.

Even the Deputy Premier will concede that the Housing Commission waiting list has gradually grown longer and the waiting time has gradually increased since this Government has been in office in Victoria. The reason is that, when this Government was elected to office in 1955, one of its first moves was to reduce the building programme of the Housing Commission. This is clearly evident from the commission's annual reports as long ago as 1955. The number of homes constructed each year has not since reached the figure that was attained in 1955, when more than 4,000 homes were constructed. In the year 1955-56, when the Labor Government went out of office, the number of houses built exceeded 5,000. Despite the increase in population since 1955, in 1972 the Government was able to build only 252 homes in the metropolitan area. Nevertheless, it asserts how interested it is in home-owners. It has never shown any regard for the people who are in need of welfare housing.

In May of this year several Liberal Party candidates attempted to create the impression that, if a Labor Government was elected to office in Canberra, people would be thrown out of their homes when their wages were increased. What a lot of nonsense! It is not right.

Mr. THOMPSON.—It is.

Mr. WILTON.—The Deputy Premier realizes that it is not. Under the Standing Orders I cannot call him a liar, but any fair-minded person who is prepared to examine Mr. Johnson's proposals cannot but agree with me. However, I must abide by the Standing Orders and refrain from calling the honorable gentleman a liar, although the facts will speak for themselves.

Mr. THOMPSON.—They certainly will.

Mr. WILTON.—Both the honorable gentleman and the Government have used the Housing Commission in the most grievous way since this Government has been in office. The Housing Commission has been forced to expend money on the construction of works not related to housing, such as building overpasses over railways. That is how the Government has used Housing Commission finance.

Mr. MEAGHER.—Where?

Mr. WILTON.—In Broadmeadows, on the Barry Road overpass over the north-eastern railway line. That fact is recorded in *Hansard* of 1964, when I moved the adjournment of the House to bring to notice how the Government was using Housing Commission funds to construct roads and overpasses in Broadmeadows. The costs are all on the record. If the Minister of Transport wants to refute my statement, he is welcome to make the attempt.

A similar situation applied to the extension of sewerage services to the Ford Motor Company. The Housing Commission had to foot the bill. When the Barry Road overpass was constructed it was not the normal standard road ; it was twice the width of the standard road because that is

what the industry required, as well as unrestricted access to Pascoe Vale Road, for its heavy articulated transports. The Government met the cost from Housing Commission funds which have been used in a way that was never intended.

In regard to other Government schemes I had to bring before Parliament information showing how, through the lack of administration by its Minister, the Government was allowing speculators—the "con" merchants—to buy industrial land from the Housing Commission and resell it at double the price. That is on the record. They bought land in Broadmeadows for $20,000 and, before they had finished paying for it, sold it for $40,000. Government supporters talk about honesty in Government and about giving "the little bloke" a fair go. A person has to pay 7 per cent interest if he wants to protect his family under the Housing Commission death benefit scheme and the repayment period has been reduced from 45 years to 30 years, so that he had to pay $100 a month out of a gross weekly income of $70. That is the Government's idea of helping "the little bloke" get a home for himself. It is hypocrisy, and it turns one's stomach.

I remind honorable members of the Government's scheme under which people could buy land from the commission and build their own homes. When the Deputy Premier was Minister for Housing he tried it in Broadmeadows and it did not work, so he negotiated with private builders to build the houses. He did not worry about the prices asked for the houses after they were built on Housing Commission land. The builders were given a free hand.

The Government did not control the price of houses sold by A. V. Jennings in the Meadowlea estate. That is the history of the Government in the housing field. Honorable members have seen press statements by the present Minister of Housing asserting "We will fight on the beaches". Did he get dumped by a wave? Perhaps the honorable gentleman lost his surf board or it sprang a leak. The Premier soon resolved the situation. After about three weeks the honorable gentleman said that he would sign the agreement. There was none of this nonsense of fighting on the beaches or anywhere else. Victoria is obtaining an additional $9 million under the new housing agreement.

Mr. STEPHEN.—When did the Premier say that?

Mr. WILTON.—It is in *Hansard*. The honorable member should look for it himself. The Federal Government clearly showed that in the eighteen years during which it has been in office the Government has paid only lip service to the question of providing welfare homes for persons in the community whose only hope of getting a home is through the State housing authority. What has the Government done for people on low fixed incomes? The Housing Commission simply tells them, "There is your home. You must buy it. There is no choice". Many of the people cannot afford to pay interest on loans for the purchase of a house.

In Broadmeadows the contracts regarding the purchase of homes which were completed three years ago have only just arrived. I made representations to the Minister on behalf of a person who paid $1,200 in rent while awaiting his contract, and who was allowed only $60 off the purchase price. That is not an isolated case. It is a situation which was brought to the attention of the present Minister of Transport when he was Minister of Housing in 1971. I must say that although the Minister never agreed with me, he was always courteous.

Mr. STEPHEN.—There are not too many who will agree with you.

Mr. WILTON.—That is because I am always right and the honorable member for Ballaarat South is always wrong, but he is too arrogant

to admit it. All of this information was presented to the Minister in 1971 and it is on the files.

I shall cite some actual cases for the information of the House. In one case, the person had waited for a home for five and a half years. He was led to believe in December, 1970, that the house would cost $13,000. He was told in June that it would cost $15,000, with monthly repayments of $86. Although the form he received showed interest at 4½ per cent. this was changed to 6½ per cent. He had waited so long that he could not back out. He was prepared to sign anything to get the house.

Mr. LOXTON.—Was that with or without the death benefit?

Mr. WILTON.—The death benefit is 1 per cent and the repayment period is reduced from 45 years to 30 years. Another case concerned a person who was told that his house would cost $13,500. When the contract was settled, the price had risen to $15,254. His monthly repayment is $86.19, including insurance. This man has four children.

Another person obtained a house on the recommendation of the Social Welfare Department. He drew $200 in superannuation to finance the purchase. He is paying $73.17 a month. This person has five children and brings home $53 a week. He recently paid $119 in arrears. The details of the cases to which I have referred, and of other cases, have been made known to the Minister. A welfare organization in my electorate has taken a keen interest in the plight of these people and has approached the Minister about it. The Government is playing a political game with which the Opposition does not wish to be associated.

The proposed agreement is a breakthrough, notwithstanding what the Minister has said about it. By the inclusion of a clause in the agreement the Minister is saying, in effect, "If you have serious problems, come and talk to me".

Mr. THOMPSON.—It is on the initiative of the Federal Minister.

Mr. WILTON.—The Minister did not have that right in the previous agreement. Previously he went to Canberra, got dressed down and was told to go back to Victoria. For the first time Ministers of the States are able to see the Federal Minister in the event of unusual situations arising; they need not wait for the renegotiation of the agreement. They can initiate action at any time. This Government is arrogant and callous and simply indulges in political gymnastics. I was told the other day that I must not call members of the Government "political frauds" and I agree that I cannot do so; nevertheless, I do not feel that the expression is incorrect.

Mr. THOMPSON (Minister of Education).—In my experience, this legislation is probably the most offensive that the House has been called upon to approve.

Mr. HOLDING.—Throw it out.

Mr. THOMPSON.—The rejection of the so-called agreement would place an impossible financial burden on the State because of the threatened loss of the subsidized interest rate. I point out that the Housing Commission has calculated that over the period of the agreement it would be necessary for the State in some way to find $70 million out of the blue to service the additional 4 per cent interest payments on this year's money alone. The State cannot afford that. The only way in which that amount could be found would be to raise rentals, and that would not be in the interests of tenants or purchasers of Housing Commission homes. Opposition members know full well that the Government will not do that, just as they know that this legislation gravely infringes the rights of States in this important field of State constitutional responsibility.

When there was a Liberal Government in Canberra the Premier and other Ministers had the courage to criticize various Federal measures when necessary. It would be better if the Opposition adopted a similar approach to proposals put forward by the present Labor Government. The Opposition claimed that the Government has been guilty of telling lies or of duplicity for suggesting that the Federal Minister for Housing was contemplating that people who have some success in life and, as a result, receive higher incomes, could be removed from Housing Commission homes.

Mr. HOLDING.—That was never suggested.

Mr. THOMPSON.—It has been suggested time and again tonight by the honorable member for Moonee Ponds. The honorable member invited the Government to provide evidence.

Mr. EDMUNDS.—I still invite the Government to do so.

Mr. THOMPSON.—I shall quote from remarks which were made at the conference of Housing Ministers on 24th February, 1973. Mr. Johnson said that there should be a uniform means test with a limit of about $90 a week and that when a person's income rose above that figure he should be entitled to obtain alternative accommodation.

Mr. EDMUNDS.—That is out of context.

Mr. THOMPSON.—At page 12 of the notes which were tabled in the Legislative Council, Mr. Johnson said—

> They did not wish to dampen people's initiative to improve themselves but he intended to uphold the principal that money should be made available for housing persons of limited means and he also upheld the principal that families whose income rose above a means test should not continue to be housing authority tenants.

Mr. HOLDING.—Will the Minister table the document?

Mr. THOMPSON.—Yes. I have a record of an HSV7 programme on Friday, 19th December, 1972, an interview between the Honorable L. Johnson, M.P., Commonwealth Minister for Housing and the Honorable V. Dickie, Victorian Minister of Housing. The interviewer was Mr. David Johnston. Mr. Johnson, the Commonwealth Minister, said that he was not interested in people who were going to go out and be wealthy in the future, and possibly in the near future, buying Housing Commission homes, because this was preferential money which the taxpayer had made available. Mr. Johnston, the interviewer, said that he would ask Mr. Johnson whether if it happened, as Mr. Dickie said it probably would, that 75 of those people who had been in homes for, say, twelve months, decided that they wanted to buy the houses, and they were not in accord with what the Commonwealth social workers regarded as the type of people who should be in those houses, he would turn them out of the houses. The Federal Minister said that they should be encouraged to look, over a reasonable term, for alternative housing.

Mr. HOLDING.—That is fair enough.

Mr. THOMPSON.—That is exactly what the Government claimed that Mr. Johnson said and it illustrates that Mr. Johnson had a policy of moving out of Housing Commission homes people who had some material success in their later lives due to their own hard work. That is a policy which the Victorian Government abhors.

The Victorian Government said that Mr. Johnson did not favour home ownership. For the first time on record in a Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement, a restriction is placed on home ownership, despite the repeated objections of the Victorian Minister of Housing, even to the extent of saying that Victoria was thinking of going it alone. I am reminded that other State Ministers of Housing took the

same attitude. Clause 19 of the agreement, for the first time, limits the sales of Victorian Housing Commission houses to not more than 30 per cent of those erected. During the period that this Government has been in office, 34,000 homes have been sold, of a total of 74,000 built. That is more than 40 per cent. The Government would prefer that the percentage be increased, not decreased. Yet there is preferential legislation favouring Tasmania which will be allowed to sell 50 per cent. of these homes. That is an extraordinary decree.

Mr. WHITING.—Why is that?

Mr. THOMPSON.—The honorable member's guess is as good as mine. For the first time, Housing Commission money comes to Victoria, not through the Loan Council but under section 96 of the Commonwealth Constitution so that its use can be restricted. This is offensive to the Victorian Government. The Government does not complain about the amount of money; the Federal Minister has been given credit for providing the extra money which can be profitably used. The Government objects to the offensive terms of the agreement, which constitute an infringement on the right of the State to determine how its own money should be spent.

Mr. EDMUNDS.—That is a lot of rubbish; it is nonsense.

Mr. THOMPSON.—I wish it were nonsense. I refer to the let-out clause, of which the honorable member for Moonee Ponds and the honorable member for Broadmeadows made so much. They said that State Ministers could initiate a change. It is sub-clause (3) of clause 24 of the agreement. It states that on the initiative of or with the approval of the Minister — that is the Federal Minister — and with the concurrence of the State Minister or Ministers concerned — a change may be made to the provisions of clause 16. So, again, the final say lies with the Federal Minister. Furthermore, a needs test is applied by the direction of the Federal authority which takes away from teachers in Victoria the right to obtain either a co-operative housing society loan or a Housing Commission home. When I was Minister of Housing, I made a block allocation of homes to the Education Department, knowing that teachers in the country have special needs. These are further strong objections to the Commonwealth proposals.

The Government makes no apology for the fact that, through the years, it has actively encouraged home ownership and given the small man the right to own his own home. Under this agreement, 70 per cent of the homes built by the commission will be given to people who will never have the right to own the homes in which they live because Mr. Johnson and the Commonwealth Labor Government say that they shall not have that right.

That is why the Government so strongly objects to this agreement. It will continue to do all within its power to foster home ownership because it believes that the homeowner is a more contented and secure citizen. It is the fundamental right of every Australian to own his own home. This right applies to young married people whether they come from Kara Kara or Toorak.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. McLaren).—Does the Minister intend to table those documents?

Mr. THOMPSON.—I am quite happy to do that, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. HOLDING (Leader of the Opposition).—I enter the debate in order to join issue on the position taken by the Deputy Premier who, somewhat emotively, reiterated all the old bogies that have been trotted out by the Government about this agreement. One can almost ascribe a political pattern to the Victorian Government's relationships with the Commonwealth Government. What has occurred with housing has also occurred in other areas. Whenever there has been a new Commonwealth initiative the State Government has objected. Those initiatives have been

based on policies which were clearly explained to the people of Australia and endorsed by them at the elections in December of last year. When these initiatives are translated into an increased flow of funds to the States for particular purposes, the first reaction by Ministers of the Victorian Government is to reject the money and condemn the initiative.

The Minister of Housing performed in a way which would have done credit to Charlie Chaplin or Buster Keaton, except that his was a much lower level of comedy. While the Minister was making all these statements to the press, there was not a word from the Premier. The Premier is calm and reasonable. He is the one who explained to the gentleman with whom he has to negotiate in Canberra that they should not take any notice of his backwoodsmen as they represent the old school. While the Minister performed publicly the agreement was signed. That presented the Government with some problem when this Bill was introduced and it had to rely on its backwoodsmen on the front bench to go through the same song and dance as the Minister of Housing.

When the Minister of Education was offered record sums of money for education in Victoria, he spoke to the press about the Socialism and centralism of the Federal Government and said that it would never be accepted in Victoria. But, in a matter of months, the money was flowing to this State. Admittedly, the Minister said that an additional $1 million would be made available by the State for certain areas of education, but he did not explain that it was Commonwealth money.

What a performance was put up by the Minister of Transport when he was offered $9 million to use on metropolitan public transport. A motion relating to this is still on the Notice Paper but it will never be debated. During the negotiations the Premier was saying to the Prime Minister, "Do you think you can arrange a conference between Mr. Jones and Mr. Meagher because Mr. Meagher is not so bad?" The Victorian Government is establishing this political pattern of abusing the Commonwealth Government in public and then going to the Commonwealth's back door to apologize and sign agreements. That is what occurred in this case.

Mr. LOXTON.—Tell us about the teachers who will not receive any co-operative housing society money.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. McLaren).—Order! There has been a lot of interplay between parts of the House, but I suggest that continuous interruptions of the speaker are not conducive to good debate. I hope that honorable members on the Government benches will desist from constantly interrupting.

Mr. HOLDING.—The Deputy Premier was concerned to refer to "his people" in Canberra. I am not sure whether he was referring to Mr. Snedden, Mr. McMahon or Mr. Gorton. Perhaps we could look at the record of the McMahon Government. In fairness to the Deputy Premier, I must agree that he was at least prepared to concede that the new Federal Government adopted a much more realistic attitude in dealing with the social problems of housing than did the former Government. But his colleagues, under the reign of Mr. Billy McMahon, that lamentable figure in political history, provided $29·25 million for welfare housing and $11 million for co-operative housing. The agreement before the House provides $38·25 million for welfare housing and $16 million for co-operative housing.

Mr. LOXTON.—That will not cover the increase in costs.

Mr. HOLDING.—Of course housing costs have increased 45 per cent in twelve months. That is because the Victorian Government has refused to do anything to control either the price of housing or the price of land. Back-bench members of the Government party should concede the integrity of the Premier, who said that the Government would not take action against land speculators

because to do so would be contrary to its private enterprise philosophy. Everybody knows that the Government has refused to do anything about land speculation. The problems of the building industry are probably greater than they have been for years, but the Government has done nothing about them.

There can be no argument about the finance available for housing. This agreement provides more money for the State than any agreement made by the gentlemen who support the political philosophy of the backwoodsmen on the Government benches.

The House should examine the "sacred" issue of home ownership. The Government has double standards on this. What was the record of the Deputy Premier when he was Minister of Housing? Was home ownership sacred then? It was not sacred to people who lived in Collingwood or Fitzroy when the Government wanted an outlet for the production of the factory at Holmesglen. If a house had a narrow frontage, even if it was perfectably liveable, it was knocked down. The bulldozers went through area after area. The Government was told, day after day, that although it might be solving the housing problems of a few, it was creating a whole new set of social problems.

Mr. JONES.—The Government cannot build schools for the children who live in the flats.

Mr. HOLDING.—I accept the helpful interjection by the honorable member for Melbourne who, like other members of the Opposition representing inner suburban areas, knows the situation. Concerning my own electorate, on many occasions when the Minister of Education was asked what plans the Government had for educating the children who would move into the high-rise flats, and what plans it had for nurseries and crèches——

Mr. THOMPSON.—What clause is this?

Mr. HOLDING.—The Minister of Education does not like to be reminded of his own housing record. If he went to Elizabeth Street, Richmond, he would find that the children are now being transported in buses to the Yarra Park Primary School, which is grossly overcrowded.

Mr. THOMPSON.—We are driving them 1 mile.

Mr. HOLDING.—The Minister who promised the House that there would be a new school for these children is now having them driven to one of Melbourne's oldest and most overcrowded schools to provide the children with sub-standard accommodation and educational facilities. That is the Government's planning in Richmond!

Mr. THOMPSON (Minister of Education).—Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order, the agreement contains many clauses and I suggest that the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition are not related to any of them.

Mr. HOLDING (Leader of the Opposition).—On the point of order, paragraph (*d*) of clause 14 of the agreement provides that housing authority advances may be used, subject to the approval of the Minister, to provide bridging finance for community amenities that are not the responsibility of the housing authority.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. McLaren).—The debate has ranged over a wide field and probably much wider than the Bill covers. A wide area of debate has been allowed and in this instance I find no point of order.

Mr. HOLDING (Leader of the Opposition).—I do not want to embarrass the Minister of Education too much so I will move from the chaos which the Government has created in Richmond to 1 mile away in Collingwood, where one can see a magnificent achievement of the skill and the foresight of the Government.

Mr. THOMPSON.—A $4 million project.

Mr. HOLDING.—This is a brilliant achievement! When high-rise flats were envisaged, the Government did not confer with the local community. The Collingwood City Council suggested that perhaps a playing field might be provided, but the Government would not accept that. In Collingwood the skill, diligence and brilliance of the Government is such that it erects high-rise flats without any regard for the fact that another Government authority is proposing to widen the road. The result is that a car park which would have acted as a noise barrier between a busy four-lane road and the flats has to be pulled up so that the widened road will now pass close to the front of the flats. Behind the flats, a large hole has been dug, taking up half of the playing space, to provide parking space for cars. This is an example of the skill, diligence and brilliance of the Government!

Mr. THOMPSON.—What about the agreement?

Mr. HOLDING.—The Minister does not want to hear the record of his own Government. Mr. Johnson, the Federal Minister for Housing, was too lenient. One could not trust the Victorian Ministers to buy a newspaper because the kids would take the money from them. If I were the Federal Minister I would make no apology for imposing restrictions on the incompetents who operate in this State.

Let me examine some further problems in Collingwood. Time after time, honorable members were told that discussions were being held and that schools would be no problem. Honorable members should look at the mess and the sub-standard facilities in which children are being educated. I invite honorable members to travel to Fitzroy to see another brilliant tribute to the Government. Honorable members were promised that a new school would be built on a site that was barely 2 acres but no school has been erected. We were also promised a new school in Richmond on a site which is less than 2 acres.

This is the record of the Government and then all of a sudden it is decided that high-rise flats are no longer fashionable. It is all very well for the Minister to talk about State rights, but a Commonwealth Government has some responsibility when it hands money out to ensure that it is properly expended. The only way in which this Government will survive will be as the result of the largesse from the Commonwealth Labor Government.

Let me now deal with this important Liberal Party philosophy of home ownership, about which the Deputy Premier became so excited. I shall cite figures which have been provided by the Government and therefore will not be in dispute in reply to a question asked by the honorable members for Moonee Ponds yesterday. Since 30th June, 1964, when there were 10,718 current applications for Housing Commission dwellings by 25th October, 1973, the number had increased to 16,428. It is not surprising that the demand has increased because it is becoming increasingly difficult for low-income earners to acquire a house or any form of accommodation. Accordingly, the pressures on the Government to provide low-cost accommodation will be increasing rather than decreasing.

For the past three years the emphasis has been overwhelmingly loaded in favour of flat-type accommodation. With the emphasis on high-rise flats, it seems a little odd to say that the Government is concerned to see that everybody owns his own home. Nobody believes that people who are living in high-rise flats will ever own their own flat or will even want to do so. If the Government is so dedicated to the concept of home ownership, about which the Minister of Education spoke so eloquently, how is it that during the period when the honorable gentleman was Minister of Housing more flats than houses were built? I have no doubt that the Government's argument is the

economic use of the land; that it is cheaper to provide high-rise accommodation; but now even the Government recognizes the fallaciousness of that argument.

Whilst the Opposition would always have disagreed with the concept of emphasis being placed on high-rise flats, what the Government has done is to provide a source of housing which will be rented and not owned. Therefore, the Government can claim that one of the side benefits of the high-rise flat developments has been the build-up of a considerable store of flat accommodation—no matter how inadequate it might be for family accommodation—which essentially will always be rental accommodation because nobody who lives in the high-rise flats will buy them.

The available figures indicate that more than 50 per cent of the accommodation that has been provided by the Government is high-rise flat accommodation which will be available only for rental. The difference between the approach of the Commonwealth and that of the State Government is simply that the Commonwealth recognizes, as does anyone who is dealing responsibly with housing, that it is essential for any Government to maintain a considerable pool of housing for rental because there are some groups in the community which will need that type of housing. That has been the social consequences of the Government's own policy. In some areas, it represented 30 per cent but in others it was well over 50 per cent of the accommodation provided.

The difference between the Commonwealth Government policy and that pursued by this Government is that the Commonwealth Government rejects the concept of high-rise housing as providing any sort of proper family accommodation. It is concerned to provide houses and not high-rise flats. Because it recognizes the reality of the situation, the Commonwealth Government says that 30 per cent of those houses must be maintained for rental. For years, this Government has been building high-rise flats which will never be sold.

Mr. THOMPSON.—The Government has sold more than 40 per cent, representing 34,000 out of a total 74,000.

Mr. HOLDING.—Not high-rise flats. Of 1,986 units built by the Government in 1972-73—the Government talks about units—only 805 or less than 50 per cent were houses. The remainder would be flats which are not for sale. The Minister admits that more than 50 per cent of the housing units that are being provided will never be offered for sale because they are unsuitable for sale. The difference between the policies of the Commonwealth Government and the State Government is that the Commonwealth Government does not believe that flats provide proper accommodation for young families. It believes houses must be built for them. It is also agreed that Victoria must keep a stock of accommodation for rental. The figure that has been agreed on is 30 per cent, which is 20 per cent lower than the record number that this Government has retained at any time in its history. The Minister overlooks that point. Has any Minister of Housing suggested that it is unnecessary to keep a surplus of units available for rental?

Mr. THOMPSON.—Not 70 per cent.

Mr. HOLDING.—The Minister has now agreed with the principle. Having agreed with the principle, he must then argue about percentages.

Mr. THOMPSON.—The Minister of Housing certainly has not agreed to the method of sale proposed by the Commonwealth Government.

Mr. HOLDING.—The Commonwealth Government is allocating more money to Victoria for housing than any other Administration. The Government has wasted the money made available to it for housing by its gross inefficiency. If honorable members walk in a straight line down

Victoria Street for a distance of 3 miles and go into any one of three electorates, they can examine the results.

Mr. BURGIN.—And yet Victoria is better off than any other State.

Mr. HOLDING.—Unfortunately the honorable member has not had the benefit of travelling very far. The Minister has agreed with the principle that it is necessary to keep a stock of housing units in reserve for rental, and it has been agreed that 30 per cent is a reasonable figure. Some honorable members may argue that the percentage should be lower, but if one examines the problems confronting low-income families in finding accommodation, one realizes that 30 per cent is a reasonable figure. It may err slightly on the low side, but it is a reasonable figure. The Minister has already conceded the principle.

Mr. THOMPSON.—I did not concede that.

Mr. HOLDING.—The Deputy Premier has agreed that it is a proper figure.

Mr. THOMPSON.—The honorable member is under dictatorship from Canberra. He should tell the House what he really thinks.

Mr. HOLDING.—I will tell the Minister what I really think. Victoria is considerably better off when people live in houses and not in high-rise flats, and particularly when 30 per cent of those houses are kept for rental purposes as opposed to the Government's record of retaining 50 per cent.

Mr. THOMPSON.—Seventy per cent; it is the other way around.

Mr. HOLDING.—This evil man, Mr. Johnson, wants to prevent every one from owning his own home!

I shall now deal with the honesty and integrity that emerges in these documents. If I must defend any statements made on housing — and I do not agree with the Federal Minister on everything — I would rather defend the Federal Minister than have the responsibility of trying to defend the thoroughly scandalous and dishonest position taken by the Victorian Minister of Housing. I now propose to quote from the same document from which the Deputy Premier quoted, but the honorable gentleman obviously did not want to read all the transcript. I refer to a transcript of a television interview between the Commonwealth Minister for Housing and the State Minister of Housing on 19th January, 1973. It reads—

> INTERVIEWER: Why will you not allow the houses to be sold, why just for rent?
>
> Mr. JOHNSON: We have never said that. I made a comment yesterday and it is becoming more apparent that this comment is justified. I said that there was an impetuous reaction, and strangely from Victoria alone —not from the Queensland people—not from Mr. Askin. Mr. Dunstan is enthusiastic—I saw him yesterday.
>
> We are prepared to allow houses to be sold on the rental purchase scheme. Of course, all those houses which are being built under previous agreements will go on without any interruption at all. I just cannot understand the misunderstanding here. I think that people could be flying up and down from one State to another quite unnecessarily when it is just a matter of time finding out the facts.

The underlying basis of this statement is that Mr. Johnson believes at this stage it is important to build up an adequate reserve of houses for rental, and the number of people on the Housing Commission's waiting list for houses for rental is overwhelmingly the largest single component of the housing problem in Victoria.

Mr. STEPHEN.—What is the best way in which to accommodate the most people? Is it by building houses for rental or for purchase?

Mr. HOLDING.—If the honorable member had his way everyone in Victoria would be in trouble. I will examine the Government's record. I understand the Minister's anxiety about his position. In desperation he blamed the Commonwealth for increasing rentals.

I refer now to the transcript of the conference which took place in the Minister's office on 24th February, 1973. It reads —

Mr. Gaskin said that the commission had an agreement with the Government that the commission carries out a review of rentals charged but that increase only takes place every three years.

Mr. Dickie stated that he believed that this was an internal political problem. He mentioned the fact that when he became Minister of Housing the commission did indicate to him that there should be an increase in the rental charges, but his Government had decided that in this financial year there would be no increase in rental charges.

He stated that in July, 1973, the Victorian Government would however be making a review of all rentals, and it was better if there was to be an increase that it take place simultaneously in all fields of housing .....and perhaps it was better to have small increases take place every year rather than large increases take place triennially.

He stated that it was his opinion that this was a political one.

Of course it was political. Everyone is aware that there have been increases in Housing Commission rentals, and everyone knows, as the Minister of Housing indicated, that it is part of the State Government's policy to review rentals every three years and the Government decided that there would be no increase in the last financial year. At the very time the statements were made, the State Minister of Housing indicated to the Federal Minister that Housing Commission rentals would be increased in July of this year. It is extraordinary to suggest now that these increases are the result of directions by the Federal Government. The facts relating to these increases are abundantly clear.

I commend the detailed and excellent analysis of the Bill and the agreement given by the honorable member for Moonee Ponds, but it has not been answered by supporters of the Government. If members on the other side of the House do not like the Bill, the Opposition will accommodate them and call for a division and they can vote against it. There is no problem about that. There is a name for people who prostitute their political principles for the sake of money.

What are the facts regarding the agreement? The first undeniable and indisputable fact is that record sums of money have been made available to the State by the Commonwealth Labor Government. More money is available for all areas of housing than when the political friends of the Deputy Premier were in power in Canberra. The second fact, which has been the main basis of complaint by the Minister of Housing, concerns the percentage of houses not available for purchase. I have proved conclusively that the Government's housing policy, whether it likes it or not, has created a situation where more than 50 per cent of the Housing Commission units were not for sale and could never be purchased, and people would not want to own them. I refer, of course, to high-rise flats.

The Commonwealth Government has stated that a percentage of the housing built by the commission should be reserved to provide a core of houses for rental. The State Government and the Deputy Premier agree with that proposition, but there is an argument about what the percentage should be. The Minister of Housing believes that should be decided by the State alone, but an examination of the Government's record in housing reveals that for years it claimed that high-rise flats were the solution and yet during the past eighteen months or two years the Government has decided not to erect more high-rise flats. The Government has realised the fallaciousness of its own policy.

The Commonwealth Government owes as much responsibility to the Victorian people as does the State Government. If it has supplied record sums of money to the State, it is entitled to say that it wants to ensure that the money is spent efficiently and competently. I support that principle.

Mr. JONA.—Do you support that principle on every issue?

Mr. HOLDING.—I am prepared to support it so long as there is——

Honorable members interjecting.

Mr. HOLDING.—If the States were to be judged by the quality of some of the backwoodsmen of the Government, the sooner the States are abolished the better.

Mr. RAFFERTY.—You will have to resign and let Mr. Jones take your place.

Mr. HOLDING.—I would suggest that if the Minister of Labour and Industry continues to act as he did yesterday, the Premier will have no alternative but to sack him.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. K. H. Wheeler).—Order! I suggest that the Leader of the Opposition return to the debate.

Mr. HOLDING.—No responsible Commonwealth Government could allow a situation to develop under which the Victorian Government was prepared to accept huge sums of money to pursue policies which have now been abandoned but which proved disastrous in meeting the needs of the people of this State.

I commend the Bill to the House. However, if honorable gentlemen opposite are not happy, the Opposition will call for a division and they can vote against it. It is as simple as that. Frequently when offers of financial assistance are made by the Commonwealth Government, Ministers of this Government perform like young prima donnas. The Premier must travel to Canberra and silently apologize for their actions and then sign his name on the dotted line. The Government should not act in this manner.

Mr. REESE (Moorabbin).—Honorable members have just heard from the Leader of the Opposition a travelogue around the areas of Collingwood, Richmond and Fitzroy. The crux of his speech was in his concluding remarks when he said that he believed it was the right of the Commonwealth Government, having made the money available, to state how it should be spent. That is the difference between Government supporters and the Opposition in their approach to this legislation. I support the passage of the Bill but I regret that it is termed an agreement.

If, Mr. Speaker, your wife or your daughter were held with a gun at her back or a knife in her ribs and then raped, she would not be accused of entering into an agreement, but that is analagous to what has occurred to the State Government which has produced the agreement now under discussion. What has been held at the back of the Government is a $70 million dagger which represents the interest differential. The Government has been told if it signs the agreement the Commonwealth Government will charge only 4 per cent interest but if it is not signed the Commonwealth Government will charge the State Government the going interest rate which is currently around 8 per cent or 8·5 per cent. That is the key to the so-called agreement. No State Government can afford to reject money which it is offered in the prevailing financial situation confronting the States. If the State did not sign the agreement it would be faced with interest charges amounting to an extra $70 million.

In this so-called agreement not only is the interest differential introduced, but the agreement goes further. The Commonwealth Government says to the State Government, "Yes, you can have the money and we will give it to you under section 96 so that we can call the play. We can say where and how it will be spent". The Commonwealth Government is further saying to the State Government, "You can have the money which you can use to construct houses but no more than three out of every ten houses constructed can be purchased by the folk who occupy them". The whole basis of this dictation and of the agreement shows a complete lack

of appreciation of the Victorian housing scene. Since 1955 at least 50 per cent of the homes built by the Housing Commission have been purchased by their present tenants.

Mr. ROPER.—And there is still a long waiting list.

Mr. REESE.—The reason for that waiting list is that there has been insufficient finance available for housing, just as in other areas. Honorable members should look at the position in the right perspective. Since 1955 the people of Victoria have shown their appreciation for the policy of this Government in allowing them to purchase their homes. I represent an area which includes a substantial Housing Commission development.

Mr. WILKES.—There are no high-rise buildings, however.

Mr. REESE.—There are no high-rise buildings in my electorate, but of the homes constructed by the Housing Commission there at least two-thirds are being purchased by the people who live in them. That means that two-thirds of Housing Commission tenants are satisfied with the policy of this Government, especially if voting trends since 1955 are any indication.

Since last December, honorable members have heard a lot about mandates being given by the people. However, honorable members have not heard much about the mandate given last May and repeated within the last week or two in the electorate of Greensborough, which contains many Housing Commission homes. No doubt the tenants are happy with the Government's policies that have enabled them to purchase their homes.

If honorable members further examine this so-called agreement, they will see that it limits the grants that co-operative housing societies can make to the lower-income people in this State. Since the first housing co-operative was formed in 1945 or thereabouts, the co-operative movement has played an important part in housing. About 80,000 homes have been built under this method of financing. After our Socialist friends in Canberra had suggested a reduction from 30 per cent to 20 per cent of the money made available to the co-operative societies—which incidentally was not included in the so-called agreement because it was left at 30 per cent—the general climate following the agreement seriously reduced the ability of home owners to make use of the co-operative housing movement. I believe this reacts to the detriment of future home-owners. A situation has been created in which for the first time a needs test is introduced into the agreement made between the Commonwealth and the State. The needs test applies to a person who earns a gross income of $100 a week, including overtime. From that amount the purchaser is required to repay about $80 a month. The terms laid down in this so-called agreement show a real lack of understanding by the Federal Minister for Housing and the agreement is having an effect on the co-operative housing movement because of the amount of money made available by the Commonwealth Government under terms which it has dictated.

If honorable members look objectively at the submissions which have been made, they will see showing through very clearly the basic philosophy that motivates the Socialist Government in Canberra. Honorable members also see clearly the imputation in this statement by the Federal Minister for Housing which was quoted by the Deputy Premier tonight—

> I am not interested in people buying Housing Commission homes which are going to make them wealthy in the future.

The Federal Minister for Housing is not interested in providing an opportunity to every Australian to better himself. Statements made by Mr. Johnson indicate that a person who passes the needs test and obtains a Housing Commission home, but who later by his ability improves his position so that he no longer qualifies for a commission home, should move and make room for

somebody else. The Commonwealth Government believes he should not have an opportunity of bettering himself. Further, if he rents a house and subsequently wants to purchase the house, he will find that he is unable to do so because his income exceeds the magical $100 needs test. With the current inflation in the community which is to a large extent generated by policies emanating from Canberra, honorable members will find that this figure of $100 which applies every week and every month becomes more and more unrealistic. A person who is a tenant today but who wants to purchase tomorrow will find that under the terms dictated by Mr. Johnson he is not eligible to purchase. This is the degree of sympathy shown by the Opposition to the agreement which is directed against the average wage earner in this country. However, there is sympathy in the policies of this Government which has held office since 1955 and will remain there for some time yet.

I return to the basic principle that this measure must be ratified as the Government has to have access to this money. The Commonwealth Government in Canberra has dictated that the State Government cannot receive the funds at less than current interest rates—which incidentally are being raised with great rapidity again as a result of policies dictated from Canberra—unless the State agrees to certain conditions. The State can only obtain the additional finance on a $70 million dagger basis determined, dictated and laid down by this Socialist Minister for Housing in Canberra.

Mr. WILKES (Northcote).—After three brilliant speeches by three honorable members of the Opposition this evening, I am encouraged to enter into the debate for no reason other than the incredible situation which has developed this evening. I do not know of any Parliament in which a Government introduces a measure and then appears to adopt the role of the Opposition in relation to it.

Mr. JONA.—The reason has been explained.

Mr. WILKES.—If it has been explained, I apologize for not being able to understand the reasons advanced by the Government. I always understood that if a Government introduced legislation it was prepared to stand up for it. But three amusing situations have developed. Firstly, in his introductory speech, the Minister of Transport, acting on behalf of the Minister of Housing, devoted the whole of his time to saying that the Government did not want the legislation. This to me is incredible as the proposed agreement is the legislation. Honorable members then heard the Deputy Premier on what he thought about the legislation. He was not happy about it. I pay a compliment to the honorable member for Moorabbin because he was the only member of the Government party who was prepared to be honest in his endeavours by saying that he supported the legislation. No honorable member on the Government side was prepared to support it. If it were not for members of the Opposition, the Government would have been in the dilemma of not knowing what to do with its own amending legislation.

The only criticism that has been levelled at the agreement by the Government is that it was introduced by the present Federal Minister for Housing as distinct from the agreements introduced by the two former Federal Ministers for Housing, Dame Annabelle Rankin and the Honorable Kevin Cairns. The present Federal Minister for Housing realizes that there is a demand in Victoria for rental accommodation as distinct from high-rise flats. The former Minister of Housing, now the Minister of Transport, was generous enough to say three years ago that he did not like high-rise development. The Deputy Premier, when he was Minister of Housing, could not build enough high-rise flats and he still fails

to acknowledge that the basic need in Victoria is for rental accommodation other than high-rise accommodation.

A week never goes by without requests being made to honorable members representing inner-metropolitan electorates to assist people to rent houses rather than flats. This constitutes a big demand. People do not want to rear their children in high-rise flats, with the attendant problems of children falling from the windows and the social difficulties that are created. It is beyond the capacity of this Government to do anything about those problems.

The obvious solution is to provide houses for rental. Because the Federal Minister for Housing, Mr. Johnson, wants to write that into the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement, it seems to stick in the neck of the State righters, who now believe that he may be right in saying that a proportion of the houses built by the Government should be made available for rental as against the accommodation that the Government wants to sell.

I refer now to what previous Federal Ministers for Housing did. The Honorable Kevin Cairns said that the terms of agreement were made known in the Budget speech by the then Prime Minister and the State Ministers were called to Canberra and told what the agreement was; they were not asked to negotitate an agreement. At least Mr. Johnson called the State Ministers together to discuss the agreement.

Mr. STEPHEN.—You have shifted ground under pressure.

Mr. WILKES.—That is a matter of opinion. The Premier has been busy in other spheres and has not been present in the House, but he would realize that it is incredible for a Government to walk away from its own amending legislation. If it had not done so, it would not have signed the agreement.

Mr. STEPHEN.—That is not right.

Mr. WILKES.—Of course it is. If the Government really believed what the Minister said in his second-reading speech, it had a clear duty not to sign the agreement, The Opposition supports the agreement and the Government's amending legislation.

Mr. BURGIN.—In every part?

Mr. WILKES.—Yes, in every part, because it realizes that there is a demand in Victoria for rental housing. Unfortunately, under our social system, there will always be a large number of people who will never be able to purchase their own homes, whether on the promise of the Premier to enable them to do so without deposit or in other ways, because they will not be able to pay $86 a month, with an income limitation of $100. That is the crux of the matter. If one listened to Government supporters tonight, one would assume that every wage earner in the State wants to purchase a home from the commission. The fact is that many people in the community will never be in a financial position to purchase a Housing Commission home, because they will be unable to meet the repayments. The amount of the deposit has nothing to do with it.

I shall not cover the ground already canvassed by the honorable member for Broadmeadows. The valid cases that he quoted were a clear illustration of why there will always be many people in the community who will be unable to purchase Housing Commission homes. These people have a desire to rear their families in a Housing Commission dwelling other than in a high-rise flat. That fact is well known to the Premier and to the Minister of Transport. They realize that large numbers of high-rise flats in the inner-metropolitan area can never be sold; they will always be there, so the Government can say, "There is rental accommodation but it is in high-rise flats. If you want dwelling accommodation for rental, you cannot have it".

The Minister of Transport knows that if a commission home becomes vacant, it is made available for purchase and not for re-rental. That is the policy of the Government and of the commission; they have high-rise flat accommodation for any person who is unable to purchase a home. Leaving aside the old centralist Government versus States argument, I point out that the agreement provides that houses should be available for rental.

Mr. BURGIN.—What is the percentage?

Mr. WILKES.—The percentage has not been defined.

Mr. MEAGHER.—It has.

Mr. WILKES.—The percentage for sale has been defined. The Minister knows that this cuts across his Government's policy of not building dwelling houses for rental. There is no doubt in my mind that if a number of people want to purchase dwelling houses from the commission, the agreement will not deny them that right.

Mr. MEAGHER.—It will for 40 per cent.

Mr. WILKES.—That is not so. The honorable member for Moonee Ponds has already stated that there is a shortage of villa units because of this stupid policy of the Government of building high-rise flats. It is not the fault of the Federal Government that this Government has, stupidly, not built enough villa units. It was selling Housing Commission land in Broadmeadows when it could have built villa units on the Jacana estate. If the Government had been able to build more villa units or the new type of house for which the Minister was responsible, the Government would not have thought of opposing this agreement. It now finds itself in a predicament.

It seems incredible that the Government should oppose its own amending legislation. It is equally incredible that it should fail to acknowledge that there are people in the community who, because of their social standards, will never be in a financial position to purchase a Housing Commission home, and the only accommodation that will be forced on these people will be high-rise flats. If the Government had the foresight to build more dwelling houses, it would have accepted this agreement. Mr. Johnson is more concerned about the people who cannot afford to buy Housing Commission homes and who do not want to live in high-rise slums.

Mr. MEAGHER.—He is so concerned about them that he wants to restrict them.

Mr. WILKES.—Of course he wants to restrict high-rise development.

Mr. MEAGHER.—It is not the high-rise development he wants to restrict. That is not mentioned in the agreement.

Mr. WILKES.—The honorable member for Moonee Ponds took 30 minutes to describe the agreement. Unless one knew who the Minister was, one would have thought that it was an Opposition reply to a Government proposal. The Government cannot have it both ways; when one considers the Commonwealth-State agreements over the past eighteen years, one realizes that the Government has had a birthday. It has been given an additional $14 million, which it will accept without qualification. The only objection the Deputy Premier had to that was that the State should be able to do what it wants with money lent to it by the Commonwealth under the agreement. If the Commonwealth Government increases the amount lent under the agreement by $14 million, surely it has the right to express what it believes to be the housing needs in Victoria.

Mr. BURGIN.—Would the Commonwealth Government know?

Mr. WILKES.—The Federal Government was certainly in Opposition long enough to see what the Victorian Liberal Government did with moneys lent to

it under Commonwealth-State housing agreements. For those reasons there is no doubt that if restrictions are written into the agreement, they should be readily accepted by the Victorian Government. It should stop fooling about with its own legislation. If it believed the agreement was unsuitable, it should not have signed it. However, the Premier signed the agreement without hesitation. The Government should provide rental accommodation in houses for people who wish to rear children without being pushed into high-rise development. The Government should efficiently use the additional moneys made available to the Ministry of Housing through the agreement. The present situation is a disgrace; I have never seen its like in this Chamber before. I hope I shall never see this spectacle again.

Mr. AMOS (Morwell).—The Deputy Premier tonight had the gall to speak about the Government's record on housing. When the honorable gentleman was Minister of Housing, the result of his policy was that Victorians should be put into more little boxes than all the undertakers in Melbourne could put together. Without repeating complaints that have already been canvassed by other speakers in this debate, I refer to some remarks made about the new agreement which directly affected the operations of the Housing Commission in the Latrobe Valley. Honorable members have been told about past and present Government policy on high-rise flat accommodation. Because a tenant cannot purchase a high-rise flat, the total number of Housing Commission dwellings in Victoria available for rental is reduced.

Some time ago I asked the Minister of Housing—

How many applications had been received as at 31st August, 1973, for Housing Commission homes in Morwell, Traralgon and Moe, indicating rental and purchase applications, respectively?

On 12th September, the Minister supplied the following figures: Morwell, 116 families ; Moe, 104 families ; Traralgon, 64 families. Of the 116 families in Morwell, 89 wanted rental accommodation and 22 wanted to purchase Housing Commission homes. In Moe, of 104 applicants for homes, 73 families desired rental accommodation and only 6 wanted to purchase Housing Commission homes. In Traralgon, of 64 applicants, 44 families wanted to rent accommodation and only 17 wanted to purchase homes. That indicates that in the Latrobe Valley alone the majority of applicants want to rent accommodation. In Victoria 17,000 families are waiting for Housing Commission homes —not high-rise flats, but villa-type accommodation. The Latrobe Valley contains the largest Housing Commission estate outside the metropolitan area and Geelong. It is a good example of the number of people wanting to purchase homes, compared with those who want to rent accommodation.

Over the years the Government has unjustifiably wasted the resources made available to it by previous Federal Governments. Earlier this year it was made known to the Parliament, by a question on notice to the former Minister of Housing, that in Dandenong, the Latrobe Valley and Geelong, even though the Housing Commission employs officers for the collection of rentals, the sale of Housing Commission homes was conducted by selected real estate agents. I asked the Minister how many real estate agents in Geelong and the Latrobe Valley respectively sold Housing Commission homes and how much commission was paid to them for that purpose. I asked a further question on how much commission had been paid to real estate agents for the sale of Housing Commission homes throughout Victoria. The Minister replied that in the Latrobe Valley $213,871 had been paid in commission to real estate agents for the sale of homes. A further $156,048 was paid to real estate agents for the collection of rents. Throughout Victoria a total of $1 million was paid to real estate agents

by the Government for commission for the sale of Housing Commission homes. More than $1·125 million was paid to those agents in commission for rents collected. It is interesting to note the type of work done by real estate agents in the collection of rents for Housing Commission homes.

Mr. ROSS-EDWARDS.—Some of them do a very efficient job.

Mr. AMOS.—I admit that, but the Housing Commission should use its own office, which is adequately staffed with sufficient numbers of efficient officers, in a suitable location so that people wanting to purchase a Housing Commission home do not have to walk past the door of the office and continue for several miles down the road to the office of an estate agent to buy a home. All the real estate agent does is to keep a waiting list. The legal transactions associated with the sale are carried out by the Housing Commission, not by the real estate agent. Similarly, rents are not all paid to the real estate offices. The real estate agents do not chase delinquent accounts. They do not issue eviction notices or do the other work involved in collecting the money due to the Housing Commission. Officers of the Housing Commission carry out this responsibility. Therefore, real estate agents are being paid substantial sums of money simply for keeping waiting lists.

Mr. ROSS-EDWARDS.—That point is valid in areas where a Housing Commission office exists.

Mr. AMOS.—It is interesting to note where this occurs. Persons requiring Housing Commission accommodation in Dandenong could just as easily deal with the central office. People in Geelong have the services of a well-equipped and serviced Housing Commission office. Applicants for Housing Commission homes in the Latrobe Valley are very well served by an efficient office. The Government is paying large sums of money to estate agents for no apparent reason. In the Latrobe Valley, $470,000 has been paid in commission to real estate agents. Nobody can rent a Housing Commission home in Churchill except through the Teacher Housing Authority or the police housing authority. All the homes there have been built with subsidized low-interest finance made available by the Commonwealth Government. The real estate agent who has sold those homes in Churchill has netted $30,000 simply for keeping a waiting list.

Who are the real estate agents to whom I have referred? Mr. G. R. Billingsley has been appointed by the Housing Commission and has carried out the work for the past sixteen years. Mr. Williams has carried out the work for four years. The firm of Cameron Davies Pty. Ltd. has carried out the work for fifteen years.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. K. H. Wheeler).—Order! It escapes me how the real estate agents' commissions which the honorable member mentioned can be in line with the contents of the Bill. The honorable member is straying wide of the mark.

Mr. AMOS.—Mr. Speaker, I am endeavouring to illustrate to the House how funds allocated to the Housing Commission have been misused. The funds were received by the Government through the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement. and if steps are not taken to prevent their misuse they will continue to be misused. I direct attention to the unnecessary procedure of paying commission to real estate agents for performing tasks which could be more readily and efficiently done by Housing Commission officers. One estate agent in Churchill has sold homes in an area where houses have been constructed with funds provided under the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement. Those homes are not available for rental to any applicant in the Latrobe Valley. One of the estate agents is Mr. G. R. Billingsley. One might well ask who that gentleman is. He is a prominent member of the Liberal Party who donates generously to Liberal Party campaign funds.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. K. H. Wheeler).—Order! I suggested to the honorable member that the fees for collection of rents and to whom they were paid had little bearing on the contents of the Bill before the House. I ask the honorable member to return to the terms of the Bill.

Mr. AMOS.—I mentioned the collection of fees in a passing reference to one of the real estate agents concerned. It does affect the cost of housing.

Another matter which affects the proposed Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement is the move to be taken by the Premier of Victoria to negotiate with Federal authorities a new deal for housing in the Latrobe Valley area as a result of the Government's decision to destroy the Yallourn township.

In another debate I alluded to the fact that the Minister for Fuel and Power and the Minister of Housing are preparing a submission for the Premier to put to the Prime Minister. One clause of this Bill provides for the Commonwealth Minister for Housing to grant special exceptions to the agreement. It is possible that the needs test can be expanded so that additional homes may be built.

In the Latrobe Valley the State Government is completely wiping out about 1,000 homes because they belong to one instrumentality.

Mr. MEAGHER (Minister of Transport).—I raise a point of order. I have been fairly patient throughout this debate, but the honorable member for Morwell is now talking about the demolition of the town of Yallourn, which is not referred to in any way or even by implication in this agreement.

Mr. AMOS.—It was a passing reference.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. K. H. Wheeler).—Order! I have previously asked the honorable member to return to the Bill. It is in order to make passing references, but passing references are not lengthy speeches.

Mr. AMOS (Morwell).—The point I make is that already it has been announced publicly in the Latrobe Valley that the Minister for Fuel and Power and the Minister of Housing are preparing a submission for the Premier to submit to the Prime Minister. The provisions of the Bill allow for such communication to take place and for some straying from the needs test. I made a passing reference to the fact that one area of housing was being denied by the State, and yet another one was being sought from the Commonwealth because of the application of the provisions of this Bill.

I refer the House to an article which appeared in the *Latrobe Valley Express* of 10th October, stating that the Minister of Housing and the Minister for Fuel and Power are preparing a submission to the Prime Minister pointing out that few of the people who will lose their homes because of the destruction of Yallourn will qualify for Housing Commission homes because few earn less than $90 a week. It also stated that the Premier will ask that the special circumstances of the Latrobe Valley be taken into consideration and that some proportion of the Federal money allocated to Victoria for housing be exempt from the $90 a week stipulation. One may well ask whether it is necessary for this to be done. The need for it has been brought about by the restrictions which apply, and which applied on other agreements. Previously, families with a total gross income of more than $80 a week, and more than two children, could not obtain a Housing Commission dwelling, and families with one child, with a total gross income of more than $70 a week could not obtain housing. Now, because of Government action, families from the Yallourn area seeking accommodation elsewhere in the Latrobe Valley will not qualify unless special representations are made to the Commonwealth.

Mr. MEAGHER.—That is only because of this agreement.

Mr. AMOS.—It is not; these conditions applied previously to agreements which were made between the previous Victorian Minister of Housing and the previous Ministers for Housing in the Commonwealth Government. Previous Commonwealth-State Housing Agreements did not provide for any negotiation, as the Minister of Transport is aware.

Mr. MEAGHER.—It could be waived at a moment's notice by the Minister.

Mr. AMOS.—The Government is attempting to lead honorable members to believe that this agreement will create extra hardships in Victoria for applicants seeking Housing Commission dwellings. Nothing could be further from the truth. The State has been treated more than generously with the extra $14 million funds to be spent during the period of the new agreement. Furthermore, the restrictions about which the Government complains were in effect previously and were applied rigidly by the Minister of Transport when he was Minister of Housing, and by the Housing Commission.

I have already demonstrated that in the Latrobe Valley area more than three-quarters of the applicants are seeking houses for rental, not for purchase, and in excess of 93,000 families in Australia are seeking homes for rental. It must be conceded that that is the greatest area of need, and that in Victoria the 17,000 families seeking accommodation should be provided with accommodation as speedily as possible.

I commend the Bill. I believe it deserves a speedy passage. The people of Victoria have been waiting for months, or years if they live in the metropolitan area, for the benefits it bestows, and they deserve speedier attention than they have been accustomed to from this Government over the past few years.

Mr. ROPER (Brunswick West).—This debate has shown that the Government is extremely reluctant to accept a priorities policy in any area of its administration. It has introduced this Bill—no member of the Government party has said that he intends to vote against it—although on a number of occasions the Minister of Housing has said, or threatened in the press, that he would not comply with, or would seek ways and means of getting around the proposed agreement.

The basic idea behind the housing agreement is the concept of need—which is the neediest area in Australian housing and which is the area requiring the most assistance? One should remember that this is a five-year agreement, an agreement which will be renegotiated. In five years it will have served its purpose and will have dealt with one of the major problems. In five years' time there may well be other significant problems. However, the agreement relates to the area of low-cost rental accommodation and deals with it for what it is, the major problem facing the Australian people in the housing area.

If any honorable member has any doubts that this is the major problem, researches carried out in Victoria, and particularly in Melbourne, in the past few years should leave no doubt about it. The first study was carried out by Professor Henderson, Professor Harper and Miss Allison Harcourt; it was a study of "People in Poverty" in Melbourne. That document clearly showed that the basic problem for low-income earners and for large families was the very high cost of housing. It also showed that the same problem applied for aged people. The high cost and low quality of housing was the basic problem facing these people in poverty and keeping them there.

The second study, of 150 low-income families, was conducted by the Brotherhood of St. Laurence. This showed that the basic

problem of people who required assistance was the high cost and low quality of their accommodation. They had many other problems but that was the basic one. A number of them lived in Housing Commission accommodation, but more than half did not, and their problems of the quality of accommodation and its cost were seen to be far more serious than those of other people in the State. The third study—one can only go on press reports and pirated copies of the Doyle report on poverty in this State, which has not been published because it is an internal Liberal Party document—again suggested that the cost of housing and its unavailability contributed very substantially to poverty and poor living conditions in Victoria. Members of the Government party have carefully studied the Doyle report, probably so carefully that for one reason or another they have decided not to make it public. Poor families who, for one reason or another require rental accommodation, suffer when attempting to obtain housing. When one looks at the research material and then at the figures which indicate what the Government has done, one finds that in the past four months the names of more than 800 additional families have been placed on Housing Commission waiting lists, in a period when rents are rising astronomically. The waiting list has become even longer for families seeking rental accommodation.

If any honorable member in this House does not believe that at present low-income families and large families are going through a grave crisis, they should visit my electorate or many other electorates in Victoria. Many families have come to me in desperation over the past five months saying that they are being evicted and it is clear that the practice is growing. A house that once was available to a rental of $22 a week is now costing $28; a rental of $15 a week is now increased to $22 a week. On behalf of a family in need, I was naïve enough recently to go to an estate agent and ask about the cheapest 2-bedroom flat available in Brunswick at that time. I was told it was $25 a week. That is the kind of problem that thousands of people are facing. The Government asserts that this agreement does not meet Victoria's housing problems. The main housing problem in Victoria is the lack of cheap, adequate, low-rental accommodation and this Bill, which has been strongly supported by the Opposition, will enable the State Government, even despite its wishes, to provide much more low-rental accommodation.

The last point I make is that while all these ructions and confusions have been going on between the Commonwealth and State Governments, rents in Victoria have been increasing and the Victorian Government has done virtually nothing to assist people who are on the Housing Commission's waiting lists. Landlords in Victoria laugh at the fair rent legislation. Few tenants complain about the rents they are charged because there are no inspectors to investigate their cases.

The State Government is not carrying out its responsibility to provide low-rental accommodation. This Bill puts Victoria's housing policy for the first time where it should be and will enable the Government to meet the highest need and the highest priority. The Bill does not encourage what has happened in the past—skating around socially difficult questions—and it does not ignore those people in the community who are facing difficult circumstances. The Bill tackles those problems and, hopefully, five years hence, when the Australian Labor Party Government renegotiates a new housing agreement, this problem will be solved and other problems in the public housing field will be tackled.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was read a second time and committed.

Clause 1 was agreed to.

Progress was reported.

ADJOURNMENT.

TRACTOR ACCIDENTS—PROPOSED POINT ORMOND RESTAURANT—CRIME IN BRAYBROOK.

Mr. THOMPSON (Minister of Education).—I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

Mr. SIMMONDS (Reservoir).—I direct the attention of the Minister of Labour and Industry to the continued incidence of tractor accidents within Victoria. As reported in the *Age* on Monday, 29th October, Mr. Frederick Hugh Wiltshire, the veterinary surgeon to the Victorian Greyhound Racing Control Board, died in a tractor accident on his property at Lancefield, which is 42 miles north of Melbourne. His death occurred on Saturday, 27th October. Mr. Wiltshire, who was 47 years of age, was towing a tree, when it snagged. As a result, the tractor flipped over and crushed him.

One can read of tractor accidents in newspapers almost every week, but many of them are not reported in the press. Accidents suffered by colourful or well-known personalities are, and I suppose that is why Mr. Wiltshire's death, as a result of a tractor accident, was reported. He had been involved in the sport of greyhound racing for fifteen years and for many years he was the greyhound racing correspondent for the *Age* newspaper. It is only when people of some notability in the community are involved in this type of accident that reports are printed in the newspapers. I ask the Minister of Labour and Industry to investigate this and other accidents and to indicate what steps the Government will take to prevent similar accidents from occurring.

Mr. ROSS-EDWARDS (Leader of the Country Party).—I raise a matter with the Minister for Conservation following the announcement today that a restaurant will not be constructed at Point Ormond on a magnificent site for recreation purposes for people living in the area. Having regard to the fact that in 1965 this Parliament made a certain decision and that a contrary decision is proposed to be made, will the Minister for Conservation consider offering financial assistance to the St. Kilda City Council to restore this area to some of its former glory?

Mr. BALFOUR.—It is the same now as it was 40 or 50 years ago.

Mr. ROSS-EDWARDS.—In recent years it has deteriorated and that is understandable.

Mr. DIXON.—In what way has it deteriorated?

Mr. ROSS-EDWARDS.—Doubtless because of the threat hanging over it, the area has deteriorated as a park. There is scope to develop it with native shrubs and trees and to make full use of it. Many people did not realize the potential of this land until it appeared likely to be lost to the ordinary person. I consider that the Government is under an obligation to assist the St. Kilda City Council to make this area a showpiece on the foreshore of Port Phillip Bay. I ask the Minister for Conservation to confer with the St. Kilda City Council with the object of developing the area.

Mr. FOGARTY (Sunshine).—I refer to the Chief Secretary a report published in today's *Herald* attributing a statement to a person under the control of the honorable gentleman. The statement is of concern to the City of Sunshine and I believe it should be aired openly in this Chamber. In the County Court yesterday a detective is reported to have said—

It was unusual for a seventeen-year-old youth from Braybrook not to have a criminal record.

The report also alleges that the detective said—

Although there are a lot of nice people in Braybrook I feel it is to his, the accused's, credit, to live there and not have a prior conviction by the time he is 17.

As a representative of the people in the City of Sunshine, I take strong exception to the statement made by the detective. Many fine youths reside in the community and the vast majority of children of seventeen years of age who live in a disadvantaged area are respectable persons. I ask the Chief Secretary to investigate the allegation. The Mayor of Sunshine has made a statement on the article but I do not believe he went far enough. I also ask the Chief Secretary to table the results of his investigation in Parliament.

Mr. RAFFERTY (Minister of Labour and Industry).—I believe the information which the honorable member for Reservoir gave to the House is already known to the Department of Labour and Industry. The honorable member would also know that last year this Parliament enacted legislation relating to tractor accidents. At present the Government has no intention of altering that legislation.

Mr. BORTHWICK (Minister for Conservation).—I thank the Leader of the Country Party for his suggestion. The Government, through the Ministry for Conservation, will be pleased to advise the St. Kilda City Council, which is responsible for the Point Ormond area referred to, on any works that it cares to undertake. Point Ormond is a difficult area to reinstate because of the sea winds that blow there. I point out to honorable members that the main provision of the St. Kilda Land Act 1965 was the construction of the marina, the rental from which goes to the St. Kilda City Council, and from memory I think it is in the vicinity of $10,000 or $11,000 per annum. The St. Kilda City Council receives considerably more than that amount from the collection of rates from the land on which the marina is constructed. I am sure that the Ministry for Conservation will make advice freely available to the council, and the Government will co-operate generally.

Mr. THOMPSON (Minister of Education).—I shall be pleased to draw to the attention of the Chief Secretary the matter raised by the honorable member for Sunshine.

The motion was agreed to.

The House adjourned at 11.42 *p.m.*

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE.

The following answers to questions on notice were circulated:—

MOTOR REGISTRATION FEES.

(Question No. 302)

Mr. McINNES (Gippsland South) asked the Chief Secretary—

Whether he has received any requests to reduce or waive registration fees on vehicles used by partially incapacitated people similar to concessions extended to totally and permanently incapacitated ex-servicemen; where these vehicles are required in daily pursuits of business or living; if so, whether consideration will be given to such remission of registration fees?

Mr. ROSSITER (Chief Secretary).—The answer is—

Yes. The Government has received a number of requests of this nature over recent years, and they have been given careful consideration. However, the Government does not propose to extend the present policy under which concessions of this nature are limited to totally and permanently incapacitated ex-servicemen.

FUEL.

(Question No. 318)

Mr. AMOS (Morwell) asked the Minister for Fuel and Power—

1. How the royalty paid on brown coal compares with the royalty paid on natural gas—

(*a*) based on equivalent calorific values; and

(*b*) based on a percentage of price?

2. Why results of research financed by the Government were made available to Australian Char Pty. Ltd.?

3. What examination of the economics of producing liquid fuel from brown coal is currently being undertaken and by whom?

4. What is the estimated ceiling price of crude oil before the production of liquid fuel could be justified economically?

5. What examination of the economics of winning clay at the base of the brown coal in the Yallourn open cut have been carried out, indicating who carried out such examinations and what results were obtained?

6. What other clays are found in the brown coal seams at Yallourn which could be suitable for commercial production?

Mr. BALFOUR (Minister for Fuel and Power).—The answer is—

1. Royalty is paid at the rate of 4 cents per ton on brown coal of calorific value of 6,000 B.T.U. per pound. This is equivalent to ·30 cents per million B.T.U. As the coal concerned is not marketed a value would have to be assumed. Taking a value of $1.50 per ton the royalty on a percentage basis would be approximately 2·67 per cent.

Royalty is paid on natural gas under the provisions of the Petroleum (Submerged Lands) Act at the rate of 11 per cent of the well head value of the gas. With the present economics of gas production offshore, the production costs exceed the revenues obtained. In these circumstances a nominal value of ·27 cents per therm is placed on the gas at the well head. Royalty would therefore be approximately ·29 cents per million B.T.U.

In summary—for brown coal, the royalty is ·30 cents per million B.T.U.s or approximately 2·67 per cent of value at the mine; for natural gas, the royalty is 0·2976 cents per million B.T.U.s or 11 per cent of value at the well head.

2. The Government, as part of its policy for the marketing of brown coal and briquettes, has always, through the various agencies involved, made freely available the results of research into the chemical and physical properties of brown coal and briquettes. It has also, where practicable, provided assistance to organizations undertaking the development of commercial enterprise based on brown coal.

At various times over past years, the Gas and Fuel Corporation of Victoria, the State Electricity Commission of Victoria and the Brown Coal Research Laboratory of the University of Melbourne, have been actively involved in laboratory and pilot plant research directed towards the production of char from brown coal.

The result of much of this research has been published from time to time in technical and other journals and is therefore freely available to the public.

The ready availability of the considerable expertise built up on char production over the years was undoubtedly a significant factor in the decision by Australian Char Pty. Ltd. to proceed with commercial development at Morwell. Without this assistance, it is doubtful if this development would have occurred.

3. Confidential discussions have been initiated by the Government on this matter in order to establish a large scale, effective, research effort into this subject with the State Government taking an active role. It is too early to make a public announcement concerning this as a number of matters have still to be clarified.

4. There is no definite agreement on the estimated ceiling price of liquid fuels extracted from brown coal at present due to the uncertainty of current means of technology. As a broad guideline the consensus of opinion at present is that the figure would be in the order of three to four times the current price of Australian indigenous crude oil.

5. The State Electricity Commission has not examined the economics of mining clay at the base of the brown coal in the Yallourn Open Cut. Although the commission has encouraged inquiries from various interests, no proposal for the commercial development of the clay has been received.

6. The commission is aware that deposits of clay occur in the coal seams. However, it has not undertaken any investigation into the suitability of the clays for commercial production.

MARIBYRNONG RIVER BRIDGE.

(Question No. 390)

Mr. EDMUNDS (Moonee Ponds) asked the Minister of Transport—

1. What stage plans have reached in the construction of a new bridge across the Maribyrnong River at Fisher Parade, Ascot Vale?

2. When it is expected that work will commence and how long construction will take?

Mr. MEAGHER (Minister of Transport).—The answer is—

1 and 2. This bridge is the joint responsibility of the cities of Essendon and Footscray. The Country Roads Board is preparing the plans and specifications for the replacement of the bridge at the request of the Essendon City Council.

The design of a new bridge on the south side of the present bridge was well advanced, but was suspended early in 1972 because of a proposal for the future development of the Footscray Institute of Technology which would require deviation of Farnsworth Avenue. A new location is proposed for the bridge which will permit a road alignment to fit in with the present route of Farnsworth Avenue and would permit realignment of Farnsworth Avenue to suit the institute's proposals. The preliminary design of a bridge and approaches on this new alignment has now been completed.

An amendment to the planning scheme showing the altered road alignment and proposals relating to the Footscray Institute of Technology is required before work can proceed.

LEVEL CROSSINGS IN BRUNSWICK WEST ELECTORATE.

(Question No. 411)

Mr. ROPER (Brunswick West) asked the Minister of Transport—

Whether the Abolition of Level Crossings Committee has considered grade separation for any level crossings in the electoral district of Brunswick West?

Mr. MEAGHER (Minister of Transport).—The answer is—

No.

VICTORIAN RAILWAYS STAFF.

(Question No. 416)

Mr. CURNOW (Kara Kara) asked the Minister of Transport—

1. How many persons are employed by the Railway Department?

2. How many welfare officers and psychologists, respectively, are employed by the department?

3. Whether it is planned to employ additional welfare officers and psychologists; if not, why?

Mr. MEAGHER (Minister of Transport).—The answer is—

The information requested by the honorable member is contained in the following statement supplied by the Victorian Railways Board.

1. 24,996.

2. Two officers are engaged solely on staff welfare and rehabilitation. In addition staff welfare forms a significant portion of the function of other positions, for example the Supervisor of Apprentices.

No qualified psychologists are employed.

3. No. The railways consider that the existing provision for staff welfare is adequate.

MILEAGE POSTS ON HIGHWAYS.

(Question No. 417)

Mr. KIRKWOOD (Preston) asked the Minister of Transport—

Whether the Country Roads Board, when replacing the present mileage posts on highways with kilometer signs, will replace them with posts showing the distance from Melbourne and the distance from the nearest towns, similar to what is done in other States?

Mr. MEAGHER (Minister of Transport).—The answer is—

I will ask the Country Roads Board to investigate your suggestion.

BUSH-FIRE PUMP SUBSIDIES.

(Question No. 418)

Mr. CURNOW (Kara Kara) asked the Chief Secretary—

(Question No. 417)

1. Whether he has approved any applications for subsidies in this financial year for pumps to be used by farmers in case of bush fires; if so, how many?

2. How many applications are on hand but not approved and when they will be approved?

3. Whether all applications for subsidies submitted before the end of the summer fire danger period will be approved; if not, why?

Mr. ROSSITER (Chief Secretary).—The answer is—

1, 2 and 3. The Government has allocated $250,000 from the works and services account for payment of these subsidies in the current financial year. Five hundred and thirty-nine applications have already been approved and one hundred and twenty applications are on hand. The position will be kept under review as the financial year proceeds.

GRANTS TO DISADVANTAGED SCHOOLS.

(Question No. 434)

Mr. FORDHAM (Footscray) asked the Minister of Education—

1. Whether the Government recently made supplementary direct grants to disadvantaged schools for the year 1973-74 following the provision of funds for the purpose by the Commonwealth Government; if so, which schools have received these grants, indicating how much in each case?

2. What criteria were used in the establishment of these grants?

Mr. THOMPSON (Minister of Education).—The answer is—

1 and 2. Supplementary grants have been made to approximately 200 schools in the Melbourne metropolitan and Geelong areas. These schools were selected by a departmental committee after consideration of information provided by the Commonwealth arising from census returns.

Grants for individual schools were calculated on the basis of school enrolment multiplied by factors, derived from the Commonwealth information, which were assumed to reflect the socio-economic characteristics of the communities from which the

schools draw their enrolment. Grants ranged from $450 in the case of a small primary school to almost $6,000 for one of our largest city high schools. The payment of these grants to date has accounted for 35 per cent. of the $1 million made available in the State Budget for disadvantaged schools.

Because it is acknowledged that there are many other schools in the city and schools in the country which are entitled to financial support on account of particular disadvantages, the remaining 65 per cent will be distributed over the next few months after further investigations of needs.

Arrangements will shortly be announced whereby schools will be able to make application to the special committee for supplementary grants, and the department is presently appointing field consultants to visit schools on request to assist in the identification of disadvantages and to advise on the preparation of applications.

STATE ELECTRICITY COMMISSION VALUER.

(Question No. 438)

Mr. AMOS (Morwell) asked the Minister for Fuel and Power—

Which land valuer in the Latrobe Valley is engaged by the State Electricity Commission for land valuation purposes, indicating—

(*a*) how long this valuer has been so engaged by the commission;

(*b*) the terms and conditions of his appointment;

(*c*) how much money has been paid for his services in each of the years under appointment; and

(*d*) on what basis he was first appointed?

Mr. BALFOUR (Minister for Fuel and Power).—The answer is—

The Commission from time to time has engaged the firm of G. R. Billingsley Pty. Ltd., 26 Commercial Road, Morwell, to carry out land valuations in the Moe, Morwell and Traralgon Districts. It is understood that Mr. George Billingsley, principal of the firm, is the only person resident in the Latrobe Valley who holds a certificate to practise as a valuer for the whole of the Latrobe Valley area.

(*a*) Current records indicate that G. R. Billingsley Pty. Ltd. was first engaged to act as valuers in 1965.

(*b*) G. R. Billingsley Pty. Ltd. is not appointed nor is it under contract to the commission, but is engaged as and when required to provide valuations of freehold land or assessments of compensation for the acquisition of easements for transmission lines in the Latrobe Valley.

(*c*) Fees paid to the company for freehold assessments are in accordance with the basic scale of valuation fees prescribed by the Real Estate and Stock Institute of Victoria. With respect to easement compensation assessments the fees payable are determined having regard to the particular circumstances, such as time and travelling involved.

The total amounts paid annually to G. R. Billingsley Pty. Ltd. since 1965 are as follows:—

	$
1956-57	288
1957-58	1,814
1958-59	2,740
1959-60	900
1960-61	946
1961-62	339
1962-63	1,487
1963-64	1,043
1964-65	2,085
1965-66	843
1966-67	2,786
1967-68	2,083
1968-69	1,567
1969-70	5,493
1970-71	3,717
1971-72	1,717
1972-73	1,895
1973	2,645
24th October, 1973	34,288

(*d*) G. R. Billingsley Pty. Ltd. has been engaged because of its detailed knowledge of the real estate market in the Latrobe Valley.

In the instances where the commission desires a second valuation the firm of C. H. Burnham and Associates of 380 Russell Street, Melbourne, and/or the Valuer-General have from time to time been instructed.

LICENCE FEES FOR COMMERCIAL VEHICLES.

(Question No. 442)

Mr. CURNOW (Kara Kara) asked the Minister of Transport—

What is the present rate of licence fees for all commercial goods vehicles including ED., EI., and discretionary licences?

Mr. MEAGHER (Minister of Transport).—The answer is—

Section 14 of the Commercial Goods Vehicles Act 1958 provides that the annual licence fee for all commercial goods vehicle licences is $4, with the exception of ED licences which is 50 cents per annum.

SHARE FARMERS.

(Question No. 451)

Mr. McINNES (Gippsland South) asked the Chief Secretary—

1. Whether the State Accident Insurance Office has a clear definition of a share farmer as opposed to a direct employee, for the purposes of the Workers Compensation Act 1958?

2. Whether the owner of a farm is required to cover a share farmer under the provisions of the Act?

3. What was the total premium revenue received by the office from workers compensation for farmers and how many farmer policy holders there were in each of the past five years?

Mr. ROSSITER (Chief Secretary).—The answer is—

1. The legal standing of a share farmer under the Workers Compensation Act 1958 is not clear and is dependent upon the terms of the agreement in each case. Because of the resultant problems in determination of liability, the matter has been considered by the working party on workers compensation set up by the Government in 1971. Members of the working party are examining amending legislation which will clearly define the entitlement or otherwise of share farmers.

2. It is possible that the Workers Compensation Board would find that a share farmer is deemed to be a worker under subsection (6) of section 3 of the Workers Compensation Act 1958 as it did in the case of Hyland versus Humphrys (W.C.B. reports 1901/1962). Farm owners should therefore seek indemnity against potential liability under the Act.

3. Gross premiums received for farming—including dairying and hop and tobacco growing—were :—

		$
1967-68	—	124,086
1968-69	—	110,607
1969-70	—	106,910
1970-71	—	122,817
1971-72	—	113,161

The number of policies involved in these figures is not available.

CAMP ROAD OVERPASS.

(Question No. 453)

Mr. WILTON (Broadmeadows) asked the Minister of Transport—

1. What percentage of the $130,000 listed as item 106 in the table of the Railway Works and Services Bill currently before Parliament will be spent on the Camp Road overpass at Broadmeadows?

2. When work will commence on building the above overpass?

Mr. MEAGHER (Minister of Transport).—The answer is—

1. Approximately 6 per cent has been allocated for preliminary expenditure in the current financial year and provision made for a further 3 per cent during the balance of the period to which the Bill relates.

2. The Country Roads Board, which is constructing authority for the project, advises that actual construction work is expected to commence late in the 1974-75 financial year. However, in the meantime expenditure will be incurred on land acquisition, and possibly on relocation of services and acquisition of materials.

COUNTRY FIRE AUTHORITY.

(Question No. 455)

Mr. CURNOW (Kara Kara) asked the Chief Secretary—

What amount the Country Fire Authority will receive in 1973-74 from the Treasury and insurance companies, respectively?

Mr. ROSSITER (Chief Secretary).—The answer is—

The following amounts have been allocated to the Country Fire Authority for the 1973-74 financial year:—

Municipalities Assistance Fund	*Insurance contribution*
2,102,080	.. 4,204,160

AVONDALE HIGH SCHOOL.

(Question No. 465)

Mr. GINIFER (Deer Park) asked the Minister of Education—

When the Education Department plans to fence the boundary of the Avondale High School?

Mr. THOMPSON (Minister of Education).—The answer is—

A contractor has been selected to carry out the fencing of the Avondale High School site. The Public Works Department expects that the work will be put in hand within one month.

HOSPITALS ASSOCIATION.

(Question No. 466)

Mr. CURNOW (Kara Kara) asked the Minister of Health—

1. Which bodies or organizations comprise the Australian Hospitals Association?

2. What authority the association has to recommend that the Bush Nursing Association be integrated into the Hospitals and Charities Commission?

3. Whether he will give an assurance that the operations and structure of the Bush Nursing Association will not be changed?

Mr. SCANLAN (Minister of Health).—The answer is—

1. The Australian Hospitals Association is a private Australia-wide organization which is made up of representatives of hospitals and institutions and of various associations of persons working in the health field. It also includes a large number of individuals most of whom have a direct interest in the hospital field.

It is governed by a federal council with branch councils at State level.

2. Although one of its objects is "to promote... the extensions of rural-urban hospital co-ordination", the Association has no more authority than has any other privately operated organization or any private individual to make such a recommendation.

3. Both the Bush Nursing Association and the individual hospitals forming that associating are subsidized through the Department of Health. Bush nursing hospitals are registered as private hospitals but are exempt from the provisions of the Hospitals and Charities Act. Although some individual hospitals, a number of years ago, elected to become public hospitals subsidized through the Hospitals and Charities Fund, there is no intention within the foreseeable future to alter structure and operation of the Bush Nursing Association and its member hospitals.

CATTLE AND SWINE COMPENSATION FUNDS.

(Question No. 469)

Mr. CURNOW (Kara Kara) asked the Minister of Agriculture—

Whether he is aware that the Department of Agriculture is now refusing to pay compensation from the Cattle and Swine Compensation Fund for diseased animals found in stock yards; if so, whether he will have the decision reversed in the interests of primary producers and, if not, why?

Mr. I. W. SMITH (Minister of Agriculture).—The answer is—

Both the cattle compensation and swine compensation Acts provide that no compensation shall be payable under those Acts, where the owner of any cattle or swine visibly affected by disease has failed to give any notice of the existence of the disease required to be given by or under the Stock Disease Act 1958, or the Milk and Dairy Supervisor Act, 1958.

Under the Stock Diseases Act, it is an offence to expose, in a market, any stock that are diseased.

Departmental officers administering the stock diseases, the cattle compensation and the swine compensation Acts, have been instructed that the requirements of the legislation must be strictly implemented and that action should be taken against owners who expose diseased stock in markets.

HOUSING COMMISSION TENANCY AGREEMENTS.

(Question No. 474)

Mr. JONES (Melbourne) asked the Minister of Transport, for the Minister of Housing—

1. What is the wording of clauses 8 and 10, respectively, of the current Housing Commission tenancy agreements?

2. In which languages these tenancy agreements are available?

Mr. MEAGHER (Minister of Transport).—The answer supplied by the Minister of Housing is—

1. Clause 8—

"The Commission shall be at liberty by its officers, agents or workmen to enter upon the flat/house to inspect the state of repair and cleanliness at all times and to execute repairs or to make alterations or additions or for the purpose of reading or inspecting any meter installed in connection with the supply of hot water to the premises".

Clause 10—

"Where the tenant is in receipt of a rental rebate the Commission reserves the right at any time to determine the tenancy and transfer the tenant to such alternative accommodation as it thinks fit".

2. English only.

Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, November 1, 1973.

The SPEAKER **(the Hon. K. H. Wheeler)** took the chair at 11.4 a.m., and read the prayer.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE.

WASTE DISCHARGE LICENCES.

Mr. DOUBE (Albert Park).—In view of the fact that the Environment Protection Act requires all statutory bodies that discharge water to apply for licences by 1st June of this year, will the Minister for Conservation explain the significance of signs at various outlet points of creeks into Port Phillip Bay warning that the waters are still contaminated? Is there not an anomaly that licences

have to be applied for and yet the signs are still there saying that the water is heavily contaminated?

Mr. BORTHWICK (Minister for Conservation).— The Environment Protection Authority at this stage exempts all domestic septic sewerage systems. As honorable members will be aware from previous debates one of the major pollution problems in the waterways of this State is brought about by the large number of septic tanks throughout the peripheral areas of Melbourne. Running concurrently with that statement is the knowledge that the House has of the substantial sewerage headworks programme being undertaken by the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works at Cape Schanck, which extends the basic capacity of the board's system.

There has also been an upgrading of priority of the major headworks of the Dandenong Valley, which were initially recommended to be started in approximately 1985, but which are currently under way. Until an alternative is provided to septic tank sewerage through sewerage reticulation and prior to that the establishment of the necessary headworks, which are under way, many of the problems that the honorable members refer to in this question cannot be overcome.

FLUORIDATION.

Mr. WILLIAMS (Box Hill).—I address a question to the Minister of Health. Honorable members representing the electoral district of Box Hill have been circulated with material against fluoridation by a man who describes himself as President of the National Association of Naturopaths, Osteopaths and Chiropractors. I find a lot of his allegations most contrary to my particular views and I ask whether the Minister would investigate these allegations and categorically refute them.

Mr. SCANLAN (Minister of Health).—Is the person to whom the honorable member is referring a Mr. Jacka?

Mr. WILLIAMS.—Yes.

Mr. SCANLAN.—The honorable members referred to the National Association of Naturopaths, Osteopaths and Chiropractors. There have been a number of claims made by Mr. Jacka on behalf of associations of naturopaths, osteopaths and chiropractors that have been drawn to my attention and his usage of these names as an authorizing vehicle for advertisements in the *Age* and the *Herald* newspapers have caused considerable confusion to other chiropractic groups who are seeking recognition of their skill and qualifications. Mr. Jacka does not speak on behalf of all chiropractors.

Mr. WHITING.—How does the Minister know?

Mr. SCANLAN.—Because I have been assured by the President of the Australian Chiropractic Association that he does not. There are three different groups. Mr. Jacka seems to have conveyed to members of the House individually and to me as Minister a number of points about his opposition to fluoridation. I believe the position should be quite clearly put that his points are being considered and they will always be carefully considered.

Mr. Jacka has made a number of comments about the position in South Australia. I expect that the Health Department of South Australia will be quite prepared to examine those allegations about the effects of fluoridation in that State. So far as I am concerned, Mr. Jacka is not qualified to comment on the medical or biological aspects of fluoride. He is acting in a contrary fashion to the World Health Organization, the Australian Medical Association, the Australian Dentist Association, the International Dental Association, the Commission of Public Health and the National Medical and Research Council.

Mr. HOLDING.—And the Liberal Party.

Mr. SCANLAN.—And the Liberal Party, as the Leader of the Opposition says; I would agree with that.

I am also reminded that the Tasmanian Royal Commission should be included in the list. The points which Mr. Jacka raised have in large measure been examined by those bodies which have established the high standards of health we now enjoy throughout the world. Frankly, except for one or two matters which will be examined, what he said can be ignored.

PUBLICATION OF WAGE DETERMINATIONS.

Mr. FOGARTY (Sunshine).—I direct a question to the Minister of Labour and Industry. The weekly news letter of the honorable gentleman's department shows that there is a delay of four and a half months in the publication of wage determinations after they have been made, from June onwards, in many cases. Is this delay used by employers as a means of avoiding paying correct wages?

Mr. RAFFERTY (Minister of Labour and Industry).—The latter part of the question calls for an opinion, but the honorable member has raised a matter of importance and I will have it examined.

BICYCLE PATHS

Mr. McCLURE (Bendigo).—In the light of his research into bicycle travel this morning, will the Chief Secretary investigate the desirability of providing special lanes for bicycles on metropolitan roads?

Mr. ROSSITER (Chief Secretary).—Mr. Speaker, I believe this question should more properly be directed to the Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation, who was also concerned in this morning's research into bicycle riding in Melbourne. My own research leads me to believe that any middle-aged to elderly citizen who wishes to take up the advice of the Minister of Youth, Sport and Recreation on riding bicycles to ease traffic congestion should first enter into training for at least six months.

Mr. WILKES (Northcote).—I direct a further question to the Chief Secretary. Can the honorable gentleman advise me why it was necessary to have much needed police act as escort to him on his bicycle ride through the city this morning?

Mr. ROSSITER.—I have much pleasure in answering this question. No approach was made by either the Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation or the Chief Secretary for any such police assistance.

SALE OF GOVERNMENT LAND FOR HOUSING.

Mr. EDMUNDS (Moonee Ponds).—Can the Premier inform the House when the first ballot will be arranged to determine who will be able to buy the Government land which is to be released for private housing?

Mr. HAMER (Premier and Treasurer).—This matter is in the hands of the Minister of Housing. I will ask him to forward a reply to the honorable member for Moonee Ponds indicating when it is proposed that land will be released under the plan which he has already promulgated. If I remember correctly, it was stated that it would be early in the New Year.

RECREATIONAL FACILITIES FOR MEMBERS.

Mr. CRELLIN (Sandringham).—Can the Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation inform the House whether, in the planning of the north wing of Parliament House, provision has been made for recreational facilities for members?

The SPEAKER (The Hon. K. H. Wheeler).—Order! That is not a matter for the Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation, but for the House Committee. The question could be directed to me, as chairman of that committee.

Mr. CRELLIN.—I redirect the question to you, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. K. H. Wheeler).—Details of the plans are being investigated, and any questions which honorable members may have on this matter will be examined.

WASTE DISCHARGE LICENCES.

Mr. DOUBE (Albert Park).—I direct a question without notice to the Minister of Health. In view of the answer given to me by the Minister for Conservation indicating that certain sewerage and drainage authorities do not require licences or permits to discharge effluent into Port Phillip Bay, will the honorable gentleman have warning notices, similar to those placed at the mouth of the Kananook Creek and the Mordialloc Creek, placed at the mouth of the Elwood Canal and the Cowderoy Street drain, because these drains carry effluent which is offensive to people and, in the opinion of many people, dangerous to health?

Mr. SCANLAN (Minister of Health).—I will examine the proposition put forward by the honorable member.

RAIL FREIGHTS.

Mr. McINNES (Gippsland South).—I direct a question to the Minister of Transport. In view of the rail freight differential between Sale and Yarram on groceries of $18.70 a ton and on beer of $10.85 a ton, does this indicate that the Railways Board gives higher priority to beer, or treats it as a preferred cargo?

Mr. MEAGHER (Minister of Transport).—The railways freight rate books have grown up over a number of years, based largely on what the traffic will bear. The whole question of freight rates is being examined by the new Railways Board, which I hope will come up with something better than has been applicable in the past.

BICYCLE PATHS.

Mr. GUY (Gisborne).—As I have received many requests and serious representations have been made to the Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation about the provision of bicycle paths in certain built-up areas of the Gisborne electorate, is the Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation in a position now, after this morning's excursion, to advise the House what his department's future policy will be to the construction of bicycle paths in Victoria?

Mr. DIXON (Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation).—The policy of my department is to strive to encourage the introduction of bicycle paths in Melbourne and throughout Victoria. It did appear to me this morning that there are distinct possibilities for four routes, one each from the north, south, east and west, into the inner-city area. Certainly the route that was pursued this morning by the Chief Secretary and myself, along Beach Road and Beaconsfield Parade, through Kerferd Road—we could have gone around City Road into the eastern end of the city—would be relatively easy to negotiate. Similarly, routes from other directions will be possible provided that the will to use them is there. The Minister of Transport has asked the Country Roads Board to undertake a feasibility study on where these routes could be located.

Mr. CURNOW.—It is just a publicity stunt.

Mr. DIXON.—It is not a publicity stunt and I resent that statement by the honorable member. In major cities in other parts of the world, routes and parts of routes into the central business district have been set aside for bicycles. The plan has benefits in terms of the traffic congestion and of anti-pollution, relaxation and health of the citizens. This is a serious business, and the Government is considering it seriously.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. K. H. Wheeler).—Order! Whether it is or is not, as has been suggested, a publicity stunt is certainly beside the point. The Minister was asked a

question and if honorable members consider that it is hilarious, this is not the place to show it.

Mr. DIXON.—Concerning the reference by the Chief Secretary, I point out that 50 per cent of the population is under 30 years of age, and it would be the desire of this Ministry that when those citizens reach the age of the Chief Secretary they will have no need to undergo such a course of training.

I think it is also true to say that there are many people of middle age and older who would find a ride of some 3 or 4 miles quite easy. I am certain that this idea is going to produce more beneficial effects for a number of factors.

BICYCLES FOR MINISTERS.

Mr. HANN (Rodney).—I ask the Premier and Treasurer whether, in view of the interest taken in bicycles by Ministers, he can envisage a situation in the future where a Minister will be issued with a tandem bicycle with the driver on the front rather than a Ministerial car.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. K. H. Wheeler).—Order! Question time is provided to enable honorable members to obtain information on serious matters. I reject frivolous questions.

AMALGAMATION OF MUNICIPALITIES.

Mr. BORNSTEIN (Brunswick East).—Can the Premier and Treasurer inform the House when the Voumard committee completed its report on the proposed amalgamation of municipalities and when the Government first received the information contained in the report?

Mr. HAMER (Premier and Treasurer).—I presume the honorable member is referring to the report on the amalgamation of four municipalities, including the City of Melbourne. I have no idea when the committee completed its report but it became available to the Government in the last week or so.

ACCIDENTS AT LEVEL CROSSINGS.

Mr. AUSTIN (Hampden).—In view of the recent tragic double fatality at a level crossing at Willaura, will the Minister of Transport investigate the feasibility of using vivid paint on trains so that they may be easily distinguished, because this particular accident took place at a comparatively safe railway crossing? The use of brighter paint might make trains more discernible to motorists.

Mr. MEAGHER (Minister of Transport).—Over a number of years, the railways have carried out experiments with painting trains in vivid colours in order that they might be more visible. A number of problems have been involved in effecting this type of solution. One problem concerned the dust coming up from the track and destroying the luminosity of the paint. There was also an experiment with the use of tarpaulins to cover up certain portions of the train and so break the continuity of the designs.

The railways also experimented a few years ago with installing luminous painted boards alongside tracks so that a flickering effect would be visible through the wheels of the train. All these things have been tried at times, but so far it has been impossible to find a way of preventing people who are stupid from running into trains.

DECOMPRESSION CHAMBER FOR MALLACOOTA.

Mr. B. J. EVANS (Gippsland East).—Has the attention of the Minister of Public Works been directed to a report in this morning's newspaper concerning a diver at Mallacoota who required treatment in a decompression chamber? Is the Minister aware of moves within his department to build a facility at Mallacoota in which it is proposed to provide a decompression chamber? If so, when is it expected that the facility will be provided?

Mr. DUNSTAN (Minister of Public Works).—The answers to the three questions are, "No", "No", and, "I don't know".

ACCIDENTS AT LEVEL CROSSINGS.

Mr. JONES (Melbourne).—I direct a further question to the Minister of Transport following the question asked by the honorable member for Hampden. To try to avoid fatalities at level crossings, will the Minister consider the installation of rumble strips and/or metal topes along the lines of those which have been investigated by the Road Safety and Traffic Authority and which have been widely used in Mexico with great success?

Mr. MEAGHER (Minister of Transport).—Yes, I will be happy to discuss that proposal with the relevant parties.

AMALGAMATION OF MUNICIPALITIES.

Mr. ROPER (Brunswick West).—In the light of the considerable public discussion on what is now known as the second Voumard report, will the Premier take steps to ensure that copies are available to members of this House and interested councils which may wish to examine it?

Mr. HAMER (Premier and Treasurer).—The answer is, "Yes".

MOTORAIL SERVICES.

Mr. TREZISE (Geelong North).—Because of the success of the motorail service between Melbourne and Mildura, which this year has carried twice as many motor cars as last year, I ask the Minister of Transport whether any other railway lines are being considered for a similar service. If so, which one?

Mr. MEAGHER (Minister of Transport).—It appears that there is a motorail service to Mildura and one to Sydney and Murwillumbah in northern New South Wales. They have been successful, and in due course it is hoped to introduce them on other appropriate lines.

LOCUST PLAGUE.

Mr. TREWIN (Benalla).—Will the Minister of Agriculture inform the House of the present position concerning the grasshopper plague in the northern part of Victoria, and in the southern Riverina? Can the necessary manpower in the Department of Agriculture be made available to repel this plague?

Mr. I. W. SMITH (Minister of Agriculture).—In parts of New South Wales and northern Victoria, there appears to be one of the most serious outbreaks of plague locusts that have been known. However, in recognition of that fact, various chemicals have been strategically placed in New South Wales by the New South Wales Government and in Victoria by the Victorian Government. There is very close liaison between the two Governments and the Commonwealth Government, which has agreed to provide up to $500,000 on a $1 for $1 basis with the States for the control of locust plagues.

At this stage, I am optimistic that it will not be a major problem because of the control measures which are in hand. However, one can never be too sure. The locust is a strange pest and it may well be that at some time locusts will decide to swarm together and assume plague proportions. If they do they will spread rapidly down into Victoria. Locusts have been known to fly from the River Murray to Bass Strait overnight and it is very difficult to combat this type of rapid mass movement. Apparently in some parts of Broken Hill locusts are now so thick that they have been stopping trains from progressing along the tracks. That gives an indication of the seriousness of the threat.

The Department of Agriculture has officers specially organized and employed throughout the State and at this stage I am confident that locusts

are not a threat, but we rely on the farming community to report outbreaks and movements of locusts to the department so that they can be traced and steps taken to ensure that control measures are effective.

FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE DIVISION.

Mr. CURNOW (Kara Kara).—Can the Minister for Conservation inform the House whether it is the intention of the Fisheries and Wildlife Division to appoint assistants to country inspectors and, if so, when?

Mr. BORTHWICK (Minister for Conservation).—The appointment of additional inspectors is determined by the availability of finance and is also a matter for the Public Service Board. I hope additional staff will be appointed, but I cannot give the honorable member any assurance about that.

POLICE SEARCH AND RESCUE VESSEL.

Mr. CRELLIN (Sandringham).—Can the Chief Secretary inform the House of the delivery date of the new police search and rescue vessel?

Mr. ROSSITER (Chief Secretary).—The vessel which has been purchased by the Victoria Police Force has embarked on its voyage from Sydney to Melbourne and will arrive in Port Phillip Bay at approximately 4 a.m. on 7th November.

DRIVING LICENCE TESTING.

Mr. EDMUNDS (Moonee Ponds).—Will the Chief Secretary advise the House whether the Government is considering a more comprehensive driving licence test and whether, in addition to the oral test which is given to prospective licence holders, written tests are being considered by the Government?

Mr. ROSSITER (Chief Secretary).—The methods of testing for driving licences are always under review. I recently received submissions from the Road Safety and Traffic Authority, which has been examining present procedures. The Chief Commissionor of Police is presently studying those submissions. Questions were asked in the House last week by members of the Opposition concerning the difficulties experienced by new Australians in undergoing driving licence tests. Those matters are being examined.

HEAVY VEHICLE SPEEDS.

Mr. SKEGGS (Ivanhoe).—In view of the increasing incidence of trucks speeding along main arterial highways, particularly trucks driven by owner-contract drivers, will the Chief Secretary consider reducing the maximum permissible speed for heavy vehicles?

Mr. ROSSITER (Chief Secretary).—I shall be happy to discuss that matter with the Road Traffic and Safety Authority.

REFLECTORIZED NUMBER PLATES.

Mr. TREZISE (Geelong North).—In view of the fact that the highest percentage of road accidents at night are caused by rear-end collisions, can the Chief Secretary inform the House whether an inquiry into the use of reflectorized number plates on motor cars has been carried?

Mr. ROSSITER (Chief Secretary).—Yes, there is an inquiry at present in train concerning the advisability of introducing reflectorized number plates for motor cars in Victoria. They are used in other States, and we are examining their experience of these number plates.

LOCUST PLAGUE.

Mr. McINNES (Gippsland South).—In view of the concern of the Minister of Agriculture about the current locust plague, can the honorable gentleman advise whether he has received an offer of assistance from the military forces, particularly the Air Force, and is he prepared to give an undertaking that the commercial agricultural aviation industry will be fully utilized before assistance is accepted from other sources?

Mr. I. W. SMITH (Minister of Agriculture).—I did not know that we had any military forces left. It is the policy of the Victorian Government to use its own resources as best it can. That involves the use of commercial aircraft. However, the Commonwealth Government has advised that, if necessary, whatever military forces it can muster will be available.

PAPERS.

The following papers, pursuant to the direction of an Act of Parliament, were laid upon the table by the Clerk:—

Public Service Act 1958—Public Service (Public Service Board) Regulations—Regulations amended Nos. 572 and 573 (two papers).

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

Mr. HOLDING (Leader of the Opposition).—Mr. Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I desire to seek your guidance and assistance. The procedures which have been adopted by the Government have become a matter of concern to the Opposition. They seem to be leading to a situation where, when the time allotted under sessional orders for the debate of general business has expired, the question then standing before the House is not put. If the House continues to follow this procedure, the situation will be reached where there will remain a whole series of motions which are virtually left unresolved.

In discussions between the Deputy Premier and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition the implication was that when the time allotted for debate on matters—which can be dealt with either as notices of motion or as matters arising from Ministerial statements—had expired the House could so order its affairs that the matter would be resolved. It is unsatisfactory for the House to find itself now with two Orders of the Day virtually unresolved. If that procedure is followed today, there will be three unresolved Orders of the Day.

With the concurrence of the Deputy Premier and to have these matters resolved, I suggest that when the appropriate time allowed for the debate is about to expire, the question should be put. The House can govern its affairs so that any honorable member who wants to speak on the subject-matter will be given an opportunity of doing so but the matter will be resolved. It is undesirable for the House to have the Notice Paper cluttered with unresolved matters.

Mr. THOMPSON (Minister of Education).—I do not disagree with the course of action advocated by the Leader of the Opposition. It would be a more satisfactory approach for these matters, which arise from debates or substantive motions, to be resolved at the conclusion of the debate and not remain on the Notice Paper, at least as a general rule.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. K. H. Wheeler).—Order! If no honorable member rose in his place to seek the call, the question would be put. If an honorable member rises I have no alternative but to call on him to speak.

Mr. WILKES (Northcote).—The real problem, and the Opposition has discussed this with the Deputy Premier, is that under sessional orders time is allocated for the debate of general business on Thursdays. Last Thursday a substantive motion was before the Chair and when the time had expired the motion was not put. There is no procedure except by special resolution of the House under which the motion can be brought on again for debate. Under the sessional orders debate of general business on Thursdays can take place only until 1 p.m. Today only one and a half hours remains for debate of general business. The procedure which the Opposition suggests should be followed is that after that period of time has expired the question should be put. This would be similar to the normal procedure when a Bill is guillotined at the expiration of the allotted time. I believe that would

dispose of the question, and the Order of the Day would be removed from the Notice Paper.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. K. H. Wheeler).—The Chair is obliged to observe the sessional orders, unless the House decides otherwise. If no honorable member rises in his place to seek the call, the procedure is simplified became the question is then put. The course of action to be followed really rests with the House.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT.

DRY-DOCKING FACILITIES FOR PORT OF MELBOURNE.

Mr. WILTON (Broadmeadows).—In his Ministerial statement of Tuesday, 23rd October of this year, on the dry-docking facilities for the port of Melbourne, the Minister of Public Works prostituted all principles of political morality. I move—

That this House take note of the Ministerial statement on future dry-docking facilities for the port of Melbourne.

The statement was a cowardly attack on a Minister of the national Parliament. It was without foundation, completely inaccurate and distorted the issues deliberately for the purposes of extracting the Minister of Public Works and his Government from the situation in which they placed themselves because of their fumbling inability to get on with the job and because of the gulf that exists between the Minister and the Premier. I propose to establish that beyond doubt.

Mr. DUNSTAN.—Can the honorable member substantiate that?

Mr. WILTON.—I can substantiate it and ram it back down the Minister's throat. I refer to the first shot fired by the honorable gentleman in the safety of this Parliament.

Mr. DUNSTAN.—I will say it outside.

Mr. WILTON.—The Minister of Public Works said—

The background to an answer is littered with Commonwealth Government indecision, apparent disinterest, procrastination and cancelled appointments.

I shall examine the statement of the Minister as against the facts, not the distorted version given by the Minister for Public Works.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. K. H. Wheeler).—Order! From what is the honorable member quoting?

Mr. WILTON.—I am not quoting from anything.

The SPEAKER.—I thought the honorable member was quoting from a document.

Mr. WILTON.—I am referring to page 1273 of *Hansard,* of 23rd October of this year.

Mr. DUNSTAN (Minister of Public Works).—I rise to a point of order. In the Ministerial statement I did not mention 1969. The honorable member has just said that he is quoting from the Ministerial statement and he is referring to the year 1969.

Mr. WILTON.—Is the Minister deaf as well as stupid? He should sit down. What is the matter with him?

Mr. DUNSTAN.—I distinctly heard the honorable member say that he was quoting from the Ministerial statement. The year 1969 is not mentioned in the Ministerial statement.

Mr. WILTON.—I did not say it was.

Mr. DUNSTAN.—From where is the honorable member quoting that year?

Mr. WILTON.—If the Minister will sit down, I will tell him. As far back as 1969, the situation of Duke and Orr's dry dock became obvious.

Mr. STEPHEN.—Is this a point of order? A point of order was taken.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. K. H. Wheeler).—Order! There is no point of order. There was evidently a misunderstanding between the Minister and the honorable member for Broadmeadows.

Mr. WILTON (Broadmeadows).—As long ago as 1969 it became obvious to the people operating Duke and Orr's dry dock that with the construction of the bridge across the

Yarra River their dock would become inoperative and a replacement would be required. A plan was prepared and sent to the then Federal Government in 1970 by the former Minister of Public Works. Now the present Minister talks about procrastination.

Mr. DUNSTAN.—What are you quoting from?

Mr. WILTON.—I am quoting from the Ministerial statement.

Mr. DUNSTAN.—I did not say that in my statement.

Mr. WILTON.—The honorable gentleman said—

> The background to an answer is littered with Commonwealth Government indecision, apparent disinterest, procrastination and cancelled appointments.

That was so until 2nd December, 1972. The former Federal Government received a report from the then Minister of Public Works in 1970.

Mr. DUNSTAN.—I did not say that.

Mr. WILTON.—I am not saying that the honorable gentleman did, but that is what happened. The report was sent to the Commonwealth Government in 1970 and the decision was made in 1972 that no finance would be provided by the Commonwealth Government for the replacement of the dry dock. That decision was conveyed to the Victorian Government in August, 1972.

Mr. DUNSTAN (Minister of Public Works).—On a point of order, I must ask the honorable member to inform the House from what document he is now quoting. It is not the Ministerial statement.

Mr. WILTON.—I am not quoting from any document.

Mr. DUNSTAN.—The honorable member is reading dates from it.

Mr. BORNSTEIN (Brunswick East).—On the point of order, the Minister is erroneously saying that the honorable member for Broadmeadows is quoting from another document. Surely it is within the competence of any honorable member to refer to notes during a debate and I put to you, Mr. Speaker, that that is what the honorable member for Broadmeadows is doing. The only quotations he is making are from the Ministerial statement of the Minister of Public Works. That should be obvious to the Minister and to any other honorable member.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. K. H. Wheeler).—Order! On the first point of order, I understood that the Minister was trying to ascertain from what the honorable member was quoting. The answer given by the honorable member was that he was not quoting from the Ministerial statement at that time. There was no point of order at that stage.

The honorable member for Brunswick East was in the same position as I was, of not knowing whether the honorable member was quoting from a document or not. That was the same sort of information I was seeking. The honorable member for Broadmeadows has explained the situation by saying that he was not quoting from a document when the question arose. Therefore, the point of order of the honorable member for Brunswick East cannot be upheld.

Mr. WILTON (Broadmeadows).—The decision of the previous Federal Government, of which Mr. McMahon was Prime Minister, was conveyed to the Victorian Government in August, 1972, prior to the last Federal elections, and it was that no finance would be provided by the Commonwealth Government to assist in the replacement of Duke and Orr's dry dock. At page 1274 of *Hansard* of 23rd October, in his Ministerial statement, the Minister of Public Works said—

> Does not August, 1972, come before December, 1972? Apparently the Minister has some difficulty in understanding our calendar. He seems to have difficulty in understanding the difference between August, 1972, and December, 1972. The McMahon Liberal Government conveyed its decision to the Victorian Government in August, 1972. There was to be no money for Victoria; the money was to go to Newcastle. The Commonwealth Government's departmental committee studied the submissions made by the Victorian Government in 1970.

The committee recommended to the McMahon Government that the funds be directed to the installations to be built at Newcastle. Victoria was advised accordingly in August, 1972. The Minister of Public Works said that representations seeking financial assistance for the construction of a new dry dock in Melbourne were made by the Premier to the then Prime Minister in October last year. They were made both in 1970 and 1972! The honorable gentleman went on to say that a decision was not made before the defeat of the Government in December. But a decision was made in August, 1972.

Apparently, there is no communication between the Premier and the Minister. They are so far apart that the Minister does not know what sort of information the Premier receives. The Minister said that the background to the answer was littered with Commonwealth Government indecision. On 13th March of this year the Commonwealth Labor Government decided that finance would be made available. The decision was conveyed to the Premier that day. The Premier is not talking to his Minister of Public Works. He would not tell him what the Commonwealth Government told him in 1972, and apparently he has not told him that the new Commonwealth Government will provide money. Where is the indecision on the part of the Commonwealth Government to which the Ministerial statement refers?

All this clearly shows that the Ministerial statement prostitutes the political morality of the Government. In fact, its political morality is going downhill fast. One could almost say that the Victorian Government is the Moll Flanders of Australian politics.

Mr. HOLDING.—Mr. Speaker, a quorum is not present.

A quorum was formed.

Mr. HOLDING (Leader of the Opposition).—As an amendment, I move—

That the following words be added to the motion:— "and condemns the Minister of Public Works because of his failure to provide all the available facts, and for the political bias contained in the statement, and records its belief that the replacement of existing dry dock facilities is a matter of urgency, and requests the Minister to provide the detailed submissions necessary to enable this project to be commenced forthwith by both the Federal and State Governments."

The SPEAKER (the Hon. K. H. Wheeler).—Members speaking from this point will be deemed to be speaking to both the motion and the amendment.

Mr. HOLDING.—It is always with regret that one moves an amendment which says as bluntly as this that a Ministerial statement did not record the facts, was laden with political bias and could have, in its end result—if more sense had not been shown by the Commonwealth Government—damaged the relationship which should exist between Federal and State Ministers on a matter as important as the creation of dry-docking facilities.

The terms of the amendment have not been used loosely and it is incumbent on me to satisfy the House on all its ingredients. The first aspect of the amendment condemns the Minister of Public Works because of his failure to provide all the available facts. I rest my case on the failure of the Government to take effective action at an appropriately early time to get this project under way. There was no reference in the Ministerial statement to any events which preceded December, 1972.

I realize that the election of a Federal Labor Government in 1972 caused a considerable trauma to the Minister, but I would have expected that, when the honorable gentleman made a statement to the House in which he proposed to state the history of negotiations with the Commonwealth on a project as important as the one under discussion, it was incumbent on him to inform the House of all its aspects. But the

Minister did not refer to correspondence or events which preceded December, 1972.

That, of itself, was a significant omission, and I rely on it to substantiate my allegation that the Minister has failed to provide all the relevant facts. But it also goes some way to establish the second element of the amendment, the allegation of political bias in the statement.

Mr. DUNSTAN.—Are we all not biased?

Mr. HOLDING.—Of course. It is no slander to say of anyone in public life that he is politically biased.

Mr. DUNSTAN.—Then why pick on me?

Mr. HOLDING.—Obviously, from his own statement, the Minister confuses his political functions with his Ministerial duties. As an advocate of the Liberal Party, the honorable gentleman can show as much bias as he wishes. That is part of his political duty—I would put it as high as that. But when he, as a Minister of the Crown, informs the House on important negotiations, he has a responsibility and a duty to the House to exclude, as far as practicable, political bias from his statement. The honorable gentleman was biased in making a statement, not in the sense of showing a normal form of political bias, but in failing to meet his Ministerial obligations to Parliament.

I put that in two ways. The bias was quite deliberate in order that the House would not be informed of the failure of the Government and its predecessor to act responsibly.

Mr. DUNSTAN.—Do you mean the failure of the McMahon Government?

Mr. HOLDING. — Both the McMahon and the Hamer Government, and also the Bolte Government. The Federal Government had been approached and had formed an interdepartmental committee in July, 1970, to consider a request from the New South Wales Government for financial assistance towards the provision of a new dry dock in Newcastle. It is clear from the file that at that time the bridge that was planned by the Board of Works to cross the Yarra River in the area of Johnson Street would go between Duke and Orr's dry dock and the sea. It was equally clear that a new dry dock would be needed to enable commercial shipping to dock in Melbourne. Duke and Orr's, the company which leased the facility from the Melbourne Harbor Trust, had commissioned consultants, Maunsell and Partners, in 1969 to investigate the need for a new dry dock.

I remind the House of those dates. In 1969 Duke and Orr's, conscious of the problems, commissioned a private organization to advise them. In July, 1970, the Commonwealth Government under the McMahon administration set up an inter-departmental committee to consider the problem on the basis of a request which it had received from the New South Wales Government. The first contact which the McMahon Government had received from the Victorian Government was in January, 1972. That was two years after the establishment of the Commonwealth committee, which would have been able to deal with the matter, and almost three years after Duke and Orr's were apprised of the problem and had commissioned a private organization to advise them. Perhaps the mistake was made by the Melbourne Harbor Trust; perhaps it was made by Duke and Orr's; but there was a time lag of almost three years between when the Minister of Public Works was apprised of the problem and when the Victorian Government's request was made to the Commonwealth. I shall not weary the House by quoting from correspondence that passed between the Premier and the Prime Minister, but the dates are important.

The first letter which was sent by the then Premier, Sir Henry Bolte, on 6th January, 1972, was acknowledged by the Prime Minister's private secretary on 10th January.

1972. Correspondence was exchanged, but seven months elapsed before Mr. McMahon—the friend and colleague of the Victorian Liberal Government—refused the request for assistance. The Minister of Public Works made no mention of that. The file contains not a single note condemning the Federal Government for the delay.

Mr. DUNSTAN.—To which file is the Leader of the Opposition referring?

Mr. HOLDING.—I am referring to the file which the Premier laid upon the table several days ago. There was not a note of criticism concerning the then Federal Government, and by then there had been a delay of seven months. This was conveniently forgotten by the Minister in his attempt to demean a Federal Labor Minister. A further letter was sent to the Prime Minister by the present Premier on 30th October, 1972, and was acknowledged on 1st November, 1972. However, no reply was made to the substantive matters raised by the Premier on the Victorian Government's second attempt to obtain Federal assistance. By 1st November, 1972, there had been a delay of almost two years from the time the Victorian Government was apprised of the problem; a delay of seven months before the former Prime Minister, Mr. McMahon, refused the request; and a further delay of two months before another request was made by the present Premier to which no acknowledgment was received.

I invite honorable members to consider the series of events, because that is an accurate summary of the relationship that existed between the Victorian Government and the Federal Liberal Government. Not even the most enthusiastic back-bench Liberal could say that speed was the essence in those negotiations. Was there any sense of urgency? Was a public statement made or did press notices appear? It is well known that the Premier is not reluctant to be photographed. Did he go down to Duke and Orr's dry dock and say, "We need a new dock"? He certainly did not. At that stage it was important for the Victorian Government not to embarrass an ailing, failing Liberal administration.

What I might describe as the next series of correspondence began on 19th December, 1972, after the election of the Federal Labor Government, when a letter was written by the Premier to the Prime Minister. The letter was acknowledged on 5th January by the Prime Minister, who sent a telegram to the Premier on 13th March, barely one and a half months later, accepting in principle that negotiations should take place to arrange a joint agreement with the Victorian Government for the ownership of the dock with the Australian Government, and for any assets gained to be commensurate with the final contribution. The Premier sent a telegram in reply noting and appreciating the decision and saying that he would be happy for Victoria to take part in the negotiations. Where there had previously been considerable delay, one of the initiatives taken by the Prime Minister was to respond to the request within two months. It was almost a record for this Government to be told that the Commonwealth Government would be pleased to provide funds and to participate in a project.

The Premier was properly delighted with the response and indicated that he would be happy for Victoria to take part in the negotiations. However, the negotiations would involve not merely contact but a consideration of the offer made by the Commonwealth.

Mr. DUNSTAN.—No specific offer was made by the Commonwealth; a promise to provide money is not a specific offer, as it may mean 25 per cent, 50 per cent or the lot.

Mr. HOLDING.—Perhaps I should give the Minister some helpful advice by telling him that he is in enough

trouble now and should not compound it by trying to extract himself from the situation by suggesting that as a result of the telegram from the Prime Minister, the Premier did not understand that the Commonwealth had come to the party and that in principle the Federal Government was prepared to be involved in the building of a new facility. It was clear at that stage that the State would have to put submissions and that the Commonwealth would have to consider them, perhaps then make submissions of its own, and arrive at a basis for discussion. Apparently, the Minister and I agree on the facts up to date.

What then occurred is that the Victorian Government—I think this has been conceded—had under consideration the despatch of a technical study group to review floating dock design, construction and operation in a number of countries. The original discussions centred around a dry dock, but as matters emerged the type of the dock became a matter for consideration and deliberation. Indeed, the Federal Government was concerned to provide a floating dock facility somewhere in south-eastern Australia and as a proposal had been submitted by the Victorian Government this was the basis upon which the Federal Government was concerned to operate. The type of the dock and its location became a problem. Several questions were involved and the Minister of Public Works and the Victorian Government acting quite responsibly had to be prepared to gather the technical information. A study team was given the task of investigating the most suitable dock, with particular reference to floating docks. Following the appointment of consultants, the study team left early in May and returned in July. The Commonwealth Government made a senior naval architect available to accompany the team.

The report was finalized towards the end of August and submitted to the Victorian Government. Prior to the receipt of the report and the information contained in it, the Minister of Public Works was not in any position to finalize detailed arrangements with the Commonwealth about the nature of the structure.

Mr. DUNSTAN. — The honorable member is spot on again.

Mr. HOLDING.—I accept the Minister's expression. I am spot on because at that stage the Minister did not have the technical information available. Accordingly, the Minister now concedes that until the end of August there was no way in which he could have put the sort of detailed submissions which this Government is bound to prepare for the Commonwealth Government in order that the latter Government could accept, reject or modify the offer.

Mr. DUNSTAN.—The Leader of the Opposition is confusing technicalities with financial arrangements. Financial arrangements could have been discussed twelve months ago.

Mr. HOLDING.—I should have thought the financial arrangements might well have been discussed years ago.

Mr. DUNSTAN.—Discussions were held about a graving dock and not about a floating dock.

Mr. HOLDING.—The Commonwealth acceptance of the project in principle left it to the State Government to determine the basis on which it would submit specific proposals for a new dock. This position is confirmed in a letter from the Acting Premier, Mr. Thompson, to the Prime Minister on 24th August, in which the honorable gentleman said, *inter alia*—

> The report of this study will shortly be submitted to my Government and will be followed by detailed submissions to the Federal Government regarding assistance for the dry dock.

I ask the House to consider that statement.

Mr. DUNSTAN.—Can you divorce that letter from Mr. Jones's letter of 24th September?

Mr. HOLDING.—On 24th August, 1973, the Victorian Government still had to finalize its submissions and prepare the report which would be sent to the Commonwealth.

Mr. DUNSTAN.—The report was already with the Commonwealth at that stage but the Federal Minister had not read it.

Mr. HOLDING.—The report of the study group went to the Commonwealth but the letter from the Acting Premier stated clearly that the report would be the basis of detailed submissions from the State Government to the Federal Government.

Mr. DUNSTAN.—At a technical level.

Mr. HOLDING.—The letter said nothing about a technical level. The letter merely states that following the submission of the report to the State Government, detailed submissions will be made to the Federal Government "regarding assistance for the dry dock". The only conclusion that can be drawn is that the word "assistance" means financial assistance. The Prime Minister has the right to regard that letter as saying that the Victorian Government, on the basis of a report, of which the Commonwealth has a copy, will prepare detailed submissions which will be sent to the Federal Government regarding assistance for the dry dock. Surely financial assistance must be contemplated.

This Government has been good at holding out its hand to the Commonwealth but when it received nothing from the McMahon Government the matter was kept in club and not made a subject for public disputation. Having again held out its hand to the Federal Government and having had a proposal accepted in principle, the Victorian Government must make detailed submissions for assistance. This was the basis of the letter written by the Acting Premier to the Prime Minister. Have those detailed submissions been made? Again, the answer by the Minister is that they have not.

Mr. HAMER.—In view of the correspondence the Leader of the Opposition cannot be proposing that the Commonwealth Government is waiting for these submissions?

Mr. HOLDING.—If the Premier examines all of the correspondence he will find that the Victorian Government has indicated an intention to provide submissions which will become the basis for negotiations. It is difficult to negotiate when submissions have not been made.

Mr. DUNSTAN.—How can a Minister have formal negotiations without meeting his opposite number, and how can he have discussions without keeping appointments?

Mr. HOLDING.—I will come to that. The Australian Government has clearly indicated its readiness to assist with the replacement of the dry dock in Melbourne, but the Victorian Government must still make a number of basic decisions on technical issues relating to ownership and financial contribution. The real cause of the delay was the time spent by the Victorian Government in carrying out the technical investigations. An objective assessment of the facts can lead to no other conclusion. The Minister has conceded that he was not in a position to prepare a submission until August of this year. The delay that occurred from the receipt of the telegram from the Prime Minister on 13th March, indicating Commonwealth acceptance in principle, until August, was by virtue of the fact that detailed technical submissions were being prepared by the Minister.

The State Government should realize that it is not the only Government which is entitled to be sensitive. The Federal Government is continually offering funds for education, housing or transport and in many cases before the details have been closely examined it is subjected to the most extreme forms of political attack. The Federal Minister for Transport may be so acutely sensitive to the

political maledictions of Ministers of this Government that he may have considered it prudent to discover what the Victorian Government wanted before he said anything. The Victorian Government stated that it wanted to negotiate but the Deputy Premier said that detailed written submissions would be provided. The Commonwealth Government has simply said that it will provide financial assistance and indicated its desire to negotiate with the Victorian Government on joint ownership in the operation of the dock. The Victorian Government has not stated whether the principle of joint participation is acceptable. No statement has been made by the Minister or the Premier.

It could be inferred from correspondence from the Premier that the Government is prepared to accept in principle the concept of joint participation, but it is certainly not spelt out in detail. This Government has opposed any offers of joint participation. A heated and lengthy debate took place last night and a further debate has been left unresolved regarding joint participation in transport. The Federal Minister for Transport is acutely aware that this Government, having knocked back the Commonwealth offer of $9 million, is sensitive about any concept of joint partnership. Therefore, is it unreasonable for the Federal Minister of Transport to say that he will wait for the detailed submissions from the Victorian Government which he has been promised?

No statement has been made by the Premier or the Minister. No honorable member is in a position to say the Victorian Government accepts the principle of joint participation for this venture. If it is accepted, what will be the nature of the participation? Will it be on the basis of financial contribution? Will it be conducted by the Commonwealth, a State instrumentality or a private company? All these matters must be resolved, but the Commonwealth Government and this House cannot be aware of the view that the Victorian Government takes on the technical information that has been received.

When the Ministerial statement is stripped bare the grievance of the Minister is revealed as being the fact that three appointments were made and three appointments were cancelled. This would not be the first time that Ministers of the Crown have cancelled meetings. No one should know better than a Minister of the Crown the problems that can be encountered in arranging such meetings. A lack of courtesy may have been involved by reason of shortness of notice.

Mr. DUNSTAN.—No, the times were made to suit Mr. Jones, not me.

Mr. HOLDING.—Part of the problem is that the Minister is endeavouring to meet not only Mr. Jones, but also the Treasurer. There may well have been a complaint from the Minister that he was not receiving the courtesy to which his position entitled him. I ask honorable members to consider the facts on which a Minister in this House stated that the Federal Minister for Transport should resign his portfolio. What the situation comes down to is that, firstly, there has been considerable delay on the part of the Victorian Government. I concede that some of the delay was the responsibility of the predecessors of the Premier and the Minister. Secondly, there is the serious omission of the details of the correspondence between the State and Federal Governments. This is a significant omission. There is no mention in the Ministerial statement of the fact that between March and August, with the best will in the world, no negotiation or discussion could take place between the Ministers because they were waiting on the report of a certain group.

Mr. DUNSTAN.—That is not indicated in Mr. Jones's correspondence.

Mr. HOLDING.—I am not overlooking any of the correspondence, which is available for perusal. I shall be happy to hear the Minister's answer. However, the Minister has

conceded across the table that he was not in a position to provide a detailed submission at an earlier stage, because he did not possess the required material.

Mr. DUNSTAN.—I referred to a technical submission.

Mr. HOLDING.—It is not merely a matter of techniques. It involves costs and designs. There was nothing to stop the Minister from saying to the Federal Government, "We accept Federal participation in this joint venture on the basis that ownership will be in proportion to Commonwealth and State contributions". The Minister did not do that.

Mr. DUNSTAN.—How do you know?

Mr. HOLDING.—There is nothing on the file to suggest it.

Mr. DUNSTAN.—Then the Leader of the Opposition has not looked at the file.

Mr. HOLDING.—I have looked at everything that is on the file. If there is something missing from the file, that is not my responsibility.

Mr. DUNSTAN.—What period does the file cover—1969 to 1972?

Mr. HOLDING.—I will not delay the House by going through all the correspondence that is contained in the file. When a Minister makes a Ministerial statement he should put all the facts before the House, but on this occasion the Minister of Public Works did not do so.

The House is dealing with negotiations which have taken place with the Federal Government; and, so far as is practicable, a Ministerial statement should not be used as the basis of a biased, one-sided, political attack on the Federal Labor Government. In his statement, the Minister has not mentioned the submissions to the Commonwealth Government that the Victorian Government said it made; for that reason, I submit that the Minister could be charged with dereliction of his responsibility.

The Opposition is tired of recurring situations in which Ministers because of their political bias, act in a thoroughly irresponsible manner over a whole range of matters.

This motion deals with a subject which should be of continuing concern to the State Government in its negotiations with the Federal Government. In view of the Government's present attitude, it is no wonder that the Minister is under attack for having acted in a way which does not do him credit. It is the result of the closed mind he has shown in approaching new initiatives.

Mr. DUNSTAN.—Nobody has attacked me.

Mr. HOLDING.—I am attacking the Minister.

Mr. DUNSTAN.—I did not know that.

Mr. HOLDING.—Perhaps I am being nicer than usual. When this matter was previously before the House, the Government used its numbers to obtain an adjournment of the debate and, on the first suitable occasion, the Premier saw the Prime Minister and said, "Can you arrange for some discussions to take place between our Ministers?" The Minister abuses in public, but apologizes in private. It is in the interests of this State that this double-edged political meanness should cease.

The amendment moved by the Opposition should be agreed to. The House is duty bound to condemn the Minister of Public Works for his failure to provide all the available facts. The Minister concedes that his Ministerial statement ignores the significant period in which negotiations commenced and obliterates the period in which they should have commenced. The Minister should be censured for the political bias contained in his statement and the House is duty bound to record its belief that the replacement of existing dry-dock facilities is a matter of urgency. Therefore, the House should ask the Minister to provide the detailed submissions necessary to enable this project to be commenced forthwith by both the Federal and State Governments.

If this debate does nothing else, I hope it will prove to the Government and to the Minister that it would be better for them to put political bias aside and endeavour to establish a proper working relationship compatible with the new initiatives that are being taken by the Commonwealth Government so that discussions can proceed not on the basis of the Minister's attempting to score political points, but on the basis that negotiations are necessary for the prosperity of Victoria.

Construction of the dry dock is an important project and negotiations on it should be conducted without political bias. There was no need for the Minister to make a non-factual statement to the House. His statement should be condemned for what it was—a low, mean and non-convincing political exercise.

Mr. DUNSTAN (Minister of Public Works).—Briefly, I shall try to reply to the statement made by the Leader of the Opposition on two of the time factors. I do not dispute dates that were mentioned by the honorable member, but he apparently failed to understand the answer I gave to a question without notice on Tuesday of this week, in which I explained that in the period between 1969 and 1972 there were frequent discussions between Commonwealth and State officers, Commonwealth and State Ministers, and the Prime Minister and the Premier of the day about financial assistance for the construction of a graving dock.

The Leader of the Opposition made great play on the fact that in August, 1972, the then Commonwealth Government said that no financial assistance would be available for a graving dock. I made this abundantly clear last Tuesday.

Mr. HOLDING.—Why not say that in your statement?

Mr. DUNSTAN. — Because the statement was, in effect, a reference to later developments. In the period from 1969 to 1972 the Commonwealth Government made it clear that there would be no finance available for a graving dock. There was an agreement between the Federal and New South Wales Governments that a graving dock would be built at Newcastle in New South Wales. The decision was announced last week—so there was also some delay by the Federal Government in reaching a decision on that matter.

Between August and October, 1972, Commonwealth and State officers were revising their thinking and looking into the advisability of establishing a floating dock instead of a graving dock in Melbourne. This would have attracted a 45 per cent subsidy. A decision concerning a floating dock was not made before the Federal elections which were held last December. So immediately the new incoming Labor Government took office the Prime Minister in the first Whitlam Ministry was contacted by the Premier on 19th December, and as soon as the second Whitlam Ministry was sworn into office and a new Federal Minister for Transport was appointed——

Mr. HOLDING.—But your Government had approached the McMahon Government.

Mr. DUNSTAN.—Yes, but the financing of a floating dock was not raised until after the Commonwealth had said in August, 1972, that it would not provide finance for a graving dock.

Mr. HOLDING.—Why did you not say that before?

Mr. DUNSTAN.—I said it last Tuesday.

Mr. HOLDING.—So in October, 1972, a request was made to the McMahon Government for finance for a floating dock?

Mr. DUNSTAN.—That is correct; a request was made for the 45 per cent shipbuilding subsidy towards the cost of a floating dock. I am advised that Mr. Peter Nixon, the then Minister for Shipping and Transport, recommended to the Prime Minister, Mr. McMahon, that the 45 per cent subsidy should be made

available but no decision was made between then and the election on 2nd December, 1972, a few months later.

As soon as the Federal Labor Government took office I revived the request made by our Government, and this is shown in the correspondence. Mr. Jones wrote to me on 14th May, 1973, suggesting that we get together. I immediately telephoned him and informed him that I would meet him as soon as possible wherever it suited him. Mr. Jones mentioned in his letter that he understood that the Premier had informed the Australian Government that the State Government desired to negotiate an agreement on the ownership and operation of a new dry dock for Melbourne. He further wrote—

> I would like to get things moving in this area. Perhaps your private secretary could contact my office in the next few days to arrange a mutually convenient time and place for a preliminary meeting between us on this matter.

My private secretary immediately telephoned Mr. Jones's office and Mr. Jones stated that it would be convenient for him to meet me in Melbourne at 10 a.m. on 12th July. He suggested the meeting and made the date. Then he cancelled it, although he had said that he wanted to get things moving.

Mr. HOLDING.—Did you have a detailed submission to put to him?

Mr. DUNSTAN.—Yes.

Mr. HOLDING.—What was it?

Mr. DUNSTAN.—I was prepared to discuss joint ownership.

Mr. HOLDING.—On what basis?

Mr. DUNSTAN.—I cannot get details if I can spend only ten minutes in eight months with Charlie Jones. On 29th August I went out of my way and met Mr. Jones in Canberra, knowing that I could not see him for long because the Federal Parliament was sitting. He allowed me half an hour and said that he had not had a chance to look at the matter or discuss the question of joint ownership with the Treasurer. I question his statement that they had not had a chance. Mr. Jones had more than eight months in which to discuss the matter with the Treasurer. However, on that occasion he said that we would meet again as soon as possible. I said that I would make an appointment whenever it suited him and that I was even prepared to go to Canberra. On two occasions since then appointments have been cancelled. Honorable members should remember that he was asking me to get together with him and that when I made an appointment he cancelled it.

Mr. HOLDING.—Do you believe a Minister ought to resign when he cancels two appointments?

Mr. DUNSTAN.—There are more reasons than cancelled appointments why Mr. Jones should resign.

Mr. HOLDING.—That is the only basis for your statement.

Mr. DUNSTAN.—Some of the Federal colleagues of the Leader of the Opposition share that view.

Mr. WILTON.—Why do you not quote from your Ministerial statement?

Mr. DUNSTAN.—The honorable member should be able to read it.

Mr. WILTON.—You did not say anything about this last week.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. K. H. Wheeler).—Order! The honorable member for Broadmeadows and the Leader of the Opposition have put their case, and as the Minister of Public Works is endeavouring to reply I ask honorable members to cease interjecting.

Mr. DUNSTAN.—As early as last May Mr. Jones wanted to get together with me to discuss joint ownership of the dry dock, and I said I was prepared to meet him. I am still waiting and I will meet Mr. Jones at any time and at any place to suit his convenience, but I hope that it will not be necessary again to cancel airline tickets for four people.

Mr. WILTON.—You were advised in March of this year that the Commonwealth would provide funds.

Mr. DUNSTAN.—I will reply to that interjection because it is a good one. Frequent statements have been made, mostly in the *Australian Financial Review*, that the Commonwealth Government will provide finance. Those statements have been made only through the press.

Mr. WILTON.—You said that no decision had been made; now you are saying that they did make a decision.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. K. H. Wheeler).—Order! I have repeatedly asked the honorable member for Broadmeadows to cease interjecting and I do so again.

Mr. DUNSTAN.—A detailed technical submission was in the hands of Mr. Jones a week or so before I met him in Canberra and he admitted that he had not read it. I do not know whether he has read it yet.

Mr. HOLDING.—What about the detailed submission which was promised in the letter of the Deputy Premier? Was that prepared?

Mr. DUNSTAN.—I did not make that statement. The Leader of the Opposition is trying to widen the debate by putting a certain interpretation on that statement. It is the policy of this Government not to publish details of negotiations until discussions have been held, informally or formally, between the two Governments. I do not want to speak through the newspapers. I repeat that I will meet Mr. Jones at any time and at any place, at his convenience.

Mr. FORDHAM.—To abuse him.

Mr. DUNSTAN.—Not to abuse him, but to put a proposition and to discuss joint ownership and sharing of the financial cost of providing a floating dock for the port of Melbourne.

Mr. STIRLING (Williamstown).—I placed a question on notice on 25th September, 1973, in a sincere attempt to reduce concern exhibited by constituents involved in the ship repair industry, workers whose skills are useful only in that industry. The question of docking facilities was causing concern because they are almost non-existent in the port of Melbourne. The Minister of Public Works, in his Ministerial statement, refers to the lack of concern exhibited by the Federal Minister for Transport for the skilled unionists who have worked for many years in the ship repair industry. Their plight will be accelerated if no replacement dock is constructed in the port of Melbourne.

I support the motion moved by the honorable member for Broadmeadows and the amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition stating that provision of the facilities is urgent. They have been urgently needed for a number of years. Long before 1969, when it was made known that Duke and Orr's would be closing, we saw the advent of a new era in shipping in the port of Melbourne in the form of the introduction of containerized vessels. At that time the port of Melbourne was a terminal port, where there is usually a quick turn-around of shipping, and this has become more pronounced with containerization. Similarly, when a vessel returns to its home port there is a another quick turn-around. It is essential for this type of vessel to be kept at sea without too many interruptions to its operations.

It is necessary economically for shipowners to dock these vessels or have docking facilities in the terminal ports to carry out maintenance, such as removing marine growth. It has been a matter of concern to shipowners that provision has not been made in the port of Melbourne over the years—long before the Johnson Street bridge was mooted—for a replacement dock to take ships larger than those which Duke and Orr's dock has been able to accommodate for more than 100 years.

A group of unions concerned with the industry, namely, the Metal Trades Union, the Ships Painters and Dockers Union, the Shipwrights Union and the Seamen's Union, made inquiries regarding the type of shipping that would use facilities in the

port of Melbourne. An American shipping company — APT — whose main trade with this country is the carriage of meat products to the United States of America has a fleet of 43 vessels, of which eighteen use the port of Melbourne. For economic reasons the company's vessels have a quick turn-around.

Docking requirements must be booked in advance. When the question of these facilities arises, the vessels must dock in the United States of America or if docking facilities are not available there, the company must send its shipping to Japan to be docked. This is uneconomical. The docking industry could be expanded in the port of Melbourne by the provision of suitable facilities.

Closer to home, five ships of the Australian National Line once used Melbourne as their terminal port but they are unable to dock in the port of Melbourne now because of their size and consequently have to be diverted to other States to obtain docking facilities. Australian National Line is involved in a cost of $7,000 for each day lost on turn-around. There have been instances when these ships have been sent to Singapore and Japan. Over the years the Government has neglected to consider this important industry. So far as tonnage is concerned Melbourne is the second largest port in Australia. It is recorded in the *Year Book* of 1972 that more than 4,000 ships entered this port. Duke and Orr's docking facilities could cope with only a small number of the vessels which entered the port of Melbourne.

Mr. DUNSTAN.—Are you speaking to the motion or to the amendment?

Mr. STIRLING.—I am speaking to both the motion and the amendment. I refer to the amendment in the sense that the Opposition believes it to be a matter of urgency that the Government should replace the existing dry dock. This should have been done many years ago.

From November last to the present day Duke and Orr's dry dock has taken approximately fourteen dockings. Eleven dockings are booked up until later this year—after that, who knows? So far as the Ministerial statement is concerned, the information I was seeking on behalf of my constituents was not provided. It has already been outlined by the Leader of the Opposition and the honorable member for Broadmeadows they have said all that the statement set out to do. It would be a sorry day if no urgency was given to the matter of the replacement of the docking facility, whether it be a graving or a floating dock. So long as the present facilities remain, the port of Melbourne will be in danger of losing a skilled industry. I reiterate that Melbourne is the second major port in Australia. I have pointed out one particular shipping company—there are others—that would use such facilities and I urge all members to support the amendment.

Mr. HAMER (Premier and Treasurer).—In the very brief time available to me, I move—

That the amendment be amended by the omission of the following expressions:—

"and condemns the Minister of Public Works because of his failure to provide all the available facts, and for the political bias contained in the statement" and "and requests the Minister to provide the detailed submissions necessary to enable this project to be commenced forthwith by both the Federal and State Governments."

The effect of my amendment to the amendment would be to delete all the expressions with the exception of that part which records the belief that the replacement of the existing dry-dock facility is a matter of urgency.

The whole story was not told by the Leader of the Opposition. He said that the Minister of Public Works had omitted the early part of the story. I say that the Leader of the Opposition has omitted the latter part of the story. The latter part is of importance because after the Deputy Premier wrote to the Prime Minister in August, the Federal Min-

ister for Transport wrote to the Minister of Public Works and asked him his views on six questions. The Leader of the Opposition has a copy of that letter because I handed it to him.

In reply, the Minister of Public Works put his views. They were needed before any relevant discussions could take place.

Mr. HOLDING.—From what letter are you quoting?

Mr. HAMER.—It is a letter dated 25th October from the Victorian Minister of Public Works to the Federal Minister for Shipping. Regarding three of the Federal Minister's inquiries the Minister of Public Works referred him to the report, "Proposal for a Floating Dock for Victoria".

The Minister of Public Works requested discussions on the other three questions, relating to finance, the terms under which funds were to be provided, and ownership and operation of the dock. The only accusation which has been made against the Minister is that he has not provided the detailed submissions which the Deputy Premier mentioned. The answer is that they became unnecessary. The Federal Minister asked some questions to which the Minister of Public Works replied and asked for further discussions.

Mr. HOLDING.—Will the Premier read the questions that were asked?

Mr. HAMER.—The questions may be summarized from the Federal Minister's letter of 24th September. I draw the honorable member's attention to the fact that this letter crossed with that of the Deputy Premier dated the same day.

Mr. CURNOW.—You have not got much co-ordination.

Mr. HAMER.—We are not able to co-ordinate letters from Canberra with our own if they cross in the mail; we cannot help that. The six questions related to the size and type of dock, location, capital contributions of the Commonwealth and Victorian Governments, terms under which funds were to be provided, ownership and management of the dock, and operation of the dock.

Those were the six questions which Mr. Jones——

The SPEAKER (the Hon. K. H. Wheeler).—The time for the consideration of the motion has expired.

Mr. HOLDING (Leader of the Opposition).—Mr. Speaker, can the question be put?

The SPEAKER. — Government business takes precedence from 1 p.m. I made that point clear this morning.

The sitting was suspended at 1.1 *p.m. until* 2.3 *p.m.*

Mr. HAMER (Premier and Treasurer).—By leave, I move—

That the sessional orders be suspended so far as to permit the motion relating to the Ministerial statement on future dry-docking facilities for the port of Melbourne and the amendments thereto, to be put forthwith.

The motion was agreed to.

The House divided on the question that the words proposed by Mr. Hamer to be omitted from Mr. Holding's amendment stand part of the amendment (the Hon. K. H. Wheeler in the chair)—

Ayes	17
Noes	39
Majority for Mr. Hamer's amendment	22

AYES.

Mr. Amos	Mr. Lind
Mr. Doube	Mr. Simmonds
Mr. Edmunds	Mr. Stirling
Mr. Fogarty	Mr. Trezise
Mr. Fordham	Mr. Wilkes
Mr. Ginifer	Mr. Wilton.
Mr. Holding	*Tellers:*
Mr. Jones	Mr. Bornstein
Mr. Kirkwood	Mr. Curnow.

NOES.

Mr. Austin	Mr. MacDonald
Mr. Balfour	Mr. McInnes
Mr. Baxter	Mr. McKellar
Mr. Billing	Mr. McLaren
Mr. Birrell	Mr. Maclellan
Mr. Borthwick	Mr. Meagher
Mr. Burgin	Mr. Rafferty
Mr. Chamberlain	Mr. Ross-Edwards
Mr. Crellin	Mr. Scanlan
Mr. Dixon	Mr. Skeggs
Mr. Dunstan	Mr. Smith (*Bellarine*)
Mr. Ebery	Mr. Suggett
Mr. Evans (*Gippsland East*)	Mr. Templeton
Mrs. Goble	Mr. Thompson
Mr. Guy	Mr. Trewin
Mr. Hamer	Mr. Williams
Mr. Hann	Mr. Wiltshire.
Mr. Jona	*Tellers:*
Mr. Loxton	Mr. Plowman
Mr. McCabe	Mr. Ramsay.

PAIR.

Mr. Roper	Mr. Lacy.

Mr. Holding's amendment, as amended, was agreed to.

The motion, as amended, was agreed to.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL AND CHIEF SECRETARY (ADDITIONAL FUNCTIONS) BILL.

Mr. HAMER (Premier and Treasurer).—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The purpose of this small Bill is to enable the administration of the Auction Sales Act and the Estate Agents Act to be transferred from the Treasurer to the Chief Secretary, and for the administration of the Money Lenders Act to be transferred from the Treasurer to the Attorney-General.

As honorable members will see, the clauses of the Bill are self-explanatory. Clauses 2 and 3 delete from the Auction Sales Act and the Estate Agents Act reference to the "Treasurer" and substitute the word "Minister". References in the Money Lenders Act to the words "Treasury" and "Treasurer" are deleted by clause 4 and the words "Law Department" and "Attorney-General" are substituted.

Sections 43 to 47 of the Estate Agents Act provide for the establishment in the Treasury of the Estate Agents Guarantee Fund. The fund was established for the purpose of reimbursing people who have suffered financial losses in transactions with estate agents, such losses resulting from the failure of the agent to comply with Part V. of the Estate Agents Act.

The liquidity of the fund is underwritten by the Government and it is appropriate that it should remain in the Treasury and be under the control of the Treasurer. The Bill has no provisions other than those necessary to give effect to the proposed administrative changes, and I commend it to the House.

This is part of a general reorganization of Government departments. In particular, some of the small administrations which are attached to the Treasury and the Premier's Department, for historical reasons, are being transferred to more appropriate administrations under the Chief Secretary or the Attorney-General. It is thought that the administration will be more efficient, and the Premier's Department and the Treasury will be left freer to deal with matters with which they are intended to deal and which from time to time are not as well dealt with as they ought to be, partly because of the weight of other business which is really extraneous to their duties and which could be transferred to other departments.

On the motion of Mr. WILKES (Northcote), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Thursday, November 15.

REVOCATION AND EXCISION OF CROWN RESERVATIONS BILL.

Mr. BORTHWICK (Minister of Lands).—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

It provides for the revocation of the permanent reservation of one area of Crown land and for excisions to be made from five other permanently reserved areas.

The land described in Schedule One of the Bill is no longer required for the purpose for which it was reserved. The lands to be excised from the reserves listed in Part I. of Schedule Two are required for public purposes other than those for which they have been respectively reserved.

Clause 1 of the Bill cites the short title. Clause 2 revokes the Crown grants of the lands described in Schedule One and in Part VI. of Schedule Two. Clause 3 revokes the permanent reservations of the lands described in Schedule One and in Parts II. to VI. of Schedule Two.

Clause 4 provides that the lands of which the Crown grants and permanent reservations are revoked shall be unalienated lands of the Crown freed from all trusts and the like. Clause 5 is the usual provision that no liability shall attach to the Crown.

Schedule One lists the land of which the permanent reservation and Crown grant are to be revoked. Schedule Two lists in Part I. the permanent reservations and Crown grant which are to be revoked only so far as the lands respectively described in Parts II. to VI. thereof are concerned.

I shall now give details of the proposed revocation and excisions. Schedule One relates to the site for a shire hall and offices in the township of Lilydale. This land containing 567 square metres is located at Castella Street, Lilydale, and was permanently reserved in 1897. By a Crown grant dated 23rd July, 1897, the land has been vested in the corporation of the Shire of Lilydale on trust for the purpose of the reservation.

The land was used for shire offices until 1960 when the municipality transferred its activities to new shire offices it had constructed in Anderson Street, Lilydale. These new offices were gutted by fire in July, 1968, and the old offices in Castella Street were again used for staff accommodation until reinstatement of the new offices was completed in December, 1970.

Since 1960 the old shire offices have been used for meetings for local charitable groups, as a storage area for the Lilydale Citizens Welfare Service and uses of a similar community nature. The Lilydale Shire Council has now resolved that the old shire offices should be developed as a historical museum. On revocation of the existing reservation it is proposed to re-reserve the land for the desired purpose and appoint the municipality as the committee of management.

I shall deal now with Schedule Two, which contains five items as follows:—

ITEM 1: Parish of Moorabool West —Site for racecourse and other recreation purposes.—This reserve comprising 82·15 hectares is known as the Ballan Racecourse and Recreation Reserve. It has been placed under the control of a committee of management consisting of five members of the local community. The Racecourses Licences Board delicensed the Ballan racecourse in 1969.

The portion to be excised contains 3·17 hectares as described in Part II. of the schedule. The excision is sought by the Country Roads Board in connection with the deviation of the Western Highway north of Ballan. This deviation is part of the progressive upgrading to freeway standard of the road between Melbourne and Ballarat.

Portion of the land to be excised will also be required to provide an access road from Racecourse Road to a property on the west side of the east branch of the Moorabool River. Racecourse Road will underpass the proposed freeway and will be in a cutting. It is necessary, therefore, to locate this access road to be clear of the cutting.

The proposed new freeway route has been so selected by the Country Roads Board so as to cause the least possible disturbance to the community generally. The land to be excised has not been developed for the purpose of the reservation. The committee of management of the reserve has no objection to the excision for road purposes.

ITEM 2: Parish of Wannaeue—Site for public park and recreation.—This site of 63·94 hectares is known as the Rosebud Park and Recreation Reserve. The portion of the reserve from which the proposed excision is to be made is used by the Education Department for school plantation purposes. The land to be excised comprises the small area of 259 square metres as described in Part III. of the schedule.

The excision is sought by the Flinders Shire Council for the formation of Elizabeth Drive on a proper alignment. The present road reserve is slightly offset and it is necessary to provide an alignment which will allow for the safe flow of traffic. The new alignment is the minimum requirement for the volume of traffic which will use the road and which will approach the curves from a long section of straight road in both directions.

Prior to the construction of the Mornington Peninsula Freeway the main access to the locality was via Eastbourne Road but this is now terminated and traffic will and should use Elizabeth Drive as a major route. The excision will have no adverse effect on the use of the reserve.

ITEM 3: Parish of Nunawading—Site for public recreation. — The reserve referred to in this item is the Box Hill City Oval. It contains 4·847 hectares and has been placed under the control of the municipality of the City of Box Hill as a committee of management. The land to be excised comprises 1,293 square metres as described in Part IV. of the schedule.

The excision is sought by the Country Roads Board in connection with proposals for the improvement of the intersection of Maroondah Highway and Middleborough Road. This intersection, which is a dog-leg intersection offset from the alignment of the highway, is in need of urgent improvements to facilitate a more satisfactory traffic flow and ease the problem of congestion.

The land to be excised is mainly low lying mown grass outside the security fence of the football ground and a narrow strip of rough slope inside the security fence between the fence and the top of an embankment. The Box Hill City Council has agreed to the excision subject to the Country Roads Board erecting a suitable retaining wall on the new reserve boundary.

ITEM 4: Township of Frankston—Site for public recreation. — This reserve, which originally contained 15·25 hectares, is known as the Municipal Golf Links Reserve. The reserve has been placed under the control of the municipality of the City of Frankston as a committee of management. In 1969 an area of 2·739 hectares was excised from the reserve for addition to the adjoining Frankston Community Hospital reserve. The excision now proposed comprises 2·729 hectares as described in Part V. of the schedule.

It is sought by the Hospitals and Charities Commission having regard to the ultimate hospital development required to serve the rapid population growth of Frankston and the Mornington Peninsula. Confronted with the need to plan health and hospital services to meet the demand, the commission has recommended the development of a major hospital at Frankston which will be capable of providing all forms of diagnosis, treatment and care.

The existing hospital has been added to so that, with works under way or authorized, it has reached the limits of what can be achieved in present buildings and services. It

will be necessary in the near future to embark on a major project as a first stage of the envisaged new hospital complex. The project must be so planned that it can be expanded to meet the growing needs of the community, changing patterns of medical technology, and health policies generally.

This planning requires a large site area for the horizontal expansion of departments or the provision of new departments. The commission considers that a minimum area of 8 hectares is required for this purpose. The present hospital constitutes a big investment. It is strategically placed in the community and thus any proposal to relocate a new hospital elsewhere is just not practicable.

The Frankston City Council has agreed to the excision in order that the land may be reserved for hospital purposes, subject to—

1. The closure of the municipal golf links, which is scheduled for 1974. In this regard an area of about 68 hectares and being part of the former Frankston pine plantation has been reserved for public recreation and construction of a golf course thereon has reached an advanced stage;

2. the land remaining available for public open space until the plans of the hospital development are prepared and the use of land for actual hospital construction is imminent; and

3. an area fronting Yuille Street being excised from the present hospital reserve and re-reserved for public recreation to provide a contiguous area for extending existing tennis courts.

The Hospitals and Charities Commission has agreed to the council's conditions. Excision of the land from the public recreation reserve at this juncture will allow the commission to initiate its planning for the ultimate development complex.

ITEM 5: Parishes of Dean, Bungaree and Warrenheip—Site for the purposes of water supply to the Ballarat water supply district.—This is one of several large areas of Crown land reserved for water supply purposes and vested in the Ballarat Water Commissioners for the purpose of the reservation. The portion to be excised from this particular reserve comprises the small area of 1,814 square metres as described in Part VI. of the schedule.

The excision is sought by the Bungaree Shire Council to provide a deviation at a sharp bend on Black Swamp Road. The safe speed for vehicles traversing this bend is at present only 25 miles an hour. However, the Country Roads Board has provided funds to construct the road to a bituminous pavement and the minimum safe travel speed required by the Board for such roads is 50 miles an hour. The Ballarat Water Commissioners have agreed to the excision.

A set of plans showing the lands the subject of the Bill has been prepared for the benefit of honorable members and they are available from the Parliamentary Librarian. I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of Mr. GINIFER (Deer Park), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Thursday, November 15.

FLEMINGTON LAND BILL.

Mr. BORTHWICK (Minister of Lands).—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

Its main purpose is to put the occupation by the Flemington and Kensington Bowling Club of portion of the Public Park at Racecourse and Smithfield roads, Flemington, on a proper footing. At the same time the opportunity has been taken of correcting an irregularity which has been discovered in respect of this public park reserve.

The Crown land comprising 2·38 hectares and known as Flemington and Kensington Park was permanently reserved as a site for public recreation in 1886. The land was then vested in the Board of Land and Works and the Borough of Flemington and Kensington as trustees.

At the request of the municipal council the land was surrendered to the Crown by the trustees in 1889. This action was taken in order that the land might be reserved as a site for a public park for which grants would be available to the municipality from the public parks and gardens vote.

The land was subsequently permanently reserved as a site for a public park and vested in the same trustees on trust for the purpose of the reservation. However, no action was taken to revoke the permanent reservation of the land as a site for public recreation.

In 1915 the land was placed under the control of the Melbourne City Council as a committee of management. The Minister of Lands and the City of Melbourne are today the successors in law to the Board of Land and Works and the Borough of Flemington and Kensington respectively.

From the records of the Lands Department it appears that the bowling club has occupied portion of the reserve since 1892 by agreement of the municipal council acting as co-trustee and later as committee of management.

The Melbourne City Council and the club are now desirous that the occupation be placed on a firm tenancy basis by empowering the municipality to grant leases to the club of its present site. The council is also desirous of making a loan to the club to modernize its club-house and facilities.

Clause 1 of the Bill cites the short title. Clause 2 revokes the permanent reservation of Flemington and Kensington Park as a site for public recreation and confirms the permanent reservation of the land as a site for a public park. Clause 3 confirms the Crown grant vesting the land in trustees on trust for a public park.

Clause 4 appoints the corporation of the City of Melbourne as the committee of management of the reserve. This action of appointing the corporation itself, rather than the municipal council, is in line with the existing provisions of the Land Act. Clause 5 provides that the municipality, as committee of management, may lease the land shown on the plan in the schedule for the purposes of a bowling green and amenities connected therewith. It also sets out the standard conditions of leasing for measures of this nature.

The schedule contains a plan of the land presently occupied by the club and comprising 3,700 square metres which may be leased by the municipality. I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of Mr. JONES (Melbourne), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Thursday, November 15.

COUNTRY ROADS (AMENDMENT) BILL.

Mr. BORTHWICK (Minister for Conservation).—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

Its purpose is to provide assistance to municipal councils in meeting the costs of street lighting on main roads and to improve lighting on these roads. At present the municipal councils are responsible for meeting the charges for street lighting on roads declared as main roads under the Country Roads Act.

Following a recommendation of the report of the Board of Inquiry into Local Government Finance that "municipalities be relieved, in part, of their present obligation to meet the costs of street lighting on main roads" the Government undertook at the time of the last election to adopt this recommendation to assist

councils. I understand that approximately 450 miles of declared main roads in urban areas are not lit to the standards adopted by the Street Lighting Committee for State highways.

The Country Roads Board estimates that the total cost of lighting these urban sections of main roads to these standards would require capital expenditure of some $1·44 million. The tariff charge for street lighting of declared main roads lit to these standards is estimated to be $787,000 per annum.

Under existing legislation the Country Roads Board may provide funds for the lighting of freeways and State highways but not for the lighting of other roads declared or proclaimed under the provisions of the Country Roads Act.

This Bill extends to main roads the provisions of the Country Roads Act relating to the lighting of State highways. It extends the provisions of the existing legislation in a number of ways to provide that when approved by the Street Lighting Committee the cost of operation and maintenance of existing lighting installations on main roads, and the installation, operation and maintenance of new or improved installations shall be shared one-third by the Country Roads Board, one-third by the State Electricity Commission and one-third by the municipal council concerned.

Honorable members will be aware that in some cases the municipal council takes the place of the State Electricity Commission as the local supplier of electricity. In these cases the costs in respect of the street lighting of main roads will be shared one-third by the Country Roads Board and two-thirds by the municipal council concerned. In other words, the costs will be shared by the Country Roads Board, the municipality and the electricity supplier and where the municipality is also the supplier, it will take responsibility for both areas.

The acceptance of responsibility for a portion of the costs of street lighting on main roads by the Country Roads Board and the State Electricity Commission will provide greater financial resources for the improvement of street lighting and will relieve municipal councils of a substantial part of these costs.

Good lighting is a significant factor in road safety, particularly in reducing accidents between pedestrians and motor vehicles and the additional financial resources to be made available for street lighting as a result of this legislation will make a material contribution to road safety. On behalf of the Minister of Transport, I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of Mr. WILTON (Broadmeadows), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Thursday, November 15.

HOSPITALS AND CHARITIES (INSTITUTIONS AND BENEVOLENT SOCIETIES) BILL.

Mr. SCANLAN (Minister of Health).—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

This is a very short but important Bill of four clauses which will amend the Hospitals and Charities Act 1958 to require any institution or benevolent society to obtain prior approval of the Minister to any agreement, contract or arrangement made by the hospital, society or institution regarding construction of buildings or extensions to any building where finance for such buildings is to come from Government funds, whether State or Federal.

The Bill will also require the approval of the Minister before an institution or society may enter into a contract or arrangement for "bulk" deals for patient care. The amendment will leave untouched the normal arrangement between patient and hospital when made on an individual basis. The final purpose of the Bill is to insert a new section 92 in the Hospitals and Charities Act to

control strictly the communication of information relating to patient care.

Over the years Victoria has developed a hospital system second to none in Australia. Within the metropolitan area there are fourteen fine teaching hospitals many of which, such as the Royal Melbourne, Royal Children's, Royal Women's, St Vincents and Alfred hospitals, the Peter MacCallum Clinic and the Mercy Public Maternity Hospital, are of international repute.

Nearly twenty years ago the Victorian Government initiated a scheme of regional planning of hospitals and geriatric homes throughout Victoria, based on eleven regions. In addition, ambulance services were organized in sixteen regions co-ordinated into the institutional regional scheme. This regional development resulted in the provision of services centred on a base hospital in each region. Regional hospital services include pathology, radiology, physiotherapy, speech therapy and occupational therapy, Peter MacCallum clinics, and many others providing decentralized specialist and paramedical services. The State mental health services are also decentralized and regionally co-ordinated.

In addition to regionalization, individual hospitals specialize in particular branches of medical care or treatment. This is particularly so in the metropolitan area where, for example, it would be most uneconomic and wasteful to provide the highly sophisticated specialities in all hospitals. For this reason, these services are rationalized on an over-all State basis.

Some hospitals in the group specialize in open heart surgery, such as the Royal Melbourne, the Alfred and the St. Vincents hospitals; others in renal transplants, such as the Royal Melbourne Hospital; and another—the Austin Hospital—in paraplegic care and service. Some hospitals, such as the Royal Children's Hospital, provide specifically for children, and others for gynaecology and obstetrics, and eye, ear, nose and throat. A State-wide geriatric hospital service is also available.

There are also a considerable number of excellent private hospitals of equally high repute which are an integral part of the State's hospital system. These hospitals have been supported by the magnificent voluntary organizations for which Victoria is famous and whose existence and service to the community it is desired to preserve at all cost.

At present the investment of the State in its hospital system is in excess of $875 million, the greater part of which has been met from State Government funds. However, voluntary donations from a very generous public have constituted a significant contribution to those funds.

The annual cost of running the State hospitals alone, exclusive of geriatric hospitals, is of the order of $225 million a year, of which 52 per cent is met by the State Government, 32 per cent by patients through voluntary hospital benefit organizations, and the remaining 16 per cent by the Commonwealth Government. Of the 16 per cent contribution from the Commonwealth, 11 per cent is for hospital benefits, and the remainder is largely pensioner contributions from the Commonwealth Government, which provides $5 for a hospital bed costing the State $45, or a total of $45 million per annum.

Recently there has been considerable concern and alarm in this State as a result of reports from individual Ministers and spokesmen of the Federal Government to the effect that the Federal Government would deal directly with hospital managements and the managements of other organizations, and provide Federal funds for programmes oriented to the policies of their Government.

Accordingly, the purpose of clause 3 of the Bill is to preserve, foster and further develop the co-ordination and planning through the Hospitals and Charities Commission, the Mental Health Authority and other agencies of the Ministry of Health in Victoria

to ensure a co-ordinated, decentralized and rational development of services for which this State is well known throughout Australia and, indeed, internationally. In other words, Victoria is threatened with fragmentation of the regional and decentralization planning which is contrary to the public good. It must protect its regionalized hospital planning.

The legislation is not intended to cut off the supply of needed Commonwealth funds to Victoria, but is intended to ensure that there is full consultation between the Australian Government and the Government of Victoria in providing additional Commonwealth funds for the planned development of the State's hospital and health services. It is obvious that much of the advantage of present planning would be lost by haphazard and unco-ordinated Commonwealth dealings with organizations and committees at random. Every effort must, therefore, be made to preserve and continue to develop the existing system, and in the process ensure that maximum value is obtained for the people's dollar no matter from what Government or by what arrangement it may come. This will be achieved by ensuring that any contract, agreement or arrangement for or with respect to the construction or extension of any existing building of an institution or benevolent society in Victoria, which is to be financed by Government funds in the broad sense, will be subject to the approval of the Minister who shall take the advice of the statutory authorities and other experts which is constitutionally available to him.

Control will also be exercised in a similar way over " bulk " contracts concerning patient treatment or the provision of services from the institutions. Naturally, there will be no interference with individual arrangements between the patient and the hospital, and where the patient is a member of a voluntary health insurance organization those arrangements, similarly, will not be affected.

The final provision of the Bill, clause 4, is designed to preserve a fundamental right of every human being, namely, his right to privacy. The report of the Health Insurance Planning Committee to the Federal Minister for Social Security has recommended that every citizen shall have a health insurance card with his name printed thereon. In addition, the card will contain his social security identity number together with his signature. The number contained on this card will be used as the key to all types of confidential information about " John Citizen "; particulars of his health and personal affairs will be contained in a Federal computer which the committee strongly recommends shall be located in Canberra. The committee has said that the first installation is designed to support direct data entry and off-line operation with data being read from a magnetic tape. There are options: The magnetic tapes may be received either by air from capital city offices or the input data may be transmitted by land line to the central computer installation. In case the basic installation is not adequate, the installation of a second linked computer will permit the development of essential statistics and the set-up of a readily accessible data base—whatever that means. Needless to say, there will also be another, and just as elaborate, installation, in case of breakdown.

There is no doubt that this machinery will do its job thoroughly and record faithfully all personal details that the planners of the monolithic society consider may ultimately be of interest. Nothing could be more calculated to bring all of George Orwell's dreams of 1984 into our society in 1974. The whole thing would be quite humorous if it were not so serious and such a needless and useless dissipation of national resources.

The least disturbing facet is the fact that the computer has already been estimated to cost $19 million. In short, this represents more than

$1 a head cost to every man, woman and child in the Australian population. This $1 a head could be much more effectively used to provide some necessary items of health care. It could be much better used for the provision of facilities for the care of the mentally retarded.

Just in case there is thought that some comments which have been made are exaggerated it is interesting to know what the correct pulse or right digit can do in the wrong place. *Rydges Journal* for the month of September this year provides some sobering thoughts on this question and I make this quotation—

> Under the heading "Security", a copper covered booklet called *The Common User Data Network*, published by the Post Office for the benefit of intending users, states broadly: "There can be no unauthorized access of one customer's data by another organization". And Mr. Hulme (who was Postmaster-General in 1969), anxious to dispel potential users' fears of data going astray, had stated: "Each customer organization will be assured of complete security for its messages or data streams and will have guaranteed non-intrusion from other users."
>
> Unfortunately, this has not been the case. Even with only two users on the system, there have been difficulties in channelling the data to the right customer. Computer operators in the Department of Health found themselves trying to process airlines reservation information, while TAA had data from Queensland chemists jumbled up with their plane reservations.
>
> A spokesman for the Post Office said "It was not unexpected. This is the sort of teething problem you get with a new type of system."

Although spokesmen for the Federal Government have stated that the computerized information will remain confidential, they are in no position to guarantee what will happen to such information. However, apart from accidents, recently a Minister has been known to arrange a midnight raid on the headquarters of the Australian Security and Intelligence Organization.

The mind boggles at what could happen if a person sought employment in the Commonwealth department responsible for controlling the computer or, indeed, elsewhere. There would readily be great temptation for a person's complete medical history to be looked up. Of interest may be, for example, whether he had psychiatric trouble or merely whether he had some other condition which an administration is looking for as a means to do something. The office boy might be tempted to know whether a pretty unmarried girl is on the pill. All this sort of information may well be recorded; indeed, the authors of the scheme have said—

> for detailed statistical analysis of every aspect of the plan's operations, information about what is happening in the health care system will be available to the administrators of the programme on a much greater scale and in much more detail than ever before . . . through the computer.

The reference to that statement is page 19, paragraph 2.83 of the Health Insurance Planning Committee report.

There is an even more serious side, however. People who have come to Australia from Europe and some countries outside Europe have other thoughts on what can be done with national identity records. Once a social security card is introduced, they know it will be impossible to prevent its becoming the means of identification for other purposes. The provision for the signature on the card will readily suggest methods of pressure by which a person may be forced to sign his name.

In wartime, it is well known that the social security card system of certain European countries was used as a basis by the enemy for rounding up and identification of the population. Very often by exerting pressure on those who were found it was possible to find others whose existence would not have been known were it not for the social security card.

The Bill indicates the circumstances in which Victorian hospitals, private as well as public, may supply information without the consent of the patient. Although the Bill allows normal communication of information about a patient's condition and treatment for bona fide hospital purposes to the patient's next of kin, or for

his further treatment, and information required by the Commonwealth Statistician, it limits the communication of this type of information to only those other channels which the Minister considers are necessary in the public interest.

The onus is placed on the committee of management of a hospital, boards of directors of a hospital or private hospital, the proprietor, owner, occupier or any person having the management or control of the hospital, or an employee, to comply with the requirements of the proposed Act. The Bill provides a penalty of $250 for non-compliance. I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of Mr. LIND (Dandenong), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Thursday, November 15.

EDUCATION (HANDICAPPED CHILDREN) BILL.

Mr. DIXON (Assistant Minister of Education).—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The main purpose of the Bill is to remove the obligation to educate handicapped children from the parent, where formerly it reposed almost entirely, and to make it the obligation of the Minister of Education. In fact, the only obligation which the parent will have will be to notify the Minister of Education as soon as the parent becomes aware that he has a handicapped child.

I regard this as a real landmark in the history of education in Victoria. It seems to me to be a further indication of Government acknowledgment of humane compassion and understanding. I believe it is appropriate that the introduction of this Bill should occur early in the period of office of the present Premier and Treasurer. I am also pleased that it has taken place in the period of office of the present Minister of Education.

The purpose of the Bill is to replace section 61 of the Education Act 1958 with a new division which will be "Division 2.—Handicapped Children" consisting of new sections 64A to 64K in Part IV. This new division is more appropriate to the current needs of handicapped children.

In the past, additions and alterations have been made to section 61 to meet needs that arose, particularly the needs of deaf children. Although appropriate to that stage of development, the cumulative effect may now be seen to be cumbersome, inadequate and to some extent illogical. Even more important, section 61 is far from being an accurate reflection of current attitudes, intentions and actual commitments to handicapped children. Not the least objectionable feature of section 61 is the fact that it appears to discriminate against the parents of handicapped children.

In Australia, as in the United Kingdom and the United States of America, recent years have witnessed a marked development and public sensitivity towards the fundamental rights of handicapped children. The proposal to repeal section 61 and replace it with the new division reflects a more liberal commitment to handicapped children. At the same time it represents a plain statement of the total commitment.

In proposed section 64A, the definition of a handicapped child is simple but all embracing. It should be noted that the proposed amendment to the Act does not categorize handicapped children or distinguish between them on the basis of intelligence. It represents a total provision, in due course, for all types of educationally handicapped children, including children eligible for day training centres.

To assist honorable members in understanding who are covered by the definition of handicapped children. I point out that the definition includes any child who is deaf, whose hearing is impaired, who is blind or visually handicapped, who is mildly intellectually handicapped, moderately intellectually handicapped, or severely intellectually handicapped, who is emotionally handicapped or

physically handicapped or educationally handicapped, who has marked learning difficulties, who has speech disabilities, who is socially at risk, who is placed in an institution for the socially handicapped or who has any combination of the handicaps I have mentioned. The general provision covered by the actual definition—handicapped to an extent likely to affect his educational progress unless supported by special educational facilities—applies to all those categories within the definition of "handicapped child".

In sub-section (1) of the proposed section 64B the inclusion of the word "priorities" is necessary because a service destined to include every type of handicapped child requires additional resources and new types of teacher training. Services will be phased in as resources permit.

It will be noted too that in proposed section 64A the school age for all handicapped children is reduced to four and a half years. Honorable members will be aware that except for the deaf, the normal compulsory period of education at school is from six to fifteen years of age. This should be related to proposed section 64K which provides for special education of the handicapped child whenever it is appropriate. This may be before the age of four and a half years—as with parent guidance for deaf children—or beyond fifteen years—as with intellectually handicapped, deaf and physically handicapped children. I cannot stress too much the importance of this provision whereby our commitment begins at nought and extends beyond fifteen years where appropriate.

Research by Bloom and other world wide educational authorities has emphasized the fundamental importance of the early stages of a child's education. This point of view is strongly endorsed by the Ministerial Committee of Inquiry into Special Education in Victoria, in its interim report of August, 1973. For the handicapped child, early identification and diagnosis are essential but this must be followed by early educational intervention. It therefore follows that, where it is appropriate, the Education Department should have the right to provide educational services for handicapped children from birth through the pre-school years, through school years and beyond this when it is in the interests of a particular child. At present early educational intervention is restricted to deaf children. World authorities have commended our work with deaf children. We now seek to extend this type of service to other handicapped children.

We currently work at the pre-school level with deaf children because there is mutual agreement between the Department of Health and the Education Department that this is desirable and educationally necessary. The extension of this concept to other types of handicap is a forecast of even greater co-operation between the two departments as indicated in sub-section (1) of proposed section 64K.

Proposed section 64C is based on the present practice of providing ascertainment committees to review regularly the educational needs of deaf children and to make recommendations for appropriate placement in special schools or normal schools or for the provision of specialist services. As with existing ascertainment committees, the special education authority would consist basically of an educational psychologist, a medical practitioner and specialist teachers. Again, the intention is to extend these services to children who have other handicaps. It is not advisable to be prescriptive concerning the personnel of the authority because it is essential to have varying types of authorities to meet a wide variety of educational handicaps.

In proposed section 64E there is an obligation on the part of both the parent and the principal of a normal school to give notification of a child

in need of special education. It also makes provision for the notification of a handicapped child from other sources. In fact, the total concern is the educational welfare of the handicapped child.

It will be noted that proposed section 64G requires the recommendation of the authority for admission to special schools and specialist services. This precaution ensures that services are not swamped unnecessarily. At all times recommendations take cognizance of parental wishes and unusual circumstances. Particular provision is made for the wishes of parents to be taken into account under the Bill. There can be no equivocation about the matter of payment. Proposed section 64I states clearly that the educational services provided by the State for handicapped children are free.

The State has an obligation above all to children. For this reason it maintains its policy of free and compulsory education. Our courts attest to the fact that, although not large in number, irresponsible parents do exist. The penalty cited in paragraph (*b*) of sub-section (1) of proposed section 64J is a modification of that contained in sub-section (1) of section 57 of the principal Act. I would remind honorable members that "reasonable excuse" is defined in sub-section (3) of section 53 of the principal Act. This sub-section provides—

It shall be a reasonable excuse as regards any child that—

(*a*) the child is under efficient and regular instruction in some other manner and is complying with the like conditions of attendance as are required under this section with regard to attendance at State schools;

(*b*) the child has been prevented from attending school by sickness, reasonable fear of infection, temporary or permanent infirmity or any unavoidable cause;

(*c*) the child has been excused by a general or particular order of the Minister; or

(*d*) there is no State school which the child can attend within a distance (measured according to the nearest practicable route) from the residence of the child—

(i) of two miles if the child is under nine years of age; or

(ii) of three miles if the child is at least nine years of age—

and that the child is being educated by correspondence tuition.

In the past it has been left to voluntary organizations assisted by subsidies—provided through the Mental Health Authority—to cater for moderately intellectually handicapped children; and the day training centres continue to give sterling service in this area. The introduction of the new division will open the way for a greater educational participation by the State in this area.

Closely related are our special schools for mildly intellectually handicapped children and these are meeting an urgent need. It is a source of considerable pride that voluntary and service organizations and various community groups have given and continue to give considerable support to these schools. We look forward to and will need their continued support, just as any educational service requires the involvement of the people concerned with that service.

This highly commendable community interest in education is a practical expression of the basic principles underlying plans to give school councils a much greater involvement in schools. For intellectually, socially, emotionally and physically handicapped children and children with learning difficulties we at present provide 48 special schools with 3,890 pupils and 598 teachers; and 83 special services with 3,708 pupils and 186 teachers. These special services include opportunity remedial centres, remedial centres, special education units and demonstration units. Provision is also made for eighteen psychology and guidance centres with 4,751 pupils

and 136 professional staff and nineteen speech therapy centres with 5,709 pupils and 44 professional staff.

For the period between 1974 and 1976, plans include an increase in special schools and services from 168 to 252, an increase of approximately 50 per cent; an increase in enrolments in schools and services from 7,598 to 13,500, an increase of approximately 78 per cent; and an increase in trained specialist teachers from 784 to 1,376, an increase of approximately 76 per cent. In addition a target has been set to increase the number of psychologist–guidance officers from 98 to 478, to increase the number of social workers from 32 to 130, and to increase the number of speech therapists from 44 to 110.

The Government will require considerably larger sums of money from the Federal Government in order to achieve these targets. The provisions for repeal of section 61 and the introduction of the new Division 2 are the direct results of recommendations from the Ministerial Committee of Inquiry into Special Education in Victoria. I pay tribute to the committee—the chairman, Mr. Lloyd Senior; Mr. Emerson, the Director of Special Education; Professor Marie Neale, of Monash University; Mr. John Illman; Miss Agnes Baird; Mr. Ken Runciman; Mr. Bill Watson; Dr. Leo Murphy; and the staff, which has so adequately assisted and is continuing to assist the members of the committee. I particularly pay tribute to the Director of Special Education, Mr. Les. Emmerson. In my time as a member of Parliament, I have never worked with a more dedicated officer. He has given of himself to this service and is in no small way to be thanked for what is now happening.

Greatly increased services to handicapped children will be made legally possible by the new Division 2 but it will require an expenditure well beyond that envisaged in the report of the Interim Committee for the Australian Schools Commission, more commonly known as the Karmel report. Karmel funding was based on Australian needs and the generalizations that arose from a national survey. Although it is a fact that, in some areas of special education, Victoria is in advance of other States, it is equally true that there is a very great need to extend our commitment to handicapped children in Victoria so that we can assist certain children who at present are educationally at risk. That is the major reason for the repeal of section 61 and its replacement by new Division 2.

I now direct attention to clause 3 of the Bill. It will be noted that paragraphs (*a*), (*d*), (*e*) and (*f*) are amendments to the principal Act needed to keep it in harmony with the repeal of section 61 and its replacement with the new Division 2. Paragraph (*c*) amends section 6 so that there is recognition of the Division of Special Services which is responsible for special education and specialist services.

Paragraph (*b*) of clause 3 stems from a recent and exhaustive study of the administrative structure of the Education Department. This was one of the first tasks undertaken by the newly appointed director-general, Dr. L. Shears. From his study of comparable organizational structures, it became evident that a more efficient administration would be possible with the creation of an additional position of assistant director-general.

The proposed regionalization of educational administration will mean that the director-general and senior officers in the Education Department will be called upon more often to support regional directors in their various regions. It is therefore proposed that one assistant director-general will act as a permanent deputy to the director-general so that he will be able to maintain constant contact with developments in the regions and still maintain continuity of administration at headquarters. Honorable members can be assured

that the new structure of the Education Department will be progressively made known to the House as the final touches are put to the proposal.

In the interests of handicapped children and the education of children in general, I commend the Bill to the House.

Mr. FORDHAM (Footscray).—I move—

That the debate be now adjourned.

Mr. DIXON (Assistant Minister of Education).—I suggest that the debate be adjourned for two weeks.

Mr. FORDHAM (Footscray) (*By leave*).—This is a Bill of great importance and many people in a diverse range of positions will be affected, including parents and children and others who have worked in the field of special education. The Opposition sees it as its obligation to make contact with these people so that it can obtain their opinions on the radical changes proposed for the education of handicapped children. It may be that a fortnight will not be long enough for that. I ask for an assurance from the Minister that, if the period of two weeks is not long enough, the length of the adjournment will be extended by another week.

Mr. DIXON (Assistant Minister of Education) (*By leave*).—I am only too happy to give that assurance.

The motion for the adjournment of the debate was agreed to, and it was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Thursday, November 15.

MONASH UNIVERSITY (AMENDMENT) BILL.

Mr. THOMPSON (Minister of Education).—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The Bill amends the Monash University Act in the light of modern needs. The major change will be the reconstitution of the council, or a substantial change in its membership. There will be several additional representatives from the university itself. Other changes will affect the categories of people appointed by the Governor in Council.

When Monash University was established in 1958 it was envisaged that it would become a technological institution or a place with particular emphasis on technology. In fact, the university did not develop in that way. This role has been undertaken by the Victoria Institute of Colleges.

When the principal Act was passed, special provision was made for representatives of technical school councils from the metropolitan area and the country to be members of the council and further provision was made for the representation of the Director of Technical Education. It is now believed that this special type of representation is unnecessary. Instead, people appointed by the Governor in Council, apart from the three Parliamentary representatives, will broadly be people from commerce, industry, the professions and agriculture. However, provision for a representative of the Victorian Trades Hall Council has been retained. No doubt the honorable member for Footscray will welcome that.

The other changes relate to the internal management of the university and results from recommendations of the council. Clause 2 has the effect of excluding visiting professors from membership of the Professorial Board. That is a strange provision but it was recommended by the council itself. Clause 3 makes it possible for Monash University to consist not merely of graduates and undergraduates of that university, but also of graduates of other universities who may be studying at Monash. Clause 4 deals with the membership of the council. Clause 5 sets the terms of members at four years for members other than those representing students, and at two years for student representatives. Clause 6 is a consequential clause arising from the abolition of the provision for a representative of the University of Melbourne.

Clause 7 makes provision for the appointment for the first time of two deans. Clause 8 deals with the method of appointment of deans. Clause 9 provides a slightly more stringent disqualification clause for people who do not regularly attend meetings of the council. At present, if a person is absent without leave for six consecutive months, he is excluded from the council. Now he can be excluded if he has not attended three meetings without special leave. This is on the recommendation of the council.

Clause 10 enables appointments to be made before a vacancy actually occurs. One of the difficulties is that, on a strict legal interpretation of the existing Act, if a vacancy occurs on the council no move can be made for a replacement until the vacancy actually occurs. This will allow the machinery to be put in process to appoint a replacement before the vacancy actually occurs, although the new appointee, naturally, will not assume office until the retiring member retires or resigns.

Clauses 11 and 12 deal with the method of university government by committees. At present a practice has developed of including outsiders on committees of university councils. It has been suggested that this is illegal, but there is obviously merit in enlisting the aid and advice of competent outsiders in a variety of fields, depending upon the particular assignment given to the committee. Clause 13 provides that at least half the members of a committee so chosen shall be members of the council. That is a wise safeguard.

Clause 14 deals with the representation of the professors and the chief librarian of the university on the Professorial Board and adds the director of the computer centre. For the first time it also makes provision for other members, such as members of the teaching staff or students, to be elected in accordance with statutes.

Clause 15 provides for the deputy chancellor to be represented on the governing boards of faculties. Clause 16 provides that minors may enter into agreements for the repayment of loans made from the students loan fund. Clause 17 provides for the first time beyond doubt that loans may be made to members of staff, not only for the purchase of existing houses, but also for the erection of new houses. It repeals the necessity for the specific approval of the Treasurer to be obtained in every case. Clause 18 is in line with legislation at present before the House clarifying the position on the acquisition of land either by agreement or compulsion for the use of tertiary institutions.

Clauses 19 and 22 deal with recommendations made by the university that it should be allowed to present its report to Parliament without waiting for the report of the Auditor-General. This provision has already been made for other tertiary institutions, and will have the effect of eliminating an eight months' delay which usually arises between the completion of the report and the completion of the Auditor-General's statement on the accounts of the university.

Clause 21 will enable fines imposed on members of staff or students of universities in breach of the statutes or regulations to be collected as a civil debt.

The Bill deals with a number of different provisions. The major one is a change in the constitution of the council which increases membership from within the university by seven. In order to make this possible, the total size of the council will be increased from 36 to 39. For the first time two deans will be represented, the number of professors will be increased from three to four and the number of students represented will increase from two to three. The Bill also provides for one representative of the non-teaching staff to be represented on the council, and this is desirable. The measure increases from one to three the representatives of the teaching staff. It is an enlightened

move which will facilitate the management of the university and has the desirable aim of giving a greater say in the management of the university to those who regularly work there. I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of Mr. FORDHAM (Footscray), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Thursday, November 15.

MOTOR CAR (FEES) BILL.

The message from the Council relating to the amendments in this Bill was taken into consideration.

Mr. ROSSITER (Chief Secretary). —The House and the community have had some reservations concerning the Government's proposal as originally expressed in this Bill, that the Governor in Council should set the fees. In view of the reservations expressed, the Government has now accepted the contrary proposition that has been advanced. Sub-clause (1) of clause 2, as passed by this House, provided—

In sub-section (8) of section 22 of the Principal Act for the expression "not exceeding $2 for each appointment made for testing and not exceeding $4 for that test" there shall be substituted the words "for each appointment made for testing and for each test".

The Council amended this sub-clause by omitting the expression—

"not exceeding $2 for each appointment made for testing and not exceeding $4 for that test" there shall be substituted the words "for each appointment made for testing and for each test"

and substituting the expression—

"$2" there shall be substituted the expression "$5" and for the expression "$4" there shall be substituted the expression "$10".

I move—

That amendment No. 1 be agreed to.

Mr. WILTON (Broadmeadows).—The amendment made by the Legislative Council indicates that the Government has acceded to the argument that was submitted by members of the Opposition and the Country Party when the Bill was last before this House. However, it takes the matter a step further by providing for fees of $5 and $10 respectively. Apparently, the Government has decided that the fee payable for making an appointment for a licence test shall be $5 and for the actual test $10. I cannot recall the Chief Secretary explaining why the Government wants to increase the fees. The public and the Parliament are entitled to some explanation of the reason for the increase in the fees.

When the measure was considered in Committee in this Chamber, in an effort to save time, I suggested to the Chief Secretary that progress be reported so that the honorable gentleman could confer and perhaps introduce the amendments which have now been made by another place. Time could have been saved and this present exercise would have been avoided if the Chief Secretary had accepted my suggestion. On that occasion, the honorable gentleman rejected the suggestion and even called for a division. Government members talk about wanting to save time and demanding co-operation from the Opposition so that its legislative programme can proceed, but some Ministers are not prepared to use common sense during the passage of legislation.

I should like an explanation from the Chief Secretary why it is necessary to increase the fees because I do not recall the honorable gentleman giving any explanation on this matter when the Bill was last before this Chamber. When the measure was considered in another place, certain members of the Government party were not prepared to sacrifice the right of Parliament to fix fees. The Government had to concede the point and the Bill was amended.

Mr. B. J. EVANS (Gippsland East). —Despite the protestations of the honorable member for Dundas that the amendments originated in the back benches of the Liberal Party,

there is no evidence of this in *Hansard.* When the Bill was before the House previously the entire case against the proposition for an open-ended provision in the legislation to enable the Executive Council to set fees was argued almost exclusively by members of the Country Party. These facts are on record at page 1110 and following pages of *Hansard.* It is futile for the honorable member for Dundas to make this claim because if Government party members do not express their views in Parliament, what are they here for? Members of the Liberal Party are not game to speak in this House. Although the honorable member for Dundas may be quite sincere in his view, it merely indicates that in the party room the voices of back-bench members are worth nothing. Members of that party ought to move to where their voices count, and that is with honorable members who truly represent the country people of the State.

It is difficult to work out where the Minister stands in this matter. The honorable gentleman insisted on retaining certain provisions in the Bill, but in one instance he agreed with my criticism and suggested that the Bill would be suitably amended in another place. This has not been done although the Minister agreed that the provision in question was merely gobbledygook. I do not think the Chief Secretary knows his own view on the matter. He is ready to criticize the Country Party's stand but I have the utmost difficulty in following his attitude on the measure. Although the Bill has been amended in another place, the gobbledygook has not been rectified.

The Country Party welcomes the amendments that have been made because its members stated quite clearly during the second-reading debate and in Committee that control over the limits of fees that may be set should vest in Parliament and not in the Executive. We agree that certain other Acts contain power to fix fees by regulation, but it is hoped the Government will embark on a campaign to rectify that policy. Members of the Country Party have indicated that they will not agree to this principle being incorporated in future legislation. Fortunately, on this occasion, wiser counsel has prevailed in another place which proves once again the importance of that place in the Victorian legislature.

Mr. WILKES (Northcote).—I support the views expressed by the honorable members for Gippsland East and Broadmeadows. The Country Party highlighted that Parliament should at all times have power over the fixing of fees rather than the Governor in Council being given regulatory power in this field. I concede that the Country Party has adopted the right attitude and apparently the Government has now conceded the point. However, the Government has proposed a savage increase in the fees.

Mr. ROSSITER.—The amendment relates to maximum fees.

Mr. WILKES.—Long waiting lists for licence tests exist at every licensed testing station. Until recently, it was impossible to make a booking by telephone; a person had to call at the station, pay his fee and then wait until he was called back in another two or three weeks' time for the test. Figures provided by the former Chief Secretary indicated that something had to be done about the testing stations.

Mr. JONA (Hawthorn).—On a point of order, although the Deputy Leader of the Opposition is raising matters which are relevant to the Bill and may be of interest to honorable members, they are not concerned with the amendment which has been made by the Legislative Council.

Mr. GINIFER (Deer Park).—Speaking to the point of order, the amendment effects profound changes in the Bill as passed by this House. Accordingly the Deputy Leader of the Opposition ought to be

able to canvass these matters because Victoria is getting back to Government by regulation.

Mr. WILTON (Broadmeadows).—On the point of order, the proposed amendment achieves two things. It restores to Parliament the authority to set fees but it also substantially increases the existing fees. I submit that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition should be permitted to canvass what is involved for the general public in making these appointments, being tested and paying the fees. The Minister, in presenting the Bill, made no mention of the fees that were to be charged. It is only now that the House has been made aware of this fact. Therefore, I submit that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition is in order.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. K. H. Wheeler).—Order! I think I should make the position clear, because possibly a little confusion has been created. Each amendment will be dealt with seperately. Appointments for drivers' licence tests are the subject of the third amendment made by the Council. Therefore, I uphold the point of order. Later there will be an opportunity for the Deputy Leader of the Opposition to refer to that subject.

Mr. WILKES (Northcote).—The amendment to clause 2 proposes to omit the expression, "not exceeding $2 for each appointment made for testing and not exceeding $4 for that test", and to substitute the amounts of $5 and $10.

If an increase in fees is proposed, a better service should be provided to justify the increase. Members of the public are entitled to a better service and it is common knowledge that they are not receiving good service. Driving school associations have written to me and I have written to the Minister pointing out where the system has fallen down. If the fee is to be increased the Minister should be able to promise better licence testing facilities for the public. The amendment further states—

'. . there shall be substituted the expression "$5" and for the expression "$4" there shall be substituted the expression "$10".'

The present licence test does not ensure that a person who is issued with a licence is capable of handling a vehicle on the roads under today's conditions. I am not objecting to a fee of $10 being charged for a licence test, but I expect the standard of the tests to be made higher so that the person who receives a licence will be a better driver than the applicant licensed under the present system.

The Secretary of the Cabinet, for whom I have some regard, served on a committee which examined this subject in depth. He would be the first to suggest that there is room for improvement, if for no other reason than that the demands made on motorists today are difficult and more precise from what they were ten years ago. Of course the fee for a licence test must be increased if the duties of a tester are to be increased.

There are exceptions to the rule, but the average person who is licensed is not capable of handling a vehicle under wet conditions, and in other difficult situations. If a fee of $10 is substituted for a fee of $5, the additional revenue should be sufficient to enable the Government to instruct its licence testers to test applicants for their ability to handle a vehicle under wet conditions, for their capability to drive at 50 miles an hour, which is the maximum speed limit for a "P" plate driver on the highway, and for the prowess in driving at night. At present these three aspects of driving are not covered by the licence test.

Today an oral test was suggested. I am not competent to say whether there should be a written or an oral test but I am competent to say that the present test does not provide for the three conditions to which I have referred. In the interests of road

safety, all users of the roads should be required to comply with those conditions before being issued with a licence. The Government has the opportunity to demand that prerequisite. Drivers should be tested under wet conditions, night driving conditions and on the highway at 50 miles an hour to ascertain whether they are sufficiently competent to control their vehicles. The problem is that when people are issued with licences their first action is to try themselves out on the highway. The Government should sincerely attempt to improve this situation. The Opposition will take no exception to drivers' licence fees being increased to $5, provided that better drivers are produced.

Mr. ROSS-EDWARDS (Leader of the Country Party).—I have much pleasure in supporting the honorable member for Gippsland East and Opposition speakers in their support of the Government for having at last seen reason and changed its decision. This matter was debated in Committee for nearly an hour. The honorable member for Hawthorn accused a member of the Opposition of wasting time. For one hour in Committee members of the Country Party and the Opposition hammered the Government and told it how stupid this measure was. Three Government members walked out.

Mr. ROSSITER.—Not on this issue.

Mr. ROSS-EDWARDS.—On the same principle, and on the same night. These members must have been brought into line. Now a backbench member has the impudence to say that the Liberal Party backbench members brought pressure on the Government. Not one of them had the courage to stand up and say, "For heaven's sake, think about it". The Minister adhered to the principle that there would be no change. Outside the House, wisdom prevailed and the Minister returned and changed his hat. The Minister did not explain to the House that the maximum fees would be charged. It is the Minister's responsibility to say what is to be charged and give a genuine indication of what the fees will be.

Mr. WILTON.—The third amendment sets the fee.

Mr. ROSS-EDWARDS.—Yes, but for how long? That is a relevant point. It is all very well to increase the fees in future in line with inflation but at this stage the Minister should say whether it is intended to change the fee next month or at Christmas time. In the past I have criticized members of the Opposition for not speaking against their Commonwealth colleagues. That is now a closed book. I now make the same criticism of members on the Government side of the House who sit in their places and remain silent at a time when a principle which is very important to this Parliament is being discussed.

Mr. BIRRELL (Geelong).—I wish to reply to the criticism which has been levelled at members on the Government side of the House by the Leader of the Country Party. I refer the honorable member to page 1000 of *Hansard* where a debate on a similar principle is reported. After I had waited in vain for a member of the Opposition or the Country Party to speak, I rose to protest at the transference of power from Parliament to the Executive. I think it is fair to say that if I had not risen the matter would not have been raised.

Mr. WILKES.—That is not right.

Mr. ROSS-EDWARDS.—I invite the honorable member for Geelong to refer to the second-reading speech.

Mr. BIRRELL.—The honorable member for Gippsland East referred to page 1100 of *Hansard* and I am saying that I raised this matter of principle when another Bill was considered on the previous day and that my remarks are recorded at page 1000 of *Hansard*.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. K. H. Wheeler).—Order! Is the honorable member for Geelong making a personal explanation?

Mr. BIRRELL.—No, I will speak to the motion.

The SPEAKER.—I draw attention to Standing Order No. 87, which states—

No member shall allude to any debate of the same session upon a question or Bill not being then under discussion except, by the indulgence of the House, for personal explanations.

Unless the honorable member is making a personal explanation, his remarks are out of order.

Mr. BIRRELL.—I wholeheartedly agree with the action taken by another place in amending the Bill and referring it back to this House.

The motion was agreed too.

Mr. ROSSITER (Chief Secretary).—Clause 3 of the Bill, as drafted, was as follows:—

In sub-section (1) of section 3 of the Motor Car (Learner Drivers' Permits) Act 1972 for the expression—

"(4) The applicant shall pay in advance such fees as are prescribed, which shall not exceed—

(*a*) for making an appointment or appointments for the tests $2

(*b*) for carrying out the tests .. $4"

there shall be inserted the following:—

"(4) The applicant shall pay in advance such fees as are prescribed for each appointment made for testing and for each test.

(4A) Notwithstanding anything in this or any other Act all fees under sub-section (4) shall be paid to the Consolidated Fund and the provisions of sub-section (2) of section 22E shall not apply thereto."

The Council amended this clause by omitting the expression—

'"(4) The applicant shall pay in advance such fees as are prescribed which shall not exceed—'

I move—

That amendment No. 2 be agreed to.

The motion was agreed to.

Mr. ROSSITER (Chief Secretary).—The third amendment made by the Council was that it omitted the expression:—

'there shall be inserted the following expression:—

"(4) the applicant shall pay in advance such fees as are prescribed for each appointment made for testing and for each test.'

and inserted the expression—

'there shall be substituted the expression—

"(*a*) for making an appointment or appointments for the tests .. $5

(*b*) for carrying out the tests .. $10"'

I was assailed by the Leader of the Country Party earlier for not making it clear that these are maximum amounts. They are the maxima. The maximum amounts are now to be set out in an Act of Parliament, although it is expected that the limits will be increased from time to time. I move—

That amendment No. 3 be agreed to.

Mr. WILKES (Northcote).—The Minister did not say that the maximum amounts can be adopted immediately, if the Government so desires.

Mr. ROSSITER.—But the Parliament cannot object.

Mr. WILKES.—That is so, but the way is left open for the Government to increase the charges for appointments and for tests. The Leader of the Country Party asked the Minister to indicate when the fees will be increased. The debate on this Bill, which is a Budget Bill, was peculiar in that it was taken only to a certain stage because the debate on the Appropriation Bill had not been held. The procedure has resulted in some confusion. The honorable member for Gippsland East raised this matter during the limited second-reading debate, and is to be commended for doing so. The Government should indicate its intentions. It is well known that the busiest time for licence testing is in the months of November and December, just before Christmas, and if the Government

intends to apply these increased fees before the Christmas rush, one might suggest that this Bill is designed for revenue purposes. If that is so, the Minister should say so.

The Bill does not in any way provide for more severe licence tests with the object of improving the standard of drivers. It is of interest to note that there is only one testing station in Victoria which will accept telephone bookings. Under the present system a driving school has to attend the licence testing station and make a licence test appointment over the counter. That costs money in time and effort. A reputable registered driving school should be able to make an appointment for a driving test by telephone. The appointment fee could be paid at the same time as the licence test fee. That is an efficient way of collecting the fees, and if the fees are to be increased, they should be increased for that purpose alone.

If the fee for the licence test is to be increased, and the Chief Secretary will not inform honorable members of the intention of the Government in that regard, the test should be subjected to careful examination by the Government. I reiterate what I have said on previous occasions, that instead of an eighteen-year-old appearing for the licence test and driving around a predetermined course, all applicants should be tested under wet and other conditions. Road accident statistics reveal that most accidents in Victoria occur during the winter months.

Mr. B. J. EVANS.—How do you arrange wet conditions?

Mr. WILKES.—The honorable member for Gippsland East would have seen in operation simulated conditions at a testing pad, so wet roads could be created. There would be no difficulty in testing an applicant under night conditions.

The Road Safety Committee has already pointed out to the Government the serious deficiences in eyesight testing. Licences are issued to applicants who should not receive them because of defects in their eyesight. If a person wants to join the Victoria Police Force, his eyesight has to be better than that of a Qantas pilot. However, the eyesight test for a person who wants to drive a motor vehicle on Victorian roads is a quick one. The applicant is shown a card and asked, "Can you read that?" A test of this type is not good enough. Deficiencies in a person's eyesight can be compounded under night conditions.

A further condition which the applicant should meet is a test to determine whether he is capable of handling a motor vehicle on a highway at 50 miles an hour. When an applicant is handed his licence he is permitted to take a vehicle out onto the highway. The vehicle may be a high-powered GT Falcon or GT Holden, and because of the exuberance of youth today, young people seem to have to try themselves out. The tester ought to know whether the applicant is capable of handling a vehicle at high speeds under highway conditions. He has no way of learning that under the meagre test which is now conducted around a predetermined course in the city or in a country town.

If the Government is to charge an increased fee, the licence test should be improved in the interests of road safety and the saving of lives, and it should be impressed on new drivers that there is a difference between driving around a test course and driving along a freeway. The Opposition has no objection to the increase in fees provided that the Government is earnest in its endeavours. The Chief Secretary should inform the House whether the increased fees are to apply before Christmas as a means of raising revenue or whether the Government is sincere in its endeavours to improve the quality of new drivers by improving the licence test which applicants now have to undergo.

If the Chief Secretary answers that query, I am sure the Country Party and the Opposition will be satisfied.

People interested in road safety in Victoria will also be satisfied because for many years they have been talking about the inadequacy of the existing licence test. The Chief Secretary should arrange for telephone bookings to be accepted by any licence testing station in Victoria. The alterations to the driving licence test suggested by the Opposition should be made by the Government as quickly as possible.

Mr. B. J. EVANS (Gippsland East). —I refer to earlier comments made during the second-reading debate. If honorable members turn to page 526 of *Hansard* they will see that my opening remarks were—

> The Country Party is not happy with the Bill because it gives the Government an open cheque to increase the fees for driving licence tests and for appointments for these tests without having to refer the matter to Parliament. The Country Party opposes that principle.

I went on to say—

> There is no reason why the Government should take unto itself the sole responsibility for determining the fee; accordingly, the Country Party is opposed to the Bill.

The Chief Secretary asked—

> Where does the Bill say that?

I suggest that that is what the Bill is all about. The Chief Secretary's interjection indicated that he did not have the vaguest idea what the Bill was about when he introduced it. It is no wonder the House will have been delayed possibly by two hours by the time the Bill is passed because there has been a need to straighten it out. In future, when the Parliamentary Secretary to the Cabinet is getting upset about delays taking place in the House, he should ensure that Ministers know what they are talking about when explaining Bills. That will save a great deal of time. I do not believe the Opposition or the Country Party should be the targets of challenges regarding waste of time in debate.

I was interested to hear the remarks of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition on driver testing. However, I feel his suggestions are impracticable. Although I believe they are desirable, I cannot see how it is physically possible to test an applicant for a driving licence and to ensure that he knows how to handle a car under wet conditions or on the open highway. By the same token a ridiculous situation could arise with a country motorist driving a car in peak hours in Punt Road—at 8 a.m. Under the present system he is expected to be able to do that.

Mr. WILKES.—I concede it is less hazardous to drive in peak hours but if the Government is hoping to educate people to drive under all circumstances, it is a valid argument.

Mr. B. J. EVANS.—I do not know how to train a country motorist to drive in peak hour periods unless the Government will foot the bill for bringing him to the city to gain that experience. Many city learner-drivers will never gain experience of driving on country roads at 50 miles an hour because, to my knowledge, it is extremely difficult for new drivers to find a place in the metropolitan area where they could practise. Perhaps they could practise on the freeways. However, the traffic hazards they meet on freeways are indeed small. They will not encounter on freeways gravel surfaces which are one of the hazards of driving on country highways. This is where the city motorist has not had the experience of handling a car at relatively high speeds.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. K. H. Wheeler).—The amendment made by the Legislative Council relates to the making of appointments for tests and the carrying out of tests. Speed on highways and road conditions are not related precisely to the amendment.

Mr. B. J. EVANS.—I was commenting on the conduct of the tests referred to by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. I agree with your ruling, Mr. Speaker, and I will conclude my remarks on that aspect. The amendments could have been avoided if

the Chief Secretary and the Government had done their homework before the introduction of the Bill.

Mr. WILTON (Broadmeadows).—I am disgusted with the performance of the Government over this measure. It seems to me that the Government is incapable of standing up for its own policies in a straight-forward and honest way. The Government originally introduced the Bill in the hope that it could hoodwink the Parliament into allowing it to fix fees behind locked doors. The Government hoped to sneak through increased fees by regulation without bringing the matter before Parliament.

The Bill was pushed through this House by sheer weight of numbers. When it was transmitted to another place, the Government was unable to dragoon certain members. Finally the Government proceeded to tap the mat and has produced this amendment.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. K. H. Wheeler).—Order! The amendment relates to appointments for driving licence tests and the carrying out of tests, and not to the Government's alleged inability to handle its business.

Mr. WILTON.—The amendment now being debated concerns the setting of fees at $5 and $10. I charge the Government with attempting to push through the Parliament legislation which would have allowed these fees to be set behind locked doors. In this House the Government demanded that its back-bench members vote against the Opposition and the Country Party. When the measure reached the other place, the Government ran into difficulty. It found that it could not dragoon some of its members and consequently this amendment was inserted by the Legislative Council.

When he introduced the Bill into this Chamber the Minister did not mention the proposed fees and he has not said today why the Government wants to impose a fee of $5 for an appointment and $10 for a test. What is the reason? Apparently the Chief Secretary intends to remain silent and not give any explanation to the Parliament or the public. He is demanding the same servitude from Government back-bench members that he has been getting throughout this session. Apparently those honorable members are prepared to accept the proposed fees without any indication from the Minister that improvements will be made in the system of appointments and testing.

Because he is not prepared to deny them, the honorable gentleman is completely ignoring all the points made by the Leader of the Opposition when he spelt out the problems now being faced by the community. Honorable members are therefore entitled to assume that everything which the Leader of the Opposition said is correct. It is a disgrace that, having been found out, having been flushed out of their skunk holes, members of the Government party are not prepared to stand up for their own policies. I do not know whether the honorable gentleman explained the position in the party room, and asked back-bench members to keep silent and to cast their votes as they have in the past, but the Minister seems to think it is good enough that the community at large will have to lump it.

The Government has not had the decency to bother to explain. It has tried subterfuge; it has been caught out and flushed into the open, but it is not prepared to stand up publicly and justify its policies. The Government is trying to steam-roll this Bill through by sheer weight of numbers. That indicates its political immorality.

Mr. DOUBE (Albert Park).—This is an important debate. It is interesting to find that usually urbane Ministers are becoming harassed and losing their control. Perhaps some of the Ministers should undergo a test of their fitness to hold office. It is becoming clearer that Ministers are introducing Bills into the House without looking at them and without

understanding the implications involved in transferring powers to the Governor in Council.

There is a tendency for Ministers who have been in office for many years to imagine that there is no longer any need for them to examine Bills and that they can trust the departments they administer. They put forward outrageous proposals and attempt to offer a defence when these are brought to their notice. Honorable members recently saw the spectacle in this House of Opposition and Country Party members arguing that unless cogent reasons could be advanced, the House should reject the proposition that its powers should be handed over to the Executive. It is pleasing to note that as a result of activities in another place the Government has seen the sense of our recent proposals.

The Chief Secretary has advanced no explanation why the fees should be increased as proposed. Obviously he is satisfied with the present test applied to a person who wishes to obtain a motor cycle learner's permit. That fact is staggering in itself because this would have been an opportunity for the Minister to prescribe better tests. All he is doing now is seeking authority to charge more money for the same old tests. All that is required at present is for an applicant to answer orally or write answers to a few questions and take an eyesight test. He is then set loose on the road on a motor cycle to see if he can survive. That is not good enough. Apparently the Minister thinks it is. Inferentially, he supports the present tests by saying that he wants more money to carry them out.

The Government should be denied extra money for this purpose, because the result of these tests is a high accident rate among people riding motor cycles for the first twelve months. If the fees are to be raised, the standard of the test should be raised. No one can look with equanimity at the high casualty rate of young motor cyclists.

Mr. JONA (Hawthorn).—On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I direct attention to the amendment before the House, which sets a maximum fee. I suggest that the honorable member for Albert Park is canvassing the whole area of the relevant section of the principal Bill and is going far beyond the question of whether Parliament will fix a maximum fee or whether fees will be entirely fixed by regulation.

Mr. DOUBE (Albert Park).—On the point of order, I suggest that the honorable member for Hawthorn is in error. The House is now fixing maximum fees. The amounts were previously set at $2 and $4. The amendment changes the amendments originally proposed to the Act. Instead of the Governor in Council fixing the fees, the maximum amounts will be set by the Bill. I suggest that any honorable member is entitled to ask the Government why the maximum fees should be raised in view of the fact that the tests are still the same simple tests that they always have been.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. K. H. Wheeler).—I have listened carefully to the remarks of the honorable member for Albert Park, who is making out a case for the carrying out of certain tests, and stating why these tests are necessary and why particular fees are required in order that the test may be carried out. I cannot uphold the point of order.

Mr. DOUBE.—Sub-section (4) of section 3 of the Motor Car (Learner Drivers' Permits) Act which refers to learners' permits for motor cyclists, provides that an applicant shall pay in advance such fees as are prescribed, which shall not exceed $2 for the making of an appointment or appointments for the test and $4 for the carrying out of the test. It is proposed to raise the maximums to $5 and $10 respectively, but the House has been given no information on why this is necessary.

The Act provides that an applicant for a learner-driver's permit may be required to undergo a test, which may be a written test, on his knowledge of traffic laws of Victoria. As there is no suggestion that that test is to be altered, what justification is there for raising the fees to this extent? One only has to see one of these tests taken to understand that the expense involved could not possibly have doubled. The point I make is that practically nothing is done. The applicant is asked a few questions. I know of no one who had to undertake a written test. A test takes only a few seconds of the time of the testing officer.

If the Government wants revenue it should say so, but if it suggests that the expenses involved in testing these applicants have more than doubled it should prove that to the House.

Mr. HANN (Rodney).—I am pleased to support my Country Party colleagues and members of the Opposition in this matter. We have all battled hard to convince the Government that a limit on fees should be set in the Acts under which they are levied. Earlier the Country Party was unable to convince the Government on this but results can be seen now. I am concerned at the large increases in maximum charges, particularly those relating to motor cycle learners' permits. However, I am glad that the Government has taken action to set out in print the increases it has in mind.

The reaction of the community will be interesting, once it realizes how much the maximum fees will be raised. The Country Party has fulfilled its role in this House by pointing out that maximum fees must be set by legislation so that they may be discussed in Parliament. I previously said that this proposal was partially intended as a taxing measure. It continues to be a taxing measure, and that is to be deplored.

The motion was agreed to.

MINES (FEES) BILL.

The message from the Council relating to the amendments in this Bill was taken into consideration.

Mr. BALFOUR (Minister of Mines).—This Bill originally provided that the fee or a miner's right—which had been set at the equivalent of 25 cents for 70 years—should be prescribed by regulation. The Legislative Council made two amendments to the Bill. The first inserted in sub-clause (1) of clause 2 after the word "fee" the expression "not exceeding Four dollars ($4.00) as may be". The second amendment was to sub-clause (2) of clause 2 and inserted after the word "fee" the expression "not exceeding One dollar ($1.00) as may be".

I indicated that it was the Government's intention to increase the fee for a miner's right from 25 cents to $2. The other fee of 10 cents would have remained as it was. The Legislative Council has fixed a maximum figure. I move—

That the amendments be agreed to.

Mr. AMOS (Morwell).—The minor amendments before the House touch on the same important principle that was debated a short time ago on another measure. During the debate on clause 2 in Committee, a number of honorable members said that the power to fix fees in the future ought not to be taken away from the Parliament. I made that point in my second-reading speech on the Bill, and it was also made by other members of the Opposition and of the Country Party. To their credit, the honorable members for Ballaarat South, Ballaarat North and Geelong also said that it was a bad principle to take that right away from Parliament. At page 1002 of *Hansard,* I am reported as having said—

During the second-reading debate I made it plain that the Opposition was opposed to the principle about which the Leader of the Country Party spoke. This is the only issue, the removal from Parliament to the Governor in Council of the right to fix fees for

miners' rights. No matter how highly the Governor in Council is regarded in this State he is still not the Parliament.

I understood that the honorable members for Ballaarat South and Geelong thought likewise. I challenged them by saying—

I congratulate the honorable member for Geelong and the honorable member for Ballaarat South for opposing this suggestion and I hope they, and other Government back benchers who are opposed to the right to fix this fee being taken from the Parliament, will put their votes where their mouths are.

The vote was finally taken. The tally of votes appears on page 1007 of *Hansard,* but the names of the honorable members concerned are missing. They were not game to put their votes where their mouths were.

When discussing clause 2, the honorable member for Geelong spoke about the same principle which I am now raising and which another place decided should not be applied as the Minister originally intended. During his speech, which is recorded on page 1000 of *Hansard,* the honorable member read from page 12 of the report of the Subordinate Legislation Committee. The honorable member stated that he was the author of the document and read clauses 14.1, 14.2 and 14.3 of the report.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. K. H. Wheeler).—Order! Is this related to the amendments?

Mr. AMOS.—It is directly related to the point I am making and to the fixing of maximum fees. The report of the Subordinate Legislation Committee stated at page 12—

Some witnesses argued that the demands of administration call for open ceiling for fees to be fixed by regulation.

The committee disagrees. It believes that Parliament should delegate no more than the authority to fix fees and charges within certain stated limits, with the maximum amount clearly stated. In all cases clear authority must exist in the Act for any prescription of fees by regulation.

I regret that, in his concluding remarks, the honorable member for Geelong stated—

The report basically was written by me and I want to direct the attention of the Committee to this aspect of the Bill.

To what did the honorable member wish to direct the attention of the Committee? Did he refer to the fact that he was the author of the document or that he was concerned because the Minister and the Government were bringing in a measure designed to remove from Parliament the very right about which he spoke and wrote, if he was the author of that document? The honorable member for Geelong should have asked the Government to take the measure away and return it in an amended form. The honorable member for Geelong and other Government supporters who spoke against the measure at that time should have spoken up in the party room and had the measure amended before it was introduced. It is to be regretted that, when these honorable members had the opportunity, they did not vote against this principle. As a result, the measure went to another place and because honorable members there felt the same as I and other members of the Labor and Country parties feel, that this right ought not be removed from the Parliament without certain restrictions, two amendments were proposed. The Bill has now been returned to this Chamber and honorable members are asked for their concurrence.

I trust that this will be a lesson to back-bench Government supporters who make statements in the House but do not vote in accordance with what they say. Parliament ought not to give up its right, and of course the Opposition does not oppose the amendments which guarantee that that right will remain with Parliament. It is a shame that the time of the Parliament has been wasted by the inept attitude of some

Government back-benchers who were not able in the first place to persuade the Government that the amendments should not come before the Parliament.

Mr. McINNES (Gippsland South).—I rise to support the amendments and express gratitude for the wise counsel which prevailed in another place. I join with the honorable member for Morwell in regretting the need for the measure to be referred back to this House for amendment. A vital principle is at stake on the question of the words "on payment of the fee prescribed by the regulations". The Country Party led the way in several divisions on this matter, because it saw how vital this could be and the consequences which would arise if the principle were allowed to prevail. It was hoped that honorable members occupying the back benches of the Liberal Party who spoke in support of the amendments would have the courage of their convictions by remaining in the House to express that support when the division was called. However, that was not to be, because for reasons known to themselves those honorable members found other tasks to occupy them at the time. I do not propose to go into lengthy discussion, because the ground has been traversed previously.

The fact that justice has again been done does reinforce the confidence of my party in its belief that there is a need for another place. Although the Government has a majority in the Legislative Council, honorable members there can see fit to amend Bills which should have been amended in this place earlier. I admit that that statement is a reflection on the attitudes adopted in this Chamber. However, justice has been done and the Country Party certainly supports the amendment.

The motion was agreed to.

GOVERNOR'S SPEECH.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

The debate (adjourned from October 25) on the motion of Mr. McClure (Bendigo) for the adoption of an Address-in-Reply to the Governor's Speech was resumed.

Mr. GUY (Gisborne).—In the closing hours of this week's sitting, it is my privilege to address the House on behalf of the electors of Gisborne and to take the opportunity of reflecting on the Speech presented by His Excellency on 19th June last. It goes without saying that I, personally, and on behalf of my electors, pass on to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. our sincerest respects and to His Excellency the Governor and Lady Delacombe our gratitude for the opportunity that we have had, especially during the past several months, of welcoming them to the electorate as warm and sincere friends. Again, I take this opportunity of presenting our sincerest respects to His Excellency and Lady Delacombe.

It is interesting to reflect on the words spoken by the Governor and to examine the legislation which has been introduced by the Government since His Excellency made his Speech. His Excellency said—

> In this session the Government will bring before you a variety of measures designed to promote the happiness and wellbeing of the people of this State. The emphasis will be on quality of life, on the protection of the environment and on the total welfare of Victorians, with particular concern for the rights of the individual citizen and for the family unit as the basis of society.

His Excellency then went on to reflect on the confidence that the people of Victoria have placed in the Government and stated—

> The Government accepts the mandate of the Victorian people at the recent election with humility, noting that this was the first time that young people between the ages of 18 and 21 had voted. It pledges itself to do its utmost to justify the faith and aspirations of the electorate.

His Excellency also said that the activities of the new Ministry of Conservation will be intensified and I

should like to link those two comments because one of the main concerns of the younger people of this State, and indeed many of their elders, is the preservation of the environment in which we live and which in conservation terms relates to a certain very special area in the Gisborne electorate.

I hope the Government will see fit in the near future to implement planning policies and recommendations that will ultimately lead to the conservation and preservation of this unique area, the Macedon ranges. They are only 30-odd miles from the centre of Melbourne with easy access along the Tullamarine Freeway. Development is springing up in all sections of the ranges. They extend probably as far as 50 or 60 miles from Melbourne and encompass tremendously large areas of land, some of which extend beyond the extremities of my electorate.

The area is becoming most popular for residential purposes ; it is a recreational area and is also used for water catchment and has a variety of other multiple usages. Therefore, the range area is not one to just sit back and admire. Activities in the area cover the full spectrum of life and interests of this society.

Tremendous problems arise in the management of the range because a complexity of Government authorities and other interested bodies of citizens, such as conservationists or concerned citizens, want more protection to be given to the area than is being afforded to it at present. No fewer than thirteen Government authorities are involved in the administration of the area. Each authority probably considers its particular area of administration is well defined and does not conflict with the administration of another authority. However, when one comes on top of the other there is a tremendous jigsaw that is quite puzzling.

It does not require much imagination to see the need for over-all planning policies for the ranges which will take into consideration all the desires and objectives of the thirteen or more Government departments and agencies which administer the area, as well as the many private organizations which are interested in the area from different points of view. Naturally, the views of local organizations are presented through the local councillors or the local Parliamentary representatives. With these numerous Government authorities and private organizations having some interest in the area, there is a tremendous need for the Government to implement a planning policy to control all aspects of the future usage of the ranges area and the interests of all organizations which currently administer it.

Approximately twelve months ago I started to canvass opinions from the various Government authorities in order to familiarize myself with the real problems facing the ranges area. I received much support from the authorities ; they were prepared to give me a quick run-down on their philosophies as they applied to the ranges, the sort of responsibilities they accepted and the sort of co-operation they would like to extend to other organizations to ensure that this unique area was preserved in as natural a state as possible for the enjoyment of present and future generations who might possibly reside there.

I should like to quote from the letters that I have received from the various authorities because certain facts need to be recorded. I shall quote correspondence from departments such as the Local Government Department and the Soil Conservation Authority because the information will allow a clear picture to emerge that the ranges are on the brink of a possible disaster. Although all the authorities exhibit a tremendous interest in the future of the area, they are not sure exactly in which direction the Government should be moving with its over-all planning policies.

Firstly, I refer to the state of town planning in the Macedon ranges area

as it affects the Shire of Gisborne. The area of the Shire of Newham and Woodend has an interim development order over it. The Shire of Romsey includes a large portion of the ranges and it is working off an interim development order at the moment. A town plan has been submitted for the small hamlet of Riddell, which is my home village and of which I am happy to be a citizen.

However, I place on record my concern that the town plan envisages a population of 3,000 in Riddell's Creek in the near future. There is no reason why the township cannot support that number of people provided that all the services and facilities are available, but this is not being considered as part of an over-all plan for the ranges area. It is being done in bits and pieces. The Gisborne Shire Council is currently undergoing some trauma because of the town plan which is on exhibition. Because of various technical discrepancies it has been decided to exhibit the plan for another statutory three months. The plan has already been on exhibition for three months and has attracted enormous criticism from the local residents of Gisborne and Macedon. Many of the critics are newcomers to the area, but they have shifted there for the usual reasons—because of its easy access to the city and the pleasant environment. These people are greatly concerned about the urban development that will take place in the area.

Although as I said, the town plan is extremely controversial and objections are being lodged in the usual democratic way, it has created much friction between local residents and the Gisborne Shire Council, which is held responsible by the citizens for the future development of the area.

I refer to an extract from a letter from the Minister for Local Government dated 27th November, 1972, relating to town planning in the area. The Minister spoke firstly of control and development in the Macedon ranges area, and then said—

> The Macedon range is, of course, an important natural resource. Firstly, it is a valuable catchment for the local urban water supply.

That is the first point the Minister for Local Government made. He emphasizes that the area is a valuable catchment area for local urban water supply. Time and again I have received letters from Government departments expressing concern that the range area is being despoiled as a unique water catchment. The letter from the Minister continues—

> Secondly, the extensive forested slopes provide not only pleasant surroundings for scenic walks and picnics and a sanctuary for wildlife but also timber for commercial use. Thirdly, its volcanic features are of general geological interest. Fourthly the range, with elevations exceeding 3,000 feet is a prominent landform providing welcome relief from the flat grassy north-western plains.

More importantly, the honorable gentleman states—

> Furthermore, its ready accessibility to the metropolitan area makes it a popular destination for week-end day trips by metropolitan residents.

There is an influx of tourists into the area, in addition to the clamour by other people to buy blocks of land on which to build holiday homes or homes in which to live permanently. The following is probably the most pertinent part of the letter :—

> Some forms of occupancy have already destroyed some of the natural environment and these competing demands must be reconciled and integrated by careful planning and the strict regulation of land use if further environmental damage is to be avoided.

I suggest that the crisis point has been reached in future urban planning in the Macedon range area. As the Minister pointed out in his letter, some forms of occupancy have already destroyed some of the natural environment. One wonders how it reached that stage in the first place. A plan must be evolved to ensure

that it does not deteriorate further in the future. The Minister concluded his letter by saying—

I believe that it is important to ensure that the character of the area is not destroyed and I have therefore directed the Town and Country Planning Board to undertake the necessary studies preparatory to producing a statement of planning policy. Mount Macedon is obviously important in this context but the studies will involve also the adjacent elevated areas such as the Blackwood ranges to the west.

The Minister aired his concern that development in the region had caused environmental damage and if action was not taken soon, more environmental damage would occur.

I refer now to a letter I received from the Minister for Local Government dated 18th September, 1973. I had been pressing him to tell me when the Town and Country Planning Board would produce a statement of planning policy for the entire Macedon ranges area. That letter states—

MACEDON RANGES.

I refer to my letter to you of the 27th November, 1972, in which I advised you that I had directed the Town and Country Planning Board to undertake the necessary studies preparatory to producing a statement of planning policy for the Macedon ranges area and adjacent areas such as the Blackwood range.

The Town and Country Planning Board has advised me that due to the additional heavy commitments undertaken by the board recently, particularly those associated with the Albury–Wodonga project, the necessary studies have not been commenced.

I have asked the board to keep the position under review and to give the matter as high a priority as is practicable in the circumstances.

I submit that the highest priority should apply to future planning in the Macedon ranges area. Although I sympathize with those who have to solve the problems in the Albury–Wodonga area, I am trying to remain unbiased, which is probably impossible, but the Macedon ranges deserve to be studied by the Town and Country Planning Board and a statement of planning policy produced before any more time expires. Admittedly, this will cost money and much effort, but it will be worth while. A statement of planning policy would be of advantage not only to the people who live in the area but also to those who visit it at week-ends and the people from all over Victoria who visit the Macedon ranges for holiday periods. The area is a wonderful tourist attraction and immediate efforts should be made to preserve it. I appreciate that the Town and Country Planning Board has problems in providing development guidelines for all areas, but there may be other solutions to the dilemma.

I refer now to the comments made, and studies and attitudes presented by other Government departments on the subject. The Town and Country Planning Board is having difficulty in defining a planning policy for implementation by the local council. Recently many objections have been raised in the Mount Macedon and Macedon area by local citizens to permits being given for flat and other residential development. These people have exercised their democratic right to object to council decisions and have even taken them to appeal. In most cases they have been successful. This leads to the conclusion that the local council has a tremendous problem when it attempts to implement its own planning policy. At this stage it does not know in which direction to turn.

The following is an extract from the 26th annual report of the Town and Country Planning Board :—

PLANNING AND KNOWLEDGE —

At the present time when there is growing interest in planning and protection of the environment, it is interesting to consider briefly the place of planning as a process involving some expert knowledge in a world in which the rapid increase in information appears to make inevitable ever-increasing specialization and division of expertise into tight compartments.

I submit that this specialization and division of expertise into tight compartments makes a progressive planning policy impossible. The compartments are too specialized, too diverse and divided into too many departments. These compartments must be brought together under the one heading of planning. The report continues—

In a free society the technical planner always supplies an advisory service to the democratically elected decision makers who, regardless of their educational qualifications, may reach decisions on a basis of common sense, and local knowledge, with a capacity to take a long-sighted view of what is best in the public interest.

Mr. DOUBE.—What is the name of that report?

Mr. GUY.—It is the 26th annual report of the Town and Country Planning Board. The conclusion to be drawn from that statement is that the public is in violent disagreement with what the local council wishes to do about planning. In view of this disagreement, one can only assume that we have fallen flat on our faces so far as Gisborne is concerned.

Appeals have been lodged with the Town Planning Appeals Tribunal against some council decisions, and have been decided in favour of local residents. I view this fact with some concern. I do not see why there should be any conflict between the public and local government. It is interesting to read a judgment which was handed down by the Town Planning Appeals Tribunal in respect of the erection of brick veneer flats at Macedon. It is appeal No. 73/326, and it was heard on 19th July, 1973. The proposal had been agreed to by the council, but was objected to by local residents. The judgment states, *inter alia* —

One of the objectors main objections to the proposal was the difficulty of providing adequate and proper provision for dealing with household wastes which would be produced by the proposed development.

It was proposed that human waste should be dealt with by a septic tank and sand filter which however, would have to be carried by drain to a nearby creek which drained into Riddell's Creek and finally into the Maribyrnong River. It appeared that sewerage would not be available to the subject land for some considerable time.

In our opinion it is undesirable that flats of this density should be erected in an area where sewerage is not available owing to the probability of pollution of the environment.

The appeal is allowed and it is directed that no permit issue.

As honorable members are aware, the Environment Protection Authority has paid much attention to the situation which exists in respect of the Maribyrnong River, Jackson Creek and Riddell's Creek. On a population basis it is estimated that if subdivisions were permitted on blocks which have sealed plans of subdivision attached to them, the area could have a population of about 5,000. The estimate of its present population is about 1,200. The shire engineer estimated that the population of Macedon could be 5,000 by 1983, but, having regard to the popularity of the area, I think that figure could be reached well before then.

In a report dated 6th April, 1972, discussing sanitation in the Gisborne shire in general, and Gisborne, New Gisborne, and Macedon in particular, the health inspector of the Shire of Gisborne, Mr. R. J. Hastings, stated—

Since taking up the appointment with the Shire, I viewed with some concern the number of septic tanks being installed. Due to the geographical location of the areas specified, the nature of the soil, and the climatic conditions, the areas specified plus new subdivisions, particularly Greenhills, are in my opinion rapidly reaching saturation which will even with the best installations (and some are not) produce, as in other shires and municipalities where a population explosion is taking place, a serious situation liable to create a danger to health, with diseases such as hepatitis, infantile diarrhoea, dystentry and so on.

Honorable members will not need to be told that that would be a poor advertisement in a tourist brochure. It would hardly encourage anyone to visit the Macedon ranges on their days off. Perhaps the fact that the health inspector left the service of the Shire of Gisborne shortly after making that report is a matter which

deserves to be investigated, but for this exercise, his words should be heeded.

I now direct the attention of the House to extracts from a report concerning the study of the north-eastern area of this State by the Land Conservation Council of Victoria. The report refers basically to Crown land, but there are certain suggestions relating to the Land Conservation Act under which the council was created which to me seemed to cover a wider scope than just Crown land. Sub-section (1) of section 5 of the Land Conservation Act states—

The Council shall—

(*a*) carry out investigations and make recommendations to the Minister with respect to the use of public land in order to provide for the balanced use of land in Victoria;

(*b*) make recommendations to the Governor in Council as to the constitution and definition of water supply catchment areas under the Soil Conservation and Land Utilization Act 1958; and

(*c*) advise the Soil Conservation Authority concerning policy on the use of land (whether public land or any other land however vested) in any water supply catchment area.

Sub-section (2) provides *inter alia*—

In making any recommendation the Council shall have regard to the present and future needs of the people of Victoria in relation to—

. . . . . .

(*f*) the creation and preservation of reserves for the conservation of fish and wildlife;

(*g*) the preservation of species of native plants; and

(*h*) land required by government departments and public authorities in order to carry out their functions.

That relates back to the water supply question once more. It is clear that the council has the authority to investigate water supply problems in water catchment areas. Sub-section (4) of section 5 of the Land Conservation Act 1970 provides—

Any person or body may make submissions to the Council as to how any public land can be better used to meet the needs of the people of Victoria and the Council shall consider any such submissions before making any recommendation under paragraph (*a*) of sub-section (1).

Residents in the Macedon ranges in future can make submissions to the Land Conservation Council once the first report has been tabled, and many residents look forward to doing that. A more important point arises later in the report of the Land Conservation Council. A definition of "conservation" is given and I shall read it to the House as I should like to have the definition incorporated in *Hansard*. The report states—

Conservation can be considered as an endeavour to anticipate and resolve conflicts between the individual and society about the present and future use of resources, and between competing uses of the same resource. The conservationist is aware of long-term needs and recognizes that a community requires land for recreational, scientific, and aesthetic purposes as well as for the production of food, timber, and minerals, or for urban and industrial use.

There is no better way of summing up the conservation problems presently existing in the Macedon ranges than referring to the definition of "conservation" as contained in the Land Conservation Council report on the north-eastern study area. I turn now to correspondence which I have received and discussions I have had with the Soil Conservation Authority, which is also involved in the development of the Mount Macedon area. The views of the Soil Conservation Authority are set out in a letter dated 17th October, 1972, as follows:—

There is a conflict of interest between private landholders and the conservation groups: the former feel that they should be permitted to develop their properties as they see fit, the latter feel that existing forests and landscapes should be retained. The eight waterworks trusts concerned will side with the conservation groups in this regard.

So, there is a report of the Soil Conservation Authority admitting to problems in the Macedon ranges area. The letter continues—

The basic consideration in deciding on the category is whether or not utilization and/or development will result in erosion or other-

wise affect the water supply. The authority would have difficulty in preserving timbered areas for purely aesthetic reasons, under the existing legislation.

The authority is saying that it wishes to preserve timbered areas but cannot do so at the moment because of the existing State legislation. I suggest that honorable members should look at this problem seriously. Sometimes there may be a good reason for introducing legislation simply to preserve an area because of its attractive appearance, especially as found in the Macedon ranges area. Any honorable member who has driven near the area could not help but be moved at the sight of the ranges, especially at sunset and at other times of the day. The letter goes on—

Water trusts generally consider that the Soil Conservation Authority land use determinations allow too much forest to be cleared, to the extent that summer flows are reduced. Such arguments cannot be proved or disproved due to lack of long term flow data, but the authority's observations indicate that any such hydrologic interferences caused by its multiple use policy have been kept to a minimum.

At present I believe the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works is conducting a hydrological study of certain areas of Melbourne. However, it does not expect to be in a position for another five or six years to make a specific report or decide definitely on whether the clearing of forest areas affects water supply. I submit that that is too long to wait to ascertain whether the clearing of 100 acres of timbered area in a water catchment area will affect the quality or quantity of the water supply in the area. Once an area of land in a water catchment has been cleared, regardless of whether there was a permit for the clearing, it is too late as trees cannot grow to their former glory in less than twenty years. It will take that long for the area to be benefical and fulfil its potential as a water supply catchment. In the Macedon ranges certain land has already been cleared. Some excellent stands of timber have been felled but the Soil Conservation Authority seems to have no control over land held by private interests. Accompanied by local councillors, I have driven through the range areas and have seen hundreds of acres cleared in water catchment areas.

Mr. EDMUNDS.—Can you name the individuals?

Mr. GUY.—I do not wish to name the individuals at the moment, but in future discussions with the Minister for Conservation I am prepared to name them because I have the names in my possession.

Mr. EDMUNDS.—They should be "pinched".

Mr. GUY.—They should be "pinched", to use the expression of the honorable member for Moonee Ponds, or "knocked off", if I may use the expression just used by the Minister of Public Works. In those areas the Soil Conservation Authority should be preserving the forest and catchment areas; something is obviously wrong with the administration. Perhaps it may be too late to "grab" landowners who have cleared their land because once the trees are cut, they cannot grow overnight. The Government, through its agencies, should police the area more thoroughly, especially those areas where land-use determinations have been made.

There are many other problems flowing from land clearing. I have seen streams silt up over the past couple of years. Whereas the depth of water in a stream was once between 5 feet and 6 feet—it was clear, beautiful water—the same stream today has water to a depth of only 1½ feet to 2 feet, the remaining depth having been lost through silt. Rainfall erodes the top soil into the gullies, and in turn, silts up the streams.

The small water trusts do not have the funds to enable them to police the areas as would the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission. I believe the large Government departments should accept more responsibility in this regard. Any landowner who clears land contrary to a land use determination should be held responsible and pay the consequences. The Soil Conservation Authority report further states—

> However, there are changes in land use which can be made in these catchments, without hazard to the water supply. If a blanket ban on development was implemented for these catchments, the authority would be obliged to pay large amounts of compensation to private landowners. Therefore unless the legislation is changed, and funds made available for compensation on purely "preservation" grounds, no such limitation on development is possible.

If the legislation needs changing, Parliament should seriously and responsibly consider it. The Soil Conservation Authority states that it is prevented from policing these areas as rigidly as it would desire. If a blanket ban on development is implemented in these ranges, the authority would be obliged to pay compensation to the private landowners. If the Government deprives a landowner of his income earning capacity, most certainly it must pay compensation. However, in the Macedon ranges area, I suggest that is unlikely because many people who reside there would be seeking an increase in the value of their land and using any expenditure on it as a taxation deduction each year where possible on broad acres.

The Soil Conservation Authority further states—

> Some of the municipalities involved have assisted the work of the authority — by introducing by-laws restricting piggeries (Gisborne), and restricting the extent of timber clearing (Gisborne and Romsey); by being objective about subdivisions. The final decision as to whether or not a subdivision (and all its consequences) will be permitted rests with the municipalities.

The Soil Conservation Authority is placing the responsibility clearly on the shoulders of local government, which is in all sorts of trouble in regard to this statement of planning policy. The report proceeded—

> It is important that the long-term effects on land use and conservation be considered, not simply the theoretical financial benefits of the short term.

I agree with the comment and philosophy of the Soil Conservation Authority, and with the comments and philosophies of the other Government departments to which I have referred today. However, whilst it is wonderful to have these ideals and to be able to say, "Yes, there are other priorities which should be determined", that responsibility should be founded in a total planning concept.

The Forests Commission was kind enough to devote some time to research for me and it did a magnificent job. I had some reservations about the thoughts of the Land Conservation Council and logging in some areas, but that is of no concern now. The welfare of the people earning their income from logging in the Macedon ranges will be protected. In a letter to me dated 6th November, 1972, the commission stated that the Mount Macedon forest park had been set aside to facilitate its management for the protection of water catchments. It said that proclaimed catchments occupied a large part of the range. Everyone is concerned with catchment areas. The Forests Commission pointed out that the forest park had also been set aside to control and provide the facilities for the many people who visited the forest areas in their leisure.

There is no doubt that in this case the major problem is people pollution. People continually visit the range area. They are welcome, and the beautiful forests and walk-ways are for the use of the public. An educational programme for the public, though, is sadly lacking. I do not wish to throw responsibility on anybody, but people pollution is a great problem in the

forest areas of Macedon. People enter the forest area and without permits remove soil. Picnickers who have access to water catchment areas do not consider the ramifications of their actions. People cannot be denied access to a declared water catchment area. An educational programme may have to be implemented to control the problems of people pollution in the areas under the control of the Forests Commission, and this I would urge.

The Environment Protection Authority is now taking a great interest in the Macedon ranges. At present it has its hands full taking care of the complaints that have been referred to it since its establishment. Because of its policy statement on the Maribyrnong River, the authority must be considered in relation to the Macedon ranges. I quote an extract from the report of the Environment Protection Authority of 1st November, 1972, which implies that the authority is not happy with the financial provision for conservation. It states—

> In the long run Victoria will get as good an environment as this Government and people are prepared to pay for.

Nothing will be obtained for nothing. Payment will be made in money, effort or concern. A basic statement of planning policy that incorporates the objectives, philosophy and attitudes of every Government department which has anything to do with the future management of the Macedon ranges is required.

It has been heartening to me to have been able to discuss these problems at some length with the Minister for Conservation. The Ministry for Conservation Act provides that the functions of the Ministry are, firstly, the protection and preservation of the environment, and secondly, the proper management and utilization of the land and living aquatic resources of Victoria. The Act also provides, *inter alia*—

> It shall be the duty of the Minister to take all reasonable steps to ensure that the objects of this Act are achieved and in particular without limiting the generality of the foregoing—
>
> (*a*) to control the discharge into the environment of substances which are of danger or potential danger to the quality of the environment;
>
> (*b*) to co-ordinate all activities relating to the prevention or control of pollution or to the protection and preservation of the environment; and
>
> . . . . . .
>
> (i) to co-operate with the Government of the Commonwealth and other States and with public statutory authorities constituted under a law of the Commonwealth or of any other State in relation to the carrying out of the objects of this Act.

That would indicate—my theory is supported by the co-operation I have received from the Ministry for Conservation—that the Ministry believes the responsibility rests squarely on it to endeavour to co-ordinate the activities of any Government department that has anything to do with the future planning and conservation of the Macedon ranges area.

The Minister for Conservation has agreed to meet a deputation of residents from the Macedon ranges area at 10 a.m. tomorrow so that, firstly, he can understand their concern and, secondly, in the near future, he can call a conference of all those bodies which have anything to do with the future planning and use of the area.

In a letter I forwarded to the Director of Conservation, Mr. Downes, I explained the reasons for this deputation—the icing on the cake, so to speak. The members of the deputation will present to the Minister for Conservation a summary of the action taken by concerned residents of the Macedon ranges about town planning in the area and its past, current and future effect on the unique environment and resources of the ranges area. They will impress on the Minister their desire to support the findings of the current surveys, future activities and environmental controls reasonably proposed by the

Land Conservation Council, the Environment Protection Authority, the Soil Conservation Authority, the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission, and the Forests Commission. Even the Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation considers that he has a vested interest in the future of the Macedon ranges area in the recreation sphere.

Honorable members heard humorous dialogue in the House today about proposed bicycle tracks. Authorities in the Macedon area are seriously considering the implementation of horse riding and pony riding tracks because there is great danger to young people from heavy vehicular traffic. If they wanted to ride horses, the track would be available for them. Their interests need to be covered also. In this way Macedon could be a truly multi-purpose area.

The deputation tomorrow will concern itself with the future planning policies of the Town and Country Planning Board. It will want to ensure that that body is provided with the necessary finance to undertake the study from which a statement of planning policy may be made. It should be a study to take fully into account the aims, objectives, policies and standards of conservation as expressed by those departments and authorities.

This Government has a unique mandate from the people of Victoria and it is in a position to make bold decisions on their behalf. Although in the past conservationists have been regarded as a little on the " nutty side ", they have now come to understand what they must do in order to present their case to the property authority at the appropriate time and through the proper person.

It will be my pleasure to initiate proceedings by taking the deputation to the Minister for Conservation at 10 a.m. tomorrow in the hope that the Government will see fit to consider all that has been mentioned today. It is to be hoped that, eventually, a plan can be produced for the future of the Macedon ranges so that they will be a joy to everybody, not only those who live there, but also those who want to visit there, and even those who want to be buried there.

On the motion of Mr. EDMUNDS (Moonee Ponds), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until next day.

ADJOURNMENT.

MORNINGTON PENINSULA LAND.

Mr. THOMPSON (Minister of Education).—By leave, I move—

That the House, at its rising, adjourn until Tuesday, November 13.

The motion was agreed to.

Mr. THOMPSON (Minister of Education).—I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

Mr. DOUBE (Albert Park).—I raise a matter of great importance to the Victorian community of today and of the future. We are indebted to the foresight of the people who went before us for the many recreational areas in inner areas of Melbourne and the outer suburbs. In our turn, we have an obligation to do something which will benefit future citizens of Victoria. On the Mornington Peninsula, 2,000 acres of land owned by the Green family is, I understand, absolutely untouched.

It is known locally as Green's Bush. It comprises one of the last stands of indigenous timber on the peninsula and also has flora and fauna. It is predicted that there will be an explosion of the population of the Mornington Peninsula and few areas will remain as they were when Flinders was there in the early part of last century.

I understand that the surviving family of the late Mr. Green is anxious that the land should be used for public purposes as a national park. The Government now has a last chance to do something about this. Negotiations for the purchase of land have been going on for some time. Unfortunately, the executors of the estate are now moving towards having the land subdivided. If it wishes this land on the Mornington Peninsula to be preserved for the use of the present and future generations, the Government must act quickly. Unless something is done soon, the last opportunity to obtain this unique area of land will be lost.

Mr. BORTHWICK (Minister for Conservation).—I will be pleased to examine the suggestion of the honorable member for Albert Park. One of the disappointments associated with my portfolio is that hopes raised throughout Australia some twelve months ago about the buying back of the national estate have not been fulfilled. The cost of purchasing this type of land for public purposes is enormous. Over the past twelve months, the State Government has committed itself to buy back land costing more than $6 million.

Currently, I am drawing up a priority list to submit to the Minister for the Environment in Canberra who has, I remind the House, allocated to him, for the purpose of buying back the national estate throughout the whole of Australia, the sum of $500,000. For this purpose, the State would need enormous funding from the Federal Government.

One difficulty is to order priorities. I shall take up the suggestion of the honorable member and examine it but, in so doing, I must consider it in the over-all contexts of finance, on the one hand, and, on the other, priorities throughout the State which must be fixed to make submissions even to obtain portion of the minimal amount of money which the Federal Government has set aside for this purpose.

The motion was agreed to.

The House adjourned at 5.37 *p.m. until Tuesday, November* 13.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE.

The following answers to questions on notice were circulated:—

TREASURY BANK ACCOUNTS.

(Question No. 126)

Mr. HOLDING (Leader of the Opposition) asked the Treasurer—

1. How many bank accounts are operated by the Treasury, indicating with which bank, the nature of the account, and the funds involved in each case?

2. What are the current balances in each account and what is the range of the account in any financial year?

3. What interest is paid by the bank in respect of each account?

4. What principles are applied by the Treasury in its banking arrangements?

5. Whether any preference is given to the State Savings Bank of Victoria in the banking of funds controlled by the Treasury; if not, why?

Mr. HAMER (Premier and Treasurer).—The answer is—

1. (*a*)

	2. (*a*) Current balances at 17th October, 1973	Range of daily balances 1972–73. (*b*) Minimum	Maximum	3. Interest
	$	$	$	
(*a*) The public account—current account—				
Australia and New Zealand Banking Group Ltd., 351 Collins Street, Melbourne ..	113,617	nil	11,791,055	2·25 per cent on daily balances
Commercial Bank of Australia Ltd., 335 Collins Street, Melbourne	149,594	nil	18,438,178	
Commercial Banking Company of Sydney Ltd., 251 Collins Street, Melbourne	991,939	nil	31,739,573	
Australia and New Zealand Banking Group Ltd., 388 Collins Street, Melbourne	438,596	nil	9,306,484	
National Bank of Australasia Ltd., 271 Collins Street, Melbourne	233,201	nil	13,172,292	
Bank of New South Wales, 368 Collins Street, Melbourne	268,950	nil	11,997,650	
Commercial Bank of Australia Ltd., Wellington, New Zealand	87,030	15,399	118,713	nil
	2,282,927			
(*b*) The public account—fixed deposit account—				
Australia and New Zealand Banking Group Ltd., 351 Collins Street, Melbourne ..	27,800,000	11,400,000	34,100,000	4·8 per cent to 8·0 per cent
Commercial Bank of Australia Ltd., 335 Collins Street, Melbourne	27,800,000	11,400,000	34,100,000	
Commercial Banking Company of Sydney Ltd., 251 Collins Street, Melbourne	27,800,000	11,400,000	34,100,000	
Australia and New Zealand Banking Group Ltd., 388 Collins Street, Melbourne ..	27,800,000	11,400,000	34,100,000	
National Bank of Australasia Ltd., 271 Collins Street, Melbourne	27,800,000	11,400,000	34,100,000	
Bank of New South Wales, 368 Collins Street, Melbourne	27,800,000	11,400,000	34,100,000	
Reserve Bank of Australia	100,000	100,000	100,000	
	166,900,000	68,500,000	204,700,000	
(*c*) Treasury advance account, State Savings Bank of Victoria	1,354	nil	74,604	nil
(*d*) Treasury central salaries account, State Savings Bank of Victoria	nil	Opened July, 1973	..	nil

4. Treasury banking arrangements are carried out generally in accordance with a long-standing agreement entered into between the Government of Victoria and the private trading banks.

5. No. The State Savings Bank is not a party to the existing agreement but arrangements are in course to include it as one of the bankers to Treasury.

So far as departmental banking accounts are concerned, departments are at liberty to arrange these to their best advantage having regard to general convenience with any bank including the State Savings Bank. In fact there are some 250 departmental accounts with the State Savings Bank and at 19th October the aggregate balance in those accounts was $7·4 million.

ESTATE AGENTS.

(Question No. 421)

Mr. EDMUNDS (Moonee Ponds) asked the Treasurer—

1. How many individuals are licensed as estate agents or sub-agents, respectively?

2. How much money is currently standing in the name of the Estate Agents Guarantee Fund?

3. How many claims have been made against this fund to the registrar in the past twelve months?

4. How many claims have been approved in the past twelve months, indicating the details in each case, the sum of money paid to each applicant and the action taken against the agents involved?

5. How many estate agents or sub-agents have been delicensed since the commencement of the fund?

Mr. HAMER (Premier and Treasurer).—The answer is—

1. (*a*) Estate agents (individuals) 2,775
(corporations) 741
(*b*) Sub-agents 4,866

2. $54,577.

3. Six claims have been made against the Estate Agents Guarantee Fund in the preceding twelve months.

4. Four of these claims have already been approved for payment from the fund. Details of these claims are as follows:—

(*a*) Mr. L. Rapa was paid $5,340 from the fund as a result of a loss incurred in a transaction with Bohumil Wertfein trading as Town & Country Real Estate. The money was paid by Rapa to one Jones, a licensed sub-agent employed by Town & Country Real Estate as a deposit on the proposed purchase of a property at Newham. The transaction did not proceed, but no refund could be made as Jones had fraudulently converted $26,551 of trust funds to his own use. Warrants have been issued for his arrest but his present whereabouts are unknown. Wertfein died at or about the time the affairs of the business were under investigation.

(*b*) Grenville Service Co. Pty. Ltd. were paid the sum of $750.99 from the fund as a result of a loss incurred in a transaction with David Elliott Pty. Ltd. The service company appointed the agent company to act as its managing agent for its property at 12 Grenville Street, Hampton. The agent company received the maintenance and service charges and paid therefrom certain expenses in relation to the management. The agent company should have held in its trust account an amount of $750.99 on behalf of the service company. Examination showed that the managing director and officer in bona fide control of the agent company, David Wexlear, fraudulently converted trust moneys amounting to $34,078 to his own use. The business was closed and the licences were surrendered. Wexlear was sentenced in the County Court to a term of imprisonment.

(*c*) Mr. H. Kotarakos and Mr. G. Tzas were paid the sum of $351.10 from the fund as a result of a loss incurred with Andor Gorda. Originally the claimants paid to the agent, as a deposit, the sum of $1,500 on the proposed purchase of a property at Hawthorn. The transaction did not proceed and when the agent failed to refund the deposit legal action was taken and judgment obtained against the agent for the amount of $1,500. This amount was paid from the fund in 1971. The present payment relates to the legal costs incurred by the claimants in establishing this original claim. Provision is made in the section for the payment of such costs from the fund. Gorda surrendered his licence and pleaded guilty in the County Court to a number of charges of fraudulently omitting to account as an estate agent and was sentenced to a term of imprisonment. An amount of $16,185 was involved.

(*d*) Mr. and Mrs. Gianinotti were paid the sum of $700 from the fund as a result of a loss incurred in a transaction with Cornwall Park Pty. Ltd. The claimants appointed the agent company to sell their property at Coburg. The agent company accepted a deposit of $800 on the proposed purchase. The sale did not proceed and when the agent company refused to refund the deposit, the purchasers took legal action against the claimants and the agent company. Before the action was finalized, the agent company went into liquidation and its affairs were wound up. The action was settled out of court when the claimants paid to the purchasers the sum of $700 in full settlement. The claimants were then entitled to recover that amount from the Estate Agents Guarantee Fund.

5. The Estate Agents Act provides that an estate agent is no longer eligible to hold or to continue to hold an estate agent's licence if a claim against the fund has been admitted for payment against him. Claims against 100 estate agents have been admitted for payment from the fund since 1957.

INDUSTRIES AT PORTLAND.

(Question No. 443)

Mr. HOLDING (Leader of the Opposition) asked the Minister for Fuel and Power, for the Minister for State Development and Decentralization—

1. Why Pennell Tucker Box Pet Food Industry is no longer considered by the Department of State Development to be a viable proposition for Portland?

2. Whether the department is providing a loan of $200,000 for a private enterprise motel complex at Portland?

3. Whether one of the principals of Blainslie Pty. Ltd., which will operate the proposed motel complex, is the son-in-law of the Chairman of the Portland Development Committee, Mr. Reuben Halliday?

4. Whether the Minister will lay the file dealing with both these transactions on the table of the Library?

Mr. BALFOUR (Minister for Fuel and Power).—The answer supplied by the Minister for State Development and Decentralization is—

1. The company's application is still before the Victorian Development Corporation and the company has been invited to submit further information.

2. The Victorian Development Corporation has approved a loan of $200,000 to a private enterprise motel complex at Portland.

3. The Portland Development Committee does not determine whether loans are made in Portland, the decision is made by the Victorian Development Corporation. In any case the corporation is not aware of any relationship between the gentlemen.

4. No. The submissions made to the Victorian Development Corporation contain considerable information on applicants' personal and business affairs, and are therefore expected to be treated confidentially.

POWER STATION SITES.

(Question No. 449)

Mr. AMOS (Morwell) asked the Minister for Fuel and Power—

What are the details of the State Electricity Commission's study into possible power station sites along the coast near Loch Sport Beach, Paradise Beach and Seaspray, indicating—(*a*) when those sites were first considered; (*b*) what type of power station is being considered for those sites; (*c*) what work has been undertaken by the Commission on this study; and (*d*) what amount has been expended on these studies?

Mr. BALFOUR (Minister for Fuel and Power).—The answer is—

The commission is not undertaking any study into the siting of power stations along the Gippsland coastline between Loch Sport and Seaspray. However, at the time of the Land Conservation Council of Victoria's investigation into the land use in the South Gippsland area (district No. 1) the commission proposed that land be reserved for service areas within the Gippsland Lake coastal reserve which the council has recommended should be established.

The service areas proposed by the commission near Loch Sport Beach, Paradise Beach and Seaspray could be used as service corridors for power stations which may possibly develop elsewhere in Gippsland although there are no firm plans for these stations at the present time. Also they could possibly provide suitable land fall points for pipelines from future offshore gas and oil fields.

ROAD CONSTRUCTION PLAN, NIDDRIE.

(Question No. 464)

Mr. GINIFER (Deer Park) asked the Minister of Education—

Whether he is aware that a road construction proposal of the Country Roads Board in the vicinity of Watt Street, Niddrie, near the Niddrie Primary School, is considered by the local community to be a potential danger to primary school children; if so, whether the Education Department will have discussions with the board with a view to amending the road construction plan to eliminate potential dangers to primary school pupils?

Mr. THOMPSON (Minister of Education).—The answer is—

This matter will be taken up with the Country Roads Board.

KEILOR SOUTH AND OVERLAND PRIMARY SCHOOLS.

(Question No. 471)

Mr. GINIFER (Deer Park) asked the Minister of Education—

1. Whether he has had representations from the parents of grade V. pupils at Keilor South Primary School who will be transferred to the new Overland Primary School in 1974; if not, whether he will receive such a deputation before a decision is made to compel the pupils to transfer?

2. How many grade V. pupils are involved in the transfer and whether these numbers will constitute a burden at Keilor South if they remained at that school for 1974?

Mr. THOMPSON (Minister of Education).—The answer is—

1. No. If the Overland Primary School is not opened by February, 1974, the present grade V. pupils at Keilor South Primary School may finish the grade VI. year at that school.

2. Twenty-two. The Overland Primary School has been established to relieve pressure on schools in the Keilor South–Milleara area.

MODERN GREEK COURSES AT SCHOOLS.

(Question No. 475)

Mr. ROPER (Brunswick West) asked the Minister of Education—

Further to the answer to question No. 398 asked on 30th October, 1973, what are the specific details of the qualifications in modern Greek of the teachers at Fitzroy, Collingwood and Richmond girls' high schools, respectively, indicating the institutions at which such qualifications were gained?

Mr. THOMPSON (Minister of Education).—The answer is—

Fitzroy High School

Teacher No. 1—B.A., Dip.Ed.—No formal qualifications. Spent a number of years in Greece and is currently taking second year modern Greek by correspondence at Armidale University.

Teacher No. 2—B.A., Dip.Ed.—No formal qualifications in modern Greek. Modern Greek 1 at Melbourne University to be studied next year but has classical Greek.

Collingwood High School.

Teacher No. 1—B.A., Dip.Ed.—No formal qualifications in modern Greek. A private language tutor and self taught.

Teacher No. 2—B.A., Dip.Ed.—No formal qualifications in modern Greek. Australian born, Greek family.

Richmond Girls High School.

Teacher—B.A., T.S.T.C.—Native speaker, Greek University with major study in Greek. One year training in teaching Greek in Greece.

MILK SUPPLY IN LATROBE VALLEY.

(Question No. 476)

Mr. AMOS (Morwell) asked the Minister of Agriculture—

1. Which dairy companies process and supply milk in the Gippsland area east of Warragul?

2. Whether the dairy company supplying the central Latrobe Valley region has any competitors; if so, which companies?

3. What recourse is available to consumers of milk who have been denied milk supplied in bottles because the company serving their area has decided to abandon bottled pasteurized milk in favour of homogenized carton milk?

Mr. I. W. SMITH (Minister of Agriculture).—The answer is—

1. (*a*) Moe Co-operative Dairying Co. Ltd., Moe.

   (*b*) Gippsland Amalgamated Milk Products Ltd., Traralgon.

   (*c*) Gippsland Amalgamated Milk Products Ltd., Bairnsdale.

2. The companies located at Moe and Traralgon are competitors supplying the dairies distributing milk in the Central Latrobe Valley Region. Both companies now supply milk in cartons only.

3. Neither the Department of Agriculture nor the Milk Board has the authority to direct a processing dairy to package milk in a particular type of container, provided it is an approved container. If there were a demand for bottled milk to the extent that a party was prepared to provide a supply of bottled milk, it would be open to him to apply to the board for permission to distribute such milk in a particular area. The board advises me that it would give prompt consideration to such an application.

As a matter of interest, all milk processed in Gippsland is pasteurized, as it is in most of Victoria.

Legislative Council.

Tuesday, November 13, 1973.

The PRESIDENT **(Sir Raymond Garrett)** took the chair at 4.58 p.m., and read the prayer.

HOUSING (COMMONWEALTH–STATE AGREEMENT) BILL.

This Bill was received from the Assembly and, on the motion of the Hon. V. O. DICKIE (Minister of Housing), was read a first time.

POLICE REGULATION (AMENDMENT) BILL.

This Bill was received from the Assembly and, on the motion of the Hon. A. J. HUNT (Minister for Local Government), was read a first time.

PET FOOD INDUSTRY FOR PORTLAND.

The Hon. D. G. ELLIOT (Melbourne Province).—I wish to move the adjournment of the House for the purpose of discussing the failure of the Minister for State Development and Decentralization to implement a Government undertaking to secure a pet food industry for the town of Portland.

Approval of the proposed discussion was indicated by the required number of members rising in their places, as specified in Standing Order No. 53.

The Hon. MURRAY BYRNE (Minister for State Development and Decentralization).—I rise to a point of order. Mr. Elliot was good enough to inform me approximately one hour ago of the subject-matter of the motion. It concerns an application by a proprietary company which is currently before the Victorian Development Corporation and the Government. At this stage, I do not know what information Mr. Elliot may have, but I did say to him that I presumed that any confidential information that he may have about the