Legislative Council.

Tuesday, October 25, 1977.

The PRESIDENT **(the Hon. W. G. Fry)** took the chair at 4.52 p.m. and read the prayer.

RACING (FEES) 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.

STATE FORESTS WORKS AND SERVICES BILL (No. 2).

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.

LABOUR AND INDUSTRY 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.

PAY-ROLL TAX BILL (No. 2).

This Bill was received from the Assembly and, on the motion of the Hon. V. O. DICKIE (Chief Secretary), was read a first time.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE.

ELECTION CAMPAIGN FUNDS.

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY (Melbourne North Province): I ask the Minister for Local Government whether he can reconcile the following statement which he made to this House—

> that I did not know the amount of any individual subscriptions, and I did not know the name of any donor.

with the letter from Mr. Alan Stokes to Mr. Colin Hicks, which is an exhibit at the inquiry, and which reads, *inter alia*—

> This cheque was presented to Alan directly. He considers it should be included in the committee funds.

The Hon. A. J. HUNT (Minister for Local Government): Certainly I can reconcile it, and I am sure the House accepts that everything I have told it has been honest and in good faith. The statement that I made related to the campaign organized by Messrs. Leake and Cooke, and I repeat, it remains true that I did not know the name—except for what has come out at the inquiry—of any donor, the amount of any subscription or the total raised.

There were funds which were not raised by that campaign, but were raised by the Liberal Party and as is the case with any candidate, a handful of small cheques came to me personally from well-wishers in the Mornington–Mt. Eliza area. In every case I either sent them on to the local Liberal committee, not the special committee, or asked that that be done. Clearly there has been a misunderstanding in the case of this small cheque which, it was my intention, should go to the local Liberal committee and not the special committee. It was certainly not raised by the Cooke–Leake campaign and I did not know that it had been paid into its campaign funds.

If Mr. Galbally had checked against the letter, he would have noted that it was sent by Mr. Stokes from his home, not from my office, after the elections and apparently he must have had it in his pocket for some time. I cannot recall the precise directions which were given, and I do not expect the House would expect me, after this lapse of years, to recall precisely what was said, but it was one of a handful of local donations received, all of which were intended to be sent to the local Liberal Party campaign and not to the Leake–Cooke campaign.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY ACT.

The Hon. J. V. C. GUEST (Monash Province): My question is directed to the Minister of Water Supply representing the Minister of Labour and Industry. As the Equal Opportunity

Act is not yet in force, and in view of the prevalence of job advertisements in newspapers seeking specifically male or specifically female applicants for the jobs advertised, will the Minister refer such advertisements to the Anti-Discrimination Committee and advise the House in due course of the result of such reference?

I wish to draw the Minister's attention particularly to yesterday's *Age*. In the "Monday Job Market" numerous advertisements appeared seeking specifically male or specifically female applicants. Will the Minister take steps to have the *Age* and other newspapers co-operate with the spirit of the Equal Opportunities Act, if only by asking advertisers who discriminate on the ground of sex to amend their future advertisements?

The Hon. F. J. GRANTER (Minister of Water Supply): This matter comes within the portfolio of my colleague, the Minister of Labour and Industry, as Mr. Guest mentioned. The Victorian Government and other State Governments supported the Federal Government in its ratification of the International Labour Organization convention to prevent discrimination in employment. I understand that there is a joint committee with both State and Federal members which is working well and is investigating complaints. If the honorable member gives me the information which he has supplied in this House I will forward it to the Minister of Labour and Industry and ask him to take the matter up with the committee which is under his jurisdiction.

SMOKING.

The Hon. K. I. WRIGHT (North Western Province): Is the Minister for Local Government aware that the Swan Hill Shire Council has, by resolution, decided that no councillor or any other person will be permitted to smoke in the council chamber? Does the Minister agree with such action and will he introduce legislation to cover the matter on a wider field?

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. W. G. Fry): As the question involves an expression of opinion, I disallow it.

ALBURY–WODONGA LAND ACQUISITION.

The Hon. A. K. BRADBURY (North Eastern Province): I direct my question to the Minister for State Development and Decentralization. In view of the fact that a number of landowners in the Wodonga area have been informed that their land is no longer required for acquisition by the Albury–Wodonga Corporation, and the consultative council is to be reconstituted following the Ministerial Council meeting last month, when will the Minister be in a position to make a Ministerial statement on the future plans and objectives of the Albury–Wodonga Corporation rather than requiring local members representing the area to obtain the information from the media?

The Hon. D. G. CROZIER (Minister for State Development and Decentralization): In common with other Ministers, I will be making Ministerial statements to this House with relation to the Albury–Wodonga Corporation when it is appropriate to do so.

ELECTION CAMPAIGN FUNDS.

The Hon. D. R. WHITE (Doutta Galla Province): How does the Minister for Local Government reconcile his statement made in the House last week about the source of funds for his special election account with a statement made by Mr. Peter Leake at the inquiry last week when Mr. Leake said—

> Having regard to how I earn my income it would be patently clear to Mr. Hunt that it would be more than natural that I go to people within my own clique or set in order to raise those funds.

I ask the Minister how he can reconcile his statement of last week with that statement.

The Hon. A. J. HUNT (Minister for Local Government): The statement is completely consistent with what I said in the House last week.

In any event, Mr. Leake was wrong in assuming that I knew that was the source from which funds would be raised. I point out to the House that Mr. Leake at that time had been the past president of the Mornington shire, had been the Chairman of the Western Port Regional Planning Authority and was then chairman of the Flinders Electorate Committee of the Liberal Party and had recently been president of the local Mornington Liberal Party branch. His standing as a man who had newly joined the development industry was certainly not one of a leading developer. He was a leading peninsula Liberal and leading peninsula citizen but certainly not a leading developer. In those circumstances, I believed the source of funds would be from fund-raising efforts on the peninsula. I did not specifically advert to the possibility that he would be approaching his land development colleagues but if I had adverted to it I would have seen no reason to object to it.

FLEMINGTON RACECOURSE.

The Hon. F. S. GRIMWADE (Bendigo Province): As an historic event is to take place a week from today on Crown land at Flemington, could the Chief Secretary make public his prediction on the outcome of this event?

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. W. G. Fry): This does not appear to be a matter of Government administration.

The Hon. V. O. DICKIE (Chief Secretary): May I say briefly that those who have known me for a period would realize that throughout my membership of this House I have never been "reckless". Last week we saw a "happy union" when the National Party voted with the Labor Party.

PROPOSED WATER STORAGE ON BUCKLAND RIVER.

The Hon. D. M. EVANS (North Eastern Province): My question without notice is directed to the Minister of Water Supply. I refer to the proposed water storage on the Buckland River above Myrtleford. In a letter dated 21st December, 1973, to the Secretary of the Myrtleford Shire Council, the Minister said—

> The Victorian Government has included the project in its ten-year programme, with construction tentatively scheduled for 1981–82.

Will the Government fulfil that commitment?

The Hon. F. J. GRANTER (Minister of Water Supply): The Buckland River project was included in the ten-year programme. However, it was subject to funds being made available by the Federal Government and I envisage that these funds will now not be forthcoming. I approached the previous Federal Government under the ten-year programme about the allocation of funds but no funds were forthcoming and I envisage that the project will not be built on time. I have indicated that I would be prepared to receive a deputation from the shires of Bright and Myrtleford.

AMENDMENT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT.

The Hon. S. R. McDONALD (Northern Province): My question is directed to the Minister for Local Government or the Minister for State Development and Decentralization and concerns the possibility of amending Part XLA. of the Local Government Act which gives councils authority to borrow money for decentralization purposes. Can the appropriate Minister advise me whether this Part will be amended and, if so, when it will be amended? Can he also indicate what the amendment will involve?

The Hon. A. J. HUNT (Minister for Local Government): It is certainly intended to amend and improve Part XLA. Draft legislation has already been prepared and is currently the subject of consultation between the Local Government Department and the Department of State Development and Decentralization and is under

consideration by my Parliamentary party's committee on local government. As soon as we are satisfied with the form of the Bill it will be presented to the House. I do not believe it is a desirable practice to foreshadow the precise nature of amendments before a measure is presented to the House.

RAVAGES OF CRIME ON THE COMMUNITY.

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY (Melbourne North Province): I wish to move the adjournment of the House for the purpose of discussing the ravages of crime on the community.

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

That the House do now adjourn.

The last quarter of the twentieth century is not a good time for youth. Melbourne has become the favourite pitch in crime. I shall give some figures to illustrate this. I am indebted to senior officers of the Police Department for much of my information and the time that was given to me. Youth under 21 years of age commit 72 per cent of major crime in Victoria. Most bank robberies are the work of youths under 25 years of age. Worse than that, some bank robbers are drug addicts whose addiction, I am told and believe, costs up to $1,000 a day. They cannot get on without heroin and they stop at nothing to obtain supplies.

The crime statistics, for which I am grateful, do not by any means present the whole picture. Many crimes are never reported. Many armed holdups are in this category. The gunman, having obtained his loot, warns the shopkeeper to say nothing or else he will shoot—on the principle that dead men do not tell tales or cannot go to the police. Other victims of armed robbery do not wish to publicize the details of the crime because of the prying nature of the tax commissioner. A shopkeeper or a starting-price bookmaker might amass a large sum of money; somebody hears of it and he is robbed. For reasons quite sufficient to him, he says nothing about it. It can only be a matter of conjecture how many of these instances occur.

Pedlars of drugs are sometimes the victims themselves of armed robbery and they again preserve the anonymity of silence. The great society, if it ever existed in Melbourne, has indeed become a violent society. Robberies of crime and violence have risen 600 per cent in the past ten-year period. No one can give a true incidence of rape in the community because so many of those raped do not wish to undergo the ordeal of committal proceedings and a trial. Parliament has endeavoured to lighten court procedures for rape victims in the past year or so.

The statutory review of crime made by the Victoria Police—and I commend their industry—shows that in 1976, 11,814 cars were stolen. This year the figure is expected to be at least 14,000. Cars are stolen mostly by persons under seventeen years of age, and even as young as eleven. Here are some staggering figures: The proceeds from burglaries of shops last year amounted to $2·7 million of which $1·5 million was recovered. Out of $7 million from house burglaries only $384,000 was recovered. There has been an alarming increase in armed holdups this year—a rise of 50 per month.

It was said that the early nineteenth century was not a good time to be a child because there were instances, as Dickens pointed out, of children so small that they had to be lifted up to be seen in the dock, and they were solemnly tried at the bar of justice. What is left of the twentieth century, on present indications, offers little promise for our youth. Next year thousands of school leavers and university graduates will be seeking employment, many in the knowledge

that their skills in education will be rejected in the labour market. It is unthinkable that their frustrations may impel them to resort to crime, but the possibility must be taken into consideration.

The industrial revolution gave us machines employing a large work force. However, the industrial revolution was financed by the slave trade; that is what got it going, and it is not a pretty picture. The industrial evolution, as I call it, has given us machines that work themselves; they do not need a labour force.

Meanwhile, we are geared to an expenditure by the Victorian Government on education of more than $1,000 million a year. I have not the figures with me at the moment, but honorable members know how much money is poured into the universities by the Commonwealth Government. Many university graduates face the melancholy conclusion that our educative processes do not ensure a livelihood and that the most brilliant of scholars is unwanted in the marketplace. This process has been accelerating in recent years, but government throughout Australia has failed to respond to the changes that I have mentioned.

I am not suggesting that the acquisition of learning should not be encouraged or should be frowned upon, but we are rearing a generation of youth who are encouraged to believe that a tertiary education is a guarantee of a livelihood. I only wish it were so. As Mr. Elliot interjects, the position is the opposite.

I do not disparage a tertiary education—I was the beneficiary of a tertiary education—but compare the graduates from our universities today and the vain quests of some of them for a livelihood with the professional tennis player, the professional golfer, and—perhaps there is a question mark over this—the professional cricketer. Some of them can become millionaires before they are 30 years of age. The sums made by professional tennis players beggar description. Some of them can earn $1 million a year.

The Hon. B. P. DUNN: It does not do them much good, though.

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY: Nor does being out of work do one much good. Our own talented and courageous league footballers are big money earners. However, education is in a different category. Today it offers little prospect of even getting a job. Education no longer ensures a livelihood.

The disappointment of graduates coming out of the university today is very real. It is a tragedy for our nation because, as a member of a university council, I gather that no attention is being given either by government or by the universities to this problem. Undoubtedly, they are aware of it, but nobody has come up with a solution or even a remedy. It is a tragedy that at a time when Australia needs leadership and the ability to change things, nothing is done.

That is one reason why the motion has been launched. It is not aimed at the Victorian Government; it is aimed at all Governments in Australia and their unwillingness to live in today's world and not yesterday's. We neglect the problem of youth in our community at our peril. I say with great feeling, and hopefully understanding, that this will add to the horrifying wave of crime. We have reached the stage in this generation that the young, having fulfilled and achieved the academic goal—schooling and university is hard work, hard toil—they are blocked by a sign "Road closed". That is the situation all around Australia today. Boys and girls who have finished their courses at school and those who graduate with degrees from our tertiary institutions find that the road is closed. Honorable members know the trends and the problems in factories, but the only factories that will not languish will be the factories of crime.

Our community attitude to the wrongdoer who serves a sentence is bitter and uncompromising. Once a person is a gaol bird, to use the vernacular, there is a reluctance on the part of the community to accept his release from Pentridge. He is a gaol bird for life and we do not give him a fair go. The stigma stays with him.

The Hon. D. G. ELLIOT: Or the poor old vagrant.

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY: The problem is much deeper than that confronting the poor old vagrant. The so-called Christian society never forgives and never forgets. The truth must be faced. In this deadly economic peril, governments throughout Australia are in a state of paralysis and unable to act where action is deserved. Unemployment cannot be served or improved by paralysis. I believe it can be met only by great moral leadership in our community from the Prime Minister down. Our education system, terribly expensive as it is, has failed to meet the needs of Australia today. The youth of our country, not the old people, are shackled to an education system that has become a castaway.

The Hon. V. O. DICKIE (Chief Secretary): The terms of the motion are extremely wide and it is difficult to argue when one knows that what Mr. Galbally says is factual. These are not matters that can be put at the feet of the Government, whether it be Liberal Party, Labor Party or National Party. Mr. Galbally is talking about a community problem. I do not object to motions such as this being raised as we are able to highlight community problems and hope that the media will be prepared to publicize the highlights which are brought forward in a debate such as this.

On a motion such as this, one of necessity must express personal views because one speaks as one sees the problem. As Mr. Galbally has rightly said, the youth of today are being diverted into a life of crime because the community at large has failed to provide for them a way of life that would have been instrumental in them being better occupied.

What are the factors which face youth today that may not have faced me when I was a young man? As a young fellow in my home town, I remember that the local draper's store was frequently robbed. Clothes and textiles were in short supply and it was easy to get rid of that type of article. Almost every week, one of the local stores was "knocked off". In this present era, which obviously is one of great crime, I do not think there has been that type of robbery in my home town for several years. What has changed that and what other things should we be looking at?

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY: Perhaps the wealth has been taken out of the place.

The Hon. V. O. DICKIE: That may be so. I make that point only to indicate that crimes were being committed when I was a young lad. Perhaps criminals have now directed their attention elsewhere. The motor car age enables people to travel quickly from one place to another and, whereas previously a crime was committed within a reasonable distance of one's home town, now within an hour the criminal can be 60 miles away committing the same crime in some other place.

Mr. Galbally rightly spoke about the problems of education of our young people today. Some might say with hindsight—I am not saying this with hindsight because I have always believed it to be so—that we went through an unfortunate era about ten or fifteen years ago when we tended to instil in our young people the attitude that if they did not go to a university there was no future for them. We tended to overlook the past value of technical education and the job opportunities that may not necessarily have required the child to go to secondary level and use whatever talents he may have had to go on to university. The thinking throughout the world about

ten or fifteen years ago was that there was no future unless the child went to university.

I often relate the story of the father who was asked where were his three sons and he said one got his Ph.D., one got his M.Sc. and the other got a job. This is the unfortunate situation that we have tended to create. I do not say that we have over-educated our community, but we have tended to divert young minds away from job opportunities in our community not necessarily requiring a tertiary education.

Today, industry is re-educating people to do what are simple tasks. In looking for qualified people, industry is not looking for high academic qualifications, but a qualification to indicate that the young person, when he applies for a job, at least knows the rudiments of what is required. This is my personal view, but I know that it is shared by thousands of others. The education system should teach the basic principles of reading, writing and arithmetic and be prepared to offer the child the best way of being educated in his or her way.

We are reaping the whirlwind of that sort of attitude in education. What is the definition of education? To my mind, it should be the way education was originally meant to be, and with discipline associated with it. Yet the community today is prepared to accept an education system which I believe will continue to have these pitfalls associated with it. In Sydney, Professor Harry Messel recently talked about this problem and the area of high education for which he is responsible, nuclear physics and so on. He was prepared to go down to the basics of primary education and suggest that we have lost sight of what young people should be taught which will permit them, if they have the ability, to reach the highest positions in the land. If they have not that ability, they should have the opportunity to hop off somewhere and know that at least they have these basic qualifications which impress the employer today or permit the young person to go into a business of his own.

We have lost these things. I happened to be in England three years ago when Prince Charles made his maiden speech in the House of Lords. His subject was on how society today can find avenues whereby the pent-up enthusiasm of youth can be used to the advantage of all. War is a dreadful thing, but throughout history there have been dreadful wars. Today two young people can drive motor cars at each other. This is against the law. It is called "playing chicken" and everyone says how dreadful it is that young people should even think of doing such a thing. In wartime if two pilots act in a similar manner, one may get the Victoria Cross. So this is a different avenue for the pent-up enthusiasm of youth. I would not wish to replace the present situation with another war, but today the problem is to provide youth with an outlet for the excitement that war has given them in the past. The challenge is to find these outlets in a peacetime community. The Silver Jubilee proposal of Her Majesty the Queen is directed towards what can be done for youth which will divert young people from the multiplicity of areas available to them today.

Mr. Galbally referred to the drug problem and its association with armed holdups. The solving of bank holdups by the police has been remarkable. Usually the hardened criminal is not involved, although there may be the odd ones. A sick person often commits this crime to get money for drugs, not only for himself but also for other people. Drugs are not bought for a few dollars and cents; they involve big money. Therefore, today bank holdups and pay-roll holdups are directed to that end. It is a tragedy that at a time when the Government is trying to reduce the incidence of drug-taking, of alcohol as a contributing ingredient in the road toll, and of

cigarette smoking with all its associated health hazards, that the do-gooders are saying the smoking of marijuana should be legalized because it is not injurious. Young persons say that if people in high places are claiming that the Government should do this, perhaps drug taking, and all that it leads to, is not so bad. Over the past ten years we have had to put up with these attitudes. I am pleased that the community is starting to rethink its ideas on the subject.

I accept all the political ramifications of unemployment, but there is no doubt that the definition of full employment in the years following the depression meant employment of the breadwinner. In the 1930s and 1940s full employment never meant that every husband, wife and child over the age of 16, 17 or 18 years had a job. It was tragic ten years ago when there were many latch-key children. Father and mother were both working and when the child came home from school no one was there. I believe it is fit and proper that when a child comes home from school his mother should be there. I know this is impossible with many families because it is necessary for the mother to work as well as the father, but it has become standard practice.

Rightly or wrongly, the era arrived—I recall talking on this same issue to the Minister of Health—and because there was full employment the child came home from school and no parent was there to exercise parental control. Day-care and child-care centres became common. I remember asking where the Government takes over and where the responsibility of the parents stops. These are vital years in the life of a young child and over the past ten or fifteen years the lack of parental control has changed society. There has been lack of parental control, lack of discipline and a wrong attitude to education, but this is the "in" thing. If one talks in any other way, one is supposed to be old hat. The sooner the community returns to the basic principles which were part and parcel of every family in years gone by, the better. Those were the days when families sat as a family to have Sunday dinner and everyone shared that type of life. The loss of that way of life has meant an enormous step forward in diverting youth into an area of crime.

It is a community problem. I agree that Governments must do something about it, but surely the instrumentalities set up by the Government should be able to control these things. It is the responsibility of the Victoria Police Force to uphold law and order and to prevent and detect crime. There is no doubt that the Police Force does a magnificent job. Figures can be produced to indicate that there is an increase in crime in certain areas, but figures can also be produced to show that there has been almost an elimination of certain types of crime. It is a continuing process. I commend the work of the Victoria Police Force in the interests of the community in the continuing fight against the criminal and all that crime means. It is still basically a problem for the community. If there has been an increase in crime, it is time that the community took stock of itself and decided whether its lax attitude has not been the real contributor to the upsurge in crime.

This is a difficult motion on which to speak because it does not specifically allege that the Government is to be condemned for doing something. There will be a vote, and it is obvious what the result will be. The House will not adjourn on a matter such as this. However, honorable members have had the opportunity of speaking on this important subject. The Government has done everything possible to keep crime down to a minimum and will continue to do so. Increased expenditure has been directed towards the Victoria Police Force. An extra 350 policemen and policewomen will be recruited, which will mean in excess of 7,000 personnel in the Victoria Police Force. More money has

also been allocated to making the Police Force more mobile. The Government accepts that if crime is to be reduced the Victoria Police Force must be in the forefront.

I emphasize that this is a community problem, and if more can be done it most certainly must be done within the family. Parents must know where their children are. In many instances they have committed a crime and the parents have not known they were not home all night or that they have not arrived home until the early hours of the morning. The Government is doing as much as it possibly can. If this debate can get across to the community that it must do more, I shall be pleased that Mr. Galbally has moved the motion.

The Hon. B. P. DUNN (North Western Province): Today there is little doubt in my mind that we live in a society that is relatively frightened. A family man probably feels concern for his wife and his children in the present community. It is a sad indictment on our way of life that women are attacked and raped in their own homes and are molested in the streets. This is clearly illustrated by the figures, and we read about such matters every day. In many cases it is not safe for children to walk to and from school on their own. I feel sure that in the interests of their own safety many honorable members would not be prepared to walk around large areas of Melbourne on their own at night. That is not an exaggeration.

The Hon. N. F. STACEY: To which areas are you referring?

The Hon. B. P. DUNN: If the honorable member is so smug about community responsibilities, he should look at the figures and see what is happening in the community. He should have a little concern instead of piping up like the Liberal backbench chorus we hear every day in the House.

No one can deny that these crimes are happening in the community. Vandals needlessly destroy trees and property. In New York during the blackout it was obvious that the community was waiting to erupt to a level of crime that could not possibly be measured. It was held in check by the Police Force and by a veneer that maintains law in the community. It is frightening that when the lights went out throughout the city a wild rampage immediately followed. Surely the people involved already had those tendencies and were merely waiting for the right opportunity. This event caused them to abandon a lawful way of life and to break the law on the assumption that they could get away with it.

The newspapers are becoming largely full of reports of crime. I am sure honorable members are sick of the sordid stories of rape, suffering and robbery that are reported daily. The crime statistics reveal the story. I refer to a publication *Statistical Review of Crime* 1976 compiled by the Victoria Police. The report shows the percentage increase or decrease in major crimes from 1975 to 1976. The number of homicides fell by 5·2 per cent and the number of serious assaults by 1·88 per cent. The number of robberies rose by 8·59 per cent and the number of rapes by 23·55 per cent. I emphasize that this increase in the number of rapes was within a period of one year.

The Hon. D. N. SALTMARSH: How many cases of rape were there?

The Hon. B. P. DUNN: In 1975 there were 276 and, in 1976, 341. Those figures represent the reported cases, those which became known. As Mr. Galbally pointed out they reflect only a proportion of these crimes. The number of burglaries rose from 33,072 in 1975 to 36,075 in 1976, an increase of 9·08 per cent. The incidence of theft, other than motor vehicle theft, rose by 1·84 per cent and that of motor vehicle theft rose by 8·26 per cent. The total number of crimes increased by over

5·5 per cent in one year and there was a similar increase in the number of major crimes.

These are sobering figures when it is realized that they compare one year with the next. The dramatic proportions of increases in crime are shown by the figures for 1976 as against those for 1960. In that period the number of major crimes increased by 83 per cent. The incidence of homicide increased by 24 per cent; serious assault by 696 per cent; robbery by 272 per cent; rape by 251 per cent; burglary by 150 per cent; theft, other than motor vehicle theft, by 44 per cent; and motor vehicle theft by 87 per cent.

As was pointed out by Mr. Galbally and discussed by the Chief Secretary, much of this crime was committed by persons under the age of 21 years. Others figures from the *Statistical Review of Crime* show that crimes committed by those under 21 years of age included 16 per cent of homicides; 33 per cent of serious assaults, 65 per cent of robberies; 42 per cent of rapes; 73 per cent of burglaries; 56 per cent of thefts other than motor vehicle thefts; 72 per cent of thefts of motor vehicles and 23 per cent of the offences of obtaining by false pretences, offences against trust and currency offences. Of all these crimes 53 per cent were committed by persons under the age of 21 years.

I have not yet touched on drugs but the Victoria Police report shows that 1,935 drug offences were detected last year. The number detected in 1975 was 1,146, so the number increased by 36·6 per cent in one year. There was an increase of 53·8 per cent in drug offences during the past two years. This clearly indicates the rise of this alarming type of crime. Certainly, drug offences are responsible for crimes even more serious than drug peddling.

We should ask what we should do as a Parliament. It has been said that this is a community problem and that we should try to find out where we have gone wrong or where man has gone wrong. We have heard the great reformers talking about reform of our penal institutions, punishments, and our laws. But reforms have done nothing to solve the problem of an increasing level of crime.

Surely the first thought in the mind of this Parliament must be the safety of the people. Where does the problem lie? We can only speculate and, as the Chief Secretary said, we probably have to give our personal views. My view is that the prime reason for the increase in crime is the breakdown of the family unit. This has a tremendous bearing on many of the problems in our community today. I know that the old family structure is discouraged and frowned upon today. The young person is told that he is an individual, that he should lead his own life and do his own thing. But while people are doing their own thing, what is happening to the children in the families concerned? What effect is the bringing-up of children in child-care centres having on the children as they grow? What effects are broken homes having on children during the years when they need parental advice, love and support? Clearly the breakdown in family life is a major contributing factor to the increase in crime.

It also appears that crime is an illness of big cities. Crime increases as a city grows. As Mr. Galbally said, in a large city, many people work in soul-destroying jobs with little hope or prospects of improvement in the future. But, most of all, there is a loss of identity or a failure of people to identify themselves with anything in the community. Many of them are like ping-pong balls in an ocean. They do not identify themselves with the community, their neighbours or with the problems of the community; they are cells withdrawn into themselves. They lose a sense of involvement and awareness.

Another factor is the education and exploitation of the young. We speak about the problems of the young but what about the companies which

make millions of dollars exploiting them, such as the companies which turn out movie after movie packed full of violence? After a pleasant dinner, people can watch two or three hours of television depicting coldly calculated murder, violence and shooting, before going to bed and sleeping the night through. There is a point I raised during a debate on motor car safety. We see advertisements on television screens for movies which set out to show how great it is to break the law and beat the police. This is shown as a game for young people to play with their mates and in speeding cars. This sort of behaviour is treated as the "in thing". This is something else which affects young people.

We think of young people as causing the problems but who makes the money from them? Who runs the movie companies which exploit them and push this material forward? Some standards should be set. Violence is depicted as commonplace and the six-gun mentality to which Mr. Landeryou referred recently is shown to young impressionable people as something acceptable. Surely, day after day of watching this rubbish must have an effect on them. I do not have a narrow mind about movies or television viewing but there is no doubt that the amount of crime and violence which is forced on the viewing public has a bad effect.

Another factor in the problem is drug abuse and addiction. Again this problem is presented in a way which helps to persuade young people that they can get their kicks from using drugs, and this has most effect on the impressionable age group.

Do reduced penalties and short terms of imprisonment have any effect on the amount of crime? In other words, are our penalties harsh enough to deter people from committing crimes? I know that time and time again it has been said that penalties do not stop crimes from happening. I agree that penalties do not stop crimes in isolation but certainly they must have an over-all effect and act as a bar. If a penalty is reasonably harsh, at least it means that people are not back on the streets—as they are in many cases—within a short period of committing the crime for which they went to prison. Most of us know that most offenders who have committed serious crimes are back on the street within a short number of years to continue a life of crime or to live otherwise within the community.

Whether the Government wants to view the problem in this light or otherwise, it has a responsibility to the citizens and the community. I agree that this is largely a community problem but the Government is elected by the people to maintain the law and to fight crime. It should set standards and generally guide the community. If the people do not want to go along with it, a Government cannot force them, but at least it should show a light and lead the way.

The situation in Victoria is not as good as it could be and we have the right to ask: Why not? One has a feeling that the level of some crimes is almost out of control. The most important question that can be asked in this debate is: What can be done? Again, this is a matter of personal views but I suggest that the Police Force must be in the front line in the fight against crime and in maintaining law and order. It should be given top priority. Day after day and year after year this Parliament passes laws which it knows cannot be fully enforced because of the inadequate number of police to cover the city and the State as a whole. I know there have been tremendous increases in the strength of the Police Force since 1971. This increase is indicated by the ratio of police to population since then. In 1971 it was 1:707; in 1972, 1:672; in 1973, 1:651; in 1974, 1:618; in 1975, 1:612, and in 1976, 1:584. The St. Johnston report in the early 1970s suggested an ideal ratio of 1:530, but at that time the problem was much smaller, so that ratio could not be considered as ideal for today.

We must now strive for an improved ratio because of the growth in community needs and the enormous increase in crime. The Government must give top priority to ensuring that Victoria has sufficient policemen equipped with the most up-to-date systems and methods of crime detection and prevention available.

On Sunday, 23rd October, the Premier outlined on 3XY what the Government is aiming to do in connection with the Police Force. He said that the Government would be providing new vehicles and that the number of policemen would be increased by 350. He has at last recognized the need to provide support staff. The Premier said that more than 300 additional typists, licence testing officers, bailiffs and other officers had been provided in the past few years, and that this had allowed policemen to get out on to the beat and into the community.

The Hon. R. J. EDDY: We have been saying that for years.

The Hon. B. P. DUNN: I am aware that Mr. Eddy has been supporting that principle, and I have been advocating it for years also. The Government must concentrate on increasing the Drug Squad and the other squads that operate in the areas of crime that are raising most of the problems.

Another aspect to which attention must be paid is, as I said before, the matter of penalties and sentences. They may be too light, and perhaps harsher penalties and sentences should be introduced. Another matter which needs urgent consideration is the law covering the use of firearms. It is clear that the State is reaching a situation where the ownership and use of firearms is prevalent. A great many people have firearms. In many cases people keep a gun, not for sporting or hobby purposes, but to assist them in carying out a crime; or they may have a gun for their personal safety. It is clear that the present gun laws in Victoria are not adequate. They are not serving to restrict the flow of firearms into the hands of people who use them unlawfully, and an urgent review of our gun laws and regulations is essential.

The Victorian Government, together with the Federal Government, should examine television programmes and films. Fewer films portraying violence and murder should be shown, and perhaps movies portraying reckless car chases should be banned, because they set out to show young people that it is a great thing to be able to outdo and outspeed the law.

It is also necessary for the Government to examine the causes of crime. Members of the Government party have not explained what studies are being carried out into this subject or what emphasis is being placed on attacking the causes of crime.

The Hon. D. N. SALTMARSH: Do you want another couple of inquiries?

The Hon. B. P. DUNN: There is certainly a need to investigate the causes of crime in the community and the Government is in a position to institute such investigations. It may be that some fundamental changes need to be made.

The Government could also do much to assist the family and to keep families together. Both State and Federal Governments could have a significant influence in this area. An all-out effort must be made to get back to the family way of life. National pride and a sense of community responsibility must also be developed. Those concepts are virtually thrown out of many of our schools today. Children should be taught to develop pride and an interest in the community around them, not simply to develop themselves as individuals, which is what is happening with many young people today. They are told to forget the community and the nation and that they have no responsibilities to them.

The Hon. D. G. ELLIOT: Do you think every class-room should have a flag?

The Hon. B. P. DUNN: There must be some degree of national pride, some thought of belonging to a nation, so that young people will appreciate that if they cut down a tree it will affect not only themselves but also the nation and the community. They must see things in the perspective that they are part of a community and that their actions affect those around them. They can learn these principles in schools and in the home.

I have raised a few matters which concern members of the National Party on this subject, which is a subject that must concern every thinking person in the community. As Mr. Galbally's motion points out, the level of crime and its ravages on the community are urgent problems. Perhaps more can be done to alleviate the situation. Members of the National Party would be happy to work towards reducing the incidence of crime so that people will not be frightened and so that there will be safety for women and children. The National Party supports the motion, which demonstrates its concern about the situation and its desire to tackle the problem.

The sitting was suspended at 6.21 *p.m. until* 8.4 *p.m.*

The Hon. J. M. WALTON (Melbourne North Province): The matter dealt with in the motion moved by Mr. Galbally, like many other motions he has moved in the House, can largely be agreed upon by members of all parties.

All members tend to regard the subject differently; Mr. Galbally regarded crime in the community as being necessarily the result of a poor educational system. Honorable members will recall that in the motion Mr. Galbally stated that he proposed to speak on the subject of the ravages of crime on the community.

The Chief Secretary said that it was a challenge to find a way for young people to let out their pent-up enthusiasms. Young people also have pent-up frustrations, particularly at present when so many are unemployed. As other speakers asked, what could be more soul-destroying than spending seven or eight years undertaking secondary or tertiary education, obtaining a degree and finding no suitable employment is available?

As Mr. Galbally said, that is not easy, and all honorable members who have undergone serious secondary or tertiary education know that it is not easy to obtain a degree. After having done so and finding no way of putting a degree to work, people must feel frustrated. Young people with these feelings often do things that they would not do in ordinary circumstances. Initially they may be tempted to commit petty crimes, but eventually they get mixed up with people who lead them to start committing more serious crimes and perhaps into taking drugs, which in turn leads them into very serious crimes, such as bank robberies and so on.

Recently the Chief Commissioner of Police, Mr. Miller, when addressing the Melbourne Press Club, said that 2 million innocent Victorians would become victims of serious crimes in the next fifteen years. The Chief Commissioner said that he was troubled by the next fifteen years. I agree with him. There has been a significant increase in the incidence of serious crime over the past few years, not just in Victoria, but throughout Australia. As Mr. Dunn said, this has been reduced in certain areas of minor crimes.

The Hon. N. F. STACEY: Is homicide a minor crime?

The Hon. J. M. WALTON: Statistics show that the incidence of murder is increasing. Up to a fortnight ago there had been 53 murders in Victoria this year, which is two more than for last year. It is estimated that if the present rate continues, the record of 62 murders in a year may be exceeded.

This is an important matter and is one of the reasons for the increase in this type of crime. To that extent it is not, as the Chief Secretary said, the fault of the community, but the fault of the Government. It is easy for Government supporters to laugh, but the community expects the Government to take action to stop these crimes. When the Opposition suggests this, all Government supporters say that it is not the Government's fault but a community problem and they laugh about it. The Opposition does not consider it laughable; the number of serious crimes in the community is a serious matter. I refer to crimes such as murder, homicide, bank robbery, kidnapping, burglary and theft. As the motion implies, crimes of these types impose heavy costs on the community. Initially, the police have to find out who committed the crimes.

I pay tribute to the Victoria Police Force because its members found out who committed nine out of ten bank robberies and 99 per cent of murders. I do not know how they managed to do it. Last year there were only three unsolved murders in Victoria—the murders of two young women in Easey Street, Collingwood, and of a taxi driver. That is an outstanding record of the police.

As I said, the cost of these crimes to the community is enormous, initially because of the number of police involved in trying to solve crimes. The next step is for accused persons to go to trial; they are kept on remand until the trial, and that may take many months, during which the cost on the public is huge. If a defendant is found guilty of a crime and sentenced to ten or fifteen years' imprisonment, further expense is imposed on the community because he has to be sheltered and fed at public expense.

The Leader of the House said it is not safe to walk around the streets of Melbourne at night. I felt much safer walking around the streets in China when I was there several years ago. A person could feel absolutely safe walking around the streets at 2 a.m. in China.

The Hon. O. G. JENKINS: They shoot anybody there.

The Hon J. M. WALTON: Has Mr. Jenkins been to China?

The Hon. O. G. JENKINS: No.

The Hon. J. M. WALTON: I have been there and I know that the Chinese culture and way of life leads the people not to commit these sorts of crimes. That is what needs to be inculcated in people today.

Vandalism is the cause of enormous expense to the community. When a whole carriage of a train standing at a siding overnight is burnt out or the seats are slashed from one end to the other, the damage is paid for by the community. Litterbugs who dump rubbish on the sides of the roads or in the streets are another cause of public expense, because the rubbish has to be picked up by somebody. It would cost a person nothing to take rubbish home and place it in a garbage can or incinerator instead of dumping it on the side of the road because a truck with two or three men has to pick it up and remove it.

Arsonists who go around burning properties either for fun or for profit also impose a heavy cost on the community. There are often cases of arson being committed for both reasons. A large fire occurred early this week which the police are now investigating because arson is suspected. About $1 million worth of damage was caused in that fire, and this has to be paid for one way or another by the community. People may believe that the firm pays for the damage; that is not so. The insurance pays for it, and the community contributes to that, making another cost to the community.

If there were no crooks or dishonest people in the community, people would not need to carry around in their pockets, as most people do, a bundle of keys; they

could go out and leave their front doors open knowing that it would be safe to do so. People would not have to switch on burglar alarms or take out insurance policies so that if goods were stolen, they would be paid for. These are further costs on the community, and that is what Mr. Galbally was alluding to in the motion.

Car accidents are yet another cost on the community when damage is caused to a car through the actions of some person who does not respect the law. The cost of hospitalization of people injured in car accidents and those who are unfortunate enough to have to spend the rest of their lives in wheelchairs has to be paid for by the community.

Other unprovoked assaults to which Mr. Galbally has referred previously in the House such as rape, child molestation, fraud and corporate crimes are paid for by the community. People employed in companies manipulate the figures in books to make huge personal gains, and as a result the shareholders and members of the community have to pay higher prices for commodities.

They are known as corporate crimes, which are committed against the law but are paid for by the community.

Not so long ago there was a boom in mining shares and millions of dollars were invested by the community. Small investors were encouraged to invest in all types of mining companies. They were going to make a fortune overnight. Many of the people who dealt in those shares are serving terms in prison for issuing false prospectuses and providing false information.

If people were honest there would be no need for floor walkers in shops. These days the quantity of goods stolen from shop counters is enormous. The honest pay for the dishonest. The cost of goods stolen is built into the cost of the articles for sale which are bought and paid for by honest people. The dishonest people obtain the goods for nothing; the honest pay either through insurance premiums or through the increased price of the commodity.

If people were honest there would be no need for armoured cars or armed guards around the city. Almost in fear of their lives, when the car pulls up two or three of those men jump out and stand holding guns while perhaps a moderately small pay-roll is taken into a factory. Even with such precautions, recently when the guards were away from the scene for less than a minute, two or three armed persons stepped in and robbed the factory.

There is also the crime of mischief. People do things which cause the police great trouble and expense. Some blatantly irresponsible people venture out on the sea or into the mountains without sufficient experience or on days on which they should not do so, and this causes the community much expense.

As the Minister has said, many of these things are a community problem, but I believe many fall back on the Government. Other costs to the community include the costs of bookmakers, Tattersalls, one-armed bandits as there are in New South Wales, casinos as there are in Tasmania, taxes imposed by Government on people, and perhaps one of the worst—inflation. In the past few weeks one of the most serious costs to the community has been the millions of dollars of public money wasted on useless land purchases from which speculators have made millions of dollars. This, of course, must be laid at the feet of the Government because it is at fault. Not only a cost in money terms is involved but also a cost in terms of misery and trauma. The Government has a job to do and the Opposition must point out the Government's inadequacies.

It is well known, as Mr. Galbally has said in this House on a number of occasions, that if every criminal knew when he committed a crime

that there was a certainty that he would be caught, in all probability he would not commit the crime. The provision of that deterrent could prevent many crimes. The Government is not providing the number of police required to do the job. Certainly the Premier has announced an increase in the authorized strength of the Police Force. A few days ago it was announced in the newspapers that an additional 350 police would be recruited.

The Hon. V. O. DICKIE: It is difficult to get 350 policemen.

The Hon. J. M. WALTON: Of course. Sir Eric St. Johnston in his report stated that from 1965 to 1969 the net gain in numbers of members of the Police Force for each year was 25, 53, 195, 94 and 12 respectively.

The Hon. V. O. DICKIE: For every 100 people who apply only 33 are accepted, and of that number 40 per cent require one year's remedial education.

The Hon. J. M. WALTON: Under the present conditions the maximum number of trainees who can undertake the course at one time is 500—two half-yearly courses each of 250. If the Government was able to provide better facilities or to rearrange the programme in such a way as to train more recruits, there would be a chance of the Premier's promise being fulfilled. The honorable gentleman does not care how many promises he makes in this direction because he is unable to train more than a certain number and does not have room to do so.

The Hon. V. O. DICKIE: There is room.

The Hon. J. M. WALTON: It cannot be done unless the facilities are available. The strength of the Police Force cannot be increased by more than a small number each year. The increase of 350 in the authorized strength would bring the total strength from 6,670 to 7,020. However that number will not be reached by the end of next year. As about half of the recruits will leave for various reasons, the figure is more likely to be about 120.

The Hon. V. T. HAUSER: Is the honorable member plugging for secret police?

The Hon. J. M. WALTON: No. However in regard to some of the land deals that have been taking place, some secret police would have been of assistance. I remember the Geelong Gas Co. shares, how long it took the Labor Party to ferret that out, and how an investigation had to be made into the dealings in Geelong Gas Co. shares. The land deals are only the latest——

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. W. G. Fry): Order! I do not know what this has to do with the subject of the ravages of crime on the community.

The Hon. J. M. WALTON: It has to do with crooks.

The PRESIDENT: Perhaps it has, but the honorable member should deal with the subject under discussion—the ravages of crime on the community. The debate is not really on the Police Force *per se.*

The Hon. H. M. HAMILTON (Higinbotham Province): I raise a point of order of the utmost gravity. Previously, Sir, you have ruled, and I ask you to rule again for the benefit of Mr. Walton, concerning the imputations which he has made against a member of this Chamber and his involvement in the Geelong Gas Co. share issue. That matter was cleared and the imputations and accusations made by Mr. Walton are unfair to the honorable member, are dishonest and are quite inappropriate to this House.

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. W. G. Fry): I must uphold the point of order. The matter has been previously decided. Mr. Walton will not refer to it again in this debate.

The Hon. J. M. WALTON (Melbourne North Province): If I have offended Mr. Hamilton in his views

of Mr. Hauser, I shall not refer to the matter again. What I said was that at that time it was necessary to have an inquiry into the matter.

The Hon. V. T. HAUSER: I was cleared.

The Hon. J. M. WALTON: I did not say that the honorable member was not cleared.

The Government is responsible for the prevention of crime by the provision of an adequate Police Force. This year the Police Force asked for an additional 300 public servants to carry out office duties that policemen are currently doing. This would have allowed those policemen to perform the work of dealing with criminals, for which they have specialized training. The Government provided twelve public servants. Yet the Premier came out with the clap-trap that 350 more policemen will be trained in the next twelve months. If the honorable gentleman really wanted to do so, he could have that number of policemen on the streets tomorrow, by providing the extra 300 public servants required.

The Motor Boating Squad, which is responsible for policing crime on Victorian waterways, is stationed at Dawson Street, Brunswick. The Government will not provide it with facilities on the waterfront or on the bay where it can do some useful work. When a crime is committed on the water the squad has first to travel from Brunswick. To traverse Sydney Road to the boat would require at least an hour's travelling so that, by the time the police arrived on the scene, the culprits could be miles away.

The recommendation of Colonel Sir Eric St. Johnston of the provision of an independent patrol group was implemented by the Government and that group is doing a tremendous job. However, there should be four times as many police in this area. The Government is responsible for doing something about it, although the Chief Secretary says that it is a matter of community responsibility or of sending kids off to war. An attempt should be made to convince lawbreakers that the Police Force will not allow them to get away with crime. I support the motion.

The Hon. N. F. STACEY (Chelsea Province): I direct a few remarks to the subject of the ravages of crime on the community. Although this seems to be a topic for wide-ranging discussion, it becomes self destructive. One can turn it around. From the Opposition benches has come a catalogue of what has been happening in the world of crime. The latest statistics have been bandied around. However, honorable members should consider the other side of the argument and what the community is doing to respond to those ravages. I submit that the Government is giving a lead to the community in this regard.

Members of the community have a far better understanding of this matter than has been displayed by members of the Labor Party and the National Party. In every municipality, community organizations, run by a host of people, are dedicating themselves to making the society a better place in which to live.

From what has been said by members of the Opposition, it appears that all that is necessary is to put more men in every police station. That is not the answer. The Leader of the House made the point that this year the number of police officers will be increased, but this matter cannot be solved only by the Government. The general public accepts part of the responsibility and is playing a major role in ensuring that there is some morality in the community. People are prepared to help other people and to ensure that children and young people who may be turning towards delinquency are given assistance back.

Few of the books that I have been able to find in the Library catalogue statistics about good things; they always catalogue statistics about dismal things. This is a subject on which a wide-ranging discussion can take place. Honorable members should concentrate on the brighter side of the picture.

In his introductory remarks Mr. Galbally was critical of the educational process and of the product of the educational process. Perhaps some criticism can rightly be levelled in that direction because education reacts to philosophy in the community. This is the pendulum which alternates from one side to the other. Perhaps the pendulum of education has swung to the extreme and is now firmly on its way back to ensuring that the young people who leave school are equipped to take their rightful place and to obtain satisfactory positions which will enable them to work for the benefit of the community.

It is about time members of the Opposition began to emphasize the right of young people to work rather than the right of people to strike. In the province I represent there were hosts of people who did not work today. They did not work because this Parliament has not emphasized the right of people to work. Many honorable members have much to say about the right of people to strike, but let us be concrete and look on the brighter side and talk about the right of people to work.

In the past we have spoken about the right of people to receive welfare benefits, but young people in the Chelsea Province want the right to work. There are few people who do not want to work, but those who do, have not been able to work for the past four weeks. These young people will say at the next election, "Give us the right to work."

I hope that as the debate continues honorable members will emphasize the positive aspects of what is happening in the community, especially in education. There is much community support for our schools, not only from the school councils but also from the total community in which those schools operate. If there is continuing interruption to industry of this nature, the young people will face a desperate situation.

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. W. G. Fry): Order! I have been hoping that the honorable member would link up his remarks on strikes, industrial conditions and education with the ravages of crime in the community.

The Hon. N. F. STACEY: Thank you, Mr. President. I am trying to put that it has been alleged by members of the Opposition that the community has allowed young people to come out of the education system not equipped to take a job and therefore, as a consequence, they are being allowed to go into a life of crime.

I am trying to emphasize the positive side of what is being done to augment the work of the Police Force, which is not what we are talking about. I believe we are talking about the total community, and I am trying to point out the active work that is being directed towards building up the morality of the community.

Having summarized in a reasonable way the argument advanced by the Opposition, I conclude on that point and submit that the House should not adjourn on account of the motion moved by Mr. Galbally.

The Hon. R. J. EDDY (Thomastown Province): I support the motion so ably moved by Mr. Galbally that the House should adjourn because of the ravages of crime on the community. There is no doubt in the minds of members of the Opposition that crime has increased considerably over the years. I am not castigating the Government, but it is about time Parliament did something about the ravages of crime.

No one can deny that crime is rife in this State. Armed holdups are committed daily and on some days

two or three occur. There are also many offences of rape committed, but it should be remembered that many offences are not reported to the police, so we really do not know how many rapes are committed each day.

In presenting his case Mr. Galbally spoke about education as it exists today. He made the point, as did the Leader of the Government, that perhaps there is not sufficient disciplining of students in primary schools. The Government should instruct teachers to adopt a hard line and to inform students that they are subject to disciplinary action.

Mr. Galbally also referred to students from high schools continuing on to tertiary education. The Government should endeavour to devote more time to students who desire to enter the trades as apprentices. An insufficient number of apprentices are in training in Victoria. If the Government was genuine in its attempts to reduce crime, it would provide more opportunities for the training of apprentices and this would go a long way towards reducing the number of crimes committed.

The Leader of the Government stated this afternoon that from 1930 to 1940 there was full employment, but I submit that during that period there was more unemployment as it covered the depression years. He said that in those years the male person within the family unit provided for the wife and the family thus allowing the wife to remain at home to look after the children.

This is not the position today, because of the actions of the Government. It is not possible for a wife to remain at home. As an illustration, I refer to the Government's policy on the sale of land. My sons have had to pay through the nose to purchase land in a particular area. But for the actions of this Government, they would not have had to pay the prices that they have paid. If the Government had acted properly and provided land for young people at reasonable prices, the wives would have been able to remain at home and look after their families. However, they are not able to do that; they have to go to work because they cannot otherwise afford to pay the high prices of consumer goods or the high rentals charged. That is why a majority of young people are not being cared for in the same way as honorable members were when they were young. Because of the lack of parental control, young people are allowed more freedom to move around in the community, and thus commit crimes.

It has also been stated that they have easy access to drugs. Honorable members have also learnt that people who have been imprisoned find it easy to obtain drugs in gaol. The drugs are thrown over the walls concealed in rubber balls.

I believe the Chief Secretary is of the view that we need more police. Many unemployed people who have high academic qualifications have not been able to obtain a position after leaving university. Those qualifications would enable them to become members of the Police Force, but unless the Government is prepared to pay them adequately for the work they are asked to carry out, they will not seek that employment.

The Government should construct police stations in municipalities where they are urgently needed. Within the Shire of Whittlesea, with a population in excess of 60,000, there are only 2 police stations, 1 at Thomastown, which closes at 11 p.m., and 1 at Epping, which closes at 5 p.m. The people within the shire have no police protection at night.

At Broadmeadows there is a 24-hour police station, which looks after a population of 120,000. The area covered by that police station extends into Craigieburn where there is another large populated area, but the Government is not providing the necessary police protection for the people. As a result, the young people

can do as they like. This Government has been in office for 23 years, but that is the standard of police protection that it is affording the people of Victoria, and it is not good enough.

Until the Government is prepared to give protection to the people in those municipalities, the people under 21 years of age, about whom honorable members have heard so much today, will continue to commit crimes of armed robbery, rape and so on. This Government is prepared to sit back and accept that situation, but members of the Opposition are not. I do not think the community is prepared to accept that type of treatment from the Government.

Mr. Dunn made some excellent remarks about people from broken homes. A number of crimes are committed because young people from broken homes have had no parental control or help. Mr. Dunn also said that penalties should be increased. I do not agree. A few weeks ago the penalty for armed robbery was increased to 25 years, but no judge will impose that penalty if he can avoid it.

I support reform, and I believe people who are imprisoned should be helped to come back into society. Our penal institutions have nothing to offer in the form of rehabilitation. There are no workshops in which people can be taught to become decent citizens and to accept positions in industrial plants when they are released. It is about time more money was provided for more police protection and police stations so that members of the Police Force can work in the interests of the people. Unless the Government is prepared to do this, the incidence of crime will increase. The Government has been in office for 23 years but has done nothing to improve the situation.

Mr. Stacey mentioned young people being given the opportunity of working. That is the most ridiculous statement I have ever heard in this Chamber. The Government has done nothing to provide young people with the opportunity of working until this late hour when it has made available $100,000. How far will that sum go? If young people are given the opportunity of working they will do so. Today they do not have that opportunity. Unless they are able to obtain work crime will increase.

It is tragic that persons who are imprisoned can easily escape. What has the Government done to correct that situation—nothing! So long as it is easy for prisoners to escape, they will do so. The Police Force does a wonderful job in apprehending people who commit crimes, but when criminals are imprisoned, it is easy for them to escape. I believe the motion moved by Mr. Galbally should be carried.

The Hon. S. R. McDONALD (Northern Province): I congratulate Mr. Galbally for once again bringing before this Chamber a subject of great importance. Various points of view have been put forward by a number of speakers. The real value of this type of adjournment motion is that it enables worth-while and constructive debate to take place. The current session of Parliament has been the most barren and unproductive session that I have seen in ten years. But for motions introduced by the Labor Party and the National Party, the Legislative Council would have little business to transact.

The Hon. V. O. DICKIE: Isn't that what government is all about?

The Hon. R. I. KNOWLES: So that we have less.

The Hon. S. R. McDONALD: If that is the Government's criterion, it is not good enough. The motion before the Chamber is of great importance. The National Party believes it should be debated. I do not consider that it is a party political issue. Each party should approach it constructively and put forward its point of

view. Various speakers have done that. Mr. Dunn has put forward the basic view of the National Party.

My main reason for entering this debate is to say something about the responsibility of the National Party in deciding whether to support motions of this type. I have been provoked into doing so because of remarks or interjections from friends and colleagues on my left. The motion before the House at present refers to the ravages of crime on the community. It is not a censure or want-of-confidence motion. It does not refer to the failure of the Government to carry out any particular policy or decision. This Chamber has long and valued traditions in initiating and debating matters of importance, and this motion provides an opportunity for debate. As on previous occasions, the National Party will decide its attitude to the motion on the merits, arguments and evidence put forward.

Mr. Dunn indicated that the National Party supports the motion on a number of grounds but basically because it affords the opportunity for this type of important social issue to be properly debated. To vote against the motion would imply that we are entirely satisfied with the present situation in respect of crime prevention, and are completely satisfied with the Government's record. On neither of those two grounds is the National Party prepared to vote against the motion.

Earlier the Leader of the House made a passing reference to the " happy union " between the National Party and the Labor Party last week. Let me inform the Leader of the House that there is no union between the two parties, whether it be happy or unhappy. I make that point because in the ten years that I have been a member of this Parliament the National Party has made decisions on legislation and adjournment motions purely and simply on the merits of the argument put before the Chamber. I want to make that position abundantly clear. In conclusion, I believe the adjournment motion introduced by Mr. Galbally has important implications for the community and Parliament. The National Party believes it is entirely appropriate that this type of issue should be debated, and therefore supports the motion.

The Hon. D. G. ELLIOT (Melbourne Province): I will be brief. I do not apologize for that briefness. I consider in this debate that certain things should be said. I have been a member of this House for seventeen or eighteen years and on numerous occasions I have had the privilege of hearing my Leader, Mr. Galbally, approach what I call high statesmanship in his contributions. I am sure that all honorable members will concur with my assertion. All of us have lapses and altercations across the Chamber. Sometimes debates move into not only the commonplace but the very ordinary. I am a little disappointed that tonight honorable members have witnessed, particularly from the Government side of the House—perhaps some members of the Labor Party have been guilty too—accusations, cross-accusations and cynical remarks which I do not think this motion deserves. I pay tribute to the Leader of the House because he treated the matter seriously and contributed in the best way he knows about what is required in future of legislative chambers of any description in this State.

As a representative for Melbourne Province I come in contact with more than my share of delinquincy, juvenile crime and crime in general. More than two-thirds of the high-rise flats in Melbourne are in Melbourne Province. There are frequent reports of problems of young mothers who are deserted, who are suddenly left alone because the husband has been killed or has died. Melbourne Province has more than its share of elderly citizens who are left alone and are either unable to look after themselves or have children who are disinclined to look after them. All in all in the whole of this sorry tale there is a recipe for the breaking of the law.

One can hardly blame the youth of today, who are faced with neutron bombs, uranium and its fearful consequences when used for the wrong purposes, who find it hard to get jobs and who also come from one-parent families. I can take honorable members to a school in the southern section of the Melbourne Province where about 40 per cent of the children come from one-parent families. All of these things accumulate to the extent where one has a semi-sick society, and yet in talking with young people who have been up to most of the dodges—they have " pinched " cars, committed crimes, been in gangs, and have been most objectionable members of society at some time in their lives—I find that in the majority of cases the homes they came from were the cause of their behaviour.

It is reflected in the attitude of parents and whether they really care for their children; whether the parents are prepared to accept the responsibility that goes with bringing a child into the world; whether true love exists between the parents and the children, or whether it is just indifference or too much indifference.

I do not think teachers should be criticized too much, although some teachers are a little too permissive. I go on record as castigating various members of the teacher unions in that regard. Today we are dangerously close to bringing back semi-illiteracy in areas of education where competency was commonplace when I was young, such as the ability to add up, subtract, multiply, divide; and even more, the ability to read, write and punctuate. Unfortunately, many teachers today contend that the young people will make up for this as they grow older because they are being taught to think.

I do not know how they are being taught to think, because when children leave school, even if they have not received a tertiary education, which has been mentioned frequently tonight, and if they have gone only to the secondary stage or to the minimum school-leaving age of fifteen years, one finds an appalling lack of knowledge of the three Rs in people working in industry and offices. Thus young people who leave school earlier than we would like them to are almost unemployable because of their lack of knowledge of the basic forms of education. I do not know whether that is an indictment of society when it is spending so much money on education, but I am inclined to think it is.

In the area of tertiary education, with all it does for young people today—once again I may incur wrath, but I do not mind doing it because I fervently believe in this matter—too many graduates from Victorian universities are coming out virtually unemployable. There should be a ruthless reassessment of priorities in this area, since it is costing the taxpayer so much money for tertiary education, and we should look carefully at the type of education that is to be made more freely available.

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. W. G. Fry): Order! Previously I had to call a Government supporter to order because he was giving a similar dissertation to that which Mr. Elliot is giving on matters concerning education, which are probably sober and proper matters to be raised in a debate on education, but I ask him to show the connection between what he was saying on education in general and the subject of the motion, which is the ravages of crime on the community. I hope Mr. Elliot will not go too far in being philosophical.

The Hon. D. G. ELLIOT: I am not trying to be philosophical, Mr. President, and I take umbrage at your statement, because this gets down to the nitty gritty of the situation.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I ask Mr. Elliot to withdraw that remark. I was not reflecting on what he said; I was directing him on what he should do and I ask him to do it.

The Hon. D. G. ELLIOT: Sir, you are then destroying the argument that I am going to put about the younger

fraternity in society and their inclination, because of the type of education that is given to them today, to turn to crime. If you rule against me, Mr. President, I shall sit down, but I shall do so fervently disagreeing with your ruling. I ask for your guidance.

The PRESIDENT: My guidance is quite clear; there is no difference of opinion.

The Hon. D. G. ELLIOT: There seems to be.

The PRESIDENT: Mr. Elliot is speaking and has spoken at some length on the subject of education. There was no indication that that is linked in any way with the subject of crime. If Mr. Elliot is going to link it to the subject, I ask him please to get to the point.

The Hon. D. G. ELLIOT: Sir, in other words you are asking me to be more precipitate in putting my argument, and that is what I take umbrage at.

The PRESIDENT: I regret that Mr. Elliot takes umbrage; nevertheless I ask him to withdraw his remark.

The Hon. D. G. ELLIOT: I withdraw it, if it satisfies you, Sir.

The PRESIDENT: Having withdrawn the remark, Mr. Elliot should understand that I am not asking him to be precipitate, or to do this, that or the other. I am saying that he will speak to the motion, which refers to the ravages of crime, and that is a subject I have not heard mentioned for a considerable time. What is the crime?

The Hon. D. G. ELLIOT: I am trying to explain to you, Sir, that in your judgment—I will not say impatience—you are decreeing that I am wandering from my argument and I disagree with you on that, but surely I am entitled to do that, Mr. President, so I will get on with it. I will get to the point as quickly as I possibly can, with your indulgence. May I do so, Sir?

The PRESIDENT: We are all waiting, so long as Mr. Elliot proceeds on the subject of the motion.

The Hon. D. G. ELLIOT: What I am trying to point out is that because of the type of education in which we are unrealistically indulging today, many young people are being sent into society unequipped to earn a reasonable living for themselves. This is one of the most potent inducements to frustrations, to the taking of drugs and, through that, to entering into crime. An analysis of crime involving young people clearly indicates that education is an important factor in the incidence of crime in Victoria, and, for that matter, throughout Australia. I believed that was a most important aspect to dwell on.

We, as adults and as legislators, are distinctly responsible for the world of the future. If we do not have the courage to put our best foot forward in that regard, we must stand indicted, as I have often said in past years, by future generations for our lack of intestinal fortitude and our lack of ability to discipline ourselves to the extent of finding the funds necessary to give young people in society some hope for the future.

Quite frankly, when I go around and talk to young people I am full of faith in their ability to handle the future. I try to encourage them, give them something to believe in and something to do, even if it is non-productive in monetary terms. Young people thrive on the opportunity to do something so enthusiastically that from then on their involvement in crime becomes almost negligible. Mr. President, how would you like to be the parent of a young person living in, say, Collingwood, where one can walk from Victoria Parade to the now almost defunct Alexandra Parade—thanks to the Victorian Government's transport policy—without finding one square metre of park space in which to play? Young people are compelled to play in the streets. Permission has to be obtained from the Education Department for them to play in school yards until sunset.

This also applies in areas of Brunswick and Prahran, where the amount of space available to keep young people occupied in sport or something they can learn is limited. The Try Boys organization in Prahran is a wonderful institution that provides these opportunities. Without those chances, young people turn to petty crime and from then to God knows what as they grow older.

This is a sick society because it worships a man's wordly goods instead of considering what he can contribute to the society in which he lives. That is why I was a little hurt, with great respect to you, Sir, because you have been very indulgent to me in your occupancy of the chair, when you misinterpreted what I was saying about education. Education is not only what can be learned at university or in primary, secondary or technical school; it is a way of life. Education is what parents think, how close they want to get to their children, how much their children matter to them; and that is where crime is developing today and slowly but surely getting out of control.

This apparent cynicism, an almost instinctive form of cynicism, the young fry have today because they do not have much to look forward to in the future has become quite common. This is the world of the atom bomb, the neutron bomb and uranium; a world in which two-thirds of the population lives under totalitarian rule. I do not know whether young people believe that basic freedom is on the way out, but cynicism leads them into crimes of all descriptions.

That is why I believe the motion moved tonight by Mr. Galbally on the ravages of crime on the community speaks for itself and provides a unique opportunity for the House to talk in the highest possible manner about one of the most important subjects that have been introduced into the Chamber. The right thing for the Government to do would be to agree with the motion, and it would be greatly admired if it did so. I think all honorable members should pause and think about it.

The Hon. D. N. SALTMARSH (Waverley Province): Many things can be said about this motion. It is good that the subject has been raised. Generally, the contributions to the debate have been thoughtful and worth while. However, we are long on highlighting the problems of the so-called young people and short on highlighting their contributions and the opportunities that young people generally make.

I am mindful of the fear, concern and hurt that are caused by crime. We must stand by the victim, but must also seek to understand as clearly and sympathetically as possible the person who is the offender. In order to understand the offender it is necessary to look not only at him or her, but also at the whole of a changing society in a growing, changing world.

I am aware that things have changed. For example, in my youth one of the chief forms of bear baiting was to have sectarian riots between followers of the Protestant and Catholic traditions. There were always fights in the streets of the local towns and children would beat one another up to prove some stupid sectarian point. Thank God that stage has passed. We have moved along with the changing society into different areas, and need to be able to examine and ask questions about what is happening.

I am mindful of the wonderful work that many young people are doing at present in youth organizations and community service projects. I am aware of the high idealism of many young people and pay tribute not only to them but to those who dedicate themselves as leaders, together with teachers in various organizations and societies. We ought to be able to stand by them and to say, " We commend you for the work you are doing because it is a positive

contribution to society in which you are seeking one of the most basic things—to provide young people with a listening ear, an understanding mind and a spirit that is able to respond to their spirit—and with this form of communication we can build a new society."

One of the severe problems of the world at present is loneliness, which results in alienation, separation and desperation. One can stand back, as has been done in the debates tonight unfortunately, and simply condemn people who are victims of these circumstances and say that they are contributors to crime.

I am delighted that at least there is a new awakening in the community generally that has resulted in new approaches being taken and in the formation of self-help groups comprised of people who have sympathy and understanding, care and concern.

Let us take the single-parent family. A few years ago it was common to see these families disintegrate and for the children to be placed in care. A regressive process occurred where young people from children's institutions frequently drifted into crime and then into various penal institutions. In the past few years there has been a magnificent response in many ways and a growth in community self-help groups which have provided community health and day-care centres. A new community interest is being created for the existing demands, where people of similar beliefs and experience can share in a common way and support one another and build one another up. In so doing they are helping to provide better opportunities for their children to grow in understanding and in this sense they are accepted.

These children are staying at home, within the community, and being cared for by new networks of services that are springing up. The fascinating thing is that if we go to the children's reception centres we find that there is a dramatic decrease in the numbers of children being accepted into care at present. One of the great contributing factors is that because there is a new spirit of care in the community at work, these young people are being cared for at home and in the local community.

When I see these sorts of things occurring and being encouraged by governments, I see good and positive things happening in our society. They are designed to give all young people in particular a sense of their worth. We should not criticize and condemn, but we should support young people. It seems that one of the big problems which the community faces in relation to this whole area of crime and its effects is the unreal expectations that we have for young people. The education aspects have already been canvassed widely. There are many young people who we think should at least get their higher school certificate, when in fact they would be better served by completing schooling at a much earlier age and undertaking more effective training to find a better place for themselves in society by doing work which they enjoy.

Within our society there is still a desperate inability to listen to and understand young people. We have in fact a great inability to understand anybody half the time because we become so selfish and self-centred. If we could communicate, we would find that there are always motivations, misunderstandings, deep hurts and deep angers which can be understood and worked out through helpful, useful, empathetic concern.

If we look at our community we are aware of isolation, not only of young people but of other people who feel terribly isolated and alone. Again, if people had the ability to listen, accept and understand others, there should no longer be a need for those people to reach out in anger, to hurt and destroy and to wound. Until we can grasp the central basic point and become more human, there is no point in talking about punishment, about penalties and about rehabilitation. I think this is one of the

wonderful things that is happening in so many ways: Our society is becoming more human. Examples of this are found in the way people care for those who have been affected by fire, floods, strikes and so on. We see compassion in people digging into their pockets to help others.

A grave situation, even in a place such as this, and in our Federal Parliament, is that our standard in many political debates seems to be descending to gutter politics. We are showing a very clear disregard for worthy standards, for understanding and accepting standards, and while we continue with muck raking and belittling other people, we cannot give leadership to the community. We have a responsibility in this whole area of the ravages of crime on the community. We all have a responsibility to stand together, and until we appreciate that and stop buck passing and accusing this or that person and say "It is a total community responsibility; let us see what we can do together; let us learn to share together and be human together", we shall continue to have the ravages of crime on our community.

The Hon. H. M. HAMILTON (Higinbotham Province): I am prompted to join in this debate by three factors. Two of them are statements made by Mr. Walton. The subject "that the Council do now adjourn" is one on which I have no doubt whatsoever. I believe the Council has other things to do than to adjourn, but the subject under discussion, "the ravages of crime on the community" is a very important one and I do not believe any speaker has touched on the one essential ingredient which is evident throughout most of the crime in our community. I shall come to that presently.

Firstly, I shall deal with one enlightening statement made by Mr. Walton. The honorable member said that he felt safer walking in the streets in China than he does in our community. No doubt that is true. I must confess I have not been to China as he has, but I did read the account, for instance, of a British engineer who was imprisoned there some years ago. He described the actions of the people's court; as soon as a petty criminal of any sort was brought in, he was tried and taken out and shot. So China eliminated criminals of all sorts! It was effective, but it was singularly an ill-chosen example. I am not for one moment suggesting the same activity should occur in this community.

I agree with my colleague that we are becoming a more human and more enlightened community, and by and large this applies to the vast majority of people. Unfortunately, there are within the community a few persons who, whether for a physical, mental or some other reason, or perhaps due to their background—I do not know—persist in following criminal activities. I recall that you yourself, Mr. President, quoted to this House some years ago the famous case of an American family which was traced back for a number of generations, and found to have had an appalling record of involvement in crime of all sorts.

The second factor mentioned by Mr. Walton was the white-collar crime, the effects of which extend into many areas of our community. However, those effects are limited to the investing public, and while I do not condone the activities of the white-collar criminal, I point out that we are just emerging from the most massive crime perpetrated against our community in our history, the effects of which have extended into every family and every strata of our society. Indeed the whole community has been impoverished by it. There is no penalty for those who perpetrated the crime of this strike which has brought our community virtually to its knees. The estimated cost to the community as a whole now runs at a massive $1,200 million. This sort of crime is permitted and, indeed, encouraged and supported by members of the Opposition.

The Hon. I. B. TRAYLING (Melbourne Province): I raise a point of order, Mr. President. This is an outrageous assertion of a crime which we support: I am not aware of any crime which has been condoned anywhere in relation to the strike, and certainly the Opposition has not supported any crime. I think the statement is a bit strong. The honorable member makes many points of order which you uphold from time to time, Mr. President, and on this occasion I ask him to withdraw the assertion that we are supporting a crime.

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. W. G. Fry): If those were the words used, I ask the honorable member to withdraw them. I must admit that I did not hear them.

The Hon. H. M. HAMILTON (Higinbotham Province): On the point of order, may I point out that what is a crime is a matter of definition.

The PRESIDENT: Did Mr. Hamilton use the words mentioned by Mr. Trayling?

The Hon. H. M. HAMILTON: I used the term " the Opposition ". In fact I will request that the Clerk take down what I said.

The PRESIDENT: I can make a judgment without the words being taken down.

The Hon. H. M. HAMILTON: I said that a massive crime had been committed against society in this State by the people who went on strike. I said that it had cost our community $1,200 million.

The PRESIDENT: There is no point of order. It is a matter of opinion. No person in this House is being accused of condoning any particular crime. Such statements are made in debates quite frequently.

The Hon. H. M. HAMILTON: I repeat that this is a matter of definition. Those who define crime as being strictly limited to murder and armed holdups, have one view. Those who describe crime as being the ravages created by the white-collar criminal, as he is called, have another view, and I believe those who deprive our community of enormous sums of money and create poverty and hardship in our community are equally as guilty of crime as those who hold a gun at the head of a man in the street, because they have held a gun at the head of our community.

The third point with which I wish to deal is the common ingredient which extends through most of crime in our society, and our society has refused to deal with it. I have already pointed out that in one half of all major crime in the community the element of alcohol is involved. In one in five cases of children being battered an element of alcohol is involved. In one in five divorces and judicial separations often some element of criminal activity and alcohol is involved. This is the common factor extending throughout most of the crime in the community. Honorable members have attempted this evening to link education with crime. Perhaps education has something to do with some aspects of crime, but precious little, in my view. It has been established by every investigator into the subject, that alcohol is the common factor, and until it is dealt with we shall not make any inroads on crime in the community. There are various ways in which this can be done but it is not the subject of this debate.

I conclude my remarks by making a special request to the leaders of the Government and to leaders throughout our community to re-examine the question of alcohol, its impact on crime within our community, and the methods that ought to be brought to bear to reduce it.

The Hon. W. A. LANDERYOU (Doutta Galla Province): I enter the debate because some of the arguments put before the House tonight were intellectually emasculated.

What a magnificent philosophical contribution Mr. Block made tonight! He sat there and read Grimms fairy-tales—if he has advanced that far! The position that has been put to the House completely contradicts what the Leader of the Government has said this session, that the organized working man has the right to withdraw his labour. Now Mr. Hamilton suggests that some crime is involved in that proposition. The front page of today's *Herald* quotes the Premier as criticizing the arbitration system and foreshadowing changes in industrial negotiations involving State instrumentalities.

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. W. G. Fry): Before we go too far down that path, I direct Mr. Landeryou's attention to the fact that the subject of the debate is the ravages of crime on the community. I ask Mr. Landeryou to relate his remarks to that subject.

The Hon. W. A. LANDERYOU: In my introduction, I am endeavouring to relate my remarks to statements emanating from the wild mind of the previous speaker who contended, and despite a challenge you upheld his comments, that the concept of the industrial problem in the Latrobe Valley was in fact a crime. I want to take the House through what the Premier is reported to have said concerning the creation of that particular situation. In the article by Peter Ellingsen, it is stated—

> "I am not satisfied with the way the arbitration system works," he said.
>
> "It seems unduly lengthy, but that is another matter."
>
> Mr. Hamer said the Government would examine the way industrial disputes were handled by State instrumentalities such as the State Electricity Commission.

The concluding paragraph of the article states—

> "Perhaps we would have resolved (the strike) earlier if the State Electricity Commission had informed the Government in the early stages," he said.

In terms of that alleged crime, who were the criminals by your own definition, Sir?

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. W. G. Fry): Order! No definition of mine is under debate. An honorable member expressed an opinion and I gave a ruling on that matter. I gave no ruling as to the substance of what he said.

The Hon. W. A. LANDERYOU: I suggest that what was put by way of argument in presumably a rational and philosophical discussion on a very serious question was that, by exercising a right conceded by the Leader of the Government in this House, those workers were involved in some sort of criminal activity. That dispute lasted eleven weeks and the Premier has now admitted, as reported on the front page of Melbourne's afternoon daily newspaper, that he had been poorly advised and that he had grave doubts about the satisfactory process of so-called arbitration. That is the very point that has been put by members on this side of the House constantly throughout the dispute.

By any measure of logic, it is absurd in the extreme to assert that what occurred in the Latrobe Valley was anything other than a withdrawal of the right to work to assert a point rather than some criminal activity.

I turn now to deal briefly with the realistic and sensible proposal submitted by my Leader in a statesmanlike manner. In our community, violence is virtually becoming acceptable and crime is becoming almost the norm. It cannot be good enough for the Government to dismiss this by saying that it is doing its best in terms of police recruitment, establishment, strength and numbers. It is not good enough for the Government to dismiss it by saying that we should not be knocking but that we ought be encouraging, as Mr. Saltmarsh has suggested, those who are good amongst us and that we should do what the Premier has done so often, act like an ostrich and bury our heads in the sand and ignore the

problem. One cannot do that in this context and still remain intellectually honest.

The facts are that this State does nothing and the Government does not provide sufficient police to police the laws that this Parliament makes. Despite what might be said by the Minister of Health and Mr. Hamilton with respect to alcohol, and despite the fact that this State has led the way in stringent laws on personal freedom concerning the abuse of alcohol and the combination of alcohol and driving, this side of the House has been denied its proper voice by an electoral gerrymander. Honorable members opposite who are shouting do not like to hear the facts, but I am prepared to debate this point anywhere at any time.

The Hon. N. F. STACEY (Chelsea Province): On a point of order, I am trying to follow the remarks of Mr. Landeryou but I cannot relate them to the terms of the motion. I seek your ruling, Mr. President.

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. W. G. Fry): I find no point of order.

The Hon. W. A. LANDERYOU (Doutta Galla Province): I can understand the difficulties of some honorable members, particularly those who sit in the gods, in following a logical argument but I will endeavour to help them. What is difficult for some of them to understand is that the sort of philosophical arguments that have been put forward from all sides of the Chamber tonight have been put constantly by honorable members on this side of the House. There is no question about the validity or the need to prepare society by enacting laws to protect them, the need to educate society or to ensure that sufficient police are available to protect members of our society, but to merely carry pious resolutions does not give the police either sufficient powers or sufficient numbers. To do so is being purely hypocritical and that is the test of the Government's sincerity. It is all right for the Chief Secretary and other spokesmen for the Government to talk about law and order, but the Government is in power and honorable members have yet to see unveiled—I am not sure whether it has been unveiled in one of the party rooms yet—the Government's legislative programme of 100 Bills for this session.

The Hon. S. R. McDONALD: We have passed only fourteen Bills up to date.

The Hon. W. A. LANDERYOU: Exactly, and most of them have hardly been significant; at least seven have been correcting previous mistakes made by the Government or by Parliamentary Counsel or some other Government adviser. We have reached the situation where Parliament pretends that it passes the laws but there are insufficient personnel to police them.

Armed robberies are on the increase as are other crimes of violence. Rape is becoming more prevalent. Indeed, only recently there was the absurd spectacle of a senior policeman being quoted in a daily newspaper concerning the rape at Thomastown of a lady who was on her way home from work or some social function reasonably late at night, but on the right side of midnight, as saying that she should not be out alone at night, that that is what caused the crime. What sort of society do we live in when a Government pretends that it stands for law and order and passes all sorts of laws when this sort of statement is made by a senior police official?

Recently, this House passed an Act to provide for 25 years' imprisonment for armed robbery when no court in this State has sentenced anyone to the existing maximum. What sort of hyprocrisy abounds when Government spokesmen say that the Government stands for law and order, the laws are passed but the Government does not provide the wherewithal for organizations such as the Police Force to ensure that the law prevails?

The absurdity of the Government's position justifies the House carrying the motion. More importantly, in terms of the future, if our society is to mean anything, and if this Parliament is to remain as some sort of relevant institution, it must live up to the importance of the pious words that are used by Government spokesmen. Whilst members of the Government party might become sensitive and almost hysterical about electoral reform and about the need for more police, they are not being intellectually honest. Undoubtedly, the community will finally recognize that in the few months ahead.

The House divided on the motion (the Hon. W. G. Fry in the chair)—

Ayes	13
Noes	22
Majority against the motion	9

AYES.

Mr. Bradbury	Mr. Trayling
Mr. Dunn	Mr. Walton
Mr. Eddy	Mr. White
Mr. Elliot	Mr. Wright
Mr. Galbally	*Tellers:*
Mr. Knight	Mr. Evans
Mr. Landeryou	Mr. Thomas

NOES.

Mr. Block	Mr. Jenkins
Mr. Campbell	Mr. Knowles
Mr. Chamberlain	Mr. Long
Mr. Dickie	Mr. Reid
Mr. Granter	Mr. Saltmarsh
Mr. Grimwade	Mr. Stacey
Mr. Guest	Mr. Storey
Mr. Hamilton	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Hauser	
Mr. Houghton	*Tellers:*
Dr. Howard	Dr. Foley
Mr. Hunt	Mr. Gleeson

PAIR.

Mr. McDonald	Mr. Ward

ADMINISTRATIVE LAW BILL.

The Hon. HADDON STOREY (Attorney-General), by leave, moved for leave to bring in a Bill to make provision with respect to the review of certain decisions made by certain administrative tribunals, and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (REGIONAL REFUSE DISPOSAL) BILL.

The Hon. A. J. HUNT (Minister for Local Government), by leave, moved for leave to bring in a Bill to provide for the constitution of regional refuse disposal groups, to amend the Local Government Act 1958, the Health Act 1958 and the Local Authorities Superannuation Act 1958, and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

CATTLE COMPENSATION (AMENDMENT) BILL.

This Bill was received from the Assembly and, on the motion of the Hon. W. V. HOUGHTON (Minister of Health), was read a first time.

CONSUMER AFFAIRS (AMENDMENT) 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.

PAPERS.

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

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

Publications—Report of the State Advisory Board for the year 1976–77.

Town and Country Planning Act 1961—
Shire of Flinders Planning Scheme 1962—Amendment No. 95, 1977.

AGE OF MAJORITY BILL.

The Hon. HADDON STOREY (Attorney-General): I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The objects of the Bill are to reduce the age of majority in Victoria from 21 to eighteen years of age, and to

adopt the use of the words " minor " and " minority " in place of the words " infant " and " infancy " in all legislation referring to persons below the age of majority.

The Government believes the age of majority should reflect society's understanding of the capacity and responsibility of young people today, and match their needs and aspirations. There is no magic attached to the age of 21 years. Indeed, it appears that it has become the age of majority by a process of historical accident.

I am informed that in ancient Rome the age of majority was fifteen and that a similar age also applied to the early Britons. In Anglo-Saxon days the law recognized the concept of an age of majority for both males and females, but there was no fixed rule as to what that age was. Different ages seem to have been fixed for different classes of society.

In medieval times the young burgess became of full age when he could count pence, measure cloth and conduct his father's business. The young sokeman—that means a yeoman farmer—came of age when he was fifteen, and a tenant by knight's service when he was 21. The latter age had some connection with the ability of the young man to sustain a heavy suit of armour and lift a lance or sword at the same time. No one would think that a relevant consideration today.

Gradually the rule of the knight became generally accepted by all classes of society and by the courts as the age of majority for most purposes. However, other ages were still retained as marking other points in the life of an individual, such as the right to marry without consent.

The rules as to the age at which a person had capacity to make a will, being a matter for the common law, followed the Roman rule of fourteen years for a male and twelve for a female. It was not until 1837 that the common law rules as to the age of majority were applied to testamentary capacity.

In recent times, the movement has been away from the universal application of the age of 21 years. Since 1965 infants have had testamentary capacity upon attaining the age of eighteen years. In the same year the Property Law Act was amended to validate certain housing loan transactions or mortgages made with specified financial institutions by infants over the age of eighteen years. More recently eighteen-year-olds have been given the right to vote in both State and Federal elections.

In 1973 the Statute Law Revision Committee was asked to consider a report of the Chief Justice's Law Reform Committee which had recommended that the age of majority be reduced to eighteen years. The Statute Law Revision Committee pointed out that the historical reasons for 21 years as the age of majority are not relevant to contemporary society. They concluded that by the age of eighteen most people are ready to accept their responsibilities and rights, and recommended the reduction of the age of majority to that age.

The Government commends the report of the committee and agrees with its view. Today young people make their own decisions and behave as responsible adults by the time they are eighteen years of age. If they are regarded as old enough to vote, they should also be old enough to have the rights and responsibilities of full adulthood. Accordingly this Bill gives effect to the committee's recommendations.

The main provision in the Bill is clause 3 which provides that a person attains full legal capacity upon attaining the age of eighteen years. This means that persons between the ages of eighteen and 21, who at present by reason of their age are not of full legal capacity, will be able to enter into contracts of all types, and enforce them and be bound by them.

Equally, they will be able to own property of all types. Of course, the Bill will not affect any lack of capacity attributable to any factor other than age.

It should be noted the Bill provides that the time at which a person attains a particular age is the commencement of the relevant anniversary of the date of his or her birth. It is on that day that the provisions of the Bill will take effect in respect of any individual who turns eighteen after the Act comes into operation. People already between the ages of eighteen and 21 years when the Act comes into operation will immediately achieve full age and legal capacity.

The Bill will not affect the construction or operation of any will or instrument of trust executed before the commencement date of the Act, nor will it affect the distribution of the estate of any person who died intestate before the commencement of the Act. It will not affect any interest in property to which a person had become entitled before the commencement of the Act.

The Bill provides that proclamations, subordinate legislation and statutory instruments will have to be construed in the light of the provisions of the Act, but this provision will not affect the operation or construction of any reference in such an instrument to an age expressed in years. Nor will this provision affect the construction of any industrial award, order, determination or agreement, or any instrument made under an Act prescribing wages or other conditions of or relating to apprenticeship, or any provisions of any Act concerning conditions of employment.

The Bill contains two schedules. The first contains a list of statutory provisions in which the words " minor " and " minors " are substituted for the words " infant " and " infants ". The second makes specified amendments to various Acts to bring them into line with the provisions of the Bill and so give effect to the recommendations of the Statute Law Revision Committee. Many of these consist of substituting the age of 18 years for the age of 21 years presently contained in the relevant provision.

Explanatory notes have been circulated with the Bill which make more detailed references to the clauses.

The passing of this Bill will confer new rights on those between eighteen and 21 years old. But it should be remembered that it will also confer new responsibilities on them. I have no doubt that they are ready and able to accept this responsibility, and that the community will benefit from the change. I commend the Bill to the House.

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

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

PAY-ROLL TAX BILL (NO. 2).

The Hon. V. O. DICKIE (Chief Secretary): I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

This Bill implements the Budget decision to increase the exemption for liability from pay-roll tax from $48,000 to $60,000, that is, an increase of 25 per cent, which is more than double the inflation rate. It was proposed in the Budget that the new exemption would reduce by $2 for each $3 increase in total pay-roll above $60,000 to a new flat exemption of $27,000 at pay-rolls of $109,500 and above. The new exemption provisions will operate from 1st January, 1978.

On 31st December, 1975, the exemption from pay-roll tax stood at $20,800. On 1st January, 1976, it became $41,600 and on 1st January, 1977, it became $48,000. The increase in this Bill means that in this time the Government will have almost trebled the exemption from pay-roll tax to help small businesses and some

10,000 employers will have, as a result, been freed from liability for pay-roll tax.

The legislation passed last year to increase the general exemption introduced into the pay-roll tax two formulas contained in Schedules One and Two of the Act. The formulas applied the exemption provisions to the financial year as a whole and avoided dividing it into two artificial six-monthly periods. They also ensured that employers are able to fully utilize the exemption available to them for the whole year. This formula approach also makes for simpler amending legislation because all that is required is for new figures and dates to be substituted where appropriate.

The Bill provides for the insertion of the new dates and figures to implement the Government's decision to introduce a new level of exemption for pay-roll tax as from 1st January, 1978, and the commencement provisions contained in clause 1 ensure that the existing Act will continue to apply as required for financial years before 1977–78.

As a result of the increase in exemption contained in this Bill 1,700 small businesses in Victoria will cease to be liable for pay-roll tax as from the beginning of 1978 and all other employers will pay less tax. The estimated cost to the Budget is $2·5 million for 1977–78 and $6 million in a full year. I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of the Hon. D. R. WHITE (Doutta Galla Province), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Tuesday, November 1.

RACING (FEES) BILL.

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

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The purpose of this Bill is to increase the fees charged for certain licences and permits issued under powers conferred by the Racing Act 1958. These fees have not been reviewed since 1971, but are expected to be related to the cost of processing applications and issuing the licences and permits.

The controlling bodies of the three branches of the racing industry have been advised of the proposed increases and have raised no objection. The increases are not excessive, having regard to rises in costs since the last review.

Clause 2 amends the four relevant sections of the Racing Act, 1958, as follows—

(*a*) It increases the maximum fee which may be prescribed under section 22 (*a*) (i) for a permit to conduct trotting races at agricultural shows from $2 to $10. The present fee was fixed in 1967 and is totally inadequate to meet the cost of processing applications.

(*b*) Section 27 of the Racing Act provides that the maximum fee for a licence for a racecourse or trotting ground shall be $20 a year. The Bill increases this maximum to $40.

Since 1968 the fee prescribed for a licence for a metropolitan racecourse or trotting ground has been $20, whilst that for a country licence was fixed in 1971 at $12.50. It is proposed that if the Parliament enacts this Bill the regulations will be amended to increase these fees to $40 and $20, respectively.

(*c*) Section 58 (1) provides that $5 is the maximum fee which may be prescribed for the issue of a licence for a greyhound racing ground, and section 59 allows the Minister to prescribe a fee not exceeding $5 for the annual renewal of such a licence. These fees were fixed in 1967.

The Bill amends both sections by increasing the maximum fee to $40. It is proposed to prescribe $40 as the fee for a metropolitan licence and $20 as the fee for a country licence.

I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of the Hon. R. J. EDDY (Thomastown Province), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Tuesday, November 1.

STATE FORESTS WORKS AND SERVICES BILL (No. 2).

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

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The Bill provides authority for the expenditure of $15·2 million on works and services.

An amount of $11·35 million has been approved for expenditure on proposed works for the financial year ending June, 1978. The additional amount authorized by the Bill is to provide Parliamentary authority to continue works in the early part of the next financial year until the passing of further legislation for the works programme for that year.

Clause 1 comprises the short title and citation. Clause 2 provides for the expenditure of moneys for the purposes set out in the table in clause 2 of the Bill. 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 Service Act 1976.

ITEM 1: FIRE PROTECTION, $3·5 million—The Forests Commission is responsible for prevention and suppression of fires in 6·6 million hectares of State forest as well as fire suppression in national parks and protected public land. Additionally, the commission's authority with respect to fire protection extends over private property located within 1·5 kilometres of State forests, national parks and protected public land. This territorial responsibility covers almost one-third of the State.

The forests of south-east Australia are recognized as being among the most fire hazardous in the world. The disastrous bush fires of last February, though largely confined to grass lands, again underlined that this State's fire reputation is well deserved. The commission has, over many years, developed an effective fire-fighting organization based on a system of fire lookouts to provide rapid detection, a network of roads and tracks to provide quick access of men and machinery, a radio communications network, and a well-trained fire-fighting force.

Helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft are used for additional fire detection coverage, fire bombing with retardants, reconnaissance of going fires, transport of crews to remote locations, back burning by aerial ignition and other specialized purposes. The commission will again retain a helicopter on immediate call during the height of the season.

This year provision has been made for construction of 81 kilometres of new fire access tracks, 195 kilometres of prepared firelines, 30 dams, reconstruction and rehabilitation of 725 kilometres of fire access tracks and construction of two fire lookout towers.

The commission's fire-fighting capability is based on pre-season prevention works, coupled with prompt initial attack and follow up on wildfires by well-equipped crews. To augment this capability, the commission's fire-fighting force will be increased during January and February by four mobile, self-contained fire-fighting crews and the employment of additional seasonal labour in country areas. Similar crews have proved most valuable during previous seasons.

The efficiency of the commission's V.H.F. radio network will be further improved by the purchase of a further 28 mobile radios and additional remote installations on high points, controlled by U.H.F. links and powered by solar generators. Fifty-five single side band high frequency radios will replace outmoded units linking district bases with Melbourne.

Liaison between the commission and the Country Fire Authority during fires will be greatly strengthened by the installation of 45 radios operating on Country Fire Authority frequencies in district offices. Additional hand-held portables will be obtained to give greater flexibility in communications on the fire edge, in conjunction with a newly designed aerial system to improve communications between aircraft and fire crews.

Work will be continued on research projects to provide basic data on fire behaviour and the effects of fire on flora and fauna. The results are used to update and refine fire suppression methods and fuel reduction burning.

ITEM 2: INDIGENOUS STATE FOREST, $3 million—This item provides for the improvement and regeneration of native forests. It includes regeneration of recently logged areas and blanks caused by natural events such as fires or wind storms, thinning of overcrowded stands and the improvement of stands by the removal of defective stems.

Some 2,700 hectares of mountain-type forests on which utilization has been completed will be regenerated by sowing seed either by hand or from the air. Large quantities of eucalypt seed of a number of species must be collected for this purpose. Thinning, liberation and other silvicultural treatments will be carried out in the mixed species, river red gum and box ironbark forests. Regeneration of these forests using natural seed fall will be continued.

Additional facilities for recreation will be established and works will be undertaken for protection of environmental values in the forests, especially in the 116 forest parks, scenic reserves and other reserves totalling 57,382 hectares set aside for scientific, aesthetic, educational and recreational purposes. People will make some 5 million visits to the forests this year for pleasure driving, picnicking, camping, bushwalking and similar activities, and the interest of the general public in forest recreation continues to grow dramatically.

ITEM 3: EXTRACTION ROADS, $1·1 million—This item will enable the commission to improve and extend the present system of roads and bridges constructed principally for the extraction of forest produce.

For continuity of timber supplies, roads into new areas to be harvested must be constructed in advance of actual harvesting operations. The large areas of regrowth stands resulting from the 1939 fires in which cutting is now commencing require additional roads and improvements of existing roads. The agreements made with wood-using companies for long-term supplies, particularly where there are large timber volumes, involve extension and upgrading of the road system in some forests.

Strengthening and improvement of roads is necessary to permit efficient operation of the modern timber transports now being used and to make the roads safer for general use by the public. Additional surfacing will be required to ensure haulage of wood supplies at all times of the year. Extraction roads in State forests are also used for the protection and management of the forest and by the general public for recreation access.

ITEM 4: PLANTATION ESTABLISHMENT—SOFTWOOD AND HARDWOODS—INCLUDING SOFTWOOD PLANTING UNDERTAKEN IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE AGREEMENTS BETWEEN THE COMMONWEALTH AND THE STATE, $5·5 million—The Commonwealth is prepared to enter into a new agreement to provide loan funds for a five-year period commencing 1st July, 1977, to cover the cost of maintaining the softwood plantations established previously with Commonwealth financial assistance. Though special Commonwealth funds will not be available for new plantings, the plantation extension programme will continue with a planting target for this year of 3,600 hectares. Plantings will be in the seven established plantations development zones—Central, Benalla–Mansfield, Ovens, Upper Murray, Latrobe, Portland and Ballarat–Daylesford—where wood

supplies require to be available as raw material for major decentralized industries.

In establishing the commission's softwood plantations provision is made for landscape, aesthetic and recreational requirements and for the retention of wildlife and natural plant habitats within each project. About 20 per cent of the gross area of each plantation project is used for these purposes. Softwood plantations as a whole occupy only a very small area of Victoria in comparison with the extensive native forest, but they are very highly productive.

Within the limits of finance, properties suitable for inclusion in the softwood plantation programme will be purchased as they become available at economic prices. The aim is to have a substantial part of each year's programme planted on purchased farmland. Some 6,700 hectares have been purchased over the past five years for this purpose, and new plantings on what were formerly marginal farms average 30 per cent of the total.

The plants required for the softwood plantings programme will be raised at nurseries at Benalla, Trentham, Rennick and Koetong. Substantial areas of the older plantations are being clear felled to supply the softwoods requirements of industries. Each year there is a replanting programme for such clear felled areas.

Hardwood plantings will continue in a number of districts throughout the State with the major plantings taking place in South Gippsland. Here some 340 hectares of purchased scrub-covered marginal farms will be reforested with eucalypts, mainly mountain ash. Approximately 320 hectares of logged areas as in East Gippsland will be planted with eucalypts.

Plants for hardwood planting throughout the State will be raised mainly at prison camps at Olsen's Bridge, Mirboo district, and Won Wron, Yarram. Prison labour will carry out the major part of the work under the supervision of Forests Commission staff in these two nurseries. They will also assist in planting in South Gippsland.

ITEM 5: FOREST OFFICERS' QUARTERS, OFFICES AND OTHER BUILDINGS, $1 million—This item will provide for the purchase or construction of a number of new residences for forest officers in small country towns. In general, these will replace old residences which have become sub-standard. Major improvements will also be carried out to a number of existing residences in country areas and new workshops, garages, and so on, will be provided at various field locations. A new office will be built at Alexandra.

ITEM 6: PURCHASE OF LAND, $350,000—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 accordance with the Government's policy for the preservation of the area and its more effective protection from fire. This item does not include land acquisition for softwood plantations.

ITEM 7: PURCHASE OF PLANT, other than under items 1–5 inclusive, $500,000—This item provides for the supply of vehicles, plant and equipment not covered by the Forests Plant and Machinery Fund and includes such items as additional motor vehicles, first attack bulldozers for fire-fighting purposes and the purchase and fitting out of fire tankers.

ITEM 8: FARM FORESTRY, $250,000—This item provides for loans to landowners under the farm forestry loan scheme, to assist them to establish commercial plantations. Following the increase in the maximum amount which can be advanced to any one owner from $5,000 to $8,000 there has been much greater interest in the scheme, and increased numbers of applications are being received.

Some 86 are now on hand and being examined for suitability of the sites for commercial tree growth. At 30th June, 1977, the net amount committed for advances to agreement holders was $668,000.

The Government believes that the farm forestry programme provides a welcome alternative land use for farmers where soil and climatic conditions are suitable for tree growth and at the same time will contribute significant timber volumes for local industries. Loans are interest-free for twelve years and can now be made for hardwood planting as well as for softwoods.

I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of the Hon. R. J. Eddy, for the Hon. J. M. WALTON (Melbourne North Province), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Tuesday, November 1.

CATTLE COMPENSATION (AMENDMENT) BILL.

The Hon. W. V. HOUGHTON (Minister of Health): I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The effect of the Bill is to remove the disease malignant tumour of the eye from the list of diseases for which owners may be paid compensation under the Cattle Compensation Act.

The proposal to exclude this disease from compensatable diseases has been thoroughly canvassed with primary industry organizations and breed societies and has received wide-spread support. The Livestock Advisory Committee at its August meeting, recommended that the Cattle Compensation Act should be amended in this way. There are both financial and disease control reasons to support the proposition.

The financial reasons relate to the significant deficit now occurring in the Cattle Compensation Fund. This deficit has resulted primarily because of the introduction of a full scale test and slaughter eradication programme for the disease brucellosis, with payment of compensation to owners of cattle destroyed as brucellosis reactors.

This programme was implemented on 1st November, 1975, and from then until 30th June, 1976, all compensation payments for brucellosis were made from the fund. The position since that time has been somewhat improved due to the Commonwealth entering into an agreement to contribute 75 per cent of the net payments for brucellosis compensation, the remaining 25 per cent continuing to be met from the Cattle Compensation Fund.

In addition to the increased level of payments from the fund because of the introduction of compensation for brucellosis, the revenue to the fund through tax stamps and residual values for reactors slaughtered has been decreasing because of the depressed state of the cattle and meat industry, and also because of an increasing trend to direct selling of livestock on a carcass weight and grade basis, which avoids the requirement to pay cattle compensation stamp duty.

In cash terms, the net excess of expenditure over receipts in 1977–78 and following years could be expected to be in the order of $500,000 unless some corrective action, such as that proposed by this Bill, is taken.

Two alternative financial proposals were considered to stabilize the Cattle Compensation Fund. One proposal was to increase the cattle compensation stamp duty payable by cattle owners on the sale of cattle. The other alternative was to remove from the list of compensatable diseases the disease malignant tumour of the eye, which accounted for payments of $486,000 from the fund during the 1976–77 financial year. This second alternative was chosen as it affected fewer producers. It is proposed that the amendment should come into force as from the 1st December, 1977,

and the savings to the fund in a full financial year is expected to amount to $500,000.

From the point of view of disease control, the payment of compensation has not been effective in reducing the incidence of the disease. The fact that compensation is available has largely removed the incentive for the farmer either to cull suspect breeding stock or to selectively breed animals that are not susceptible to the disease. Without such an incentive, breeding animals showing evidence of the disease have been retained in the herd until the condition has become offensive or has had an effect on their health. It is expected that the removal of the compensation provision will have the effect of stimulating breeders to select strains of cattle that are not susceptible to malignant tumour of the eye.

The proposed amendment will bring Victoria into line with New South Wales, which has already taken the step of removing this disease from the list of those for which cattle compensation is paid. 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 1.

ADJOURNMENT.

The Hon. V. O. DICKIE (Chief Secretary): By leave, I move—

That the Council, at its rising, adjourn until tomorrow, at a quarter-past two o'clock.

The motion was agreed to.

The House adjourned at 10.33 *p.m.*

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE.

LEVEL CROSSING ACCIDENTS.

(Question No. 516)

The Hon. D. M. EVANS (North Eastern Province) asked the Minister for State Development and Decentralization, for the Minister of Transport—

(*a*) Have the Victorian Railways Board or the Government carried out any formal inquiries into the causes of railway level crossing accidents in country areas within the past ten years?

(*b*) Has the board adopted any major new measures designed to improve the safety of motorists by making trains more easily visible or the approach of a train more obvious?

For **the Hon. D. G. CROZIER** (Minister for State Development and Decentralization), the Hon. Haddon Storey (Attorney-General): The answer supplied by the Minister of Transport is—

(*a*) Yes.

(*b*) I refer the honorable member to my recent answer to question No. 506.

MILEAGE SUBSIDY FOR RURAL SCHOOL CHILDREN.

(Question No. 572)

The Hon. D. M. EVANS (North Eastern Province) asked the Attorney-General, for the Minister of Education—

In respect of the mileage subsidy paid to parents of rural children in Victoria living more than three miles from the nearest school and not provided with a free school bus—(i) what is the current rate of subsidy; (ii) how many children are currently receiving the subsidy; (iii) how much did the scheme cost the Government last financial year; (iv) how much is the scheme estimated to cost this year; and (v) when was the last increase in the rate per mile (or kilometre)?

The Hon. HADDON STOREY (Attorney-General): The answer supplied by the Minister of Education is—

(i) Maximum conveyance allowance payable for pupils residing at least 4·8 kilometres from the nearest appropriate school is 25 cents for each day's attendance for primary pupils and $231 per annum for post primary pupils.

(ii) Number of primary pupils conveyed —approximately 9,350.

Number of post primary pupils conveyed —approximately 15,500.

(iii) 1976–77—primary $462,987, post primary $3,239,361; 1977–78—primary $472,000, post primary $3,440,000.

(v) Last increase: Primary allowance—1st January, 1974; post primary allowance —1st January, 1977.

The department does not categorize children as rural and other than rural.

MOTOR MOWERS.

(Question No. 580)

The Hon. K. I. WRIGHT (North Western Province) asked the Minister for Local Government, for the Minister for Conservation—

Does the Environment Protection Authority research show that two-stroke mowers discharge unacceptable levels of unburnt fuel into the atmosphere; if so—(i) to what degree; and (ii) will manufacturers be instructed to phase out production of two-stroke motors; if so, when?

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

The Environment Protection Authority has not conducted any research which indicates that unacceptable levels of unburnt fuel are being discharged from two-stroke mowers.

CHILDREN'S CROSSINGS.

(Question No. 585)

The Hon. B. A. CHAMBERLAIN (Western Province) asked the Chief Secretary—

Has the Chief Secretary examined the criticisms by Mr. Harry Carlin-Smith of Monash University of the design of children's crossings; if so, what is the result of such examination?

The Hon. V. O. DICKIE (Chief Secretary): The answer is—

In preparing his research thesis entitled "The Effectiveness of School Crossing Accident Countermeasures" Mr. Carlin-Smith relied on accident statistics in relation to the years prior to 1975. Consequently, account was not taken of the effect of the school crossing supervisor's scheme which was introduced by the Government in 1975. Under this scheme, the Government subsidises municipal councils for the cost of wages of persons employed to supervise busy school crossings. The supervisors' duties are to ensure that children do not proceed to cross the road until it is safe to do so. There are 1,600 approved school crossings throughout the State. Approximately, two-thirds of such crossings, which experience the higher levels of pedestrian or vehicle traffic, are supervised.

Accident records for 1975 indicate that less than 1 per cent of child pedestrian casualties occurred at school crossings with flags displayed. In 1976, for example, two children in the age group five to eleven years were injured on such crossings during the hours 7.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m.; there were no fatalities in this age group during these hours. By comparison 360 child pedestrians were injured and 30 were killed, in the age group five to eleven years, on Victorian roads in the same year.

Overall, therefore, a relatively high standard of safety is provided for school children through the use of school crossings, particularly those which are supervised.

Nevertheless, the suggestions which are made in Mr. Carlin-Smith's thesis are being examined to determine whether there are grounds for their application at children's crossings throughout the State.

ALBURY–WODONGA CORPORATION LAND PURCHASES.

(Question No. 591)

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

(*a*) How many farm properties have been purchased by the Albury–Wodonga (Victoria) Corporation?

(*b*) In each case what was the area of the property, what was the valuation per hectare under the Wodonga Area Land Acquisition Act 1973, and what was the total settlement figure?

For the **Hon. D. G. CROZIER** (Minister for State Development and Decentralization), the Hon. Haddon Storey (Attorney-General): The answer is—

(*a*) The Albury–Wodonga (Victoria) Corporation has purchased no land. However, the Minister for State Development and Decentralization, on behalf of the Albury–Wodonga (Victoria) Corporation has purchased 234 non-urban properties, four of which were of an industrial-commercial nature.

(*b*) The valuation provided by the Valuer-General does not give a separate figure for improvements, which vary considerably in each instance.

Extraction of information to provide an average price per hectare in every instance would take a considerable time, and in any case, I am reluctant to provide individual details which are essentially a matter of confidence between the corporation and the

landowner. However, I am prepared to give the honorable member opportunity to peruse individual land purchase schedules.

The total area involved was 14,739 hectares and the average price per hectare (including improvements) paid by the corporation was $2,575.

FORK LIFT DRIVERS' LICENCES.

(Question No. 595)

The Hon. K. I. WRIGHT (North Western Province) asked the Minister of Water Supply, for the Minister of Labour and Industry—

Is the Minister of Labour and Industry aware that an applicant for a fork lift driver's licence is required to be at least nineteen years old and that drivers under that age face dismissal, if so, will the Minister reconsider this requirement?

The Hon. F. J. GRANTER (Minister of Water Supply): The answer supplied by the Minister of Labour and Industry is—

Under the provisions of regulation 13 of the Cranes Regulations 1964, no person shall operate a power crane, including a fork lift truck, unless he is not less than eighteen or in the case of a tow truck type crane, not less than nineteen years of age. Persons under those ages are in breach of the law if they operate cranes.

The provisions of the regulations regarding certificates of competency for operators of fork lift trucks require applicants to be not less than eighteen years of age.

As the minimum age is eighteen years, the last part of the question does not appear to require an answer.

LOCUST PLAGUE.

(Question No. 596)

The Hon. K. I. WRIGHT (North Western Province) asked the Minister of Health, for the Minister of Agriculture—

Is the Minister of Agriculture aware of a possible locust plague in Victoria this summer; if so, what plans has his department to counter this threat?

The Hon. W. V. HOUGHTON (Minister of Health): The answer supplied by the Minister of Agriculture is—

The Department of Agriculture is continuing liaison with the Australian Plague Locust Commission and is aware that there are very significant egg beds and hatchings in New South Wales.

Observations in the northern part of Victoria in recent months have failed to locate the presence of any significant locust egg beds, and it is considered likely that any development of a plague will occur north of the Murray River.

The Australian Plague Locust Commission, the New South Wales Department of Agriculture, and farmers are actively engaged in spraying locust bands in New South Wales and this will reduce the potential for an invasion of Victoria.

It is the considered view of officers of my department that spraying of locust bands in New South Wales in the summer of 1976–77 very materially reduced the numbers of locusts which flew into Victoria. For this reason, the Government is continuing to support the operations of the Australian Plague Locust Commission against locust bands in New South Wales to the extent of $80,000, which is an increase of 60 per cent on last year's contribution. This is an indication of the inceased activity of the commission, which is now at full operational strength.

In addition, my department's Deputy Plague Locust Operations Manager will be in the Riverina working with the Plague Locust Commission as soon as the situation in that part of New South Wales warrants it.

COUNTRY ROADS BOARD FUNDS.

(Question No. 599)

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

What funds will be available to the Country Roads Board from State sources in 1977–78, and what funds were available in 1976–77?

For the **Hon. D. G. CROZIER** (Minister for State Development and Decentralization), the Hon. Haddon Storey (Attorney-General): The answer supplied by the Minister of Transport is—

1976–77	$108,134,719
1977–78 (estimated)	$121,252,000

STATE EMPLOYMENT SCHEME.

(Question No. 604)

The Hon. K. I. WRIGHT (North Western Province) asked the Minister for Local Government—

(a) With regard to the State Employment Scheme 1977, what are the average unemployment figures for each of the twelve

months to July last, used by the Local Government Department for each of the 27 municipalities in the North Western Province?

(*b*) If average figures under 8 per cent not available to the department at that time and not included in the reply to part (*a*) will he also indicate unemployment averages for those municipalities under 8 per cent?

The Hon. A. J. HUNT (Minister for Local Government): As the answer is detailed and statistical, I seek leave of the House to have it incorporated in *Hansard* without my reading it.

Leave was granted, and the answer was as follows—

Because of the enormity of the task, monthly unemployment figures are only provided for Commonwealth Employment Services regions. These figures are broken down into municipalities three to four times per annum.

The figures collected are related to the place of residence, not the place of last employment of the registered unemployed.

The percentages of registered unemployed for the twenty-seven municipalities in the North Western Province are as follows—

Municipality	Allocations	Percentage of unemployed persons		
		October, 1976	April, 1977	July, 1977
	$			
*Arapiles Shire		3·1	6·0	6·4
*Birchip Shire		4·0	7·0	2·9
*Charlton Shire		2·6	2·6	1·3
Cohuna Shire		4·7	6·3	7·2
*Dimboola Shire		2·2	3·4	2·9
*Donald Shire		1·2	1·0	1·2
*Dunmunkle Shire		4·1	4·6	4·9
Gordon Shire		4·4	3·6	3·3
Horsham City	67,000	10·3	8·8	8·5
*Kaniva Shire		1·2	1·2	0·7
Kara Kara Shire		2·5	2·5	1·4
*Karkarooc Shire		2·0	3·2	2·3
*Kerang Borough	13,500	7·8	8·9	10·2
*Kerang Shire	13,400	6·4	5·8	7·4
Korong Shire		3·2	2·6	3·2
Kowree Shire	17,500	3·4	4·6	4·1
*Lowan Shire		1·1	2·5	3·2
*Mildura City	73,000	12·8	15·7	10·1
*Mildura Shire	34,000	7·8	8·8	9·2
St. Arnaud Township		4·2	4·9	5·0
Stawell Shire		1·6	1·4	0·8
*Swan Hill City	50,000	12·3	10·2	10·4
*Swan Hill Shire	79,000	9·7	7·5	10·9
*Walpeup Shire		1·8	3·2	2·2
*Warracknabeal Shire		2·4	3·0	3·0
*Wimmera Shire		7·9	3·3	4·7
*Wycheproof Shire		2·5	2·7	2·6

The 27 municipalities listed are those which now constitute the North Western Province as defined by the 1975 redistribution, that is, the electorate of the Honorable B. P. Dunn, M.L.C.

Mr. Wright was elected in 1973 based on the 1965 redistribution and his electorate only covers those municipalities marked with an asterisk (*).

Allocations totalling $348,200 have been made to eight municipalities within the province. Works are under the control of various municipalities, the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission, the Ministry for Conservation and the Department of Crown Lands and Survey. It is hoped that up to 168 men will be able to be employed utilizing these funds.

WATER SUPPLY TO ROCKBANK.

(Question No. 606)

The Hon. I. B. TRAYLING (Melbourne Province) asked the Minister of Water Supply—

(*a*) Has the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission received an application from the Melton Shire Council for approval of a new water supply to Rockbank; if so, has the commission replied, and what was the decision?

(*b*) Did the shire seek a 50 per cent grant or subsidy from the commission for the provision of the water supply to Rockbank; if so, what has been the response to that request?

(c) When will the commission release funds for the project if approved, and has a completion date been set?

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

(a) The commission has not received an application from the Melton Shire Council concerning such a supply but has received an application from the Melton Waterworks Trust which is the responsible authority for providing a water supply to Rockbank: The commission has approved the proposals involving a new supply main from Melton at an estimated cost of $190,000 and advised the trust of such approval by letter dated 5th July, 1977. At the present time, the residents of Rockbank received a temporary supply from the Sunbury water supply system via the Commonwealth Army supply main.

(b) The Melton Waterworks Trust has been advised that under the current provisions of the financial asistance formula for new township schemes, the trust would be eligible for a 50 per cent grant towards the Rockbank scheme. For the remaining capital cost to be borne by the trust, the usual subsidy by the Government to meet interest payments in excess of 3 per cent per annum would also apply. The actual grant entitlement would be calculated on the final costs and will depend on wage levels and population and the cost of bulk water existing at that time.

(c) The Melton Waterworks Trust has been authorized to borrow privately up to $1·5 million during 1977–78 financial year for the urgent augmentation of its present water supply system to meet the increasing demands arising from the rapid development occurring in the area. Depending on the final cost of these works relative to the above allocation, a decision will be made by the trust concerning the commencement of the permanent scheme to serve Rockbank township.

ARARAT MENTAL HOSPITAL.

(Question No. 607)

The Hon. R. J. EDDY (Thomastown Province) asked the Minister of Health—

Is he aware of the degradation and condition of patients within "J" ward at Ararat; if so, what action is he taking to overcome this situation?

The Hon. W. V. HOUGHTON (Minister of Health): The answer is—

Neither the Minister of Health nor the Mental Health Authority is aware of any degradation of patients within "J" ward at Ararat. "J" ward buildings were constructed over 100 years ago and the conditions present difficulties in the treatment of patients.

The Mental Health Authority is considering and planning for the construction of a modern security ward in the metropolitan area to replace 'J" ward at Ararat. It is hoped that these plans can be proceeded with in the near future.

SEWERAGE RETICULATION IN SOUTH OAKLEIGH.

(Question No. 611)

The Hon. I. B. TRAYLING (Melbourne Province) asked the Minister of Water Supply—

(a) How many houses in the Oakleigh South area of the electoral district of Oakleigh are unable to obtain connection to a reticulated sewerage service?

(b) When does the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works plan to provide connection for the houses concerned?

(c) Were assurances given, seven years ago, that connection would be available in no more than five years or when 80 per cent of the area was built up; if so, why have the assurances not been honoured?

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

(a) The Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works does not have statistics readily available on an electoral district basis. However, the areas in South Oakleigh, within the municipality of Oakleigh, which do not have sewerage facilities available contain 245 houses—this information is from records compiled from data collected in late 1975 and early 1976.

(b) These areas have been included on the board's works programme for construction is the financial year 1978–79. The programme is dependent on adequate funds being made available. The sewering of these areas also depends for an outlet on the construction of the Clarinda Road branch sewer. This sewer is to be financed in part from funds provided by the developers of lands served by the sewer and construction is dependent on development of these lands.

(c) A number of replies to owners in these areas were forwarded in 1969 indicating the possibility of sewerage facilities being available in approximately three years at that time. This information was supplied on the basis that it was then envisaged that the areas could be sewered to the existing sewered areas to the west. Subsequent investigations showed that, due to existing underground obstructions, this course of action was not practical.

BEACH INQUIRY.

(Question No. 612)

The Hon. R. J. EDDY (Thomastown Province) asked the Chief Secretary—

What has been the cost of the inquiry by Mr. Barry Beach, Q.C., into allegations against members of the Victoria Police Force?

The Hon. V. O. DICKIE (Chief Secretary): The answer is—

The total cost of the Board of Inquiry into Allegations Against Members of the Victoria Police Force was $607,403.

NEW POLICE STATION FOR BENDIGO.

(Question No. 616)

The Hon. S. R. McDONALD (Northern Province) asked the Chief Secretary—

(*a*) Has a decision been made to construct a new Loddon district headquarters and police station at Bendigo?

(*b*) Have plans and specifications been prepared for this project?

(*c*) Will funds be available for this project in 1977–78; if not, when is it expected that funds will be available?

The Hon. V. O. DICKIE (Chief Secretary): The answer is—

(*a*) Yes.

(*b*) No.

(*c*) No. I am unable to indicate at present when funds will be available for this project.

Legislative Assembly.

Tuesday, October 25, 1977.

The SPEAKER **(Sir Kenneth Wheeler)** took the chair at 4.5 p.m. and read the prayer.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE.

HOUSING COMMISSION RENTALS.

Mr. WILKES (Leader of the Opposition): Can the Minister of Housing now state the policy of the Government with respect to the question asked of him last week by the Leader of the National Party concerning people who are behind in their rent in commission houses due to the strike in the Latrobe Valley? Has he formulated a policy which will prevent evictions in this case and, if so, can he give details of that policy?

Mr. HAYES (Minister of Housing): I will complement this answer with a written response to both the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the National Party. The Housing Commission normally advises its tenants one week after arrears of rent are noticed of that arrears situation and thereafter there is no further advice and district managers pursue the matter with the tenants or credit purchasers concerned. The commission has adopted the policy to which I referred last week, whereby those directly or indirectly associated with the events which have occurred over the past ten weeks will not be harassed in any sense. In other words, the commission will pursue a compassionate course, recognizing individual needs and offering individual help where it is required.

DISASTER FUND.

Mr. ROSS-EDWARDS (Leader of the National Party): I refer the Minister for Social Welfare to the statement that was made by Senator Guilfoyle in Canberra suggesting the setting up of a disaster fund to assist people who are the innocent victims of the Latrobe Valley strike. Has the Minister had the opportunity of discussing this question with the senator and, if so, can he give the results of the discussion?

Mr. DIXON (Minister for Social Welfare): I have not had the opportunity of discussing the question with the senator. I rang her today in connection with this matter. I want to make it quite clear that I believe the whole question of income maintenance is a matter for the Commonwealth Government. I think the

situations which force people out of work so that they become eligible for unemployment benefits ought to be the subject of serious consideration by the Federal Government about when unemployment benefits should be payable. The whole question of special benefits which can be applied by the Commonwealth Government needs to be clarified and people need to know of their rights.

A lot of people who go into the Commonwealth Employment Service office do not know that in cases of hardship they are entitled to Commonwealth special benefits. I believe there are two areas which should be examined by the Commonwealth Government in the first instance. Of course, there is always the question of emergency relief and I believe the response to the strike in the Latrobe Valley by voluntary associations, the Commonwealth and State Governments and the people of Victoria has shown that we are able to respond to emergencies. I further believe that both unemployment benefits and special benefits should be paid by the Commonwealth Government.

The question of the position in which voluntary associations find themselves when they have had to expend money of the order of $500,000 from their resources in times of a crisis like this needs to be fully examined. My colleagues from the welfare Ministries in other States share that view. Accordingly, I have today written to Senator Guilfoyle asking that a meeting of Commonwealth and State Ministers concerned with social welfare be urgently arranged to discuss this whole matter.

LATROBE VALLEY POWER DISPUTE.

Mr. CRELLIN (Sandringham): Following the decision of the State Electricity Commission maintenance workers in the Latrobe Valley to resume work today, can the Minister for Minerals and Energy advise whether an immediate relaxation of electricity restrictions on business and industry can be announced, thus allowing many people who have been suffering unnecessary hardship to return to their jobs?

Mr. BALFOUR (Minister for Minerals and Energy): As I understand the situation, the men are resuming work on the afternoon shift, which is about now, and there will be a need to ascertain what maintenance work has to be done. I do not think any restrictions can be lifted today or tomorrow, but I hope they might be by Thursday and there may be full supply by the end of the week.

HENRY JONES (IXL) LTD.

Mr. FORDHAM (Footscray): Is the Premier aware of allegations that Henry Jones (IXL) Ltd. has selectively offered larger shareholders in the Kyabram Preserving Co. Ltd. $2.70 a share before the official announcement of the increase of the original offer from $2.50 to $2.70, thereby offering these larger shareholders preferential treatment and manipulating the takeover bid in such a way that the preserving company did not lose its Reserve Bank preferential financial arrangements? Is the Minister aware that if this is so there has been a breach of the provisions of section 180M (1) of the Companies Act? Will the Minister investigate the situation, particularly as the person concerned, Mr. John Elliott of Henry Jones (IXL) Ltd., is alleged to have had close links with members of the Liberal Party?

Mr. HAMER (Premier and Treasurer): The latter part of the question is a gratuitous reflection on a person who is not here. I have not heard of the matter referred to by the honorable member, but in view of his question and the statements he has made, which may or may not be factual, I will have it investigated and will write to him. If those statements are factual, the matter will certainly require further action.

RIVER MURRAY SALINITY.

Mr. WHITING (Mildura): Further to the matter I raised on the motion for the adjournment of the sitting on 21st September, 1977, about the salinity problem in the River Murray and as the Deputy Prime Minister said that a meeting of the State Ministers concerned would be called to try to alleviate the problem, can the Premier advise whether that meeting has been held and, if so, what were the results of the meeting?

Mr. HAMER (Premier and Treasurer): The Government certainly agreed to the meeting and, naturally enough, I nominated the Minister of Water Supply, with Victoria's representative on the River Murray Commission, to represent Victoria. I am not aware whether the meeting has yet taken place. If it has not, it is imminent, and the Government hopes that it will lead to some early decisions on what works ought to be undertaken to relieve the salinity in the River Murray.

As the honorable member will recall, the Deputy Prime Minister said that whatever steps were taken should be part of an over-all programme that would be shared by the three States and the Commonwealth and that they would be carried out in priority in accordance with the greatest benefit for the River Murray as a whole. Victoria is anxious to be in the programme and I consider that the works to which the honorable member referred, in the Mildura and Merbein areas, must be among the highest priorities of all.

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS.

Mr. WOOD (Swan Hill): Can the Minister of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs inform the House whether there is any foundation in rumours that the Commonwealth Department of Aboriginal Affairs is to be phased out and that its role in this State is to be taken over by the Ministry of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs?

Mr. JONA (Minister of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs): I am not aware of any move to have the Federal Department of Aboriginal Affairs phased out. I am aware, as are honorable members, that in 1974 the Commonwealth, as a result of the carrying of a national referendum, assumed——

Mr. ROPER: It was 1967.

Mr. JONA: I am sorry, it was in 1967. Subsequently, as a result of the transfer of powers relating to Aboriginal affairs by legislation passed in this Parliament some years later, the Commonwealth assumed full statutory and constitutional powers for Aboriginal affairs. It is true that State Ministries such as housing and health and special education, and indeed my own Ministry to some extent, are involved in discussions with the Federal Department of Aboriginal Affairs in respect of programmes carried out by the State and fully funded by the Federal department. I know that only recently the State Minister for Federal Affairs in another place represented the State Minister of Housing at a discussion in Canberra between Commonwealth and State Ministers in that respect, and I am not aware of any decision made at that conference for the phasing out of the Federal Department of Aboriginal Affairs in any of its responsibilities.

In respect of the Aboriginal health programme which was also discussed at considerable length at the last health conference, there was no suggestion that the Federal Government would be surrendering its responsibility in any way. The Victorian Government still regards Aboriginal affairs as being very much the constitutional responsibility of the Commonwealth. To my knowledge the Commonwealth has made no approach to the States to transfer any of these responsibilities back to the States. However, many of the State departments are administering these programmes on the Commonwealth's behalf.

POLICE STAFF.

Mr. EDMUNDS (Ascot Vale): I direct a question to the Premier without notice. The Premier is alleged to have said in a broadcast on Sunday, 23rd October—and I quote from the transcript—

> In order to free police members from desk work and outside duties we have begun to provide more support staff; more than 300 typists, licence testing officers, bailiffs, and other assistants in the last few years alone so as to allow the police to concentrate more on normal police work.

The Police Department requested 300 public servants for this financial year and the Treasurer approved of twelve. In view of that fact, would the Treasurer reconsider the approval of only twelve additional public servants for the Victoria Police Force, to allow more police to concentrate, as he says, on normal police duties?

Mr. HAMER (Premier and Treasurer): The figures I gave in that broadcast were exactly accurate. The figure is actually 302, and they comprise a wide range of support staff, such as typists, bailiffs and all sorts of other people who were appointed for the prime purpose—the Leader of the Opposition may laugh, but it has a serious purpose. There is nothing misleading about it.

The SPEAKER (Sir Kenneth Wheeler): Order! The Leader of the Opposition is taking no part in either asking or answering the question and I ask him to cease interjecting.

Mr. HAMER: In the past few years 302 people have been added to the staff of the police, or else made available as support staff to the police, in order to relieve police of extraneous duties. The position is exactly as the honorable member for Ascot Vale said, and he has now raised the question of this year's request. There was a very extensive request by the police, as there is each year, I might say, for additional staff. I said in the Budget that we were trying to restrict the growth of the Public Service and the Government service to 1 per cent. That is the reason why no department got anything like the number it requested. The police have been dealt with, I hope, generously in the past few years and that will continue because in addition to the additional staff that have been approved, there is also provision for 350 extra members for the police themselves, which will bring the strength of the Police Force to over 7,000 for the first time in history.

DIAL-A-BUS SERVICE.

Mr. LACY (Warrandyte): I refer to the establishment by the Minister of Transport of the demand-responsive system also known as dial-a-bus service in St. Albans and Chirnside Park. Is the honorable gentleman able to indicate to the House the extent of the public response to this initiative?

Mr. RAFFERTY (Minister of Transport): Yes, I am able to respond to the honorable member. I received a report this afternoon that the first day of operation, which was yesterday, was very successful. In St. Albans, 71 people used the service and at Chirnside Park, 77 people used the service. The reports from the bus operators indicate that they were more than satisfied and it is believed the services will be used extensively by people and could prove to be successful.

SOCIAL WELFARE (HOMELESS PERSONS) BILL.

Mr. ROPER (Brunswick): Has the Premier been asked by the equal opportunity council and the Victorian Council for Civil Liberties to delay the passage of the Social Welfare (Homeless Persons) Bill so that clause 2 (3) can be reconsidered? If he has received this request, can the honorable gentleman inform the House whether it is the Government's intention to accede to it?

Mr. HAMER (Premier and Treasurer): I have received a letter from the council asking that it be given the opportunity of examining the Bill and commenting on it and

requesting that its passage through another place be deferred to allow that to happen. I have not had the opportunity of talking with the Minister in charge of the Bill, but I will do so, and if the programme in another place permits it and if the council is prepared to act promptly, I know of no reason why the Government should not have the benefit of its advice.

PENTRIDGE PRISON ESCAPE.

Mr. JASPER (Murray Valley): I direct a question without notice to the Minister for Social Welfare. Following reports that the escape from Pentridge Prison a week ago by David John Keys may have been assisted by the non-operation of the new stellar electronic shield equipment, can the Minister advise the House whether the equipment has now been completed and, if so whether it is in operation?

Mr. DIXON (Minister for Social Welfare): To the best of my knowledge the equipment is not in operation. It was not in operation at the time that Keys escaped. The point was made that even if the equipment had been in operation, it probably would still not have prevented his escape because of the manner in which the equipment is intended to operate. For that reason some modifications have been made to the plans so that the stellar screen will make perimeter-wide provisions to make certain that the alarm device is activated if anybody should scale the walls. As far as I know, the device is supposed to be operational within the next week or so.

CASH FLOW TO SMALL BUSINESSES.

Mr. WILLIAMS (Doncaster): Can the Premier inform the House what measures the Government intends to take to improve the cash flow to small businesses affected by the power strike? I refer in particular to the expediting of payments owing to small businessmen by the State Government.

Mr. HAMER (Premier and Treasurer): This question touches on a grave problem for many small businesses as a result of the power strike, and that is the problem of their cash flow, particularly as the Christmas period is approaching and many of them have heavy obligations for holiday pay and the like.

The Government has so far taken various actions, but I have made it public, firstly, that the State Government will on application, where cases of hardship as a result of the strike are shown, be prepared to defer payments of pay-roll tax that are due.

Secondly, I have written and spoken to the Federal Treasurer about deferring payment of quarterly instalments of company tax which are due in November, and he has responded sympathetically to that request.

Thirdly, the Government has been in touch with all the banks requesting them to be extremely sympathetic and generous where applications for financial accommodation are made in the next few weeks by firms that have suffered because of the strike.

Finally, the Government has issued instructions to its own departments and semi-Government authorities in Victoria to make prompt payment of any bills that are due by them to business firms in Victoria, again, to assist with their cash flow.

Those are the measures the Government has taken so far, and in addition it has asked the Small Business Development Corporation to give special assistance to firms that are in difficulty because of the strike and advise them where they may be able to obtain additional financial support or support at lower interest rates—indeed, across the spectrum, to give them all the support they can to help them in the present difficulty.

PAY-AS-YOU-DRIVE MOTORING.

Mr. JONES (Melbourne): With a view to assisting in conserving motor fuels and to reduce the cost to

motorists with small annual kilometrages, what action will the Minister of Transport take to introduce pay-as-you-drive motoring and abolish standing charges?

Mr. RAFFERTY (Minister of Transport): That is a matter of Government policy, and at the moment, no legislation is contemplated.

RAIL TRANSPORT OF LIVESTOCK.

Mr. AUSTIN (Ripon): In view of the advantages and cost savings, and also lack of bruising involved, can the Minister of Transport inform the House when the complete development of containerization facilities for livestock transportation, as promised by the Victorian Railways, will take place in this State?

Mr. RAFFERTY (Minister of Transport): I am unable to advise the honorable member. Either he can put his question on notice or I will give the information to him independently.

GIPPSLAND SECONDARY SCHOOLS.

Mr. McINNES (Gippsland South): I ask a question of the Minister of Education concerning an article appearing in today's *Herald*, headed—"Gippsland Schools Inadequate", whereby Senator Carrick, Federal Minister for Education, is reported as stating——

The SPEAKER (Sir Kenneth Wheeler): Order! The honorable member cannot quote from a newspaper.

Mr. McINNES: He is reported as saying that Victorian secondary schools are five years ahead of the programme. How does the Minister of Education relate that to the results of a survey conducted by the Gippsland Secondary Schools Principals Association which indicate that Gippsland is deficient in assembly halls, gymnasiums and library facilities?

Mr. THOMPSON (Minister of Education): It all depends on the criteria that are used. If we use the criterion of staffing, Victorian secondary schools would be the best staffed in Australia. If we take into account the number of schools with gymnasiums and compare that with similar areas in other States, we might find that the comparison is not favourable.

I have not had the opportunity of seeing either the article referred to or the report from the Gippsland principals. I will read the latter report and discuss it with the honorable member.

PROSECUTIONS FOR MISLEADING ADVERTISING.

Mr. AMOS (Morwell): As the Government is prosecuting a number of small traders concerning misleading advertising of petrol prices, can the Minister of Consumer Affairs amplify the answer that he gave to a question on notice in which I asked was the Minister aware of anyone, that is the public of Victoria, being misled by this advertising?

Mr. MACLELLAN: (Minister of Consumer Affairs): The honorable member's original question on notice concerned signs outside service stations which showed the major figures in large print and the figure following the decimal point in tiny print. My answer to the honorable member suggested that I did not know of anyone who had been misled, and that is the current situation. I do not personally know of anyone who has been misled.

However, as I had answered the honorable member's question very narrowly, I took the precaution to advise the honorable member in writing that three prosecutions were pending in relation to at least three traders and that it would be a matter for the court to determine whether it was misleading. Although it is not necessary to establish that any particular person has been misled, the

question is whether the signs themselves are misleading. That is the matter that has to be put to the court. The honorable member's question to me was: " Did I know of anyone who had been misled? " and my answer, of course, was that I did not.

Whether or not anyone has been misled, will not be the question before the court. The court will be deciding whether the sign is misleading. If the court decides that these signs are misleading, we can look forward to further prosecutions of those service stations that do not use the same sized printing to show the full price of petrol and thereby possibly mislead people in the community.

EMPLOYMENT IN SMALL BUSINESS.

Mr. COLLINS (Noble Park): Is the Minister of Labour and Industry aware that a small but significant proportion of Victorian industry and commerce will not reopen its doors again until after Christmas or January, 1978? If the honorable gentleman is aware of this, will he take steps to secure the assistance of his Federal counterpart so that an immediate survey can be conducted through the Commonwealth Employment Service to determine exactly how many companies will not reopen their doors until January or February, 1978, so that the State Government may plan some form of strategy to assist those workers who have not only been stood down but might well not be re-employed?

Mr. MACLELLAN (Minister of Labour and Industry): The honorable member asks whether I am aware of any small businesses that may not reopen. All members of this Parliament are concerned that some businesses may have been so severely affected by the strike that they may not reopen. At the recent Premiers Conference, the Premier called for the Commonwealth and State Governments to establish a number of working committees on youth unemployment and unemployment in general. Those committees are being formed right now. The best and most effective means of contacting small businesses that may be going out of business permanently would be through the employer organizations—the Victorian Employers Association and the Victorian Chamber of Manufactures. Those bodies would have the best means of communicating with the companies concerned and the best means of obtaining the intelligence. If that information is able to be obtained, I shall draw it to the attention of the Federal Minister and ask for special help for the people who are stood down and lose their jobs permanently, and for those people whose employment prospects are reduced because of the strike.

DERRIMUT SALE-YARDS.

Mr. FOGARTY (Sunshine): Has the Minister for Planning received any approach from a municipality, members of Parliament or ratepayers' association, suggesting that the controversial area 7 for the Derrimut scheme be rezoned? If so, what action has the Minister taken in cooperation with other Government bodies?

Mr. HAYES (Minister for Planning): The answer is " Yes, certainly, many times." If the honorable member was more specific on the particular aspects of the question that he would like answered and was prepared to put the question on notice, I could be more specific than at this time.

EMERGENCY GENERATING EQUIPMENT.

Mr. SKEGGS (Ivanhoe): In view of the crippling effect of the recent power strike on industry, will the Premier consider measures to encourage industry to install emergency generating equipment?

Mr. HAMER (Premier and Treasurer): I believe as a result of this power strike many reviews of policy will need to be made. At present, the State Electricity Commission frowns upon the sale of power

by any person to another person. This will have to be reviewed. So also will means of ensuring that key industries and other key installations have adequate reserve power generating equipment. Many other things will have to be reviewed. It is quite wrong for a State to be placed in the position where emergency supplies cannot be available to key industries and key installations.

HOUSING COMMISSION LAND PURCHASES.

Mr. CAIN (Bundoora): In relation to the Housing Commission land at Sunbury, have discussions recently taken place between the Shire of Bulla, the commission and other persons with regard to the development of that land by use for small farms or hobby farms? If so, is that the land purchased by the commission on which the price was based on residential zoning?

Mr. HAYES (Minister of Housing): Discussions have taken place with the Shire of Bulla as to the development of the 1,200 acres. The honorable member, who has perused the files to some extent, would know that an agreement has been struck between the Shire of Bulla and the commission as to a variety of density developments on the Sunbury plateau. There has been no question of separate pricing in terms of turn-off sale related to the purchasing price, but rather we have been anticipating, from the housing point of view, selling off, or purchasing for our own purposes, land on that plateau at Sunbury such as to show at least a handsome dividend related to the price paid for the whole property in the first instance.

GRAIN ELEVATORS BOARD.

Mr. TREWIN (Benalla): Did the Premier receive a deputation from the Victorian Farmers Union regarding the appointment of additional members to the Grain Elevators Board? If so, has he replied to that deputation and what was the reply?

Mr. HAMER (Premier and Treasurer): Yes, I received a deputation which made that request. The matter is still under consideration and the Victorian Farmers Union has not yet received a reply.

PAPERS.

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

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

Publications—State Advisory Board on Publications—Report for the year 1976-77 with Appendix—Report ordered to be printed.

Town and Country Planning Act 1961—Shire of Flinders Planning Scheme 1962, Amendment No. 95, 1977.

PROBATE DUTY BILL (No. 2).

The SPEAKER (Sir Kenneth Wheeler) announced the presentation of a message from His Excellency the Governor recommending that an appropriation be made from the Consolidated Fund for the purposes of the Probate Duty Bill (No. 2).

Mr. HAMER (Premier and Treasurer), pursuant to Standing Order No. 169, moved for leave to bring in a Bill to amend the Probate Duty Act 1962 and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

EDUCATIONAL GRANTS (CONTINUATION) BILL (No. 2).

The SPEAKER (Sir Kenneth Wheeler) announced the presentation of a message from His Excellency the Governor recommending that an appropriation be made from the Consolidated Fund for the purposes of the Educational Grants (Continuation) Bill (No. 2).

Mr. THOMPSON (Minister of Education), pursuant to Standing Order No. 169, moved for leave to

bring in a Bill to amend the Educational Grants Act 1973 and the Educational Institutions (Guarantees) Act 1976.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

TRANSPORT WORKS AND SERVICES BILL (No. 2).

The SPEAKER (Sir Kenneth Wheeler) announced the presentation of a message from His Excellency the Governor recommending that an appropriation be made from the Consolidated Fund for the purposes of the Transport Works and Services Bill (No. 2).

Mr. RAFFERTY (Minister of Transport), pursuant to Standing Order No. 169, moved for leave to bring in a Bill to authorize expenditure on works and services and other purposes relating to railways and road transport.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

DAIRY PRODUCTS (REPEAL) BILL.

Mr. I. W. SMITH (Minister of Agriculture), by leave, moved for leave to bring in a Bill to repeal the Dairy Products Act 1958 and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

AERIAL SPRAYING CONTROL (AMENDMENT) BILL.

Mr. I. W. SMITH (Minister of Agriculture): I move —

That this Bill be now read a second time.

Section 8 of the Aerial Spraying Control Act 1966 provides that a person shall not commence aerial spraying unless the owner of the aircraft concerned has lodged with the Director-General of Agriculture, or satisfied the Director-General that he has lodged with a person acceptable to him in another State or Territory of the Commonwealth, security by way of a contract of insurance for an amount of at least $30,000 indemnifying the owner against liability in respect of loss or damage to property, including livestock, resulting from aerial spraying or spray drift.

Because of delays experienced in the issue of contracts of insurance in some cases in the past, it is now proposed to amend this section to provide that the lodging of a cover note in respect of such a contract of insurance with the Director-General, or an acceptable person, shall be deemed to be sufficient lodging of security to permit the commencement and continuation of aerial spraying from the date of lodgment of the cover note until 30 days after its date of issue, or when it ceases to be in force, whichever comes first.

The passing of this amendment will avoid any future delays in the commencement of aerial spraying operations pending the issue of insurance contracts, and I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of Mr. FOGARTY (Sunshine), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Tuesday, November 8.

CATTLE COMPENSATION (AMENDMENT) BILL.

The debate (adjourned from September 21) on the motion of Mr. I. W. Smith (Minister of Agriculture) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

Mr. FOGARTY (Sunshine): In its application, this Bill to amend the Cattle Compensation Act is simple. It will delete one disease affecting cattle from the list of diseases in the Act—cancer of the eye. On other occasions I have said that when the Minister of Agriculture has certain problems placed before him, the first thing he does is to arrange to have the relevant provisions deleted from

the legislation. I have also said that I would hate to see him as a doctor. If a person went to him with a common cold, he would cut his throat.

In the area of cattle disease there is great Government concern, particularly in relation to cancer of the eye, and this is expressed in the Minister's second-reading speech, because the funds available do not meet the need. To overcome this problem the Minister has introduced a Bill to delete this disease from the list of those for which compensation is paid. This is a wrong attitude for the Minister to take, particularly when Governments and people are greatly concerned about diseases that have an adverse effect on our primary industry.

The Opposition believes the State Government, in co-operation with the Federal Government, should expedite the minimizing or the complete eradication of these diseases. In this instance it will be the producer who loses. The deletion of the disease from the list of those which are compensatable comes at a time when the beef industry is in the doldrums and when the farmer needs all the assistance he can obtain from the Government or anyone else.

As I have indicated, the Minister went to great lengths to assess the commitments of the Government under the cattle compensation scheme and stressed that the money available does not meet the need. Although I realize that good housekeeping revolves around a balanced budget, I suggest that there are certain avenues which could be explored to obtain funds, particularly funds from the Federal Government. During the past couple of weeks honorable members have learned that Federal funds will be made available to cattle producers and the man on the land in relation to certain diseases and that money is being expended in particular areas. In many cases the amount to be expended is much less than the total available to the farmers.

This may open the way for the State Government to obtain greater financial assistance from the Federal Government, not only to increase its efforts to eradicate brucellosis—and the Minister emphasized this—but also to allow the list of the diseases in the Act to remain as it is. It is accepted that brucellosis is a dreaded disease and must be eradicated. At this stage cattle prices are depressed but, if a disease is to be eradicated, its eradication should not be a long-term project but should be expedited and carried to a conclusion as quickly as possible.

It is essential for medical science to do all in its power to eradicate all these forms of disease, no matter what they are. Cancer of the eye is found only by its being seen; it is diagnozed visually. In the market place the buyer or the agent takes note if a beast has cancer of the eye and there is a tendency for it to be rejected completely. The farmer has been put to great expense in transporting the diseased animal to the market and, in the past, he would receive a certain amount of compensation for it. It is possible that if the animal went to a slaughter-house, certain sections of the carcass could be used. But there is a definite rejection by the public and by buyers of an animal which has any form of disease even though, in this instance, the affected part could be cut out or, as is the more common practice, the head could be removed completely.

Human nature being what it is, when a person has had something given to him and it is taken away, there is a natural resentment. But producers are going through lean times and the benefit which they had enjoyed is now to be removed. If medical science is suggesting that this disease may be minimized or eliminated, the Cattle Compensation Act should be amended in such a way as to provide that compensation payable for animals with cancer of the eye will be phased out over a period of ten years. During that time,

medical science would have every opportunity of carrying out the necessary investigation.

The *Weekly Times* of 5th October, at page 30, has a headline, " Cancer Eye Cure? " The article states that effective treatment or even prevention of eye cancer in cattle by a simple vaccine-type injection is the goal of research workers at the University of Queensland. So Queensland is carrying out research into cancer of the eye and it is the honest opinion of the research workers that within a given period they will be able to minimize or eradicate the disease. There is no doubt that we have the necessary research facilities in our own institutions. Nor is there any doubt that Victorian experts in the agricultural and medical fields are carrying out experiments now. I am certain that the disease will be eradicated.

I have obtained figures from the Department of Agriculture which suggest that the incidence of disease has been compounded; certainly compensation payments have increased. It is not that the Cattle Compensation Act is being administered differently, but that people are becoming more and more aware of their rights and, accordingly, are making the appropriate applications for compensation. I suggest that this is what has led to the problem of funding that the Minister faces today. In 1976–77, 8,982 cattle were condemned because of malignant tumour. The great majority of these had malignant tumour of the eye, which accounted for payments of $486,000 from the Cattle Compensation Fund. There is no evidence that the payments have resulted in any reduction in the incidence of the disease or its over-all effects on the beef industry.

Published figures show an alarming increase in condemnations for malignant tumour in cattle in recent years. In 1971–72, only 4,101 cattle were condemned on farms because of malignant tumour, whereas the latest figures show that more than 8,737 were condemned in 1976–77. Almost all of the cattle condemned on farms for having malignant tumour would have had malignant tumour of the eye. During that period beef cattle numbers declined slightly from 3·444 million to 3·363 million. As almost all cases of eye cancer occur in Herefords and Poll Herefords, and as the proportion of these breeds in the total beef herd is relatively stable, these figures indicate that the incidence of eye cancer seems to have more than doubled in a five-year period during which compensation has been payable.

No doubt this accounts for the Government's concern, but the Opposition believes that in an area such as this, which is beyond party politics, the job of the Parliament as a whole is to ensure that all diseases affecting our rural industry—both those affecting cattle and those affecting pastures —are eradicated, not just over a given period, but as soon as possible. It is for this reason that the Opposition, which understands the problems facing the Government in that the money available will not meet the expenditure, believes if the Act is amended to delete any one disease from the list of compensatable diseases, compensation should be withdrawn over a period, particularly because of the depressed state of the industry and the difficulties facing farmers. The Opposition suggests that the Minister should take another look at this problem and possibly defer this Bill. He should meet people and organizations concerned with the industry who have suggested to the Opposition that the Government should be expending all its effort to eradicate these diseases.

Mr. TREWIN (Benalla): The Bill is small, but important. Clause 2 provides—

> In section 3 and in section 4 (2) (*a*) of the Principal Act the words " malignant tumour " shall be repealed and after the word " brucellosis ", the words " or malignant tumour other than the disease malignant tumour of the eye " shall be inserted.

Malignant tumours are cancerous growths and can occur in all animals, including human beings.

One malignant tumour developed by cattle is known as "lumpy jaw" and cattle may develop lumps in other parts of the body. Compensation is paid for these diseases. Malignant tumour of the eye, with which the Bill deals, is most prevalent in Herefords and Friesians and almost all compensation paid from the Cattle Compensation Fund for this disease is for Herefords.

The Government is seeking to exclude this disease for two reasons, the main one being financial considerations. The Livestock Advisory Committee recommended this course of action, which will relieve the fund from payments for the disease. I understand that an amount of approximately $486,000 was paid in the last financial year in compensation for cattle that had contracted the disease.

Members of the National Party are concerned that this compensation is being taken away from cattle breeders rather rudely and quickly at a time when the industry is in a depressed state. The breeders of both horned and poll Herefords are making efforts to eliminate, or at least lessen, the prevalence of the disease. I have been informed that a great deal or research into tumour of the eye has been carried out in Queensland and it is hoped that before long a vaccine will be developed.

Members of the National Party are concerned that the action proposed by the Government is too sudden. Cattle owners, who are in financial difficulties because of the state of the industry, may find that they have a few cattle in their herds that are showing the first sign of the disease, a tear duct that is bleeding or has a clear discharge. There may not be any apparent malignant growth at that time, but it soon becomes evident. A farmer in that situation could well have half a dozen cattle for which he cannot claim compensation and which have to be disposed of.

The National Party is concerned about what will happen in cases where compensation is not payable. Will the disease remain a notifiable disease? Is it a contagious disease? What is the farmer to do? He may elect to send the animals straight to the market, but if a cow has a fairly young calf he may have to sacrifice the calf as well, because if the cow is sold the calf will either have to be reared in the field or receive special treatment. The owner would probably try to rear the calf until it reached six or seven months of age, at which time it would be of marketable size, but by that time the cow would have a well-developed tumour and would be unsuitable for marketing. Would it be allowed into the market-yard, or would it be isolated when it reached the market, and what would happen then? Would it have to be sold to a knackery for whatever it may bring and the farmer could lose a considerable sum of money? That would present problems because at present the disease is notifiable and the owner receives compensation.

A maximum of $175 compensation is payable, but there would be few animals that would be valued at that amount at this time, unless they were stud animals. The market value of the animal is arrived at by discussions between the owner and the stock inspector and the animal is taken to a special abattoir that has facilities for dealing with diseased animals. In the area that I represent, animals with malignant eye tumours are taken with cattle suffering from brucellosis and slaughtered on a particular day under certain conditions. What will happen in the future?

The disease should be kept under control and surveillance for a longer time until the research being carried out by the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization and the various departments concerned with agriculture throughout Australia has been completed. Support for this research is being given

by the Australian Meat Board, which it is hoped will soon become the Australian Meat and Livestock Corporation. Those funds are being raised by the meat levy under the Commonwealth Act. Further research is necessary and it should be financed from the Australian Meat Research Fund.

The scheme suggested in the Bill is not acceptable to the National Party. In the last financial year the income of the Cattle Compensation Fund was $3,082,369, which included $1·8 million from the Commonwealth for the brucellosis campaign. The balance was collected from the levy paid under the Cattle Compensation Act. That levy is an amount of 2 cents in every $5, up to the value of $50. It is, therefore, 20 cents a head of cattle sold through sale-yards. In Victoria the levy is collected by agents, but cattle may be sold privately or under the weight and grade system and in that situation no payment is made to the fund. Of course, many wise farmers make the payment in case their stock is rejected, but it is not compulsory. The amount of duty payable on the sale of stud stock animals is also only 20 cents, although many of the animals are worth thousands of dollars.

During the Minister's explanatory second-reading remarks he pointed out that two alternative proposals were considered, one of which was to increase the cattle compensation stamp duty payable on the sale of cattle. As I have indicated, that amount is now only 20 cents a head for all cattle and I do not believe the Minister should be reluctant to increase that amount by a further 20 cents, with a graduated scale up to $100 according to the value of the stock. That would increase the money going into the fund. There is nothing unusual about an increase of that nature, because almost every week there are increased charges and increased stamp duties in all fields.

As I have mentioned, members of the National Party believe the proposed legislation will deny cattle breeders and fatteners compensation that is justly theirs. The National Party also believes the compensation should be phased out over a period of up to five years, at which time it is hoped that research will have evolved a vaccine that will greatly lessen the incidence of the disease. Therefore, I move—

That all the words after "That" be omitted with the view of inserting in place thereof—"this Bill be withdrawn and a new Bill introduced which will provide a formula for phasing out over a period of five years, the payment of compensation in respect of malignant tumour of the eye in cattle and which will provide additional finance for further research into the disease".

Mr. B. J. EVANS (Gippsland East): I second the amendment.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. McLaren): Order! From now on honorable members discussing the Bill will discuss both the Bill and the amendment.

Mr. TREWIN (Benalla): I mentioned earlier that $3,082,369 was paid into the Cattle Compensation Fund in the last financial year, which included $1·8 million from the Commonwealth for the brucellosis campaign, and the balance was obtained from stamp duty on the sale of cattle. In the same financial year an amount of $3 million, in round figures, was paid out of the fund. Of that amount $2,044,645 was compensation for brucellosis reactors. Commonwealth contribution accounted for 75 per cent of that amount. An amount of $60,000 was paid for malignant tumours other than malignant tumours of the eye, and $486,000 was paid for malignant eye tumours. That is a considerable amount of money and approximately 4,500 head of cattle were affected, so it is obvious that it is a serious disease in cattle. I have been unable to ascertain whether the disease is contagious, but it is certainly hereditary and occurs mainly in Herefords. As I asked earlier, if the Bill is passed and the owner receives no compensation, does he simply send

the animal off to the knackery or does he keep it until it dies on his property?

The honorable member for Sunshine said that the number of cattle with eye tumours had increased considerably over the past three or four years. Farmers in Australia are not doing enough to reduce the number of flies. One of the most severe problems in primary industry, particularly in the livestock industry, is caused by flies—the common house fly, the blow fly or the green or blue-tailed blow fly, which causes enormous damage in the sheep industry.

Even today, when carcasses are left around the countryside they provide a breeding ground for flies. The number of flies must be reduced. The result of this proposed legislation could be an increase in the number of cattle carcasses being left to rot, providing a haven for flies.

Under the Cattle Compensation Act, 5,000 head of cattle are to be slaughtered. In many cases only the head is condemned, but the rest of the body could be suitable partly for human consumption and partly for pet food. If only 1,000 carcasses were left lying around, they would provide a haven for flies. That is another reason why the House should think again before removing this disease from the list of diseases for which compensation is paid.

I refer next to the building up of diagnostic laboratories. In the second-reading speech the Minister of Agriculture mentioned the financial position of the Cattle Compensation Fund and said that from year to year it is not even paying its way. Difficulties are caused because the Commonwealth payments for brucellosis compensation are quarterly or half-yearly and the fund becomes overdrawn when normal compensation payments for malignant eye tumours and brucellosis are made.

Treasury officers know that these moneys will be recouped, but I understand that the Victorian Department of Agriculture fears that the Treasury is getting tired of making payments to the Cattle Compensation Fund and then being recompensed. Although the moneys may be transferred for a short time, a certain amount of work is involved, so it was decided to remove the disease known as malignant tumour of the eye from the list of compensatable diseases.

The brucellosis eradication campaign, which is going well in Victoria, will continue, and one must admire the efforts of the Department of Agriculture, particularly in the Animal Health Branch, through the private veterinarians and the regional diagnostic laboratories. However, behind the scenes funds are being transferred from one account to another, and at times the Cattle Compensation Fund falls into arrears. That is not an excuse for removing this disease from the area of compensation.

In 1976 after the brucellosis eradication campaign had got into full swing 21,000 reactors were slaughtered in Victoria. Brucellosis compensation was dealt with in the same way as that for eye tumour—a market value was placed on the animal and a residual value was determined.

Before the brucellosis campaign was begun, cattle suffering from the disease were slaughtered at abattoirs. I do not say that it was done indiscriminately, but because farmers were not aware of the extent of the disease and did not know without special tests which cattle had brucellosis, cattle were slaughtered in abattoirs throughout the State. However, today they are slaughtered only at selected abattoirs.

In 1977, 25,000 reactors were slaughtered, and it is anticipated that next year, as the campaign progresses and reaches its maximum strength, 30,000 reactors will be disposed of at specified abattoirs. The programme involves the payment of a considerable amount of money to private veterinary surgeons who have been called in to assist. These people have

been doing an excellent job. If they had not been recruited by the Government many vets could have been at starvation level in view of the low prices being paid for cattle. I hope it will not be long before that position changes.

In New South Wales the disease of malignant tumour of the eye has been removed from the compensation area. This happened during the boom in cattle sales, because the fund was running out of money. The market value of cattle was high and this resulted in extensive pay-outs. I am not sure how this money is collected and what amount is paid.

Similar action was taken in Western Australia, but as it was not taken in Victoria then, I know of no reason why it should be taken now just because funds run short at certain times of the year. Cattle breeders should not be deprived of compensation for cattle affected with eye tumours.

The Livestock Advisory Committee, on which the Minister of Agriculture depends heavily for advice, recommended the removal of the disease for compensation purposes. The committee comprises two representatives from the Victorian Farmers Union; two from the Graziers Association of Victoria; two from the Victorian Meatworks Association; two from the Victorian Stock Agents Association; two from the Department of Agriculture; and Dr. Knight, who is the chairman.

I contacted the Victorian Farmers Union to obtain the opinion of its members about the proposed legislation. On 18th October I was informed that a motion had been passed by zone fifteen of the Victorian Farmers Union stating that its Pastoral Division supported the proposal that compensation for eye cancer should be left as it is for ten years and that the Australian Meat Research Committee should be requested to commence research on treatment for cancer of the eye in cattle. I was informed that the motion was carried at the Pastoral Division meeting and passed on to the Australian Wool and Meat Producers Federation which gave it its support.

Although the Victorian Farmers Union is represented on the Livestock Advisory Committee, its members comprise only two of a total of ten and the chairman, and although the union adopted the approach I have outlined, it was outvoted on the matter.

I contacted the Graziers Association of Victoria, which sent me a letter in the following terms—

> This is to confirm previous verbal advice to you that the council of the association in August, 1976, adopted the following motion in respect of eye cancer in cattle—
>
> "That compensation for cattle affected by malignant tumour of the eye should be progressively phased out or reduced over a number of years and that additional funds be made available to the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization for research purposes, mainly in Hereford cattle."
>
> I should advise that the above motion was only adopted after the subject had been thoroughly discussed by members of the association during a series of branch meetings.

The letter was signed by the assistant secretary of the association. The National Party's proposed amendment would satisfy the requests of the two producer organizations that represent the people who will be affected by the change because they breed and grow the cattle. If the Bill is passed, these people will miss out on receiving compensation.

Mr. John Sleigh of the Poll Hereford Society of Victoria has informed me that his society supports the elimination of this disease from the Cattle Compensation Fund. Mr. Sleigh is a prominent breeder of Poll Herefords, and I accept his opinion if his society has discussed the matter and is prepared to carry the burden of the decision, which will be good for the breed societies. These societies generally have valuable cattle, but in addition there are thousands of commercial breeders of

Hereford cattle, and these are the producers about whom the National Party is concerned.

The National Party believes that malignant eye tumour should not be removed from the list of compensatable diseases immediately. The reasoned amendment has been moved because two producer organizations would like more research to be done over the next ten years, and they believe that compensation should be phased out progressively.

The National Party supports the actions and beliefs of the producer organizations, and that is why it has proposed the reasoned amendment. It is essential to take note of the opinions of those who produce cattle, because, as I have already said, the cattle industry is in the doldrums.

Those farmers should not be deprived so suddenly of something to which they have been entitled. On my farm I have only Angus or Angus cross cattle. We have not had one case of malignant tumour of the eye for a number of years. Nevertheless we still pay into the Cattle Compensation Fund and we are prepared to do so until the disease can be either eradicated or so diminished as no longer to be a burden on the industry.

I wish to refer to the Cattle Compensation Fund and the manner in which it was used to finance the building of Victoria's diagnostic laboratories. Amendments were made to the Cattle Compensation Act to enable moneys from the Cattle Compensation Fund to be used for this purpose. The construction of some of the diagnostic laboratories was financed from loan funds but the laboratories at Bairnsdale and Benalla and part of the laboratory at Bendigo were financed by the Cattle Compensation Fund. This fund has been underwritten by the Government. If an outbreak of pleura or foot and mouth disease were to occur, the Government would immediately provide the extra finance required, and probably the Commonwealth Government would inject moneys into the fund to contain the disease as rapidly as possible. However, on a State basis, immediate action would first have to be taken to isolate the areas and contain the disease.

The Victorian Government has underwritten the building of diagnostic centres and it should also underwrite the Cattle Compensation Fund. I understand that one of the reasons for the introduction of this Bill has been a significant deficit in the Cattle Compensation Fund. The Treasury must allocate money to the Department of Agriculture to build up dull areas in the fund when compensation has been paid out. For instance in the brucellosis area, where Commonwealth funds have not yet been received to recoup the fund, the Treasury makes a payment, a book transaction occurs and there is a change of money from one department to another. Members of the National Party believe it is not necessary to take malignant tumour of the eye out of the Cattle Compensation Act in Victoria.

Mr. AUSTIN (Ripon): I support the Bill and oppose the amendment moved by the honorable member for Benalla on behalf of the National Party. The Bill removes malignant tumour of the eye from the list of diseases for which owners may be paid compensation under the Cattle Compensation Act. Concern has been expressed by both the spokesmen for the Opposition and for the National Party that this will occur with the implementation of this Bill. It has been suggested that it would be better to phase out compensation on the disease over a considerable period of time. Various organizations, including the Livestock Advisory Committee and breed societies have met and provided advice to the Government, and that advice should be taken.

The main reason for the removal of malignant tumour of the eye from the Act is that the Cattle Compensation Fund is in debt. The reason for that debt is the added cost in paying out compensation for reactors in the

brucellosis eradication campaign which was introduced into Victoria. That programme has been highly successful. Each year a number of reactors have been found in Victoria.

As a result of those payments the fund is $500,000 in debt. In the previous year the cost of compensation payments for malignant tumour of the eye in cattle was $486,000. To make up the $500,000 it would have been necessary to increase stamp tax by about 100 per cent. Although it has been pointed out by the honorable member for Benalla that at present the amount paid in stamp tax is not great, I believe any increase inflicted upon the cattle industry which is an economic hardship would be completely unacceptable. Any attempt to increase the stamp tax charges is the thin end of a wedge.

It should be realized that there is less money in the Cattle Compensation Fund than in the past, partly because of the lower prices of cattle in recent years and partly because of the increase in direct selling. Stamp tax is not paid on cattle sold directly to the abattoirs on a weight-grade basis.

No mention has been made of the possible benefits that may accrue from the implementation of this Bill. The measure provides an opportunity for a new look at management of cattle properties and cattle in general. I do not wish to be critical of the majority of cattle owners but in the past many cattle owners and breeders have been careless in their attention to "cancer eye". Frequently cattle have been kept on a farm so that the farmer could obtain the highest economic gain from a particular animal. A small percentage of cattle afflicted with this disease—it occurs in only one eye of the beast—suffer an immediate loss of condition and die in a short time. However, in the majority of cases the animals live and keep in reasonable condition for from two to five years. During that time there is not only a degree of cruelty to the animals concerned but also a spreading of the disease by flies to other animals. The implementation of this Bill will mean a quicker diagnosis of the disease in the first place, followed by quicker corrective action.

Experiments have shown that by selective management the disease can be controlled to a great extent. People who are familiar with what occurs in stud cattle sales will know that the degree of eye pigmentation of each beast is usually stipulated.

No mention has yet been made of the fact that this disease occurs to a greater extent in one breed of cattle —Herefords. Tests have shown that in the Friesian breed of cattle there is an 0·7 per cent incidence of eye cancer and no incidence in the other major breeds. In Herefords it has been shown that the incidence can be as high as 20 per cent. In America 4·7 per cent of Hereford cattle have this disease.

Tests carried out in Western Australia have shown that of the 696 Hereford animals tested 25·3 per cent had signs of eye cancer. Various tests were then carried out with selection for eye pigmentation and it was found that the percentage of eye pigmentation increased tremendously with each cross, until the fourth generation had a 95 per cent eye pigmentation, at which stage there was very little potential for the disease to occur.

A malignant tumour of the eye can be controlled in other ways. It is possible to carry out surgery and remove it but, of course, in normal commercial cattle this would be somewhat expensive. As has been previously mentioned in this debate, in Queensland work on a vaccine has been carried out by a Dr. Wilson. I believe the implementation of this Bill will help to speed up those experiments. I hope action will be taken to ensure that work is done in this field and that more funds are provided for that purpose.

In the future it will be necessary for cattle that are affected with eye cancer to be sold directly to the abattoirs, and I hope there will not be a problem as has been suggested as this is vital for future disposal. The Minister must ensure that there is an outlet in the abattoirs for the cattle that are sent there with cancer of the eye.

The owners of cattle afflicted with eye cancer will have four options open to them. They will be able to sell their cattle direct to the abattoirs; they will be able to dispose of the cattle on the property, and this will occur only in advanced cases, as already happens today; they will be able to have the malignant tumour of the eye removed surgically; or they will be able to have the removal done by radiation therapy. The last two options would be possible only on early diagnosis, and would probably apply only to stud properties because of the expenses involved. With the present prices of cattle on the commercial market this would not be a worth-while proposition for all the cattle affected.

Finally, I mention Western Australia. In the past three years, of the 5,850 head of Hereford cattle condemned either wholly or partly, 509 or 8·7 per cent actually had cancer of the eye. Those figures show a high incidence of this disease among Hereford cattle. I hope the implementation of this Bill will ensure that in the future the management of farms will be such that there will be a greater reduction in the incidence of malignant cancer of the eye. I commend the Bill to the House.

Mr. FOGARTY (Sunshine): I wish to confirm the position of the Opposition on the amendment. From the contribution to the debate of the honorable member for Benalla it is obvious that the attitudes of the Opposition and the National Party on this matter are similar; the only difference seems to be in the phasing-out period. It was mentioned that members of the Opposition believe that if there is to be a phasing-out period it should be from two to ten years. Having learnt from the honorable member for Benalla that members of the National Party believe the phasing-out period should be five years, members of the Opposition have decided to support the amendment, on the ground of the need for additional research. There is every possibility that in the future research will find a cure for the disease.

I mentioned earlier that the *Weekly Times* of 5th October contained a pertinent article. To amplify my point, I quote from the same article—

> At the Department of Veterinary Preventative Medicine of the University of Queensland, Professor John Francis and his colleagues are using Australian Meat Research Committee funds to try to turn this possibility into practice.
>
> Starting from earlier research in the United States, the group has been taking cancerous eyes from affected cattle, grinding them up and injecting extracts of this material into cattle with cancer eyes.

The honorable member for Ripon also mentioned that testing was being carried out by the Department of Agriculture in Western Australia. In referring to those tests, the honorable member supported the argument advanced by both the Opposition and the National Party.

The research programmes carried out in Western Australia showed from figures published by the Western Australian Department of Agriculture that there was a close link between the amount of eye pigmentation in cattle and the incidence of eye cancer. The amount of pigmentation is largely inherited, so that it is possible to reduce the incidence of eye cancer by selectively breeding cattle with highly pigmented eyes. The Western Australian Department of Agriculture has estimated that by the sixth generation of selection, 99 per cent of cattle could have pigmented eyes.

It has been clearly shown that in Queensland and Western Australia much research has been carried out

into this problem. Contrary to the views of Government supporters who have criticized the hygiene standards in our food industry, I have always believed that the standards in Victoria are equal to, if not better than those of most countries in the world.

I expect that State Government bodies are also carrying out tests in this field. Research is the main area of concern, and the Opposition believes that over a period, the research authorities, including the universities, will be able to come up with an answer which will almost eliminate the disease of eye cancer.

Earlier I stressed the depressed state of the industry. Farmers are going through grave financial times at present. The old battle cry states, "What we have, we hold" and if one takes something away from someone, it leads to dissatisfaction. The points mentioned by the honorable member for Ripon related to direct selling through the abattoirs, but there is always a certain cost involved as a buyer can reject anything where disease is present. The Opposition will support the amendment moved by the honorable member for Benalla.

Mr. I. W. SMITH (Minister of Agriculture): I have had time to consider the amendment, and I advise the House that the Government will oppose it. The Bill comes from a recommendation of the State Livestock Advisory Committee.

Mr. HANN: The Minister set that up; it is his committee.

Mr. I. W. SMITH: The honorable member for Rodney will be surprised to learn that the members of that committee are not always unanimous, nor do they always agree with me. However, this measure is one of its recommendations, and although I sympathize with the opinions expressed by honorable members who have spoken from the National Party and the Opposition, the practicality is that this measure involves an amount of $500,000 a year. It would be nice if someone would suddenly produce another $500,000, but if they did, as the Minister responsible I would not allocate it towards eye cancer compensation. There are far more pressing priorities in the area of agriculture. If it is narrowed down to the area of cattle disease compensation, surely the highest priority is to speed up the eradication of brucellosis so that Victoria will be provisionally free of brucellosis by 1983, thus hopefully, securing our markets in the United States. With this knowledge the Livestock Advisory Committee, in its wisdom recognized the priority which had to be allocated, and that is why it made the recommendation.

The honorable member for Ripon clearly indicated, as did the honorable member for Sunshine, that compensation has not done anything to help eradicate the disease. If anything, it has encouraged farmers with cancer eye cattle to keep them for the limit of their commercial life. What they do not appreciate or understand is that, while they keep those cattle with cancer eye, the disease is spreading as it is communicable.

The honorable member for Ripon was right on the ball when he indicated that this measure will require farmers to improve animal husbandry and ultimately their commercial return. For the reasons I have outlined, particularly the allocation of funds on the basis of priority, the Government cannot accept the amendment.

I also pose the question of how the department would administer a phase-out. Would it pay less than market value in each successive year until ultimately it paid no market value, or would it pay less to the farmers on a percentage of their herd? It would be an administrative nightmare, and I do not see how the proposal could be administered.

Mr. WILTON (Broadmeadows): After listening to the Minister of Agriculture and the honorable member for Ripon, I take the view that the removal of the disease from the list of compensatable diseases under

the principal Act will have an effect contrary to that indicated by the Minister. Rather than to encourage farmers to dispose of diseased stock, there will be a tendency for the farmers to retain stock to extract as much as possible from the economic life of the animal because the disease is no longer compensatable.

The Minister should go to the Parliamentary Library and study the history of cattle compensation. It was originally enacted on the argument that it would encourage farmers to dispose of diseased animals. It was on that argument alone that the whole gambit of cattle compensation legislation was enacted by this Parliament. By arguing that the removal of the disease from the list will encourage farmers to dispose of diseased stock, the Minister shows that he knows little or nothing about the history of cattle compensation in this State; he should check on it further. The argument he has used was the argument submitted by those responsible for introducing the principal Act to create the Cattle Compensation Fund so that farmers could be enticed or encouraged to dispose of animals affected by a variety of diseases, one of which was malignant tumour of the eye.

Once this disease is removed from the list, there will be a rapid return to the bad old days. The Minister stated that farmers were not encouraged to dispose of their stock which had contracted this disease, although they were entitled to receive compensation, but because they retained the stock, the disease spread. If one removes the compensation, how does one remove the disease? How do you persuade a farmer to dispose of diseased stock, particularly breeding stock, especially when he wishes to retain that stock to extract as much of its economic life as the disease will permit? The removal of this disease from the list of compensatable diseases will have the opposite effect.

I refer the Minister to 1973 when the Government decided to amend the principal Act. At that time section 10 (3) (c) provided that one-third of the amount standing in the Cattle Compensation Fund could be used towards the cost of establishing and equiping diagnostic laboratories. However, the Government decided to amend that provision by adding a new sub-section (3A) which provided—

> In addition to any amount which may be applied out of the fund under sub-section (3) a further amount not exceeding half of the net amount standing to the credit of the fund on the day on which the Cattle Compensation Act 1973 receives the Royal assent may be applied from the fund for the purpose of paragraph (c) of sub-section (3).

That is the sub-section which deals with the building and equiping of diagnostic laboratories. The following sub-section was also inserted—

> (3B) for the purposes of sub-section (3A) "net amount" means the amount standing to the credit of the Fund less any unspent amount which has been authorized to be applied for the purpose of paragraph (c) of sub-section (3).

Does that mean that the contribution went from one-third to two-thirds of the fund and it could be used in this way? Is that a fair and reasonable burden to place on the fund, bearing in mind that it is not only the producer who receives benefit from the work performed by the diagnostic laboratories and the research programmes undertaken in our universities, but also primary industry as a whole. One would hope there is a link-up between the work undertaken in the diagnostic laboratories and the research programmes. Is that contribution a fair and reasonable burden to be borne by the primary producer when benefits are received by primary industry as a whole, including the processing section as well as the primary production section? I do not accept the argument that this industry is isolated in terms of there being a producer with no other part of the industry involved.

Surely the processing section would receive benefits which it would want to expand when it moved into the area of the international market

place with overseas earnings coming back to Australia as a result of those trading operations. Primary industry plays an important part in this operation. In 1973 the Cattle Compensation Fund was so buoyant and healthy that the Government considered it fair and reasonable to amend the principal Act thereby increasing the financial contribution for the operation of diagnostic laboratories from one-third to two-thirds. The Government now asks Parliament to remove a disease from the list of compensatable diseases, and advances the argument that the funds are not available to retain it because of the amount taken from the Cattle Compensation Fund each year to deal with other priorities, such as the brucellosis eradication programme.

The Government should have looked at this section in terms of the commitment from the fund for areas other than direct compensation. There should be a phasing-out programme. I do not think it is impossible to work out the percentage of the residual value of the animal which should be paid to the owner who seeks compensation. That is done in other areas, so why should it be impossible for the departmental officers concerned to work out a sliding scale to phase out compensation over a period of time? The whole question of compensation should be examined, including the charges that are made on the compensation fund, and particularly charges other than direct compensation. Those matters should be examined rather than removing one disease from the list on the ground that the fund cannot afford it any longer. That is not the answer. I cannot accept the Minister's argument that if one removes the disease from the list that will reduce the number of stock that are diseased; it will have the contrary effect.

Mr. BURGIN (Polwarth) : I support the Bill to amend the Cattle Compensation Act to remove the disease of cancer of the eye from the compensation list. Most points have been well canvassed during the debate, but I stress three or four matters relating to the Bill.

The Cattle Compensation Fund was set up, as the honorable member for Broadmeadows said, to pay compensation to stock owners to permit them to get rid of diseased stock. For most diseases covered by the Act, that is what happens. In fact, there has been a big reduction in the diseases in cattle throughout the industry in this State, and that means that the legislation has been successful. Despite the amount of money that has been paid out of the fund for cancer of the eye, there has been no reduction in the incidence of this disease. The incidence of the disease is the same as when compensation was first introduced. Is the Government justified in going on blindly, like the animal with the disease, and paying compensation when it is not doing one bit of good for the industry, or should the Government look at other means of controlling the disease?

This Bill will afford the opportunity to some breeding societies and beef growers of looking to other means of bringing cancer of the eye under control. As I said previously, the paying of compensation has not reduced the incidence of the disease, and in fact Victoria could face the position, as this disease has been removed from the list included in the New South Wales Act, where dealers will buy cattle with cancer of the eye in New South Wales and bring them into Victoria to claim compensation.

Mr. TREWIN: Stock agents do not always play the game.

Mr. BURGIN: I do not know whether stock agents always play the game; but that is not the point. At present cattle can be brought from across the border in New South Wales and compensation could be paid in Victoria. This measure will prove its worth in the near future. All cattlemen should be able to make a value judgment and detect the disease at

an early stage and be able to send the animal to an abattoir and receive the best possible market value for it. If the farmer leaves the animal to deteriorate because it is diseased, he will have to take a loss. If compensation is not paid there will be some incentive for the owner of the cattle to detect the disease in its early stages while the animals are in good condition and get them off his property and to the abattoirs. In that case only a small part of the carcass would be lost.

The rest of the matters referred to in the Bill have been well canvassed. I cannot agree that the present practice should be continued for another five years as the amendment states. I believe a phasing out programme will create enormous problems, and it is not necessary. It would be much better to make a clean incision and allow the problem to be overcome by the good management of cattlemen.

Money should certainly be spent at Federal level on research, but this will continue and has nothing to do with the taking away of compensation payments for eye tumours. I know of no reason why the Minister of Agriculture cannot make arrangements, through his department, for adequate steps and facilities to be made available to handle diseased cattle in the abattoirs, thus allowing the producer to receive the best financial return.

Mr. B. J. EVANS (Gippsland East): I support the amendment moved by the honorable member for Benalla. It is apparent that the Cattle Compensation Act was passed to encourage the owners of diseased cattle to get rid of them and to share the burden of the cost or of any loss among other stock owners. The whole concept is to share the burden of the expense brought about by contagious or transmittable diseases between stock, the basis being that if an individual owner has a diseased beast on his property there is a danger not only to his stock—of course that is his own pigeon—but also to neighbouring herds of cattle. Therefore, the members of the cattle industry were agreeable to contributing to a fund so that compensation could be paid, and funds were raised by a duty on the sale of every head of cattle through the sale-yards. This seems to be quite contrary to the point of view expressed by members of the Government party when they argued that removing tumour of the eye from the list of compensatable diseases will encourage producers to eradicate the disease from their herds.

The same argument might be applied to every other compensatable disease; if no compensation is paid that will encourage the owner of the stock to get rid of it more quickly. I cannot see the logic of that argument. If it is logical, then taking it through to its logical conclusion one must argue that it would be better if no compensation were paid for any disease. That is not an acceptable proposition. Those who accept that proposition are being caught by the typical Government three-card trick, because it was made abundantly clear, when the Parliament agreed to funds from the Cattle Compensation Fund being applied to the construction of veterinary diagnostic centres around the countryside, that the Government would step in and help if there were any unduly large claims for compensation. That was clearly and firmly stated by the Government at that time, yet the Government is now using the argument that there are not sufficient funds available for all the needs of the compensation fund and it is now attempting to save the day by proposing that tumour of the eye should not be a compensatable disease.

The proposition advanced by the honorable member for Benalla is reasonable. Scientists could well be on the eve of finding a cure for this disease. That being so, it is a sound and logical proposition to put forward that at least five years' notice should be given before the eventual deletion

of the disease from the compensatable list. It may well be that a cure will be discovered within that five-year period. Alternatively, it may be necessary to extend the period to allow more research to be carried out. The point is that if the industry knows it has a specified time in which the disease will remain on the list it has somewhere to set its sights on in an effort to arrive at a time-table to achieve elimination of the disease. There are several solutions. Breeders can take account of the factors which lead to the precondition for this disease. Some form of immunization may be the answer.

I refer now to the argument that the grower or owner should wake up to the fact that a beast is affected by the disease and should market it at the earliest possible time. That will not deceive the buyer, because the buyer will be closer to the beast and will be in a better position to see the symptoms more clearly than the grower would in his normal handling of his stock. I do not think the suggestion that a grower will be able to get rid of a beast quickly through the sale-yards will deceive anyone. The phase-out period is desirable, and should be supported by the Parliament.

The sitting was suspended at 6.16 *p.m. until* 8.4 *p.m.*

Mr. HANN (Rodney): I indicate my strong support of the amendment so ably moved by the honorable member for Benalla. The Bill emphasizes the contention that members of the National Party have been making for some months—that the Government gives a very low priority to the problems and the plight of the beef industry in Victoria. The Bill is another example of this, because rather than looking at the plight of the industry at present and recognizing that the industry needs funds, the Government is deleting from the Act one of the important diseases for which owners received compensation.

From observations and inquiries made by members of the National Party, it is evident that the Graziers' Association and the Victorian Farmers Union do not give their full support to the proposal in the Bill. Both these organizations have recommended a phasing-out programme, as suggested by the honorable member for Benalla, but once again the Victorian Government is flying in the face of these organizations.

The Bill has been introduced mainly to effect a saving to the Cattle Compensation Fund of approximately $500,000. The National Party supports the eradication of brucellosis. The Minister in his second-reading speech said that the Commonwealth Government is contributing 75 per cent of the funds for the brucellosis eradication campaign. The Victorian Government at present is contributing nothing. It is relying entirely on contributions to the Cattle Compensation Fund from beef producers to pay out the balance of the State's contribution to the brucellosis campaign. The Bill should not have been introduced. The amendment moved by the honorable member for Benalla gives the Government a chance to make a contribution to the brucellosis campaign, and that would eliminate the need to delete the provisions in the Act relating to eye tumour.

There is a total annual payment into the fund of about $3 million, of which the Commonwealth Government contributes $1·8 million. Of the $3 million payout, $2·044 is paid out on the brucellosis campaign, so less than $1 million is paid out for other compensatable diseases. The Government is halving the number of cases eligible for compensation and eliminating the largest single disease. The brucellosis campaign should be recognized as a separate campaign, which will not only benefit the beef industry and the dairying industry, but will also benefit the general public. It will result in a general upgrading of the health standards throughout the community, and will eliminate one of the important diseases that could possibly be passed on to mankind.

That is one reason why the Commonwealth Government has recognized the importance of the brucellosis campaign. One would have hoped that the Victorian Government would be prepared to recognize it in a similar way.

It concerns me that less than $1·5 million is paid out of the fund in compensation for malignant eye tumours in cattle. When the farmers in Victoria become aware of what this Bill does, there will be a hue and cry within the rural community in the next twelve months. Members of Parliament will write to the Minister, and he will receive a never-ending string of correspondence asking why he deleted this disease from the compensatable diseases in cattle.

The Minister drew attention to one reason why malignant tumour of the eye should be retained as a compensatable disease—that is that it can be transferred from one animal to another within a herd. If compensation is not paid for this disease, it will take away the incentive for a producer to get rid of an animal that has this disease. The Minister shakes his head, but that is not my experience. If a farmer becomes aware that he has an animal that has a disease which is notifiable, and which he himself would be fearful of as it may be transmitted to humans, he will get rid of the animal, particularly if he receives compensation for it. It is not known whether some of these diseases can be transmitted to humans. Pink eye in cattle can be transmitted to humans, and who can say that malignant tumour of the eye in cattle cannot be transmitted to humans. The quicker animals suffering from this disease are removed from the herds in Victoria the better, because it will stop the disease from spreading within the herd and it will also prevent the possible transmission of the disease to human beings.

The case put forward by the Minister justifies the argument that there should be a period of time for phasing out of this compensatable disease, as suggested by the honorable member for Benalla. Much more research should be done into the methods of eradiction and some of the implications of this disease.

The only real argument put forward for the Bill by the Minister and the Government is that there will be a saving to the Cattle Compensation Fund of $500,000 a year, and this is the simplest way of doing it. The Government should have been more positive in its action. It should have recognized the plight of the beef industry and should have been prepared to put $500,000 into the industry to offset this problem. That would have been $500,000 more than the Government is putting in at present, because the contribution of the Government in the past twelve months has been virtually nil.

I support the amendment moved by the honorable member for Benalla. It has the support of all the cattle producer organizations in Victoria.

Mr. COLEMAN: All of them?

Mr. HANN: The two major ones—the Victorian Farmers Union and the Graziers Association. If the honorable member for Syndal can name other organizations, I should be very pleased to hear him. Those organizations have a similar opinion on this issue. The Government should have made a contribution to the Cattle Compensation Fund rather than adopt this arbitrary measure.

The Minister mentioned the Livestock Advisory Committee. This committee was appointed by the Minister to come up with an answer similar to that which he has in mind. That is what the Minister has indicated in the past, and that is the way in which the committee was designed. It was originally constituted as an advisory body to the Minister, and one sees it as an excuse to promote the policies of the Minister on this issue.

It is unfortunate that the Government introduced this Bill. It should reconsider its attitude in excluding

malignant tumour of the eye from compensatable diseases in cattle, particularly in the light of the opinion of the organizations I mentioned and in the light of the amendment put forward by the honorable member for Benalla.

The House divided on the question that the words proposed by Mr. Trewin to be omitted stand part of the motion (Sir Kenneth Wheeler in the chair)—

Ayes	..	40
Noes	..	25
Majority against the amendment	..	15

AYES.

Mr. Austin	Mr. Mackinnon
Mr. Balfour	Mr. McLaren
Mr. Birrell	Mr. Maclellan
Mr. Borthwick	Mr. Plowman
Mr. Burgin	Mr. Reese
Mr. Coleman	Mr. Richardson
Mr. Collins	Mr. Scanlan
Mr. Cox	Mr. Skeggs
Mr. Dunstan	Mr. Smith
Mr. Ebery	*(South Barwon)*
Mr. Evans	Mr. Smith
(Ballarat North)	*(Warrnambool)*
Mr. Gude	Mr. Stephen
Mr. Hayes	Mr. Suggett
Mr. Hudson	Mr. Templeton
Mr. Lacy	Mr. Thompson
Mr. Lieberman	Mr. Weideman
Mr. Loxton	Mr. Williams
Mr. McArthur	Mr. Wood
Mr. McCabe	*Tellers:*
Mr. McClure	Mr. Kennett
Mr. McKellar	Mrs. Patrick

NOES.

Mr. Amos	Mr. Lind
Mr. Cain	Mr. Roper
Mr. Crabb	Mr. Ross-Edwards
Mr. Culpin	Mr. Simpson
Mr. Doube	Mr. Stirling
Mr. Edmunds	Mr. Trewin
Mr. Evans	Mr. Trezise
(Gippsland East)	Mr. Whiting
Mr. Fogarty	Mr. Wilkes
Mr. Fordham	Mr. Wilton
Mr. Ginifer	
Mr. Hann	*Tellers:*
Mr. Jones	Mr. Cathie
Mr. Kirkwood	Mr. Jasper

PAIRS.

Mr. Billing	Mr. Simmonds
Mr. Hamer	Mr. Holding
Mr. Rafferty	Mr. McInnes

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was read a second time and committed.

Clause 1 was agreed to.

Clause 2 (Amendment of No. 7615).

Mr. FOGARTY (Sunshine): During the second-reading debate, the Opposition clearly stated its objections to the clause. Firstly, an area of research could be undertaken by various Government departments which may enable this disease to be eradicated. It should be possible to phase it out during the next five years.

Secondly, the industry is in such a depressed state that any assistance that may be given to the farmer will be greatly appreciated by the Opposition, the National Party, and also by the industry generally. Thirdly, the Government should apply for Federal funding through the Federal Minister for Primary Industry whereby the existing situation could be maintained. Rather than repeat what has already been stated, the Opposition rests its case.

Mr. TREWIN (Benalla): The National Party is disappointed that it has lost this debate on numbers but feels that it has won it in other ways. I wish to note several features concerning the Bill. I was pleased to hear the Minister admit that eye cancer was a communicable disease, which means that it is an infectious disease. That is what honorable members have been talking about. I cannot understand the Minister's learned advisers in the department advising him in the way that they have. Dr. Flynn is the top man in this field in Australia and has indicated that the method proposed must be followed. I am disappointed that, although the Minister has conceded that it is a communicable disease, the honorable gentleman has not taken the matter further.

During the second-reading debate, I made a passing reference to market value and residual value. Even in the brucellosis eradication campaign

a market value is placed on the animal, and this is agreed to by the stock inspector or the veterinary surgeon and the owner, and the animal is sent for slaughter. The same position has applied with a malignant tumour of the eye or eye cancer. The difference between market value and residual value can be quite great at times, and that difference has to be met from the fund. Will greater scrutiny be exercised between the farm and the disposal of the carcass? Whether the meat will be used for human consumption or for pet food does not matter, the residual value is paid.

A further point is that, although compensation will not be payable, diseased animals will be directed to certain abattoirs and therefore the farmer will lose control of them. I am wondering to which abattoirs these animals will be directed and who will direct them. As was stated during the second-reading debate, the disease can be detected by a tear duct weeping. A buyer will see this quite readily when the animals are in the pen with other cattle, and the buyers will then depreciate the value. Buyers know more about cattle than most other people because they are handling cattle every day, and the slightest indication of anything wrong enables them to depreciate the value of the animal. I am concerned to which abattoirs the animals will be directed for slaughter and who will have the authority to direct them.

The brucellosis campaign is proceeding very well and the department should be commended for its efforts in this respect. Cattle can be brought in from New South Wales and, without any quarantine period, a claim can be made on the fund. The Minister has agreed that the disease is communicable. Any cattle that come in from New South Wales need only be in Victoria for one day and the damage is done. Either the Minister or the department should introduce some system whereby interstate cattle must be in Victoria for at least twelve months before they become eligible for compensation.

The stock agents want to keep the cattle moving and like to turn them over as often as possible in order to earn commission on the sale. When cattle go into New South Wales from Queensland, a period of time must elapse before the cattle can be moved from one area to another. Cattle from north of Bourke, which is a pleura area, cannot come into another area unless they satisfy a certain quarantine period. The importation of cattle from another State should not be permitted to make inroads on the Victorian compensation fund. Stock agents have to take some share of the responsibility in this regard.

Mr. BURGIN: What about the dealers?

Mr. TREWIN: And the dealers too. There must be some means whereby cattle coming into Victoria are examined and provision made that they have to be at least six months in the State before compensation is payable.

A magnificent job has been done with the brucellosis campaign. There is no reason why a similar effort cannot be directed towards the elimination of cancer of the eye in cattle. I dislike nominating a breed of cattle that could be disease prone, but it is a fact that this disease occurs mainly in the Hereford breed. I advise breeders to breed not red-headed Herefords but a Hereford with less white on its head. Cattle can now be seen in studs which do not appear to be so prone to the disease.

In Queensland efforts have been made to overcome this disease with a vaccine, which is proving rather successful. It is desirable that a similar effort should be made in Victoria if we are to eliminate the disease. The money saved by the Government could be put into research. The State Government is receiving a substantial amount of money from the Commonwealth Government

and money from the meat research fund, which is derived from a levy on cattle breeders, and this could be used to eliminate brucellosis in Australia. In deference to our overseas markets, this must be done in the next three years. The campaign must be thoroughly carried out. An immunization programme should be organized. I am sure that some cattle stud breeders would be only too happy to make their studs available for this programme.

I am sure the Minister will not mind my mentioning that the elimination of cancer of the eye from the compensatable diseases will mean that he has more money in the fund, and this would be good. However, I warn him that he should not treat every area in the same way. As an illustration I refer to an answer I received from the Minister to a question on notice today. I want to read it because it has a bearing on the subject being debated tonight. In my question I referred to the repealed Horse Breeding Act. The Minister replied—

> Legislation which repealed the Horse Breeding Act 1958 made provision for moneys standing to the credit of the Stallion Compensation Fund and the Stallion Examination Fund to be applied as the Minister of Agriculture directs——

Mr. COLEMAN (Syndal): On a point of order, Mr. Chairman, the Bill has nothing to do with the Horse Breeding Act.

The CHAIRMAN (Mr. McLaren): Order! I point out to the honorable member for Benalla that he should direct his remarks to clause 2 of the Bill.

Mr. TREWIN (Benalla): Thank you for your guidance, Mr. Chairman. I know of no better way of illustrating my point than by reading the Minister's answer.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I take it that the honorable member does not propose to proceed with what he was reading. I suggest that the honorable member confine his remarks to clause 2.

Mr. TREWIN: I am linking this point to clause 2. There is approximately $27,000 in the two funds to which I have referred. The Minister stated that he had decided that the moneys available in the two funds would be used for research into equine contagious metritis, which is a new disease in the horse breeding area. I inform the Minister that we accept what he has done but a contribution must be made by other horse breeders. We do not have the numbers but we advise the Minister to get on with the job of asking the Hereford breeders to do more for their industry. It would also be good if the Government could assist in some way because this matter is sufficiently important for the taxpayers of the State to contribute to it.

Mr. COLEMAN (Syndal): I have been goaded into replying to the wide-ranging arguments of the honorable member for Benalla. The honorable member's remarks would suggest that this situation has arisen only today, but for the past eighteen months or two years these cattle could not be exposed for sale in a public sale-yard. They have had to be resumed by the Department of Agriculture. The honorable member has overlooked that fact. He also cast aspersions on both the agency business and the dealer business. Few agents buy cattle without a knowledge of the prospective purchaser. At the time of acquisition it would be reasonable for the prospective purchaser to have the right to reject any cattle which he considered could cause trouble because of eye cancer. The honorable member for Benalla is off the mark in the proposition he put forward.

Mr. TREWIN (Benalla): I am aware that these cattle are not eligible for cattle compensation payable in market areas. However, when the disease is detected in the early stages, to what abattoir can the cattle be taken? Must they be left until they get too bad and then be shot? I said earlier that more of these cattle could

be left to rot around the properties because eventually they will be either shot or disposed of in some way. Once the cancer of the eye becomes too drastic, the owners will shoot the cattle on the property and drag them to the back corners of their farms where they become a haven for flies. The fly pest is the greatest problem for sheep breeders. If I were going to buy 100 head of cattle I would not ask an agent to buy them for me at Bourke, but some people, particularly hobby farmers, do this. At present these hobby farmers are causing great concern.

The CHAIRMAN (Mr. McLaren): Order! Again I suggest to the honorable member for Benalla that he should confine his remarks to clause 2. At this stage he is rather wide of the mark.

Mr. TREWIN: One of the problems with hobby farmers today is that they are not watching the brucellosis campaign.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The honorable member is still on his hobby horse. I suggest that he should refer specifically to clause 2.

Mr. TREWIN: It is not a hobby horse of mine; I am not a cattle breeder but a wheat grower. I would be disappointing the many cattle breeders in the Benalla electorate if I did not take up on their behalf the problems that honorable members have been debating tonight, whether it be cancer of the eye, brucellosis or tuberculosis. While these commutable diseases are prevalent among their herds, there will always be a problem. On behalf of these breeders in the electorate I represent and in many areas of the State, I make this appeal. We have lost the debate on numbers, but I am sure that we have won it in other ways.

The clause was agreed to.

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

CONSUMER AFFAIRS (AMENDMENT) BILL.

The debate (adjourned from 4th October) on the motion of Mr. Maclellan (Minister of Consumer Affairs) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

Mr. CRABB (Knox): The Bill makes a number of separate amendments to the Consumer Affairs Act. In another place the Opposition spokesman on consumer affairs will deal in more detail with the topics to which I will refer. In his second-reading speech, the Minister of Consumer Affairs dealt with the Bill clause by clause. That is understandable. There is no other satisfactory way of dealing with the Bill because it does not hang together; it consists of a number of unrelated amendments to the principal Act. Consequently, I will also deal with the Bill clause by clause.

The SPEAKER (Sir Kenneth Wheeler): Order! If the honorable member for Knox intends to deal with the Bill clause by clause, it might be better for him to do so at the Committee stage.

Mr. CRABB: I am merely adopting the format which the Minister used when explaining the purpose of the Bill. I should like to rebut the points he made in a similar manner.

The SPEAKER: Order! That might be better left for the Committee stage, but I shall leave that decision to the honorable member.

Mr. CRABB: Thank you for your guidance, Mr. Speaker. Clause 2 inserts in section 8 of the principal Act a new paragraph which attempts to resolve disputes by allowing the Consumer Affairs Bureau to make representations to suppliers on behalf of consumers. I am concerned with the wording of the new paragraph, which provides that the Consumer Affairs Bureau shall—

> Where a dispute arises between the consumer and the supplier in respect of goods or services, attempt to settle the dispute if it deems that such action is in the best interests of the parties.

One would have thought a Bill that is concerned with consumers would be designed to settle disputes in the best interests of the consumer, not in the best interests of the parties. It seems to me that the purpose of the Consumer Affairs Bureau is to act on behalf of consumers, not on behalf of parties, retailers or other people providing services.

The sellers, both retailers and people who sell services, have adequate protection in common law through the doctrine of *caveat emptor* —let the buyer beware. The onus is on the purchaser to prove that there was some defect in the goods or services. It is in that area that the consumer needs protection. The Minister would have done better if he had proposed an amendment to the Consumer Affiairs Act that was designed to protect the interests of the consumers rather than those of the other parties involved.

Clause 3 of the Bill makes a simple change in the machinery of the Act and cleans up the provision relating to misleading advertising. The Opposition is concerned that the Government has taken five years to propose an amendment to make this provision effective. In the five years since the Act was introduced a loophole has been quite evident to retailers and those who sell their services. They have been able to get around the law by switching their publishers and printers. I invite the Minister to expain why it has taken the Government so long to block this loophole.

Clause 4 purports to amend the Act in relation to the misleading marking of prices. In his second-reading speech the Minister said that cases had been brought to his notice in which the person who inserted an advertisement about prices was not necessarily the person who offered to supply the goods or services. The principal Act regulates the advertising of periodic payments and the cash price as opposed to a term transaction. It has been common in Victoria and throughout Australia for retailers selling certain types of goods to quote a price as so many dollars a week. Television sets, motor cars, refrigerators, and so on are advertised for sale in this way.

To some extent the Consumer Affairs Act helps to make the advertising of these goods fair dinkum, but it does not go the whole way. It is a valid criticism of this Bill that it does not go the whole way to ensure that a true comparison is provided between a terms transaction and a cash transaction. For example, why does the Bill not require periodical payments—weekly or monthly—to be stated in equally bold type in advertisements with an indication of how many payments are required? It is obvious that a contract for $1 a week for three years is entirely different from one for 50 or 60 years or forever. But the Act does not provide that an advertisement must state the terms of a contract. The advertisement is merely required to state the cash price and the periodic payment. It is difficult to relate periodic payments to one, bulk, cash payment because of the complexity of applying compound interest. However, a number of ways of doing this have been devised in other States and in countries other than Australia. Canada, the United States of America, and the United Kingdom have all enacted legislation on this subject. In February of this year an Act was passed through the Parliament of Westminster specifically regulating the basis on which a comparative statement can be made between different terms of consumer credit.

The Victorian Government has been significantly lacking in any initiative on this. It is still common in Victoria for goods such as second-hand cars, white goods and consumer durables of various types to be advertised for sale at, say, $500 or so many dollars a week. It is also common for used car yards to have advertisements on their walls stating that bank

interest rates will be applied, but many of these dealers charge bank interest only on the nominal sum involved and immediately discount the contract to a finance company at something approaching the market rate of interest. This is sheer deception of the consumer.

It is high time the Government considered the introduction of a Bill dealing with truth in advertising and providing a proper basis on which consumers could make a reasonable comparison of the contracts available to them from different financiers. There are simple ways of doing this. An Act could provide that it was necessary for the total sum of the instalments to be advertised in the same form as the cash payment and the weekly instalment. For instance, if payments were to be $1 a week for a year, it could be necessary to state that the total of the periodical instalments amounted to $52, as against a cash price of, say, $30 or $40. Similarly it should be necessary for it to be stated that the total instalments of a contract for $1 a week for three years amounted to $156. It should be required that the sum total of instalments be advertised in exactly the same way as the cash price and the periodic payments.

Victoria is lagging behind in introducing legislation of this kind. Other States, particularly South Australia, have taken the initiative. It is evident that the Victorian Government has procrastinated on this matter for a considerable period.

The next amendment proposed by the Bill relates to public fairs and shows. It is concerned with the exclusion of contracts originated at public fairs or shows from certain aspects of the principal Act. Consumers are given a ten-day cooling off period after entering into consumer credit contracts where the original sales have been made in their own homes. This Bill applies that cooling off period to contracts resulting from initial approaches at public fairs or shows as a result of which the contracts to purchase have been finalized in the homes of the consumers. It is remarkable that the ten-day cooling off period is restricted to contracts made as a result of door-to-door sales and contracts initiated at public fairs or shows.

Mr. MACLELLAN: It is hard to give ice cream back after ten days.

Mr. CRABB: Ice cream is seldom bought on credit terms. Certainly it should be possible for a ten-day cooling off period to be applied to all consumer credit contracts no matter how or where a contract was originally signed or executed. It should not matter whether the person went to a store, asked the store to send a representative to his home, bought from a door-to-door salesman, or met the retailer at a public show. It is high time the Government provided some protection for the consumer from high pressure advertising and high pressure salesmanship. A ten-day cooling off period is not inordinate and it would not cause undue hardship to the retailer or the finance company.

Mr. LOXTON: The goods would be second hand.

Mr. CRABB: The honorable member for Prahran and the Minister say that bread is not sold in that way.

Mr. LOXTON: I did not say that.

Mr. CRABB: No one ever buys bread by credit contract. Credit contracts are used almost exclusively for the purchase of consumer durables. People are put under pressure to buy goods that they do not need or want. Gullible people are often duped by other people who are friends of the honorable member for Prahran into purchasing goods they do not need or want. It is a disgrace that the people of Victoria are not given better protection by the State.

Consumer credit benefits ordinary people. It allows them to spread their incomes and to buy capital goods that they could not otherwise obtain. But consumer credit is abused dreadfully

by the people who provide the money to allow others to purchase these goods. It is incumbent on any Government to protect people from usury, deceit, and corruption.

Mr. MACLELLAN: Did you say corruption?

Mr. CRABB: Yes. It is quite common for consumer credit contracts to be sold by high-pressure salesmen to people in a way they do not understand and in circumstances in which they can scarcely resist. It is only reasonable that they should have a cooling off period during which they can cancel these contracts, a time in which they can reflect and consider, and possibly decide that they did not really mean to enter into the contracts.

That respite should be allowed to all people, not merely to those who have been subjected to high-pressure salesman at their front doors or who have been contacted at a public show. It ought to be available to everyone who enters into a consumer credit contract.

The amendments proposed by the Bill certainly go nowhere in dealing with some of the practices of retailers and the purveyors of consumer credit. For example, they go nowhere in dealing with the practice of supplying store currency. That is one of the most insidious forms of consumer credit. Retailers provide money which they have printed themselves. It is provided to consumers on a terms basis and the people then use it virtually as if it were cash and they can exchange it in large department stores for all forms of goods and services. I have seen store currency from Waltons exchanged for lunches, with the change being returned in cash.

It is common practice for salesmen to knock on the doors of unsuspecting persons and try to sell them goods of various types, such as three-piece lounge suites, colour television sets, linen, floor coverings and all the other items that people want. If it is not possible to sell them these articles because the people already have them, the salesmen then offer them store currency. They say, "You can have $100 of store currency. You do not need to buy anything now; you can buy something later, but credit is tight and you may not be able to get it next week. It will only cost you $1 a week to purchase $100 of store currency." The moment the purchaser is given this toy money, he starts paying interest.

Mr. MCARTHUR: He is told this, is he not?

Mr. CRABB: I am glad that the honorable member for Ringwood has become the back-bencher representing usurers. The whole point is that the interest rates are not clearly explained to the purchaser because of the inadequacy of the law in connection with consumer credit contracts. There is no provision in the statutes of Victoria which requires the lenders of money or the providers of credit to tell people the realities of the contracts that they are entering into.

There is nothing in the statutes of Victoria which says that interest must be expressed as compound interest or in any consistent way, other than the provisions in the Money Lenders Act and in the Hire Purchase Act. It is not difficult and does not take much perspicacity or intelligence—perhaps even the honorable member for Ringood would be able to do it—to work out a way of avoiding the provisions of the Money Lenders Act and of the Hire Purchase Act. Most hire-purchase contracts are well outside the provisions of those Acts and are well outside the control or concern of this lazy, inadequate Government.

Victoria is one of the most retrograde States in the English-speaking world in regard to consumer credit legislation. It is miles behind even the United States of America. People in Victoria can borrow money and have no idea of how much interest, in real terms, they are paying. The lenders quote interest in flat terms and say, "It is 18 per cent flat over three years", yet when they

borrow money from the consumer through, say, building societies, they never express interest as a flat rate; it is always quoted as compound interest. It is always quoted as 10 per cent compound interest, never, say, 7 per cent flat interest. It is consistent misrepresentation. If one borrows money at a flat interest rate of 18 per cent, in fact the money lender is being paid 36 per cent in compound interest.

If honorable members are somewhat bemused by these figures, I shall point out that if they bought Waltons store currency on a twelve-month contract, and hung on to it for three months before exchanging it for goods or services, they would be paying approximately 100 per cent compound interest per annum.

Mr LIEBERMAN: Simple interest, not compound.

Mr. CRABB: For the edification of honorable members opposite, I point out that I am speaking about compound interest, not simple interest, because the payments are compounded weekly as they are made. When a consumer purchases store currency he receives pieces of paper, which he can exchange for goods in the store, but he pays for the currency in hard cash, week by week throughout the operation of the contract, which is usually twelve months. If he holds his pieces of paper in the kitchen drawer for three months before exchanging them for goods, at the end of the twelve months he will have paid an effective 100 per cent interest. It is scandalous that that could happen in Victoria in 1977. It is a disgrace. Even the Money Lenders Act, inadequate though it is, provides that 48 per cent is the maximum rate of interest that can be charged.

Anyone who wishes to lend money can easily get around the Money Lenders Act by lending the money as a personal loan or as a chattel mortgage. There are many legal methods available. The Money Lenders Act is totally and completely meaningless. It is just as meaningless as the Hire Purchase Act, because it does not cover chattel mortgages, personal loans or the vast majority of credit contracts entered into by consumers. The Government has left consumers to the tender mercies of usurers and thieves and the Bill is yet another example of the Government's inadequacy.

Mr. MACLELLAN: But you are supporting the Bill, are you not?

Mr. CRABB: The Opposition is not opposing the Bill because the precious little it offers is welcome in the eyes of consumers; the precious few inches it goes towards reasonable provisions are welcomed by the Opposition. The point I make is that the Government, as always, is trailing ten or twenty years behind.

The last point I make concerns clause 7, which seems to create or perpetuate a loophole. The clause concerns warranties on certain consumer items, and I gather it refers to such things as television sets, washing machines and so on. It relates to a requirement that the repairer of a consumer durable who replaces a part must provide the consumer with the part which is replaced. In other words, if a broken valve in a television set is replaced, the person who repairs the television set must give back the broken valve when the set is returned.

The clause purports to remove from that provision of the principal Act situations where the part is being replaced under a guarantee and situations where no charge is made for the replacement valve. I am concerned because many warranties on television sets and items of that ilk cover materials only and the labour content of the replacement charge is paid for by the consumer. In other situations there may be no labour charge, but there may be a charge for the collection and delivery of the goods. The clause is inadequately worded, because it would not be hard for the repairer to say that he is not charging for the replaced valve,

but just for the labour. It is not difficult for the repairer to switch the charge from one item to the other. I invite the Minister to explain how situations such as this will be covered.

I am particularly worried about such things as television, radio and refrigerator repairs because I am sure I am not the only member of this House who has received numerous complaints about these services. I am sure I am not the only member of Parliament who has received complaints about over-charging, and I have had a number of complaints from consumers who believe they were charged for repairs that were never carried out. It may be fact or it may be folklore, but there is no doubt that many consumers believe all television repairers are crooks. They cannot all be crooks, just as all honorable members opposite cannot be crooks, but people in the community believe many television repairers are crooks.

I invite the Minister to respond to the matters I have raised and ask the honorable gentleman to reconsider certain provisions of the Bill, in particular the provisions relating to consumer credit contracts, prior to the introduction of the Bill in another place. The Opposition does not oppose the Bill.

Mr. McINNES (Gippsland South): I have listened with interest to the honorable member for Knox, a man of great intelligence and professional experience, but never have I heard such a load of unadulterated rubbish.

One of the most intelligent comments I have ever seen recorded in a Parliament in Australia—and I am not sure whether it was State or Federal Parliament—is, "We can protect the birds and the bees, but the two-legged animals can take care of themselves." We should not lose sight of that fact. We are not dealing, on the one hand, with a small bunch of crooks and, on the other hand, with an innocent and guileless community. People must take some responsibility and the onus is on them to take care of themselves. They cannot be molly-coddled from the cradle to the grave. People must be alerted to the dangers of the jungle and must take some care of themselves.

The Bill is fairly innocuous and the National Party supports it. In the typical fashion of labour and industry and consumer affairs Bills, it is a concoction of bits and pieces. Nevertheless, it has the effect of tightening up legislation and is fair and just to all concerned. I refer particularly to those clauses which relate to the provision of arbitration on matters of dispute between consumers and the suppliers of services. Such a system is necessary. From time to time members of the legal profession have ripped off people once they have gone to court and it would be better, in disputes involving amounts of up to $1,000—which are the parameters of the present Act—for an arbitrator to talk to both the supplier and the consumer and perhaps drive some sense into both of them. Often, these problems are easily resolved. It is mainly a matter of communication. I applaud the fact that the role of the Consumer Affairs Bureau has been formalized to provide this arbitration. It will save the consumer, the producer and the marketer, a great deal of money, and will lead to better relations between, and a better understanding by all concerned.

The other provision of the Bill is straightforward—it provides for the marking or stamping on goods of the manufacturer's name. Any reputable manufacturer would not object to that. He would be prepared to put his name on the goods. This requirement can be only beneficial when it relates to safe design of goods or machinery. Trade unions could take more interest in this. During the 1950s and 1960s some machinery was unsafe and from time to time only the skill of the operator prevented unfortunate accidents.

The consumer is not always lily-white. He would frequently take the trader down for his socks if he had the opportunity. This is a two-sided argument. The traders are not villians but just ordinary Australians, trying to make a profit and to remain in business. They want repeat business and most traders are willing to give a fair deal to their clients.

Mr. CRABB: Some are not.

Mr. McINNES: The great majority are. There is the isolated case of the usurer who charges 48 per cent interest. It has always appalled me that that sort of interest rate should be approved by legislation.

I do not agree with the honorable member for Knox when he says that permanent building societies charge 100 per cent. That is not factual. I speak as the director of a permanent building society. I do not mind registering an interest because the matter can stand close scrutiny. What the honorable member for Knox says does not happen. The rates of interest charged by a permanent building society are high because the rates payable on money borrowed to provide finance to home builders in a cost bracket beyond the area of co-operative housing are particularly high.

I realize that I am straying from the Bill but as a final remark on this, I mention that building societies operate on a margin of about 1 per cent to 1·5 per cent. That is probably the most economic financing available in Australia. It is possible now to borrow internationally at an interest rate of 6 per cent and, rather than a reduction of 0·5 per cent or 0·25 per cent as canvassed, the Fraser Government should reduce interest rates by 3 per cent. That could be done, and it would provide a tremendous upsurge in business which would counter any losses.

The SPEAKER (Sir Kenneth Wheeler): Order! The honorable member should return to the Bill.

Mr. McINNES: This is a straightforward measure which is designed to close loopholes. Unfortunately there are a few rogues around who are smart enough to find a way around the provisions of the Act. As one does with rabbit warrens, one must block up the holes in legislation. I fully support the Government on this measure. It provides a few more teeth to the much maligned Consumer Affairs Bureau. The Consumer Affairs Bureau and the Small Business Development Corporation should be supported by all parties in this House and should be provided with the power to command respect which would act as an inhibiting factor on people who believe the public can be taken for a ride.

Part of the commitment of the Consumer Affairs Bureau is to educate the public. I applaud the steps it has recently taken, by means of radio and television, to educate the public on the dangers that they can face. The Consumer Affairs Bureau is playing an important part by doing this. The consuming public must be informed and educated. Once that is done, if people make mistakes those mistakes are their responsibility. People can be protected just so far; they cannot be protected in an infinite manner; they must stand on their own feet and depend on their own resources. Where they are not capable of doing that, there might be a compassionate case for control and support. I am sure the courts and most Australians would be generous in that respect. However, the average Australian must take the responsibility of looking after himself to a great extent. The role of government must be to avoid the excesses and the nasty side of capitalism, as well as the excesses of left-wing unionism.

The SPEAKER (Sir Kenneth Wheeler): Order! The honorable member should return to the Bill.

Mr. McINNES: Both attitudes are harmful to Australia. The Consumer Affairs (Amendment) Bill is straightforward and I do not believe any

honorable member can take exception to it. I commend the Minister of Consumer Affairs for ensuring that the Act is progressively tightened—not before time.

The National Party finds nothing harmful in the measure but it will not be party to saying, "We, the consumers, have total rights, to the complete exclusion of the traders." The trader has rights and all Australians must act in concert. Unless there is co-operation we will get nowhere. Honorable members should not be party to consumer legislation to the point where the situation becomes ridiculous. Members of the National Party support the Bill. It is a good measure. It is not particularly earth-shattering but it moves one step forward.

Mr. MACLELLAN (Minister of Consumer Affairs): I thank the member of the Opposition for indicating that the Labor Party does not oppose the Bill, and I thank the honorable member for Gippsland South for the contribution that he made in support of the Bill.

The honorable member for Knox asked a rhetorical question: Why was this Bill not introduced up to five years ago? I am sure those honorable members who have heard the debate know the answer to the question of why this type of Bill is not introduced more regularly.

Much of the material introduced by the honorable member for Knox in relation to store currency is a matter which I will certainly mention to the Attorney-General when I next see him, as he administers the legislation in respect to such matters. I will also take up the question of interest rates, which was mentioned by the honorable member for Gippsland South, the matter of building societies and the nasty side of capitalism, with the Treasurer when I see him.

I assure the National Party that I do not intend that consumer affairs legislation should go to extreme lengths, but it is hoped the legislation will be progressively updated as opportunities to improve it occur.

The honorable member for Knox was anxious that clause 2 should provide for negotiations to take place between the consumer and the trader. I should have thought that the honorable member for Knox, with his sensitivity to industrial relations, would have been equally sensitive in the field of consumer relations and would have realized that it is the function of the bureau, not to act as a police force, but to bring the parties together in the hope that they may produce a settlement. That is what is proposed in the Bill.

The honorable member referred to clause 4 and suggested that consumer credit was a problem. He went on to clause 5 and suggested that there should be a ten-day cooling-off period for every credit purchaser. The problem is that people who buy goods from a store on an account—many people have credit accounts—would, as the honorable member for Knox has suggested, have a ten-day cooling-off period. The honorable member for Prahran indicated that it would be rather difficult if, after having used a bed for ten days, a person decided to return it because he did not like it. It is not the intention of the Bill to enter into that sort of area.

The Bill relates to door-to-door sales, where people are approached on their own territory, and are perhaps subjected to pressure or aggressive selling. It has been decided to give them a cooling-off period of ten days in which to confirm or renounce the sale. Merely because door-to-door sales take place as a result of an introduction at a fair or show is no reason to eliminate the right to the ten-day cooling-off period. That is what the clause is designed to provide.

The honorable member for Knox referred to clause 7 and used the example of the return of a television set. However, I shall use another

example—the repair of shoes. Section 61c (1) and (2) of the present Act provide that a person who repairs shoes is under an obligation to return the old part of the shoe. If that part is not returned the person concerned could be guilty of an offence, the penalty for which is $100—an absurdity which this Bill corrects. The Bill is designed to correct that absurdity because the consumer does not have the slightest interest in having the old heel or sole of the shoe returned. The legislation should not have been left in that untidy state and this provision has been introduced to bring it into accord with reality.

The penalty of $100 and the requirement of the return of the piece of shoe that has been repaired does not apply when no charge is made for the removal and replacement. Therefore, if no charge is made, one has no interest in that provision.

If the dire prediction of the honorable member for Knox about television repairs turns out to be a reality, I shall be pleased to introduce a further amendment to take account of it. I give a further undertaking to the honorable member, although he did not ask for it, that before the Bill is presented in another place, I shall examine the matter of television repairs to ensure that there is no loophole in the legislation. In the Legislative Council Mr. Landeryou will no doubt engage in a full speech on this Bill, as was indicated by the honorable member for Knox—Heaven help them there. I undertake to have this matter examined so that the Minister, who will be subjected to the full speech when it is delivered, will be in a position to answer the question raised by the honorable member for Knox.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was read a second time and committed.

Clauses 1 to 3 were agreed to.

Clause 4 (Amendment of No. 8276, s. 13A).

Mr. CRABB (Knox): The honorable member for Gippsland South stated that during my second-reading speech I had claimed that permanent building societies were charging an interest rate of 100 per cent. I should have made my speech simpler for the honorable member's understanding. What I said was that store currency —a true evil in the provision of consumer credit—had an effective rate of 100 per cent per annum if the consumer did not use the store currency within a period of three months from the date of contract. I repeat that for the benefit of the honorable member for Gippsland South.

In closing the second-reading debate, the Minister made little or no reference to the intention of the Government regarding consumer credit legislation. It is of the utmost importance to the consumers of Victoria that they should know the intention of the Government on the introduction of reasonable and decent credit legislation. Clause 4 is entirely inadequate. It is merely a sop, a trivial thing, almost a publicity exercise, or a token stand by the Government. If the Government was really interested in introducing consumer legislation, it could easily adopt the provisions contained in the United Kingdom Consumer Credit Act 1977 or the consumer credit legislation introduced in Toronto, Ottawa or the United States of America. There are a number of examples which the Government could follow if it had the will to introduce legislation for the benefit of the people of Victoria.

The clause was agreed to.

Clause 5 (Amendment of No. 8276, s. 14 (3)).

Mr. CRABB (Knox): This clause refers to a ten-day cooling-off period after a person has made a purchase at a public fair or how. When closing the second-reading debate, the Minister stated that beds which had been slept in for ten days could hardly be returned. A person who purchased a bed today would be extremely lucky to receive it before

the expiration of ten days. A person who entered into a contract to purchase a bed today, would not get the bed tonight in time to allow him to sleep in it for ten days. If that is the only objective which the Minister can put forward for extending the ten-day cooling-off period, it is weak in the eyes of the Opposition and the consumer.

Pressure selling exists, and is practised in all forms of retailing, not only at the doorstep but also in all situations, including the lounge-room, the store, the car yard and even on television. All honorable members have a responsibility to look after those people in the community who are not as strong as others and not as resilient to the blandishments of polished high-pressure salesmen.

Pressure salesmanship is something which is a part of our society. Until recently, the consumer had a ten-day cooling-off period after falling prey to a pressure salesman. It is not unreasonable to extend that cooling-off period for the benefit of the consumer involved in all credit transactions, whether in relation to used cars purchased in used car yards or goods purchased elsewhere. I ask the Minister to consider an amendment before this Bill reaches another place.

The clause was agreed to, as was clause 6.

Clause 7 (Amendment of No. 8276, s. 61c).

Mr. CRABB (Knox): When closing the second-reading debate, the Minister used an example of repairs to shoes. According to the Minister, this amendment is being introduced merely to absolve shoemakers from the responsibility of giving worn heels and soles back to a person who is having shoes mended. It is remarkable that the Minister has been heavily lobbied by shoemakers who find it inconvenient to return worn soles and heels to the consumer. I suggest that no such representations have been made to the Minister because no shoemaker would object to giving worn soles or heels back to a consumer.

The amendment is directed principally towards the repair of consumer goods including television sets, radios, stereograms, refrigerators, and other sophisticated items of machinery which the consumer does not understand. Many consumers in Victoria believe that television and radio repairmen and tradesmen who repair machinery in private homes are crooks. They cannot all be crooks, just as all second-hand car salesmen cannot be crooks. There must be honest men amongst them, but nevertheless the consumers in Victoria require and desire legislation to protect them against unscrupulous people engaged in these fields.

The Government has not provided a semblance of reason for the introduction of this amendment, except to state that it will remove the need for shoemakers to give worn soles or heels of shoes back to persons for whom shoe repairs are carried out. When a person has a television set repaired, and the picture tube or a blown valve is replaced, the worn part should be returned to demonstrate that the replacement has been effected properly, fairly and honestly.

Mr. B. J. EVANS: How would they know if it was the right tube?

Mr. CRABB: Even the honorable member for Gippsland East would recognize a blown tube, but possibly in Gippsland East they have not worked that out. A consumer might not know whether a tube is blown, but if it is returned to him, he has a fair idea that it is no good because it would be ridiculous to expect a repairman to return a good part.

I appreciate that consumers cannot be experts on all the items which they purchase. For example, I do not know whether a jade bracelet is fair dinkum or bodgie and that could be demonstrated in the one I bought for my wife.

Mr. KENNETT: You got a genuine one, believe me.

Mr. CRABB: The fact is that *caveat emptor*—let the buyer beware —is the legal basis upon which consumer transactions take place but it is only reasonable at a time of high-pressure salesmanship, high-pressure advertising, deception and deceit that the consumer should be protected. We are living in a time of deception and deceit and it is only reasonable to expect the Government to afford protection to the consumer. I submit that the amendment in clause 7 does not provide the protection that is required and the Minister did not give a good reason for its introduction other than by referring to worn-out soles and heels of shoes. The Minister should give the Committee a good reason why the amendment should be supported.

Mr. MACLELLAN (Minister of Consumer Affairs): I concede that I certainly underestimated the honorable member for Knox and I should not have given the example of shoes, but I was choosing what I thought was a simple and innocuous example. What I should have done was drawn his attention to the words " where no charge is made " as contained in clause 7 which states, *inter alia*—

> This section does not apply in a case where no charge is made.

It is a fairly simple concept that the section shall not apply when the consumer is not charged for repairs that have been carried out. In fact, the consumer may not be charged for a number of things. For instance, he may not be charged for the removal of the part or he may buy something under guarantee which breaks down and he takes it back to the agent and the part is replaced. It seems quite unreasonable that the person who is the agent and who is replacing something under a guarantee, should be the subject of prosecution, the penalty for which is $100, for failing to return to the consumer the part for whose replacement or removal he has not been charged.

It is a simple concept which I attempted to illustrate with shoes and the repair of shoes, but subsequently I have realized that I underestimated the honorable member for Knox. I have now supplied the example which he wanted. He wanted a reason for the amendment to be supported and that reason is simply the fact that the consumer does not pay. It is a service which is provided to a consumer by the person who is acting under the warranty provisions. When there is no charge, the consumer is thought to have no real interest in receiving what has been replaced and there is certainly no reason for it to be returned to the consumer under those circumtances. I apologize to you, Mr. Chairman, for referring to shoes which was an inappropriate example.

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

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

Mr. MACLELLAN (Minister of Consumer Affairs): I move—

> That this Bill be now read a third time.

Mr. CRABB (Knox): I propose to reiterate a matter which I raised in the second-reading debate. Clause 7 seems to create a loophole whereby it is possible for people who are returning goods to be charged for the cartage and the labour costs involved in repairing the goods, but not to be charged for the parts which are replaced, such as the blown valves, soles of shoes and so on. I am grateful that the Minister will reexamine this matter before the Bill goes to another place.

Mr. McINNES (Gippsland South): I think the honorable member for Knox has a point and I support the Minister in respect to removal of defective parts.

The motion was agreed to, and the Bill was read a third time.

PRIVILEGES COMMITTEE.

Mr. THOMPSON (Minister of Education): By leave, I move—

That this House grant leave to allow the Privileges Committee to meet and take evidence during the sittings of the House in relation to the matter referred to the committee for examination and report by this House on 20th October, 1977.

The motion was agreed to.

WATER SUPPLY WORKS AND SERVICES BILL (No. 2).

The debate (adjourned from October 6) on the motion of Mr. Borthwick (Minister for Conservation) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

Mr. WILTON (Broadmeadows): The purpose of the Bill is to seek Parliamentary approval for the expenditure of Government funds on a variety of water supply works and services in non-metropolitan areas of Victoria. By this Bill the Government proposes that Parliament shall grant authority for the expenditure of $70 million. However, as set out in the explanatory statement which accompanies the Bill, it is anticipated that the sum of $47·75 million will be expended during the current financial year. As honorable members know, periodically it is necessary to provide funds so that works which have been commenced can continue, and to facilitate the preparation of a works programme, design, investigation, and so on. It is usual to approve a larger sum than will actually be expended in the current financial year. As the Minister explained in his second-reading speech, this Bill cancels out all unexpended funds under the previous Act and reauthorizes certain expenditure included in that Act.

I propose to refer specifically to several items set out in the explanatory statement. I consider it to be tragic that the Government has not used this type of legislation and the works which flow from it to make a practical contribution to the current unemployment situation in Victoria.

For generations Governments have used public works programmes, whether water supply and services or public works and services programmes, when the State has been confronted with a serious economic downturn which has created a serious unemployment situation. In such circumstances, the community looks to the Government of the day to make some practical contribution to assist the private sector in creating job opportunities.

Vast areas of the State are still waiting for reticulated water supplies, water storage services, river improvement programmes, irrigation improvement programmes and all the ancillary works involved in irrigation programmes. There is expertise, not only in the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission but in various local authorities which have been established throughout the State in the sewerage districts and various local water trusts—many authorities have their own professional staff—to handle works programmes. It is therefore regrettable that in this Bill the Government has set out its works programme in what is almost a traditional manner. In other words, a little money has been provided for one water trust and a little money for a sewerage trust to tidy up here or there, but no real major works programmes have been provided. For example, item 2 at page 3 of the explanatory statement states—

Works will be continued in the Mallee irrigation districts on the replacement of open channels with pipelines to increased the efficiency of operations through the reduction of water losses by evaporation and seepage.

It is proposed to spend $330,000 on these works in 1977–78. That is a miserable amount of money at current-day values; it is almost insignificant. The area in question in the Wimmera–Mallee stock and domestic system is one of the largest systems in the State, if not the largest. It has been argued for many years that there is

a loss of the order of 70 per cent of the storage capacity in the Grampians. Water is released at appropriate times of the year to service the stock and domestic system throughout the Wimmera and Mallee channel. There are a variety of service dams. The area covers Lake Bellfield, Lake Lonsdale, Wartook reservoir——

Mr. BORTHWICK: And Lake Fyans.

Mr. WILTON: I can see that the Minister has at least had a look at the area. I have acknowledged the fact that the Minister has had a long association with the area of which I am talking. When one looks at the total capacity of the storage area in the Grampians and takes into account the fact that for years only 30 per cent of this water has reached the consumer, it is obvious that this area should have a higher priority than it has been given by the Government for a long time. I invite honorable members to compare the actual cost of piping this system with the construction cost of additional head works. If one could find a suitable site on which to construct the head works with a sufficient catchment area to make any proposed dam a viable proposition in this limited area of the Grampians, surely it should be considered much more closely than in the past. There is the added bonus that if a major works programme was undertaken by the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission the State would derive a twofold benefit. We would substantially reduce the enormous loss of water stored in the head works and also make a practical contribution to providing job opportunities for people in Victoria. The Government deserves criticism in that regard.

The other area which has been causing considerable worry for some time is the Goulburn–Murray district and in particular the salinity problem in the area. In 1975 the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission produced to the Government a comprehensive report which dealt with the question of salinity control and drainage in the area. The commission put forward a strategy programme. In the report to the Minister of Water Supply there was a comprehensive programme, the most important part of which was to bring into operation a major works programme spread over a ten-year period at an estimated cost of approximately $40 million on 1975 values. The report emphasized the importance of the Murray–Goulburn area, in terms of population in regional districts, what the area contributes to community life, the number of people who are dependent for their livelihood on the area, the viability of agricultural operations that are carried out and how close the area is coming to being a major disaster area because of the water table problem and salinity problem.

I refer to the figures presented by the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission for 1975. I am sure the Government accepts them because the Cabinet approved the scheme in principle. There was a provision of $40 million over ten years, which means $4 million a year. The Bill makes a provision of $3·5 million, of which $2·96 million will be spent in the current financial year. However, the explanatory note states that the $2·96 million provided for expenditure in 1977–78 includes $1·2 million for expenditure on irrigation and drainage works in the Goulburn–Murray Irrigation District and $550,000 for the provision of housing for additional water bailiffs. I suppose that is important if one is a water bailiff. What is more important is that the Government is allocating approximately $1·2 million to combat salinity in the Goulburn–Murray Irrigation District. That sum is paltry compared with the over-all programme put forward by the Water Commission two years ago. Then it was proposed to allocate $40 million to be spent over ten years.

If one takes inflation into account and relates that to the 1975 figures and then to the 1977–78 figures——

Mr. JASPER: They have yet to get started.

Mr. WILTON: I accept the interjection, which is very pertinent. The Government must get started on the project, and the longer it is delayed the more danger there is that the area will become a disaster area. Once the water table reaches the level where the salinity directly affects the plant life and reduces production, the area is laid waste and the cost of rehabilitation will be astronomical—it will run into hundreds of millions of dollars.

Surely it is prudent to take notice of what the recognized experts have said, because they discharged their responsibility when submissions were made to the Government. When it became apparent that the problem was serious, the local organizations, in co-operation with the departmental officers, did their job and brought forward all the evidence that could be gathered throughout the district. It was placed in a properly documented report and presented to Cabinet. The Cabinet went through the exercise of carrying a motion and making an announcement in the press in 1975 stating that it approved the programme in principle.

Over the years on a variety of matters the Government has considered reports pointing out the dangers and seriousness of the situation, had the programmes costed, and Cabinet has approved of them in principle. It has become a meaningless exercise for the people who live in the area because, as the honorable member for Murray Valley said by interjection, the Government has yet to get started on these projects. Something practical should be done to put into operation the programmes that have been mapped out by the authority and the experts who have told the Government what should be done, how much it would cost and how it should be done.

The Cabinet adopts the programmes in principle and legislation like this Bill is introduced allowing provision to be made to put the programmes into operation, but providing only $12 million, whereas in 1975 $40 million was proposed. The Government deserves criticism for that.

No doubt many of the items listed in the Bill are important, and I am sure the Water Commission and water trusts and sewerage authorities will be grateful for the amounts they will receive, but they are not enough. The Government continues to give authorities certain sums of money and then places the onus on them to obtain the remainder through rate revenue or loan allocations. This brings back the age-old problem faced by local authorities—municipal, sewerage or water—that the Government continually forces them to tax people under the archaic system of taxing property with no regard for the capacity of the owner to meet the commitment.

Honorable members have recently heard a lot of discussion in Parliament about the iniquitous obligations of pay-roll tax on manufacturers, regardless of whether they are making a profit. Similarly, local authorities are forced to levy rates as a tax regardless of the person's income or potential income. Rates are calculated on property value, which is a hypothetical figure. In areas where these taxes are applied, if a person sells a property for a certain price, that becomes the ruling price for the district, regardless of whether other owners wish to sell their properties, and it is used as a value upon which rates are levied. It is an archaic system and it is about time the Government abolished it.

Naturally, the Opposition does not oppose the Bill because these measures are necessary to obtain Parliamentary approval for appropriation to be made, but it criticizes the Government because of the low appropriation it has made.

I have chosen two items to show that the Government has again failed to take any initiative in creating job opportunities for the unemployed.

This measure would have provided an excellent opportunity for the Government to initiate a major works programme involving sewerage and water trusts, river improvement trusts and the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission to take up the slack in employment that has existed for years. Many districts have been waiting for water reticulation, sewerage and river improvement programmes to be started, and this would have given employment to hundreds of people if the funds were made available. So the responsibility comes back to the Government as the controller of the purse in Victoria. The Government should provide the necessary funds and go into a deficit for this purpose because it is a good long-term investment.

Unfortunately, the provision in the Bill for works in the Goulburn-Murray Irrigation District is totally inadequate for what is required. If the Government continues to gamble with the future of hundreds of thousands of people and thousands of hectares of land, which includes some of the choicest argicultural areas in the State and contains some of the largest and best developed regional communities, the whole future of those people and industries will be at risk. The sum of $1·2 million is a pittance even by State and Federal standards. When that is related to the catastrophe that might be faced in this area, it is almost a tragedy and the Government deserves severe criticism.

The people of the area are concerned and have taken a hostile attitude towards the Government because their future is at stake. I can understand why they have taken this attitude. The Government should not play around with the future of these people because it wants to defer making necessary decisions in the hope, like most gamblers, that it can be left until tomorrow. If it adopts this attitude, tomorrow may catch up with it and then it will be too late. If a tragedy occurs, people in this place will say, "Let us not worry about what has gone on in the past; let us get on with the future." Let Government supporters make those speeches today, but the Government should get on with the work tomorrow.

This should be done to solve these problems and to protect the future livelihood of these people. It is something with which no Government has the right to gamble.

The Labor Party does not oppose the Bill, but it is critical of the Government for the reasons that I have already outlined.

Mr. HANN (Rodney): I support the Water Supply Works and Services Bill and I echo some of the remarks of the honorable member for Broadmeadows concerning the very low priority which the Government has given to water supply. If one looks at the Budget figure of $47·750 million for proposed expenditure during 1977–78 and the total Budget figure of $3,283 million, it will be seen that about 1·4 per cent of the Budget is being spent on water supply works. This shows the Government's failure to recognize the importance and significance of water to Victoria and Australia.

Australia is one of the driest continents in the world, and water supply should be one of the greatest priorities of the Government. If ever there was a time for that it is now in many of the northern parts of Victoria where the irrigation areas will be the lifeblood of the State because of the dry conditions. One regrets that more members in this House are not aware of the importance of irrigation and proper water storage and supply in Victoria. Perhaps we should take them more often on tours throughout the State to draw the significance of water to their attention. We would be pleased to do that.

The Minister for Conservation has established many of the irrigation areas, and he is well aware that they are still prosperous. The Government should recognize the importance of this multi-million dollar industry.

It provides a livelihood for many thousands of people throughout the irrigation areas of Victoria, and the Government should not only maintain those areas in a satisfactory manner but should extend irrigation to other parts of Victoria. There are still many areas in which water supplies should be established. The Government is contributing to the main one, Dartmouth dam, which is finally near completion. The Government should have a programme for water storages at least to match the quantity of water that will be stored in the Dartmouth dam. There are various projects throughout Victoria which could do that and it is unfortunate that the Government has not recognized the importance of these projects.

Reference has been made to water trusts and sewerage authorities. An amount of approximately $9 million is allocated in the Budget towards these services throughout provincial Victoria. In his Budget speech the Treasurer blamed the Commonwealth Government for withdrawing from this programme, but Victoria cannot go on for ever and a day blaming the Commonwealth Government. It should recognize its own responsibility in this area, upgrade its priorities and further extend sewerage services throughout Victoria and water services in particular. There are still many towns in Victoria which do not have filtered water supplies, and a higher priority should be given to upgrading water supplies for people in these towns.

Mention has been made of the irrigation districts, particularly the Murray–Goulburn district, which is a significant irrigation district in Victoria. It is certainly the largest. The Government has given it low priority in view of its significance. There are enormous financial needs, including the salinity control programme. The Government received a comprehensive and sound report on the future needs of salinity control in the Murray–Goulburn district which it has passed on to the Public Works Committee. Consequently, there has been a two-year delay, and only one stage of the report has been presented to Parliament. In 1975 we were talking of a $40 million programme, but in 1977 it would be a $60 million programme—the final report has still not been received! Probably it will be a $100 million programme by the time the Government gets the report back and makes a decision on it. That will be an almost impossible challenge. The Government had a very comprehensive report prepared by its own department and it should have accepted the challenge at the time and started the salinity control programme.

In the meantime the problem of salinity has gradually extended into many irrigation areas and has moved eastward. There have been problems in the horticultural areas around Shepparton in recent years. The Government has made a contribution to ground bores as a salinity control measure—these have been successful. They have lowered the water table in those areas. I ask the Government to consider extending that programme and to change the criteria whereby it is limited to horticultural areas, and to recognize the need in the pastoral areas, particularly dairying areas, and to install some ground water bores in those areas. It is important to do that now before the problem becomes too serious.

The Government is fortunate in having people with expertise in the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission, in the Department of Agriculture and also, in the Department of Minerals and Energy. One of the most significant events in many years in regard to salinity is the report by Mr. Phil McCumber of the Mines Department in which he set out the full problem of salinity from Kerang to Shepparton and said that the forestry areas that have been cleared in the highest ranges have allowed moisture deep from the land to go into the leads underneath, and this has created problems to the pressure

points in the Kerang area. Mr. McCumber thinks this will be a problem in the Rochester and Shepparton areas. This is a new concept. In Bendigo eventually the gold mines filled with water in the same way. This finding in regard to salinity is significant and poses a number of alternative solutions. Pressure can be taken away from these underground leads farther back. It opens up the question of the reforestation programme in the highland areas. These were cleared in past generations. It also draws attention to the fact that while the problem is real, in the Kerang region the influence of salinity in these underground deep leads is moving into the Rochester and Shepparton areas.

The Government is aware of this, but I am not sure if it is fully aware of the significance of these findings. I draw them to the attention of the Minister and ask the Government to give them greater priority in the investigations being carried out and in the techniques suggested to overcome some of these salinity problems.

Other proposals put forward include a pilot project. I understand that the Premier is giving consideration to this at the moment. Some salinity control areas could be set aside to act as local salinity basins. There are farmers in the Pyramid Hill area who are able to install their own salinity control measures and these are proving successful. A significant factor also is the experiments being carried out in relation to the usage of saline water for irrigation. This is exposing some myths. It was believed that water with a saline content could not be used for irrigation. It is now being discovered that shandy water and part saline water can be used to grow good pastures.

Mr. JONES: What is the maximum salinity?

Mr. HANN: About 800 parts per million is quite satisfactory. That is above what has been recognized in the past. A recent proposal suggests that in some types of soil it opens the land up to a greater degree and allows greater penetration if the water has some salinity rather than it being pure water.

There is need, particularly in the old irrigation areas, for the pasture layout to be improved. Most of these pastures were laid out 40 to 50 years ago in the days of the horse and the land plane. There is a need to rip up the pastures and this will involve an expensive programme for the landholder. He will need to bring in expensive equipment such as large land planes and earth-moving equipment. These will move up to 2 or 3 feet of soil and completely change the layout of a farmer's land. Farmers need financial assistance to carry out such work. I recognize that the Minister for Conservation offered finance through the Rural Finance and Settlement Commission, but at present interest rates are 9 to 10 per cent and if a farmer wants to rip up established pasture and redevelop it, it could mean that his land will be out of production for a couple of years.

One of the types of equipment needed is a large land plane with a laser beam, which would allow greater and more effective control. We have not seen this type of equipment in this country yet, but it is used in the United States of America. A contractor in my area is currently investigating the possibility of importing one of these units. This new means of improving the layout of the irrigation system will eliminate many of the small pockets of water which tend to lie on many farms which were laid out 40 to 50 years ago. They have very short irrigation bays, with probably three or four drains. Under a new system water could be distributed through one long drain by the use of one bay.

The Government could accept the challenge. In the report on salinity from the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission a recommendation was made that $5 million

should be spent on the programme. The Government could have gone ahead with that type of programme immediately. I do not believe it had to wait until the Public Works Committee brought down its report, because that would not have affected the environment in any way; it would only have improved the irrigation system and eliminated the run-off of saline water in these areas, as well as controlling some of the problems of excess drainage.

It is important to turn to the question of drainage. In many areas it has been a big problem, particularly throughout the Goulburn–Murray Irrigation District, ever since the districts were established. Although the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission showed initiative in the early stages and introduced drainage along with the irrigation system, in more recent times that has not been done. It has been recognized that in any land settlement scheme the drainage system should be implemented at the same time as the erection of the irrigation system. That is how the whole irrigation area should have been originally established.

About 60 or 70 per cent of the Goulburn–Murray Irrigation District still does not have direct access to drainage. A total amount of $1·2 million has been allocated in the Water Supply Works and Services Bill for the Goulburn–Murray Irrigation District in this financial year. The estimated cost of 1 mile of drainage channel is about $50,000. Therefore, the allocated sum will provide only a few miles of drainage channel. In some areas the cost will be higher because it depends on the type of construction included in the drainage system.

In my area there are some important drainage systems. This year the allocation for the Lockington drain will be $200,000. That represents about 4 miles of drain in an area where many miles of drain still require to be built. At least ten to fifteen years ago people in that area recognized its problems and put a proposal to the Government that a drainage system should be implemented right through the area. That is now well established, and regular funding is provided each year. Vast areas of pasture have now been restored because of the provision of adequate drainage. It is a good example of what the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission officers and workers can do if money is allocated to an area. Last year the length of drain was constructed efficiently, and very rapidly.

Similarly, $241,000 has been allocated this year to the Bamawn drain. In the Rodney shire, the mosquito depression, as it is known, is probably one of the most significant depressions that need drainage in the whole of the Goulburn–Murray district. The State Rivers and Water Supply Commission has carried out no extension of that system for some five or six years, despite numerous representations and the fact that the Minister has been around the area with representatives of both the shire councils and is familiar with the problems. Some of the problems have been ironed out by the implementation of the Drainage of Land Act, which is slowly eliminating some of the blockages that cross the depression. Probably one of the best examples is the action of the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission in constructing subways across irrigation channels which cross and block that depression. This year about $165,000 is to be provided towards syphons on the mosquito depression.

Those subways will be of significance in future floods. At present they act as natural pondages. One of the most significant subways has been the one east of the township of Merrigum which has tended to flood the neighbouring landholders but has protected the town. Obviously the State Rivers and Water

Supply Commission, realizing its liabilities under the Drainage of Land Act, has decided to replace the channels with subways but there needs to be recognition of the problem, and funds should be made available in the long term to construct a drainage channel along that depression. That would improve the whole of that irrigation area.

The allocation for Wyuna drain is to be about $219,000. Although the amounts mentioned are to be spent on drainage, I believe it is only a token effort by the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission or the Government towards funding this great problem of drainage. In the Nathalia area is probably one of the worst examples of what the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission can possibly do. The commission constructed a drainage channel to a point upstream without constructing the balance of the system down to the River Murray. Consequently, landholders in the area were flooded when substantial rainfalls occurred. The programme there has been postponed until the 1980s and yet my colleague and I in the Murray Valley recognize this as one of the areas most in need of drainage. At present the Government is putting $300,000 into the Murray Valley drain. It is indicated that it will be at least two or three years before consideration can be given to changing the priorities.

When I went through the correspondence on drain No. 11, which will drain much of the Nathalia area, I found that back in the days of Mr. Mibus, who was a Minister many years ago, the first representations were made. No action has been taken on that drainage channel over the years. I doubt whether we are much closer to overcoming the problem.

I believe there should be a greater recognition of the need for adequate drainage which would solve some of the serious salinity problems throughout this area and would eliminate the need for some of the costs involved in the $40 million programme. If drainage had been implemented in the irrigation systems many years ago we would not be considering the cost factor involved in the programme today.

This year flood mitigation is mentioned in the Bill. For the first time the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission recognizes the need for some form of report on various aspects of flood mitigation. Victoria has been lax in this regard. Both New South Wales and, to my knowledge, Queensland, have spent many millions of dollars on flood mitigation works for their States by means of combined funding between the Commonwealth and the State Governments. The important difference between Victoria and those States is that their Governments have recognized the need for flood mitigation and have carried out the necessary inquiries so that they can put a constructive proposal to the Commonwealth. To my knowledge Victoria is still not in a position to do that. Only recently has the Government given the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission some authority in the field of flood mitigation. In the early 1900s levee banks were constructed on many of the river systems of Victoria, but no lead was given or decision made on who was responsible for maintaining them over the years. In the floods of 1973, 1974 and 1975 large breaks occurred in these systems and many thousands of acres of farmland and also private homes were flooded with consequential cost to the Government as a result of paying compensation.

I am concerned that, although those floods occurred some two years ago and the Premier and the Minister of Water Supply made an extensive tour of the area, only $150,000 is allocated this year for flood mitigation. A special section should be established in the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission to examine the problem. This year Queensland is spending more than $4 million on flood mitigation. That emphasizes the

weaknesses of this Bill in that direction. River catchment authorities were proposed by the Minister some two years ago but were rejected by elements within his party. There is certainly a need for an over-all river catchment policy for flood mitigation purposes. The Government should give the matter further consideration.

Recently I had the good fortune to look at the conservation authorities which have been established in Canada. Victoria should be adopting similar procedures in many of our river systems. This is not entirely restricted to flood mitigation. It opens up a whole field of recreation and conservation of natural assets and it involves the local people within the area of those river systems. The State Rivers and Water Supply Commission could be involved in a most constructive way. I hope the Minister is able to revive his proposed legislation on river catchment authorities, and that in the future authorities similar to the conservation authority of Ontario may be introduced in Victoria.

At this stage I refer to the important subject of water charges. This year a number of representations have been made to the Government, the Premier and Treasurer and the Minister on this question. Many rural areas, particularly the irrigation areas, are still facing difficulties. If the Government wants to make a genuine and positive contribution to the rural and agricultural areas of Victoria, it can do so by providing a direct financial contribution to the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission to obviate the need for any increase in charges this year. The Government should recognize that at present prices many of these agricultural industries are still depressed. If the Government is not prepared to assist by lifting the return to the producer, it should at least keep water charges down.

An inquiry has been carried out in the Goulburn–Murray Irrigation District and certain recommendations have been put forward. I suggest to the Premier and to the Minister that, certainly, no decision should be made until the Government comes to a final decision on the recommendations of that inquiry concerning future methods of fixing water charges. I support the Bill, but I believe the amount of $47 million should be at least doubled if not trebled.

Mr. LIEBERMAN (Benambra): The expenditure which is provided for in this Bill, together with the other funds being spent on public works, will provide significant employment. I am pleased that the Bill provides for the expenditure in the electorate of Benambra of approximately $10 million on works and services covered by the measure. Of that amount, the significant sum of $8 million has been allocated towards the cost of the Dartmouth dam project. The dam is situated in north-eastern Victoria on the Mitta Mitta River. On its completion it will provide a spectacle which is extraordinary to Australia. The dam will have a capacity of 4 million megalitres of water, a vast amount. The dam is, of course, an earthen dam and it will be one of the largest in the world. The water will spread some 30 miles back from the wall and, with the surrounding heavily-wooded hills, will provide a magnificent vista and a boost for tourism.

It will, of course, serve the purposes for which it was built in the first place, that is to supply each of the signatories to the agreement, New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia, with additional water needed for irrigation, as the honorable member for Rodney mentioned. It will provide city and town supplies and further guarantee water for the domestic needs of urban dwellers in the region. Most importantly it will provide a guaranteed water supply for the City of Adelaide. I understand that up to 60 per cent of Adelaide's water needs will come from this source.

The project includes provision for a hydro-electric power scheme by Victoria. This includes a single

turbo-generator of 150 megawatt capacity, which will be a significant contribution to the State's power sources. By interjection the honorable member for Murray Valley refers to the nine weeks of anxiety that all Victorians have suffered as a result of the power dispute. The Dartmouth dam project will make Victoria's power situation just that much more secure for the people of Victoria. The project is significant for many reasons. It is another example of co-operation between three States and the Commonwealth Government. I am sure that on its completion it will provide an economic return to the people of Victoria.

The project is reaching an interesting stage. I understand from talking with the Minister of Water Supply that the plug, as it is called, to start the water storage will be placed in position within the next few weeks. That will enable the storage of water to begin behind the wall. Although the wall is not yet completed, it is sufficiently advanced to allow the storage of water to start. The Mitta Mitta River will be dammed to allow work on the storage to begin. The Minister of Water Supply has assured me that the people who live downstream from the wall and who use domestic water supplies, and the irrigators and farmers who require irrigation water from the Mitta Mitta River will be fully protected and assured of adequate supplies after the plug is put in position. I find his undertaking reassuring because I have had contact with a number of the people living in Mitta Mitta and the irrigators and farmers downstream from the Dartmouth dam wall who expressed some anxiety, reasonably I believe, that in this dry season water supplies will not be adequate while the process of damming up takes place. The officers of the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission, whom I admire very much—the people of Victoria should be proud of them—have been diligent in contacting all people who are concerned. The Minister assures me that people who have not heard from the officers and who have a problem will have officers made available immediately to discuss the problem with them. That is an important assurance.

It is important to note that the constructing authority for the Dartmouth dam is the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission. As time goes by, the construction of the dam will be recognized as an historic event. The dam is of world standard and I understand that some of the officers concerned have been invited to give advice and assistance on the construction of dams to overseas nations, and that speaks for itself. I pay a tribute to those men.

In addition to the allocation of funds for the Dartmouth dam, I was pleased to note that the Bill provides much-needed funds for two towns, Barnawartha and Chiltern, which are also situated in north-east Victoria in the electorate I represent. At my request, the Minister of Water Supply visited the towns of Chiltern and Barnawartha a few months ago and inspected the growth that is occurring, particularly as a result of the accelerated development of Albury–Wodonga. The Minister was able to see for himself how the townspeople of Barnawartha and Chiltern were in considerable difficulty because they did not have adequate domestic water supplies. The honorable gentleman learnt that there were occasions when the bore system could not cope and broke down.

I am pleased that the Minister has accepted the submission from the townspeople of Barnawartha and Chiltern and has made provision in the Bill for $40,000 for additional water supply works for Barnawartha and $100,000 for Chiltern to enable water supplies to that township to be upgraded and works to commence on replacing the old reticulation system. The township of Chiltern is one of the oldest towns in Victoria. These works will provide considerable assistance to the townspeople of Chiltern and Barnawartha, who will be pleased when the works are carried out.

I also noticed that the Minister of Water Supply has made provision for additional works in Wodonga. This is part of the Victorian Government's policy of supporting and upgrading the infrastructure of Wodonga and developing State instrumentalities there as part of the national Albury–Wodonga project. The Wodonga Waterworks Trust will this year receive an additional $50,000 to enable the water reticulation system and head works to be increased. Most of the growth that has taken place over the past two years, and certainly the anticipated growth in the next three years, has been and will be located in urban Wodonga. It is therefore essential that the city of Wodonga be given the necessary financial support to enable it to absorb that growth and to upgrade, and increase its infrastructure.

The Wodonga Sewerage Authority is also to receive a substantial allocation under this Bill for improving and increasing the sewerage treatment works at Wodonga.

I also notice that the Minister of Water Supply has followed up his interest and inspections in the Shire of Bright by agreeing to the allocation of $150,000 to enable a reticulated water supply to be provided for the township of Porepunkah, which is located close to the township of Bright. That allocation will provide much-needed employment for local people in the Ovens Valley as well as providing an adequate and quality water supply, which the township of Porepunkah has required for years.

An area that has concerned me since my election to Parliament is the provision of the necessary support and encouragement to those people who give their service on the river improvement trusts located in my electorate. Some months ago the Minister of Water Supply agreed to visit and meet with the members of the Mitta Mitta River Improvement Trust. This is a vital trust because, as I stated earlier, the construction of the Dartmouth dam affects the Mitta Mitta River. It is necessary for adequate funds to be made available to protect the river, as honorable members will appreciate how the storage of water in the Dartmouth dam will have a considerable effect on the banks and habits of that important stream. Obviously the Minister recognized the submissions of the Mitta Mitta River Improvement Trust because he has allocated an amount of $75,000 to enable the trust to undertake this work during this financial year. The Ovens and King River Improvement Trust, which is also situated in my electorate, has been allocated an amount of $220,000 to enable further works to be completed.

This year's Water Supply Works and Services Bill is most welcome for the people residing in the Benambra electorate. Many of the works and services that are to be undertaken have been required for many years.

I take up the challenge of the honorable member for Broadmeadows, who invited honorable members to speak on this Bill on today's issues rather than talk about yesterday's issues. I regard as significant the amount of almost $10 million that is to be spent in my electorate. I appreciate the funds being made available at a time when resources and funds are scarce and when people throughout Victoria require assistance with water storage and river improvement projects.

I commend the Minister of Water Supply on his diligence and, from my own experience, for the interest he has shown in the problems of people in my electorate. I thank the honorable gentleman very much for his consideration.

Mr. SIMPSON (Niddrie): I take up the challenge issued by the honorable member for Broadmeadows and mentioned by the honorable member for Benambra, in relation to how this will affect the present rather than the past. There is an increase of approximately $3 million in the allocation but in actual value it is probably a decrease of $3 million.

One, area the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works, which received $3,161,444 in last year's allocation will receive $1·456 million less, a decrease of over 50 per cent. The effect of this is shown by something which I think most members will find almost unbelievable. In the electorate that I have the honour to represent there is an area of approximately half a square mile of industrial land which has no Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works water supply. All points on the compass around the area—north, south, east and west—are serviced by the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works and have been for many years. This growing industrial area has no water.

It was brought to my attention with some force by factory owners in Niddrie that they are in danger of going out of business. There has been a lot of talk about how honorable members on the Government side of the House are trying to help small businesses. I am sure that everyone will applaud and support such help because it is clear that small businesses employ a large proportion of the Australian work force, and yet in an industrial area which is less than 9 miles from the General Post Office there are established factories which do not have running water. The ludicrous situation exists that representatives from the Department of Labour and Industry have visited these factories and imposed restrictions on the owners.

Mr. BORTHWICK (Minister for Conservation): I wish to raise a point of order. My interpretation of what the honorable member is talking about is the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works water supply which is not covered by the provisions of this Bill.

The SPEAKER (Sir Kenneth Wheeler): In the table to clause 17 it states—

> For advances to the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works towards the cost of approved works of water supply $2 million.

I cannot uphold the point of order.

Mr. SIMPSON (Niddrie): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The proprietors of those factories are concerned that representatives from the Department of Labour and Industry and the Department of Health are imposing certain requirements. They are operating under extremely difficult conditions because, although they wish to comply with the various regulations of the two authorities they find that impossible with tank water.

There are also many vacant blocks of land in the area and I have it on good authority from the City of Keilor and representatives of proprietors who are desirous of establishing further factories in the area that they cannot do so because the type of industries planned will naturally have to have running water. Tank water will not suffice.

Although all of us want to support the establishment of small businesses, and there is tremendous concern about unemployment, there is a real threat of existing factories having to close their doors, thus creating more unemployment. Those who want to establish factories cannot do so because they would not have running water. Therefore, it is common sense, from the point of view of the Department of Labour and Industry and the Department of Health, and in an attempt to assist small businesses to help overcome the unemployment problem in Victoria, to look at this area.

Naturally I have made representations to the Minister of Water Supply, and I hope that he will consider those representations favourably. I can understand the Minister's difficulty because the sum of money presented to him has been reduced by over 50 per cent and in actual money terms it is probably reduced by 55 per cent. I am sure that the Minister will try to assist the area under review but he will be placed in a very difficult situation.

Although I do not want to prolong the debate—the honorable member for Broadmeadows and other honorable members have canvassed the matter in wider scope—I wanted to bring to the attention of the House the real needs of areas within close proximity to Melbourne, areas which should receive a better deal than this proposition will give them.

On the motion of Mr. JASPER (Murray Valley), the debate was adjourned.

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

ADJOURNMENT.

UNEMPLOYMENT—UNIFORM DEFAMATION LAWS—LICENSING OF MASSAGE PARLOURS—OUTER RING ROAD—DRIVING LICENCE PHOTOGRAPHS—BOARD OF WORKS INSPECTIONS—STREET LIGHTING IN BENDIGO—MINISTERIAL STATEMENT—ROYAL AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY'S SHOWGROUNDS—EXHAUST EMISSION CONTROL DEVICE—AUSTIN HOSPITAL.

Mr. BORTHWICK (Minister for Conservation): I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

Mr. TREZISE (Geelong North): In the absence of the Premier, I raise a matter with the Deputy Premier, namely, unemployment in this State and, in particular, the submissions, approaches and actions that the State Government has made or taken in recent weeks and its approaches to the Federal Government to find ways and means to reduce the size of the ever-increasing dole queues that are becoming established throughout the length and breadth of Victoria. I ask the Deputy Premier, tonight if possible, or at the earliest opportunity, to make a report to the Parliament and to the people of Victoria on the submissions made by the State Government to the Federal Government at the recent conference and what action the State Government has taken immediately to overcome this ever-growing problem. This is an urgent matter which needs the urgent attention of the Premier or Deputy Premier.

Mr. CAIN (Bundoora): I bring a matter to the attention of the Minister representing the Attorney-General. Last week the Law Reform Commission of Australia presented a draft uniform Bill on defamation and privacy of publication, of which I believe the Attorney-General has received a copy. The Bill is the first real attempt to give Australia a uniform defamation law.

Honorable members will be aware that for years this nation has been plagued by seven diverse and inconsistent laws on defamation, which has resulted in many deficiencies, not the least of which is a timidity and some degree of uncertainty by the press in Australia. With seven diverse laws, it is absurd that newspapers and radio or television media that traverse the boundaries of every State should be hamstrung, as they are. A publication from New South Wales or Victoria may be considered defamatory in one State and not in another, or defamatory in the Australian Capital Territory and not in one of the States. The measure of damages that is assessed on finding that a statement is defamatory can vary from State to State.

The system is absurd, and I put it to the Minister that Victoria and Australia for the first time have an opportunity of introducing a uniform law. I urge the Attorney-General to take the lead for Victoria because uniform legislation is required in each of the six States and the Australian Capital Territory to bring about uniform law throughout Australia. I believe the Attorney-General will find on examination of the draft Bill that, although it may not be perfect in every respect, it is a good, down-the-line review of what the law on defamation and privacy of publication ought to be.

The Government has an opportunity of setting the pace, giving a lead and giving an assurance that

Victoria will co-operate in passing legislation in the form suggested by the Australian Law Reform Commission.

Mr. ROPER (Brunswick): I raise a matter with the Minister of Special Education, who represents the Chief Secretary, concerning the licensing of massage parlours. No doubt the honorable gentleman will recall that earlier this year the Chief Secretary, when under some pressure about the licensing of massage parlours, said that he would refer it not to the police but to the Minister of Health.

Mr. EDMUNDS: A fat lot of good that is going to do.

Mr. ROPER: I agree with my colleague, the honorable member for Ascot Vale, because that is what has happened. I have asked two questions on the subject. The first was answered on 20th September when the Minister of Health said that certainly the matter had been referred to the Commission of Public Health as far back as 1973 when the commission had told one of the municipalities in Melbourne that it wanted no part of the matter.

I asked another question, whether there had been a further reference from the Chief Secretary to the Minister of Health and, if so, what had become of it. The answer I received today was that the Chief Secretary had referred the matter to the Minister of Health in December last year, that the Commission of Public Health had already in 1974 expressed its view on the matter, namely, that it had nothing to do with the registration of massage parlours, and further, that the Minister of Health had accepted the advice of the Commission of Public Health and had conveyed these views to the Chief Secretary.

Therefore, the Government has no policy on the registration of massage parlours. The Chief Secretary, having tried to dodge the issue, which is a fairly significant one, referred it to another Minister, who batted it back with fairly firm force. It has been suggested that the matter should be under the jurisdiction of the Minister of Consumer Affairs because the Chief Secretary would have difficulty in batting it back to another Minister.

I ask the Minister representing the Chief Secretary to tell Parliament what the Government intends to do about the registration and control of massage parlours, because it is a matter of serious concern. The Chief Commissioner of Police has suggested that organized crime has moved into the massage parlour area, although not much evidence of this has been produced.

It is not suggested that the Minister of Health should interfere in crime control, but I ask the Minister of Special Education to advise the House how the Chief Secretary intends to deal with this matter, given that the Minister of Health has washed his hands of it.

Mr. LACY (Warrandyte): I raise a matter for the attention of the Minister of Transport and, in his absence, of the Premier. I refer to the outer ring road study and its recommendations. The Government has decided to preserve its options about the possibility of the construction of an outer ring arterial road or freeway in the general area around Melbourne between Altona and Frankston.

The Premier will be aware that the area between Greensborough and Ringwood does not have any road reservations. The Government's decision to preserve its options has created an enormous amount of uncertainty for the people who live in the electorate that I represent, in the general area of the Yarra River to Ringwood on a north-south axis and between Mullum Creek and Springvale Road on an east-west axis. Many people have been unable to sell properties; young couples buying blocks of land have been unable to decide whether to proceed with building on the land; couples who own blocks of land and wish to establish themselves away from any proposed road route have been unable to sell

their land to do that because of the uncertainty since the decision was taken.

Whether the Government proceeds with the construction of the road, is not necessarily implied in the decision to preserve its options. It would be of tremendous advantage to those families and young couples to learn as quickly as possible precisely where the road will be located and where the Country Roads Board will begin purchasing properties.

I ask the Premier and the Minister of Transport to determine quickly when the study will commence, if it has not already commented, and when the study will be completed, and to make that known to the public, particularly the people concerned, as well as when the Government will be able to announce where it proposes to purchase land so that those options will be preserved. Only by that means can people who may not otherwise be affected determine their future. I make a plea to the Premier for the determination of this route to be decided, at the maximum within twelve months.

Mr. JONES (Melbourne): I direct a matter to the attention of the Minister representing the Chief Secretary. It concerns the suggestion by the Junior Chamber of Commerce that holders of driving licences ought to be issued with passport-style photographs.

Mr. ROSS-EDWARDS: Everybody else received an answer to that a month ago.

Mr. JONES: But I think it has not yet been raised in the House. I direct to the attention of the Minister representing the Chief Secretary the suggestion that drivers' licences ought to have photographs affixed to them.

Mr. MACLELLAN: That would be a police State.

Mr. JONES: The idea has much to commend it and could certainly do something to prevent the misuse of drivers' licences by people who have been disqualified from driving and who " borrow " or otherwise acquire licences. It could also help in the identification of accident victims.

The problem of avoiding an Orwellian-style central registry suggested in the interjection by the Minister of Consumer Affairs could presumably be overcome if the applicant for a licence secured for himself or herself a photograph from one of the automatic coin-in-slot photograph machines in the streets, which are really very cheap. The photograph could then be affixed to the licence by the licensing authority and stamped, as is the case with passport photographs. That would avoid a central registry " mug file ", which does have some odious implications.

This form of identification is common with student I.D. cards, and airlines and other groups have similar identity tags. It is also quite commonplace in Europe with travel cards such as the fêted orange cards which are now used in Paris, France, as Henry Ford used to say. I should like to know the Government's attitude to this suggestion.

Mr. SIMPSON (Niddrie): I draw to the attention of the Minister representing the Minister of Water Supply a matter relating to a memorandum sent to all supervisors of the company A. G. Dennis and Associates Pty. Ltd. in July this year. The memorandum states, *inter alia*—

> A situation has arisen which has made it abundantly clear that we are responsible for supervision of sewerage works and the board's role is that of inspection only.
>
> Regardless of whether or not the board's inspectors are on the site full time to watch every minute of the construction and giving tacit approval as the works are progressing and approval at the time the works are placed on maintenance, it is still our responsibility to ensure the works are constructed in accordance with the approved plans and specifications and any departure from the approved plans is our responsibility.
>
> The board's inspectors do not have the authority to direct or instruct the contractor (apart from trench safety regulations) and

under no circumstances is the contractor to vary the design on the suggestions of an inspector without the following procedure being adopted.

It goes on to list eight procedures to be adopted and then says—

Having satisfied yourself that the construction is satisfactorily to a stage you are to immediately inform the contractor he may proceed to the next stage regardless of whether or not the board's inspector is available. Under no circumstances are the works to be held up for an inspector's approval.

The representations made at the recent inquiry into the Board of Works by Mr. Ted Ajani, an engineer, who spoke about the dangers of sewer collapses highlight the need for adequate inspection by Board of Works inspectors, and I should like an assurance from the Minister that the memorandum will be examined closely to ensure that any works under the control of the Board of Works are examined thoroughly by the board's inspectors and that those inspectors have absolute control to ensure that no further work is carried out until they are completely satisfied that the work already completed is of a suitable standard.

Mr. McCLURE (Bendigo): I direct a matter to the attention of the Government because it is becoming urgent and is certainly important. Five years ago the Bendigo City Council made application to have street lighting extended in several areas, particularly on the northern approaches to the city along the Midland Highway.

A letter concerning this matter was originally sent to the State Electricity Commission and from there it has been on a merry-go-round from an organization called something like the Street Lighting Committee, to the Country Roads Board, the State Electricity Commission, the Bendigo City Council and myself. My patience has expired and I do not know how the Bendigo City Council has managed to keep its patience. Someone will have to unravel the situation.

I understand that there is a sign in the office of the President of the United States of America which says, "The buck stops here".

Mr. JONES: That was Truman. It was a long time ago.

Mr. McCLURE: I believe the sign is still there. This particular matter has surely run its course and someone should be prepared to write a letter, hopefully to me, explaining when the work will be carried out and accepting responsibility for it.

Mr. ROSS-EDWARDS (Leader of the National Party): In the absence of the Minister of Transport I raise a matter for the attention of the Premier. I refer to item No. 10 on the Notice Paper, the Ministerial Statement—Hume Freeway, Wallan to Broadford Pavement Failure. Approximately four or five weeks ago an undertaking was given that the matter would be debated at an early date. Members of the National Party had in mind a period of a week or two. Perhaps no harm has been done, but the matter is extremely serious and I ask that it be placed higher on the Notice Paper, hopefully to be dealt with tomorrow.

Mr. EDMUNDS (Ascot Vale): I should like the Premier or the Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation to examine the future of the Royal Agricultural Society's showgrounds, which are in the electorate that I represent. When the trots were transferred from those grounds to the Moonee Valley racecourse, it was said in the House that a feasibility study would be conducted into the viable future use of the showgrounds.

It was suggested that greyhound racing, motor bike racing and/or general public entertainment would be suitable uses for the area. To date there has been no public announcement by the Government or the Department of Youth, Sport and Recreation about the findings of that study. The matter is of deep concern to the people of the area

because they are worried about intrusion. I should like the Premier and/or the Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation to give an assurance to the House that they will examine the problem.

People were publicly invited to undertake feasibility studies and I understand that a number of entrepreneurs came forward and produced proposals that the Government is examining. The people of the community know nothing of this and it is most important for the Government to tell people what is the future of this large area, where a lot of public money is invested.

The people living in the immediate vicinity do not want to see motor bike racing, greyhound racing or pop concerts conducted in the showgrounds.

Mr. HAMER: What would you prefer?

Mr. EDMUNDS: I would prefer that the showgrounds be closed down and opened only for the show, as was originally contemplated when the land was designated.

Honorable members interjecting.

Mr. EDMUNDS: I hear a lot of criticism of that proposition but the land was originally reserved for that purpose.

Mr. ROSS-EDWARDS: How narrow is that?

Mr. EDMUNDS: I do not know how narrow it is, but if it were suggested that motor bike racing should be conducted in Shepparton every second night or that there should be a dog track or pop concerts held in the middle of Shepparton, I imagine the local member would kick up a terrible fuss, but the honorable member suggests that that would be a fair enough use of publicly-owned land in the area that I represent.

Irrespective of what the National Party thinks ought to occur in the electorate that I represent, I ask the Government to announce the result of the feasibility study for the Royal Agricultural Society's showgrounds.

Mr. COLLINS (Noble Park): I raise a matter with the Premier. It relates to an issue I brought before the House some months ago regarding an emission control and economy device invented by a Mr. Thomas Cosway. At that time the reports I made to the House did not result in the answer I sought, namely that the Government ought to be involved in some kind of support to evaluate this man's invention. Since that time a fair degree of work has taken place within a number of responsible authorities. I draw to the Premier's attention the fact that the committee set up under his initiative, the Conservation of Energy Resources Committee, cannot consider this matter for six months and I request therefore that he should accelerate their deliberations on this matter.

I am concerned that recognition should be given to a device of which has been proven by various people to be satisfactory and could save $1 million a day in Australia. This is a claim of some magnitude, but if someone has a means of saving $1 million a day in fuel usage, it warrants the Government getting behind it and examining it to determine what is going on.

Technisearch Ltd., which is a non-profit organization, has looked at this gentleman's work over the past six months. That company recently wrote to Mr. Cosway and said—

> As promised, I have asked an expert from within the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology to comment on the documents you have supplied to us.
>
> His general conclusion is that the device could have benefits but not enough evidence has been supplied to allow for a detailed technical assessment.
>
> For us to proceed further you would need to be prepared to pay for a detailed test and evaluation programme, which we would be happy to carry out. Alternatively, if you cannot financially support such a programme we are prepared to nominate your device as a potential student project for 1978.

It will cost about $2,000 in technical research to evaluate this particular device.

However, there have been discussions with the Minister of Transport about providing a car and for the Premier's Department to provide another vehicle for testing purposes. Neither of these vehicles has been able to be used as yet because officers of the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization will not be in a position to start testing until the new year. They are under a fair amount of pressure.

The research department of the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization, the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, and a number of engineering companies believe this man's work is of some value. Mr. Cosway has developed it over 25 years. Some honorable members would know of him.

I ask the Premier to take this matter up with the Conservation of Energy Resources Committee. I will supply a full report, and I ask that the committee consider it in the near future so that a speedy trial can take place.

Mr. SIMMONDS (Reservoir): I raise with the Minister representing the Minister of Health a situation that has occurred at the Austin Hospital owing to the cuts in capital works. About two weeks ago, 150 workers on the site were sacked because of the Government's cut in expenditure on capital works by $3 million this financial year. I am advised that the delay in the construction programme has added a further $2 million to the cost of the project. This is because of the action of the Government in cutting the works programme. Because of this cut in its capital works budget and the $1·8 million cut in its operating budget, the hospital will now be forced either to close wards or to reduce staff.

I ask the Minister representing the Minister of Health in this Chamber to investigate the situation existing at the Austin Hospital, particularly as it is also a teaching hospital and therefore has a role to play in that area. The delay is adding to the cost structure. The hospital also services the Diamond Valley and Greensborough area and these cuts will mean that this expanding area will not have access to the hospital's public health services, which the inhabitants of those areas should reasonably expect.

I ask the Minister to take the matter up with the Treasurer to ensure that adequate funds are available to re-establish the works programme to employ the 150 workers and to maintain in employment those people running health services for people who reside in the Greensborough area.

Mr. HAMER (Premier and Treasurer): The honorable member for Geelong North asked what submissions had been made at the recent Premiers Conference on unemployment. The main discussion on unemployment concerned youth employment. Two things were decided at the conference. Firstly, the qualifying period will be reduced from 6 months to 4 months, which is very welcome. Secondly, a task force will be set up in each State capital and other main urban areas to establish a special unit to look into opportunities for youth employment and to try and slot into those opportunities young people who are willing to take them up.

In addition, the Victorian Government is prepared to double its commitment to the special youth training scheme and also to increase its commitment to the training of apprentices. All those things will contribute to the solution to a certain extent, of youth unemployment.

The honorable member for Warrandyte inquired about the ring road. It is Government policy that we have an outer ring road to divert through traffic from the inner suburbs. The exact location of that ring road in some areas will have to be the subject of a study, and that study in turn will have to be made public so that

people affected by it can make their contribution and express their views. However, I will bring to the notice of the Minister of Transport the necessity of making a decision as soon as possible as to the location and alignment of that road so that uncertainty can be eliminated.

The Leader of the National Party mentioned item 10 on the Notice Paper, the debate on the Hume Highway. I will ask the Leader of the House to bring that item forward as soon as possible so that there can be full debate on the subject.

The honorable member for Ascot Vale inquired about the future use of the showgrounds. I presume he meant the arena, mainly. There is to be, if it is not already in operation, a feasibilty study on this subject, and as soon as this is available there can be a debate on the matter. I will ask the Minister to bring it forward so that the matter can be fully ventilated.

The honorable member for Noble Park raised the question of a fuel injection device, the invention of one Mr. Thomas Cosway, of whom I confess I have not heard before. I will bring this to the notice of the Minister of Transport. If there is anything in this device, of course we are interested, but a number of devices have been produced from time to time. If this is just another water injection device, I point out that I have had one on my car and it does not work. However, I will have the matter investigated.

Mr. MACLELLAN (Minister of Labour and Industry): The honorable member for Bundoora raised the matter of the Federal Law Reform Commission, which is headed by Mr. Justice Michael Kirby. I understand that he has been described as a pinstriped radical. The matter relates to suggested uniform defamation laws. The proposals have been circulated and debated at some length, and have now been crystallized in a final report by the commission. I am sure that the Attorney-General will be anxious to be in the forefront of any reform, and that will be the attitude of the Victorian Government. Whether the particular report is the best and most achievable objective will be assessed by the Government. Obviously, it is a matter of Government policy and I will ensure that the words of the honorable member for Bundoora are drawn to the attention of the Attorney-General.

Mr. SCANLAN (Minister of Special Education): The honorable member for Brunswick raised the matter of licensing of massage parlours. I am not sure whether the honorable member wants them registered, but the Government does not consider the registration of massage parlours to be necessary at this time. From time to time the Chief Secretary has considered the operation of massage parlours generally. He has had formal contact with the Minister of Health concerning them and has also discussed the matter generally with him on a number of occasions. The Chief Secretary is of the opinion that the powers available to the police to prosecute for illicit and illegal activities at massage parlours are sufficient where appropriate action should be taken to inhibit such activity.

The honorable member for Melbourne raised a matter that was raised by the honorable member for Mitcham some time ago concerning a suggestion by the Junior Chambers of Commerce that driving licences should contain a photograph of the holder in a similar fashion to passports. When the honorable member for Mitcham raised the question originally—it was again suggested by the honorable member for Melbourne tonight—it was contended that the idea of a central registry of "mug files" could constitute an invasion of privacy, a big brother approach and a sort of security identification card. A number of aspects have to be very carefully considered and thought out

before any such proposal is implemented. I will certainly raise the matter with the Chief Secretary.

Mr. BORTHWICK (Minister for Conservation): The honorable member for Niddrie referred to the responsibilities of inspectors of the Board of Works in dealings with private contractors working for it. I am not familiar with the problem, but I will be pleased to refer it to the Minister of Water Supply and obtain the information for the honorable member. It would help if the honorable member could provide me with the document from which he has quoted.

The SPEAKER (Sir Kenneth Wheeler): The honorable member for Bendigo did not know to which Minister to direct his remarks. He seemed to go on a merry-go-round, so I suppose it would be a matter for the Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation.

Mr. McCLURE (Bendigo): By leave, I presume that you are not asking me to answer my own question, Mr. Speaker, but I would appreciate a reply from any Minister who is prepared to assist.

Mr. THOMPSON (Minister of Education): I will be pleased to take up with the appropriate Minister the matter raised by the honorable member for Bendigo.

Mr. JONA (Assistant Minister of Health): In referring to stage 2 of the building programme at the Austin Hospital, the honorable member for Reservoir suggested that approximately 120 people had been laid off as a result of a reduction in funds. I think the honorable member should be corrected at the outset and advised that he is about 100 out in the number of construction workers concerned. The number of construction workers laid off totals approximately 25, and the inaccuracy that the honorable member quoted was taken from the local newspaper, which, I understand, was corrected in a letter from the general manager of the hospital this week. Therefore, the number is nowhere near the 125 referred to by the honorable member.

I also draw his attention to the fact that the honorable member for Ivanhoe recently introduced a deputation to the Premier and Treasurer from the board of management of the hospital, and as a result the whole question of finance for stage 2 is under consideration by the Government.

Mr. SIMMONDS (Reservoir): I wish to make a personal explanation. The Assistant Minister of Health has misrepresented the position that I put before the House. I did not quote from any newspaper or rely on any newspaper for my information. I believe the information that I provided is correct and I will establish that in debate at some later stage.

The motion was agreed to.

The House adjourned at 11.48 *p.m.*

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE.

The following answers to questions on notice were circulated—

ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AUTHORITY LICENCES.

(Question No. 2500)

Mr. CATHIE (Carrum) asked the Minister for Conservation—

1. How many applications for licences have been received by the Environment Protection Authority and each of its delegated agencies to date?

2. How many licences—(*a*) have been issued, refused, or altered, respectively; and (*b*) are pending?

Mr. BORTHWICK (Minister for Conservation): The answer is—

1 and 2. The following table shows the latest statistics on the number of applications for licences received, and the number of licences that have been issued, refused, amended and are pending by the Environment Protection Authority and its designated agencies.

	Applications received	Licences issued	Licences refused	Licences amended	Licences* pending
Environment Protection Authority ..	4,818	2,376	22	875	2,420
Commission of Public Health	1,302	960	3	381	339
Dandenong Valley Authority	804	552	90	129	162
Latrobe Valley Water and Sewerage Board	856	720	11	97	125
Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works	2,221	1,277	581	624	363
State Rivers and Water Supply Commission	3,643	2,256	82	179	1,305
Totals	13,644	8,141	789	2,285	4,714

*The figures for "licences pending" include applications for discharges which are presently exempt from licensing.

NEW SPECIAL SCHOOLS.

(Question No. 2506)

Mr. FORDHAM (Footscray) asked the Minister of Special Education—

Whether recommendation 8 of the interim report of the Ministerial Committee of Inquiry into Special Education, that a recruitment capaign should be initiated now to attract and employ an additional 78 guidance officers and an additional 24 social workers to permit the creation of a task force to meet the increased demands brought about by the establishment of new special schools and units in Victoria, has been accepted by the Government; if so, what progress has been made towards giving effect to the recommendation?

Mr. SCANLAN (Minister of Special Education): The answer is—

A recruitment campaign has been instituted to obtain additional guidance officers, social workers and speech therapists. As at 31st January, 1974, the position was—

Guidance officers (teachers)	100	
Social workers (teachers)	28	
Speech therapists (teachers)	52	
Professional appointees—		
Psychology officers (non-teachers)	Nil	
Social workers (non-teachers)	Nil	
Speech therapists (non-teachers)	Nil	
As at 13th October, 1977, the position was—		
Guidance officers (teachers)	212	
Social workers (teachers)	28	
Speech therapisits	41	
Professional appointees—		
Psychology officers (non-teachers)	52	
Social workers (non-teachers)	37	
Speech therapists (non-teachers)	52	(including part-time and sessional)
Assistant professional appointees—		
Welfare officers	22	
Interpreters	29	(an additional thirteen are currently being employed)

PSYCHOLOGISTS, SOCIAL WORKERS AND SPEECH THERAPISTS.

(Question No. 2509)

Mr. FORDHAM (Footscray) asked the Minister of Special Education—

Whether recommendation 10 of the interim report of the Ministerial Committee of Inquiry into Special Education, that a recruitment campaign should be instituted in all Australian States to attract psychologists, social workers and speech therapists, and, if necessary, the campaign should be extended to those overseas English-speaking countries whose qualifications are regarded as equivalent for accreditation purposes in Victoria, has been accepted by the Government; if so, what progress has been made towards giving effect to the recommendation?

Mr. SCANLAN (Minister of Special Education): The answer is—

See the answer to question 2506. The campaign was extended to the United Kingdom and North America.

(Question No. 2510)

Mr. FORDHAM (Footscray) asked the Minister of Special Education—

Whether recommendation 11 of the interim report of the Ministerial Committee of Inquiry into Special Education, that maximum use should be made of the studentship scheme to escalate the supply of qualified personnel needed to meet the requirements of the Education Department for psychologists, social workers and speech therapists, has been accepted by the Government; if so, what progress has been made towards giving effect to the recommendation?

Mr. SCANLAN (Minister of Special Education) The answer is—

The studentship scheme was introduced to increase the supply of teachers.

The scheme has not been used to escalate the supply of qualified personnel needed to meet the requirements of the Education Department for psychologists, social workers and speech therapists.

See also the answer to question 2506.

SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS.

(Question No. 2520)

Mr. FORDHAM (Footscray) asked the Minister of Special Education—

Whether recommendation 21 of the interim report of the Ministerial Committee of Inquiry into Special Education, that emergency measures should be taken to release from permanent positions those trained special teachers who wish to return to the special field before completing the required period of service, has been accepted by the Government; if so, what progress has been made towards giving effect to the recommendation?

Mr. SCANLAN (Minister of Special Education): The answer is—

For some years, an advertisment has appeared in one of the September issues of the *Education Gazette*—"Possible temporary vacancies for primary teachers in special positions".

The various special education facilities have been listed and applications invited "from teachers in the Primary Schools Division who are assistants in the Assistant class for temporary transfer to any of these possible vacancies" in the following school year.

Teachers who have already received permanent appointments for the following year have not been considered for transfer to the possible temporary vacancies.

INFANT WELFARE SISTERS.

(Question No. 2541)

Mr. ROPER (Brunswick) asked the Assistant Minister of Health—

In respect of infant welfare sisters, whether the Department of Health has recent figures, by region, as to the number of sisters per 1,000 live births, as used in the report of the Committee of Inquiry into Hospital and Health Services in Victoria; if so whether those figures will be made available to the honorable member for Brunswick?

Mr. JONA (Assistant Minister of Health): The answer is—

Region	Numbers of infant welfare sisters and infant welfare centres per 1,000 live births in each statistical division in Victoria—1976																			
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	10A	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	State	Metro-politan
Infant welfare sisters (equivalent full-time) per 1,000 live births..	7·32	8·66	6·27	9·45	8·64	7·60	7·52	8·93	7·36	6·04	12·82	9·58	6·79	6·29	6·33	8·17	6·14	7·54	6·05	7·14	6·89
(1974 survey figures in brackets)	(9·1)	(9·7)	(10·6)	(12·1)	(7·8)	(11·7)	(10·3)	(12·1)	(8·1)	(5·9)	(—)	(5·7)	(5·5)	(5·0)	(5·8)	(6·2)	(5·5)	(5·6)	(6·6)	(6·8)	(5·7)
Infant welfare centres per 1,000 live births ..	17·31	20·72	12·23	27·72	34·57	17·04	19·49	23·21	18·93	18·48	37·34*	8·91	9·28	6·56	9·07	10·00	8·17	9·95	9·77	12·52	8·98
(1974 survey figures in brackets)	(16·9)	(17·9)	(18·0)	(30·3)	(27·2)	(16·7)	(16·7)	(17·7)	(18·9)	(13·7)	(—)	(4·8)	(7·6)	(5·6)	(8·1)	(9·2)	(7·4)	(6·7)	(12·6)	(10·7)	(7·6)

* Note.—Some of the figures included in 10A could relate to regions 18 and 16 but it is not possible to give a definite breakdown.

The foregoing statement details the 1976 figures corresponding with those on pages 53 and 54 of the supplement prepared by Dr. David Legge and Mr. N. Sharpe to the report of the Committee on Inquiry into Hospitals and Health Services in Victoria.

There have been a few minor changes in the allocation of municipalities to the statistical regions since the supplement was compiled in 1974 and one completely new statistical division (East Central) has been included as Region 10A.

These few changes do not explain the quite substantial drop since 1974 in most of the country regions in numbers of infant welfare sisters per 1,000 live births. The figures now presented have been verified and, because it is known that the number of sisters has increased and births decreased, it is believed that certain of the information used for the survey in 1974 was inaccurate.

CHARGES FOR OUT-PATIENTS AT PUBLIC HOSPITALS.

(Question No. 2558)

Mr. ROPER (Brunswick) asked the Assistant Minister of Health, for the Minister of Health—

In respect of the charge for out-patients services at public hospitals—

1. Whether the Minister will supply a copy of the survey mentioned in the answer to question No. 1451 answered on 3rd May, 1977?

2. What is the expected revenue from such a charge in a full year?

3. What is the estimate of total administration costs in its collection?

4. How any excess of revenue over expenditure will be disposed of?

Mr. JONA (Assistant Minister of Health): The answer supplied by the Minister of Health is—

1. Yes—copy attached.

2. Estimated revenue for a full year at $6 per attendance would be

Casualty	..	$2,100,000
Out-patient	..	$3,780,000

3. As arrangements have been made for monthly claims to each registered health benefit organization, it is estimated that the total administration costs in its collection will not be great.

4. The excess of revenue over expenditure will form part of the operating revenue of each individual hospital and will be applied towards operating costs.

SURVEY OF OUT-PATIENT DEPARTMENTS 1977.

Insurance Status.

Hospital	Unknown	Compensable	Private	Standard Medibank	Total
Alfred	94	122	694	1,573	2,483
Royal Melbourne	33	131	406	1,389	1,959
Royal Children's	269	2	743	826	1,840
PANCH	41	205	194	948	1,388
Geelong Hospital	5	22	216	508	751
Ballarat Base	23	19	72	360	474
Moorabbin (physiotherapy only)	5	7	49	38	99
Totals	470	508	2,374	5,642	8,994
Percentage	5·2	5·7	26·4	62·7	100

SURVEY OF CASUALTY DEPARTMENTS 1977.

Insurance Status.

Hospital	Unknown	Compensable	Private	Standard Medibank	Total
Alfred	30	47	196	562	835
Royal Melbourne	66	42	107	343	558
Royal Children's	26	8	971	1,168	2,173
PANCH	26	150	475	1,091	1,742
Moorabbin	22	24	194	197	437
Geelong	7	87	295	341	730
Ballarat Base	19	49	250	423	741
Totals	196	407	2,488	4,125	7,216
Percentage	2·7	5·6	34·5	57·2	100

SCHOOLS IN OAKLEIGH ELECTORATE.

(Question No. 2583)

Mr. FORDHAM (Footscray) asked the Minister of Education—

Which schools in the electoral district of Oakleigh—(*a*) have applied for; and (*b*) are receiving funds under the disadvantaged schools programme in 1977, indicating—(i) the amount; and (ii) the purposes for which it is to be used in each case?

Mr. THOMPSON (Minister of Education): The answer is—

(*a*) Schools are recommended by the Supplementary Grants Committee for placement on a declared list on the basis of information supplied by schools for the circulation of a schools priority index based on degree of disadvantagement of pupils.

(*b*) No. 4678 Jordanville South Primary has received $6,462, including $138 science programme, $387 art/craft and $900 physical education. The balance provides teacher aide salary.

No. 1601 Oakleigh Primary is the only other school at present listed in the area. It is newly listed, and has as yet received no funds. Its submission will be presented to the area committee by 31st October, 1977.

HORSE BREEDING SOCIETIES.

(Question No. 2627)

Mr. TREWIN (Benalla) asked the Minister of Agriculture—

1. When moneys from the Stallion Registration Fund, collected under the repealed Horse Breeding Act 1958 will be made available to breed societies as promised last year?

2. What amounts will be paid to the several horse societies concerned?

Mr. I. W. SMITH (Minister of Agriculture): The answer is—

1 and 2. Legislation which repealed the Horse Breeding Act 1958 made provision for moneys standing to the credit of the Stallion Compensation Fund and the Stallion Examination Fund to be applied as the Minister of Agriculture directs for the improvement of the horse breeding industry in Victoria. In accordance with that provision, I have decided that the moneys available in the two funds will be used for investigations into equine contagious metritis which will benefit the whole of the horse breeding industry in the State.

DERRINALLUM HIGH SCHOOL.

(Question No. 2635)

Mr. FORDHAM (Footscray) asked the Minister of Education—

With regard to the Derrinallum High School—

1. Whether a metalcraft teacher is to be appointed to the school for 1978?

2. When it is expected that further technical education facilities will be available at the school?

Mr. THOMPSON (Minister of Education): The answer is—

1. Total staffing needs across the State are not yet known in detail. At this stage it is not possible to say whether or not such teacher will be appointed to the school for 1978.

2. Provision of more specialized technical education facilities will be considered when the outcomes of experimental provisions in schools with similar problems become known. These experiments involve such high schools as Charlton, Rainbow, Hawkesdale and Beaufort.

BUILDING OF PUBLIC OFFICES IN RURAL AREAS.

(Question No. 2644)

Mr. TREWIN (Benalla) asked the Minister of Public Works—

1. Whether the building programme for public offices in rural Victoria for 1977–78 has been finalized; if so, what is the programme?

2. When it is expected that tenders for offices at Benalla will be called?

Mr. DUNSTAN (Minister of Public Works): The answer is—

1. The confirmed priorities for the construction of public offices in rural Victoria are Geelong, Ballarat and Bendigo. Public offices at Geelong are currently under construction and due for completion in September, 1978. Schematic designs are being prepared for Ballarat and it is expected that a contract for construction will be awarded during 1978. Site possibilities in Bendigo are still being investigated.

2. Schematic designs are being prepared for Benalla, but no date has been fixed for the calling of tenders.

REGISTRATION OF MASSAGE PARLOURS AND HEALTH STUDIOS.

(Question No. 2677)

Mr. ROPER (Brunswick) asked the Assistant Minister of Health, for the Minister of Health—

Further to question No. 2350 answered on 20th September, 1977, concerning the registration of massage parlours and health studios—(*a*) when the Chief Secretary or his department requested the Minister or the Department of Health to consider the registration of massage parlours and health studios; (*b*) whether the Commission of Public Health has considered this request and if so, with what result; and (*c*) when it is expected that a decision will be reached?

Mr. JONA (Assistant Minister of Health): The answer supplied by the Minister of Health is—

(*a*) December 1st, 1976.

(*b*) No. The Commission of Public Health has already expressed a view on the matter—see answer to question No. 2350 on the 20th September, 1977.

(*c*) The Minister of Health has accepted the advice of the Commission of Public Health on this matter and has conveyed these views to the Chief Secretary.

CARAVANS.

(Question No. 2720)

Mr. MUTTON (Coburg) asked the Minister of Special Education, for the Chief Secretary—

1. Whether there are any safety standards applicable to the manufacture of caravans; if so, who is responsible for the setting of standards?

2. Whether a roadworthy certificate is required in the event of transfer of ownership of a caravan; if not why?

Mr. SCANLAN (Minister of Special Education): The answer supplied by the Chief Secretary is—

1. There are no design standards in operation in Victoria concerning the construction of caravans, with which manufacturers must comply. However, under clause 68 of the Motor Car Regulations 1966 " Every motor car and every trailer or other vehicle attached to and drawn by a motor car shall in their form, construction, working equipment and general condition and in all their parts be of such a nature that they will not cause or will not be likely to cause danger to any person in or upon such motor car or trailer or other vehicle or on any highway ". (Under section 3 of the Motor Car Act 1958 a caravan falls within the definition of a trailer.)

In addition to the provisions of the clause there are safety standards applicable to the use of caravans on Victorian roads, in respect of braking and lighting equipment, laid down in the above-mentioned Act and regulations.

2. A certificate of roadworthiness is required only in connection with the transfer of ownership of a trailer which is registered for commercial use. However, under the Motor Car Act 1958, police are empowered to intercept, inspect and issue notices of repair in relation to all trailers which do not comply with the provisions of the above Act and the regulations made under the Act. A traffic infringement notice may also be issued in respect of an unroadworthy trailer.

It is considered, therefore, that the present laws provide adequate safeguards concerning the roadworthiness of caravans.

FUTURE NUCLEAR POWER STATION IN VICTORIA.

(Question No. 2742)

Mr. STIRLING (Williamstown) asked the Minister for Minerals and Energy—

Whether any investigation or planning has taken place for a future nuclear power station in Victoria; if so, what sites are being considered?

Mr. BALFOUR (Minister for Minerals and Energy): The answer is—

Although it is expected that the bulk of Victoria's electricity will continue to be generated by brown coal power stations in the Latrobe Valley at least for the next decade or two, the State Electricity Commission, as part of its long-range planning, regularly reviews all energy sources available for fuel production and electricity generation.

In this regard, preliminary investigation of a number of possible sites for a nuclear power station was carried out some years ago.

Sites investigated along the Victorian coastline extended from Portland to Giffard (Ninety Mile Beach) and included sites at Kirk Point (Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works Sewerage Farm) and Red Bluff (French Island). The commission owns the site on French Island.

Currently the commission is not carrying out specific investigations associated with future nuclear power stations.

SOUTHERN CROSS HOTEL, MOYSTON.

(Question No. 2755)

Mr. AUSTIN (Ripon) asked the Minister of Special Education, for the Chief Secretary—

In respect of the Southern Cross Hotel, Moyston, de-licensed in 1969—

1. Whether a full investigation into the financial position of Mr. E. M. Wilson, the purchaser of the hotel in 1963, was made by the Liquor Control Commission prior to the granting of a licence; if so, whether the applicant's financial position was acceptable at that time; if not, why?

2. What were the reasons for de-licensing the premises in 1969?

3. What was the basis on which compensation was determined and, in particular—(*a*) whether a full investigation of trading operations was undertaken; and (*b*) whether purchases of barrels from sources other than the breweries were taken into account?

Mr. SCANLAN (Minister of Special Education): The answer supplied by the Chief Secretary is—

1. Prior to the transfer of the hotelkeeper's licence at Moyston to Mr. Eric Matthew Wilson, the then Chairman of the Licensing Court, His Honour, Judge Fraser, heard evidence from Mr. Wilson that he was in a sound financial position.

In support of his application, Mr. Wilson produced documents relating to his assets and income for the financial years 1961 and 1962. On the basis of the evidence produced to His Honour, the licence was transferred to Mr. Wilson on 12th November, 1963.

2. On 12th September, 1969, the Chief Supervisor of Licensed Premises issued a notice to show cause why this hotelkeeper's licence should not be cancelled or suspended on the grounds of non-compliance with requirements of the commission issued on 26th May, 1969.

The grounds for the application to show cause why the licence should not be cancelled were found proven at a hearing by the Liquor Control Commission. The commission reserved its decision in the matter to allow the owner-licensee the opportunity of making application for surrender of the licence.

An application for surrender of the licence dated 13th November, 1969, was made by Mr. Wilson as owner-licensee, with the consent of Mrs. Claudine Zimmer Carnegie being the unpaid vendor.

The surrender of the licence was accepted by the commission as from 31st December, 1969.

3. A valuation was requested from the Valuer-General in respect of these premises. Using that valuation as a basis, the commission then determined the compensation which was offered. In addition, conferences took place between the solicitor then acting for Mrs. Carnegie who, as unpaid vendor, had rescinded the existing contract of sale of the hotel between herself and Eric Matthew Wilson. The late Mrs. Carnegie, by statutory declaration dated 5th January, 1970, declared that she was in fact the owner of the Southern Cross Hotel at Moyston and was the registered proprietor.

(*a*) Yes.

(*b*) No. There was no evidence that liquor was purchased from sources other than the breweries nor was there any evidence produced to the commission that such was the case by Mrs. Carnegie or her solicitor.

TECHNICAL TEACHERS' SALARY CLAIM.

(Question No. 2765)

Mr. CULPIN (Glenroy) asked the Minister of Education—

Why he refuses to enter into negotiations with the Technical Teachers Association of Victoria with regard to its salary claim?

Mr. THOMPSON (Minister of Education): The answer is—

Sections 43 and 44 of the Teaching Service Act 1958 quite clearly provide that the power to fix wages and salaries rests with the Teachers Tribunal. The Technical Teachers Association of Victoria is aware of this legislative provision and has been advised on a number of occasions that the Government is not prepared to negotiate salary levels.

AIR CONDITIONING FOR POLICE VEHICLES.

(Question No. 2775)

Mr. EDMUNDS (Ascot Vale) asked the Minister of Special Education, for the Chief Secretary—

What investigations have been undertaken into providing air conditioning in police vehicles and what action is contemplated in relation to the installation of air conditioning on a trial basis?

Mr. SCANLAN (Minister of Special Education): The answer supplied by the Chief Secretary is—

On 8th July, 1977, the Victorian Government Motor Transport Committee, at the request of the Honorable the Premier, appointed a sub-committee to study and report upon the feasibility of fitting air conditioning units in Government vehicles, including police vehicles.

The sub-committee has been requested to have its report completed and available for the Premier by 1st May, 1978.

PROPOSED APOLLO PARKWAYS PRIMARY SCHOOL.

(Question No. 2784)

Mr. FORDHAM (Footscray) asked the Minister of Education—

Whether in view of the increased overcrowding at Greensborough and Greenhills primary schools, aggravated by the rapid expansion of the Apollo Parkways housing estate and traffic hazards faced by students, he will allow the Apollo Parkways Primary School to be established on the purchased sites and commence operations at the start of the 1978 school year; if not, why, and when the school will commence operations?

Mr. THOMPSON (Minister of Education): The answer is—

A new school to be called Apollo Parkways will be built on the department's site in Civic Drive. The school will open at the start of 1979 in a relocatable complex.

WASTE DISPOSAL SITE FOR COBURG.

(Question No. 2790)

Mr. MUTTON (Coburg) asked the Minister of Public Works, for the Minister for Local Government—

1. What is the expected tipping life of the present waste disposal site operated by the Coburg City Council?

2. What provision has been made for a replacement for the present site, where the new site will be located, and what is the estimated cost of purchase?

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

The Town Clerk of the City of Coburg has provided the following information—

1. On 5th September, 1977, the city engineer advised the council that the estimated life of the present waste disposal site is between six months and twelve months.

2. The city engineer further advised that the City of Broadmeadows had agreed in principle to the council's request for an agreement to tip in that municipality for a period of ten years. The city engineer of Broadmeadows has been authorized to discuss conditions with the City of Coburg.

Negotiations are continuing.

It should be noted that there are no other disposal sites currently available in the City of Coburg, but that the metropolitan regional garbage disposal scheme agreed to by municipalities to ensure proper rationalization and provision for the future has been accepted by the Government. Draft legislation, in the preparation of which municipal representatives have fully participated, will shortly be presented to Parliament.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT SPECIAL SERVICES DIVISION.

(Question No. 2791)

Mr. MUTTON (Coburg) asked the Minister of Special Education—

1. What was the total number of staff in each of the branches of the Special Services Division of the Education Department at the commencement of the 1976 school year?

2. How many staff are employed in each branch?

3. How many staff seconded to each branch from the Education Department have returned, or applied to return, to their former teaching positions?

Mr. SCANLAN (Minister of Special Education): The answer is—

1 and 2.

Branch	Number of staff employed at commencement of 1976 school year	Number of staff currently employed
Audio Visual Education Centre	128	106
Curriculum and Research Branch	237	232
Forestry Branch	10	9
Library Branch	70	50
Music Branch	20	18
Physical Education Centre	49	41
Publications Branch	38	30
School Camps Branch	27	27
Counselling, Guidance and Clinical Services	349	515
Special Education Branch	14	14
Aboriginal Education Branch	2	3
Child Migrant Education Branch	25	26
Reading Treatment and Research Centre	20	18

3. It is not known how many staff have applied to return to teaching positions. These applications are private and are not processed through the head of the branch.

USE OF FLUOROCARBONS IN AEROSOL CANS.

(Question No. 2797)

Mr. MUTTON (Coburg) asked the Assistant Minister of Health, for the Minister of Health—

Whether the National Health and Medical Research Council has completed its considerations of the effects of the use of fluorocarbons as propellants in aerosol cans; if so, what are their findings?

Mr. JONA (Assistant Minister of Health): The answer supplied by the Minister of Health is—

No. The National Health and Medical Research Council at its eighty-third session in April, 1977, established a working party to inquire into and report on the incidence of skin cancer in Australia as related to the effects of variations in the ozone levels of the earth's stratosphere and resultant change in ultraviolet radiation. The council has not yet received the report of this working party.

REPORT ON ALPINE STUDY AREA.

(Question No. 2800)

Mr. CATHIE (Carrum) asked the Minister for Conservation—

1. Whether any chapters of the Land Conservation Council's report on the alpine study area were written, in whole or part, by officers of Government departments; if so, which chapters, indicating the relevant departments involved?

2. When the final draft of each chapter was completed?

3. When the final draft of the completed report was sent to the printer?

Mr. BORTHWICK (Minister for Conservation): The answer is—

1. I am advised that background material was made available to the Land Conservation Council by a number of Government departments and agencies to assist the council with the preparation of its descriptive report on the alpine study area.

I would take this opportunity to invite the attention of the honorable member to page xii of the report in which the council acknowledges the sources of such information as well as other assistance provided by Government bodies and members of the public.

2 and 3. My understanding is that the report was completed in stages and, therefore, it would not be possible to provide the honorable member with specific details on the completion of chapters.

The final section of the report was submitted to the Government Printer on 15th June, 1977.

MACHINERY DISMANTLING AND CAR WRECKING YARDS.

(Question No. 2821)

Mr. FOGARTY (Sunshine) asked the Assistant Minister of Health, for the Minister of Health—

Whether the Minister or the Department of Health has received requests to have car wrecking and other machinery dismantling yards declared noxious trades to be covered by the Offensive Trades Regulations; if so, what action the Minister intends taking?

Mr. JONA (Assistant Minister of Health): The answer supplied by the Minister of Health is—

By proclamation published in the *Government Gazette* on the 22nd December, 1971 (page 3905) any of the trades usually carried on or in connection with motor car wrecking yards, junk yards and obsolete machinery yards were declared to be offensive trades within the meaning of the Health Act as from the 1st March, 1972.

The trades mentioned are therefore already subject to the provisions of the Offensive Trades Regulations.

DRUG DETECTION IN GEELONG AREA.

(Question No. 2838)

Mr. TREZISE (Geelong North) asked the Minister of Special Education, for the Chief Secretary—

1. What staff are stationed at Geelong specifically to act on drug detection?

2. What were such staff allocations at Geelong for such purposes in each of the past five years?

Mr. SCANLAN (Minister of Special Education): The answer supplied by the Chief Secretary is—

There are no members of the force stationed at Geelong for the specific purpose of detecting drug offences. These laws are enforced by all members of the uniform and criminal investigation branches stationed at Geelong, under the direction of the chief superintendent in charge of the Barwon police district.

As in all other police districts, there is a Special Duties Squad which, in addition to other duties, gives particular attention to the enforcement of the drug laws in the Geelong area. Staff from the Drug Bureau at Police Headquarters also provide assistance to police in country districts if, and when, required.

FLOODING IN FRANKSTON AREA.

(Question No. 2855)

Mr. CATHIE (Carrum) asked the Minister for Conservation, for the Minister of Water Supply—

Following investigations into flooding along the Karingal No. 1 outfall and Beach Street drainage systems, and in the Housing Commission estate near Ballarto Road—

1. What works to alleviate the serious flooding that occurred in February, 1977, are currently—(*a*) under consideration; and (*b*) being undertaken by the Dandenong Valley Authority and the Frankston City Council?

2. Whether the rapid rise in flat development is a contributing factor to the flooding; if so, what action is planned to cope with future pressure from this source?

Mr. BORTHWICK (Minister for Conservation): The answer supplied by the Minister of Water Supply is—

1. (*a*) Works under consideration by the Dandenong Valley Authority—

(i) Karingal—Investigations are taking place into the possibility of utilizing retarding basins and improving the overflow drainage system.

These proposals are a combination of ideas by the Frankston City Council and the Dandenong Valley Authority.

(ii) Beach Street drainage system—Problems with the Nursery Avenue drain are under investigation and improvements to its capacity may result.

(iii) Housing Commission estate—The feasibility of running water into a retarding basin is under investigation. There are, however, problems with this solution.

(*b*) There are no works being undertaken at present jointly by the Dandenong Valley Authority and the Frankston City Council but it is understood that the Frankston City Council is considering the allocation of funds for some minor works.

2. Flat development is a factor contributing to the flooding. The Dandenong Valley Authority has no power in this regard as it is not consulted when building permits are issued. The report by the Building and Development Approvals Committee may lead to a change in this situation.

HOUSING COMMISSION ACCOMMODATION.

(Question No. 2879)

Mr. CAIN (Bundoora) asked the Minister of Housing—

Further to the answer to question No. 2467 given on 20th September, 1977—

1. In respect of each of the electoral districts of Morwell, Narracan, Berwick and Westernport, respectively, how many persons are on the waiting list for—(*a*) two-bedroom homes; and (*b*) three-bedroom homes?

2. What is the waiting time for each type of accommodation in each electorate?

3. How many persons on each of the waiting lists in each of the electorates are seeking to—(*a*) rent homes; and (*b*) purchase homes?

Mr. HAYES (Minister of Housing): The answer is—

	Two-bedroom	Three-bedroom
1. Morwell	159	443
Narracan	105	81
Berwick	416	5566
Westernport	96	899

2. It is not possible to supply waiting times for housing within electoral districts. Waiting time varies between individual estates and the type of accommodation sought.

3. Separate records of rental and purchase applications are generally not kept in these areas. Provided houses are available for sale under existing Commonwealth–State Housing agreements, applicants meet eligibility requirements and have the ability to meet financial obligations under proposed contracts, sales can eventuate. At Churchill houses are available for sale only.

Legislative Council.

Wednesday, October 26, 1977.

The PRESIDENT **(the Hon. W. G. Fry)** took the chair at 2.35 p.m. and read the prayer.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE.

ELECTION CAMPAIGN FUNDS.

The Hon. D. R. WHITE (Doutta Galla Province): I direct a question to the Minister for Local Government. Did the Minister offer any

financial assistance from the special fund raised by Mr. Peter Leake from land developers to any candidate in the 1973 State election, and specifically, did Mr. Norm Billing, the Liberal member for Heatherton, receive assistance from that special fund, and was any assistance offered to the then Liberal member for Frankston, Mr. Ray Meagher?

The Hon. A. J. HUNT (Minister for Local Government): Firstly, I point out that these questions do not in any way relate to Government administration, but nevertheless, I am perfectly happy to answer them.

Towards the end of the 1973 elections, I became aware that Mr. Billing, who was standing for a marginal seat, was having some difficulty in raising adequate finance, and I mentioned that fact to Mr. Leake. Whether anything was paid by him I do not know.

No funds whatsoever were paid or offered from the funds raised by Mr. Leake and Mr. Cooke to the Honorable E. R. Meagher. However, I am aware that funds were subscribed to Mr. Meagher's campaign, not from Mr. Leake or Mr. Cooke, but from another source, and included moneys raised by land developers. If the honorable member would like to know all about it, rather than wasting the time of the House at question time, I shall be happy if he will grant me leave and if the House will do so, to add to what I have said by way of explanation.

BALMORAL–NORADJUHA RAILWAY LINE.

The Hon. K. I. WRIGHT (North Western Province): I ask the Minister for State Development and Decentralization a question relating to his own portfolio and to that of the Minister of Transport. In the *Wimmera Mail Times* today the Prime Minister has been quoted as having written to a committee for the retention of the Balmoral–Noradjuha railway line expressing strong support for the retention of the line. In view of this development and the recent large increase in the usage of the port of Portland, mainly by wheat ships, will the Minister take up with the Minister of Transport again the matter of the retention of this line? It was proposed by the Government that the line should be closed in two years' time. Will the Minister take up the matter of retaining and upgrading the line and perhaps making representations to the Prime Minister for financial assistance in this project?

The Hon. D. G. CROZIER (Minister for State Development and Decentralization): I am not responsible for the Prime Minister's correspondence.

PORNOGRAPHIC MATERIAL.

The Hon. B. A. CHAMBERLAIN (Western Province): Following the presentation yesterday of the report by the State Advisory Board on Publications, in view of the repeated requests by the board for amendments to the Police Offences Act and the comments of the Full Court of the Supreme Court in the Presswell case, will the Chief Secretary institute an immediate review of the law relating to pornography to provide a workable system for the protection of young people in this State?

The Hon. V. O. DICKIE (Chief Secretary): This is being done. As honorable members would be aware, the main thrust of the recommendation of the Advisory Board on Publications was that the board should be given power to restrict succeeding copies of publications that may be considered to be offensive, whereas at present the board has the power to restrict only the current issue of a publication, and by the time the current issue has been restricted, perhaps four, five or six succeeding copies are on sale in the bookstalls.

The Government is considering this provision and a number of other provisions. It is difficult to achieve a

desirable balance between not restricting the rights of members of the public to see, read and hear what they wish, and protecting those people who do not wish to be confronted with offensive material. A complete appraisal of the legislation is being made. Recently the Police Offences Act was amended to protect children from being used in pornographic publications. The police have a number of suggestions that are being considered and during the autumn sessional period of Parliament I foresee a consolidation of the section of the Police Offences Act relative to pornographic material.

CHAIRMAN OF THE HEALTH COMMISSION.

The Hon. B. P. DUNN (North Western Province): In view of concern that is being expressed by various people in the health field, including hospital committees, about the appointment of the Chairman of the Health Commission, can the Minister of Health inform the House when a decision will be made on the matter, and when the Health Commission will be in full operation?

The Hon. W. V. HOUGHTON (Minister of Health): I expect that the appointment of the Chairman of the Health Commission will soon be announced. Mr. Dunn will be aware of the considerable lengths to which the Government has gone on a worldwide basis to acquire the best possible man. All the procedures have been followed and within a short time an announcement will be made regarding the appointment.

FLEMINGTON RACECOURSE.

The Hon. F. S. GRIMWADE (Bendigo Province): In regard to the historic event which will take place next week on Crown land at Flemington, will the Chief Secretary advise the House what action the police will be taking to control pickpockets, tipsters and clairvoyants?

The Hon. V. O. DICKIE (Chief Secretary): All I can say is that I am "unaware" of the arrangements.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

The Hon. A. J. HUNT (Minister for Local Government): By leave, I desire to make a personal explanation with respect to the matter raised by Mr. White during question time.

On 23rd September last I was absent interstate when an article appeared in the *Age* attributing certain comments to the Honorable E. R. Meagher, a former Minister in the Bolte and Hamer Governments. The article came to my attention late on the following day and I immediately recognized what it was about.

I would never impugn the integrity of the Honorable E. R. Meagher or suggest for one moment that he would either publicly or privately tell an untruth whether for his own advantage or any other purpose. He is a man in whose integrity I have the utmost faith and confidence. I add, the remarks he made and which were reported in the *Age* were a garbled version of what in fact has occurred, based on substantial misrecollection of events. I wish to state those facts clearly to the House.

In the middle of April, 1973, before the 1973 election campaign had commenced I had a working lunch at the Chateau Commodore with Jack Woodruff, Labor chairman of the Melbourne City Council Caucus, Councillor Stewart of the Altona City Council and a property consultant whose name I will reveal in the proper place and at the proper time, which dealt with certain land problems in the Altona area, problems which were very difficult to resolve. The problems are the result of old and inappropriate subdivisions and require the co-operation of the Government to solve. Local members, including Mr. Knight, know something about these problems.

Those problems are currently being overcome. The starting point in overcoming them was that working luncheon, which was later followed by visits to the site by Mr. Borthwick, as Minister of Lands, and myself. At the end of the luncheon the

property consultant involved said to me, "Alan, would you like any help in the elections?" Councillor Woodruff said, "Hey, hey, hey", or words to that effect, and I replied, "No thanks, I think things are all right." I said that for a number of reasons, the most important being that I could not under any circumstances even consider accepting financial assistance from a land developer with whom I was having current discussions or with whom I might expect to have discussions; so I refused.

I think people have heard something of my campaign. About two and a half weeks before the end of the campaign a Mr. Donald Fowler, organizer for Mr. Meagher, came to me and said, "Alan, there is some ill feeling in the electorate. Your campaign is far more expensive than Ray Meagher's." I asked him what the problem was, and he said, "Well, we haven't got funds to do any more." I said, 'How much do you need?" He said, 'We could do with another $1,000." I replied, "Well, you get your running shoes on and I will do what I can. If we all work to raise a bit of money I will guarantee that you will have your $1,000. If there is a shortfall I will bear it myself. From here on you work on the assumption that you have that money and think positively and get out and undertake the publicity."

I then telephoned the property consultant and re-emphasized the fact that I wanted nothing for myself. I put him in touch with Mr. Fowler, the organizer of Mr. Meagher's campaign. The property consultant said "How much is wanted there?" I said, "They are looking for about $1,000 in all." He said, "Well, that is only ten people at $100 each. I think we could probably help there." I indicated that I myself would meet any deficiency.

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY: Why couldn't Mr. Meagher have rung up for himself?

The Hon. A. J. HUNT: Because it is better that he does not know. That is the way we approach it. I believe the property consultant himself made immediate contact with Mr. Meagher's organizer. On the following Monday at State Cabinet Mr. Meagher spoke to me, thanked me and asked the facts. I informed him that a property consultant was involved and that I did not believe it was proper for me to accept any money to go to my campaign knowingly and that I had therefore referred him to the party organizer of my colleague, and Mr. Meagher indicated that that was a proper thing to do. He has obviously recalled my remarks at that time, to which he reacted that that was a proper thing to do, and thought of that as his idea in apparent opposition to something that had occurred. I want to quote an analogy which I remember from many years ago.

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY (Melbourne North Province): This is not a personal statement if the honorable gentleman proposes to quote an analogy. I know that a certain latitude can be enjoyed, but what does an analogy have to do with a personal explanation?

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. W. G. Fry): Order! The subject was not raised by the Minister for Local Government. The honorable gentleman sought leave of the House and no one objected. As far as I am concerned he can make a statement in his own way.

The Hon J. W. GALBALLY: We gave him leave, but not to act as advocate for his own cause.

The PRESIDENT: I ask Mr. Galbally to cease interjecting.

The Hon. A. J. HUNT (Minister for Local Government): Some years ago in a club of which I was a member, a scandal arose when a member left his wife to live with another woman. His wife was an attractive, charming, accomplished woman with what appeared to be a gentle nature, and members were amazed. I recall a discussion which took place one

night after this occurred, when one member said, "I can't understand it. I don't know how he did it. She could have put her shoes under my bed any night." About a month later the story was relayed to me by one of the people in that group that that woman was no better because she used to be on with so and so who used to be a member of the club. What had happened was that that man had a recollection of what had been said about those shoes. May I suggest that that case involves the same kind of thinking. Mr. Meagher remembered the picture of his reaction, that it certainly would have been improper to accept funds, direct or indirect, through the party organization and to knowingly accept funds from someone with whom I was having discussions at the time. He said I was offered a large sum of money. The offer was not made to me but to the party organization. It was not conditional on my accepting the money personally. I had refused the money and the consultant approached the organization.

The Hon. D. R. WHITE: But you raised it for him.

The Hon. A. J. HUNT: I was never prepared to jeopardize myself by offering funds direct, is what Mr. Meagher said. Mr. Meagher has forgotten that in the same electorate another member of the Ministry and I were present when Mr. Meagher received an offer of assistance by a well-known Liberal who had no axe to grind and sought no favour. Mr. Meagher accepted in the presence of others; so he misremembered again. I have a great affection for Mr. Meagher and I supported him for the deputy leadership when Sir Henry Bolte retired, but when the question of the premiership arose, I did not support him. I also informed him that there was no point in his standing because Mr. Hamer had the numbers.

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY: Is this going to be a personal explanation as to why he fought someone in an election?

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. W. G. Fry): This is getting away from the subject-matter. If there is a close connection, I hope the Minister will make it quickly so that we can see the connection.

The Hon. A. J. HUNT: I will make it quickly. Both Mr. Meagher and his wife said that I worked actively against him for the premiership, which is not true. There was no need to. It was clear that Mr. Hamer had the support. I do not know whether that experience has coloured his recollection.

SESSIONAL ORDERS.

The Hon. V. O. DICKIE (Chief Secretary): I desire to give notice that on the next day of meeting, I will move—

That so much of the Sessional Orders as provides that the hour of meeting on Tuesdays shall be half-past four o'clock, on Wednesdays four o'clock, and on Thursdays eleven o'clock; that on Wednesday in each week Private Members' business shall take precedence of Government business; and that no new business be taken after half-past ten o'clock, be suspended until the end of December next and that until the end of December next the hour of meeting on Tuesdays shall be half-past three o'clock, on Wednesdays a quarter-past two o'clock, on Thursdays a quarter to eleven o'clock, and on Fridays a quarter to eleven o'clock; and that Government business shall take precedence of all other business.

When I move the motion I will give the undertaking that a number of items already listed as private members' business will hold their precedence and will be debated before the session ends, either late in November or early December.

SUBORDINATE LEGISLATION COMMITTEE.

PORT PHILLIP PILOTS SICK AND SUPERANNUATION FUND REGULATIONS 1977.

The Hon. R. I. KNOWLES (Ballarat Province) presented a report from the Subordinate Legislation Committee upon the Port Phillip Pilots Sick and Superannuation Fund Regulations 1977 (Statutory Rule 105/1977), together with minutes of evidence.

It was ordered that they be laid on the table, and that the report be printed.

PAPER.

The following paper, pursuant to the direction of an Act of Parliament, was laid on the table by the Clerk—

National Museum—Report of the Council for the year 1976–77.

BOARD OF WORKS CHAIRMAN.

The Hon. I. B. TRAYLING (Melbourne Province): I move—

That the Council agree to the following Address to His Excellency the Governor—

"MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY—

We, the Legislative Council of Victoria, in Parliament assembled, being firmly of the opinion that Alan Humphrey Croxford is guilty of misbehaviour in his office as Chairman of the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works in that he has misused resources of the Board for his private benefit, pray that Your Excellency may remove the said Alan Humphrey Croxford from his office as Chairman of the said Board."

This is a very serious motion. When money is paid from public funds, ratepayers' funds in this instance, there must be accountability. The Chairman of the Board of Works is using the resources of the board for private benefit. The House must judge whether this act should be condoned or tolerated, and the people of Victoria must witness whether the Government approves of the behaviour of a man appointed to a high position with its approval.

This is not the first occasion on which the House has had cause to debate the actions of the present Chairman of the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works. In 1972, following disclosures in this House, a board of inquiry was appointed to investigate the purchases and sales of land in Victoria by Alan Humphrey Croxford. I intend to make only a brief reference to the report of the board of inquiry. At page 11, the report deals with the sealing of Beckett Road, Mitcham Hills. Mr. Croxford had property on Beckett Road, and at that time was a councillor of the Shire of Doncaster and Templestowe. The report refers to the fact that Councillor Croxford moved a recommendation in the meeting of the Streets and Roads Construction Committee and at the council itself. The report states—

There is evidence that sealing the road made it easier to sell the lots owned by Mr. Croxford and his co-owners in Beckett Road.

At the conclusion of chapter 6 of the report, page 12, the board of inquiry states—

I think it is only fair to state that, even if Mr. Croxford did contravene the provisions of section 181 (1) by voting in committee and in the council on the matter, this was a technical breach, of no significance in the context of this inquiry.

That is a qualitative comment in this disgraceful report. It was a whitewash and a sham.

The Hon. W. V. HOUGHTON: Who made the report?

The Hon. I. B. TRAYLING: I did not realize that the Minister of Health was unaware of the report. It is a report of the Board of Inquiry into the Purchases and Sales of Land in Victoria by Alan Humphrey Croxford. The board comprised Mr. W. O. Harris, Q.C., and the report was presented to His Excellency the Governor on 18th January, 1973.

The Hon. A. J. HUNT: He is now Mr. Justice Harris.

The Hon. I. B. TRAYLING: That is right. Of course he is Mr. Justice Harris, because there is a lot of precedence for suggesting that Queen's Counsel who are appointed by this Government to conduct boards of inquiry end up as judges. That is the answer to the Minister's interjection.

The Chairman of the Board of Works is using an unusual expense allowance made available by the board, which authorized an additional tax-free income of $6,000 a year. The chairman has used an employee of the board, whose salary is also paid from ratepayers' money, to conduct

personal business for him. The chairman has also used Board of Works property at Kinglake, which is managed by his nephew, who is also paid from the board's rate revenue, for private purposes.

The Hon. H. M. HAMILTON: You get an expense allowance.

The Hon. I. B. TRAYLING: I note that the perennial interjectors are in their places. I submit, for the consideration of the House, the contention that the public purse must not and cannot be pilfered.

Let me consider the position of the Chairman of the Board of Works who was recommended for appointment by his fellow commissioners, and that recommendation was approved by the Government. Mr. Croxford receives a salary of $36,790, plus an expense allowance of $1,500 as approved by the Governor in Council. The same sorts of procedures are followed with salary levels of permanent heads and similar appointees.

The Hon. R. J. LONG: Is that misbehaviour?

The Hon. I. B. TRAYLING: There is nothing wrong with that. In addition, an incredible arrangement was made whereby the finance committee of the board passed a resolution making available—I want honorable members opposite to listen carefully to this—an expense allowance of $6,000, which had to be claimed. In order to get that $6,000, the chairman of the board had to submit a claim. In response to a question on notice several weeks ago, the Minister of Water Supply said that in the last year the $6,000 had in fact been expended. Of course, I accept that. However, how does Mr. Croxford tell the board that in fact the money has been spent for purposes other than as another means of private income? Every fortnight, the chairman submits an authority for expenditure and pay voucher "for reimbursement of expenses incurred by the chairman in the conduct of the board's business". For the period 1st February to 15th February, 1977, the amount claimed was $290 and then for other fortnights the amounts were $290, $302, $273, $275, $295, and so on until the $6,000 was exhausted.

The Labor Party has no argument about the $1,500 expense allowance that is subject to Governor in Council approval, but the $6,000 is not accounted for. Let me examine what Mr. Croxford could be using it for. One suggestion might be taxis but, no, the chairman has a full-time driver and a car, which are paid for by the board. Another could be his home telephone, but that is also paid for by the board. The wet cupboard, which may be used by commissioners who might like a Scotch, is paid for by the board. Entertaining of visiting delegations and so on is another possibility, but, no, this is also paid for by the board. Air fares and accommodation when travelling away from Melbourne is another suggestion, but they are also met by the board. The short answer is that there is nothing left except a total of $150 a week—$1,500 a year approved by the Governor in Council and the $6,000 a year additional—to spend in some way. The chairman could take the odd person to lunch or an occasional dinner but an amount of $7,500 a year is a bit rich, given what is left for the chairman to actually spend the money on after everything else is paid for.

If the $6,000 were taxable income, the chairman would be getting an additional $18,000 a year. This would put his salary higher than that of the Premier. It might be argued that this sort of perk is perhaps common to people in equivalent positions, so I checked around the various departmental heads, either with them personally or through the Victorian Public Service Association, and with the railways and so on. Apart from the allowances approved by the Governor in Council, these permanent

heads do not get another cent in expenses. Why should Mr. Croxford get from public funds this bonus or tax-free income of $6,000?

The Hon. O. G. JENKINS: Was it not approved by resolution of the board?

The Hon. I. B. TRAYLING: For the benefit of honorable members opposite, perhaps I should explain the sort of salary range in the Public Service and where Mr. Croxford fits in. There are three levels—A, B and C. Level A comprises the Chairman of the Railways Board and the Chairman of the State Electricity Commission, who both get just on $48,000 a year with an allowance of $2,250. Neither of these two gentlemen gets 1 cent more by way of allowance. The level B officials comprise the chairmen of the Country Roads Board, the Melbourne Harbor Trust, the Rural Finance and Settlement Commission and so on. Their salary is $37,530, plus an allowance of $1,750 a year, and they get not 1 more cent in allowances. Mr. Croxford falls within the level B range, although he gets slightly less than certain departmental heads in that range, but does he make up for it with his $6,000 extra allowance! Then there is level C which comprises certain permanent heads who receive $33,790, plus an allowance of $1,750.

The Hon. R. J. LONG: Did not the board approve of this?

The Hon. I. B. TRAYLING: For the benefit of honorable members opposite, I inform them that last week, in the presence of the Minister, I asked a senior officer of the board, the secretary—admittedly he was not prepared for the question—how this money could be spent. He could not answer how it might be spent other than on the occasional lunch or dinner. That is a fair summation of what happened at that meeting. The expenditure cannot be accounted for.

Taking into account this $6,000 in tax-free income, it means that, in real terms, the chairman of the board is earning the equivalent of $55,000 a year, while the Premier of Victoria gets only $47,738. If the board were a private company and the chairman had made an arrangement as a chief executive of that private company, we would have no quarrel because in the private sector expenses at this level are paid. However, where public money is involved, we have a right to be concerned. We should be concerned how money paid to the board by its ratepayers is spent.

Before passing on to the aspect of using board property and employees for private benefit, I inform the House that it is not because Mr. Croxford is impoverished that he takes advantage of this tax-free income provided in an expense allowance for which there is no accountability, as in the future he will be the recipient of probably the most generous superannuation scheme devised in Australia.

The Hon. F. J. GRANTER: It was approved by the board; there is no question about that.

The Hon. I. B. TRAYLING: I am not questioning the legality of the scheme, but I am questioning the provision of a $6,000 tax-free expense allowance. I suggest that is a most generous benefit given to him by the board.

Mr. Croxford's superannuation scheme provides for a payment of 70 per cent of salary after being in office eight years, but it requires him to make only a 5 per cent contribution of his salary to the scheme. In this House several weeks ago in answer to a question, the Minister of Water Supply stated that, like other public servants, Mr. Croxford will receive 70 per cent of his salary on retirement. If that were the simple answer and covered everything, that would be all right, but it does not.

A permanent head of a Victorian Public Service Department gets 70 per cent of his salary on retirement but only after a qualifying period of

30 years, compared with Mr. Croxford's 8 years. Whereas the Chairman of the Board of Works pays a contribution of 5 per cent of his salary, for the past fifteen to twenty years a career officer in the Public Service in this State has been paying 9 per cent of his salary. This would be the best deal ever arranged by an individual in any institution.

The Hon. R. J. LONG: What are the board members doing? Tell us about that.

The Hon. I. B. TRAYLING: A board of inquiry has been set up for the purpose of looking at what they do.

I now want to give to the House details of the use made of board property. On 10th March this year, a board employee, Mr. Martin Rowan, went to Wodonga to the Suzuki Angus Beef Classic. There the board's employee purchased for Mr. Croxford an Aberdeen Angus bull. The bull was lot 4 and its name was Barwidgee Statesman. It was born on 3rd April, 1973, and was sired by Barwidgee Potter and the dam was Barwidgee Myola, the 18th.

The Hon. W. V. HOUGHTON: What was the price?

The Hon. I. B. TRAYLING: It was $3,700.

The Hon. W. V. HOUGHTON: Cheap!

The Hon. I. B. TRAYLING: Mr. Martin Rowan then arranged transport of the bull, which Mr. Croxford paid for, with other cattle being transported to the board's Werribee farm. However, to where was the bull transported? To Mr. Croxford's private farm? No! Mr. Croxford's bull was transported to the board's farm at Kinglake. I suppose his nephew, Mr. Fred Castle, who manages the farm, looked after Uncle Alan's bull.

This is a serious matter. Mr. Croxford's bull was purchased for him by a cattle buyer from the board, and it was subsequently transported to the board's farm at Kinglake and placed in the care of the manager, Mr. Croxford's nephew, Mr. Fred Castle. I suppose, as I said, Mr. Fred Castle was perfectly happy to look after Uncle Alan's bull. Mr. Castle had been appointed manager subsequent to Mr. Croxford's appointment by the board.

The Hon. W. V. HOUGHTON: There must be more of the story. We can hardly wait!

The Hon. I. B. TRAYLING: Does the Minister of Health approve of the board's resources being put to private use?

The Hon. W. V. HOUGHTON: I want to hear the rest of the story.

The Hon. I. B. TRAYLING: I know, as indeed does the public, that the Liberal Party Government has a very high acceptance of and tolerance to corruption, both within its own ranks and outside. That is why the sneering, smug interjections from the Minister of Health are relevant in depicting the general attitude and malaise of his Government.

On 6th October, Mr. Walton and I visited the Kinglake farm. We went in through the back entrance and were able to identify, in a paddock adjacent to the manager's residence —what do you think?

The Hon. W. V. HOUGHTON: The bull!

The Hon. I. B. TRAYLING: The Aberdeen Angus bull.

The Hon. F. S. GRIMWADE: How did you identify it? Mr. Trayling does not know anything about bulls. He could not identify it as they are all black.

The Hon. I. B. TRAYLING: The bleatings of Mr. Grimwade indicate that he knows more about sheep than he does about bulls. On 17th October, I rang the Kinglake farm and spoke to none other than Mr. Martin Rowan. In response to my question he said that there is not and never has been an Aberdeen Angus bull on the Kinglake property. It is

a beautiful property; it supports a pure-bred Hereford stud farm, and I am sure that is how it should be.

The Minister of Health might be amazed over the corruption and misuse of board property. Members of the Labor Party know what is going on, as do members of the public. The smug, sneering attitude to this revelation will rebound on the Government because I am sure that the tolerance level of the community to corruption has reached its limit and that this will be illustrated at future elections.

The Hon. R. J. LONG: If that is a serious statement, why does Mr. Trayling not release these facts outside the House instead of in the House?

The Hon. I. B. TRAYLING: I will do what the Ministers in this House do not do. I will raise serious matters within the confines of this Chamber, rather than waiting, as Ministers do, for the sessional period to conclude and then running from discussion in the House by making a statement with the full confidence that they cannot be questioned as they could be in the House. This is the place for debate, not in the press or outside.

Those are the charges that I make in support of the motion. Whether it is the millions of dollars for which the ratepayers of Melbourne are being touched or whether it is $6,000 and the use by the chairman of board property, they are all relevant, and if these actions are to be permitted, it is the thin edge of the wedge. The House should be debating what has already happened in this State. This is something about which the Government should not be unconcerned. The Government should be seriously concerned, and I suggest that this motion should be supported.

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

That the debate be now adjourned.

In view of the allegations made by Mr. Trayling, and especially his reference to the farm and the purchase of the Angus bull, which I am not able to confirm or deny without making full inquiries——

The Hon. I. B. TRAYLING: I will give you the evidence.

The Hon. F. J. GRANTER: If Mr. Trayling does so, I shall thank him. However, I seek to have the debate adjourned until the next day of meeting when I will make a full reply to Mr. Trayling's allegations.

The motion for the adjournment of the debate was agreed to, and it was ordered that the debate be adjourned until the next day of meeting.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (REGIONAL REFUSE DISPOSAL) BILL.

The Hon. W. V. HOUGHTON (Minister of Health): On behalf of the Minister for Local Government, I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

Its purpose is to provide legislative authority for municipal councils to join together to make long-term plans for the disposal of refuse on a regional basis.

In its 1971 progress report on the disposal or destruction of garbage and other rubbish, the State Development Committee recommended, amongst other things, that the State's future refuse disposal needs be planned and co-ordinated on the basis of the needs of whole cities and/or regions, and that the Government give maximum encouragement to the promotion and development of regional disposal schemes involving a number of councils.

In the metropolitan area four regional groups—eastern, northern, south-eastern and western—were formed in 1974, based on the then proposed Federal municipal regions. Studies which employed consultants were carried out in three of the regions with the aid of Federal funds and a series of reports has been produced by the Environment Protection Authority's Land Waste Management

Branch which was established in 1972 to control the depositing of waste on land.

Committees representing the councils forming regional groups have prepared draft constitutions for the groups and there are also a number of existing agreements between "hosts", that is municipalities with disposal sites, and "guests", that is the municipalities which use those sites. Councils in the regions have generally accepted that a system of co-operative regionalism must be adopted if refuse disposal is to remain a local government function. The regional system will enable councils to make or continue to make long-term plans for refuse disposal and will ensure that space for sanitary landfill, which is the accepted method of disposal for the foreseeable future, will be shared equitably by all councils in each region. In addition, joint operations will provide more efficient and economical disposal.

The legislation now proposed will provide a statutory basis for existing regions as well as future regions outside the metropolitan area. The provisions will be inserted in the Local Government Act as Part XLI. The former Part XLI. dealing with the registration of dancing saloons was repealed by the Local Government (Amendment) Act 1977. The new provisions appear in clause 2 of the Bill, and the first of these is section 812 which defines various terms used in the legislation.

Section 812A authorizes the Governor in Council to declare any two or more municipal districts to be a refuse disposal region. Any order made for this purpose may be subsequently revoked or amended if the councils concerned are first given an opportunity to express their views.

Section 812B authorizes the Governor in Council, on the application of not less than two thirds of the municipalities whose municipal districts are in a refuse disposal region, to declare all the municipalities in the region to be a regional refuse disposal group. If a municipal district is added to or severed from a region the municipality concerned automatically becomes a member of the regional group or—as the case may be—ceases to be a member. The Governor in Council also has power to make an order dissolving a regional group.

Section 812C provides for the approval by the Minister of a constitution for a regional group. On approval by the Minister, whether with or without amendments, the constitution is binding on all members. At any time after formation of a group all members may jointly submit a draft constitution for approval of the Minister but if no constitution has been submitted within six months after declaration of the group, two-thirds of the members may submit a draft. The Minister, after consulting other members of the group, may approve the constitution with or without amendments.

Section 812D sets out the matters which must be dealt with in the constitution of a regional group. These include provision for—

(i) Appointment of a committee of councillors.

(ii) Apportionment of costs and expenses amongst members.

(iii) The drawing up of general plans or strategies for the disposal of refuse for which the members are responsible.

(iv) Guidelines for host-guest agreements.

Councils must dispose of refuse for which they are responsible in a manner which accords with the general plan in force for the regional group to which they belong. Any council which is a member of a group is expressly prohibited from entering into any agreement relating to use of a refuse disposal site which it owns or partly owns if this will or may prejudice the general plan for the region and, further, may not fix

any charge for refuse disposal which could prejudice the operation of the plan.

Section 812E provides that at least two-thirds of the members of a group may vote to amend the constitution of the group. The Minister, after consulting the members who do not favour the amendment, may approve the proposal with or without amendments.

Section 812F provides that the committee of a regional group will be a body corporate. Only sitting councillors may be members. A committee may employ staff and for the purposes of long service leave for its staff will be deemed to be a municipal council. Member councils of the group may assign officers or employees to work for the committee. A committee may invest any moneys which it may have in the same way as a municipal council may invest its municipal fund and will have the same powers to enter contracts as a municipal council.

Section 812G requires the committee of a regional group to prepare and submit to member councils on or before 31st August an estimate showing the nature and amount of expenditure proposed for the year beginning on the next succeeding 1st October.

A council may object to any item and a dispute is then deemed to arise which must be settled in the prescribed manner. Subject to this each council must contribute the amount for which it is liable before the following 1st October. Councils may borrow for contributions towards capital works of a committee provided the works, if carried out by a council, would be permanent works or undertakings within the meaning of Part XV.

Sections 812H and 812I provide for appointment of auditors, qualified to audit the accounts of municipalities, to carry out audits of the accounts and other records which every committee is required to keep. Provisions similar to those applying to municipal councils have been adopted and inspectors of municipal administration are given the same powers with respect to committees as they have in relation to municipal councils.

Section 812J provides that a committee may borrow money on the security of its assets and, with consent of the Minister, may obtain advances from banks by overdraft of its current account for the purpose of executing any work or undertaking for which councils are authorized to borrow. For the purpose of temporary accommodation a committee may obtain an overdraft not exceeding any amount due to the committee at the time by way of annual contributions from member councils of the group.

Under section 812K a committee may purchase or lease land by agreement. It may take land compulsorily —other than land of a municipality or other public authority—as if it were a municipal council and the region its municipal district. When a committee proposes to acquire land it must give to the council in whose municipal district the land is situated an opportunity of buying the land itself, either for its own use or the use of the committee. If the council objects that the land should not be used for the purpose for which the committee proposes to use it, a dispute is deemed to arise between the council and the committee which must be settled by arbitration in the prescribed manner.

Section 812L provides that a committee may sell land no longer required for the purposes of the group but must first offer it to the council in whose municipal district it is situated. The price must be the market value as determined by the Valuer-General or such lesser amount as is agreed upon by the parties. Leases of such land may be granted under the same conditions which apply to leases of land by municipal councils.

By section 812M councils may jointly agree to purchase or lease land or equipment or to erect buildings for refuse disposal purposes. Each

council is authorized to borrow for the purpose of meeting its share of the cost.

Section 812N makes provision for the settlement of disputes which may arise between two or more regional groups, councils or committees. The parties may agree on a arbitrator or refer the matter to the Minister who may arbitrate himself or appoint an arbitrator. Whoever arbitrates will have the powers conferred on the Minister by the principal Act for the settlement of disputes between councils and his decision will be final.

Section 812O applies to meetings of committees of regional groups the provisions of section 181 of the principal Act which imposes certain disabilities on councillors who have pecuniary interests in matters being discussed by their councils. The provisions are being applied with the necessary alterations and adaptations.

Under section 812P a committee may, with the approval of the Governor in Council, make by-laws for carrying into effect the purposes of the legislation. It may also, subject to the constitution of the groups, fix charges for receiving refuse at any depot which it has established.

Clause 3 makes amendments to the Health Act in relation to the powers and duties of councils with respect to refuse disposal to provide for the occasions when the powers are exercised or the duties performed by the committee of a regional group.

Clause 4 provides that committees of regional refuse disposal groups shall be authorities for the purposes of the Local Authorities Superannuation Act 1958 so that any employees of a committee may contribute for superannuation under that fund.

The proposed legislation is flexible and will permit regional groups to function in whatever manner the participating councils consider to be appropriate. The committee may have no other function than to prepare and continually update the regional strategy plan while refuse disposal is carried out by a council or councils under a host-guest agreement or agreements. Alternatively the committee may acquire land and plant and carry out a disposal operation or a combination of these methods may be adopted. I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of the Hon. R. J. Eddy, for the Hon. I. B. TRAYLING (Melbourne Province), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Tuesday, November 1.

LABOUR AND INDUSTRY BILL.

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

That this Bill be now read a second time.

It amends the Labour and Industry Act 1958. It covers minor changes to the industrial machinery contained in the Act, several provisions relating to shop trading hours, including a proposal to license trash and treasure markets, a proposal to alter the law relating to the carting of bread more than 30 miles from where it was baked, increases in penalties for offences under the Act, the repeal of discriminatory provisions in the legislation and increases in fees for the registration of factories and shops. Because it contains such diverse matters, I will deal with it clause by clause.

Clause 1 need no explanation. Clause 2 amends section 26 (1) of the Act which presently allows the Minister to appoint persons to vacancies on wages boards for the unexpired portion of the term of office of a member who dies or resigns or is removed. From time to time, cases arise where a new appointment is required to be made as an urgent matter. Where the Minister is unable to act, and this can be for a variety of reasons, delays in the appointment of members can occur. These delays, however short they

may be, can cause difficulties where a board is required to deal with an urgent matter. The amendment proposed in this clause will allow the secretary, if authorized by the Minister, to make appointments to wages boards in cases of emergency or where the Minister is unable to act.

Clause 3 is a minor machinery amendment. The existing subsection (*l*) of section 45A allows the Minister to refer a determination of a wages board to the Industrial Appeals Court for consideration. However, a large number of determinations at present being made are determinations made by the court itself. The amendment will allow the Minister to refer to the court, determinations made both by wages boards and by the court.

Clause 4 proposes a new section allowing the Minister to refer to the Industrial Appeals Court any draft regulations prepared by the Industrial Training Commission under section 56 of the Industrial Training Act 1975 for advice regarding any proposals in the draft relating to the fixing of minimum rates of wages.

Honorable members will recall that late in 1975 the Labour and Industry Act was amended to give the Minister power to request the Industrial Appeals Court to review any determination of a wages board. This power was inserted to ensure that the principles set out in the decisions of the Australian Conciliation and Arbitration Commission in relation to national wage cases were being followed by wages boards. The decisions of the Australian Conciliation and Arbitration Commission in the 1975 case, and in subsequent cases, have the support of the Government of Victoria and the Minister is seen as having a monitoring role in relation to wage decisions coming within the ambit of his administration. The fixing of minimum rates for apprentices by regulation under the Industrial Training Act 1975 is another of the many wage-fixing systems operating in Victoria. As the Industrial Appeals Court is the body which reviews wages board determinations on request, it is appropriate that it should also be the body to advise the Minister on the suitability of proposals for the fixing of minimum rates of wages for apprentices.

Clause 5 proposes the registration of trash and treasure markets at an annual fee of $100. Individual stallholders will not be required to register. Representations have been made by the Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry that these markets are in competition with established businesses but are not subject to the same burden of municipal rates, and so on. The scheme for registering these markets at a fee of $100 will help redress the balance.

Clause 6 removes the existing limit of fifteen weeks on orders of exemption issued by the Minister in relation to shop trading hours in holiday resorts. It has been found that the holiday population of many resort areas rises substantially during weekends, particularly at places within a reasonable driving distance of Melbourne. The removal of section 80A (5) (*a*) would allow applications to be granted where extended trading hours for more than fifteen weeks appear desirable to the council of the municipality concerned.

Clause 7 proposes to extend the provisions of section 80C by adding the township of Warrandyte to the list of places where the council may apply for an order exempting shopkeepers of shops in tourist areas from being required to close. The township of Warrandyte has developed as a tourist resort and it is appropriate that the exemptions should also be able to be granted to shopkeepers there. Clause 7 (2) proposes to allow the Council of the City of St. Kilda to make application to the Minister for exemption from the closing hours provisions for shopkeepers in that municipality. The Minister in granting the order may impose conditions, limitations and restrictions.

The Government's intention is that applications will only be approved for small businesses and specialty shops to meet the needs and traditional trading patterns of particular areas of St. Kilda. If enacted it will bring the law into line with the desires of the shopkeepers, the municipal council and the people who patronize these shopping areas. It is not the Government's intention to allow chain stores to gain unfair trading opportunities just because they are located in St. Kilda. It is the small shops which will be allowed to open.

Clause 8 proposes an amendment to section 104 (4) of the principal Act which relates to the carting of bread more than 48·3 kilometres from where it was baked. The existing provision in the Act was designed to assist country bakers to meet competition from large bakers who were carting bread over long distances. The aim was to assist decentralization. It has been found that, in areas within 50 kilometres of Melbourne, the measure was operating to protect large bakers from competition from other large bakers. It is proposed that the provisions of section 104 (4) shall not apply to the carting or delivery of bread in the range of municipalities listed in the Bill which are those that are roughly within 80 kilometres of Melbourne, except that those municipalities close to the City of Geelong have been excluded. The City of Geelong and the surrounding municipalities are seen as having special problems and for that reason have been excluded from the list of municipalities within an 80 kilometre radius.

In clause 9 it is proposed that power be given to shopkeepers to take proceedings against other shopkeepers who open at times when by law they are required to be closed. A similar provision exists in the Consumer Affairs Act 1972 which re-enacted a provision from the now repealed Part V. of the Goods Act 1958. This will help to satisfy traders and trade associations which complain about the lack of action by inspectors of the department in relation to alleged breaches of the law on trading hours. If shopkeepers are given this power they can, particularly where they find their businesses being affected by illegal trade, institute proceedings themselves.

Clause 10 proposes an amendment to the Fifth Schedule by adding chemists' shops and sporting goods shops located at sporting venues that sell goods likely to be used at those venues. The Victorian Branch of the Pharmacy Guild of Australia can see no purpose in the present restrictions on trading hours and would be happy to see them removed. At present chemists can open at any time except between 1 p.m. and midnight on Saturdays and between 8 p.m. and midnight on Sundays and on public holidays. Prescriptions may be dispensed behind locked doors at those times. By adding chemists' shops to the Fifth Schedule those which confine themselves to the sale of chemists' lines will be able to be open without restriction.

The proposal relating to sporting goods shops at sporting venues recognizes a situation which has apparently gone unnoticed for many years where shops selling sporting goods, such as golf professional shops, have traditionally opened at weekends both at public and private sporting venues in order to provide a service for sports players. By adding these shops to the Fifth Schedule the practice will be regularized.

Clause 11 proposes a substantial change in the method of fixing penalties for breaches of certain sections of the principal Act. Instead of fixing maximum penalties for first offences and minimum and maximum penalties for subsequent offences, the maximum penalty only will be fixed. In cases of obstruction of the means of escape, the maximum penalty will be $2,000; for shop trading hours offences, $1,000; for bread carting offences, $2,000; for failure to report industrial accidents, $1,000; and for penalties not provided for elsewhere,

$300. These are provided for in paragraphs (*a*), (*b*), (*c*), (*d*) and (*j*). This proposal will give courts greater discretion in fixing penalties. In a serious case, a heavy penalty can be fixed by the court even though it may be a first offence.

Other changes are penalties for failure to pay rates fixed in determinations of wages boards will no longer be subject to fixed minimum penalties; the penalty for continuous offences in relation to failure to keep premises in conformity with the Act and regulations will be increased from $10 to $50 per day; and penalties for forging certificates and making false entries in records required by the Act will be doubled and the penalty for dismissing an employee in certain cases connected with membership of wages boards or for giving information to inspectors will be increased from $50 to $500. These changes are provided for in paragraphs (*e*), (*f*), (*g*) and (*h*).

Clause 12 of the Bill proposes the repeal of references in the principal Act which, according to present-day thinking, are discriminatory. The Committee for Review of the Labour and Industry Act 1958 in its third report advised the Minister of Labour and Industry of the submissions it had received from organizations representing women's interests on this subject. The committee recommends the changes proposed in this clause and its report went on to say that—

> . . . the removal of these words would remove from the legislation some of the features which are annoying, to say the least, to women's organizations which made submissions to the committee.

These proposed changes to the principal Act represent a change in community attitudes from one where women were thought of as persons requiring special protection to one where women should be able to compete on equal terms with men.

Clause 13 proposes increases in fees for the registration of shops and factories. In line with the Government's policy of assistance to small business enterprises, the fee for premises where not more than four persons are employed remains unchanged. I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of the Hon. W. A. LANDERYOU (Doutta Galla Province), the debate was adjourned.

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

CONSUMER AFFAIRS (AMENDMENT) BILL.

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

> That this Bill be now read a second time.

It makes several minor amendments to the Consumer Affairs Act 1972. As has been said before in this House, the Consumer Affairs Act requires amendment from time to time to keep it abreast of developments in consumer matters. The Bill follows that practice and, as the matters are unconnected, I propose to deal with them clause by clause.

Clause 1 needs no explanation. Clause 2 provides for an addition to the powers of the Consumer Affairs Bureau by allowing it, in appropriate cases, to attempt to settle disputes between consumers and the suppliers of goods or services. Although it has never been envisaged that the bureau would act on behalf of consumers in the same way as a solicitor acts for his client, the practice has grown whereby the bureau attempts to resolve disputes by making representations to suppliers on behalf of consumers. The inclusion of this provision will regularize this existing practice.

Clause 3 is a simple machinery measure. The existing provisions of section 13, which relate to false and misleading advertising, deem a statement to be published if it is inserted in a newspaper printed and published in Victoria. It has been found that advertisements have been inserted in newspapers printed outside Victoria. By altering the words of section 13

(3) (*a*) to read "printed or published", action against persons advertising in interstate publications will be simplified.

Clause 4 proposes to add a subsection to section 13A of the principal Act which relates to the misleading marking of prices. Cases have been brought to notice where the person inserting an advertisement is not the person offering to supply the goods or services. The provisions of the clause will catch up those persons who advertise.

Clause 5 proposes to extend the coverage of the door-to-door sales provisions of the principal Act to include cases where the original approach leading to the sales agreement was made at a bona fide fair or show. The Consumer Affairs Bureau continues to receive complaints concerning high pressure sales tactics in private homes. Many of these relate to agreements signed in the home but where the householder made the initial approach for information at a public fair or show. This change will allow the consumer to terminate the agreement within ten days should he wish to do so. Section 59 of the principal Act gives the Governor in Council power to make regulations in relation to the safe design and construction of goods.

Clause 6 of the Bill extends that power to include a requirement for the marking or stamping on the goods the manufacturer's name and the place of manufacture.

Clause 7 proposes a minor amendment to section 61c of the principal Act. This section relates to a requirement that a repairer is to offer to return replaced parts to the consumer where these are replaced in the course of repairs. It has been found that there are many cases where no charge is made for the removal or replacement of the part under the terms of a warranty. The requirement of the section should not apply to these cases.

The Hon. F. J. Granter.

In clause 8 it is proposed to repeal section 13D and 31 which provide that a person concerned in the management of a corporate body may be convicted for certain offences as well as the corporate body itself. It is proposed to re-enact a similar provision covering all offences under the principal Act.

Clause 9 proposes an amendment of the Small Claims Tribunals Act 1973 to allow the appointment of a senior referee. The tribunals have been operating since 1974 and at present two full-time and one part-time referees are hearing claims. The stage has been reached where it would be appropriate for one of the referees to be appointed "senior referee". As well as performing his ordinary duties as referee he would be required, in conjunction with the other referees, to develop standards for orders and procedures. In view of the development of case law on the supervision by the courts of the activities of the Victorian tribunals and similar ones operating in other States, the senior referee will be required to keep abreast of these decisions and to see that they are followed in a uniform manner by the tribunals. The senior referee is also to be a channel of communication between the Minister and the other referees and between the referees and the registrar. I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of the Hon. W. A. LANDERYOU (Doutta Galla Province), the debate was adjourned.

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

COMMITTEES (ATTENDANCE FEES) BILL.

The House went into Committee for the further consideration of this Bill.

Discussion was resumed of clause 2 (Amendment of No. 7727 s. 51A) and of Mr. Walton's amendment—

Clause 2, page 2, line 6, omit "Order of the Governor in Council" and insert "regulation".

The Hon. V. O. DICKIE (Chief Secretary): When this measure was last before the Committee I asked that progress be reported because of the following amendment proposed by Mr. Walton—

> Clause 2, page 2, line 6, omit "Order of the Governor in Council" and insert "regulation".

In looking at that proposition I emphasized that one needs to look at the provision in the principal Act which is being amended. Section 51A (1) of the Parliamentary Committees Act 1968 reads—

> Each member of a Committee to which this section applies shall, subject to this section, be entitled to receive by way of reimbursement of his expenses in relation to his attendance in the discharge of his duties as a member of the Committee for each attendance at a meeting of the Committee at which a quorum is present an attendance fee of $10 together with such other travelling allowances and expenses as are prescribed.

There are actually two provisions. A member is entitled to an attendance fee of $10 and also in all instances to such other travelling allowances and expenses as are prescribed. The attendance fees have been $10 for ten or fifteen years.

The Hon. A. K. BRADBURY: Longer than that.

The Hon. V. O. DICKIE: No one would know better than Mr. Bradbury because he has been a member for a long period. The Public Works Committee Act, which has been amended, provided for an attendance fee of two guineas. Rather than bring this matter back to Parliament every so often it is far better to set the fee by regulation. One must realize that when fees are set by regulation they apply almost without exception across the board. I hope the fees will be stabilized because it appears that the consumer price index is now increasing at a rate of about 2 per cent a quarter—an annual increase of about 10 per cent. The Government believes that for expediency the amount of the fees should be set by regulation and also that the total attendance fees should be fixed. That is the important thing that the Government set out to do. Mr. Walton proposed an amendment to clause 2, which in paragraph (*b*) proposes to insert the following new sub-section (3A) in section 51K of the principal Act which provides—

> The total amount payable for attendance fees of members pursuant to this section should not exceed such sum as is for the time being fixed by order of the Governor in Council for each financial year.

As I explained, the Treasurer has a responsibility to decide how much money will be allocated to each committee and the committee must work within that figure. On numerous occasions, committees have sought approval of the Treasurer, perhaps to travel interstate or do something which has not been allowed for in the amount set for them. It is proper that a total sum should be fixed for a financial year and that approval should be given for any increases that may be necessary in that sum by order of the Governor in Council for each financial year.

I know it has been said that Parliament should have the right to disallow regulations and that by writing this specifically into the legislation by amending the Committees (Attendance Fees) Act, the Parliament tends to lose a little control, but I do not think one should consider this case in isolation. If we want to argue that in all amendments such as this, a regulation-making power should be included in legislation so that the Subordinate Legislation Committee can bring to the notice of Parliament that something is irregular and that a particular regulation should be disallowed, we should go further than specifically taking one amendment out of a particular Bill because similar provisions apply in many areas. If this issue is subject to amendment or is controversial we should look at the Subordinate Legislation Act and the possibility of amending it in such a way that the committee retains full powers to disallow and bring before Parliament a particular resolution.

There is one before the House today.

For those reasons the Government believes two amendments, which are identical, are being proposed for the sake of expediency and therefore the Government cannot accept this particular amendment.

The Hon. J. M. WALTON (Melbourne North Province): I thank the Minister for his explanation and at the same time apologize for not having given the House a full list of amendments on the last occasion this matter was considered. It was due to a misunderstanding of the printer that only the first amendment, which appears on today's list, was given to the House. That may be why the Minister was temporarily confused. The amendments are meant to give the House the opportunity of passing judgment and to ensure that we are consistent and make the same provisions for all similar regulations which set fees. If the Minister goes back through the legislation I think he will find that we have been consistent in this regard. We have always said that these matters ought not to be taken away from the control of Parliament and ought to come before it.

It is not enough to put them before the Subordinate Legislation Committee. The present charter of that all-party committee enables it to see that regulations are within power. This Bill has nothing to do with the Subordinate Legislation Committee and could be considered by it only if an amendment was made to the Act to allow that committee to pass judgment. I would not be agreeable to that. Parliament ought to decide these matters and not a Select Committee. The committee has a specific job which it carries out from time to time. Reports are received of regulations that have been made outside the power of the relevant Act. That is the only function of the committee.

The amendments I intend to move are designed to bring before Parliament regulations that would be made under this Bill.

That will give Parliament the opportunity, if it sees fit, of disallowing a particular regulation. It is not necessary for Parliament to do anything about a regulation. Regulations are laid on the table and, having remained there for a certain time, if they are not disallowed by either or both Houses of Parliament they become law. If it is desired to stop them becoming law, a motion of disallowance is moved in either House.

The sole purpose of the amendment is to prevent the erosion of the powers of Parliament and to endeavour to give Parliament the responsibility of making these decisions and not leave it to some individual Minister or the Governor in Council.

The Hon. V. O. DICKIE (Chief Secretary): I appreciate the intentions behind the amendment, but I suggest that Parliament should strive for consistency. Section 7 of the Public Works Committee Act, which will be amended by this Bill, provides—

> Every member of the Committee (including the Chairman and Vice-Chairman) shall be entitled to receive by way of remuneration for his services, an attendance fee of $10.00 for each attendance at a meeting of the committee at which a quorum is present.

Section 9 (1) of the same Act relates to travelling and other expenses and provides—

> In addition to the attendance fees by this Act payable to members of the Committee every member thereof (including the Chairman and Vice-Chairman) shall be entitled to such further sum as is prescribed by regulations for the expenses incurred by him when travelling and also to any charges for any conveyance paid by him when so travelling whenever such expenses and charges have been necessarily incurred in the performance of his duties as a member of the Committee.

The Bill merely proposes to bring the provisions of section 7 into line with those of section 9.

I turn now to the Parliamentary Committees Act. Section 44 of that Act provides that each member of

the Subordinate Legislation Committee shall be entitled to receive travelling allowances as are prescribed by regulation. Nobody has worried about that provision, and all that this Bill does is to bring the provision in regard to attendance fees into line with the provisions concerning travelling allowances. Surely, consistency must reign in such legislation.

The key to the clause is that the total amount allocated for committees shall in future be fixed by the Governor in Council rather than increase of the amount being effected by regulation. The present system is time-consuming and unnecessary. The Government is doing something that it has not done for fifteen years.

Although I appreciate the principles enunciated by Mr. Walton, I do not believe the Committee should deal with any one Bill in isolation. The principle has been accepted by Parliament in other legislation and applies right across the board.

The Committee divided on the question that the words proposed by Mr. Walton to be omitted stand part of the clause (the Hon. W. M. Campbell in the chair)—

Ayes	..	28
Noes	..	8
Majority against the amendment	..	20

AYES.

Mr. Chamberlain	Mr. Jenkins
Mr. Crozier	Mr. Knowles
Mr. Dunn	Mr. Long
Mr. Evans	Mr. McDonald
Dr. Foley	Mr. Reid
Mr. Gleeson	Mr. Saltmarsh
Mr. Granter	Mr. Stacey
Mr. Grimwade	Mr. Storey
Mr. Guest	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Hamilton	Mr. Ward
Mr. Hauser	Mr. Wright
Mr. Hider	
Mr. Houghton	*Tellers*:
Dr. Howard	Mr. Block
Mr. Hunt	Mr. Bradbury

NOES.

Mr. Knight	Mr. White
Mr. Landeryou	
Mr. Thomas	*Tellers*:
Mr. Trayling	Mr. Eddy
Mr. Walton	Mr. Elliot

PAIR.

Mr. Dickie	Mr. Galbally

The clause was agreed to.

Clause 3 (Amount to be fixed by Order in Council).

The Hon. J. M. WALTON (Melbourne North Province): I will not proceed with the first amendment to be proposed to clause 3, but I shall persist with the second amendment. Accordingly, I move—

Clause 3, insert the following paragraph after paragraph (*b*):—

'(*c*) After section 24 (1) there shall be inserted the following sub-section:

"(2) Regulations made under this Act shall be subject to disallowance by Parliament.'"

The amendment was negatived, and the clause was agreed to.

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

PUBLIC ACCOUNT (AMENDMENT) BILL.

The debate (adjourned from September 20) on the motion of the Hon. V. O. Dickie (Chief Secretary) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

The Hon. I. B. TRAYLING (Melbourne Province): The Opposition does not oppose the Bill. It is almost a machinery measure to increase the lending authority of the Government from the Works and Services Account, which has not been increased since 1970–71. In that year the total expenditure from the account was $159 million, and it has increased by 2·7 times to $438 million for the year 1976–77.

The present limit of $6 million referred to in section 6 of the principal Act is now proposed to be increased to $15 million as carry-over finance

that the Government uses for works and services while waiting for appropriation Bills to be passed.

In the light of the effects of inflation over the past few years, that seems to be an acceptable amount, and the Opposition does not oppose the Bill.

The Hon. S. R. McDONALD (Northern Province): The National Party supports the Bill, which is simply one of the regular amending Bills that might be termed a form of compensation for the inflation that has occurred in recent years.

The Chief Secretary and Mr. Trayling outlined quite clearly that the measure amends section 16 of the Public Account Act which authorizes the advance to the Treasury of funds for particular purposes.

The limit of $6 million was set in 1970–71, and the Chief Secretary indicated that it is considered appropriate to increase it to $15 million.

It is obvious that this is necessary to compensate for inflation, and therefore the National Party supports the Bill.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was read a second time, and passed through its remaining stages.

PRIVILEGES COMMITTEE.

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. W. G. Fry): I have received the following message from the Legislative Assembly—

The Legislative Assembly requests that leave be given to the Honorable V. O. Dickie and the Honorable Haddon Storey, Q.C., to attend, in order to their being examined, before the Privileges Committee of the Legislative Assembly upon the matter referred to that committee by resolution of the Legislative Assembly dated 20th October, instant.

The resolution reads as follows—

That the allegations concerning the member for Caulfield as published in the newspaper the *Australian Financial Review* and in the letter tabled from Mr. Beach, Q.C., be referred to the Privileges Committee for examination and report.

The Hon. V. O. DICKIE (Chief Secretary): I move—

That the Honorable V. O. Dickie and the Honorable Haddon Storey, Q.C., be given leave to attend, if they think fit, before the Privileges Committee of the Assembly.

The motion was agreed to.

It was ordered that a message be sent to the Legislative Assembly intimating the decision of the House.

EPWORTH HOSPITAL (GUARANTEE) (AMENDMENT) BILL.

The debate (adjourned from September 20) on the motion of the Hon. W. V. Houghton (Minister of Health) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

The Hon. D. G. ELLIOT (Melbourne Province): The Epworth Hospital is a magnificent institution. It is situated in the Melbourne Province in Erin Street in the salubrious City of Richmond, as my confrère, Mr. Knight, would say.

When dealing with a Bill like this, one sometimes recapitulates what the Minister has said on guarantees and finance in relation to a hospital, institution, football club or whatever the case may be. However, in this instance I am absolutely positive that the board of management of the Epworth Hospital, in its wisdom, got together with the Government and the Parliamentary draftsman to enact a classic piece of legislation which members of all parties have no alternative but to support.

The Opposition is singularly interested in the Epworth Hospital because the beautiful wife of Mr. Landeryou—I call her "Tondelayo"—was trained there, and she is a magnificent nurse. She has what I call the gentle touch. With those few words, I indicate that the Opposition supports the Bill.

The Hon. A. K. BRADBURY (North Eastern Province): The National Party supports the Bill,

which will amend the measure passed by Parliament during the autumn sessional period. At that time it was hoped that the legislation providing for the inauguration of the Uniting Church in Australia would have been proclaimed. However, that did not occur until June, and as a result the House is asked to deal with this Bill, which is purely a machinery matter to delete the words "Methodist Church in Victoria" and insert the expression "Uniting Church in Australia, Synod of Victoria" wherever necessary.

The measure is a technical one, and the National Party supports it with pleasure.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was read a second time, and passed through its remaining stages.

ADJOURNMENT.

LEVEL CROSSINGS IN THOMASTOWN AND LALOR—RIVER MURRAY SALINITY.

The Hon. V. O. DICKIE (Chief Secretary): By leave, I move—

That the Council, at its rising, adjourn until Tuesday, November 8.

The motion was agreed to.

The Hon. V. O. DICKIE (Chief Secretary): I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

The Hon. R. J. EDDY (Thomastown Province): I raise a matter that deeply concerns me and to which I have previously referred. I ask the Minister for State Development and Decentralization or any of the Ministers in the House to refer it to the Minister of Transport in another place.

I refer to open level crossings in the townships of Thomastown and Lalor, where this afternoon a further fatality occurred. A motor car was involved in an accident, again with a train. Over the past few years too many fatalities have occurred in the townships of Thomastown and Lalor, and I have previously called on the Government to have boom gates installed at the relevant crossings. I have asked the Minister to go out and see for himself how dangerous those crossings are. During times of heavy traffic cars bank up across the line. I do not blame the drivers of the trains because nine times out of ten the accidents are caused by the motorists who should not be across the crossing.

I urge the Minister to refer the matter to the Minister of Transport and to request the honorable gentleman to go out and see for himself how dangerous the crossings are. I hope that for the safety of the public the Government will provide finance for boom gates at the four crossings concerned which are within a stretch of 2 miles.

The Hon. K. I. WRIGHT (North Western Province): I raise with the Minister of Water Supply the matter of tube wells to deal with the enormous salinity problem of the River Murray between Merbein and Red Cliffs. The Public Works Committee was requested to look into the matter urgently. The Premier has stated that if the Public Works Committee brings in a report indicating that the tube wells are required, finance for the project will become a matter of the highest priority.

The cost of the work has been estimated at $810,000 and I understand that a meeting was to take place between the State Ministers of Water Supply from each State involved, and the Federal Minister, Mr. Anthony. In view of the situation I ask the Minister whether the meeting has taken place.

The Hon. F. J. GRANTER (Minister of Water Supply): In reply to the matter raised by Mr. Wright, I wish to advise that the meeting took place in Canberra on Monday last, and the four Ministers agreed that consultants would be engaged to prepare a list of priorities for works on the salinity problem in the Murray Valley

basin. The consultants are to report to the Ministers within six months, but prior to that report a steering committee was nominated by the Ministers to instruct the consultants on the development that should take place. The Victorian representative is Mr. W. E. Bromfield. The cost of the consultants' fees will be shared equally by the four Governments.

As the Minister representing Victoria, I believe I put a strong case for the groundwater interceptor scheme in the Sunraysia area, mentioned by Mr. Wright. I hoped it would be accepted because the estimated cost was $810,000. The Victorian Government is keen that this work should proceed immediately and I hope that when the steering committee meets the consultants, this matter will be advanced and enabled to proceed at an early date.

I shall draw to the attention to the Minister of Transport the matter of the open crossings in Thomastown and Lalor that were mentioned by Mr. Eddy. I take it that warning lights and bells operate at the open crossings. It is unfortunate that accidents occur. The Government has a policy of trying to install boom gates at all open crossings over a period of years. There is a Level Crossing Committee. As Acting Minister of Transport at times, I know that on occasions accidents occur for no apparent reason. I shall refer the matter raised by the honorable member to the Minister of Transport.

The motion was agreed to.

The House adjourned at 4.50 *p.m. until Tuesday, November* 8.

QUESTION ON NOTICE.

ALBURY–WODONGA DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION.

(Question No. 601)

The Hon. A. K. BRADBURY (North Eastern Province) asked the Minister for State Development and Decentralization—

(*a*) Has the Albury–Wodonga Development Corporation made recent approaches to landowners in the Baranduda–Middle Creek area intimating its intention to acquire their properties in the near future; if so—(i) what properties are to be acquired; and (ii) when it is expected such acquisition will take place?

(*b*) Further to question No. 530, answered in this House on 13th September, 1977—(i) how much money was allocated by the Commonwealth Government to cover reasonable legal and valuation fees for landholders whose negotiations with the corporation has been terminated due to amendments to the compulsory acquisition area; (ii) how many claims have been made and what is the total amount of such claims; and (iii) what is the total amount paid out in respect of such claims?

The Hon. D. G. CROZIER (Minister for State Development and Decentralization): The answer is—

(*a*) The Chairman of the Albury-Wodonga (Victoria) Corporation has recently made personal contact with certain landowners, or where not available with their solicitors, to advise them of the intention to acquire their properties so that they were aware of the situation before a public announcement was made.

(i) The intention is to acquire a further thirteen holdings from the following landowners—

D. J. Schubert
D. J. and F. A. Schubert
C. R. Nichol
Estate G. E. Street
J. E. Street
P. G. F. Street
P. E. Boyes
H. F. and P. E. Boyes
K. A. Barton
A. F. Barton
A. F. and K. A. Barton
D. J. and K. P. Darmody
Schubert and Dougherty

(ii) Before 31st December, 1977.

(*b*) (i) $130,000 has been made available by the Commonwealth Government for such compensation in the Albury–Wodonga area.

(ii) Sixty claims totalling $79,779.78 have been received from landowners on the Victorian side of the border.

(iii) To date, 30 claimants have produced receipts and an amount of $18,485.98 has been paid.

Legislative Assembly.

Wednesday, October 26, 1977.

The SPEAKER **(Sir Kenneth Wheeler)** took the chair at 2.34 p.m. and read the prayer.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE.

AUSTRALIAN LOAN COUNCIL.

Mr. WILKES (Leader of the Opposition): Can the Treasurer indicate to the House what the Government's loan raising programme is, particularly with respect to the propositions outside the Loan Council which were agreed to at the Premiers Conference last Friday?

Mr. HAMER (Premier and Treasurer): I shall have to straighten out a few of the honorable member's statements because they do not actually represent the facts as they stand. The States of Western Australia and Victoria, in particular, have been pressing for a relaxation of Loan Council rules which at present prohibit State Governments and State instrumentalities from any loan raising overseas, even for the largest project. If one looks ahead, it is obvious that in all States there will be projects, especially in power generation, but also in port construction, railways and several other areas, which are so large that the Australian capital market simply will not be able to find the necessary funds to support them. An example in Victoria will certainly be the Loy Yang power station for which the estimated cost is now $1,600 million spread over ten to twelve years.

Mr. WILKES: Is that the only one you have in mind?

Mr. HAMER: At present that is the main one and the largest. Subsequently, if an economic means is found, for instance, of converting coal into oil and it is regarded as desirable from the point of view of Victoria and Australia that a plant be set up for that purpose, the cheapest estimate for such a plant would be $1,200 million. So we are considering large slabs of capital for these large infrastructure projects. What we wanted was not a departure from the Loan Council itself but a departure from Loan Council rules which prohibit the borrowing abroad of funds to support that type of project. It is envisaged that the Loan Council would support the over-all terms of loans, including interest and other conditions. What was agreed to last Friday as a result of a study by Treasury officers of all States and the Commonwealth over the past year was that the necessity for such borrowings was accepted in principle. It will be done on a project-by-project basis. That is, it will be necessary to establish that a project is of such size and importance that the funds are not likely to be available within Australia and on such a basis that the Loan Council approval of the borrowing can take place. The officers of the State and Federal Treasury have been instructed to draw up rules and guidelines for such borrowings abroad. I hope I have made plain that whatever is done will be done under Loan Council supervision and with Loan Council approval, but a new field of loan capital will be available for the large projects that will be needed in the future.

Mr. WILKES: Will the House be told from time to time?

Mr. HAMER: Yes.

LATROBE VALLEY INDUSTRIAL DISPUTE.

Mr. ROSS-EDWARDS (Leader of the National Party): Will the Premier set out in writing details of the terms of the settlement or any agreement reached in the settlement of the recent industrial strike in the Latrobe Valley? I refer to any terms of settlement or any agreements made between the Government and/or the State Electricity Commission on one side, and on the other side the strikers, the unions concerned and the Conciliation and Arbitration Commission.

Mr. HAMER (Premier and Treasurer): So far as the Government and the State Electricity Commission are concerned, that would be a blank sheet of paper. No agreements of any sort have been made.

The attitudes of the parties, that is, the State Electricity Commission, and also the State Government when it is

separately represented in some of the proceedings, have been made public in the Arbitration Commission. There are no other agreements.

Mr. ROSS-EDWARDS: What are the rumours all about then?

Mr. HAMER: I cannot help rumours. I inform the honorable member that positively there are no agreements of any sort which have not been publicly aired and the position has been made quite plain in public in the Arbitration Commission.

RAILWAY TICKET VENDING MACHINES.

Mr. McARTHUR (Ringwood): I refer to the installation last year of automatic ticket vending machines at the St. Kilda and Heidelberg railway stations. Can the Minister of Transport indicate how those machines have been received by the public, favourably or otherwise? Can he also indicate whether he will give consideration to the installation of similar machines at other stations on the suburban network so that people are not caught without tickets when getting on trains from stations which are unmanned?

Mr. RAFFERTY (Minister of Transport): Now that the appropriate union is acting more sensibly, the installations at St. Kilda and Heidelberg are working very satisfactorily indeed. Because of the success of the initial pilot scheme the Victorian Railways are about to call tenders for additional machines and those machines will be located in other suburban areas. As these additional machines become available—I do not know the number at the present time—there will be a progressive installation of machines in the most appropriate areas of the suburban rail network.

SCHOOL BUILDING PROGRAMME.

Mr. FORDHAM (Footscray): Can the Minister of Education indicate why $6 million of last year's Budget allocation for the school building programme was not spent during that period? Firstly, who was responsible for this? Was it his own department or the Public Works Department, bearing in mind the need for capital expenditure on our schools? Secondly, can the Minister further indicate why, in determining this year's allocation, the loss of last year's $6 million has been reinforced in that the base figure on which the 11 per cent increase was given was on expenditure rather than on last year's allocation?

Mr. THOMPSON (Minister of Education): The reply to the second part of the question is that that is the customary approach. When I saw that it was expressed in that way in the Budget, I queried it at the time but it became clear that that was the customary approach. In reply to the first part of the question, there was a delay because of the strikes and suspension in the letting of Government contracts for a period before Christmas and that did have an effect on the school building programme but approximately $4 million was channelled into the purchase of land for school sites.

TECHNICAL SCHOOL TEACHERS.

Mr. WHITING (Mildura): Can the Minister of Education inform the House whether the memorandum to principals of technical schools, No. T77/1722, issued on 21st September with regard to staffing limits in technical schools, was issued at the direction of the Treasury or did it emanate from within the Technical Schools Division of the Education Department? If it was by direction of the Treasury, will the same procedure apply to the Secondary Schools Division and the Primary Schools Division of the Education Department? Can the Minister also indicate whether those people who are to be listed as surplus staff at technical schools will be required to transfer from the schools to which they are already appointed?

Mr. THOMPSON (Minister of Education): To the best of my knowledge there was no direction to the Technical Schools Division on the

document emanating from the Technical Schools Division. If there is one area of the department which has no cause for complaint in relation to staffing it would be the Technical Schools Division. Last year it had a teacher-pupil ratio of 1:10·5. I know of no other Government education system anywhere in the world with anything like such a favourable ratio. Secondly, this year we lost some 2,000 pupils in our post-primary schools, including technical schools, and we appointed 1,300 additional teachers, so that ratio of 1:10·5 would even be better this year.

BENTLEIGH RAILWAY CROSSING.

Mr. SUGGETT (Bentleigh): I ask the Minister of Transport, as thousands of people daily refuse to use the shockingly constructed subway at the Bentleigh railway station and put their lives in jeopardy by venturing out into the busy street, whether he will hasten the inquiries of the railway engineers into the cost and feasibility of constructing a street level crossing?

Mr. RAFFERTY (Minister of Transport): This is the third occasion in the past three weeks on which the honorable member has asked the same question. I shall be happy to answer it on as many occasions as he likes to ask it.

I seriously doubt whether many thousands of people a day are refusing to use the subway. Last week I took the trouble of inspecting the subway, and I agree with the honorable member for Bentleigh that the steepness of the access to the subway makes it difficult to enter it, which is not desirable. I have asked the Victorian Railways to examine the situation, but I have also informed the honorable member that the possibility of amelioratory measures being taken with some urgency, if they are approved, is unlikely.

The plain fact is that there are other areas of equal importance on which large amounts of money are being spent. It will be a question of whether priority can be given to that area, depending on the reports I receive from the railways.

GEELONG FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES PROGRAMME BALLOT.

Mr. TREZISE (Geelong North): Has the Minister for Social Welfare frozen the ballot for positions on the Geelong area Family and Community Services Programme? If so, what is the reason for doing so, and if not, is the honorable gentleman concerned that allegations have been made about the way in which the ballot has been conducted, and further, if that is the case, what are his reasons for concern and what does he propose to do about the whole situation?

Mr. DIXON (Minister for Social Welfare): Representations have been made to me about the positions on the Family and Community Services Programme to which people are to be elected by interested voters in the Barwon region.

The principal allegation seems to me to be that some members of the community have been going into the Geelong regional services office and taking a considerable number of voting application forms. The principal objection to that seems to be that some misuse could occur of these ballot-papers in that some people could simply sign the name of a person who was listed on the electoral roll without being that person.

Notwithstanding that point, a lot of protection is given because every ballot-paper will be checked by the returning officers for the election. If there were an irregularity, the ballot would have to be held again.

The procedure that has been adopted has had the advantage of gaining full participation; nevertheless, as I am anxious to ensure that everyone should have full confidence in the people who are elected to the Victorian Family and Community Services Programme, I have asked that the procedures recommence on a different basis. All application papers

will have to be picked up by the person taking the application for registration or the person taking the application will have to give evidence that the person voting is voting as himself or herself. Because of the delay in the procedure, the final date of voting has been altered from 7th November, 1977, to 14th November, 1977.

Mr. COLEMAN (Syndal): Following the last question, I ask the Minister for Social Welfare whether the election for representatives to the Family and Community Services Programme will be carried out by the electoral office or by the department.

Mr. DIXON (Minister for Social Welfare): The election will be carried out by the department.

RADIO CENSORSHIP.

Mr. JONES (Melbourne): Is the Minister of the Arts aware that action has been taken by the Commonwealth Government to deprive the people of Victoria of access to two important forms of radio? One of these is 3ZZ and the other, which is being censored and eliminated, is Terry Lane's talk-back programme on 3LO. Does the Minister share the concern of members of the Opposition about the growing tendency towards a media monopoly and a monolithic imposition of one kind of opinion on news programmes?

The SPEAKER (Sir Kenneth Wheeler): Order! The honorable member is asking for an opinion. He should rephrase the question.

Mr. JONES: Is it a fact that there is a growing tendency towards media monopoly and the monolithic imposition of one type of opinion in the media and will the Government express the concern of many Victorian citizens by making representations to the Commonwealth Government over the Terry Lane issue?

Mr. HAMER (Minister of the Arts): The question is merely propaganda. Despite its rephrasing it asks for an opinion from me and I am not prepared to give that opinion. It is a matter entirely for the Federal Government, as the honorable member well knows.

DELAYS IN NATURALIZATION.

Mr. MUTTON (Coburg): Is the Minister of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs aware of an article that appeared in a political newspaper called the *Labor Star*, which stated that there were deliberate delays being imposed on people seeking naturalization or Australian citizenship? It is alleged that the delays are being caused by the Australian Security and Intelligence Organization and the Commonwealth Police. If that allegation is correct, what action is the Minister taking with his Federal counterpart to rectify the problem?

Mr. JONA (Minister of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs): I am well aware of the extremely serious matter raised by the honorable member for Coburg. I am also aware of the article that appeared in the recent copy of the *Labor Star*, which, I understand, is the official organ of the Australian Labor Party. It made serious allegations which have subsequently been inquired into and found to be entirely incorrect. It should be pointed out that the Victorian Government has a very real interest in Australian citizenship applications and follows a strong policy of encouraging all migrants in the community who have not taken out Australian citizenship to do so as soon as they qualify. As an indication of the inaccuracies of the allegations which are made in the *Labor Star* newspaper, it should be pointed out that in the six months ended September, 1977, there were 10,503 applications for citizenship received from migrants in Victoria. There were 11,050 approved and 9,383 certificates conferred. It will be quite clearly seen from those figures for the six months ended September, 1977, that there has been no undue delay between the time of applications being received and applications approved.

It should also be pointed out that the Victorian Government, in the course of its strong efforts to encourage citizenship of migrants in the community, conducts its campaigns in a manner not related to the sort of suggestion referred to in the *Labor Star*—bartering in the market, and other ways in which the Australian Labor Party has been operating.

I also point out in reply to the honorable member that when an application for Australian citizenship is made the applicant is interviewed on the day the application is made at the department's office or within seven days if it is made by post. The normal character checks, which take six to eight weeks, follow the normal pattern and no delay has been occasioned at the request of the Australian Security Intelligence Organization or any other outside authorities unless such inquiries have been requested by the Commonwealth department because of evidence suggesting that inquiries should be made along those lines. All character inquiries normally take about six to eight weeks, and the honorable member is well aware that ceremonies are conducted by municipal councils quarterly, or at Scots Church weekly, and any delays in holding municipal ceremonies are dependent on the numbers that are available in the municipality from time to time.

POSSUMS.

Mr. McCLURE (Bendigo): Is the Minister of Housing aware of damage being caused to houses in the metropolitan area and the inconvenience caused to people living in residential areas, and not in rural areas, by large numbers of possums? Can the Minister advise the House what action he is taking to remove this problem?

Mr. HAYES (Minister of Housing): It just happens that this morning a member from another place noticed me put into the boot of my car a possum trap. Somebody said, "What is that for?" I said, "If the Minister for Conservation will not let me look after these possums in my own way, in my own house, I would prefer to put them back into the Treasury Gardens each morning." That is the simple answer, and the possums are going back as from tomorrow morning.

AIRCRAFT FOR POLICE FORCE.

Mr. EDMUNDS (Ascot Vale): Can the Premier advise the House what stage the Government has reached in its investigations into buying an aircraft for the Victoria Police Force and will he advise the House whether the Government is considering either a fixed wing or a rotary aircraft, and when will a decision be made?

Mr. HAMER (Premier and Treasurer): As the honorable member is aware, Victoria has the most advanced and efficient air wing of any Police Force in Australia, and at the moment the air wing is operating with leased aircraft, and I think very satisfactorily, too, but there have been suggestions that the buying of additional aircraft should be examined.

It is not necessarily a good idea that an aircraft should be purchased; it may be uneconomic. In particular, before a helicopter was purchased there would have to be changes made in the air navigation regulations which prescribe fairly heavy restrictions on the operation of helicopters over built-up areas. If the police are to be able to use a helicopter effectively, those rules would have to be altered. Before the Government buys a helicopter for the police it would need to know that it could be effectively used.

Negotiations are in train to ascertain whether the air navigation regulations can be altered to allow the police to operate a helicopter effectively. Until the Government has an answer on that it is not prepared to consider the purchase of a helicopter.

TRANSPORT OF STOCK BY RAIL.

Mr. AUSTIN (Ripon): I ask the Minister of Transport whether the fact that the Victorian Railways have to meet the cost of subsidizing transport of cattle to market causes them to be reluctant to supply trucks to transport cattle, as has been alleged by the Victorian Stock and Station Agents Association.

Mr. RAFFERTY (Minister of Transport): The claim by the stock agents association is completely and utterly false. That is the first point. The Victorian Railways are doing everything possible to meet the demands placed on them for the transport of cattle. Another claim which has been made is that the railways are phasing themselves out of the business of carting livestock, but I make it perfectly clear that they do not intend to do so.

However, there are a number of problems. The first is that the rolling-stock is old. Substantial capital expenditure is needed for the replacement of the existing trucks. Applications have been made to the Commonwealth Government for further funds for this purpose but, thus far, they have not been forthcoming.

Because the railways carry stock at a greatly reduced charge, those who want stock transported are using the railways as much as they possibly can with the result that the demand for stock trucks is extremely high. But the demand is of an inconsistent nature. Sometimes it is high and sometimes it is low. To give some indication of the increasing demand for the transport of cattle by rail I point out that in 1972–73 the railways carried 29,211 van-loads of cattle and that, since then, the demand for the transport of stock by rail has risen to such a degree that in 1976–77 the railways transported 43,081 van-loads.

This heavy demand severely taxes the limited number of trucks which the railways have. However, I repeat that the railways are doing everything possible to meet the demand to the best of their ability within the limitations of their rolling-stock and the fact that much of it is old, and the further fact that to introduce additional rolling-stock would require a heavy influx of money which is not yet available.

ABATTOIRS.

Mr. FOGARTY (Sunshine): I ask the Minister of Agriculture whether it is a fact that a large western suburbs abattoir with financial commitments to the State and Federal Governments, by mortgage or otherwise, is now for sale by tender. Is it also a fact that the Melbourne City Council abattoirs do not meet the requirements of the Abattoir and Meat Inspection Authority? If these are facts, is it possible for the Minister to negotiate with the company concerned and other organizations with a view to maintaining a service abattoir in Melbourne and offering an air of respectability to the Abattoir and Meat Inspection Authority?

Mr. I. W. SMITH (Minister of Agriculture): I was unaware that the Abattoir and Meat Inspection Authority did not have an air of respectability. Quite the contrary. That is how I understood the question. But the works to which the honorable member refers are the Co-operative Farmers and Graziers works in Brooklyn and they are in the hands of the receiver. I have no authority or power to interfere in any way. The receiver has his statutory obligations under the Companies Act and they must be carried out. Nevertheless, I am sure that the firm Protean (Holdings) Ltd., which operates at the Melbourne City Council abattoirs, is aware of the tender, and I have no doubt that it will be interested in putting forward a proposition to the receiver. I hope there is some success with the negotiations.

SUBORDINATE LEGISLATION COMMITTEE.

PORT PHILLIP PILOT SICK AND SUPERANNUATION FUND REGULATIONS 1977.

Mr. BIRRELL (Geelong West) presented a report from the Subordinate Legislation Committee upon the Port Phillip Pilot Sick and Superannuation Fund Regulations 1977 (Statutory Rule No. 105/1977) together with minutes of evidence.

It was ordered that the report and minutes of evidence be laid on the table, and that the report be printed.

PAPER.

The following paper, pursuant to the direction of an Act of Parliament, was laid on the table by the Clerk—

National Museum of Victoria Council—Report for the year 1976–77.

MACLEOD LAND BILL.

Mr. BORTHWICK (Minister of Lands) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to authorize the Corporation of the City of Heidelberg to grant leases of certain Crown land in the Parish of Keelbundora and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

SESSIONAL ORDERS.

Mr. THOMPSON (Minister of Education): I move—

That Sessional Orders and the "Grievance Day" Standing Order No. 59 be suspended for tomorrow, so far as to allow General Business, Notice of Motion, No. 2, to take precedence on that day.

Mr. FORDHAM (Footscray): Can the Minister give an assurance that if this motion is agreed to the time available for the standard Grievance Day debate will not be decreased and that the minimum time that has been previously granted on Thursdays will still be available for the debate?

Mr. THOMPSON (Minister of Education): No, I cannot give that assurance, but I understand from the Chairman of the Subordinate Legislation Committee that this matter will take only a short time.

The motion was agreed to.

YOUTH, SPORT AND RECREATION (STATE RECREATION COUNCIL) BILL.

Mr. DIXON (Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to amend the Youth, Sport and Recreation Act 1972, to repeal the National Fitness Council of Victoria Act 1960 and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

RACING (MIXED SPORTS GATHERINGS) BILL.

Mr. DIXON (Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to make further provision with respect to betting at mixed sports gatherings, to amend the Racing Act 1958 and the Lotteries Gaming and Betting Act 1966 and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

RURAL FINANCE AND SETTLEMENT COMMISSION (AMENDMENT) BILL.

Mr. BORTHWICK (Minister of Lands) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to amend the Rural Finance and Settlement Commission Act 1961, the Land Settlement Act 1959, and the Rural Finance Act 1958.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

PROBATE DUTY BILL (No. 2).

Mr. HAMER (Premier and Treasurer): I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The primary purpose of the Bill is to implement the announcement made in the Budget speech that the Government would abolish probate duty on

all property passing to the children of a deceased person. This will apply to the estates of persons dying on or after 1st January, 1978, and the cost of the proposal is estimated in a full year to be $36 million.

As I indicated in the Budget speech, the Government has adopted a policy of the total abolition of probate duty as soon as possible, and this Bill marks the second stage in that policy. The first stage was completed last year with the abolition of duty on property passing to the surviving spouse.

There is one aspect of the legislation that was passed last year to which I should make special reference. In that legislation, a new section 10A was introduced into the Probate Duty Act. That section covered the situation where the surviving spouse was left a limited interest in property, the most common example being a life interest in the family home. The section is now being repealed as from 1st January, 1978, for a number of reasons.

Firstly, in most cases where a life interest is left to the surviving spouse the remainder interest is left to the children of the deceased and the section would become largely inoperative in any case. Secondly, with a policy of the abolition of probate duty now adopted by the Government, it would be undesirable to create a situation of Crown debts continuing under section 10A for years after probate duty was abolished. Thirdly, some technical difficulties had arisen under the section, particularly in regard to section 14 certificates, although steps for their resolution were well in hand.

The new provisions in this regard will operate as follows: For the estates of persons dying on or after 1st January, 1978, where a limited interest is left to a spouse or child of the deceased, the limited interest and the remainder interest will be separately valued, duty will be assessed accordingly and payable in the usual way. In addition, for the estates of persons dying between 1st October, 1976, and 31st December, 1977, where a limited interest is left to the surviving spouse, the administrator of the estate, with the consent of the spouse, will have the choice of electing to have duty calculated in accordance with section 10A as it now stands or on the new basis. Where this means a reopening of cases already finalized this will be done and if any refunds of duty are involved they will be made.

The policy that lay behind section 10A was commendable and was quite clear, that is, to avoid the situation where the spouse of the deceased had to dispose of a major asset, such as the family home, in order to pay duty on the remainder of the interest. However, in the light of the Government's policy to abolish probate duty, the new provisions are more appropriate for the reasons I have already outlined.

Apart from consequential changes associated with the implementation of the Budget policy, the Bill includes a number of additional matters, all of which operate for the benefit of the taxpayer.

A new and separate scale of duty has been introduced for Victorian assets included in the estates of persons dying domiciled outside Victoria. Until now, duty has been calculated on the basis of the entire estate of the deceased wherever assets are situated. This procedure has involved much time and effort in obtaining information about those assets and the position has become more difficult now that probate duty has been abolished totally in one State and in part in others. The new procedure will facilitate the administration of the Victorian assets and follows similar provisions which already operate in New South Wales and Western Australia.

The deduction from the final balance for superannuation benefits payable to the surviving spouse, children under the age of 21 years or children under 25 who are full-time students, has been extended in

the Bill to include benefits payable to any child of the deceased irrespective of age.

The maximum allowance for funeral expenses is increased in the Bill from $160 to $700. The rebates for quick succession are doubled.

Two changes have been made to the section 24 rebates in respect of bequests of land, stock and plant used for primary production. Firstly, the definition of primary production has been extended to include the business of forestry because the existing exclusion had discouraged landowners in suitable locations from establishing commercial timber crops. Secondly, the definition of persons who are related by blood or marriage to the deceased has been changed. Two anomalies now exist. Daughters-in-law and sons-in-law are not included, yet other persons more remotely related to the deceased are; for example, children of a brother or sister of the spouse of the deceased. In addition, although brothers and sisters of the spouse of the deceased are included, spouses of brothers and sisters of the deceased are not. Provision to remove these anomalities is included in the Bill.

New provisions are included to provide for relief in situations where the payment of duty will cause hardship. The existing provision in the legislation is very limited and unsatisfactory, particularly in present economic conditions. New arrangements for relief in cases of hardship are proposed. Where the amount of duty involved does not exceed $1,000, the commissioner is empowered by the Bill to provide relief. For larger amounts of duty a hardship relief board comprising the Director of Finance, the commissioner and a third member is established.

The new hardship provisions come into operation on 1st January, 1978, but their application will not be limited to the estates of persons dying on or after that date.

Finally, a new exemption is included to cover bequests to municipalities. An explanatory memorandum covering each clause of the Bill has been provided for the benefit of honorable members.

This Bill makes far-reaching changes to the probate duty laws of this State. It takes the Government's policy for the abolition of probate duty as far as is possible at the present time within the limits of budgetary responsibility. In addition, a number of significant benefits that will contribute to the further easing of the burden of probate duty, and which will provide for relief in cases of hardship, have been introduced, and I am pleased to commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of Mr. CRABB (Knox), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Wednesday, November 9.

EDUCATIONAL GRANTS (CONTINUATION) BILL (NO. 2).

Mr. THOMPSON (Minister of Education): I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

This is another of the educational grants Bills that are introduced yearly and which excite a measure of controversy in the House from time to time.

The scheme was started by the Government in 1967 with annual payments of $10 and $20 for primary and secondary school students respectively. This year the amounts have been increased from $155 payable in the current year to $179 for primary school pupils and from $260 to $297 for secondary school pupils. The charge to the Consolidated Fund will be approximately $49 million.

The Bill contains two minor clauses to which I should draw the attention of the House. The first is clause 4, which merely ensures that, despite the passage of the Bill, grants provided for 1977 shall continue to be

paid on the basis approved by Parliament at the beginning of the last financial year.

The second is clause 5, which introduces a technical amendment of minor significance to ensure that the definition of an independent school is the same for both the *per capita* grants system and the loan guarantee system, the new concept which was introduced by the Treasurer last year.

Broadly speaking, the policy of the Government has been to upgrade progressively the standard of education in Victoria. It has been doing this, firstly, by gradually improving the State system, both in the staffing area and in the buildings area; secondly, by removing inequalities, and thirdly, by relieving the heavy burden which is placed on the fee-paying parents of children at independent schools. The Bill marks a further step forward in the third category of that policy as outlined.

The increases from $260 to $297 for secondary school pupils and from $155 to $179 for primary school pupils will be warmly welcomed by all fee-paying parents of children at independent schools.

On the motion of Mr. FORDHAM (Footscray), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Wednesday, November 9.

DAIRY PRODUCTS (REPEAL) BILL.

Mr. I. W. SMITH (Minister of Agriculture): I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The purpose of the Bill is to repeal the Dairy Products Act 1958 and to abolish the Victorian Dairy Products Board.

The Victorian Dairy Products Board was originally established in 1933 consequent upon the passing of complementary legislation by State and Commonwealth Governments to provide for the equalization amongst dairy factories of prices for butter and cheese.

The Commonwealth Act was subsequently declared invalid, following which most dairy factories entered into a voluntary agreement for the continuation of price equalization and the Victorian Dairy Products Board continued to perform its function of recommending to the Minister of Agriculture monthly quotas for butter and cheese to ensure the supply and distribution of these products at reasonable prices to Victorian consumers.

However, the introduction of compulsory equalization under Commonwealth legislation which became effective on 1st July this year has rendered the Victorian Dairy Products Board redundant, and for this reason it is proposed to repeal the Act on 31st December, 1977.

The Victorian Dairy Products Board is funded by contributions levied under the Act on butter and cheese manufacturers. All such contributions are paid into the Dairy Products Fund in the Treasury and the expenditure incurred in the administration of the Act is paid out of this fund. It is estimated that there will be a balance of approximately $12,000 in the fund at the end of December, and the Bill makes provision for this balance, together with any other assets of the board, to be transferred to the Victorian Dairy Industry Authority.

The authority will also assume responsibility for payment of any debts owing by the board and the collection of any debts owing to it at that time. In either case the amount, if any, should be minimal. The board has had no full-time staff of its own but has operated through an arrangement with the Commonwealth Dairy Products Equalization Committee Ltd., under which that body has provided and been paid for such secretarial and administrative services as the board has required from time to time.

Apart from moneys in the Dairy Products Fund, the board's only asset is a small amount of office furniture. I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of Mr. FOGARTY (Sunshine), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Wednesday, November 9.

PUBLIC WORKS AND SERVICES BILL (No. 2)

Mr. DUNSTAN (Minister of Public Works): I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

I present to the House the Public Works and Services Bill 1977, which seeks approval to appropriations totalling $399,043,148 from the Works and Services Account to cover expenditure on a wide range of public works during the currency of the Bill.

Some $245 million of the proposed provision covered in the table to clause 2 of the Bill relates to works carried out by the Public Works Department on public buildings and port facilities under its control, and on buildings and services for its client departments.

The Bill also provides the necessary authority for expenditure on the general hospital building programme carried out by the Hospitals and Charities Commission and other purposes which fall outside the scope of standing appropriations and of the three annual Bills appropriating funds from the Works and Services Account in respect of water supply, transport and forests.

In accordance with established practice, the proposed provisions have been calculated to cover expenditure on the various items during a period of approximately twelve months from the passage through Parliament of this Bill until a similar measure is again proposed late in 1978.

Two documents have been circulated with the Bill for the information of honorable members: An explanatory statement and an explanatory memorandum. If honorable members examine these they will see the wealth of detail in the 210 items.

The explanatory statement sets out for each item in the table the proposed expenditure in the current financial year compared with actual expenditure in the last financial year of 1976–77 as well as the proposed provision in the Bill. The memorandum contains explanations of the content of each item and details of proposed expenditure in 1977–78 to assist in the consideration and debate of the Bill.

Although it is not my intention to elaborate on details of individual items of the Bill, which are contained in the explanatory memorandum to which I have referred, there are several matters to which I want to draw attention.

The building industry is being paralysed by a continous series of industrial stoppages, which lead to greatly increased project costs—this includes a big shopping centre in the electorate of the honorable member who is handling the Bill for the Opposition—and very long delays in completion. The Government is most concerned that these actions by militant unions are severely affecting the provision of schools, hospitals and other high priority public buildings, and I want honorable members to be in no doubt as to the seriousness of completely unjustified union sabotage.

The Victorian Public Offices Corporation, which was established in 1975 to provide and manage Government offices throughout Victoria, now has a long-range plan for construction of projects on a priority basis, with special emphasis on provincial centres where accommodation needs are rapidly increasing because of the regionalization and decentralization of Government departments. The State Accommodation Committee is responsible for providing advice to the corporation on needs and programmes and the Public Works Department is the responsible construction and management authority. The department is planning to provide and manage common facilities in new office buildings which will house a number of departments.

The corporation funds projects from the Public Offices Fund, which receives finance from the sale of redundant State property, loans and appropriations from the Works and Services Account. I should like to draw attention to the excellent progress on the Geelong and Mildura public offices, both of which are scheduled for completion and occupation towards the latter part of 1978. Construction of a public office building at Ballarat is expected to start in 1978.

On this point I mention that I receive a great deal of co-operation from the honorable member for Ballarat South.

Mr. TREWIN: You would not believe it!

Mr. DUNSTAN: I wish I had as much co-operation from the honorable member for Benalla. Does the honorable member want a personal explanation?

The work load administered by my department has increased substantially in recent years. In response to these pressures, the departmental organization has been restructured to provide for four divisions, the building, ports and harbors, property and services and administration divisions. These arrangements, coupled with a regionally based contract and maintenance and minor works administration, mean that the department is now client-oriented. Joint project planning arrangements with client departments are now more common, and increased client satisfaction has clearly resulted. The completion of a new police station at Sale, planning for the redevelopment of the Mental Health Authority Training Centre at Travancore and the new schools being completed each year are all good illustrations of improved arrangements. There was a very smooth start to the 1977 school year with respect to buildings involved.

When introducing the Public Works and Services Bill for 1976, I referred to the provision of $1·8 million for the construction of a new Government pavilion at the Royal Agricultural Society's Showgrounds to consolidate the display of the work of Government departments. I am pleased, firstly, that the Minister of Education has received the award for the best exhibit, which he fully deserved and which was presented on the Monday of the Show, but that does not necessarily mean that the Minister of Education will receive this award every year. Secondly, I am pleased to advise honorable members that this tight construction programme was successfully completed on time and on budget by the Public Works Department and that very favourable comment on the performance of the building was received from many thousands of visitors to this year's Royal Melbourne Show.

A new Government computer has recently been commissioned to service major departmental data-based systems. The Public Works and Education departments are to be the largest users and are now implementing major systems. The Public Works Department works recording system will operate through on-line terminals and its system is designed to support procedures for works planning, monitoring and accounting. All works managed by the department will be included. By regular updating of design and construction progress, a report on the state of any work will be immediately available either for the manager of a project to make a payment, or to answer an inquiry. Efficiency of the department will also increase by officers being freed from many of the time-consuming meetings and written progress reports now necessary to adequately control progress on Treasury and client department programmes.

Item 50 of the Bill covers the provision of equipment and facilities for electronic data processing and associated systems, planning and development. I might add that this is most expensive hardware.

It is also worth mentioning, for the information of honorable members, that the work of the Property and Services Division of the Public Works Department has increased rapidly in recent years. The division now administers some 465,000 square metres —5 million square feet—of Government office accommodation. Fitting out of office buildings, provision of services and purchase of specialized real estate for the Government and the leasing and fitting out of electorate offices throughout Victoria are other features of the varied work of the division. Almost without exception honorable members have commended the Premier for making electoral offices available and the Public Works Department for the way in which it has gone about fitting out those electoral offices.

Mr. TREWIN: A tremendous effort!

Mr. DUNSTAN: It is a recognition of the great work load by State members of Parliament compared with the very minor duties of Federal members of Parliament.

The need for beach restoration work to provide additional public recreational opportunity around Port Phillip Bay and the Victorian coastline is urgent, and honorable members will be pleased to know that the Premier has agreed to separately fund approved projects on the forward-look programme. Also included in the Bill is a proposed provision for the purchase of piping to enable the dredge *April Hamer* to pump sand ashore for beach restoration work.

I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of Mr. CRABB (Knox), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Wednesday, November 9.

MACLEOD LAND BILL.

Mr. BORTHWICK (Minister of Lands): I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

Its purpose is to allow the municipality of the City of Heidelberg to grant a lease to the Young Men's Christian Association of Crown land at Wungan Street, Macleod, permanently reserved for public recreation. The reserve has been placed under the control of the City of Heidelberg as a committee of management.

A community centre erected by the Heidelberg City Council and costing about $1 million is located on the reserve. The cost of the centre was borne by the City of Heidelberg, the Young Men's Christian Association and the State Government through the departments of health and youth, sport and recreation.

The concept of a community centre emerged as a result of the concern of the local Council of Churches within the City of Heidelberg in relation to youth activities and a subsequent survey effected by the Young Men's Christian Association at the request of that council. The centre provides recreational, cultural and sporting facilities for all members of the community and its wide range of facilities and activity programmes is of particular attraction to family groups. It also contains club-rooms for use by the Macleod Senior Citizens Club.

Although the municipality desires to retain its over-all control of the centre, it does not wish to be involved in the day-to-day running of the complex. It has arranged for the Young Men's Christian Association to act as the managing body and for that association to develop youth and recreational facilities for all sections of the community.

The city council has stipulated that the facilities of the centre are to be made available for use by the general public at all times when the centre is open. That part of the centre occupied by the Macleod Senior Citizens Club will not be included in any lease to the Young Men's Christian Association but rather will be the subject of a separate agreement between the City of Heidelberg and the club.

The arrangement has proved satisfactory and the provisions of this Bill will enable the Heidelberg council to enter into formal leasing arrangements with the Young Men's Christian Association in respect of the reserved land.

Clause 1 of the Bill cites the short title and provides for commencement of the legislation.

Clause 2 authorizes the municipality as committee of management to grant leases of the whole or any part of the reserved land for the purposes of sport or recreation or social activities connected therewith. It also sets out the standard conditions of leasing for Bills of this nature.

Clause 3 is the usual provision that no liability shall attach to the Crown.

The schedule containes a plan showing by hatching the reserved land. I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of Mr. CRABB (Knox), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Wednesday, November 9.

GIFT DUTY (AMENDMENT) BILL.

The debate (adjourned from September 8) on the motion of Mr. Hamer (Premier and Treasurer) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

Mr. CRABB (Knox): This Gift Duty (Amendment) Bill has been introduced to amend the exemption level under the Gift Duty Act to bring it into line with the Commonwealth Gift Duty Act, and the exemption level has been increased from $4,000 to $10,000 with concomitant changes in the rates of duty at various levels. Gift duty at present is at the rate of zero for gifts under $4,000, and on gifts between $4,000 and $6,000 it is at the rate of 1·5 per cent, plus one-thousandth of 1 per cent of each dollar in excess of $4,000, and so on. In real terms this means that a gift of $5,000, which would have attracted duty of $125 under the existing Act, after this amendment will attract no duty. A gift of $10,001 presently attracts duty of $400, and under this amending Bill it will attract $150. On a gift of $15,000 the rate will be the same as it was before. With larger gifts this amending Bill makes no difference to the scale of duty.

This Bill in part allows for inflation, but it is hardly an efficient way to allow for inflation by increasing the exemption level in this way. The proper way to allow for inflation in taxes, including income tax, is to change the base scale upwards. In other words, if there is a scale of duty up to $4,000, $6,000 or $10,000, each of those amounts should be increased and that is all that has to be done to index the scale for inflation.

The revenue cost of this measure is under $500,000. The estimated receipts from gift duty in this year's Budget is $3·4 million, which seems to allow for a considerable increase in gift duty. If this Bill were not enacted, there would be almost $4 million in receipts from gift duty in this current financial year, whereas in previous financial years the revenue from gift duty has remained relatively static at $3 million. I invite the Treasurer to explain to the House why there should be such an increase in gift duty in this year compared with previous financial years.

The Opposition agrees that it is sensible to cut out the administrative costs involved in collecting small amounts of duty, but this could be applied not only to gift duty but to other taxes as well. I was disappointed that there was no reference in the second-reading speech to an examination being made of the administrative costs saved in exempting duty on gifts of $4,000 or $5,000. It is also sensible that the gift duty exemption ought to be the same as the Commonwealth for simplicity, and to have equity between the fund-raising measures of this State and he fund-raising measures of the Commonwealth. It seems to me that there could be a lot more

co-ordination in taxing Bills, especially in these areas of gift duty and the analogous probate duty. Where gift duty is reduced by the State, it will be increased by the Commonwealth. As I understand it, the duty that is payable is not in turn dutiable at Commonwealth level. The decrease in probate duty paid in the States causes an increase in the amount of estate duty payable to the Commonwealth. The Opposition believes changes such as this ought to be made in consultation with the Commonwealth, and perhaps with other State Governments.

I would like to have heard from the Treasurer in his second-reading speech why the Government decided to provide for reductions in gross collections of gift duty in this amending Bill rather than reducing other taxes, although I realize some other reductions were proposed in the Budget speech. In view of what has been said in recent days about the insidious nature of pay-roll tax, consideration ought to have been given to providing greater reduction in pay-roll tax before reductions were made in other areas. I will be interested to hear what consideration was given to comparing reductions in this area with reductions in pay-roll tax.

The Opposition is concerned that although the exemption level on gift duty has been raised, it is still payable on gifts between husband and wife, and wife and husband, whereas probate duty is not payable on estates passing between husband and wife.

Mr. ROSS-EDWARDS: Since October.

Mr. CRABB: Yes, but this measure comes into effect on 1st January next year. If this Bill is passed by Parliament, gifts between husband and wife or wife and husband will be dutiable, whereas if the husband or wife keep the gift in his or her possession until he or she dies, and it then passes to the surviving spouse, it will not be dutiable under the Probate Duty Act. The Opposition believes this is foolish, ludicrous and a mean approach to legislation. Consequently, I move the following amendment—

> That all the words after "That" be omitted with a view of inserting in place thereof—"this Bill be withdrawn and a new Bill introduced which will exempt gifts made between spouses from gift duty".

The SPEAKER (Sir Kenneth Wheeler): Is the amendment seconded?

Mr. EDMUNDS (Ascot Vale): Yes, Mr. Speaker, I second the amendment.

Mr. CRABB (Knox). With the recent changes to the Probate Duty Act there is a situation, taken in conjunction with this Bill, where spouses are worth more to each other dead than alive. The Government has abolished probate duty between spouses, but maintains that gifts between spouses are subject to tax. This is muddleheaded and confused thinking about taxes. It lacks co-ordination and common sense, and it also discourages generosity and proper behaviour between husband and wife.

Many people wish to make gifts—a husband to a wife, or a wife to a husband. Presumably many people make gifts, otherwise the Government would not have collected more than $3 million annually in gift duty under the Gift Duty Act. However minimal the Leader of the National Party and the Treasurer may think this is, such an anomaly exists. The very fact that the Treasurer makes a point by interjection that it is not costly to the Government is an excellent reason why this amendment ought to be supported. This Bill presents a ludicrous, anomalous and nonsensical situation; a husband cannot give to his wife a large sum of money, a property, or even a motor car—it would probably be valued at more than $10,000 in some cases—without paying gift duty. A husband or wife may wish to give each other gifts over a short period which would

in total be valued at more than $10,000. These gifts would be dutiable, whereas if they held the property, cash, car or whatever, until they died, no duty would be payable. Honorable members ought to object to this ludicrous situation. I commend the amendment to the House.

The SPEAKER (Sir Kenneth Wheeler): Honorable members who now speak will be speaking to both the Bill and the amendment.

Mr. ROSS-EDWARDS (Leader of the National Party): It is rather interesting when one debates gift duty in Victoria because up to about five years ago no gift duty was paid on cash given by one person to another. I do not know how that situation survived for so long. A few months after the Victorian Government decided to impose duty on cash gifts, the Federal authorities increased their exemption level from $4,000 to $10,000. Victoria introduced legislation setting the exemption level at $4,000, and it has been $4,000 ever since.

There have been many representations over the years to the Treasurer to bring gift duty exemption into line with the Federal exemption, and I applaud that policy. The exemption level in Victoria has been increased from $4,000 to $10,000. I find it hard to understand why this should apply to gifts made on or after 1st January, 1978, because nobody will make a gift until after that date. I know of a recent example of a father giving his son $10,000. He gave him $4,000 immediately and the other $6,000 will be given to the son on 1st January, 1978, and will be a loan in the meantime.

When the Treasurer abolished probate duty between spouses last year, he took up my suggestion soon after the Budget speech was presented and set a date for this exemption to commence in October. I consider that gifts should be exempted as from now rather than 1st January, 1978. By waiting until then it will confuse the business world and it will not produce any revenue to the Government.

The National Party supports the amendment of the Opposition because it is logical. If probate duty is not payable on an estate passing between husband and wife, I do not know why gift duty should be paid on a gift between husband and wife. Probate duty was abolished in Queensland on 1st January, 1977, and gift duty also went out the door completely at the same time because the two are very much tied up with each other.

But I part company with the Opposition at this point. If this were done, what would happen when the State probate duty on money or property passing from parents to children is abolished from 1st January? It would be logical to say that gift duty on gifts between parents and children should also cease to operate then. Perhaps that is a proposition for another debate. I do not know whether the Opposition would support it; it seems to be contrary to its general philosophy on economic matters.

The National Party is happy to support the contention that, if no probate duty is charged on property passing from one spouse to another, there should be no duty on gifts between spouses. I suggest to the Treasurer that, with the abolition of probate duty, consideration should be given to the abolition of gift duty. When no duty is payable on gifts between spouses and none on gifts between parents and children, there will be little left to collect, because it is within the family that most large gifts are made, particularly from parents to children.

Mr. DOUBE (Albert Park): The important amendment to the motion for the second reading of the Bill, which the honorable member for Knox has moved, focuses attention on the fact that the Government has not thought this proposition through.

It is tragic for Victoria that its Government, instead of thinking through the problem of collecting money and paying for services, fails to give these matters its proper consideration and does not lift unfair burdens from people who are affected.

There is no doubt that, last year, when the Government introduced a measure providing that the payment of probate duty on property passing from one spouse to another should be lifted, it made a mess of the arrangements. Once again, it did not think the problem through. Subsequent inquiries—they should have been made beforehand—revealed that the Probate Duty Act had to be amended again.

Mr. HAMER: In one respect only.

Mr. DOUBE: With great respect, in a number of respects. When the Bill dealing with probate comes before the House, perhaps honorable members will be able to debate this. This is typical of the way in which the Government tackles these problems. As the Leader of the National Party made clear, until 1972 Victoria did not have gift duty. It had stamp duty on certain documents.

Mr. HAMER: At gift duty rates.

Mr. DOUBE: Any gift made without a relevant document did not attract a tax. In that sense we did not have gift duty but merely stamp duty on the instruments of gift. The whole purpose of imposing gift duty is to catch people who avoid probate duty. According to the definition in the principal Act, a gift is specifically an amount of money or articles which are not included in a will. The definition states—

> " Gift " means any disposition of property which is made (whether with or without an instrument in writing) otherwise than by will, without consideration in money or money's worth passing from the person to whom or in whose favour the disposition is made to the person by whom the disposition is made, or with any such consideration so passing if the consideration is not fully adequate.

So, the imposition of gift duty is an attempt to rope in people who try to avoid probate duty.

Twelve months ago the Treasurer stated that probate duty would not be payable on property passing to a husband or wife, so it is logical, as the honorable member for Knox has put it, that there should be no duty on gifts between husband and wife. What is the reason for it? The Treasurer said that a gift of $10,000 would be rather large and that there would not be many people making such gifts. I do not know what evidence he has for that statement. I suggest that he should consider the person who owns a house prior to his marriage and does not make it over into joint ownership at the time of the marriage. Later, he may wish to give the house to his wife or arrange for joint ownership. But, if he did that, he would have to pay gift duty, unless someone could find a legal loophole for him. I know of one person who has refrained from making his wife the joint owner of his house simply because of gift duty.

Apparently because of some ancient, historical background, any sort of gift can be made at the time of marriage and it will not be taxable. I imagine that is a principle of common law rather than a provision of statute law. I also understand that gifts made by parents to brides or bridegrooms do not attract gift duty. The whole principle of imposing duty on gifts made within the marriage situation is ridiculous. If one were in a position to do so one could give one's wife a car worth more than $10,000. If the car was registered in her name, the gift would attract duty. But, if a husband kept the car in his own name but gave his wife the complete use of it, there would be no duty.

Mr. ROSS-EDWARDS: In those circumstances he would not have made a gift.

Mr. DOUBE: That is right. As the honorable member suggests it would be wise not to make the gift. It

would be better for the husband to keep the car in his own name. If he died, the wife would inherit it and whatever its value she would not have to pay probate duty on it. It is difficult to understand the attitude of the Treasurer and the Government in wanting to maintain a tax on gifts between husbands and wives. The matrimonial situation is difficult enough without the further burden of taxes on gifts between people who may be struggling to stay together.

The forms which the donors and the recipients of gifts must complete are ridiculous documents. I remind honorable members that the Treasurer stated that the gift does not have to be valued at $10,000 before a return is necessary. A return will be obligatory if the gift is worth more than $7,500. So, even if there is to be no tax the Government will want to know what sort of gift has passed between a husband and wife. Any person who makes a gift of that value —even if the gift is from a husband to his wife or from a wife to her husband—must make a return, and so must the person who receives the gift.

All these facts are evident from the documents which can be obtained from the Treasury. The note on the back of the gift duty return form states that a return is required from both the donor and the donee but compliance by the donor with the requirement to make a return releases the donee from the obligation. That means that a person who has received a gift must get in touch with the person who made it and ask if he or she has made a return. Such an exchange of pleasantries will lead to a romantic situation indeed!

If the gift is worth more than $7,500, the Treasurer demands a return from both the donor and the recipient. Of course, there are not two collections of the tax. If the donor makes a return, the tax is collected in that way. For the life of me I cannot understand why the Government is interested in this tax. Last year on a *per capita* basis, its collections from gift duty from the Victorian people amounted to 80 cents. That is the sum total, per head of population, that the duty returned.

Mr. HAMER: What a ridiculous comparison to make.

Mr. DOUBE: No doubt that is why the Treasurer made the comparison in his Budget Papers.

Mr. HAMER: I did not make it on a *per capita* basis.

Mr. DOUBE: The Treasurer says that it is ridiculous to refer to *per capita* payments but at page 11 of his Budget Papers he lists every item of Victorian taxes in lump sums and on a *per capita* basis.

Mr. HAMER: That is right.

Mr. DOUBE: If it is good enough for the Premier and Treasurer to do that without being ridiculous, it is not unreasonable to apply the same principle to gift duty. The Victorian Government received $16·24 a head from duty on Tattersall Consultations but only 80 cents a head from duty on gifts. It is probable that the cost of collecting the tax amounts to more than 80 cents a head.

It is important for the House to know exactly what it is dealing with when considering Bills of this nature. Honorable members do not want to be disconcerted, within three or four months of enacting legislation, by finding out that it is a hotchpotch and a mess. But that will be the case with this Bill.

There cannot be any reason for retaining duty on gifts between spouses when probate duty on property passing from one spouse to the other is eliminated. The Treasurer should accept the amendment so capably moved by the honorable member for Knox who has obviously gone into the matter thoroughly. Some honorable members on the Government benches seem to be completely confused when the implications are revealed. I suggest that the Treasurer would not only do his

Government a service—that is not important to me—but would do the people of Victoria a service and, indeed, would do this Parliament a service if he took away this Bill and brought back one which approached the problem sensibly.

Mr. LIEBERMAN (Benambra): I support the Bill. This is another example of a progression towards increased exemption from taxes of this sort. In particular, this protects the ordinary person and, after all, that means most of the people. When the Bill becomes law, anyone, after a period of eighteen months, may make gifts of a total value of $10,000, to any other person, without having to pay gift duty. This, of course, is a welcome provision. The amendment moved by the honorable member for Knox is worth debating, but it should be realized that it is based on a rationalization that, because the Government saw fit some twelve months ago to arrange for the abolition of probate duty on property passing for one spouse to another, it ought to extend the principle to apply to gift duty.

That argument has some merit, but this tax is quite different. Probate duty is a vicious and iniquitous tax that strikes on the death of a person. It hits the next-of-kin at the worst possible time. Therefore, the initiative of the Treasurer in first abolishing probate duty beween husband and wife and then between parents and children is most welcome.

Gift duty is an unpopular tax. It is levied during a person's lifetime and is usually the result of a voluntary act by someone. The requirement that gift duty be paid is much different from the requirement that probate duty be paid.

Mr. CRABB: But the same people are involved.

Mr. LIEBERMAN: That is not correct because probate duty is paid on the assets of someone who has departed from this earth. The tax on gift duty is part of the everyday living of the people of Victoria. So the tax is different in that respect and that difference is important.

The revenue that will be lost by the Treasury as a result of this Bill passing through Parliament will be a further indication of the progress by the Government towards responsible introduction of reform of revenue laws. I have not heard honorable members refer to how many people in Victoria will wish to make gifts of up to $10,000 at frequent intervals, at least every eighteen months or so. I have not researched the subject, but the vast majority of Victorians will obtain substantial benefit from the provisions of this Bill, because most gifts made by people who are in a position to do so will be in the vicinity of $10,000. Few people would wish to make gifts in excess of $10,000, although there may be some.

I welcome this initiative because it will confer a benefit on many Victorians, and gift duty is a tax that is levied on people in their lifetime. This provision will also achieve uniformity with Federal laws, and that is most welcome. There is no real argument against whether the tax should be assessed on a gift of cash as opposed to a gift of property, because it would be nonsensical if the exemption of gift duty does not also apply to goods as well as cash.

However, I welcome the amendment because it may be the forerunner of further exemptions which will encourage people to transfer property to their spouses and to their children in due course. I look forward to that as a goal. The abolition of probate duty on property passing to children will mean further resources of approximately $36 million a year families can keep for themselves. The abolition of gift duty in the way proposed will provide approximately $500,000 to families in Victoria. That is worth while. It is steady progress and responsible budgeting and planning.

Mr. JASPER (Murray Valley): I join with the Leader of the National Party in supporting the Bill and I congratulate the Treasurer for introducing it. Last year when I became the member for Murray Valley, many solicitors through the Murray Valley electorate drew my attention to this matter. At that time the problem was much greater for solicitors operating along the border because the exemption in Victoria was only on gifts of up to $4,000. However, in New South Wales and in the Australian Capital Territory the exemption level was $10,000. This created an anomaly for solicitors operating along the border. The matter was immediately brought to my attention. I raised it in this House and in the Grievance Day debate in the last sessional period. I am pleased that the Government is now achieving uniformity with other States.

I support the remarks of the Leader of the National Party on the timing of this exemption. It should have been introduced from the date of the Budget. At this stage if someone wishes to make a gift of $10,000, they will give $4,000 now and then a further loan of $6,000 to the recipient. After 1st January, next year, it will become a gift. The Government has gained nothing by bringing this exemption into effect from 1st January. It would have been wiser to extend the exemption from the date of the Budget.

I also direct the Treasurer's attention to gifts to municipalities. The honorable gentleman is well aware of the problem created in the Shire of Numurkah as a result of the gift from Minnie Ann Gordon, deceased. Consequently, the Shire of Numurkah was subject to gift duty. I appreciate that the Treasurer has agreed that a gift equivalent to the duty on that estate will be given to the Shire of Numurkah for a project in the municipality. The problem does not end there. Another deceased person in Numurkah has left the total of the residue of her estate to the shire. I ask the Treasurer strongly to consider exempting all gifts to municipalities from gift duty. Money that is left to municipalities is used for improvements which benefit the ratepayers and people passing through the municipality. It all helps to make a better community in which to live. The Premier has said that he will take action, but nothing has happened. I should like immediate action to be taken. Once again I congratulate the Government on extending to $10,000 the level of exemption from the payment of gift duty.

On the motion of Mr. THOMPSON (Minister of Education), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until later this day.

PRIVILEGES COMMITTEE.

Mr. THOMPSON (Minister of Education): By leave, I move—

That a message be sent to the Legislative Council requesting that leave be given to the Honorable V. O. Dickie, and the Honorable Haddon Storey, Q.C., to attend, in order to their being examined, before the Privileges Committee of the Legislative Assembly upon the matter referred to that committee by resolution of the Legislative Assembly dated 20th October instant.

Mr. HAMER (Premier and Treasurer): I second the motion.

Mr. FORDHAM (Footscray): Leave is granted.

Mr. WILKES (Leader of the Opposition): Do I understand from the motion that members of the Legislative Council, not only the two members concerned, cannot claim privilege if they are called before the Privileges Committee? Does the motion intend to inhibit them from claiming privilege?

The SPEAKER (Sir Kenneth Wheeler): Order! The motion is merely intended to accord the two members leave to appear before the com-

mittee. We have to request leave of the Council because two privileges are involved.

Mr. WILKES: Each member can still claim privilege in his own right?

The SPEAKER: That is if the Council agrees.

Mr. WILKES: Therefore, all the motion does is to remove the privileges of the Council and not the privilege of the members.

The SPEAKER: Standing Order No. 224 states—

> When the attendance of a Member of the Legislative Council, or of an officer of that House, is desired, to be examined by the House, or any Committee thereof (not being a Committee on a private Bill), a message shall be sent to the Council to request that the Council give leave to such Member or officer to attend, in order to his being examined accordingly upon the matters stated in such message.

That is really all this motion does.

Mr. WILKES: I remember an inquiry by a committee into the Royal Botanic Gardens and another inquiry into the Little Desert. On these occasions Ministers in the Legislative Council claimed privilege and refused to appear before either of those committees. I will not name the Ministers concerned, but had there been a motion such as this they would still have been able to claim personal privilege and not appear before the committees. I am concerned that all members should be able to claim that right at all times. I am satisfied with the explanation that the motion, if carried, removes the privileges of the Legislative Council and not of the members concerned.

Mr. THOMPSON (Minister of Education): By leave, the matter of privilege is not covered. This is merely a procedure which was last used in 1901 and which gives members of the Legislative Council leave to appear before a committee of this Chamber.

Mr. McLAREN (Bennettswood): I speak as Chairman of the Privileges Committee. The last time this occurred was in 1901 when a similar procedure was carried out in relation to the Grain Elevators Board and two members of the Legislative Council were requested to appear before a committee of this House. It is purely in the terms of the Standing Orders.

Mr. WILKES: It did not occur on the Little Desert committee. That is the point I am making.

Mr. McLAREN: No, but it was a committee of this type. This is a procedure that is laid down by the Standing Orders. I have approached the two members of the Legislative Council concerned and they have given their personal approval for the matter to proceed on these lines. Therefore, it is not without prewarning that the two members will be given permission to attend by the Legislative Council, if the Council so decides. I point out that the matter still has to go to the Legislative Council for its approval before the members, in turn, have to protect their rights. I suggest that it is not, as the Leader of the Opposition stated, a matter of privilege. It is a matter of procedure and of giving the Legislative Council the opportunity of allowing any of its members to appear before a committee of this House.

Mr. WILKES: It is surely a serious inhibition on any member if he cannot appear before a committee unless a motion is moved.

The SPEAKER (Sir Kenneth Wheeler): Order! The motion is complying with Standing Orders. Standing Order No. 224 provides—

> When the attendance of a Member of the Legislative Council, or of an officer of that House, is desired, to be examined by the House, or any Committee thereof (not being a Committee on a private Bill), a message shall be sent to the Council to request that the Council give leave to such

Member or officer to attend, in order to his being examined accordingly upon the matters stated in such message.

That is what the motion is seeking and anything outside that privilege is outside the ambit of the motion. That is all the House is doing.

The motion was agreed to.

GIFT DUTY (AMENDMENT) BILL.

The debate (adjourned from earlier this day) was resumed on the motion of Mr. Hamer (Premier and Treasurer)—

That this Bill be now read a second time

and on Mr. Crabb's amendment—

That the words after "That" be omitted with a view of inserting in place thereof the words "this Bill be withdrawn and a new Bill introduced which will exempt gifts made between spouses from gift duty".

Mr. HAMER (Premier and Treasurer): I should say something about the amendment moved by the honorable member for Knox. The Government wants to proceed with this measure. It has a simple purpose, to bring the gift duty exemptions in Victoria into line with the exemptions in the Commonwealth and New South Wales. As it has no other purpose, the Government does not want it withdrawn.

As I indicated when dealing with probate duty, the Government views sympathetically the whole question of the exchange of property within the family unit. The Leader of the National Party has suggested that the Government should go further, certainly next year, and enable children to be brought within that ambit. As from the beginning of next year, all property which passes to the widow, widower or the children will be free of probate duty. When that stage is reached the Government, in terms of responsible budgeting, will also have to consider whether it can go further and abolish gift duty within the family. I give that undertaking.

It is all very well for honorable members to claim that only a small amount is involved and that it will not affect the Budget, but there was no suggestion of how that revenue might be made up.

Mr. ROSS-EDWARDS: It is a very small amount.

Mr. HAMER: It might or might not be a small amount, but I suspect that it has not been calculated by anyone involved in preparing the amendment. Even if it is only small in monetary terms, the funds still have to be found.

The Government has indicated its good faith and intentions in the matter of probate duty and it intends to do the same with gift duty as soon as possible. I give that undertaking, but when it will occur I do not know. The amendment only embraces gifts made between spouses, but it would be the intention of the Government to include children as well. It will have far greater impact if it applies within the family and will be more beneficial than what is proposed in the amendment. The principle requires a much greater understanding than it has received. It also demands responsibility in understanding what is involved financially and how lost revenue will be replaced.

The Government will examine it as soon as possible, but we must go step by step. First of all, let us get the exemption in line with the Commonwealth and New South Wales and then we will look at the other matters as a whole and determine what can be done next year.

The House divided on the question that the words proposed by Mr. Crabb to be omitted stand part of the motion (Sir Kenneth Wheeler in the chair)—

Ayes	..	44
Noes	..	26
Majority against the amendment	..	18

AYES.

Mr. Austin	Mr. Mackinnon
Mr. Balfour	Mr. McLaren
Mr. Billing	Mr. Maclellan
Mr. Birrell	Mrs. Patrick
Mr. Borthwick	Mr. Plowman
Mr. Burgin	Mr. Rafferty
Mr. Coleman	Mr. Ramsay
Mr. Collins	Mr. Reese
Mr. Dixon	Mr. Richardson
Mr. Dunstan	Mr. Scanlan
Mr. Ebery	Mr. Skeggs
Mr. Evans (*Ballarat North*)	Mr. Smith (*South Barwon*)
Mr. Francis	Mr. Smith (*Warrnambool*)
Mr. Guy	Mr. Stephen
Mr. Hamer	Mr. Suggett
Mr. Jennings	Mr. Thompson
Mr. Jona	Mr. Weideman
Mr. Lacy	Mr. Williams
Mr. Lieberman	Mr. Wood
Mr. Loxton	*Tellers* :
Mr. McArthur	Mr. Cox
Mr. McCabe	Mr. McClure
Mr. McKellar	

NOES.

Mr. Cain	Mr. Lind
Mr. Cathie	Mr. Mutton
Mr. Crabb	Mr. Roper
Mr. Doube	Mr. Ross-Edwards
Mr. Edmunds	Mr. Simmonds
Mr. Evans (*Gippsland East*)	Mr. Stirling
Mr. Fogarty	Mr. Trewin
Mr. Fordham	Mr. Trezise
Mr. Ginifer	Mr. Whiting
Mr. Hann	Mr. Wilkes
Mr. Jasper	Mr. Wilton
Mr. Jones	*Tellers* :
Mr. Kirkwood	Mr. Amos
	Mr. Culpin

PAIRS.

Mr. Crellin	Mr. McInnes
Mr. Kennett	Mr. Simpson
Mr. Templeton	Mr. Holding

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was read a second time, passed through Committee, and reported to the House without amendment, and the report was adopted.

Mr. HAMER (Premier and Treasurer): I move—

That this Bill be now read a third time.

Mr. CRABB (Knox): The response of the Treasurer in winding up the second-reading debate was remarkable. He claimed that responsible budgeting prevented the Government from accepting the amendment moved by the Opposition and supported by the National Party. Surely the Treasurer made the point himself by interjection during the second-reading debate that a trifling amount of money would be involved in allowing gifts passing between spouses to be exempt from gift duty.

The Premier stated that he would give an undertaking, for which honorable members are grateful, that he will examine as soon as possible the removal of gift duty on gifts passing between spouses.

However, honorable members would have expected the Treasurer and his officers to have considered this last year when the Government proposed the abolition of probate duty on property passing between spouses. It is remarkable how this anomaly was not considered at that time and it makes one less than confident about how long it will take for gift duty to be removed.

The amount of money involved in accepting the amendment would certainly be trifling in terms of the Budget as a whole and would not affect responsible budgeting. The total expenditure envisaged in the Budget is some $3,000 million, but the receipts from gift duty are calculated at $3 million, which is one-thousandth of the total receipts of the Consolidated Fund. A change in the terms of gift duty between spouses is unlikely to have any huge budgetary effect. Indeed, the amendments which are being made in this amending Bill are only costing the Consolidated Fund less than $500,000 in a full year. Consequently, I ask the Treasurer to give an undertaking that he will review this matter before the Bill is presented to another place.

Mr. HAMER (Premier and Treasurer): The honorable member for Knox quite obviously has misstated the position. What I said was that the Government would give consideration to eliminating gift duty on all gifts within the family. It has not the slightest intention of adopting his proposal, which would simply give gift duty exemption on gifts passing

between spouses when within a few months probate duty will be eliminated on bequests to children.

It is a much different matter and not a trifling one as there are millions of dollars involved.

The honorable member for Knox has not taken it upon himself to make any suggestions about from where that revenue might be obtained in order to replace it in the Budget. That is what I mean by responsible budgeting. It is irresponsible simply to try to curry favour in a political sense without any idea from where the revenue can be obtained to replace the amount that will be lost.

The honorable member has misstated the position—he either does not understand it or did so wilfully. I give the undertaking that when the matter is considered it will be considered in a global family sense and not simply as between spouses.

Mr. DOUBE (Albert Park): The Premier's speech was one of the most unconvincing explanations this Chamber has ever heard. It is quite obvious that the Government simply did not do its homework on the Bill. It was quite surprising that gift duty between spouses was in a sense contradictory to the action it took last year.

The Premier says it is vitally important to find the $2 million-odd, but it is perfectly obvious that the extent of the amount is in the hands of the people who intend making gifts and that they can ensure that the Treasury does not get it. All those people have to do is to retain the gift —for example, a car—in their own names until death. The surviving spouses will then receive it free of duty and the Treasury will be $2 million-odd short. This indicates quite clearly that the Government simply did not think the matter out. Neither its officers nor its committees —and I understand it has many of those—examined the problem in detail.

I am sure the Government did not intend that people should be forced to the use of subterfuge by making a gift in reality but not making that gift available for duty. Of course, all one has to do to achieve that end is to give one's spouse the use of the gift and ensure that he or she then inherits it completely and utterly free of duty. The Government simply did not examine the problem. It thinks anything it does cannot be challenged and when it is challenged a phony explanation is presented and the Premier says that the adoption of the Opposition's suggestion would ruin the budgetary situation.

The Premier asks where he will be able to find the $2 million-odd, or whatever the cost may be. He has no idea of the cost of allowing gifts between spouses to be free of tax.

Mr. HAMER: Have you?

Mr. DOUBE: No, I have not, but it is the responsibility of the Treasurer to solve such problems, not the responsibility of a mere back-bencher. It is impertinent for the Government to talk to honorable members about how much a suggestion such as this would eat into the Government's budgetary plans, when in fact it simply has no idea.

No one in this House is more surprised than the Premier to find that gifts between husband and wife are taxable during their lifetimes but are not taxable after the death of one spouse. It has been said that this is quite deliberate, and from the interjections of the honorable member for Brighton one would believe all members of the Government party knew that gifts between spouses in excess of $7,500 would be the subject of a return to the commissioner and would be subject to tax if they were over $10,000.

It is apparent to me that they did not realize that if one party to a marriage owned a house prior to marriage and wished to make a gift of half the value of the house to the other party to the marriage after the marriage had taken place, the gift would be dutiable.

That fact cannot be denied, but honorable members opposite apparently do not know it. If they did know it they deliberately allowed this proposed legislation to go through knowing that any husband or wife who attempted to make his or her spouse a partner in the ownership of the house would be subject to tax. If that is the case, the Government is much more callous and heartless than I had thought. I thought it was simply feckless and self-important, but I see now that it wilfully and deliberately moved into this simple situation of a husband or wife trying to give his or her spouse a half share in the house and said, "If you do that, you will be taxed." What a miserable thing to do!

Mrs. PATRICK (Brighton): I congratulate the Premier on his undertaking that he will consider the abolition of gift duty within the family. That principle goes much further than the amendment moved by the honorable member for Knox. The honorable member for Albert Park spent a lot of time discussing the matrimonial home, but in practice the situation he mentioned is no longer a problem. No matter in whose name the house is registered, probate duty is not payable between spouses. There have always been ways of overcoming the problem of gift duty on the transfer of a half share in the matrimonial home to a spouse. Those methods are common not only to practising solicitors who are Liberals, but also to practising solicitors who are Labor. There have always been loans and unregistered mortgages and other ways of getting over the problem.

The Government is to be congratulated for increasing the value of an undutiable gift from $4,000 to $10,000. In my experience this sort of gift usually comes from parents who are trying to help children, particularly children about to buy their first home. In that situation, $4,000 does not go far and if parents wanted to make a gift to their children it was necessary for them to go through the machinations of going to a solicitor and using unregistered second mortgages in order to provide a little extra money for their children without attracting gift duty.

I welcome this increase, which will enable those parents who are in a position to help their children to make a start in life to give them $10,000 towards the purchase of a first home. This will be of benefit not only because gift duty will not be payable, but also because it will enable many young people to receive assistance from their parents in purchasing their first home or block of land.

As I have said, in the past solicitors have had to go to great lengths involving complicated dealings to work out how the money can be given, and I welcome this step forward and again congratulate the Premier on the idea of abolishing probate duty and gift duty within the family.

The motion was agreed to, and the Bill was read a third time.

WATER SUPPLY WORKS AND SERVICES BILL (No. 2).

The debate (adjourned from the previous day) on the motion of Mr. Borthwick (Minister for Conservation) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

Mr. JASPER (Murray Valley): I am concerned about the small amount of money allocated for the services dealt with by this Bill. No doubt this will be to the great detriment of country people. When I spoke in the Budget debate, and on the pay-roll tax Bill, I said that there were some good aspects in the Budget but that it certainly was not a Budget for country people. I shall mention four or five items in the Budget that will illustrate the stark reality of the small sum allocated by the Government to water supply works and services.

In 1977–78 a sum of $1,195 million will be allocated to education, $130 million more than was allocated last

year. Health services are allocated $538 million, $58·5 million more; and social welfare $85·9 million, $10·9 million more. The explanatory notes attached to the Bill show that the estimated expenditure for 1977–78 is $47·75 million. The increase over the 1976–77 expenditure is little more than $3 million. As the honorable member for Rodney said, only 1·4 per cent of the total Budget is being spent on water supply works and services. The sum of $28 million is allocated for conservation, an increase of 30 per cent or $6 million on that for last year. The Ministry for the Arts is to receive an allocation of $40·4 million, $7·8 million more than last year. Those figures emphasize the small increase in the sum to be spent on water supply works and services as compared with those for other areas of expenditure. The estimated Government expenditure has been raised $3·283 million for 1977–78 and that the estimated expenditure on Water Supply Works and Services represents only 1·4 per cent of the total Budget. I do not in any way denigrate the excellent work done by the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission, but its work is limited by the amount of money which is allocated to it.

The members of the National Party do not oppose the Bill. We want to see money being spent in country areas through the Water Supply Works and Services Bill. However, I reiterate that there is an urgent need for an increase in the amount being spent on these works and services.

Clause 15 lists River Murray works, for which there is an allocation of $10 million. One would imagine this amount of money would be of great advantage to the River Murray, but $8 million of that amount is allocated to the Dartmouth dam project. This is a fine project, and as the honorable member for Benambra has said, it has a storage volume of 4 million megalitres. It will supply additional irrigation water, and water supplies to cities and towns along the Murray as far as Adelaide. By deducting $8 million for the Dartmouth dam from the $10 million allocated to River Murray works, it will be seen that the small sum of $2 million is to be spent on the River Murray.

It is worth reiterating some of the points I made in my maiden speech last year. One-seventh of the total area of Australia is served by the Murray–Darling river system. This is a large area and a lot of money will have to be spent on it. Some people claim that the River Murray has degenerated to such a state that it is now an uncontrolled irrigation channel, and it has been called an unmaintained sewer.

There are over 30 Government departments—State and Federal—in New South Wales and Victoria, which have some control over the River Murray. I support the suggestion that there should be an extension to the responsibilities of the River Murray Commission to cover all aspects of the control of the river. At present the commission's prime responsibility is providing irrigation waters and managing water storage within that system. If the charter of the River Murray Commission is not extended there will be piecemeal management of the river and it will degenerate more and more.

I shall list some of the things which I believe should be controlled by the River Murray Commission: Irrigation, flood mitigation, pollution and contamination of the river. Erosion is important because the river is now controlled by storages along its length, and the rapid rises and falls in the river cause greater erosion than have ever occurred before on the river banks. This is a worsening problem, especially in the higher reaches and between Lake Hume and the Yarrawonga weir. The River Murray Commission should control the quality and quantity of the water passing down the river and also parks, recreational reserves, boating, noxious weeds and fish within the river

system. Ecology and wildlife should also come under the control of the River Murray Commission.

One factor which I have not mentioned, and which will be a continuing problem with the River Murray, is salinity. This is not the problem in the area I represent, which is farther down the river. No doubt honorable members who represent areas of Victoria on the reaches of the river beyond Echuca—the problem affects places as far away as Adelaide—will speak on the salinity of the river. The honorable member for Broadmeadows made good sense in what he said on this Bill. He said that some years ago the estimated cost of a desalination programme, using Lake Tyrell, was $40 million.

I direct attention to the quality and quantity of the water in the River Murray system. This is a story which I believe highlights the enormous problem to the hundreds of towns which draw their supply from that river. I was speaking some twelve months ago to a farmer who had a piggery down on the flats, some 10 miles east of the input of the Rutherglen water supply. This farmer had been instructed by the Environment Protection Authority to pump the refuse from his piggery on to his land. When I inspected the piggery I asked him where he disposed of the refuse previously. Behind the piggery there was an enormous hole half full of refuse, so I asked him how he cleaned it out. His reply was interesting. He said that every time a flood occurs the refuse is gone.

The Rutherglen water supply is 10 miles downstream and draws untreated water from the river. That water has not affected me or other residents to date, but it is a serious problem and will become greater with the development of the Albury–Wodonga complex because the River Murray bisects those two great cities. Unless a strong stand is taken with regard to the quality of water in the river epidemics will break out and problems will arise.

Earlier I said that country people had been neglected in the areas of water supply and sewerage. More emphasis should be placed on the provision of better water supplies and sewerage for these areas. People are more conscious these days of these essential services. If education can attract the amount of finance that it does—I believe we should have the highest educational standards possible—perhaps we have reached the stage when education is taking up too big a slice of the Budget and when greater emphasis should be placed on the quality of life and in assisting people by spending more money on water supply and sewerage.

At page 41 of the Budget speech, relating to the works and services programme, approval has been given for a new borrowing programme in excess of $357 million for Government and semi-Government authorities. The Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works has been allocated $113 million, the Melbourne Underground Rail Loop Authority $51 million and the West Gate Bridge Authority $30 million. Where do country water supply and sewerage authorities rank? Right at the end of the list! An amount of $9·8 million has been allocated by the Loan Council for country water and sewerage authorities which propose to borrow more than $1 million during 1977–78. That is a pittance when one considers the amount spent in other areas. I am surprised that the Government has not decided to spend more money in country areas.

The Water Commission provided me with further figures on this subject. Last year $64 million worth of water supply works were approved to be carried out but could not be funded. In sewerage, $40 million worth of works were approved but could not be funded. In the current twelve months the amount approved for works and services for water trusts is only $13·6 million and for sewerage in country areas $27·25 million. These amounts will not even

take up the slack from the approved projects last year let alone meet the cost of projects for the future.

One example is the waterworks trust at Cobram. That trust, following a pilot project, is at present installing a water filtration unit which is estimated to cost $1 million. But the trust has been allocated an amount of only $140,000 for the 1977–78 financial year. I thank the Water Commission for that contribution. However I repeat that a total of $13·6 million has been provided for water supply works in country Victoria. How many projects can be funded with that sum? The Water Commission has a potential waiting list of 60 towns to be sewered throughout country Victoria. I was surprised to discover that only six of those 60 towns have received approval to go ahead with their project. These authorities want to provide better services for country towns but funds are not allocated and the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission is not allowed to undertake a forward borrowing programme. When will country towns receive better water supplies?

I have mentioned Rutherglen on numerous occasions. Obviously, as a resident of that town I want to see it progress. I point out to honorable members who are interjecting that Rutherglen wine is still as good as ever. The Rutherglen Sewerage Authority applied for the amount of $120,000 to carry out preliminary investigation and survey work for a sewerage scheme. That allocation has not been made. The State Rivers and Water Supply Commission has indicated that it will be four or five years before this project can start. I will make representations to the Minister of Water Supply with a view to obtaining even $20,000 or $30,000 so that at least the preliminary work can be done. There is no doubt that a town like Rutherglen should have a high priority.

Mr. STEPHEN: Why?

Mr. JASPER: There are two or three reasons. One is that Rutherglen needs a sewerage system as soon as possible because of the type of soil there. The second is its proximity to the River Murray. Drainage problems exist around the town, and drainage water eventually finds its way to the river. In times of flood the overflow from the town drainage eventually finds its way into the River Murray.

I mention Rutherglen as one example. Many country towns want to provide services which many city people accept as normal. Why should country people be deprived of those services? The Environment Protection Authority is examining pollution sources and ways of cleaning up streams and improving the environment. The authority has provided an excellent service in cleaning up these problems and also studying the discharge of water from various areas into streams throughout Victoria. However, I often wonder whether the authority's priorities might not be wrong. Sewerage must be a contributing factor to pollution and perhaps the Environment Protection Authority and the Ministry for Conservation should encourage the Government to expend more money on providing sewerage facilities and thus ease the pollution problem generally.

Many sewerage authorities are looking for money to upgrade their services, plant and treatment works. If they could obtain the additional funds, the environment would be improved and the Environment Protection Authority would be assisted in its efforts. I trust that the Minister for Conservation will note this problem because it may be possible for him to assist in having additional funds provided for sewerage facilities.

Last night, the honorable member for Rodney referred to the enormous problems with regard to drainage throughout the State, particularly in irrigation areas. I am pleased that

an allocation of $1·2 million has been made for the Goulburn–Murray irrigation system, and also an amount of $300,000 for the extension of drain 3 which is south of Cobram. It costs about $50,000 a mile of drain constructed, so not many miles can be constructed for $300,000. When I asked the Minister to expedite the completion of the work on drain 3, because of the problems being created at drain 7, I was informed that the continuation of drain 7, which would probably be taken down drains 10 and 11, around the Katunga and Numurkah areas, is as far away as 1980–81 before a start will be made. Although I appreciate the money that is being allocated for drainage works, the $300,000 in the Cobram area is not enough. Drain 3 should be completed within twelve months so that further works may be undertaken on drain 7.

I remind the House that the problems created at drain 7 and the properties involved result directly from work undertaken by the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission. This has been acknowledged by the commission, but the problem is that the works on drain 7 so far end up in a situation where the water cannot flow through to the river. The commission would have been better advised to start the work at the river end and work back along the drainage system. The work that has been undertaken by the commission and its officers should be commended.

I wish to mention briefly the money that has been allocated for works in the Murray Valley electorate. Although I condemn the Government for not providing sufficient money, I realize that the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission is spreading the icing as far as it can, but unfortunately there is not enough cake.

The Cobram Sewerage Authority will be moving ahead with its filtration plant when it receives approval to borrow $140,000. The Shire of Numurkah has been allocated $50,000, of which $30,000 will be provided by Government loan and the other $20,000 will be obtained by private loan, to be expended on investigating bores in the township of Strathmerton with a view to improving the water supply and upgrading the treatment works.

The Wangaratta Waterworks Trust has been granted approval to raise a private loan of $175,000 for upgrading the treatment plant and other works. The Yarrawonga Urban Waterworks Trust will also raise a private loan of $30,000 so that it may complete the filtration system and bring it into operation. Another allocation worth mentioning is the $220,000 for the Ovens and King Rivers Improvement Trust which will allow the trust to continue cleaning up the two rivers. A large proportion of the funds that I have mentioned will be raised privately and do not form part of the Government's allocation.

I reiterate that the Government's priorities need to be changed. The Government seems hell-bent on increasing the allocation of funds to education. I do not oppose the provision of the best education facilities possible but the Government should examine how far it should go with this expenditure, which shows an increase of $130 million this year. Perhaps the Government should examine whether it could obtain better value from the teachers employed by the Education Department. I do not deprecate the efforts of the many school teachers who do an excellent job.

If the priorities could be changed, some of the increases in allocations under this Bill could be even greater. The Government should examine an increase in the funds made available for country water supply and sewerage facilities. Victoria should not have two classes of people, one class living in Melbourne and getting the best of both worlds and all the benefits, and another class living in country areas who are not so

fortunate. The Government should endeavour to spread these facilities into country Victoria where the people deserve the best. If the facilities were improved, more people would be interested in moving to country areas.

Often, when city people visit a country town they ask whether the town has a sewerage system and what sort of water supply it has. Many people in country towns have to boil water even for normal drinking purposes. I have to do this at my own home during the summer period. It is disgraceful that this situation should exist in country Victoria.

Unfortunately, many city-based members of Parliament do not realize the position confronting country towns in regard to water supply and sewerage facilities. The Government should provide the highest standard of living for everyone by improving local water supplies. By this means, the spread of disease would be severely restricted and people would be encouraged to live in country areas. Country people demand and ought to be given the essential services that they require with the best standards of water supply and sewerage.

Mr. WOOD (Swan Hill): This Bill is most important to the people of country Victoria as it provides funds for, amongst other things, sewerage and the distribution of probably our most precious commodity, water. Last night, the honorable member for Broadmeadows said that we should not look at the past but to the future. Undoubtedly the future will solve many of the problems that have been discussed during the debate on this Bill. It is necessary to examine the past in order to appreciate and understand our present and future needs.

In the area that I represent—the Minister for Conservation would know about this as he lived in the area for some time—many of the old settlers suffered great privation and encountered other problems because of the lack of water. I have often heard some of the older men who have settled in the areas speak of how they had to cart water from the river to their farms for stock and domestic use and how no sooner would they get there than they would have to return for more. Although the rainfall may have been sufficient for the growing of feed, during years of low rainfall it was not sufficient for the type of catchment dams they had. Therefore, they had no water and as a result many stock were lost or destroyed. The network of channels that now run throughout the area is history.

By interjection, the late Sir Percy Byrnes has been referred to. I pay tribute to Sir Percy Byrnes and many members of this House and another place who were most determined to overcome the problem. I also pay tribute to members and engineers of the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission who designed and implemented the scheme. It has been a great boon and many farmers in the area doubtless owe their prosperity to the works that were carried out at that time.

Many of the northern towns also draw their water supply from this network of channels, but although over the years the towns grow and prosper, unfortunately not much has been done to improve their various water supply systems. The population of many country towns has dropped, but the demand for water has risen. This has been brought about by many factors such as modern living, improved quality of living and such things as automatic washing machines, water coolers, garden sprinklers, home swimming pools, and so on, which have necessitated the use of a much greater quantity of water. Most of these people do not take their drinking water from their storage but from rain water tanks, but there is a tremendous demand for water in these towns.

Grants and other benefits have encouraged people into country towns. The municipalities have introduced sporting grounds, bowling greens,

swimming pools, and so on. This, in turn, has created increased demand. These water supplies should be upgraded because many were designed some 50 years ago—water towers, and so on—to cope with a far less demand for water than exists today.

I could refer to many places, not only throughout my electorate but other electorates. In Watchem I was approached by the Country Fire Authority which suffered through a lack of adequate water. The State Rivers and Water Supply Commission engineers examined the problem and I believe they are installing pressure pumps which will maintain high pressure throughout the summer months when the fire danger is greatest. The towns of Culgoa and Ultima are experiencing growth. People are retiring to these towns because facilities are now available which were not there years ago. An allocation of some $300,000 to Lake Boga for water supply and extension of the Swan Hill reticulation system is a great boon to these people and will provide them with an ample quantity of high quality water.

The honorable member for Murray Valley referred to lack of sewerage in towns. Swan Hill has been sewered since about 1936. Robinvale, another area in my electorate, is in the process of being sewered. An allocation of some $300,000 will help to complete the sewerage of that town. It was not too difficult to get the money from the Government through the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission. I suggest that the honorable member for Murray Valley should try harder to obtain sewerage for Rutherglen.

Waterworks trusts with annual revenue of more than $50,000 have been advised that they will have to pay the costs of analysis of water samples.

This has created a great deal of controversy in these areas because the people believe they should not be charged this amount. I am inclined to agree with them. Last year the waterworks trust at Kerang, because of the poor quality of water from the Loddon River, spent $36,000 on water treatment. An arbitrary figure of $50,000 of revenue is placed on all trusts, and any trust with a revenue above that figure has to pay for the cost of water analysis. The Kerang Waterworks Trust rightly pointed out that the quality of water supply was bad.

Mr. BORTHWICK: Have they got a water treatment plant?

Mr. WOOD: Yes, they have, but the point I am making is that the water supplied to the trust at the point of take off is from the Loddon River and because of the poor quality of the water in the river the trust is required to spend $36,000 a year on water treatment. That is much more than it would have to pay if the water in the Loddon River was of a higher standard. As a result of the excessive cost of treating the water, the trust had to increase its rates, and consequently its revenue exceeded $50,000. It is now estimating that it will be required to pay $2,268 annually for water testing. I hope this imposition will be withdrawn. Approaches have been made to the Treasurer and the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission to withdraw this charge because it imposes hardship on a trust which is required to spend large amounts of money on improving its water quality.

One of the major problems in the State and probably in Australia is the drastic lowering over the years of the quality of water in the River Murray and its tributaries. One of the greatest assets that a continent like Australia can inherit is a vast stream of what in the past was high quality water. We have neglected to preserve this great waterway. When I say, "we", I mean the Victorian, South Australian, New South Wales and Federal Governments. Over the years the water in the River Murray and its tributaries has deteriorated greatly. It will be an enormous job to revitalize this water. Many people have said it is impossible and just

cannot be done. I believe it must be done. This issue is too vital to neglect or to consider to be beyond redemption and that nothing can be done. I think it was Don Quixote who said, " Only he who attempts the absurd is capable of achieving the impossible ". Everything possible must be done.

The massive funds that will be required are beyond the resources of this State. The Bill makes provision of $1·2 million for the drainage of the Shepparton area. This is part of the $40 million salinity attack plan of the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission. I appreciate the problems of the people of the Goulburn Valley, and I appreciate that the high water table and salinity problems have increased and have greatly aggravated the situation. However, the area around the Goulburn Valley is being drained and put back into the River Murray. As a result of agreements with New South Wales and South Australia on quality of water and water control, we are putting this high saline content into the river upstream at Shepparton. We will take it out and instead of saline water going into the river from the Kerang area it will be diverted to Lake Tyrrell. Nothing is really being done to improve the quality of the water in the River Murray. We will only be taking it from one point and putting it somewhere else.

That does not help, because poorer quality water is going back into the river and, at the take-off point lower down, the saline content is increased and the water is going back into the irrigation system. Therefore, that scheme would not help the people of Kerang because the salinity is so high.

I have discussed this matter with many people, who agreed that an over-all plan must be adopted, perhaps by establishing a statutory authority to cover the whole Murray Valley. Such an authority would help to control river salinity and flooding on the River Murray for the benefit of the people of the Murray Valley.

The high salinity has caused serious socio-economic problems because there are a number of magnificent decentralized industries such as the dairy industry in the area, and many towns depend for the livelihood of their residents on the irrigators who live along the river.

As one travels through Swan Hill to Echuca, one can see how the farms have deteriorated over the years. There are many reasons for this, including poor farming methods and lack of drainage, and something must be done to overcome this difficulty. A massive injection of Commonwealth funds is needed, although that is not easy to obtain, but it is the only way to salvage the area. It is of no use for people living on the Victorian side of the River Murray to use salinity controls and preserve the quality of the river when people on the New South Wales side of the river are pouring in high saline water in vast quantities through the Wakool–Edward effluent system. The authorities in one State may try to do everything possible to overcome the problem, but a different attitude may be adopted by those on the other side of the river.

The authority I propose should also have control of flood mitigation. A river is designed by nature, not by State boundaries, and during floods in 1973–74 in many cases water was being poured into the Murray Valley. Many years ago, before the land was settled, that water would have gone through the Wakool–Edward effluent system and bypassed Swan Hill.

At Barmah 30,000 megalitres of water went through during the peak discharge period in 1974. At Swan Hill, further downstream, probably 150 or more miles by river, the capacity is also 30,000 megalitres. However, between those points the Goulburn River discharged 214,000 megalitres, although the capacity was only 20,000 megalitres a day, and the Loddon River discharged 15,000 megalitres a day. The capacity at two points of the river is 30,000 megalitres, and in between hundreds of

thousands of megalitres of water are being forced through. The water has to go somewhere, so it floods over the river and rejoins the River Murray further down.

People living on the New South Wales side of the river do not want the flood waters from Victoria, as I mentioned earlier, because of the salinity discharges. However, the desire to preserve the quality of the water of the River Murray is not necessarily shared by the people of New South Wales.

An over-all authority is needed to handle the whole matter. I have discussed this with various people and some members of the House have said that it would result in the creation of a Commonwealth group that would take over, and that the State would not have any say. I do not concede that. Certainly the Victorian State Rivers and Water Supply Commission and the New South Wales Water Conservation and Irrigation Commission must have some say in the total scheme, which should be designed for the benefit of the people of the Murray Valley, whatever State they live in. Action should be taken not in a piecemeal way, but positively—perhaps over about ten years. Funds for this purpose can be obtained only from a national source because the State resources cannot provide the required amount.

Water rates have been mentioned. Rates are probably not relevant to the Bill, but I should like to make some comments on them, because other remarks have been made. Water rates must be related to the ability of the farmer to pay, and they cannot afford to pay higher charges than they are paying at present. Again I impress on the House the need for concerted action to be taken and for a conference to be held between Commonwealth and State departments to establish a new authority. The River Murray Commission is taxed with the problems of the River Murray, but it has no teeth and receives no finance.

Perhaps the proposed new authority could be on a similar basis to the River Murray Commission. All the surveys and inquiries that have been carried out have proven that there is a need for immediate action, and the time for it is not tomorrow, but now.

Mr. GINIFER (Keilor): One must express dismay for the interests of rural Victoria at what is occurring not only in the conservation of water, but also in the provision of adequate and suitable sewerage facilities for many Victorian country towns. This matter was clearly outlined by the honorable members for Murray Valley and Swan Hill. They said that Victoria has a city-based Liberal Government which has not paid due consideration to these areas. One sympathizes with the frustrations of both members in trying to put the viewpoints of their electorates and state the needs and requirements of the people they represent.

Because the Victorian Government is able to be elected on a city vote, the interests of country people are neglected. Unfortunately, even in the presentation of their case for additional funds for their own areas these people have been ignored. The House heard a plaintive plea from honorable members who attempted to put a case to a Government which takes little notice of them. The Government should take the matter a step further. It concerns not only the administration of the Victorian Liberal Government, but also that of the Government in Canberra, which Victorian Government speakers support.

During the term of the Whitlam Labor Government, whatever its shortcomings may have been, a massive amount of funds was made available for sewerage in Victoria. For the first time since Federation, money was provided by the central Government to the State Governments for sewerage.

By his interjection the honorable member for Ballarat South is showing his ignorance about the affairs of the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works, and unfortunately the honorable member overlooks the funds which were also earmarked for use by sewerage authorities in rural Victoria. This money was promised and budgeted for and was being provided to this State. The amount was progressively increased over the three years of the Whitlam Administration, but on the election of the present Federal Government, despite the plaintive pleas from people in country Victoria, the funds were excluded from the Federal Budget and there are now none available to help the rural people of the State.

I suggest that in future when honorable members advance their points of view on behalf of country people, they should acknowledge that there are now no funds being allocated to Victoria for the provision of sewerage facilities in the metropolitan area or in the country areas of Victoria.

I also take the opportunity of discussing the actual administration of sewerage authoritites operating within Victoria. In doing so I refer to the Sunbury Sewerage Authority and the Shire of Bulla. Both those instrumentalities are within the electorate I represent. For the benefit of the honorable member for Murray Valley, I indicate that under the Electoral Provinces and Districts Act my electorate is classified as a country electorate.

I draw to the attention of the House the sentiments that have been expressed by the Shire of Bulla and the Sunbury Sewerage Authority. Both of those statutory authorities have written to me concerning the financing of the Sunbury Sewerage Authority and referred to the allegations which were made by Mr. Gippsland of Lensworth Finance Ltd. that funds had been promised, but nothing was ever received by the Sunbury Sewerage Authority. I wish to clear the record because in making such an inference——

The SPEAKER (Sir Kenneth Wheeler): Order! I am not sure that a letter written by the Sunbury Sewerage Trust is relevant to this Bill.

Mr. GINIFER: I was about to read some expressions contained in letters I have received, because, in effect, the attitude taken by both the statutory authorities in reply to the inference, which casts a slur on the administration of both of the authorities, shows that the position is precisely the opposite. I commence by quoting from a letter I received from the Shire of Bulla dated 24th October this year. In that letter the shire secretary, Mr. Kelly, stated, *inter alia*—

> Referring to the board of inquiry into Housing Commission land purchases, I have to advise that Council——

The SPEAKER (Sir Kenneth Wheeler): Order! I do not want to stop the honorable member, but I do not see how that letter—I might add I also received a similar letter—can be linked with this Bill. There has been an inference made on the general administration of the sewerage authority, but I do not see how the honorable member can tie it in with the Water Supply Works and Services Bill.

Mr. GINIFER: Thank you for your guidance, Mr. Speaker, but the reference I was about to make covered the financial affairs of the Shire of Bulla and the Sunbury Sewerage Authority. It also relates to searches of the files of the administration of those instrumentalities and I considered, on behalf of those authorities, that I should make it clear that no correspondence was received from Lensworth Finance Ltd. and that in discussing this Bill I could refer to the administration of those authorities and the relevant correspondence in their files.

The SPEAKER (Sir Kenneth Wheeler): Order! I believe the letter that the honorable member is quoting is only a letter of advice from the Sunbury Sewerage Authority and this

is not the forum for it to be debated. It would appear to me that a letter of that nature should be directed to the authority conducting the inquiry.

Mr. GINIFER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I shall not pursue it any further. I leave it on the basis that I was contacted by the authorities as the member representing the area in which the authorities operate. I take it no further than to indicate that a perusal of the files reveals that no offer or suggestion of funds being made available was received and that the article or statement that had been made was misleading.

I return to the matter referred to by the honorable member for Swan Hill relating to the Murray Valley. I agree with his viewpoint that the River Murray has unfortunately, to a large degree, been turned into Australia's major drain and that the time is now opportune for action to be taken to clean it up. The honorable member for Swan Hill, in conjunction with the honorable member for Murray Valley, stated that a concerted effort should be made, not only on the financial aspect of what should be done in the Murray Valley but also on the basis of co-operation. It was even suggested that a statutory authority should be established to control the waters in the Murray Valley. At present the waters that pour into the river system come from the surface. It is seepage or underground saline water.

The harsh reality is that where two or three State Governments and the national Government are acting in conjunction to finance a project only the central Government is in a position to make adequate funds available. This means that the Victorian Government and the other State Governments involved will have to abrogate their responsibilities and pass them to a national authority which has the funds to control activities in the Murray Valley, not in a piecemeal manner, but so that it can be developed or regenerated in the national interests.

I suggest that the honorable members for Murray Valley and Swan Hill should take this matter up with their Federal member and ask him to put this proposition to the national forum. They should also use their influence on the Government in Canberra which they support. If they do not do this or take positive action, then what they have been saying is only a pious cry, because the final responsibility for control of this type rests with the national Government and the honorable members for Murray Valley and Swan Hill have to match that responsibility with action on their own behalf.

Mr. STEPHEN (Ballarat South): The Water Supply Works and Services Bill covers many projects in which I have been interested for a long time. I refer to the allocation of funds consistently made available to the Lake Merrimu project near Bacchus Marsh.

The amount being provided this year for expenditure on water supply works and services is $70 million, and the actual expenditure is expected to be $47·75 million. This is not a large increase on the amount expended last year, but the Lake Merrimu project has been advanced in three stages. In the first stage, the project comprised a dam on the Coimadai Creek with a tunnel to divert the waters of Goodmans Creek into the new dam. That tunnel was 1 mile in length and it was of immense benefit to the Bacchus Marsh area, as well as being the initial stages of a storage that would also service the townships of Melton and Werribee.

The scheme is now well into its second stage and makes a reserve water supply available. The second stage includes water diverted from the Lerderderg River into Goodmans Creek. The length of the proposed tunnel is slightly less than 4 miles or 6 kilometres. The third stage will allow the height of the reservoir to be raised by 40 feet which, in the belief of the engineers of the State

Rivers and Water Supply Commission, will enable the storage of the amount of water which is available for harvesting in the system.

Another section of the Bill deals with town water supplies. It is pertinent to note that at 30th June, 1977, 210 local authorities had been formed to serve 327 cities and towns. among similar projects, some seven or eight years ago, was the largest country scheme that had been approved—the Bannockburn scheme—at a cost of slightly more than $600,000. On current values one realizes how far $600,000 would go towards the construction of such a highly expansive scheme as that scheme. The water is drawn by the West Moorabool Water Board from the Moorabool River, and is taken off at Sheoaks and services the townships of Inverleigh and Teesdale which are both mentioned in this Bill, as well as the townships of Meredith, Lethbridge and Sutherland's Creek. I am pleased to note that this Bill provides for the further expansion of the scheme and I sincerely thank the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission for its consistent and constant support in this area.

Clause 14 covers a matter which I believe to be of great importance and which has not yet been mentioned by any honorable member speaking on the Bill. The amount involved is only $200,000, but it is for expenditure incurred by the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission and other authorities on the development and comparison of methods of advanced waste water treatment. I believe increasing allocations will be provided in future water supply works and services Bills for this type of work. Although the amount of money involved is not large, the principle is important. In years to come it will be more and more necessary to recycle water and to value water. That, up to this stage, has not been as necessary as it will be in future years.

Clause 9 lists allocations to waterworks trusts. The Ballan Waterworks Trust will receive $50,000. Although that township is in a particularly good rainfall area and a large number of reservoirs surround the area, it has not been well endowed with reservoirs and has had constant trouble in expanding the facilities and the availability of water because of the small pipeline servicing the township from the reservoir. Currently the shire of Ballan is negotiating with an industry which requires 400,000 gallons of water a day—a large amount for a township and waterworks trust the size of that of Ballan—and it may be necessary for the co-operation of the Geelong Waterworks and Sewerage Trust to assist the township in obtaining a water service to provide the yield for the industry. I hope that the negotiations that are currently taking place between the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission and other interested bodies will result in agreement being reached, and that this amount of water will be available from nearby reservoirs. Possibly the water would come from the Bostock reservoir which is almost adjacent to the township of Ballan.

The Bacchus Marsh Shire Council Water Trust, Myrniong, will also receive assistance under this Bill. It has a new scheme which has been long sought and which has been brought to fruition as a result of two major fires which, unfortunately, not only destroyed the local store but also the most important building in the town—the hotel. That pointed to the need for an adequate water supply, and I am pleased to note that $100,000 is provided for that purpose.

The Bannockburn District Waterworks Trust will receive a further $100,000 to extend the system which I mentioned earlier. The Rokewood Waterworks Trust will receive $30,000. This trust takes its water from the Ballarat Water Commission and has a long lead pipeline which is constantly under pressure because of the numbers of small farms and farmlets between Ballarat and Rokewood. I am indebted to the Government for the support in this area.

One does not refer to what is not in the Bill; one merely comments on what is in the Bill. However, I hope on the next occasion when I have the pleasure of speaking on the water supply works and services Bill, perhaps in 1978, I shall be able to comment on the availability of funds to the proposed Mount Egerton Gordon Waterworks Trust on which I have been working for many years and which I would dearly like to see brought to fruition.

Mr. B. J. EVANS (Gippsland East): Over the years Victoria has had a well-deserved reputation in the field of water conservation. The State Rivers and Water Supply Commission is recognized world-wide for its capacity to design and construct water storages. Its reputation was gained in the early post-war years when a vigorous water conservation programme was embarked upon by Victoria, a programme which did much to develop the rural areas of the State. There is no doubt that much of the credit for the existence of cities like Shepparton, Echuca and Swan Hill, and even to a large extent the development which has taken place at Bendigo, can be laid at the feet of Governments in the post-war years which embarked upon an ambitious water conservation programme. As the honorable member for Rodney has indicated, those Governments were either composed of members of the Country Party, as it then was, or were strongly influenced by the Country Party during the period. It is evident, if one examines population statistics for the period, that during that time the rural areas of Victoria were able to maintain a balance in population growth with the metropolitan area.

That shows that water conservation plays a significant role in balanced development. That is one of the basic reasons why members of the National Party—and I think it is fair to say members of other political parties who represent country areas—have expressed a degree of concern about the amount of money which has been made available in the Bill, particularly for water conservation measures.

The only major water storage that would have an influence on rural areas at present is the construction of the Dartmouth dam. Over the past twenty years or so, the Government has maintained a ten-year programme of dam construction. It was commendable for any Government to embark upon a definite, specified programme so that people in the various areas would have some indication of priorities and would be able to plan for the day when the area in which they lived would be favoured by the construction of a water storage. However, it is now ten years since a firm and emphatic assurance was given by the then Minister of Water Supply, who is now the Minister for Conservation, that the next major project to be constructed by the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission would be a reservoir on the Mitchell River.

In 1967, when the Commonwealth Government first embarked on the national water resources programme, Victoria was not sure whether any of its water conservation projects would be recognized by the Commonwealth and it told the Federal Government that if money were provided for water storage on either the King River or the Mitchell River—and both storages were given equal priority by the State Government—it would accept the responsibility for construction of the other storage. As history has shown, in due course the Commonwealth Government made the funds available for the construction of the King River storage. That project has been completed and has been in operation for some years, but the people who live in the area of the Mitchell River are still waiting.

I recently asked the Minister for Conservation, representing the Minister of Water Supply, what stage had been reached in planning for a water storage on the Mitchell River. In a reply dated 26th October the Minister advised—

As announced by the Honorable F. J. Granter, M.L.C., Minister of Water Supply, in February of this year, after receipt of an economic appraisal of the Mitchell dam project by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, the possibility of a smaller storage than the originally proposed 20,000 megalitre capacity is being examined by the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission for advice to the Government.

That makes the third bite at the cherry as far as the design and siting of a dam on the Mitchell River is concerned. Prior to 1967 the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission investigated sites for a dam and the design of the dam was completed. I would not care to guess how much money was then spent on this work, but the whole project seemed to be clear and everyone seemed to be satisfied with the proposal until the conservation movement, which was just starting to flex its muscles, questioned the site at Billy Goat Bend.

I have never deviated from my view that that site and the original design were right, but, in its wisdom, the Government decided that an environmental impact study should be conducted. To the best of my knowledge that was the first such study to be carried out in Victoria. It was certainly the first in relation to a water conservation project. When the study was eventually completed I was most disturbed by the extremely tentative nature of its findings. There were so many "coulds" and "perhapses" and "maybes" in the report that it certainly appeared to me to be far from a scientific assessment of the situation. There seemed to have been no effort made to examine the possible benefits to the environment that might ensue from the construction of a dam. No environmental impact study can ever show the proper balance between the advantages and disadvantages of a project unless the possible beneficial effects are taken into account as well as the possible damage or deleterious effects.

The main item of concern to the committee that carried out the study was the fact that there is an area of lilly-pilly closed forest in the gorge of the Mitchell River. It is not a unique area because lilly-pilly closed forests exist in many other places in East Gippsland, but this particular forest is the most westerly lilly-pilly closed forest in Victoria. Part of that forest would have been inundated by the dam if it were constructed at the site proposed. Without going into all the details, the result was that the Government accepted the recommendations of the environmental impact study group and decided on a second site further upstream.

For a number of years that is where the situation remained. It was considered that in due course—and that due course seemed to be stretching for an undue number of years—the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission would construct the dam on the alternative site. As I understand it, a dam was designed for that site and the Water Commission paid for designing and estimating the cost of a dam on the new site.

If my memory serves me correctly, late last year the Commonwealth Government, in response to a further request by the State Government for financial assistance in the construction of the dam, referred the matter to the Bureau of Agricultural Economics. That body produced a cost-benefit analysis.

Mr. BORTHWICK: It had been done previously.

Mr. B. J. EVANS: As the Minister interjects, it had been analysed previously, and as well as that the Mitchell River Water Utilization Committee, at the behest of the State and Federal Governments, engaged a consultant to produce another cost-benefit analysis of the scheme. I well remember, when discussing the matter with the consultant engaged to prepare the analysis, thinking what a futile exercise it was to try to assess the benefits of the dam in 50 years' time.

The sitting was suspended at 6.15 *p.m. until* 8.4 *p.m.*

Mr. B. J. EVANS: Prior to the suspension of the sitting I stated that members of the public are becoming heartily sick of the Government's indecision, of investigation following investigation, of inquiry on top of inquiry and report following report. They are looking for a Government that can make up its mind on matters. A responsible Government listens to the various points of view and then makes up its mind in the light of the evidence before it, but in this instance and in the case of the proposal for a water storage on the Mitchell River, the Government has been duckshoving the issue year after year just as it is doing in so many different fields.

Even though I should like to say much more about that proposition, I conclude my remarks on this subject by making a plea to the Government to make up its mind on the site for a water storage on the Mitchell River and to do something about it.

The next point I raise concerns a letter I received this morning notifying me of the agreement by the Minister of Water Supply on the proposal for the provision of sewerage facilities for the townships of Paynesville, Eaglepoint and Raymond Island. Before I deal with that matter I should like to make a plea to you, Mr. Speaker, to investigate the mailing arrangements that exist in this House, because the letter to which I refer appeared on my desk this morning whereas the two members from the Upper House who represent the Gippsland area received their letters yesterday. I cannot believe the Minister of Water Supply is so petty and churlish that he would try to gain some political capital for his party colleagues by ensuring that they are notified first of projects of this kind.

Neither of those members from the other place was present at any meeting I attended in relation to a move for the sewerage project to be undertaken.

Mr. LACY: Did you attend?

Mr. B. J. EVANS: Certainly; I attended a number of such meetings because some important issues were involved in this scheme and particularly because of the controversy surrounding the site originally proposed for the final treatment of the effluent. Initially it was proposed that the site for the final treatment should be on Raymond Island, which gave rise to some heated exchanges, some difficult arguments and controversial discussions.

For the information of honorable members who are not aware of the geography of the area in this context, I point out that Raymond Island is situated in the Gippsland Lakes. It is an island on which considerable development has taken place. It was feared that the treatment of the final effluent at a site on Raymond Island could, in the long term, cause pollution of the lakes.

The major question for the consultants in this case to consider was whether the site on Raymond Island, being the cheapest site for the overall cost of the scheme, was a desirable one in relation to the potential problem of pollution of the Gippsland Lakes. The eventual decision which has been confirmed in the letter received today from the Minister is that the disposal point will not be located on Raymond Island but will be at a distance of some 9·4 kilometres from Paynesville in an area south of the Bairnsdale golf course. This would be a desirable site for the treatment of the effluent but, of course, it would involve additional cost. The average homeowner within the scheme will be paying approximately $95 a year in rates for sewerage.

That represents an extra $10 to $15 a household a year, to meet the additional costs involved in disposal at a more satisfactory point, that is, inland from the Gippsland Lakes rather than at Raymond Island. This is a case of a community paying additional costs to protect the environment for the enjoyment and benefit of people mostly from other parts of the State. The circumstances are similar

to those relating to the Mitchell River dam where a change was made for environmental purposes and the people were responsible for the full cost of the whole scheme. I find this difficult to reconcile. Environmental costs are presumably incurred to satisfy the ideas and ideals of other sections of the community, but have to be borne by the people involved. There should be some way in which the Government can take up the additional costs brought about by environmental considerations rather than the total costs of these alternative arrangements being loaded on the people directly concerned.

To date, I do not have any evidence that the Government intends to consider this. As I pointed out, in the consideration of the cost-benefit ratio with the Mitchell River dam site, the total cost, which includes increased expenditure for environmental purposes, is loaded against the scheme, not accepted as the cost applying to the whole community.

A decision which was announced yesterday relating to the disposal of effluent from Paynesville and Raymond Island inland from the Gippsland Lakes directed attention to an interesting anomaly. I raised a matter with the Minister for Conservation recently in regard to the disposal of effluent from the Lakes Entrance scheme, which is in its early stages of development. The local golf club has been interested in obtaining the final effluent from the treatment works for the irrigation of its fairways. That is a sensible way of disposing of this effluent. Golf clubs and racecourses have been reluctant in the past to dispose of effluent in this way, but the Bairnsdale racing club and the Lakes Entrance golf club are prepared to take the final effluent and use it for irrigation purposes.

It was several weeks ago that I raised with the Minister for Conservation my information that the Environment Protection Authority had decreed that the final effluent at Lakes Entrance has to be disposed of into the sea. This will result in the people in that area paying higher rates to meet additional costs in the running of their sewerage scheme. I hope that before this debate is concluded the Minister for Conservation will indicate that the Lakes Entrance golf club can use the final effluent from the Lakes Entrance scheme for irrigating its golf course. The Lakes Entrance golf course committee has incurred costs in installing the necessary equipment and it is anxious to proceed with this proposal. I hope the Environment Protection Authority does not kill the whole idea by insisting that the whole of the final effluent from Lakes Entrance should be piped out to sea.

River improvement trusts are in the Cinderella area of the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission funding. The expenditure for 1977–78 is to be $1 million, whereas during 1976–77 it was $1,134,551. There has been a substantial reduction in funds for this area of administration of the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission. Over many years the river improvement trusts have carried out a great deal of work, albeit controversial in many instances, to protect streams around the State. In many cases the work was concerned with the prevention of erosion. It is evident that this work must be maintained.

Last year there was consternation among river improvement trust commissioners at the reduction in allocations for this purpose. They had to restrict their operations to simple maintenance work on projects which had already been constructed. It seems apparent from the reduced allocation that it will be impossible to continue even this maintenance work because there will not be sufficient finance available. I should like to know the Government's intention in regard to river improvement trusts. From the approach that has been adopted with this measure, it seems that the Government wants to see river improvement trusts close down their operations. I hate to think what will happen.

Mr. WILKES: Mr. Speaker, I draw your attention to the state of the House.

A quorum was formed.

Mr. B. J. EVANS: It is indicative of the interest of both Government and Opposition members in this debate that there were not enough of them in the Chamber to form a quorum. Another question which I wish to raise with the Government relates to the proposal by the Bairnsdale sewerage authority for an additional treatment area. Bairnsdale is a town which is growing steadily. Today I received information that only yesterday a new department store was opened in the township. It was a Coles New World Supermarket. An official from the organization said it was a more successful opening than they had experienced at any other single store, not excepting city and suburban stores. This is indicative of the great interest in the development of the township of Bairnsdale. It is notable that the only store which has closed down so far is the Coles store which has been there for about 40 years.

The Bairnsdale Sewerage Authority has asked the Minister for Conservation to provide an additional 50 acres from McLeods Morass for disposal of final effluent as the sewerage treatment works are operating at peak capacity. I draw the attention of the Minister to a report prepared for the Gippsland regional environmental studies. The only date which appears is 1977. It came into my possession several weeks ago. It makes the point that, from preliminary studies, there is no evidence of any widespread eutrophication or widespread problems of nutrient enrichment of the Gippsland Lakes. I should like the Minister to give urgent consideration to the provision of the additional 50 acres from the wildlife conservation area. The granting of this area will in no way diminish its use as a wildlife area. It has been stated emphatically that the morass area is a natural area for the disposal of sewerage effluent.

The SPEAKER (Sir Kenneth Wheeler): The honorable member's time has expired.

Mr. McCLURE (Bendigo): Earlier in this debate the honorable member for Rodney said that the amount of money provided by the Government in this Bill was insufficient. He was careful not to say how much more should be provided and was also careful not to point out that the money allocated in this Bill in no way reflects the total spending on water supply in Victoria.

He conveniently overlooked the contribution of the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works which supplies water for most of the people of Victoria. It was simply the old National Party whinge of " It is never enough money ". Its members failed to say which area of the Budget should be pruned to provide money. If any member of the National Party has not yet spoken, I challenge him to indicate, on behalf of his party, which area of the State Budget should be pruned in order to provide more money for water supply. I look forward to hearing a member of the National Party saying that the education votes should be slashed.

Most members who have contributed to this debate have spent some time in discussing the water supply which pertains to their individual electorates. In my electorate of Bendigo we are well looked after by the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission, and have been for over 100 years. The water supply to Bendigo is one of the most complex in this State because it is supplied from two separate and distinct systems, the primary one being the Coliban system which has storages around Malmsbury from which water is supplied to Bendigo by open channel.

Earlier this year that channel was seriously breached between the storage area and Bendigo. The break

was due to a flash thunderstorm in the Mount Alexander area but there is a reasonable contention that the channel itself has become severely eroded by the passage of time and that the break would have occurred in any case. The channel, which is constructed in concrete, is in most part above the ground so a break in it inevitably means a substantial spill. There is no way of conveying the water until the breach is repaired.

Because of the fragile nature of the channel it is important, for the security of water supply to Bendigo, that the commission find a way of prefabricating sections so that they can be replaced quickly if a break occurs. It was only by a supreme effort of the employees of the commission that a break of 90 feet was fixed in a period of a few working days and that the supply was resumed within a fortnight. Had the break been in a less accessible location Bendigo could have suffered a serious loss of water supply.

The State Rivers and Water Supply Commission is spending a large amount of money to upgrade Bendigo's water supply system. Substantial improvements are being made to the water mains, in particular the Spring Gully high level system which involves a rising main of considerable length with a storage in an elevated position feeding the reticulated supply by gravity. In other areas of Bendigo a general replacement programme is continuing at an unprecedented pace. This is appreciated by many people who have the misfortune to live in areas where the main persistently bursts.

I pay a tribute to the staff of the Water Commission in Bendigo who I believe do an excellent job in looking after the supply in the urban area, and also the irrigation district which is supplied by the system. I particularly mention the executive engineer, Mr. Nicolson, who is one of the finest officers the commission has. He is always approachable and is a thoroughly competent officer.

One other matter gives me great concern and I think it will concern all members of this House, regardless of whether their water is provided by the Water Commission, a trust, or the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works. Extensions to water mains are now provided at a cost to the person desiring the extension. This means that if a new subdivision is to be supplied with water, it is not only the cost of the internal reticulation of the subdivision which must be met by the subdividers but also the cost of extending the water main for whatever distance is required. There is justification for this on a broad basis, provided the charge is shared equally by all parties benefiting from the water main.

Unfortunately this is not the case. If the water main is extended at the request of one property owner, not only the cost of the extension of the main itself, but also charges on properties which are calculated on a formula related to area, are determined for all the properties served by the main.

Under the present arrangements, the person seeking the extension of a main must guarantee and indeed pay to the commission the levies for both his own property and every other property which will be served by the main. In one instance, a person who extended the water main at his own expense paid levies in excess of $20,000 on behalf of other property owners who did not desire to share in the scheme.

Mr. TREWIN: Your Government is doing this. You should wring your napkin out.

Mr. McCLURE: It is unusual for the honorable member for Benalla to behave in this fashion. Earlier, I said that the subject would be of interest to all honorable members and involve all areas of the State, and now the honorable member for Benalla is showing some interest.

In the case to which I referred, although the other property owners did not pay their share of the levies,

they took water from the main. This is a grossly unjust situation and the Government should do something about it. It is incumbent on the Minister of Water Supply to introduce a measure soon to implement a scheme whereby everybody who ultimately benefits shall pay their proper share for the extension of a water main. It should not be too difficult an administrative problem. Surely, when an individual seeks to tap into a water main, the question should be asked whether the levies applicable to that property have been paid. If they have been, then only the tapping fee needs to be charged. If the levy has not been paid, then that property owner should have to pay the levy plus the tapping fee.

The honorable member for Benambra referred to the construction of the Dartmouth dam in his electorate. This water storage is undoubtedly one of the major engineering feats of the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission. I simply raise the matter again because I am pleased that a lot of the engineering work connected with the construction of valves and other equipment for the dam has been carried out by engineers at the Bendigo Ordnance Factory, which has undertaken a lot of work for the commission over the years and is indeed one of the finest engineering establishments in the State.

The allocation of funds for the Coliban system which supplies Bendigo has been increased by more than 40 per cent over the allocation made last year. This is an acknowledgement by the Government that Bendigo is growing and needs this injection of capital. What does disappoint me is that the excellent work of the Coliban Water Investigation Committee goes relatively unnoticed by the Water Commission. The committee conducts investigations primarily into irrigation supplies around Bendigo. Many of the points that have been put forward have had a great deal of merit but it seems almost impossible to get the message through to the engineers of the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission in Melbourne. A lot more heed should be paid to the recommendations of the committee and I urge the Government and the Minister of Water Supply to follow this course.

Mr. TREWIN (Benalla): Before I relate my remarks to this important Bill, I want to comment on certain references made by the honorable member for Bendigo. I suggest to him that, as a very junior member of this Parliament, he should wring his political napkin out before he seeks to make the sort of contribution to the debate that he has made tonight. The honorable member may refer to me as Grandpa, but I am proud to have been a member of this House for sixteen and a half years. I have seen many honorable members pass through this Chamber. For many years, I was a member of the Public Works Committee and I had the opportunity of making a contribution to some of the important projects which have been undertaken in this State and which have enabled this State to be known as the most progressive State in the Commonwealth.

This morning at 8 o'clock I was present at the opening of the Cardinia reservoir which is an important water storage for the City of Melbourne. I was proud to be a member of the Public Works Committee when it conducted investigations into this project. I was one of very few members of Parliament who were present at the official opening and indeed I think I was the only member of the committee who was present. I was a member of the committee when the first investigation was undertaken and I saw the area as virgin land. I was also present when the first sod was turned and I was proud this morning to witness the Premier turning on or off, I don't know which, the turncock which either allowed water to flow out of the reservoir or into it.

I have taken a great interest in the future of the State in relation to both the country and metropolitan areas.

The honorable member for Bendigo should take his political napkin off and wring it out to see whether, in the interests of the State, he can get any water out of it. The honorable member made a disparaging reference to the contribution made by my party to the development of the State. Members of my party have made a tremendous contribution to the development of facilities throughout the State.

Mr. McCLURE: And a diminishing one.

Mr. TREWIN: It is not a diminishing contribution. Some day, when this great metropolis needs further water, it will have to steal it from somewhere. The metropolitan area has already stolen water from Gippsland and the honorable member for Gippsland East sees his water supply diminishing to enable the great metropolis to survive, but I hope there is not going to be a fight for the northern waters. Thank goodness the former Premier of this State said that in no way would he allow the northern waters to come to Melbourne. It is of interest that this morning the Premier did not mention the pilfering of water from the northern areas for the metropolis. I gather that the honorable gentleman wants the development of the metropolis to slow down for a while so that the planners know where they are going with regard to water supplies, freeways, underground railways and all the other projects that are in the planning stage.

The SPEAKER (Sir Kenneth Wheeler): Order! This is not a bargaining point across the Chamber and I ask the honorable member for Benalla not to get carried away.

Mr. TREWIN: I do not want to get carried away with this because, at the moment, a serious dry season is developing. I remind honorable members that great storages, other than the Dartmouth dam, exist in the State. The storages in the Benalla electorate which are supplying water to the Goulburn Valley region include Lake Mokoan, Nillahcootie, Eildon and Lake Nagambie. If the present dry season continues over the next six months, the Treasury of the State will certainly be involved. The honorable member for Bendigo is a young man with, perhaps, a lot of ambition, but he has a lot to learn. The Water Supply Works and Services Bill must be dealt with on a State basis.

Mr. McCLURE: But not Melbourne!

Mr. TREWIN: No, but the contribution of the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works is interesting.

Mr. FORDHAM: The honorable member will be right if he makes it a country-wide basis.

Mr. CATHIE: What about a national basis?

Mr. TREWIN: No, it should be a State basis. Parliament should be proud of the ten-year programme to which Sir Henry Bolte, the former Premier, the Public Works Committee, Sir Ronald East and Mr. Horsfall, former chairmen of the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission and the present chairman, contributed and which developed the water storages of the State.

Water is a country's most precious commodity. It is useless building freeways, underground rail loops, and so on, if there is no water to drink, to boil in a kettle, with which to have a shower or rinse one's teeth. The most important commodity of life would be missing.

The honorable member for Prahran will understand this. Thirty or forty years ago when he bowled his overs in a Test match he was able to have a shower after the game. He is still able to do so because the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works and the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission carried out a water conservation programme to ensure that everyone in the State had sufficient water. The people in the metropolitan area have more

than a reasonable access to sufficient water. Some people in the country have a reasonable opportunity of enjoying every facility. Others are still fighting a hard battle to obtain an extensive water supply so that they can enjoy developing modern amenities.

One important point is the extension of water and sewerage areas into country towns. It is time that the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission laid down criteria to enable people who want an extension from a sewerage or water scheme into their properties to have it connected at a reasonable cost. I refer to Seymour, Alexandra and Benalla because these towns are in my electorate. I represent one of the largest and most progressive electorates in the State. Apparently, the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission and the Government have not taken sufficient interest in these subjects. If a person seeks an extension of the water trust scheme to a new subdivision or a house, he pays a capital charge. This is good, but no formula is laid down. In Seymour a person could be charged $1,200 for a house connection, as well as the connection from the main into the house. In Benalla, the cost could be $1,500 and in Alexandra it could be $800. There is no uniformity, and it is time that there was.

Legislation was passed through the House as a result of numbers and numbers count. Politics is a numbers game. If one has the numbers, logic is not important. As a result, residents in municipalities in a water trust or sewerage area have an impossible burden imposed on them for the connection of water or sewerage. They are requested by the local authorities to make a payment to the capital fund of the authority. In Benalla, there are about eight houses——

Mr. MCCLURE: That would be about all there are.

Mr. TREWIN: Benalla is a progressive city and it could leave Bendigo behind in many ways. The point is that several people wanted an extension to their properties for attachment to the sewerage authority. Two years earlier they had been told there was no hope of this and they could put in septic tanks. They put in septic tanks. Within two years of this, they received notices from a sewerage authority stating that it was prepared to extend sewerage to their area and that the cost would be $1,400, $1,500 or $1,600 a block. One of these persons was a widow and others were young married couples with families. They were simply told to reply to the notice within two or three months otherwise the sewerage would not be connected. These people are still waiting for the sewerage. They cannot have it because they are one-income families with children and it is impossible for them to save enough to pay for the connection to the sewerage scheme.

A Bill was passed through Parliament and I dare say that nine-tenths of the Government members would be unaware of what is contained. It provided the opportunity for the sewerage and water trusts to impose a head charge on anyone obtaining an extension or a connection to their sewerage or water schemes. This is an important matter in country towns.

Seymour was a forgotten town until I became the local member of Parliament. Previously it was on the tail end of the Midlands electorate or some other electorate, but now that I represent the area the people know that they have a local Assembly member to whom they can talk. Seymour is situated on the Goulburn River, and when it overflows it floods the town. The people of Seymour have been waiting for a progressive member of Parliament who can talk to representatives of water and sewerage trusts, local councils, even the local racing and golf clubs, as well as the Housing Commission and the Army, which employs hundreds of people in the area.

Many people there want the sewerage and water supply programmes to be extended, but they have been told they will have to pay a capital charge of $1,200 each, together with all additional costs. That is not good enough, and if the Victorian Government has any sympathy for country people, it should come to the party and reconsider this matter.

I challenge back-bench members of the Liberal Party who represent country areas to stand up and endorse what I have said. I am sure the honorable member for Bendigo would come to the rescue of many people in Bendigo and say, "Let us do something about this; let us obtain a larger allocation of funds through this Bill for water supply works and services." By interjection, the honorable member for Bendigo asks if that would mean the allocations for education or hospitals would have to be reduced. The allocation for education should not be reduced, and that for hospitals has already been drastically reduced. I recommend a reduction of funds for the underground rail loop or for the magnificent bridge that is now being constructed—the Government should take another three years to finish it. All the freeways that are being built around the metropolis will create traffic congestion. This morning on my way to the opening by the Premier of an important project at Cardinia, where I saw few other members of Parliament, I saw how the traffic is delayed between 8 a.m. and 9 a.m.

The National Party seeks more funds for country areas. On my little farm—it does not matter where it is—I have a water supply, but I had to pay to have it installed.

Mr. MUTTON: Is the water fluoridated?

Mr. TREWIN: It is not fluoridated, and I do not want it to be, and I do not think anybody would want to have a fluoridated water supply. I assure honorable members that the mountain water supply at present is quite good.

The State Rivers and Water Supply Commission has to spend a great deal of money to provide adequate water storages, not only for irrigation and urban areas, but also for the small towns consisting of about 50 houses. The people in these towns do not want a fluoridation scheme; they want a water supply, and they want to have filters at the entrance to their properties.

I shall refer to two or three of these small places, and the most important is Violet Town on the Hume Highway, in which every street is named after a flower. At present the Hume Freeway bypasses Violet Town, which was the first town in Victoria outside the metropolis to be surveyed. The people of this town are in desperate straits because they have a small catchment area, and the water is putrid because the Water Commission has refused to install filters.

Last night the honorable member for Benambra referred to the water storage at Porepunkah in the Bright area. That is a wonderful community, and I am proud that I represented the people of that area for fifteen years. I worked there, but the honorable Ivan Swinburne, who was a member in another place and has now retired, lived in the area and did a tremendous amount of work for that area. If it had not been for that work, Porepunkah would not have been eligible to receive a grant for water supply works.

I refer next to the Euroa waterworks. The Public Works Committee investigated the need for a waterworks or storage in the town, with an irrigation district below. However, the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission considered that the catchment area was not sufficient to suppy adequate irrigation water, so the scheme was shelved.

The local waterworks trusts had depended on the Water Commission to determine whether the storage

would be built at Seven Creek. However, after about three years it was decided not to proceed with the project. By then the local waterworks trust had fallen into a state of flux.

The local water trust further considered the provision of a water storage, and the decision was that it would press for another storage to be known as the Mountain Hut. It is a fact of life that about that time an election occurred and the Minister of Water Supply became a candidate for that area. Whether that was the reason or not, the decision was made that the water storage would be built.

Without casting any reflection on the Minister of Water Supply, I point out that it is unfortunate that when construction started on the scheme, it was found that there was no foundation on which to build the embankment. Once again the water trust finds itself in a state of flux.

Mr. BURGIN: Who were the consulting engineers?

Mr. TREWIN: The State Rivers and Water Supply Commission had to authorize the project and should have completed all the necessary research.

Mr. BURGIN: On the advice of the consulting engineers?

Mr. TREWIN: Yes. The trust depended upon the consulting engineers and the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission to confirm the research that had been carried out. However, before the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission could confirm it, the decision had been made at a political level. I am prepared to state that in this Chamber or in Euroa, and it can be printed anywhere.

I have the greatest respect for the Minister of Water Supply, but he was taken up to the area and he was involved in the decision, although not personally. The point that has arisen is that after the contract had been let for the construction of the water storage it was discovered that it was impossible to proceed as there was no foundation on which to build the wall. Although the appropriate authorities should have been aware that it would be difficult to find a proper foundation in this area, the trust is now faced with the prospect of obtaining an extra $40,000, $140,000 or $400,000 to construct the storage. The Government has to come to the party.

Mr. McCLURE: In which electorate is Euroa situated?

Mr. TREWIN: It is in the electorate that I represent.

Mr. McCLURE: Then it is political.

Mr. TREWIN: Yes, and I will tell the honorable member for Bendigo why it is political. In the redistribution of boundaries, the boundaries for the Legislative Council province were changed.

Mr. McCLURE: Didn't you want it?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. McLaren): Order! The honorable member will address the Chair and ignore interjections. The honorable member has two minutes remaining in which to complete his speech.

Mr. TREWIN: This is a very important feature, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because no doubt the boundaries of the electorate that you represent were changed prior to the last election, as were mine, but more importantly the boundaries of the provinces were changed—some were changed for more than the ordinary reasons—and in this case instead of the area going into the North Eastern Province, it went into the Bendigo Province.

Mr. McCLURE: Central Highlands Province.

Mr. TREWIN: I do not care what you call it.

Mr. McCLURE: It was a political decision to help the local member.

Mr. TREWIN: I am interested to hear that statement, because it was not to help me as I did not need any help. The point is that it might have

been a decision to help the candidate for the Bendigo Province. However, I have the greatest respect for that member representing the province and I do not think he needed any assistance, and I can assure the honorable member for Bendigo that I did not need any assistance. The point is that the decision has been made and the outcome is that Euroa is in a difficult position——

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. McLaren): Order! The time of the honorable member has expired.

Mr. RAMSAY (Balwyn): The Water Supply Works and Services Bill usually attracts some spirited debate from members of the National Party and members of the Government representing rural areas and it is not often that the representative of a metropolitan electorate makes a contribution.

I congratulate the honorable member for Benalla on his spirited contribution to the House tonight and I express the hope that he will be spared many years to continue drinking the excellent water that is available in Victoria and trust that he is always drinking it with the right spirit.

It is understandable why country members make a contribution to this debate, especially if one looks at the opening remarks of the explanatory memorandum which states—

> This Bill is to give Parliamentary authority for the expenditure of $70 million for carrying out works of country water supply, drainage, sewerage, flood protection and river improvement as set out in the tables to the clauses of the Bill.

Included in the Bill is the sum of $2·6 million specifically allocated to the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works. When honorable members examine the Bill they should recognize that it is concerned not only with rural water supplies but also with the supply of water to the whole State.

Today is a special day for the water supply needs of Melbourne. As the honorable member for Benalla mentioned, only this morning the new Cardinia reservoir, servicing the metropolitan area, was commissioned by the Premier in a most impressive ceremony. The cost of the Cardinia reservoir is $34 million, which has been spent over a period of almost ten years since the Public Works Committee of this Parliament examined Melbourne's water supply problems and advanced the proposals for the construction of the reservoir.

Today it was commissioned in a most unusual way. One would expect that the presiding dignitary would turn on a tap, but on this occasion the tap was turned off. The reason is that the Cardinia reservoir has a very small natural catchment area, being located close to Melbourne, and the water from the surrounding area is not suitable for human consumption. The reservoir draws its supplies by pipeline from the Silvan dam located in the Dandenong Ranges, which itself is a service reservoir that draws its supplies from the O'Shannassy reservoir and the Upper Yarra and Thomson rivers. The ceremonial action this morning was turning off the tap because the Cardinia reservoir is now full.

To Melbourne this is a most significant development because the reservoir has a capacity of 287,000 megalitres, which almost doubled the water reserves available for the metropolitan area. We have at Cardinia creek a reservoir that is larger than any other water storage in the Melbourne metropolitan system. It covers an area of 12 square kilometres, which in terms of my electoral position means that we have a reservoir larger than the electorate of Balwyn.

As the area is so close to Melbourne it poses to the Board of Works the problem of how to maintain the purity of the storage. Part of the engineering works has been concerned with the divergence into a neighbouring lake of streams that would naturally have flowed into the area. This lake is known as Aquavale. The water then flows down

other courses eventually to reach Port Phillip Bay. This reservoir has created a beautiful area that is close to the metropolitan area and is available for the people of Melbourne to enjoy for recreation purposes.

The important fact is that this reservoir has almost drought-proofed Melbourne. I have always doubted the wisdom of speaking of drought-proofing in a continent as dry as Australia because it will never be possible to have enough water. There will always be extreme conditions when water supplies will be in jeopardy because of the very climate of Australia and the possibility of extensive dry spells. Although Melbourne's water supply has virtually been doubled through this project, the need still remains for users of water to exercise all the care they possibly can not to waste water.

I am proud to be part of the Government that has been responsible for such a magnificent reservoir being added to the total of Melbourne's water storages. It was designed by the Snowy Mountains Engineering Corporation and built by two firms, Fluor Australia Pty. Ltd., and Brown and Roots Australia Pty. Ltd. Honorable members who were present at the ceremony this morning will recognize that those firms deserve a vote of congratulations from this Parliament. I hope that other honorable members who, owing to their Parliamentary business, were not able to be present this morning, will take the opportunity of going out and looking at the reservoir for themselves.

Mr. CATHIE (Carrum): Although the honorable member for Balwyn has rightly drawn attention to the progress that is being made in supplying sufficient water to the growing metropolis of Melbourne, he has not pointed out the need to retain a first-rate quality of water. In this area the Government is failing woefully. In order to realize this one has only to turn to the 27th annual report of the Soil Conservation Authority, which draws attention to the inadequacies of staffing and funding allocated to the authority to ensure that water of first-rate quality is maintained in the catchment areas of Victoria. I quote from the report—

> The situation has been reached, however, where the authority is finding it increasingly difficult to provide the necessary supervision to implement its land use determinations and conditions. With multiple land use and increasing intensity of use in water supply catchments, effective implementation of land use controls is essential to ensure the future sustained use of water of acceptable quality.

Melbourne's water supply is being threatened by the lack of staffing of and funding to the Soil Conservation Authority. The authority cannot even keep up with the recommendations of the Land Conservation Council that all water supply catchments in the State be investigated with a view to proclamation. In the past two financial years, 1976–77 and 1977–78, the Soil Conservation Authority has requested an additional sixteen officers in its catchment section to undertake that task. This information was provided in answer to a question on notice last week. Not one additional member of staff was approved by this Government for each of those years.

The Government is being complacent and negligent about the quality of water in Victoria's catchments. Honorable members are aware that Victorians are becoming more mobile, that urban development is intruding into catchment areas and that road-making is continuing. Because of those types of activities, it is vital that the Soil Conservation Authority should have the staff to maintain existing water quality control.

Mr. PLOWMAN: To which catchments is the honorable member referring?

Mr. CATHIE: Because I represent an electorate in the metropolitan area, I am referring to catchments

within the responsibility of the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works. Only 54 catchment areas in Victoria have been proclaimed, and a further 80 have yet to be investigated.

As water quality is affected by the increasing pressures of urban development and population in and around catchments, the need becomes apparent to use some sort of chemical to maintain the quality.

Mr. MUTTON: Four different types of chemical.

Mr. CATHIE: That is correct. The Board of Works should carry out an investigation into the quality of water in catchments within its responsibility because the Environment Protection Authority in the United States of America has produced data to demonstrate a possible connection between chlorinated water and the incidence of stomach cancer. Yet, when I asked a question on notice, whether the Board of Works was prepared to undertake an extensive monitoring programme to study this possible link with cancer, the Minister of Water Supply shrugged his shoulders and said that the board was not the appropriate body to do the job, and that the Department of Health or some other authority should investigate the matter.

The other matter to which I refer is the increased allocation, which is extremely welcome, to the Dandenong Valley Authority. It is particularly welcome to the large number of people who live within the catchment area of that authority. Although $270,000 of a grant of $750,000 is being provided in this Bill to undertake a programme of improvements to the condition and carrying capacity of the Mordialloc Creek, many people were disappointed at the attitude of the authority in refusing for some time to undertake an environmental impact study into those works. After many complaints were received from conservationists in the area, the Minister for Conservation decided to direct the authority to undertake an environmental impact study into the nature of the works so that they will provide the best permanent value to the people of the area.

The third matter to which I refer is the special grant of $50,000 that is being provided under this Bill to new works to be commenced on the preservation of a buffer area around the Edithvale wetlands. That is being undertaken in conjunction with the Fisheries and Wildlife Division of the Ministry for Conservation. However, it seems a strange action that on the one hand the Ministry for Conservation is making available $50,000 to assist the preservation of a buffer area around the Edithvale wetlands and on the other hand the Government has decided to deny adequate funding for the purpose of providing a proper buffer zone there.

In April, 1975, the report of the committee considering conservation and management proposals for the Edithvale–Carrum–Seaford wetlands areas was presented. That committee represented many organizations connected with wildlife management and conservation. Those organizations were the Bird Observers Club, the Royal Australian Ornithologists Union, the Australian Conservation Foundation, the Conservation Council for Victoria, the Victorian Field and Game Association, the Port Phillip Conservation Council, the City of Chelsea, South Ward, Residents and Ratepayers Association, the City of Springvale, the Society for Growing Australian Plants, the Frankston Environmental, Social and Conservation Organization, Chelsea Heights Progress Association and the Frankston City Council.

I have indicated the calibre and interests of the people who came together to produce the report. They were serious people and experts in their own field. At page 9 the report states—

> A distance of 300 metres from the normal winter flood level shoreline is considered the minimum required to provide such protective buffering unless some other feature such as a bank or a water course, forms a natural but closer boundary.

A distance of 300 metres from the normal winter flood level was the recommendation of the experts. It was the unanimous view of those bodies.

Mr. B. J. EVANS: From what did they make the paper on which they printed the report? They would have had to chop down trees to provide the paper on which to make the report.

Mr. CATHIE: Everyone is aware that the honorable member for Gippsland East wants to establish a wood chip industry, probably at Orbost, but that is irrelevant to this debate. Port Phillip Bay and its adjacent swamplands are two of the most important areas for waders in Australia, particularly for migrant birds from the northern hemisphere. The Seaford–Carrum–Edithvale wetlands are part of that total system and it is probably the waders that would feel the squeeze most if those swamps ceased to exist, yet it is apparently the view of the Honorable N. F. Stacey, who represents the Chelsea Province in another place, that these wetlands would be better used to provide housing. In the *Frankston Standard* of 7th September, 1977, Mr. Stacey said that the money needed to set up a buffer zone for the Edithvale swamplands would be better spent on housing. He said that, despite the incredibly poor record of this Government in providing housing.

I have already indicated that the swamps are part of a natural ecological system which is of unique value to the birdlife in and around Port Phillip Bay, but the area is far more important than that. It has an international reputation as well. Indeed conservationists are calling on the Japanese Government to help in their fight to maintain the Edithvale wetlands because the swamp is the habitat of many Japanese migratory birds. Australia is a party, with Japan, to a treaty for the protection of this wildlife.

I should have thought that by now the Government would have accepted the importance of the area and the need to preserve it, yet it is making available only $50,000 to assist in maintaining some sort of buffer zone around these wetlands. That shows that the Government is back-tracking on its promises. A letter dated 9th May, 1973—which was, of course, just prior to a State election—states—

> As a result of the co-operative management project, the usefulness of the areas for flood storage purposes will be retained and the swamps will be preserved as a haven for aquatic birds.
>
> The joint management project provides a unique opportunity to retain the last remaining areas of wildlife habitat within the south-eastern section of the metropolis. This indicates the importance placed by the Government on the conservation of our natural resources.

Who wrote that letter? No one but the Premier of Victoria, and the honorable gentleman admitted the unique value that these wetlands have for the people of the State and said that it is the Government's aim to protect this valuable asset. Despite that, this asset is now under threat—as so often happens with this Government—from developers who want to make money by committing a large area of the wetlands to the building of housing.

In a letter to the Chelsea City Council, which is on the notice paper of the council, the Dandenong Valley Authority made the following recommendation—

> That the Premier be reminded of his promise in 1972 to provide funds for the management of the wetlands as a wildlife habitat and that these funds be requested.

As the local member, I certainly requested those funds but I did not get very far. I received a letter from the Minister for Conservation in which he said that he appreciated the concern shown about the viability of the Edithvale swamp, but that he was convinced that the expenditure of $900,000 on the purchase of the proposed buffer area would not be the wisest use of funds on behalf of conservation needs of the State generally. The Minister went on to say—

In fact, with or without the buffer area, it will be difficult to maintain the existing wildlife values within such a developing urban environment. In these circumstances, one of the greatest disabilities is the presence of unattended domestic animals and increasing the buffer area is not likely to solve that problem.

In other words, the only thing in the mind of the Minister for Conservation is the need to service the developers and those people who will make individual profits from developments in the area. Never mind about the interests of conservation!

I felt that if that was the view of the Minister for Conservation, at least the Premier, because of his commitment in the letter I read earlier, would be prepared to say, "Yes, I will honour the commitment I made on behalf of the Government to preserve this unique area", but in a letter dated 15th September, 1977, all the Premier said was—

I understand that my colleague the Minister for Conservation has replied to the similar letter you sent to him, and I agree with the views expressed.

How did the Government arrive at the sum of $50,000? Is it going to provide the $900,000 that is required?

Mr. BORTHWICK: That amount was never committed. It would be a scandalous waste of money.

Mr. CATHIE: I should have thought that honorable members would have listened carefully to the documentation I have produced and the recommendations made by the Dandenong Valley Authority and the Wetlands Management Investigations Committee. I do not know how the figure of $50,000 was arrived at, and when I asked I received the following reply—

No formal valuations have been made but an estimate of the cost of purchase of the lands was made by the Chief Engineer/Manager, Dandenong Valley Authority after consultation with municipal council valuers. This estimate was based on figures of $30,000/ha for privately owned land and $12,500/ha for privately owned flood prone land.

So, they arrived at an estimate. When I asked what valuation was made by the Valuer-General's Office, I was told, "None".

The land is currently zoned for rural use but it is within a proposed Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works corridor and it is claimed that that would have an effect on the valuation. Both the Labor Party and I have always supported the view that the Government ought to be purchasing land, whether for conservation purposes or for later urban development. The State ought to be purchasing land at rural prices, and the increment that comes as a result of rezoning should go not into the pockets of the developers but to the whole community.

The SPEAKER (Sir Kenneth Wheeler): Order! This is a Bill on water supply works and services.

Mr. CATHIE: I am referring to the specific item in the Bill dealing with the Edithvale wetlands, a project being undertaken in conjunction with the Fisheries and Wildlife Division.

The SPEAKER: I follow that, but the honorable member is now talking about planning and development.

Mr. CATHIE: Approximately two-thirds of the land that is referred to as being for urban development is below R.L. 7·0 feet and is declared flood prone by the Dandenong Valley Authority. If that land which could be subject to flooding in the future is developed, that would only impose on the State and the community the additional extra cost of providing flood prevention works, either now or at some future date.

I understand that the City of Springvale has made representations for the land zoned "corridor" to be used for residential purposes following approaches from landowners. It would be a great loss to this State if the Government gave in to this pressure. I repeat my request that

the sum of $900,000—I believe it would be less than that—be provided by the Government for the commitment it made in 1972–73, particularly the commitment I read from the Premier, to preserve this unique area. As I indicated earlier, it is connected with international agreements and, in my municipality of Chelsea, there is a need for a proper green belt. This will be the only possibility of preserving a worthwhile green belt in the future.

Although there are matters for which we can praise the Government, particularly for the additional commitment of funds to the Dandenong Valley Authority, and the successful commitment to the Cardinia dam scheme, in other areas of maintaining a good water quality, and conservation in the Edithvale–Carrum–Seaford wetlands areas, the Government has failed significantly.

Mr. WHITING (Mildura): I join this debate for several reasons, one of them being that the honorable member for Carrum put his finger on one of the problems which confronts not only the Government but the people of Victoria. Honorable members hear much about the decentralization policies of the Government, yet the honorable member for Carrum referred to the growing metropolis of Melbourne. While Melbourne continues to grow, there will be problems with freeways and water supplies. The Government should provide financial incentives for people to live at Ballarat and other centres throughout the State, but the Government gives only lip service to decentralization. If it was sincere, the Government would not be confronted with so many of these problems.

The honorable member for Bendigo referred to the fact that all members of the National Party have commented on the lack of funds for water supply, particularly in the country areas. The honorable member asked where this money would come from. The whole State is shocked by the land deals inquiry. The people are also aware that repairs to the damaged section of the Hume Freeway cost $1 million. This has been caused by maladministration. The profit of $2·4 million made on one of the land deals, plus the $1 million spent in repairing the freeway should have gone into water supply works. The community is amazed at the lack of integrity of this Government. It is causing grave concern. Members of the National Party are sad that this is happening before our eyes.

Several items in the Bill concern my electorate; some relate to the whole of the State, in fact the nation. I refer to the River Murray works. One item deals with the Millewa pipeline scheme. The Minister for Conservation was the instigator of that scheme in Victoria. It is almost completed, and $50,000 is made available under the Bill to cover the final stages of the project. This is only a forerunner of what is needed in several parts of the State, particularly in the Wimmera-Mallee area where there is a significant loss of water in the stock and domestic water supply system due to evaporation. The Millewa pipeline proves that a fairly large scheme of piping of the water supply provides a better service to ratepayers and consumers. There should be planning for small projects for a start, whereby the stock and domestic needs of areas can be supplied through a pipeline system.

Mr. BURGIN: We should stop the subsidizing of irrigators.

Mr. WHITING: Victoria would be much worse off if the subsidies paid to irrigators who provide food and other commodities were abolished, particularly with a drought year approaching. The honorable member for Polwarth does not know what he is talking about. He has been carried away by the fact that subsidies do not benefit everyone. That can be proven in many instances. He should do a bit more homework before he interjects as he did.

The growth of the metropolis was highlighted by the Treasurer in his

Budget speech on page 38 under the heading "Water Resources" where he stated that of the amount of $46·7 million proposed to be expended on water supply works and services during the financial year, an allocation of $2·9 million has been approved for the Lake Merrimu project. The honorable gentleman said that the completion of this project will contribute towards the augmentation of supplies to the growth centre at Melton—that will be a dormitory suburb for Melbourne. The Treasurer went on to say—

> The allocation for the Mornington Peninsula system has been increased by 36 per cent to $7·3 million to keep pace with the continuing development and demands in that area.

That again will be another dormitory suburb for Melbourne. Although the Premier gives lip service to decentralization, he is adding to the Melbourne metropolitan area. The majority of people do not want to live in the city; they want to opt out of the rat race. If housing and additional incentives were provided, the trend would be the other way. The Government claimed that there was a trend towards decentralization and that people were going into the country areas. However, this position is not static at any time.

I refer to the finance that is to be made available to many waterworks trusts throughout the State. No one would disagree that these trusts do a lot of work in providing facilities for residents. There are two omissions. The Merbein and Red Cliffs townships, which are adjacent to Mildura, have extremely poor water supplies which are provided by the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission pumping water directly from the River Murray and reticulating it. A move has been made by the Mildura Urban Water Trust to provide a filtered water supply to the township of Merbein. In fact, the Government and the Minister have given the green light for the establishment of that system but no money has been allocated for that purpose in this Bill.

If this service is provided for Merbein, Red Cliffs, which is approximately the same distance from Mildura, will also be looking for a filtration plant and the Mildura Urban Water Trust will require funds to provide further filtered water for those areas. The allocation for the First Mildura Irrigation Trust is also a fairly static amount each year. Because of the problems that have been experienced in the area recently and because of the pipeline needed in that district to dispense with the open channel system, the funds available could have been augmented by special grants from Treasury to cover some of the unemployment that has been caused as a result of the hailstorm damage recently. This should certainly be done in the near future.

I hope the Minister of Water Supply will also give serious consideration to the remission of water rates for the Red Cliffs irrigation district because growers in the area, who have been water users for over 50 years, will not have an income for the next twelve months. They will still require almost a normal water supply to produce a crop for the 1979 season and will be in serious difficulties in paying water rates for the 1978 year. I trust that the Minister of Water Supply will consider that point.

The honorable member for Ballarat South mentioned the allocation of $200,000 for the waste water treatment study. This is a small amount when one considers that there could be more reuse of water throughout Victoria. We have had an adequate water supply to meet our requirements until now, but from now on there will be a greater restriction on the availability of water for many purposes, and we must educate ourselves to reuse water in many areas. The honorable member for Gippsland East referred to the reuse of sewerage water at Lakes Entrance. I hope that can be done because once we start to reuse water we will be

well on the way to making the best use of the limited water supply we have in Australia.

I wish to comment on the River Murray works allocation of $10 million. As has been pointed out, $8 million of that will be used as Victoria's contribution towards the construction of Dartmouth dam. I am sure that all honorable members will agree that it is a worth-while project. Planning should already have begun for a further storage area in the headworks of the Murray–Goulburn system. In times of high rainfall we are allowing far too much water to run down the river system to the sea instead of storing it for the inevitable dry periods. The money spent on the Dartmouth dam will not be wasted, so I wholeheartedly support the allocation for that project.

The River Murray and the salinity problem have been given an airing in this debate. In the Mildura *Sunraysia Daily* newspaper, in a section headed "Weather Details", one regularly finds the weather forecast, the temperatures for the previous day, the expected maximum temperature and river heights, which cover the area from Swan Hill to Wentworth. Also included are salinity readings at the stations from Swan Hill to Cowanna Bend. It is interesting to read the increases in salinity levels which have occurred from 1st October to 25th October this year. It so happens that the reading in the electrical conductivity units at the Mildura weir on 1st October was 496 units and at the Merbein pumping station 547 units. On 11th October the figure for the Mildura weir was 451 units, and for Merbein pumping station, 590 units. By 25th October the reading at the Mildura weir was 621 units and the Merbein pumping station 748 units. There was a rapid increase in the salinity level between those two points. It is interesting to note also that the salinity level at Swan Hill is increasing by a somewhat similar margin.

The safe level, if that term can be used, for irrigating citrus trees and vines in about 450 units. It is also interesting that an advertisement on 7th October, 1977, for the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission Merbein irrigation district indicated that special irrigation would commence on Monday, 10th October. The statement was made that—

> It is estimated that salinity during the irrigation will be 500 E.C.

That indicates the seriousness of the situation when the Water Commission engineers obviously think they must indicate the level of salinity to warn growers who have to use that water for their horticultural properties. Although they know very well what the dangers are, they must also take a calculated risk because if they left their irrigation for a further period the salinity level may be higher. This is a difficult situation.

I ask the Minister of Water Supply to further examine this problem and urge the Government to provide some of the $600,000 required to provide what are known as tube wells for the area between the Mildura weir and the Merbein pumping station. These tube wells are designed to cut off the inflow of saline water from the underground system. This was recommended recently in an interim report by the Public Works Committee and a request has been made to the Federal Government for funds for this purpose. A meeting was held recently between the Deputy Prime Minister and the State Ministers of Water Supply to try to arrive at a solution to part of this problem.

At that meeting, I understand that an offer of $500,000 was made to Victoria by the Federal Government for this purpose. However, the money was never provided because the New South Wales Minister of Water Supply put in a claim for $1 million for another project, which that State considered to be more urgent. Accordingly, the meeting finished without any decision being

made. This is an unfortunate situation and I trust that the matter can be resolved in the near future by mutual consent between the Commonwealth and the three State Governments concerned.

The salinity problem affects the Sunraysia area in particular in the application of saline water to horticultural properties, but the problem continues into South Australia where water from the River Murray is used to supply Adelaide, centres as far afield as Whyalla on the west coast of St. Vincents Gulf, and centres in the northern part of South Australia.

Although the Bill provides more funds than were allocated last year for water supply works and services, still not enough is being done to eliminate or even alleviate some of the problems to which I have referred. I hope the Minister for Conservation and the Minister of Water Supply will heed some of the comments that have been made during the debate and will endeavour to provide a more equitable amount of money for water supplies to country towns and districts that are not being provided for at present.

I understand that the Murray Valley Development League, which comprises representatives from most of the municipalities bordering the River Murray in Victoria, New South Wales and South Australia, has been endeavouring to co-ordinate or get over the present lack of discussion. The league has not met with a great deal of success, but it is incumbent upon every honorable member to endeavour to get further discussions going between the three States concerned and the Commonwealth Government. If that happens, we will move along the road towards solving some of the problems. If it does not, the problem will become even greater and in the long run will cost a great deal more to remedy.

Mr. AUSTIN (Ripon): I wish to make some brief comments on this Bill that gives Parliamentary authority for the expenditure of $70 million for carrying out works relating to country water supply, drainage, sewerage, flood protection and river improvement. The proposed expenditure for 1977–78 is $47·75 million for these purposes. This might sound a great deal of money, but, in this day of inflation and high costs, it does not go very far. If the Government is forced at any time to cut back on public expenditure, I plead with the Treasurer and the Government that at least water supplies for country towns will be the last area to be cut back.

Australia is an extremely dry continent and water supply problems have been experienced all over Australia ever since the white man first settled here. Even Victoria, which is in the higher rainfall area of the continent, experiences problems and the seasons fluctuate to such an extent that the State never has sufficient water under extreme drought conditions. Unfortunately, the State now faces a drought situation in the next few months which could extend into the future.

It seems extraordinary that during September and October, at the end of the winter months and the wet season, the township of Bealiba is suffering from a complete shortage of water and, following action by the Minister of Water Supply and a visit by that Minister to the town, arrangements have been made to transport water by train from Maryborough. This is quite a remarkable thing in this day and age.

Many years ago, Sir Henry Bolte said that he considered water supply to be so important that every town in Victoria with twenty or more houses should be connected as soon as possible to a reticulated water supply system. Over many years, that situation has been arrived at, although still a few towns with more than twenty houses have not been connected. In some cases, the town is in a remote area where the expenditure involved would probably be out of proportion to the service provided.

Whilst on this theme, I particularly refer to the town of Streatham which was devastated by fire on 12th February this year and is now in the process of rebuilding. As a result, buildings such as the school and new shops, plus the various sporting and other facilities in the town, will be somewhat better than is normal for a town of this size. The one missing ingredient is an adequate water supply. When a proposal is put to the Minister of Water Supply, I ask him to consider closely the needs of Streatham and hopefully it will be possible to provide a reticulated water scheme to run through Westmere to Streatham. If people are going to be encouraged to live in the town and rebuild it, then a proper water supply is sorely needed.

Under clauses 6 to 9, $4·4 million is being made available to 92 locally controlled centres for new town water supplies. As the honorable member for Ripon, I am pleased that one of those towns is the small township of Wickliffe. For many years, the town has relied on a very inadequate water supply and a house tank system. For a town of this size to suddenly find itself connected to a first-class reticulated system is something that the local people will be proud of in the future. The Minister of Water Supply will open the scheme on 11th November next.

I should also mention that of the only two centres where work has commenced on a water treatment plant, one is the most important centre of Maryborough. When, under electoral redistribution, I represented the Maryborough area and moved into a flat in that city, I was appalled at the poor quality of the water supply. I am pleased that, under a three-stage system, a water treatment works is being installed and it is expected to be completed in about eighteen months. The first stage, which cost $196,000, will provide a clear water storage tank, and 75 per cent of this work has already been completed. The original estimate for that work two years ago was $500,000. No doubt it will cost more than that. That gives some idea of the extreme pressures that these works put on the Treasury.

An amount of $2·539 million is to be spent in 1977–78 on sewerage works. One of the projects is at Halls Gap, which is on the extreme western edge of the Ripon electorate. This very important centre nestles at the foot of the Grampians and, over recent years, it has developed enormously as a tourist resort. It has real advantages over most of the historic and traditional tourist resorts of the State. It does not rely only on the summer climate as do beach resorts, or on the winter months as do snow resorts. It has something to offer the tourist all the year around, with golf courses, wild life, wildflowers, camping, motels and other facilities. It is situated between Adelaide and Melbourne and consequently gets a great deal of through tourist traffic. It is important that Halls Gap should be a recipient of new sewerage works.

This Bill covers various other schemes that I will be pleased to report back to my electorate. Allocations of money are made to Ararat, St. Arnaud and Stawell and all these projects are designed to improve the general area of water storage and emphasize the fact that the Government places a high priority on water supply in the State. I hope it will continue to do so.

Mr. GUDE (Geelong East): One cannot help but be impressed by the enormity of the task facing the Government in meeting the needs of the community throughout the State —this applies throughout Australia— in such important and essential areas as water supply resources and sewerage and associated services. At a time when the Commonwealth Government has elected to cut back its national sewerage programme, it is commendable that the Government of Victoria has seen fit to make increases in this field. It is most commendable that at a time when unemployment is

of concern to all honorable members, the Government is endeavouring to retain the services of those persons who are employed in implementing sewerage programmes throughout the State and is seeking to employ additional people.

Speaking in a parochial sense, I am deeply concerned about the water reticulation situation, particularly in the Bellarine Peninsula. One cannot help comparing Bellarine Peninsula with the Mornington Peninsula. Some millions of dollars have been spent in the Mornington area compared with lesser amounts in the Bellarine Peninsula. Both areas are flourishing, growing rapidly and straining at the bit to provide the essential basic services that are needed by developing communities. The level of funding for Bellarine is continuing at the same rate as last year. The funding of water supply services in the previous year was $110,000 more than the three previous years combined.

Therefore, I suppose from a parochial point of view we should be satisfied, but this is impossible when an extra $7 million is being spent in the Mornington Peninsula to the detriment of the Bellarine Peninsula. A further allocation is needed to enable the Geelong Waterworks and Sewerage Trust to complete the pipeline from Pettaville basin to Marshall Town Road. That allocation will provide essential and on-going services for the Bellarine Peninsula. It will also assist the augmentation of the Torquay water supply.

Another matter of importance to the people whom I represent is that the first of the fluoridation plants is at Geelong and construction is about to commence. Governments will have to give attention to the disposal of effluent into community waters and ocean beaches. One wonders whether sewerage authorities should be totally responsible for the provision of funds to treat sewerage and effluent in those areas, or whether special funding should be provided by Governments. It is a vexed problem and certainly Governments throughout Australia, including the Victorian Government, will have to examine it.

I am pleased that there has been a significant allocation of funds for the construction of the Dartmouth dam. Recently honorable members from all sides of the House visited the area and could not have been other than impressed with the magnificent works that are being carried out for the betterment of the people of the State. In view of the recent power stoppage, the State must be concerned about not only the provision of water supplies but also the need to maintain the service of power to the community. These important works will achieve both those objects. They will provide water reticulation and service to the north and central areas of the State and augment the power supplies of Victoria. For those reasons, if not others, I am pleased to support the Bill.

Mr. BORTHWICK (Minister for Conservation): Many interesting and thoughtful contributions have been made to the debate. However, listening as a former Minister of Water Supply, one would at times have gained the impression that perhaps the Government should apologize for its performance in this field. Nothing could be further from the truth. An examination of the history of the development of water supply and related services, including town water supply, country sewerage authorities and the construction of dams during the life of the Government since 1955, reveals that the Government of Victoria has a record unsurpassed by any other State in Australia.

I may have missed a few, but from memory I have listed some of the storages that are dotted all over the State and which have been designed, financed and built during the term of this Government to assist country areas. They are Lake Bellfield in the Grampians, Nillahcootie out from Mansfield, Lake Eppalock, which is near Bendigo, Lake Merrimu at Bacchus Marsh, the first stage of

which has been completed and the second stage authorized, Tarago in Gippsland; Winton Swamp, which we now call Lake Mokoan—I remember standing on that site before it was developed—piping of the Millewa system, Devil Bend, in the Mornington Peninsula, the King River dam and the Buffalo dam in the north-east, Bungal dam and Dartmouth dam, now under construction which is the second largest in the history of the State. One would have thought from the remarks of members from the corner benches in particular, that the Government's record was poor whereas, of course, it is outstanding.

I shall talk about finance for a moment, because the honorable members chose to ignore the facts. The Bill authorizes expenditure of $47·75 million. Honorable members who gripe and groan about the situation in the country have not read the explanatory notes on the Bill. Ten years ago the total private borrowings of town water trusts in Victoria amounted to $68,000. This year the expected amount of private borrowings is $7·2 million, and the interest rate for every dollar is subsidized so that they will pay only 3 per cent. The subsidy paid on interest last year in country towns was $1·394 million.

Since 1943 sewerage authorities in country towns have had their interest payments subsidized in this way. The private borrowing authorization this year is $21·8 million—this is not part of the $47 million—and in reality the authorization this year for country water supply and sewerage works is $76·75 million. The amount in excess of $47·75 million is subsidized to a 3 per cent interest charge. Of the total of $29,010,420 that the Government has paid out in interest subsidies for country sewerage works since 1943, $28,810,420 has been paid out since 1955. That is more than twenty-eight-twenty-ninths of the total. The Government since 1955 has provided 208 country towns with a water supply, and water supply systems are at present under construction in eleven more towns.

Since 1955 sewerage has been provided for 73 country towns, and sewerage works are being undertaken in 13 more towns. The former Premier, Sir Henry Bolte, made it his boast, and the practice has continued since then, that he would alter and review formulas to make sure that a town would receive a water supply. While I was Minister of Water Supply the formula was altered twice so that water supply could be connected to a further group of towns. The Victorian Government is the only Government in history that has made a purposeful attack on the problem of providing country people with basic facilities, and it is proud of that. The figures showing the finance provided and the numbers of towns that have benefitted demonstrate the truth of that statement. One cannot listen to honorable members in the corner bleating about these subjects without becoming a little riled.

The honorable member for Carrum tried to infer that in some way the Government had committed itself to spending $950,000 for the purchase of additional land for the Edithvale wetlands. I make no apology, in the interests of conservation, for making the decision not to recommend the purchase of that area. The honorable member for Carrum did not read the part of the letter in which I said that because of the order of priorities for expenditure, I could not make that recommendation, and I make no apology for that. Many people in Victoria may suggest that the Government has spent too much money on buying land for conservation purposes. This is the only Government in the history of Victoria that has ever spent a great deal of money in this field, and the Victorian Government compares favourably with those of the Labor governed States or any other State the honorable member may like to mention.

Mr. CATHIE: The Government is bowing to the developers.

Mr. BORTHWICK: It is not a question of bowing to the developers; the honorable member for Carrum is

noted for putting forward the views of any minor extremist group that comes to notice. At no stage has the Government ever undertaken to pay $950,000 for the purchase of land in that area of the electorate represented by the honorable member for Carrum.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was read a second time and committed.

Clauses 1 to 3 were agreed to.

Clause 4 (State works).

Mr. WILTON (Broadmeadows): My research shows that the wording of clause 4 has been used in a succession of water supply loan allocations going back over many years and, more recently, in Water Supply Works and Services Bills. However, just because the clause has been used for a long time does not necessarily mean that it should remain there for ever and a day.

The first part of the clause provides that the sums expended under the tables will become a liability on the State Account. However, subclause (3) states—

> Notwithstanding anything in sub-section (2) the Governor in Council on the recommendation of the Minister of Water Supply may from time to time by Order adjust any expenditure made under sub-section (1) by transferring from the State to any district or authority . . .

That means that when Parliament passes this legislation each year, although the first part of the clause states that sums specified in the accompanying table will be a charge on the State Account, the charge can be transferred to the local authority without being referred back to Parliament.

It is possible that this could be done at some time on the advice of the Minister. The advice to the Governor in Council that the order be made may be well founded because of developments that have taken place; the authority may be able to stand on its own feet, and its community should be prepared to take over the debt. I do not argue against that proposition.

However, the measure provides that decisions can be made by the Executive Council without any reference to Parliament. In this case the decision would affect a certain section of the community, and citizens would have to carry the financial burden of a works programme which initially they assumed was to remain a liability of the State.

Perhaps the Minister for Conservation could inform the Committee whether these authorities, when they receive their financial allocation under this measure, are warned that there is a possibility that by Order in Council they could be made to carry the responsibility of servicing the loan which would be involved in supplying the sums of money allocated under the Bill.

I hope the Statute Law Revision Committee, in its deliberations on the Constitution Bill with its variety of questions involved, will closely examine the question of the powers of the Governor and the Parliamentary procedures. This aspect has concerned me for a long time because in legislation that is being enacted Parliament is giving to the Governor in Council or the Executive authority to make decisions which in my view should remain the responsibility of Parliament.

It would be possible for a situation to be created in which a local authority, by Order in Council, would be made to carry the liability for the funds provided under this measure. On being approached by the officers of the local authority concerned, the local member would have no opportunity of bringing the matter into Parliament because there is no motion under which a back-bench member could satisfy the Speaker that the matter should be examined.

I made the point earlier that a provision of this type has been in similar Bills for a long time. In my research I went back as far as 1956.

The fact that the provision has been there so long does not necessarily make it right. It is not a provision which I welcome in legislation.

Mr. TREWIN (Benalla): I wonder whether the Minister for Conservation might reply to the remarks of the honorable member for Broadmeadows. As the honorable gentleman is a former Minister of Water Supply, I was interested to hear his comments when replying to those members who had participated in the debate.

Clause 4 (4) relates to the interesting area of works which are declared to be State works. It indicates that sums can be made available for State works. Under clause 4 (3), as the honorable member for Broadmeadows stated, some of those funds, either proportionately or wholly, can revert to a particular authority or trust.

It is disquieting that although the measure indicates that no reference need be made to the Parliament or the Governor in Council to have an alteration made, some trust or authority might in good faith commit itself, along with the Government, for works to be carried out for water supply, drainage, or sewerage, and having had the finance supplied, after 6 months, 6 years or 16 years it could find itself committed to the full repayment of the loan or the repayment of interest on that loan.

It is an interesting point and the Minister, having been a former Minister of Water Supply, would probably have some knowledge of the background to this clause. The Committee would welcome an explanation from the Minister to clarify the point or an indication that it could be clarified in another place.

Mr. BORTHWICK (Minister for Conservation): The representatives of irrigators would realize that the cost of headworks of irrigation works are carried exclusively by the State. The irrigation system is broken up into a series of districts and there is an accounting procedure for each district. It is quite understandable that some of those items would ultimately be charged against a district. One example which readily comes to mind is sub-item (1) of item 2 of the table in clause 4—"Irrigation districts, including enlargement and extension of channels, structures and distributory works." I recall that from the time a channel has entered a district, the maintenance becomes a charge against that district. If I recall correctly, there used to be the Irrigation Districts Maintenance Equalization and Renewals Account.

At some time in the future it will be necessary to determine what happens to capital expenditure borne by the State and capital expenditure borne by individual irrigation districts. It is interesting to note that this is a hidden cost which is not spoken about in irrigation circles and from memory, a decade ago the subsidy for irrigation headworks in this State was running at between $12 million and $13 million a year. That is the portion which the State carries, but ultimately maintenance within the district goes back to the individual district. However, honorable members will find that with a water trust it does not apply but goes a different way. This comes under clause 5, but, as honorable members know, the maximum rate which a water trust can charge is 17·5 cents and capital expenditure which that 17·5 cents will not carry is transferred to, and borne by, the State. In other words, it works the reverse way. If honorable members want a more detailed explanation, I will obtain it from the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission.

The clause was agreed to, as were clauses 5 to 9.

Clause 10 (Geelong Waterworks and Sewerage Trust).

Mr. BIRRELL (Geelong West): Under this clause, an amount of $700,000 is being provided for works in the Geelong district which are outside the strict zone covered by the

Geelong Waterworks and Sewerage Trust. Actually the provision is for works at Lara, Moriac and Leopold and these works have received approval to be charged to the State account although the Geelong Waterworks and Sewerage Trust is actually carrying out the approved capital works.

I refer to a remark made earlier about the subsidy system which operates in the State under which there is an interest subsidy of 3 per cent on the works approved by the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission. That system was instituted in 1943 and has run the course of 34 years without change. At that time money was being borrowed with an interest rate of 4 per cent and by the end of the second world war public borrowing was taking place at 3⅛ per cent and the subsidy was a cost differential for country people. That year a strange decision was made by a Country Party Government that Geelong should not be included in the proposition, and except for a decision to subsidize some pipeworks in the past few years from Bungal dam to Geelong, Geelong has not received any subsidy.

Mr. B. J. EVANS: Geelong was a big city.

Mr. BIRRELL: In 1943 Geelong was a city with a population of between 35,000 and 40,000. Many other cities in the State have grown beyond that population and are receiving subsidies.

Mr. B. J. EVANS: How many of them have populations in excess of 40,000?

Mr. BIRRELL: Bendigo has passed that figure and Ballarat has gone beyond it. I suggest that the Frankston area is still receiving a handsome subsidy, the reason for which I do not know.

Mr. ROSS-EDWARDS: It is because of Westernport.

Mr. BIRRELL: The policy has rolled along. However, the time has come for a reassessment to be made.

Some years ago the former Premier had in mind the idea of graduating of benefits so that they would be spread more evenly, according to zones of population, instead of a cut-off point operating, with cities like Geelong and Melbourne in one category and the rest of the State being subsidized. Under the scheme there would be some sort of zones between the subsidized zone and the unsubsidized zone and the total area around Geelong would not have had to pay 10·5 per cent interest on borrowed money.

The Geelong Waterworks and Sewerage Trust operation is now being extended into the suburbs around Geelong. The Geelong trust has an area of 5 miles from the Geelong Post Office within its zonal responsibility but the outer suburbs of Geelong which are not within the trust zone expect the water trust and not the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission to supply water and sewerage. The towns of Lara and Leopold which are semi-attached are openly part of the Geelong area. Although outside the Geelong zone, these new areas are being adopted by the Geelong Waterworks and Sewerage Trust. The State Rivers and Water Supply Commission must come to its senses and provide money at the 3 per cent interest subsidy. Because of a hidebound system in 1943, areas within the 5-mile zone receive no subsidy.

I direct the attention of the House to this matter. Earlier the honorable member for Geelong East drew attention to the remarkably wide gap between what is being done by the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission on the Bellarine Peninsula and what is being done on the Mornington Peninsula. The difference has been partly caused by the burgeoning urban population. The 3 per cent interest subsidy applies at Frankston because it is on the Mornington Peninsula. I do not know why Frankston should receive this subsidy when other suburbs of Melbourne pay 10·5 per cent interest for money for capital works.

When one considers this matter dispassionately one finds some common ground for believing that the system needs reassessment, and that the decisions of 1943 were adequate for that era when towns like Frankston were small country towns. Today I doubt whether the same principles should apply. I make a plea for understanding of this subject.

Clause 10 illustrates the unfortunate position in which Geelong finds itself. An interest subsidy of 3 per cent applies outside the suburbs of Geelong because the 5-mile radius has been exceeded. Geelong is now in two categories—one which gets the 3 per cent interest subsidy and one which does not. The situation is silly.

The clause was agreed to, as were clauses 11 to 13.

Clause 14 (Waste Water Treatment Study).

Mr. BILLING (Springvale): Clause 14 provides $200,000 for expenditure incurred by the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission and other authorities on the development and comparison of methods of advanced waste-water treatment. In comparison with the large problem, this small amount of money seems to be quite inadequate. It is well known that millions of gallons of water that are used in industry find their way into storm water channels, and not much attempt is made to recycle it. The community has developed the wasteful habit of overusing one of its most scarce commodities.

The pattern of urban development today has not taken into consideration the conservation of waste water. Millions of gallons find their way down storm water drains from suburban houses and also from new houses that are built in country areas. One could go around hundreds of thousands of houses in the urban area and not find any attempt being made to conserve rainwater to replenish our water supplies. The habit of doing without a small tank to collect water from roofs is one which people will have to eliminate.

Further, the run-off from suburban developments amounts to millions of gallons. In housing settlements kerbs and channels are constructed, as are beautiful roads, concrete footpaths and concrete drives into houses. With one shower of rain, off go thousands of gallons of water into the streets and down the drains. The community should be making a concerted effort to preserve the water that is being wasted from thousands of catchment areas, to wit, the roofs of suburban and country houses. I urge each honorable member to commend the provision of household tanks to reduce the vast sums needed for water storages such as the millions of dollars which are being spent on reservoirs like Cardinia. Within a few miles from the Cardinia dam, millions of gallons are being wasted from the roofs of houses, and not one effort is being made to conserve that water.

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.

PRIVILEGES COMMITTEE.

THE SPEAKER (Sir Kenneth Wheeler): I have received the following message from the Legislative Council—

> The Legislative Council acquaint the Legislative Assembly that they have given leave to the Honorable V. O. Dickie, and the Honorable Haddon Storey, Q.C., members of the Legislative Council, to attend, if they think fit, in order to their being examined, before the Privileges Committee of the Legislative Assembly upon the matter referred to that committee by resolution of the Legislative Assembly dated 20th October instant.
>
> W. G. FRY,
> President.

ADJOURNMENT.

PYRAMID SELLING—BICYCLE PATH IN KNOX—STATE COLLEGE OF VICTORIA—COMPENSATION TO MRS. POW—POLL BY CHANNEL 7—BUS TRANSPORT FOR HANDICAPPED CHILDREN—CORIO BAY.

Mr. BORTHWICK (Minister for Conservation): I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

Mr. SIMMONDS (Reservoir): I direct a matter to the attention of the Minister of Consumer Affairs concerning the activities of a company known as Con-Stan Industries of Australia Pty. Ltd., of 23 Victoria Avenue, Castle Hill, New South Wales. I ask the Minister to investigate the company because it is a pyramid-selling organization, selling a range of cosmetics and other products.

The system has all the hallmarks of a typical pyramid operation and all the ingredients for the same sort of disasters that hit participants in organizations such as Holiday Magic. The company offers limited agency agreements for a range of products known as Abundavita products, Nutri-clean products, Nutri-metics products and Sculptress bras. No particular territory is allocated to those who join although this is presented as no limit being placed on where those who join operate.

The catch in the contract is the traditional one. Once the company supplies the goods to someone who joins, they are stuck with them and have to pay the price charged even if they are unable to sell them. The other catch is also traditional—to make more money you have to suck others into the scheme. Five levels have been created. The first step is to join as a consultant. You can become a group director if you have three consultants working under you and sell $1,500 worth of products a month. The next step is to become a district director with six consultants and $4,000 a month in sales; then a regional director with $70,000 worth of sales over four consecutive months. The last step is to become a senior regional director with responsibility for sales of $72,000 over four consecutive months. Inducements such as big commissions and luxury cars are offered to those who join the scheme.

These pyramid selling menaces keep reappearing. The public becomes involved in one such organization and thousands of people lose their hard-earned savings. The Government tut-tuts but does virtually nothing to control the problem. Within a year or so another pyramid organization emerges and the tragic pattern is repeated. The time is long past for the Government to introduce effective controls on those who gull innocent people into believing quick money can be made through these companies.

The SPEAKER (Sir Kenneth Wheeler) Order! Is the honorable member reading from a document?

Mr. SIMMONDS: The document I have is a list of the Nutri-metics demonstration kit, which lists a total kit price of $96.33, including a quantity of cosmetics that totals $69.70; a sea sponge for 30 cents; spatulas for 15 cents; lipstick demonstrators and case for $3.80; a demonstration kit case for $8.50; a literature assortment for $4.80; the Himalayan Shangri-La book for $3; and "Thank You" gifts for $6. The cosmetics include a skin cleanser for $7.50; a skin freshener for $7.50; honey and almond scrub for $10.95; Nutri-moist for $10.95; Beauty Veil Dark Rachelle for $6.50; and a number of other items.

The contract this company is peddling around the State is likely to induce people who are, perhaps, out of employment and seeking an income and who are tempted by the offers of overseas holidays and luxury cars and all the paraphernalia involved in pyramid selling, to join the organization.

I should like the Minister also to investigate on what basis the Victorian Chamber of Manufactures can say that the organization is known to it and approved by it.

Mr. CRABB (Knox): I ask the Minister of Transport to consider a matter concerning repeated requests that have been made to the Victorian Railways Board by the Council of the City of Knox regarding its desire to provide a bicycle path traversing the City of Knox from the north to the south in the reserve alongside the railway line.

There is an extremely wide reserve along the railway line and all the council is asking is to be allowed to set aside 2½ metres of that reserve on which to build a bicycle path so that children and cyclists of all ages can travel safely from the southern portion of the urban part of the city to the northern portion. Unfortunately, the Railways Board has consistently refused to allow this and the only reason given is that the State Electricity Commission and Telecom services run parallel to the boundary inside the reserve.

Surely the Victorian Railways could take a more sensible attitude to this request. It should not be unreasonable to expect the Minister of Transport to allow the City of Knox to erect, at its own cost, a path along the reserve. I ask the Minister to investigate the matter with a view to giving the council permission to use part of the railway reserve for this purpose.

Mr. JONES (Melbourne): I direct a matter to the attention of the Minister of Education. In 1972 the State College of Victoria was established. Since then I have been one of three Parliamentary representatives on the interim senate, which becomes the permanent senate on 15th November. The interim senate finds itself in an intolerable situation because the position of vice-president is about to become vacant. Members of the interim senate were directed by the Minister that an appointment be made for a period of no more than twelve months.

The Victoria Institute of Colleges is in a roughly analogous situation and is, like the State College of Victoria, currently under investigation by the Partridge committee and is possibly subject to some kind of pressure to move into a single, unified system of tertiary education outside the universities. The Victoria Institute of Colleges also has a vacancy occurring in the office of vice-president. I understand that the Victoria Institute of Colleges was also instructed to appoint its new vice-president for no more than twelve months. However, the Victoria Institute of Colleges has apparently advertised on the basis of a three-year appointment. I understand that it brought an applicant from Great Britain for interview. It may well be that the Victoria Institute of Colleges will appoint a new vice-president for three years.

In the meantime, the State College of Victoria is able to offer only twelve months' tenure to any prospective appointee and it is hard to see that offer as being attractive. The State College of Victoria tried to fill the position temporarily from within the existing State colleges. The appointee has now declined the offer of a one-year term because of the invidious position of a three-year term offered by the Victoria Institute of Colleges, and a one-year term maximum offered, by the direction of the Minister, in the State College of Victoria. I would be grateful if the Minister could clarify for the benefit of the House why there is this discrepancy of treatment between the State College of Victoria and the Victoria Institute of Colleges.

The Brown committee, which was set up by the Minister of Education to report into whether the State College of Victoria and the Victoria Institute of Colleges should be combined or remain a separate entity, recommended in favour of separation. It was obvious that if it was planned to appoint a single head for both institutions, the State College of Victoria and the Victoria Institute of Colleges, there ought to be discussion between the

senate of the State College of Victoria and the council of the Victoria Institute of Colleges. This has not happened. I put to the Minister that the situation is quite intolerable because of its uncertainty, and I ask him to resolve it.

Mr. FOGARTY (Sunshine): As the Minister of Housing is not in the House I direct this matter to the attention of the Premier. Over a period of two years I have entered into correspondence with, and asked questions on notice of, the Minister of Housing on a matter dealing with a Mrs. Pow of Braybrook. Mrs. Pow is renting a Housing Commission house which she wishes to purchase. However, because 50 feet of the rear section of the house was leased to the Braybrook Hotel, she could not purchase the house. That has now been rectified.

During the ensuing period of more than two years the value of the home has increased by several thousand dollars. It is my belief that the contract for the sale of the house should be based on the value of the house as at the date Mrs. Pow made application to purchase it or, alternatively, some consideration should be given to increasing the value of the area which was previously leased to the Braybrook Hotel. The contract must be finalized at the end of this week.

I ask the Minister of Housing, through the Premier, to examine this matter because this person has a genuine case. Inflation has increased the value of the house. At this stage drains from the house lead into the car park of the hotel. There has been an injustice done to this woman. I believe the price of the house should be taken on its value at the time of the application for purchase by Mrs. Pow and some consideration should be given at this stage to the price the hotel paid for the leased area of the land.

Mr. COLEMAN (Syndal): I raise a matter with the Minister of Labour and Industry. It concerns a telephone poll that was conducted by Channel HSV 7 last Thursday. It indicated that a preponderance of people were in favour of the Latrobe Valley workers being granted extra money. During the day I have been given a copy of a statutory declaration which would put the record of that poll very much in doubt. I will read a copy of the declaration.

Mr. EDMUNDS: What has this to do with Government administration?

The SPEAKER (Sir Kenneth Wheeler): Order! I do not think matters relating to Telecom and Channel HSV 7 come under Government administration. There may be some other time when the honorable member can raise it.

Mr. COLEMAN: It concerns me that there was a public opinion poll which indicated that a preponderance of people were in favour of the Latrobe Valley workers getting extra money. I want to illustrate the credibility of the poll that was conducted——

The SPEAKER: I do not know how Telecom can have anything to do with the Minister of Labour and Industry.

Mr. COLEMAN: With all due respect, Mr. Speaker, I do not think to this time I have mentioned Telecom.

The SPEAKER: The honorable member mentioned HSV7 channel and Telecom. That is what I based my opinion on and I stand by it.

Mr. EBERY (Midlands): I wish to bring to the attention of the Minister of Education a problem in the Inglewood–Wedderburn area. Through approaches made to the Minister of Education, the Government gave approval for the purchase of a bus for the transport of handicapped children from that area to special schools in Bendigo at a cost of $12,500. The bus was purchased in December, 1976, and it has been transporting children to special schools in Bendigo since that time. The Minister of Education kindly agreed to subsidize

the transportation of these children on the basis of $400 a pupil per annum. However, at this stage that amount does not cover the cost of transporting these children, there being a shortfall of about $3,900 per annum. It will be appreciated that it is difficult for people living in the area to find this sort of money on an annual basis.

A committee of management was formed under a constitution and the committee endeavoured to raise as much money as possible but, as honorable members will realize, it is difficult to get people together in the areas of Korong Vale, Inglewood, Bridgewater and Marong to raise enough money to cover the shortfall.

The committee of management is pleased that the Minister of Education purchased the bus and has given them $400 a pupil per annum. This was the first bus in Victoria funded under such circumstances. The children attend three schools in Bendigo, the Kalianna school, the spastic school and the Sandhurst Boys Centre. For the first time they have had an opportunity of receiving an education. It is of paramount importance that they be allowed to continue this form of education. I understand that the transport of spastic children in other areas of the State is fully subsidized and the same applies to special schools. I ask the Minister to give special consideration to the full funding of this bus.

Mr. GUDE (Geelong East): I draw a matter to the attention of the Minister for Conservation. The reports that have been appearing recently in Geelong relating to the so-called pollution within Corio Bay is a matter of great concern to members in the Geelong area. I believe a considerable amount of the press coverage on this matter has been erroneous. Mention has been made of a so-called " secret " report, which I understand to be a public report by a select committee of the Department of Agriculture.

For many years I have been swimming in the waters of Corio Bay, and only two weeks ago I was pleased to have had a few moments to swim there with my two boys. God willing, in the next couple of weeks I hope to catch fish in the bay, and I will be happy to eat them. I ask the Minister, in view of the problems and doubts that have been expressed concerning the authenticity of these reports, to review all licences for emission into Corio Bay.

Mr. MACLELLAN (Minister of Labour and Industry): The honorable member for Reservoir raised a matter relating to a possible case of pyramid selling. He gave some material to *Hansard* and I ask him to give me more details to assist me to identify the company and have the matter investigated. If there appears to be an offence under the provisions of the pyramid selling legislation in this State, proceedings will be taken.

I express unhappiness about the terms that the honorable member used. The former Minister of Consumer Affairs, Mr. Rafferty, sponsored legislation about pyramid selling which has been effective. It has been educational because we have had very few complaints about pyramid selling since the legislation was passed, and I think it would prove effective if prosecutions were necessary. I hope it will not be necessary to prosecute the company concerned. If this matter falls within the legislation the first thing I will do is to draw the matter to the attention of the company to see if the possibility of prosecution can be overcome.

Mr. RAFFERTY (Minister of Transport): The honorable member for Knox raised the question of a bicycle pathway along the railway track. I will have the matter examined and inform him of the results of the investigation.

Mr. THOMPSON (Minister of Education): Two matters were raised which relate to education. The honorable member for Midlands referred to a group of parents of handicapped children in the Wedderburn-Inglewood area who have a real problem.

I had the pleasure of meeting them eighteen months ago and agreed to provide a subsidy of $400 a child a year. I appreciate that because of increasing costs, they are experiencing considerable difficulty in continuing to run the transport service. I will be happy to review the present scheme to see if there is some further way in which those people can be assisted to deal with the real problem they have.

The honorable member for Melbourne, who usually talks about transport matters, skipped to the education field tonight and talked about a problem that has exercised my mind in recent years, but particularly during the past week. The problem is complicated by the fact that I had hoped to have the Partridge committee of inquiry report in my hands, at least by now. Because of the complexity of the task of that committee in estimating the needs of industry and commerce for trained people the committee asked for an extension of time. That is the basis of the problem.

However, I stress that we have endeavoured to treat the State College of Victoria and the Victoria Institute of Colleges in exactly the same way and I wrote an identical letter suggesting a short-term point of view. The matter is still under active consideration and I will have further discussions with the Victoria Institute of Colleges to ensure that the State College of Victoria does not feel that it is being placed at a disadvantage in any way.

Mr. HAMER (Premier and Treasurer): The matter raised by the honorable member for Sunshine is a matter for the Minister of Housing, and I will draw it to his attention.

Mr. BORTHWICK (Minister for Conservation): The honorable member for Geelong East raised a question of publicity, particularly in Geelong, about heavy metal pollution in Corio Bay. I have difficulty in conveying to people the fact that until recent times very little was done here or anywhere else in the world to control industrial emissions, whether they be to the air, land or water. Corio Bay, like Port Phillip Bay and every other estuary on which cities are located, has suffered.

In 1970 this Parliament enacted the Environment Protection Act. Since the Environment Protection Authority was formed as an organization in 1971 it and its delegated agencies have been doing a first-class job. Three years ago a drain was located near Rippleside Jetty—one of the major industrial drains in the Geelong area—which had a cadmium outflow of serious proportions. That drain was dug out and cleaned but the cadmium, like other heavy metals, remains in the sediment. No one knows the interplay between cadmium in the sediment and the surrounding water. We know that in some way it transfers from the sediment to the water and extensive research in that field is being carried on in the Port Phillip Bay studies. I emphasize that there are major efforts to control the inflow into the bay, but we have heavy metals that go back to the early gold-mining days. People ought to bear that in mind. I do not know how to get rid of them. There is no scientific way to get rid of them.

Mr. TREZISE: Is it safe to eat mussels from the bay?

Mr. BORTHWICK: It depends which part of the bay they come from. Three years ago the Department of Health made that clear and there is no evidence to suggest that the cadmium level in mussels has dropped in the intervening three years. Any person who eats mussels from Corio Bay is foolish. In fact, the port authority at Corio Bay has on the advice of the Department of Health put up signs which make it clear that one should not eat mussels from that area. I emphasize the more positive side.

Some of the articles are, in my view, scurrilous and grossly exaggerated and are designed to cause fear and hysteria. The report I have

with me was supposedly a secret document. A member of this House and the press in Geelong claimed that it was a secret document, but every university in this State had a copy as did other Government departments. So did the universities in New South Wales and research organizations in California and yet it was supposed to be a secret document. I do not know how more freely available one can make these reports, but a journalist or a member of Parliament gets on to it and thinks it is secret. I have never suppressed any document.

I remind honorable members that this information is coming forward regularly from a concerted and properly designed programme because the Government is concerned. The Government has not been sitting on its backside doing nothing but has been using the best scientists in Victoria and also recruited from overseas to carry out the proper research. It is an ongoing programme and in fact the so-called secret documents and information that are allegedly ferreted out are available only because of the work the Government is doing in the interests of the people of Victoria.

The motion was agreed to.

The House adjourned at 11.9 *p.m.*

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE.

The following answers to questions on notice were circulated—

FOOD RESEARCH.

(Question No. 2307.)

Mr. ROPER (Brunswick) asked the Assistant Minister of Health, for the Minister of Health—

1. Whether the Minister or officers of the Department of Health are aware of a study carried out by the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization's Division of Food Research, Meat Research Laboratory, Queensland, concerning the "Microbiological Quality and Storage Life of Sliced Vacuum-Packaged Smallgoods" referred to at the eleventh annual conference of the Australian Food Science and Technology Institute and in an article published in Food Technology in Australia by Shay, Grau, Ford, Ratcliff and Egan; if so, whether similar research has been carried out in Victoria and in that event, when, by whom, and with what result?

2. Whether any action is proposed as a result of the research carried out in Queensland; if so, what action and when?

Mr. JONA (Assistant Minister of Health): The answer supplied by the Minister of Health is—

1. (*a*) Yes. Vacuum packed sliced meats are well known to have a shelf life of no more than two to three weeks. This is because a number of bacterial species can grow at low temperatures in the absence of air (anaerobic conditions). Few organisms of public health significance have been described in the literature and as in the survey of Shay *et al.* spoilage bacteria predominate, thus rendering the product unacceptable to the consumer because of organoleptic (taste and odour) changes.

(*b*) No.

2. Whilst it should be possible to extend the shelf life of these products by measures designed to eliminate bacterial contamination on the slicing and packaging lines, control by way of labelling, stock rotation and enforcement by health inspection services are the main requirements.

BROADMEADOWS CRIME STATISTICS.

(Question No. 2657.)

Mr. CULPIN (Glenroy) asked the Minister of Special Education, for the Chief Secretary—

What are the crime statistics for the City of Broadmeadows in each year since 1973 and in this year to date, indicating the categories of crimes and the number of convictions and acquittals in each category?

Mr. SCANLAN (Minister of Special Education): The answer supplied by the Chief Secretary is—

Nature of crimes	Number of offences reported				1977 (to 8th October, 1977
	1973	1974	1975	1976	
Assault on police	29	21	29	42	23
Assault on police by kicking/with weapon	10	4	6	9	84
Assault on civilian	129	91	123	79	10
Assault on civilian by kicking/with weapon	62	48	62	64	54
Assault causing actual bodily harm	45	41	53	38	46
Assault causing grievous bodily harm	8	11	5	12	20
Malicious wounding	11	4	8	3	7

Nature of crimes	Number of offences reported				1977 (to 8th October, 1977)
	1973	1974	1975	1976	
Burglary—					
Counting houses	8	11	7	11	7
Factories	15	8	13	14	22
Garages	22	38	43	25	32
Houses	408	461	426	466	467
Kiosks	4	2	7	1	2
Offices	34	26	23	25	69
Pavilions	8	3	1	1	4
Schools	95	80	85	117	43
Shops	150	139	128	98	95
Stores	161	52	210	66	102
Warehouses	1	1	1	..	..
Sacrilege	5	3	4	1	1
Manslaughter	..	..	1	..	..
Murder	2	1	2	2	..
Attempted murder	5	3	8	3	5
Assault and robbery	7	11	14	18	10
Robbery in company	3	1	..	1	3
Robbery under arms	3	7	4	3	7
Robbery with violence	..	1	6	3	3
Theft	453	684	817	957	684
Theft of car	295	369	443	463	429
Theft of bicycle	240	265	248	263	223
Theft in dwelling	27	18	6	..	1
Theft from car	233	234	273	381	369
Theft as a servant	100	151	31	5	2
Larceny from the person	3	5	..	..	..
Theft of cattle	2	2	..	..	..
Shop stealing	65	128	239	206	141
Embezzlement	1	1	..	..	..
False pretences	46	65	113	102	70
Fraudulent conversion	1	9	..	..	..
Imposition	..	23	3	..	4
Obtaining credit by fraud	..	3	..	..	15
Assault with intent to rape	4	..	..	5	8
Buggery	11		12	1	1
Carnal knowledge	79	29	15	55	25
Gross indecency	51	17	2	10	2
Indecent assault—female	68	60	46	74	46
Indecent assault—male	16	2	2	3	4
Incest	82	20	5	..	12
Obscene exposure	46	16	24	32	19
Rape	6	16	5	13	18
Abduction	5	9	2	4	11
Armed with offensive weapon	17	6	15	11	27
Arson	9	7	13	13	13
Conspiracy	5	1	5	2	2
Drugs—possession of	7	8	21	25	26
Drugs—supply of	1	4	3	8	3
Drugs—use of	..	7	19	27	26
Escape from legal custody	2	4	4	6	3
Forgery	15	47	9	24	20
Handling stolen goods	56	41	33	66	42
Loitering with intent to commit a felony	8	13	7	13	6
Malicious damage	12	30	33	37	29
Possession of house-breaking implements	5	2	4	3	2
Tampering with car	9	16	39	30	23
Unlawfully on premises	33	22	32	46	37
Unlawful possession	24	19	24	28	29
Uttering	32	34	9	24	20
Armed with felonious intent	4	1	2	4	1
Blackmail	1		..	..	3
False report to police	3	3	2	4	3
Perjury	..	..	..	4	4
Felon in possession of pistol	2	2	..	4	..
Unregistered pistol	7	1	1	2	..
Cruelty to animals	2	1	..	1	2
Other offences	36	34	43	71	64
Totals	3,349	3,497	3,873	4,129	3,639

The information requested in regard to the number of convictions and acquittals in each category is not available from police records as statistics of this nature are not maintained.

MELBOURNE UNDERGROUND RAIL LOOP.

(Question No. 2671)

Mr. GINIFER (Keilor) asked the Minister of Transport—

What properties have still to be acquired for the provision of the Melbourne Underground Rail Loop, indicating the address of each individual property, its Titles Office identification and the present owner?

Mr. RAFFERTY (Minister of Transport): The answer is—

I am advised by the Melbourne Underground Rail Loop Authority that the following property has still to be acquired for the Melbourne Underground Rail Loop.

The front 15 metres of vacant land at No. 85–91 Spring Street being part of the land more particularly described as part of Crown Allotment 9, Section 9, Parish of Melbourne North, County of Bourke and being part of the land comprised in Certificate of Title Volume 8930 Folio 706.

The owners are Camrhod Proprietary Limited and Pirianda Proprietary Limited.

YELLINGBO FAUNA RESERVE.

(Question No. 2685)

Mr. CATHIE (Carrum) asked the Minister for Conservation—

1. What amount has been provided to date for the purchase of the Yellingbo Fauna Reserve for use as a wildlife habitat to save the helmeted honey-eater, indicating—(*a*) the amount of Commonwealth money granted and spent to date; and (*b*) the amount of State money granted and spent to date?

2. How much of the desired land has yet to be purchased?

Mr. BORTHWICK (Minister for Conservation): The answer is—

The Yellingbo State Faunal Reserve is already owned by the Crown and managed by the Fisheries and Wildlife Division.

In the circumstances, I assume that the information sought by the honorable member is in respect of the proposed additions to the reserve.

Under the State Grants (Nature Conservation) Act 1974, an agreement has been entered into between the Commonwealth and Victoria on the financing of land to be purchased for addition to the reserve at Yellingbo.

The agreement, among other things, is to the effect that the Commonwealth shall provide at least two-thirds of the amount expended by the State upon the acquisition of the land or 1·25 million whichever is the lesser.

Funds made available for the Yellingbo programme to date are—

Commonwealth	$360,000
State	$255,000
	$615,000

A total of 36 purchases of land are to be made under the agreement for the purpose of preserving the helmeted honeyeater and its habitat.

Nine blocks have been purchased with a total area of about 62 hectares. Agreement has yet to be reached in respect of the remaining 27 properties involving an area of about 143 hectares.

COUNTRY ROADS BOARD LAND PURCHASES, DIGGERS REST.

(Question No. 2710)

Mr. JONES (Melbourne) asked the Minister of Transport—

1. What land the Country Roads Board has purchased in the vicinity of Diggers Rest, giving the area, date of acquisition and purchase price of each parcel?

2. Whether it is intended to change the route of the Calder Highway to bypass Diggers Rest; if so, when?

3. Whether it is intended to purchase more land in this area?

Mr. RAFFERTY (Minister of Transport): The answer is—

1. The Country Roads Board, at the request of the owners concerned, has purchased six vacant house blocks in the Diggers Rest area on the grounds of hardship. The hardship cases arise because the owners of land affected by road proposals are unable to sell their land without financial disadvantage.

The details of the blocks purchased are—

Lot number	L.P. number	Area	Location	Date purchased
3	53137	Whole of lot	Calder Highway	19th December, 1973
4	53137	Whole of lot	Calder Highway	14th September, 1973
5	53137	Whole of lot	Calder Highway	31st May, 1974
6	53137	Whole of lot	Calder Highway	6th September, 1974
92	53137	Whole of lot	Plumpton Street	21st November, 1972
93	53137	Whole of lot	Plumpton Street	27th May, 1976

The compensation agreed upon is regarded as confidential between the board and the landowners concerned.

2 and 3. In July, 1976, the board submitted preliminary proposals for a future bypass of Diggers Rest to the Bulla and Melton shire councils for comment. Until the route of the bypass is firmly decided, the board is not in a position to initiate the formal acquisition of land. The construction of the bypass has not been programmed.

BOOM GATE BARRIERS FOR MITCHAM CROSSING.

(Question No. 2711)

Mr. JONES (Melbourne) asked the Minister of Transport—

When the boom gate barriers will be constructed in—(*a*) Rooks Road; and (*b*) Mitcham Road, Mitcham?

Mr. RAFFERTY (Minister of Transport): The answer is—

The Victorian Railways Board has advised me that tenders for the installation of boom barriers at a number of locations including Rooks Road, Nunawading and Mitcham Road, Mitcham will be invited later this year.

PORTLAND–PORT FAIRY RAIL LINK.

(Question No. 2717)

Mr. JONES (Melbourne) asked the Minister of Transport—

Whether he has received any representations for the construction of a railway link between Portland and Port Fairy; if so—(*a*) what is the proposed length of such a line; (*b*) what is the estimated cost of construction; and (*c*) what effects the construction of such a line would have on—(i) the Port of Portland; and (ii) the Port of Geelong?

Mr. RAFFERTY (Minister of Transport): The answer is—

Yes. No detailed consideration has been given to the construction of this section of line.

RAILWAY STATION BETWEEN SUNSHINE AND DEER PARK.

(Question No. 2757)

Mr. FOGARTY (Sunshine) asked the Minister of Transport—

What is the proposed name of the railway station to be sited between Sunshine and Deer Park on the Ballarat rail line?

Mr. RAFFERTY (Minister of Transport): The answer is—

"Robinson."

FREEWAY F2.

(Question No. 2759)

Mr. MUTTON (Coburg) asked the Minister of Transport—

1. On what date the Government abandoned that section of the Freeway F2 south of Bell Street, Coburg?

2. What was the reason for this decision?

3. How many properties were purchased by the Country Roads Board and the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works in this area, indicating the address and the former owner in each case?

4. Whether any of these previous owners are entitled to apply to either the Country Roads Board or the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works for the repurchase of their original properties; if not, why?

Mr. RAFFERTY (Minister of Transport): The answer is—

1. I announced on 14th September, 1977, that the Government had now decided that the Freeway F2 would not be extended south of Bell Street.

2. The decision was made in conformity with the Government's policy that the major efforts of road construction in inner areas will be directed towards up-grading the existing road network.

3. Seventy-five properties were purchased by the Country Roads Board south of Bell Street. The following table lists the addresses and the former owner—

Address	Name
156 Nicholson Street, Coburg	Densley
158 Nicholson Street, Coburg	Lewis
162 Nicholson Street, Coburg	Burling
164 Nicholson Street, Coburg	Kiernan
168 Nicholson Street, Coburg	Sibly
3 Merribell Avenue, Coburg	Stankovic
5 Merribell Avenue, Coburg	Bryson
6 Merribell Avenue, Coburg	Pawlak

Address	Name
7 Merribell Avenue, Coburg	Triffett
10 Merribell Avenue, Coburg	Andrews
11 Merribell Avenue, Coburg	Williams
24 Merribell Avenue, Coburg	Garner
1 Edna Grove, Coburg	Haldas
2 Edna Grove, Coburg	Ardley
4 Edna Grove, Coburg	Thompson
7 Edna Grove, Coburg	Williams
8 Edna Grove, Coburg	Billan
10 Edna Grove, Coburg	Roy
11 Edna Grove, Coburg	Pichler
15 Edna Grove, Coburg	Benallack
16A Edna Grove, Coburg	Purtell
17 Edna Grove, Coburg	Smith
18 Edna Grove, Coburg	Field
52 Cole Crescent, Coburg	Cosgrave
50 Cole Crescent, Coburg	Rotundo
48 Cole Crescent, Coburg	Trevascus
42 Cole Crescent, Coburg	Shultz
14 Cole Crecsent, Coburg	Leggo
1–3 Anderson Road, Thornbury	Lauretig
7 Anderson Road, Thornbury	Murrumbeena Steel Works
9A Anderson Road, Thornbury	Mechanical Handling
11 Anderson Road, Thornbury	Gilbarco's
15A Anderson Road, Thronbury	Containers
17 Anderson Road, Thornbury	Dinning
19 Anderson Road, Thornbury	Theodore Nominees
25–27 Anderson Road, Thornbury	Bergaman
Lots 22–31 Clara Street, East Brunswick	Prestige
2 Clara Street, East Brunswick	Agostinalli
176 Donald Street, East Brunswick	Zimmari
177 Donald Street, East Brunswick	Walls
186 Donald Street, East Brunswick	Cooper
188 Donald Street, East Brunswick	Clancy
Parkview Avenue, East Brunswick	Grosney and Taylor
201A Stewart Street, East Brunswick	Benbow Mills
Beavers Road, Northcote	Hume Pipe Co.
168 Arthurton Road, Northcote	S.S.P. and E.N.S. Nominees
2 Winifred Street, Northcote	Clark
4 Winifred Street, Northcote	Nikletic
8 Winifred Street, Northcote	King
12 Winifred Street, Northcote	Wiegmann
16 Winifred Street, Northcote	Richardson
18 Winifred Street, Northcote	Dunstan
22 Winifred Street, Northcote	Fabian
26 Winifred Street, Northcote	Crist
23 Sumner Avenue, Northcote 27 Sumner Avenue, Northcote	Sykes and Herbert
29 Sumner Avenue, Northcote	Tynen
Lots 1–4 Ida Street, East Brunswick	Cascade Nominees
16–18 Ida Street, East Brunswick	Jolin Investments
12 Clarke Street West, Northcote	Kastoris
1 Elizabeth Street, Northcote	H.G. and R. Securities
8 Elizabeth Street, Northcote	Dimitropoulos
267 Holden Street, Fitzroy	Daglas
52 Hoddle Street, Clifton Hill	Blanchard
511–513 Hoddle Street, Clifton Hill	Taylor
181 Nicholson Street, East Coburg	Nicholson
185 Nicholson Street, East Coburg	Ritchie
187 Nicholson Street, East Coburg	Sullivan
195 Nicholson Street, East Coburg	Sodgrove
197 Nicholson Street, East Coburg	Lawford
7 Bell Street, East Coburg	Marco
9 Bell Street, East Coburg	Calder-Vendor Councillor
3 Younger Street, East Coburg	Di Benedetto
7 Younger Street, East Coburg	Ward
9 Younger Street, East Coburg	Cavalli

The following properties were acquired by the Board of Works—

Address	Name
Lot 47 Harding Street, Coburg	J. N. Travascus
Lot 8 Halwyn Crescent, Preston	A Mazziotta
Part Crown Portion 135 Parish of Jika Jika County of Bourke LP's 18820, 42855 Rennie Street, Coburg	F. Agostini
Lot 50 The Grove, Coburg	G. R. Jennings
5 Anderson Road, Thornbury	G. and E. Triarico
Lot 133 Lee Street, East Brunswick	Albion Reid Pty. Ltd.
Lot 32 Ida Street, North Fitzroy	Mrs. I. Levick
Lot 4 St. Georges Road, Northcote	T. Hesketh
Lot 19 Clark Street West, Northcote	J. Yates

4. No decision has yet been made on the sale of these properties.

PROPERTY AT 37 YORK STREET, BONBEACH.

(Question No. 2767)

Mr. CATHIE (Carrum) asked the Minister of Housing—

1. How many items were listed on the form dated 13th October, 1976, declaring 37 York Street, Bonbeach, unfit for human habitation?

2. How many of these items were structural, giving the details in each case?

3. Whether any correspondence was received by the Housing Commission from the owner commenting on each item; if so, what reply and re-examination was made as a result of such correspondence?

4. Why the commission is not required to give an owner prior warning of investigations in relation to demolition or repair orders?

Mr. HAYES (Minister of Housing): The answer is—

1. Thirty particulars of non-compliance were listed in the Housing Commission's notices served in connection with 39 York Street, Bonbeach on the 13th October, 1976.

2. Six particulars of non-compliance referred to structural matters, namely—

Floors sunken and out of level and creviced.

Sub-floor timbers defective and decayed.
Evidence of decay in structural timbers.
Front veranda flooring decayed, gapped and out of level (reference to ceiling lining included in original item listed is not structural).
Rafter ends decaying.
Pan closet dilapidated and insecure.

3. On the 3rd December, 1976, the owner wrote to me and made comment on the particulars of non-compliance. The owner did not correspond directly with the Housing Commission. As the premises had been inspected on the 31st August, 1976, and as the owner had not exercised his right of appeal, it was not felt at that time that a further inspection was necessary.

4. Houses are reported to the Housing Commission as the result of neglect on the part of an owner to maintain his property in a reasonable state of repair. Warning of impending investigation of sub-standard premises could lead to victimization of tenants, obstruction, and an owner endeavouring to shed his responsibility at the expense perhaps of an unwary purchaser.

GLUE AND PETROL SNIFFING BY YOUNG PEOPLE.

(Question No. 2768)

Mr. CATHIE (Carrum) asked the Minister of Special Education, for the Chief Secretary—

Whether the Police Department has requested any special action or amendments to the law to combat the increase in glue sniffing and petrol sniffing among young people; if so, what action is proposed?

Mr. SCANLAN (Minister of Special Education): The answer supplied by the Chief Secretary is—

The Police Department has not requested amendments to the law or other specific action to combat the increase in glue and petrol sniffing among young persons. I am advised that the volatile substances inhaled by persons, in order to obtain intoxicating or exhilarating effects, are contained in many products which are widely used in our society.

The volatile substances can be divided into two groups, namely, hydrocarbons which are the solvents combined in petrol, benzine, paint thinners and similar products and fluorocarbons which are the propellent materials used in aerosol sprays, such as hair-sprays, deodorants and fly sprays. There are no legal restrictions concerning the possession and use of these products nor are there any harmless substitutes available.

Legislation which prohibited the improper use of the above-mentioned substances would be virtually impossible to enforce. Similarly, legislation which prohibited their manufacture would be impracticable.

The problem is one which must be shared by the whole community, particularly parents who should be on the alert to counteract attempts by their children to engage in the above-mentioned activities.

RAIL CROSSING, TRAMWAY ROAD, MORWELL.

(Question No. 2787)

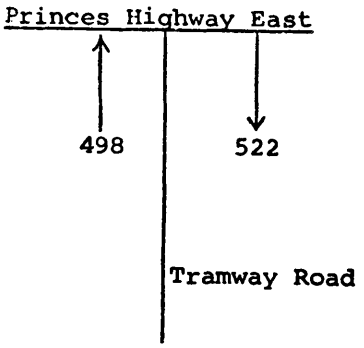
Mr. AMOS (Morwell) asked the Minister of Transport—

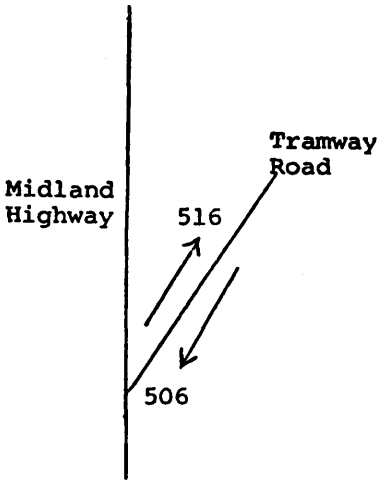
1. Whether traffic counts indicating traffic volume using Tramway Road, Morwell, have been taken since 10th December, 1974; if so, what are the results of each of such traffic count?

2. Whether the Tramway Road rail crossing is now included on the current priority list for the installation of flashing light signals; if so, when signals will be installed at this crossing; if not, why?

Mr. RAFFERTY (Minister of Transport): The answer is—

1. Yes. The Country Roads Board took traffic counts at the intersections of Princes Highway East and Tramway Road and Midland Highway and Tramway Road on Wednesday 19th February, 1975. Each count covered a twelve-hour period from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. The results were as follows—





On 9th July, 1975, the Victorian Railways Board took a traffic count at the Tramway Road, Morwell, level crossing. The count showed that sixteen trains and 1,139 cars used the crossing between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m.

2. Yes. Installation is programmed during the 1978–79 financial year.

FUNDS FOR SECOND DENTAL THERAPY SCHOOL.

(Question No. 2793)

Mr. MUTTON (Coburg) asked the Assistant Minister of Health—

Whether any progress has been made in obtaining funds from the Commonwealth Government for the establishment of a second dental therapy school in the Brunswick–Coburg area?

Mr. JONA (Assistant Minister of Health): The answer is—

No.

BALLARAT RAILWAY WORKSHOPS EMPLOYEES.

(Question No. 2805)

Mr. A. T. EVANS (Ballarat North) asked the Minister of Transport—

How many persons were employed at the Ballarat railway workshops in each of the years from 1972 to 1976, inclusive, indicating the number of skilled tradesmen and apprentices employed in each year?

Mr. RAFFERTY (Minister of Transport): The answer is—

The Victorian Railways Board has advised me that the number of staff employed at the Ballarat railway workshops in June each year from 1972 to 1976 is as follows—

—	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976
Tradesmen	285	299	307	311	294
Apprentices	42	35	31	32	44
Other grades	266	267	271	259	228
Total	593	601	609	602	566

HUME FREEWAY, EUROA.

(Question No. 2832)

Mr. JONES (Melbourne) asked the Minister of Transport—

In respect of the Hume Freeway in the vicinity of Euroa—

1. What are the comparative costs of the —(*a*) northern route by-pass; and (*b*) southern route by-pass?

2. What are the comparative environmental effects and impact on access to the town of the two routes?

3. Which route was chosen and why?

Mr. RAFFERTY (Minister of Transport): The answer is—

A copy of a report prepared by the Country Roads Board and forwarded to the Euroa Shire Council and the authorities concerned for comment has been laid on the table of the Library. The report provides full answers to the questions asked.

CAR PARKING FACILITIES AT GEELONG RAILWAY STATION.

(Question No. 2834)

Mr. TREZISE (Geelong North) asked the Minister of Transport—

Whether there are any plans for additional car parking facilities at the Geelong railway station for Geelong–Melbourne rail commuters?

Mr. RAFFERTY (Minister of Transport): The answer is—

The Victorian Railways Board has no plans to extend car parking facilities at the Geelong railway station at this stage.

FUTURE GEELONG BUS OPERATIONS.

(Question No. 2837)

Mr. TREZISE (Geelong North) asked the Minister of Transport—

When it is expected that the Transport Regulation Board inquiry into the future Geelong bus operations regarding weekly and monthly concession fares and transfer tickets, will be concluded?

Mr. RAFFERTY (Minister of Transport): The answer is—

The Transport Regulation Board informs me that it expects to complete the necessary work for the revision of Geelong's public transport services during the first half of next year.

CALDER HIGHWAY.

(Question No. 2843)

Mr. JONES (Melbourne) asked the Minister of Transport—

Why the Kangaroo Flat shopping centre section of the Calder Highway has been left out of the proposed road works for the highway over the next three years?

Mr. RAFFERTY (Minister of Transport): The answer is—

The pavement of the Calder Highway in the Kangaroo Flat shopping area is structurally sound at present.

Reconstruction of this section of highway is therefore not of high priority having regard to the road needs of the State as a whole.

Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, October 27, 1977.

The SPEAKER **(Sir Kenneth Wheeler)** took the chair at 11.4 a.m. and read the prayer.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE.

ELECTION CAMPAIGN FUNDS.

Mr. WILKES (Leader of the Opposition): In view of the evidence that has been tendered to the inquiry being conducted by Sir Gregory Gowans and certain statements made in Parliament concerning donations by land developers to certain Ministers, present and past, and other members of Parliament, will the Premier consider introducing legislation, before the next election, to make it mandatory for a full disclosure of political donations to candidates?

Mr. HAMER (Premier and Treasurer): The time for that sort of question is when the board of inquiry completes its deliberations. All that we have read in the press are certain portions of evidence, and for that matter the same applies to statements that have been made in Parliament. These matters will have

to be considered in the light of the findings of the board of inquiry. I point out that it applies just as much to one party as to another and it will have to be considered in the broadest possible context.

RAILWAY LOSSES.

Mr. ROSS-EDWARDS (Leader of the National Party): As the losses incurred by the Victorian Railways appear to be exceeding Budget estimates, is the Treasurer in a position to announce any move in an attempt to correct the situation before the losses put the whole Budget out of balance?

Mr. HAMER (Premier and Treasurer): The losses disclosed for the first two months of the financial year are not by any means indicative of the results for the full year. To my knowledge, they are no more than would have been expected. There has been no real deterioration, so far as I am aware, in the railways' financial position. The first two months, July and August, are always low months for receipts and the receipts for the other months of the year will correct the balance quite considerably.

POLLUTION OF CORIO BAY.

Mr. GUDE (Geelong East): Further to the reply from the Minister for Conservation to my request on Friday, 7th October, in which the Minister discussed matters relating to sewerage reticulation on the Bellarine Peninsula and bay pollution, which is of concern to all honorable members, and following recent press criticism concerning pollution of the bay, is the Minister for Conservation now prepared to review licences issued by the Environment Protection Authority for emissions which affect the Corio Bay area?

Mr. BORTHWICK (Minister for Conservation): I must apologize to the honorable member who asked me that question last night on the motion for the adjournment of the sitting because, in giving my rather long speech, I forgot to answer the pertinent point of the question. The Minister for Conservation has no power under the Environment Protection Act to review any licence issued by the Environment Protection Authority, but I will accede to the honorable member's request and ask the authority to review existing licences in the Corio catchment area. I will request the authority to place special emphasis on any input of heavy metals.

MINISTER FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT.

Mr. CRABB (Knox): In view of the Premier's previous refusal to suspend the Minister for Local Government until the Minister had been given the opportunity to answer the allegations which have been made, and in view of a statement made yesterday by the Minister for Local Government, which statement was reported widely in today's press, that he had personally solicited, on behalf of the then candidate for Frankston, a donation of $1,000 from a land developer with whom the Minister had dealings in his Ministerial capacity, will the Premier now suspend the Minister for Local Government?

Mr. HAMER (Premier and Treasurer): The answer is, "Certainly not". The honorable member for Knox has not even given the correct version of what the Minister said.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION TEACHERS FOR SCHOOLS.

Mr. JASPER (Murray Valley): I ask the Minister of Education whether it is correct that the Education Department is considering the appointment of physical education teachers to schools with more than 400 pupils as compared with the present limit of 490 pupils. If so, will these appointments be made to schools with fewer pupils and when will it come into operation?

Mr. THOMPSON (Minister of Education): The Government is considering various proposals to extend and expand physical education training in schools. This is one area which I believe to some degree has been neglected in the past and we are making a conscious effort to place greater emphasis upon it. A number of different proposals have been submitted on the best method of doing this. Our first aim has been to substantially increase the number of teachers who can be employed within the service. This has been done by persuading the University of Melbourne to retain its degree course and by expanding physical education training for teachers to colleges like Rusden State College and Footscray and Preston institutes of technology. A final decision will be made on any exact limits on the number of pupils in schools which qualify for special physical education teachers, but at this stage no final decision has been reached.

STATE COLLEGE OF VICTORIA AT BURWOOD.

Mr. McLAREN (Bennettswood): Is the Minister of Education aware of a fire that seriously damaged the auditorium of the State College of Victoria at Burwood, on Saturday, 15th October? What action has been taken to investigate and ascertain the responsibility for this fire?

Mr. THOMPSON (Minister of Education): There was a serious fire at this establishment a fortnight ago. Inquiries reveal that it was caused by the use of welding equipment and an oxy-acetylene torch when constructing stage props, and that some nearby foam used for stage equipment caught fire and rapidly destroyed portion of the building. The total damage is in the vicinity of $250,000. The building was insured and had previously been insured by the Council of the Burwood State college. The most immediate problem that this fire creates is that alternative accommodation has to be found for people who were completing examinations and, with the co-operation of the Education Department, that alternative accommodation has been provided. Plans will be drawn at an early stage for the replacement of the existing building.

Some further discussions will be taking place with the fire authorities to ascertain whether more effective means of notifying the brigade can be established in areas where there is a substantial capital outlay in valuable education buildings such as at the Burwood State college, where a multi-million dollar project has recently been completed.

ELECTION CAMPAIGN FUNDS.

Mr. CAIN (Bundoora): I direct a question to the Premier, further to the question asked by the Leader of the Opposition. To assist the board of inquiry to arrive at what has really occurred in the transactions of the Housing Commission, will the Premier require members of his party to give full information to the inquiry regarding any donation made to their election campaign funds by land developers or persons associated with the dealings of 1973 with the Housing Commission or in consultation with the Minister for Local Government?

Mr. HAMER (Premier and Treasurer): The inquiry is entirely in the hands of the board. The board has the widest possible powers to require whatever evidence it seeks in order to arrive at a finding of fact. The board is not inhibited in any way in the people it requires to come before it, nor in the documents it requires to be exhibited. I am sure every member of the House has full confidence that the board will produce a full and factual finding.

FITZROY COMMUNITY SCHOOL.

Mr. BURGIN (Polwarth): Has the attention of the Minister of Education been drawn to a photograph in today's *Sun News-Pictorial* of a teacher from the Fitzroy Community School playing the bagpipes for his young children while they are playing in front of a massive front end loader working on the eastern freeway? I ask the Minister whether this school is funded from State funds and whether this is part of the daily curriculum of this school.

Mr. THOMPSON (Minister of Education): The matter was directed to my attention a short time ago, but I am not sure to which school the newspaper article refers. The Government does not discourage the playing of the bagpipes; it encourages the development of a broad curriculum in schools, but this pastime is certainly not part of the curriculum.

ASSEMBLY SITTING DAYS.

Mr. FORDHAM (Footscray): In view of the announcement made this morning by the Prime Minister that he will precipitate yet another Federal election on 10th December this year, can the Minister of Education, as Deputy Premier and Leader of the House, indicate in what way this will affect the planned sittings of the Legislative Assembly between now and 10th December? If he has not reached a decision on this matter, can the honorable gentleman give an assurance that all members will be advised of it later today?

Mr. THOMPSON (Minister of Education): It was my intention to consult with the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and the Deputy Leader of the National Party because of the development announced this morning and to try to come to some arrangement that would be mutually acceptable to all members.

SCHOOL MEDICAL SERVICE.

Mr. LACY (Warrandyte): Has the Assistant Minister of Health seen a statement published in this morning's *Age* attributed to the honorable member for Brunswick that the School Medical Service examined 44,000 fewer children in 1976 than it did in 1975? Has there been a decline in the effectiveness of the School Medical Service, and if so, what action has the honorable gentleman taken to rectify the matter?

Mr. JONA (Assistant Minister of Health): I read the reported remarks of the honorable member for Brunswick in this morning's *Age*, and they are grossly inaccurate.

MR. ROPER: They are compiled from your answer.

Mr. JONA: I welcome the question, because it gives me an opportunity of indicating clearly to the House that the standard of the School Medical Service is not on a decline, but is making rapid advances towards providing the most effective service possible in this field.

The honorable member for Brunswick indicated that 44,000 fewer children were examined in 1976 than in 1975. What he failed to appreciate was that half way through 1976 the Pre-school Medical Service was integrated with the School Medical Service, and the honorable member did not take into account all the pre-school children who had been examined in the same period.

Mr. ROPER: That makes it worse.

Mr. JONA: The honorable member for Brunswick suggested that to add 30,000 additional children to the number of children who were examined makes the situation worse, but I believe it makes it better by 30,000 children. I point out that the total number of children who were examined in both the School Medical Service and the Pre-school Medical

Service programmes during 1976 was 236,135, not 44,000 fewer than the number for last year, as the honorable member for Brunswick stated.

The honorable member for Warrandyte asked specifically whether the effectiveness of the School Medical Service was declining. The standard of nursing screening procedures carried out in the past in School and Pre-school Medical Service examinations has been raised substantially during the past eighteen months. This has resulted in a slight reduction in the number of children who can be seen by the same number of staff.

However, I also point out that in this year's Budget, as the honorable member for Brunswick would realize if he read the Budget Papers, the establishment of the School Medical Service is substantially greater in numbers than it was last year, but there are still a number of unfilled positions.

Mr. ROPER: There are a lot.

Mr. JONA: That is true, but if the honorable member for Brunswick can bring along to the School Medical Service medical officers or nurses who are prepared to work in that division, they will be employed. However, because there are not enough applicants to fill these positions, I have taken steps to ensure that schools in all parts of the State will not be jeopardized. Arrangements are being made for medical officers in various areas of Victoria to carry out these tests on a sessional basis. The honorable member for Brunswick was grossly inaccurate in the figures he quoted and the conclusions he reached.

TARAGO RESERVOIR.

Mr. McINNES (Gippsland South): In view of the anxiety expressed by anglers in Gippsland, can the Minister for Conservation advise whether the waters of the Tarago reservoir are closed to fishing?

Mr. BORTHWICK (Minister for Conservation): No, I cannot advise the honorable member whether the Tarago reservoir waters are closed to fishing.

GOVERNMENT RAILWAY POLICY.

Mr. JONES (Melbourne): Is the Minister of Transport aware that the Victorian Railways monthly magazine has published an article entitled "Fare Cuts a Success: Train Travel Rises in N.S.W."? The article states that the Wran Government in New South Wales has made a 20 per cent cut in train, bus and ferry fares which has led to a striking rise and an increase in the use of public transport. In view of the Treasurer's indication in his Budget speech that there would be a rise in train fares, does this indicate a change of heart on the part of the Government? Will the Minister indicate whether he will do anything to try to ensure that Victoria follows the lead set by the Wran Government?

Mr. RAFFERTY (Minister of Transport): The answer to the first part of the question is, "No, I have not read the article in the Victorian Railways magazine". Secondly, so far as I am aware, there has been no change whatever in Government policy. The Government has no intention of following the pattern set in anything by the Wran Government in New South Wales, particularly in relation to retaining its position on the Treasury Bench in Victoria.

TOTALIZATOR AGENCY BOARD

Mr. SKEGGS (Ivanhoe): I ask the Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation: In view of the increased costs in the administration of racing indicated in the annual report of the Totalizator Agency Board, will the Minister examine ways by which the Totalizator Agency Board might be assisted in its operation by the removal of constraints relating to the display of information in Totalizator Agency Board agencies, the advertising of services and the earlier payment of dividends?

Mr. DIXON (Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation): When the legislation establishing the Totalizator Agency Board was originally introduced into the House, it was with a spirit of some constraint. The idea behind the legislation was that the Totalizator Agency Board would be given full permission to publicize the facts pertaining to betting with it but that it would not be encouraged to promote its services. The control of this matter comes under the Lotteries Gaming and Betting Act and really, an analysis of that section would not clarify the position. I have asked my officers, together with the Totalizator Agency Board, to look at the section in the Lotteries Gaming and Betting Act to see whether this could be clarified.

As far as promotion and advertising in general is concerned, the Totalizator Agency Board receives adequate promotion through the newspapers, radio and television without having to pay for it. Turning to the question of whether there should be additional advertising within the Totalizator Agency Board agencies themselves, I will examine that when looking at a clarification of the Act. Referring to the matter of the payout of dividends after the last race or between races, this is a matter which is dealt with in the Racing Act and it would require a change in Government policy.

RACING INDUSTRY.

Mr. TREZISE (Geelong North): I should also like to ask a question on that matter. Is the Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation alarmed at the serious situation which has now developed in relation to the Totalizator Agency Board and Victoria's largest industry, the racing industry, in conjunction with it? The situation now is that despite an increased amount of money being invested with the Totalizator Agency Board each year, the racing clubs and the racing industry are receiving less financial return than they received last year, because of rising costs. Mr. Hilton Nicholas has stated that next year the racing industry will receive even less. In view of the serious situation that is causing many racing clubs to reduce their stakes, will the Minister convene a conference of senior racing officials in Victoria, and the Totalizator Agency Board to try to overcome the problem, which is having an effect not only on the racing industry but on the Victorian economy?

Mr. DIXON (Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation): The racing industry, the responsible Minister and the Premier and Treasurer are aware of the situation outlined by the honorable member. I have had discussions with the Totalizator Agency Board and with the Victoria Racing Club and I expect to have further discussions with the Treasurer about the matter.

REGIONAL PLANNING POWERS.

Mr. B. J. EVANS (Gippsland East): In view of statements emanating from the Town and Country Planning Board that the board proposes to hand back to local councils responsibility for planning schemes such as the Gippsland Lakes planning scheme and the south western coastal planning scheme, can the Minister for Planning indicate how this proposition will be put into effect and, in particular, whether the return of these powers to local government will take place if municipalities refuse to join regional planning authorities? What would be the Government's proposal in that situation?

Mr. HAYES (Minister for Planning): I believe two questions were asked. With respect to the latter question, membership or not of a regional planning authority would have no effect on the Town and Country Planning Board's handing back to a responsible authority planning power where the board has temporarily held that power. Throughout Victoria, particularly in the north east, under

the Ovens–River Murray interim development order arrangement, I think 70 per cent of the board's planning powers have now been delegated back to the local councils. It is the board's intention to continue to do that State-wide as quickly as it can possibly be done.

The board has a particular interest in the Gippsland Lakes planning scheme. I shall be going there in the next few weeks with a view to handing back to the responsible authorities the powers that are presently held by the board.

EXHIBITION OF CRAFTS BY HANDICAPPED.

Mr. BIRRELL (Geelong West): Will the Minister of Special Education consider holding in Melbourne an exhibition of the art and crafts of physically and mentally handicapped people? Were this to be successful, would the Minister consider perhaps taking it to the larger provincial areas?

Mr. SCANLAN (Minister of Special Education): Yes, active consideration has been given to the suggestion by the honorable member and I assure him that it is proposed that such an exhibition be made available to provincial centres. The exhibition is of various handcrafts of the intellectually and physically handicapped that were given to me by the Swedish, Danish, United Kingdom, and United States Governments, and administrators in the field of special education.

However, it may be necessary to cancel the exhibition because the items that were given to me were placed in diplomatic mail-bags at various places around the world and have now been impounded by Customs. It is necessary to make it clear that these products are not for the individual person concerned or myself, but for the Ministry as a whole and for the benefit of those people who are interested in expanding the training of handicapped people and the output of products from the various sheltered workshops and the handicapped generally in this State. I hope the problem can be overcome and that the Customs Department will adopt a more lenient attitude on this matter, so that the planned exhibition will be able to go ahead.

HOUSING COMMISSION LAND PURCHASES.

Mr. FRANCIS (Caulfield). In view of the important issues that have arisen in the lands inquiry, will the Premier undertake to table in this House the report by Sir Gregory Gowans as soon as it becomes available to him?

Mr. HAMER (Premier and Treasurer): The answer is certainly "Yes". That is the usual course.

SCHOOL MEDICAL SERVICE.

Mr. ROPER (Brunswick): Is the Assistant Minister of Health aware that 922 schools—which is more than one-third of all the schools in the State—were not visited by officers of the School Medical Service last year? Is the honorable gentleman also aware, in view of his previous answer to a question asked by the honorable member for Warrandyte, that many of these schools are not in country areas but in city areas? If so, will the Minister make arrangements for general practitioners in city areas—as was suggested for general practitioners in country areas by the honorable member for Footscray—to be made available to schools to carry out examinations of the children, particularly first and fourth grade pupils?

Mr. JONA (Assistant Minister of Health): It is true that approximately 900 schools in the State have not been visited by the School Medical Service, but it is equally true that more than half of those schools have an extremely small number of pupils. It has been quite impracticable to roster staff medical officers or nurses to cover every acre of the State.

In the country regions where schools have not been visited by school medical officers, as I indicated in my answer to an earlier question, steps are being taken to recruit local medical practitioners to examine the children on a contract or sessional basis during this year. Many doctors have been engaged on that basis and when the figures are available for the 1977 calendar year, the honorable member will find that a substantial number of children within the schools to which he has referred will have received school medical examinations. Consideration will be given to engaging doctors in various parts of the metropolitan area on a similar basis where necessary.

EQUINE METRITIS.

Mr. TREWIN (Benalla): In view of the previous answer given by the Minister of Agriculture to a question concerning the use of funds collected under the repealed Horse Breeding Act for research into the disease of contagious equine metritis, will the honorable gentleman, in order to make further funds available, approach the Victoria Racing Club and the Trotting Control Board, which maintain registers of thoroughbreds and trotting horses, seeking additional funds for research into this extremely contagious disease which is now affecting the horse industry in Victoria?

Mr. I. W. SMITH (Minister of Agriculture): The department has embarked upon a considerable campaign of research into the control of the disease since it was first found here recently, presumably being transmitted by horses imported from Great Britain. Approaches will be made to horse organizations to ascertain whether they can assist in the extension of the programme, as I consider that to be an excellent idea.

BEECHWORTH TRAINING PRISON.

Mr. AMOS (Morwell): I preface my question by reminding the Minister for Social Welfare of previous questions asked by the Leader of the Opposition and myself concerning the tabling of files, correspondence and memoranda dealing with the inquiry at the Beechworth Training Prison. The Minister's previous replies indicated that he wanted time to consider the matter. Has the matter now been considered and can the honorable gentleman advise whether the files and memoranda will be placed on the table of the Library?

Mr. DIXON (Minister for Social Welfare): My answer remains precisely the same.

HOUSING COMMISSION PURCHASES AT ASPENDALE.

Mr. CATHIE (Carrum): Following a question without notice that I asked on 21st September, 1977, and to which the Minister of Housing replied that he would pursue the subject, I ask the honorable gentleman whether he has pursued the subject of why the Housing Commission purchased approximately 40 homes at Aspendale from Steadfast Homes Pty. Ltd., which was in financial difficulties, and whether he is aware that many of those homes were subsequently sold at a loss and why?

Mr. HAYES (Minister of Housing): I received a report on that subject yesterday and will be writing to the honorable member tomorrow.

HOUSING COMMISSION LAND PURCHASES.

Mr. SIMPSON (Niddrie): In view of the fact that counsel assisting the inquiry into Housing Commission land purchases is questioning witnesses from a police report of an inquiry into the Valuer-General's Office in 1974, will the Premier make that report available also to counsel representing the Leader of the Opposition, the honorable member for Bundoora and the honorable member for Richmond?

Mr. HAMER (Premier and Treasurer): I am not aware of the matter raised by the honorable member for Niddrie. I will have it investigated.

PETITION.

INTRODUCTION OF COMMUNITY LANGUAGES INTO SCHOOLS

Mr. FORDHAM (Footscray) presented a petition from certain citizens of Victoria praying that action be taken—

1. To provide opportunities within the schools for children whose first language is other than English to maintain and develop their language.

2. To ensure that there is no cutback in funds for the provision of English language teaching for such children.

3. To give the opportunity to all school children to learn several of the community languages spoken in Australia.

4. To allow teaching in the schools in languages other than English.

He stated that the petition was respectfully worded, in order, and bore 22,940 signatures from eight ethnic groups.

The Standing Orders were suspended to enable the petition to be read, and the petition was read by the Clerk. It was in the following terms—

THE HONORABLE THE SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY IN PARLIAMENT ASSEMBLED.

PETITION REQUESTING THE IMMEDIATE INTRODUCTION OF COMMUNITY LANGUAGES INTO THE CURRICULA OF PRIMARY, SECONDARY AND TECHNICAL SCHOOLS, IN RECOGNITION OF AUSTRALIA'S MULTICULTURAL AND MULTILINGUAL CHARACTER, AS RECOMMENDED IN THE REPORT ON TEACHING OF MIGRANT LANGUAGES IN SCHOOLS (1975).

Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that—

1. Children whose first language is other than English be given the opportunity within primary, secondary and technical schools, to maintain and develop their language as is their right.

2. There be no cutback in funds for the provision of English language teaching to children whose first language is other than English.

3. All school children, irrespective of language background, be given the opportunity to learn several of the community languages spoken in Australia.

4. The section of the 1958 State Education Act, Section 42.3 (*b*), which prohibits teaching in languages other than English in registered schools be repealed.

And your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

It was ordered that the petition be laid on the table.

On the motion of Mr. FORDHAM (Footscray), it was ordered that the petition be taken into consideration next day.

PAPERS.

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

Ombudsman—

Report for the year 1976–77.—Ordered to be printed.

Report for the quarter ended 30th June, 1977.—Ordered to be printed.

Statutory Rules under various Acts—

Discharged Servicemen's Preference Act 1943—No. 312.

Grain Elevators Act 1958—No. 311.

Health Act 1958—No. 313.

Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works Act 1958—No. 314.

Public Service Act 1974—No. 315.

PORT PHILLIP PILOTS SICK AND SUPERANNUATION FUND REGULATIONS.

STATUTORY RULE No. 105/1977.

Mr. BIRRELL (Geelong West): I move—

That the Port Phillip Pilots Sick and Superannuation Fund Regulations 1977, Statutory Rule No. 105/1977, be disallowed.

The SPEAKER (Sir Kenneth Wheeler): Is the motion seconded?

Mr. ROPER (Brunswick): Yes, I second the motion.

The SPEAKER: Copies of the regulations and the report will be available at the table.

Mr. BIRRELL (Geelong West): I move the motion not in my name as an individual, but as Chairman of the Subordinate Legislation Committee.

Honorable members may wonder why this General Business motion is on the Notice Paper because it is not the normal method by which a committee reports to the House. Under the Act by which it is established, the Subordinate Legislation Committee has twelve sitting days, from the time the regulations are presented to Parliament, in which to consider all regulations.

When a regulation requires extensive inquiry, five or six sitting days may well pass before a member of the committee actually sees the regulation, which means that the committee does not have a long time in which to consider it. In the case of the Port Phillip Pilot Sick and Superannuation Fund regulations the time was on the point of expiring before the committee came to a decision. The only action that I could take to hold the matter for further consideration was to use the technique of placing it under General Business on the Notice Paper. This was purely a holding technique which was available to me to permit the committee to further deliberate on the regulations. After much discussion and investigation, last Tuesday the committee decided to recommend that the regulation be disallowed. It is for that reason that I am addressing honorable members this morning.

The Port Phillip Pilot Sick and Superannuation Fund has been established for a considerable number of years. The parent Act was passed in 1887. Prior to that, in 1865 an Act called the Passengers, Harbors and Navigation Statute gave power to establish a superannuation fund, so the fund is of considerable antiquity. Since 1887 a small board, the Pilot Superannuation Board, has been in charge of this fund.

Mr. DUNSTAN: It is composed of representatives of the Marine Board and the Treasury.

Mr. BIRRELL: Members of the Marine Board, Treasury officers and Port Phillip pilots make up the board, which is in charge of this fund.

The committee has available to it four grounds for recommending disallowance of the regulation: First, that the regulation is outside power, *ultra vires;* secondly, that further clarity in the expression of the regulation is desirable; thirdly, that the regulation changes rights previously established by law; and, fourthly, in the opinion of the committee it would be preferable to deal with the subject-matter of the regulation by an Act of Parliament rather than to deal with it by regulation.

In this case the committee decided on the last two of those four options, namely, that in this case there were changes in rights previously established by law or certainly established by 100 years' usage and, more importantly, in the opinion of the committee, the subject-matter of the regulation would be better handled by an Act of Parliament than by regulation. It is on that last point that the report speaks.

I do not wish to go into the background of the regulation in detail, except to say that down the years when there have been upgradings in the superannuation amounts or pensions granted to pilots or retired pilots, or to widows or dependants of pilots, it has always been done across the board. A percentage increase has always been granted across the board to all beneficiaries. That has occurred for more than 100 years, so we are dealing with a recommendation for a change from a practice that has been evident in the administration of the fund for something like a century.

On this occasion the two key facts are that early this year Amending Regulations 1977 (Statutory Rule No. 27/1977) was passed, which increased pensions by approximately 5·5 per cent to all beneficiaries across the board. The committee let that regulation go through; there was no opposition to it. So early this year there was a general increase to all beneficiaries of the fund.

The regulation which has caused much concern is Statutory Rule No. 105/1977, the regulation which alters the whole set-up of distribution of benefits under the fund. This regulation increased the pensions for pilots who retired after 1st January, 1975 but prior to 1st July, 1976, and set new rates of pension for pilots retiring on or after 1st July, 1976, and for the widows and children of pilots retiring on or after 1st January, 1976. Pension payments increased by more than 50 per cent and substantial lump sum entitlements were incorporated. Those who had retired before that time, including dependants, got nothing from that last regulation.

The committee can only refuse to approve the regulation on the last ground under its charter, namely, that it primarily thinks that it would be far better that the subject matter be dealt with by Parliamentary enactment than by regulation. The committee considers that this has caused a lot of disturbance in the minds of beneficiaries under the fund, particularly those who retired earlier than 1st January, 1976, because the latest dispersal of funds is granted to a limited group within the fund and not uniformly as on past occasions.

There may be reasons why this should occur on this occasion, but it is better that the House deal with it and not a Parliamentary committee with limited powers in its own right. A superannuation fund that affects the income of people is a proper matter to be dealt with by Parliament.

That is the decision of the committee, which I am now conveying to the House. It is a matter that can be adjusted by Act of Parliament. It may be difficult because the committee was told in evidence that this regulation is the result of an actuarial investigation of the fund.

It has been suggested that serving pilots—those who were to gain the benefits of substantial rises in superannuation payments—might well have been threatening to take industrial action. If that is so, it seems uncharitable that the benefits were limited to the serving pilots rather than those who retired previously, or their widows or dependants. That is the basis of the decision of the Subordinate Legislation Committee. It was a difficult decision. Parties to the dispute were interviewed. There is a dispute behind the scenes. The committee interviewed Mr. A. J. Wagglen, chairman of the Pilot Superannuation Board, and Mr. R. G. Webster, member of the Pilot Superannuation Board, who have something to do with the fund, and also a Mr. John Dawson, the solicitor acting for the people requesting benefits under this regulation.

The committee has taken advice from Parliamentary Counsel and, all in all, it has delved into the subject fairly deeply. The committee feels that the matter should be dealt with by Parliamentary enactment. I think all honorable members should pay tribute to the work of the Pilot Superannuation Board through the years. The board has had a difficult job and the motion is not meant to be in any sense a criticism of it.

Mr. ROPER (Brunswick): The Chairman of the Subordinate Legislation Committee has put the case at some length and I shall not traverse the ground again. I wish to make two main points. Firstly, a massive change was proposed in the way in which superannuation fund benefits were to be paid out. If any honorable member wants to examine the massive change, it is set out in the minutes of evidence which have been tabled with the report.

The superannuation scheme had always worked on the basis of the fund being divided equally amongst all the beneficiaries—the retired and incapacitated pilots, widows and dependants. The new regulations proposed an entirely different system which involved three categories of

beneficiary depending upon when the pilot was incapacitated, when he died and so on. There was to be a substantial difference in the benefits payable.

Perhaps I could cite one example for the benefit of honorable members. A widow whose husband served for ten years and who comes within the pre-1975 category, would be in receipt of a pension of $2,231 while a future widow whose husband dies after the change in the scheme would receive more than three times that amount, $7,038 a year. Further examples are given in the minutes of evidence. Clearly a massive change was involved to a system that has operated for 100 years.

The committee examined very carefully whether the proposal offended rights previously established by law and it concluded that whilst certainly on a moral basis it seemed to do so, that was not the case legally. As such a major change was proposed, the committee felt that it should be a matter of Parliamentary enactment. If the Government wishes to proceed with three classes of beneficiaries, it should be a matter for this Parliament to determine. The Government can introduce a Bill which can be approved by the Government party at its own meeting, the other parties can also make a decision on the Bill and then Parliament can decide the matter. Personally, I hope that the final decision by the Government is not to open up this huge difference between classes of beneficiaries as proposed by the regulations. However, that is a matter for the Parliament to determine.

Increasingly in modern society, we live by regulation and not by Act of Parliament; we live by the executive Government. This is an important instance where a Parliamentary Committee has said that this process is not adequate; that Parliament should decide these basic matters and not the Governor in Council. For that reason, I have seconded the motion.

Mr. CRELLIN (Sandringham): I am particularly interested that this matter has come before the House because representations have been made to me by persons who will be very much affected by the proposed change in the superannuation scheme. My investigations have indicated that, if the new regulations are acted upon, there will be a disparity between the benefits payable. I am pleased that the Subordinate Legislation Committee has seriously examined the matter and made the report that it has suggesting that Parliament is the appropriate place for the further review of this important subject.

It is also worth noting that this action reflects very favourably on the system of Parliamentary committees which we have developed in Victoria as a fine art. I support the motion and hope that the whole matter will be reviewed in an endeavour to ensure that all persons involved in receiving benefits from the fund obtain a fair and equitable share of the funds involved.

Mr. STIRLING (Williamstown): I add my support to the motion. It should be made clear that the people actually affected by the regulations are fifteen retired pilots and twelve widows who are recipients of pensions from the fund. Only three of the fifteen retired pilots will receive the maximum pension whilst the other twelve will receive a minimal increase.

In a debate on this subject, it is important to point out the historical significance of the Port Phillip Sea Pilot Service which is unique in the world in the way that it operates. It has had a long history of safety and good pilotage within the port of Melbourne. To treat the twelve retired pilots and also the widows of deceased pilots so shabbily by this proposal should be condemned by all honorable members.

All honorable members have received a letter from a group of retired pilots explaining the whole matter. Those honorable members who took

notice of the letter and studied the position will see quite clearly how badly these people were to be treated. I welcome the motion which has been supported by the honorable member for Brunswick and the honorable member for Sandringham. I trust that the House will support it.

Mr. ROSS-EDWARDS (Leader of the National Party): What should be done by regulation and what should be done by legislation has long been a contentious matter. It is a very happy result that the Subordinate Legislation Committee should propose the motion because, in the eyes of the public, it is important that what is done by regulation or by legislation is not only right but that it should appear to be right. A group of people feel that a great injustice has been done to them, but this matter can be fully debated on a separate occasion.

It is satisfying to members of my party that at least the people affected know that their problem will be fully debated. I commend the Subordinate Legislation Committee on its efforts.

Mr. DUNSTAN (Minister of Public Works): I join with the Leader of the National Party and other speakers in commending the thorough research and effort that the Subordinate Legislation Committee has given to this matter and for bringing it to the attention of the House. The Government does not oppose the motion.

I give an assurance to the Chairman of the Subordinate Legislation Committee that the Government will give urgent consideration—this must be treated urgently—to introducing legislation, and I hope this can be achieved soon.

The motion was agreed to.

GRIEVANCES.

The SPEAKER (Sir Kenneth Wheeler): Order! The question is—

That grievances be noted.

Mr. McCLURE (Bendigo): It is time that the activities of Mr. B. K. Saunders of Melbourne were exposed in the House. Mr. Saunders operates a company called B. K. Saunders Pty. Ltd. Prior to the formation of that company this year, the operation of business was as B. K. Saunders and Co. I became aware of the activities of this man towards the end of last year when the manager of a building society in Bendigo drew my attention to the method by which Mr. Saunders was successfully defeating the provisions of the Local Government (House Builders' Liability) Act. Mr. Saunders lodged advertisements in newspapers, including the *Bendigo Advertiser*, to the effect that he could build brick veneer houses at very low cost. These advertisements attracted a number of people into making inquiries.

Mr. Saunders is a member of the Housing Industry Association, much to the embarrassment of that association. By referring to that fact in his literature, he gives the impression that he is a builder of some substance. At this stage I point out that Mr. Saunders is careful not to say that he is a builder, but claims to be a project manager. In the prospectus which he sends out to the people making inquiries, he makes many claims about the way in which he can allegedly successfully organize home building for people at less cost than they would otherwise pay. I believe he is being deliberately cunning in how he presents himself because, although he gives every indication of undertaking the role of builder, he is careful not to say so and, therefore, he has misled a number of people.

On page 2 of his prospectus, under the heading "Official Approvals and Inspections", Mr. Saunders states—

All permits, approvals and official periodic inspections are arranged by us—

That is his firm—

but not the payment of council fees.

This man operates by entering into an agreement with unsuspecting persons to supervise the construction of a house for them. Saunders undertakes to arrange sub-contractors, materials and so on, but in the building permit

the builder is specified as the person for whom the house is being built. Mr. Saunders does not take out the building permit; he requires the individual to do so. In this way he avoids the guarantee that goes with the Local Government (House Builders' Liability) Act.

I bring to the notice of the House the scurrilous way in which Mr. Saunders has relieved one couple, whom I know, of their life savings. In return, he has given them a partially completed dwelling, a tremendous amount of headaches and little prospect of completing the house in anything like a reasonable time for a reasonable cost. The couple to whom I refer are Mr. and Mrs. Ian Drill of Bendigo who responded to one of Mr. Saunders's advertisements earlier this year. He gave them a quote to build them a house for $36,769. Saunders was to be paid a minimum of 10 per cent for his alleged supervision. Before things progressed very far, Saunders told these people that he had decided to change his method of operation from site building to factory building. He established a factory in Essendon and then requoted the couple $34,769.

They were rather pleased to think that their home might be built for $2,000 less than previously quoted. Saunders required them to pay an ordering deposit of $100 when they signed the house order form. He then asked for $1,000 to start the work and said work would start on 14th May. At the end of May Saunders said that with the new type of construction he would require a new payment system. Up to this stage this seemed plausible enough and Mr. and Mrs. Drill parted with $14,000, their entire life savings, to this character. Saunders then commenced construction and got the house to the stage where the floor slab had been poured and the frame erected. I should point out that the frame did not, in fact, fit the slab and overhung in several places.

In early June, Saunders told Mr. and Mrs. Drill that they should select the type of bricks they wanted, which they did. He then told them they should order the bricks themselves as this would be more convenient. This seemed reasonable and, therefore, they ordered the bricks from a local company in Bendigo and they were delivered. Two months went by without further work even though the couple made constant telephone calls to Mr. Saunders, who continually promised them action. By this time they had parted with approximately $15,000. They had a house with a frame and a slab. Saunders said that before he could proceed further he would need more money. The couple could not obtain a progress payment from their bank until the house had reached lock-up stage. Consequently, they raised a personal loan—I think unwisely—and gave Saunders a further $6,000. At this stage their total commitment was in the vicinity of $21,000.

Since August three different bricklayers have walked off the job, claiming that they were worried about the way they were being treated by Saunders, whose reputation had apparently started to spread. It then came to light that the contractor who had put down the floor slab had been paid only half the amount owing to him, and that Saunders had said that if the contractor could arrange for a bricklayer, he would receive the other half of his payment. To his credit, the floor slab contractor found a bricklayer prepared to do the job and was given a cheque which was not honoured when presented at the bank. The bricklayers also became a little nervous and said that they would do the job only if Mr. and Mrs. Drill would further guarantee their payment. At this stage, Mr. and Mrs. Drill had virtually paid for a house which they did not have.

Last month Mr. Drill became extremely worried that things were not all they should be. He made personal approaches to Mr. Saunders in

Melbourne who, incidentally, is a most evasive gentleman. Mr. Drill understood that Mr. Saunders was to appear in the Bankruptcy Court on Tuesday, 27th September. He paid a visit to Saunders who told him he had a reprieve and that it appeared that a timber company might invest in his business and that everything would be all right. By this time Mr. Drill had had enough. He hired a truck, went to Saunders's factory and obtained sufficient material to at least complete the roof of the house.

He engaged Saunders in discussion, and Saunders agreed that the value of work performed to date would be about $16,000, that he would pay Mr. Drill $5,000, being the difference between what Saunders had received and the value of the work performed, and that Mr. Drill would take over the construction of the house. Needless to say, Mr. Saunders has not honoured that obligation. It now appears that Mr. Drill is $5,000 out of pocket.

I made inquiries through the Minister of Consumer Affairs about the way in which Saunders was advertising earlier this year. The Consumer Affairs Bureau conducted a comprehensive investigation into the activities of Saunders, as, I understand, did the Housing Industry Association. I am surprised to note —probably, in view of Saunders's history, I should not be in the least surprised—that Saunders signed an authority pursuant to the Bankruptcy Act on 30th August in which he appointed a Mr. G. O. Harrison as controlling trustee.

On 27th September a meeting of the creditors of Saunders was held to work out a deed of arrangement. It is significant that neither Mr. Drill and his wife nor several other people who have unfulfilled contracts with Saunders and who have paid large sums of money were included amongst the creditors.

The activities of Saunders as a person and as a company are to be deplored. This man—who I understand lives a high life—has no compunction in taking the life savings of individuals. He glibly gives assurances which amount to nothing and apparently is an expert liar, and I am amazed that he is allowed to get away with this sort of activity.

The Minister of Consumer Affairs has advised that, regrettably, the way in which Saunders has been advertising and operating appears to be outside the provisions of the Local Government (House Builders' Liability) Act and other provisions that exist for the protection of home buyers. The matter needs to be considered urgently by the Government. Naturally, scope must be allowed for an individual to build his own home, and it is inappropriate to require a person to indemnify himself against his own work. A scheme needs to be devised to prevent an operator like Saunders from holding himself out to be a project manager when he is really a builder or a con man, as was suggested by interjection, who talks people into taking out building permits as if they were the builder, then hiring Saunders to manage the project for them. The real effect of that is that Saunders is the builder and the people concerned are simply the customers.

According to a report that the Minister of Consumer Affairs has given me, it seems unlikely that Saunders has any assets of worth and that many people of whom the Ministry is aware appear to be owed thousands of dollars by him.

I hope the Government will take urgent action to overcome this type of problem and that in future people like Saunders will be prevented from operating.

Mr. TREZISE (Geelong North): I raise a matter of deep concern to the community, namely, the increasing number of Victorians, particularly young people, who are unemployed, and the lack of policies and action by the Victorian Government to correct the situation.

The increasing length of the dole queues in Victoria is having a depressive effect on the economy of the State. It also enforces idleness on thousands of young boys and girls who are becoming embittered, disillusioned and heartbroken. This will have further serious social consequences for all Victorians.

It is not good enough for the Government to try to hide the facts and push the problem under the carpet, as it did with a recent report from the committee appointed by the Government. The report recommended that about $12 million should be spent to provide jobs for 3,500 Victorians, but the Government rejected the recommendations. Despite assurances from the Minister of Labour and Industry that Labor Party members of the committee could request any evidence on the subject they wanted, he has now refused even to provide a copy of the report. This is not good enough.

It is cruel for Government supporters to say that most people who receive unemployment benefits are dole bludgers who do not want to work. The honorable member for Burwood emphasized this when he said that 83 per cent of people out of work in Victoria did not want to find jobs and were dole bludgers.

It is unrealistic for the Chief Secretary, who is in another place, to support that statement by saying that in his view 75 per cent of unemployed people in Victoria, particularly young people, do not want to find jobs. The Chief Secretary also said—and I assume this is the Government's attitude—that school leavers, migrants and married women should be crossed off the list of registered unemployed. It was cruel and callous for the Chief Secretary, when he was Acting Premier earlier this year, to say that school leavers—about 50,000 school children will leave school by Christmas—should not receive unemployment benefits for six months after they leave school. That means that it is the view of the Chief Secretary that children who leave school at Christmas to seek jobs after undertaking years of education should not receive unemployment benefits until July, 1978.

After all, the Government, the honorable member for Burwood and the Chief Secretary, in the election campaign of December, 1975, urged the parents of these children to vote for a Fraser Liberal Government because it would provide jobs for all. The same people who said that, now call the unemployed young people dole bludgers. They supported the present Prime Minister in his campaign to be elected Prime Minister of Australia by saying—and I quote from the policy speech of the Liberal Party dated 27th November, 1975—

> Only under a Liberal-National Country Party Government will there be a return to business confidence.
>
> Only under a Liberal-National Country Party Government will there be jobs for all who want to work.
>
> We will be generous to those who cannot get a job and want to work.

Today about 400,000 more people are out of work in Australia, many of them in Victoria, than were unemployed at that time.

It must be realized that people under the age of 21 years constitute 15 per cent of the work force and about 40 per cent of the unemployed in Victoria, and there is a danger that the younger generation is becoming alienated from society. It is not an exaggeration to say that this is an alarming trend that is threatening to end the traditionally democratic way of life of which Australians have been proud for many generations. After all, the reality is that these young people are losing faith in a democratic way of life which has promised them so much by educating them but has left them unable to obtain a job.

I am sure that every honorable member is concerned that these young people are starting to drop out of society, that they can be tempted by the unsavoury elements to the left of society or the unwanted elements to the right, or by the ratbag so-called religions which are being established day by day throughout the State. More of these kids are following these trends and they are undemocratic. As I said before, unless we act there is the danger that these kids will leave our way of life and follow the fringe elements to the left and the right. The great danger is that we will see in this country what has occurred in many overseas countries where people are not following our present way of life.

This has alarming social consequences and if the present trend continues a situation will arise in which the unemployed will be playing a larger part in the increasing incidence of crime, suicides, drug taking, mental illness, heart disease and even wife bashing.

Taking crime as an example, the biggest problems in the metropolitan area at present are the armed hold-ups, the bashings and the bank robberies. When we consider bank robberies and the number of people who have been arrested, we find that a large majority of those people are young unemployed people who commit a crime to obtain money to purchase drugs. I suggest that they turn to crime only because they cannot obtain a job.

It has also been accepted that the incidence of suicides has a parallel with the increase in unemployment. The director of the Link-Up welfare group for Melbourne, Mr. Dickinson, was reported recently as saying that his organization is receiving serious suicide calls every 30 hours and that this represented an increase of 30 per cent over those made last year. It was also his opinion that whereas in recent years the majority of people who threatened to commit suicide were in the mid-30 to 40-year-age bracket, the pattern today is that the majority of serious suicide calls are being made by young people in their late teens or early twenties.

The Alfred Hospital recently reported handling four serious suicide attempts a day. The Royal Melbourne Hospital dealt with two a day. The St. Vincent's Hospital also dealt with two a day. The Western General Hospital dealt with three suicide attempts a day and so did Prince Henry's Hospital. Most of those suicide attempts were made by people in their late teens or early twenties and 75 per cent of the suicide cases treated by the hospitals involved young females. This is indeed a serious situation.

It is vital that the Parliament and, particularly, the Government take action to combat the ever-increasing rise in the number of unemployed young people in Victoria today. But Victoria is spending less on combating unemployment than any other State in Australia. It has the worst record in Australia. I say that irrespective of the fact that the number of unemployed people in Victoria is fewer than that in many other States but the number out of work, whether it is 100,000 or 20,000, is no reason why Victoria should have a lower expenditure than the other States to combat the incidence of unemployment.

Conservative Governments are ever ready to point out, as occurred in recent weeks, the number of man-hours lost through industrial action, but Governments never point out the number of man-hours lost to a community through unemployment. The Commonwealth Employment Service figures for 1976-77 for Australia, and of course, in proportion, for Victoria, reveal that there was a loss of 3·1 million working days through industrial disputes but unemployment caused a loss of 68 million working days. The community suffered a financial loss because of the loss of

working days and unemployment is 21 times more responsible for lost man-hours than the problems created by industrial disputes in Victoria and Australia.

The Government never fully faces the problem. I invite honorable members to consider the recent cut-backs in health services and the announcement in recent days that at the Austin Hospital 150 jobs were lost by the cut-back in the construction of the nine-floor complex for which finance had been approved.

Another example is provided by the Police Force which in recent months has asked for the appointment of 300 public servants to take over the jobs presently performed by police officers. This would enable those officers to carry out normal outside duties directed towards combating crime but the Government, rather than creating 300 jobs, created a mere twelve.

The Government received a report from a committee of inquiry it had established and, if the recommendations had been acted upon and Government had been prepared to spend $12 million, an additional 3,500 jobs could have been provided. However, the Government hid the report under the carpet and failed to make a copy available to members of the Opposition even though the Minister gave an assurance that he would do so.

A comparison can be made with the New South Wales State Budget which was introduced during the past fortnight. In that Budget $38 million has been specifically set aside to help overcome the unemployment situation in the State. For example, the Government is giving full pay-roll tax rebates to employers who take on young people in their first year of employment. That will cost the Government $10 million but in Victoria, not 1 cent has been provided in that area.

In New South Wales the Government is also allocating $15 million for welfare housing but, in this State, not 1 cent has been allocated for this. The New South Wales Government is also allocating $8 million to municipal councils to assist in overcoming unemployment but in this State the comparable amount is only $1·3 million. Overall, we have a poor record in this State compared with the initiatives taken by the Government in New South Wales.

Therefore, all Victorians, irrespective of their political affiliation, should call upon this Government to catch up with the policies of other States and to tackle the alarming situation in Victoria where the dole queues of young unemployed people are growing longer and longer day by day.

I ask the Government to adopt policies similar to those of the other States and to act on the recommendations submitted by the Labor Party committee of inquiry which was conducted in recent months. Members of that inquiry travelled all over Victoria and spoke to the unemployed in Bendigo, Shepparton, Cohuna, Mildura, Ballarat and Geelong, as well as in other parts of the State. We learnt of the situation at first hand, and particularly of the disappointment and disillusionment of the young unemployed throughout the State over the failure of the Government to take action to reduce unemployment. These kids are right when they claim that they are denied their natural birthright in Victoria, that is a job when they have finished their schooling.

Mr. GUDE (Geelong East): The matter I wish to raise relates to inadequate police security on the Bellarine Peninsula. I was approached by the Drysdale Progress Association two or three weeks ago and I undertook to raise this matter when grievances were next debated. The area concerned covers 46 square miles and comes under the control of division 2 of the Barwon region which takes in the centres of Leopold, Drysdale and Clifton Springs. They

are three rapidly growing areas. I understand from Inspector Douglas, who is responsible for the area, that the population there is approximately 7,000, and that most of the people are part of young families.

In recent years there has been a minor wave of juvenile crime, levelled in particular against the building industry in Clifton Springs. I do not want to cast aspersions on the young people in the area; they are all from fine families and if some of them have strayed on one occasion, far be it from me to be critical. I believe the matter has been resolved. However, it points up a problem that the Government should recognize.

Population figures for the area indicate that in 1971 the total population was approximately 5,000 of which 1,444 were at Leopold, 913 at Drysdale, 408 at Clifton Springs, and the balance of approximately 2,000, which has remained fairly constant, in the rural part of the peninsula.

In 1975 there had been an increase of approximately 1,000 in the population of the region. Leopold had 2,127 inhabitants, Drysdale had 928, Clifton Springs had 656 and the population in the rural area had remained constant, at approximately 2,000.

On today's figures, which I have gleaned from the Shire of Bellarine, the population for the entire area is approximately 7,000 and that figure fits in with the information provided by the inspector. Two thousand of those people live at Leopold, 1,018 at Drysdale and 1,100 at Clifton Springs. It can be seen from these figures that over a decade a constant increase has occurred in the growth of the area. It can also be gleaned that Leopold is the largest of the more densely populated areas there.

At present a police station is located at Drysdale, to service the area. It houses Sergeant Evans, who has done a good job, and two additional men. That strength was obtained in 1975; from 1970 to 1975 there was a sergeant and one man. When the population increased by 1,000, an additional man was employed. Since 1975 a further population increase of 1,000 has occurred and it is reasonable that the residents should want the Government to provide an additional member of the force to help take care of the problems being confronted by the area.

The review that I have made points up another problem relating to a need for the establishment of a new police station to service the region. As I said earlier, the police station is located at Drysdale. At the time when only a sergent and one man were housed there, the building was probably adequate. In the past months I have raised with the Minister the standard of the police station, and I am pleased that the station was upgraded. None the less, the physical dimensions are such that the station should not be expected to house a sergeant and four others. There is a need to draw this matter to the attention of the responsible Minister.

As part of my investigation I found that a site has been reserved at Leopold on the corner of Kensington and Queenscliff roads, near the Leopold Primary School. I urge the Chief Secretary to take urgent measures to activate the building of a station at Leopold to house the police who service the district. I envisage that the site could eventually become the headquarters for the Bellarine Peninsula, and that traffic operations could be controlled from there. Eventually the Drysdale station could be closed or used for some other purpose. The time has come for the Government to draw up plans for the erection of the building. As I have adequately demonstrated, the area is growing rapidly, and I hope the Minister will take proper cognizance of that and get on with the planning process.

Whilst on the subject of police stations, I again draw to the attention of the Chief Secretary the state of the police station and the court house in

Geelong. I raised this matter once before and the station was upgraded, but an urgent need exists for a review of the court procedures at Geelong and of the dimensions and physical location of the court house, as well as a need to provide more space and better facilities for the officers who do such a tremendous job for the community of Geelong. Again I draw the matter to the attention of the Chief Secretary.

Mr. CATHIE (Carrum): During a previous grievance debate I raised the question of heavy metal pollution in Port Phillip Bay, and pointed out that information in the report of the marine chemistry unit indicated that for both the Corio Bay and the St. Kilda–Brighton areas the levels of cadmium and lead were far in excess of Victorian public health levels. That report indicated that the levels were amongst the highest reported anywhere in the world.

As a result of those claims the Minister for Conservation was reported in the *Age* of 8th October as dismissing that view as "alarmist nonsense". Those were the words of the Minister. However, only ten days later, the Minister of Health warned people who live around Port Phillip Bay, many of whom are amateur fishermen in the bay, not to eat too much flathead because of mercury contamination. That "alarmist nonsense" to which the Minister for Conservation referred is not what I have said; it is what the official reports of the Minister's department have stated and confirmed.

There is a second report, this time on mercury pollution. It is a background document from the *Ad Hoc* Heavy Metals in Fish Committee and is dated 1st September, 1977. It is entitled "Mercury Content of the Muscle Tissues of Sand Flathead from Port Phillip Bay." It was prepared by a senior research officer, Mr. T. I. Walker, of the Fisheries and Wildlife Division of the Ministry for Conservation. On the basis of that report, the Minister of Health sent out the press release of 18th October, 1977. The Minister then warned that because of a significant level of mercury above the permissible limits, health authorities in this State had strongly recommended that people should restrict their intake of flathead to a maximum of three meals a week and that pregnant women should eat no more than two meals of that fish a week.

Most of that press release was directed towards fish from the northern end of the bay, warning that that was where the mercury contamination was most serious. Indeed, the expressions "northern end" and "northern waters" occurred three or four times in the one page press release. However, one finds, on reading through the actual report, that it is clear that both the eastern and southern parts of Port Phillip Bay have mercury contamination readings in excess of the permissible level for health standards. I shall read some of the official figures in the report. Off Frankston, for example—it should be remembered that the standard for safety is 0·5 parts per million—mercury concentration in flathead was measured at 0·88 parts per million. In the area off Mornington to Mount Martha the mercury concentration was 0·7 parts per million. Both of those readings were in excess of the mean taken for all of the readings in that examination, which was 0·62, and all of those figures were in excess of the permissible levels to which I earlier referred.

The areas of this pollution and its source were well-known and were indicated in the body of the report. At the bottom of page 2 the report states—

> Relatively high mercury concentrations detected in the sand flathead from within Port Phillip Bay are a result of present and/or historic discharges of mercury.

Over the years, as industrial growth has continued, discharges of mercury into Port Phillip Bay have also continued. Page 3 of the report contains another indication of the concentrations of this metal in the bay—

> In addition the reported mercury concentrations within the sediments of the eastern streams—Mordialloc Creek, Patterson River and Kananook Creek—and occasionally elevated concentrations detected in the waters of these streams suggest that there is probably some input to the eastern region of the bay.

When one realizes that approximately 60 per cent of the input of receiving waters into Port Phillip Bay originates in the Altona Bay–Hobsons Bay area, and when one also realizes that this flow tends to move along the eastern coast of the bay, one can begin to understand the way in which mercury contamination exists in the eastern and south-eastern sections of the bay as well as in the northern areas. It would appear that the Minister of Health has been more concerned to minimize the extent of this pollution than to recognize its dangers, because he has called the public's attention only to the waters of the northern section of Port Phillip Bay.

I shall give the example of just one of the input streams mentioned in the report, Mordialloc Creek, which was referred to in question on notice No. 408, which I asked on 7th September, 1976. The answer to that question revealed that at least four out of the seven inlet drains into that creek had a much higher than hazard level of mercury; for example, in Dunlops drain the reading for mercury was more than 25 times the hazard level, which is the level recommended as a concentration in marine waters by the Environment Protection Authority of the United States of America. In the Mordialloc settlement drain the concentration of mercury was ten times that recommended level. It is unfortunate that the answer to the question indicates that no analysis was carried out at the mouth of the Mordialloc Creek, but the figures show that there must be a heavy concentration of mercury at that point, as well.

If there were any doubt that what the Opposition says about heavy metals, which are poisonous and toxic chemicals, entering Port Phillip Bay is correct and that it is not alarmist nonsense, as the Minister for Conservation described it, one would only need to refer to further reports emanating from the Minister's department. Further evidence was presented in a report prepared by the Fisheries and Wildlife Division as evidence for an appeals tribunal inquiry into discharges from the Werribee sewerage farm, probably in 1976, although the document I have is undated.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. McLaren): Order! The honorable member is continually quoting from documents. Does he intend tabling those documents or is he using his own words? I realize that the honorable member is also referring to notes, but I suggest that only limited extracts be quoted.

Mr. CATHIE: When citing an extract I shall make clear from which document the quotation comes, as I have been doing. I shall now quote from page 4 of the report, which states—

> The greatest potential source for the introduction of metals into the coastal environment will result from municipal waste waters.

On the next page the report points out that the majority of trace metals, such as cadmium, copper, lead, mercury and zinc, released into marine waters find their way to the sediments of the bay. There they remain for many years to come. But that is not what the Chairman of the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works has said. He has said that this toxic, poisonous material will be diluted and will not be a threat to the future health of the citizens of Melbourne. In an article in the *Herald* on 24th April, 1976, Mr. Croxford said that the amount of mercury allowed to be discharged for the farm was 490 lbs. each year. He said that that amount was being mixed with

180 million tons of water before reaching the bay, where further dilution occurs. The article continues—

> Mr. Croxford said that to quote annual quantities of discharge without mentioning the dilution factor gave an incorrect impression of the true position.
>
> The term "heavy metal pollution" was being used as a "scare phrase", he said.

If one reads the reports on the nature of this pollution, it is clear that once the sediments enter the bay they stay close to the point of discharge for many years and are not diluted in the waters of the bay as Mr. Croxford would like to suggest.

I have indicated that heavy metals are entering the bay through the discharge of trade wastes because of the trade waste agreements that have been entered into by the Board of Works. Once in the bay they disturb the particles and settle in the sediment. They can be moved by the flow of water and are in that way distributed over wider areas of the bay. As that is occurring, aquatic plants and animals take them up and accumulate them and the movement of the aquatic animals distributes them ever more widely around and across the bay.

Shellfish, in particular, take up and accumulate heavy metals from extremely low concentrations in both the waters and the sediment and are able to magnify the concentrations of the poisonous metals in their bodies by up to 10,000 times. Therefore land animals feeding on shellfish, and man feeding on shellfish such as the mussels around Port Phillip Bay, may receive high concentrations of these toxic metals.

The report to which I have just referred concludes that because of the association of heavy metals with sediments, once heavy metals are in the bay their effects can be exerted for decades after discharges have ceased. In other words, the effects of what has occurred in the past are there now and in many cases the damage has been done already and it will not be easy to overcome further damage in the future.

Some of the experts who have examined the problem—and the report quotes a Mr. O'Sullivan—assert that there may now be a strong case for ensuring that biocumulative or toxic conservative materials do not enter the normal waste disposal stream. Despite conclusions such as that, new licences are still being issued for the disposal of liquid trade wastes into the sewer and at present more than 174 million gallons of polluted liquid wastes are being discharged into the environment each week.

In answer to a recent question on notice I was informed that the Board of Works had about 2,979 trade waste agreements in force at the end of the 1976–77 financial year and that those agreements legalized the emission of approximately 792,000 kilolitres a week into the environment. In that year alone a further 220 new agreements were entered into. With the closure of the Sunshine tip to trade wastes because of the very real danger of aquifer pollution, there is virtually nowhere for these wastes to go other than into the sewers and ultimately into Port Phillip Bay.

It is time that the Government once again considered the need for the long-awaited liquid trade waste treatment plant, which it was originally suggested should be constructed at Brooklyn. After all, in conjunction with local authorities and municipalities, the Government has finally been able to reach agreement on some sort of regional solid refuse disposal system. If an agreement can be reached on solid wastes, it should not be too difficult to reach a similar agreement on liquid trade wastes.

It is time that the State Government drew up a master plan to cope with pollution, not only bacterial pollution which is caused by the slowing down of the sewerage programme, but also with heavy-metals pollution to which I have referred. If nothing is done, heavy metals will continue to be discharged into Port Phillip Bay. It is all very well for the Minister for Conservation to say that this is

alarmist nonsense and sweep many of the reports under his carpet, but it is long past the time for the Government to end its complacency and take the proper action to protect the community.

Mr. COLEMAN (Syndal): I raise a matter for the attention of the Minister of Consumer Affairs concerning the conduct of public opinion polls. Recently, a poll was conducted and the results indicated that a preponderance of the community was in favour of an increase in wages for the Latrobe Valley workers. The poll was conducted over the telephone and the calls were registered on a machine. This is completely different to a poll which involves a verbal discourse between the person conducting the poll and those from whom he is seeking an opinion.

The credibility of these telephone polls is now at stake because, yesterday, I was given a statement which clearly indicates that the telephone equipment can be tampered with and in fact has been tampered with. It states—

> That on Thursday, the 20th day of October, 1977, H.S.V. Channel 7 Melbourne (Willesee at 7 Programme) conducted a telephone survey seeking public opinion in favour or against the pay rise demanded by the SEC Latrobe Valley maintenance workers.
>
> The necessary telephone facilities for this purpose were provided by Telecom Australia by way of two telephone numbers 61061 for the "Yes" vote, and 61071 for the "No" vote.
>
> During one of the routine inspections of automatic exchange testing equipment at the Batman Exchange I did notice that the automatic dialing equipment was set up to dial 61061 causing excessive meter readings for the "Yes" vote. No such equipment was connected to the line 61071 for the "No" vote.
>
> I drew the attention of the officer in charge to this matter. He replied that Batman was not the only exchange indulging in such practice.
>
> To the best of my knowledge connection of the automatic dialing equipment was not authorized by the management of Telecom Australia.

That statement cleary lays it on the line that the security of consumers is being threatened. The credibility of telephone opinion polls is being damaged because it is possible to alter the readings on the machines which record the differing views in order to suit the whims of those who have a vested interest in achieving a certain result.

Mr. JASPER: It could have been the other way.

Mr. COLEMAN: It may well have been but in fact twenty lines were allocated to each of these numbers and twelve of the "No" lines were constantly engaged because, contrary to normal practice with this telephone equipment, these twelve lines did not disconnect after a call was registered. Therefore, it was possible for a caller to prevent eight or ten opinions being registered that way by not replacing the receiver.

Quite obviously somebody within the internal operations of Telecom Australia and the Batman telephone exchange, on behalf of fellow unionists, has been stacking, as it were, an opinion poll. This places very much in jeopardy the credibility of these polls in the future. I should like the Minister of Consumer Affairs to follow this up with the Minister for Posts and Telecommunications to ascertain whether security can be guaranteed for any future opinion poll conducted over the telephone.

Mr. SIMMONDS (Reservoir): I raise a number of matters concerning the actions of the Government on industrial relations in this State. The recent State Electricity Commission dispute is a classic example of how not to administer the industrial laws in this State. My opinion has been reinforced by an article in the *Herald* on Tuesday last when the Premier was reported to have said that it was his considered view that, during the dispute, communications between the instrumentalities and the Government were at some fault and

that he would have to take some steps to speed up the arbitration system.

The reality is that the Premier, either through incompetence or by design, caused the State Electricity Commission to understand that the Government's policy was that, under no circumstances, was any settlement to be reached or any wage increases to be agreed to in negotiations with the unions concerned. Throughout the dispute the State Electricity Commission was forced by the Government to reject any concept of negotiation or conciliation on wage rates for its employees in the Latrobe Valley. The actions of the Government frustrated the arbitration system to the extent that a relatively simple industrial dispute, one in which any normal employer would have negotiated and settled, was compounded to the extent that the State suffered enormous losses because of a discontinuation of power supplies.

If Parliament is to take any action in a situation such as this, it must examine the role of the State Co-ordination Council and the fact that the Minister of Transport, who is chairman of that committee, is totally incompetent in the matter of negotiations and cannot come to terms with his responsibility of enabling claims of employees of State instrumentalities to be considered on a reasonable and just basis. The State Government is currently faced with a log of claims from the transport unions and the State Co-ordination Council is again involved. It has again adopted the stand that no adjustment is to be made to increase wage rates, regardless of whether anomalies exist.

The fact that anomalies existed within the State Electricity Commission has been acknowledged by all parties. The Premier has acknowledged that the arbitration system cannot rectify these anomalies because of the indexation guidelines. The same honorable gentleman, in every national wage case, has intervened to oppose full indexation of wages. He accepted that the indexation guidelines were in fact a straitjacket but maintaned the stance that the guidelines were introduced as part of the concept of wage indexation and that the straitjacket prevented any adjusment to any anomalies, or an examination of claims by workers in State instrumentalities. The House must recognize the position of industrial relations as exposed by the State Electricity Commission dispute, but it is a continuing position.

The sitting was suspended at 1.1 *p.m. until* 2.4 *p.m.*

Mr. SIMMONDS: Before the suspension of the sitting I was indicating to the House that the industrial relations policy of the Government has created industrial disputes. It has disrupted the economy and unless its policy is changed it will continue to do so. In recent weeks half a million workers in industry have been stood down because of the failures of the Government's policies and because the Government appears not to appreciate that the basic and fundamental issues in the State Electricity Commission dispute are anomalies in pay and a method of resolving those anomalies.

The reason is that the State Electricity Commission workers have had the $26 a week State incremental payment sector of their wage pegged for some 20 months. In the same period there has been a 20 per cent inflation rate. In that 20 months, the value of the currency has depreciated and the value of wages has depreciated by 20 per cent. The dispute was aimed at achieving rectification of the existing anomalies. For instance, a tradesman working for a private contractor alongside State Electricity Commission employees was receiving $40 a week more for performing the same task, and a truck driver's assistant working alongside a tradesman's assistant was receiving $146.50, whereas the tradesman's assistant was receiving $134.20 a week. The starting rate of a fitter was $162.40 to $162.80.

When these figures are related to the wage structures of the male average earnings in the last figures from the statistical services compiled by the Commonwealth Bureau of Statistics, they show the male average earnings as $202. That is not the average wage, but simply a statistical figure. It is an indication of the sense of injustice that these workers feel when they read in the press of literally millions of dollars being made from land speculation and that those land speculators are paying vast sums of money into Liberal Party campaign funds. When they compare the measure of justice they are receiving in wages and conditions with how the people who are responsible for governing this State are conducting themselves, it is no wonder they are dissatisfied.

The result of the industrial relations policy of the Government is that people in the Latrobe Valley are now united as they have never been before. They have a concept of injustice which they will hold against this Government for as long as they can remember.

There are other sectors in the State instrumentalities in which there are anomalies and injustice. If the arbitration system is again manipulated to deny consideration of those claims, there will certainly be more disputation.

I refer to the massive unemployment in the State and the latest statistics compiled by the Commonwealth Employment Service for the month ended September, 1977. This trend should be considered by the Government. At a time when some 4,661 apprentices in the State are seeking apprenticeships in the skilled trades, there is a rising and significant increase in the level of unemployment in the skilled sector. The figures for the end of September, 1976, compared with the end of September, 1977, in the skilled building and construction trades show that there were 1,479 unemployed at the end of September, 1976, and 3,047 unemployed at the end of September, 1977. In the skilled metal and electrical trades, 2,175 were unemployed at the end of September, 1976, and 3,080 at the end of September, 1977. This is almost a doubling of unemployment in the skilled trades, as a result of policies introduced in the Federal Budget and administered by the State Government.

There should be no mistake that those policies were designed to bring about a level of unemployment which would whip the work force into line and into accepting Government policies.

The *Herald* of 4th July last described the Budget as a policy for new misery. The *Herald* does not usually support the Labor Party, but the article stated that—

> Drastic cuts in hospital, school construction and sewerage programmes are the prospect for Australia in this new financial year because the Commonwealth in the Loan Council has restricted States' borrowings to a 5 per cent rise, less than half the rate of inflation.

The article continued—

> Unemployment, on data claimed to be taken from the Commonwealth's own calculations, is forecast to reach 7 per cent within a year.
>
> In other words, at a time when the individual and social misery of unemployment will widen, while the States have impeccable credentials for securing available overseas loan money, and while essential development and health programmes are scrapped, hundreds of thousands of Australians will stay out of work.

This is the present situation in Victoria. The certainty is that the level of unemployment, which is the highest since the depression of the 1930s, will continue to rise. With the implementation of policies designed to create unemployment, the kinds of statistics to which I referred in the monthly report for September of the Commonwealth Employment Service will continue.

I take a specific illustration of the implementation of the cuts in Federal funding and matching reductions in the State Budget which apply to the Austin Hospital construction programme, and shall demonstrate what

they have meant. The amount of $9·6 million was required to continue the construction of a nine-storey building to provide for the increasing needs of people in the Diamond Valley–Greensborough area in the north-eastern region of the metropolitan area. The honorable member for Ivanhoe announced to the press that $4·5 million would be provided to enable the construction to continue. However, what he did not say was that that represented a cut from the requirement of $4·6 million. As a result contracts were suspended a fortnight ago and electricians, plumbers and other people working on the building construction could not continue working. The penal provisions of the contracts will cost the hospital, and ultimately the State, about $200,000, and delay the opening of the building by at least twelve months. It is expected that an additional $2 million will eventually be added to the cost of the building. This is the result of the economic policies being applied in Victoria at the request of the masters of Victorian Government supporters in Canberra.

The hospital wants to continue the building programme, so it will have to try to borrow through private banks the $4·5 million that is required. Interest rates payable on the loan would be $60,000 less than the cost of the penalties involved in the cessation of the contracts. If Government approval is given, the hospital can obtain private bank finance at a cost of $140,000, compared with incurring contract penalties of $200,000. The Government has got itself into a ridiculous position. It is presiding over the worst level of unemployment known in Victoria and reducing expenditure on building programmes, which is contrary to the concerns of every socially minded Government in the western World.

I invite honorable members to examine the operations of the Federal Government. It does not seem to appreciate that the State economy is increasingly falling into the grip of people who own large enterprises—multi-national companies that manipulate the economies of States and countries. An article in today's *Australian Financial Review* illustrates the point admirably when it states that the dividend rate of the Utah Development Corporation is now 187 per cent. Funds in Australia are plundered by the operations of the friends of the Victorian Government in Canberra, and can be directed back to the headquarters of the Utah Development Corporation in the United States of America. The article states, *inter alia*—

> In 1975 Utah Development Corporation paid $79 million in dividends out of net earnings of $101 million, or about 78 per cent of profits.
>
> In 1976 Utah Development Corporation made $90·8 million in dividends out of earnings of $1·37 million, a rate of 66 per cent.
>
> The dividend rate rose sharply in the first six months of the current year dividends totalling just over $70 million paid out of earnings of $83 million, a rate of 84 per cent.

So it continues and now the dividend rate is 187 per cent.

A similar thing is happening with an enterprise that is well known to Government supporters, the Ford Motor Company. The operations of that company in West Germany in 1976 showed that the company is returning to its parent company 720 million Deutsche Mark or 183·2 million pounds sterling, which is equivalent to a dividend of 100 per cent.

About 40 per cent of the total number of unemployed in Victoria are young people. The Federal Government has issued a policy that unemployment benefits will not be paid to school leavers who try to enter the work force at the end of the school year; they will have to wait until after the schools open again in February next year. These children will join the mass of unemployed people, but the payment of benefits will be delayed and made retroactive instead of being paid up to the current entitlement. Thus there will be a delay

in registration for unemployment benefits and in payment, but the school leaver will not even be able to register as unemployed.

As a result of the operations of the same multi-national companies in West Germany, unemployed workers between sixteen and nineteen years of age are listed in June as 18·6 per cent of the total work force. This conforms with the figures that apply throughout Europe and the countries in which the Ford Motor Company and the other multi-national companies are operating.

The Victorian Government should recognize the problem that confronts it and should accept that the solution for the restoration of the economy is not to pay out masses of money to land speculators, as occurred in the matter that is now the subject of the land deals inquiry. Instead the Government should spend money usefully in a public works programme designed to provide real employment. It is of little use to provide apprenticeship training schemes, youth programmes or any other devices that the Government has provided to give the public some concept of the degree of youth unemployment. It is of no use to train people for jobs that do not exist.

The New South Wales Government invested $38 million in its Budget to boost jobs. It provided $8 million for council works, $15 million for welfare housing and included tax rebates to companies for employing young people. Those propositions by the New South Wales Government Budget showed the way.

If the Victorian Government has any concern for the people in Victoria who have been cut adrift by the friends of the Victorian Government in Canberra, it should legislate in the interests of the community it was elected to represent. It should get rid of the State Co-ordination Council and set up a labour advisory council so it can engage in meaningful industrial relations and provide employment in instrumentalities on the construction of building projects instead of creating confrontations with unions. It should proceed with a works programme instead of presiding over the misery of ever increasing unemployment.

Mr. BIRRELL (Geelong West): My grievance is the tremendous amount of unemployment that has been generated by unilateral industrial action. Honorable members have just heard a tirade about unemployment and about the catastrophes in Victoria resulting from the policies of the national Government. That is fair enough, but the honorable member for Reservoir should realize that unemployment of 450,000 people has been deliberately created as a result of the industrial action in the Latrobe Valley over the past few weeks.

That action was supported by the Opposition because its members said nothing against it.

The State Co-ordination Council has been mentioned. How can we have a system of State administration operating under a countless number of State awards without having some type of co-ordination? The position would be a shambles if there was no co-ordination. After all, if there is one thing which should be seen to be done with State awards and State employees, it is that everything is fair between them. Before the establishment of the State Co-ordination Council, the situation was like a dog's breakfast. There were some employees receiving a lot and some receiving very little. There was no co-ordination between awards and the paraphernalia connected with the wage-making system.

One of the actions which the State undertook a few years ago was to create the State Co-ordination Council, which supervises the various groups of State employees. The function of the State Co-ordination Council is to ensure that people in various categories of State employment are treated equally and fairly. But for the establishment of that council, there would have been more

industrial trouble. That is one of the bright spots, because State employees know they are receiving fair treatment through the existence of the State Co-ordination Council.

Another thing that alarms me is that when a strike in a vital industry occurs its effect quickly runs through the total community. If we had a civilized community there would be no strikes. As we are an uncivilized community to some extent, we have to tolerate some strike action, which just seems to be an automatic right. In a semi-civilized society, no strikes would be permitted in essential works.

All honorable members will agree that in some avenues of activity in the community strike action should be outlawed altogether. These would include those services which affect the health of the community, such as sewerage and water supply. The power production industry should be outside the realm of strike action, as should be the public transport sector and perhaps three or four other industries which provide the basic structure of the society in which we live. If this proposition were put to the public fairly, it would be approved by something like 90 per cent of the community. There is no doubt that it would receive massive public support.

I know that the International Labour Organization Convention has the support of members of the Opposition, but only when it suits them. It espouses that strike action should be tolerated within the community, but there is an exception to every rule and we should look for a system which makes it impossible for strike action to occur especially in declared essential services.

If people are engaged to work in those essential services, they should be made to sign an undertaking not to strike. This would be one way of providing a reasonable solution to free ourselves of the trouble caused to the whole community and other workers when strikes occur in selected avenues of employment.

What happens when transport workers go on strike in Melbourne? More than half a million people are affected just because the rail and tram workers go out; they never think of their fellow workers. The same situation occurred when 2,000 workers in the Latrobe Valley went on strike; more than 450,000 people were put out of work. That is a huge displacement of labour. Trade unionists were on the dole or were chasing around for food vouchers so that they could buy perishable goods. That is not the type of society in which I want to live and the sooner we rid ourselves of the problems which create it, the better off we will be.

I am also disturbed about the arbitration system. During the Newport power station dispute, an agreement was reached between the State Government and the unions involved. It was agreed that a committee be appointed to carry out further investigation. The decision of that committee would have been cheered if it had gone a certain way. However, it did not go that way, and immediately the decision was announced, the solemn agreement which had been reached just did not register; it was trodden on and thrown in the dirt. The Opposition allied itself with its friends in the trade union movement and stated that the agreement was not worth the paper on which it was printed. It would have been if the decision had gone the other way! Then there would have been trouble if the Government had reneged on the agreement. The trade unionists would have marched up Bourke Street in their thousands behind their banners and would have been knocking on the front door of Parliament House. All of this is a form of modern treachery.

In the Latrobe Valley, when a decision was given by the Arbitration Commission it was to be accepted. What happened? The decision of the commission was given but, as it was not in the workers' favour, the agreement was not worth a crumpet and the workers continued the strike.

Mr. FORDHAM: The honorable member obviously has no appreciation of the complexity of the situation.

Mr. BIRRELL: But the commission heard the arguments and reached a decision.

Mr. FORDHAM: And it has made another decision now.

Mr. BIRRELL: At what stage should abritration come into a dispute? If, on this third occasion the commission does not produce a decision which is better than the previous two, will the workers walk out again and throw the State into total chaos once more?

Wage justice is all right, but when work is taken away from other workers, it is not so good. The Latrobe Valley workers are receiving about $200 a week, so we are not dealing with an underpaid group. They also receive the benefits of State superannuation, being members of the best superannuation fund in the Commonwealth. They also receive other benefits from their employment, so surely that must be worth something to them. Further, they enjoy the stability of being State-employed workers and I assume there are many fringe benefits in their employment. However, that still does not satisfy their demands.

The point I am trying to make is twofold. First, unemployment has an effect on the national economy, and there should not occur again the situation in which many people are forced out of employment by a small minority striking in an essential service. Secondly, we should look to the day—hopefully it will not be too far distant—when essential services are declared to be strike-free for all time.

We should have an arbitration system which will not allow what occurred in the Newport power station and Latrobe Valley disputes. I refer to the fact that the parties agreed to abide by the decision of the commission but the decision went one way and the workers did not agree with it. In those circumstances they should not be allowed to go back on the agreement just because it does not suit them.

I mentioned the International Labour Organization Convention. Within that convention is a provision which permits the work force to withdraw its labour—in other words, to go on strike. That is agreed to by the Commonwealth of Australia. Another interesting convention requires that enlistment in unions should be voluntary. That is also endorsed by Australians. They are wholeheartedly in favour of one convention but totally against another.

The previous speaker spoke about unemployment but he supports action of the type that brought about the unemployment not of a few thousand but of 450,000 recently.

Mr. JONES (Melbourne): Shortage of time prevents me from taking up the challenge thrown out by the honorable member who has just resumed his seat. I only point out that the honorable member does not grasp what a fragile concensus a society like ours rests upon. The honorable member deplores confrontation but it takes two to make a confrontation, and the records of the State Government and the State Electricity Commission in this regard are not good.

In this grievance debate I wish to refer briefly to several matters. I wish to say something about the transport disadvantages of the Greensborough electorate. I believe Greensborough is particularly disadvantaged by 22 years of Liberal Party rule in this State and 22 years of Liberal Party planning failures.

Mr. JONA: What interest has the honorable member in that electorate?

Mr. JONES: I have had a long interest in the electorate and have campaigned there in every election since 1970—with some success, I might say. With the sprawling nature of the electorate, population density is too low for regular bus services to operate properly. The

result is that people are forced to rely essentially on their own cars. Mounting motorists' costs mean that more and more people are paying an increasing share of their weekly household budget on travel and obtaining less and less value for it. Looking at the "S" shape of the Hurstbridge railway line through Greensborough, Montmorency, Eltham and Diamond Creek, it is obvious that the area ought to have "demand response" bus services. I know that the honorable member for Burwood who has recently acquired some interest in transport will know that means "dial-a-bus". The Hamer Government has been far too timid in experimenting with new transport plans. A Labor Government would press ahead to complete the double track to the city as soon as possible and would ask the Commonwealth Government to provide substantial sums for investment in new rolling-stock.

Mr. ROSS-EDWARDS: How much would the Labor Government ask for?

Mr. JONES: I would ask for $50 million immediately.

Mr. ROSS-EDWARDS: That would do the drawings.

Mr. JONES: If we had gone ahead with the Australian urban passenger train which was promoted by my namesake, Mr. Charlie Jones, when he was Federal Transport Minister, rolling-stock would be coming off into the Victorian system more cheaply than it is now, and it would be of better quality.

In the Greensborough electorate the rolling-stock of the Victorian Railways is aptly named. Pre-World War 1 rolling-stock is quite commonplace there, and it is not uncommon to see graffiti like "Relieve Mafeking" and "Hang the Kaiser" scrawled on its ancient walls. The electorate ought to have better public transport than it has now.

The second point that I wish to raise, while I am still here and have the chance, is that figures contained in a confidential report of the West Gate Bridge Authority confirm that the Fairhurst scheme would have saved money if it had been adopted for the reconstruction of the West Gate Bridge. I direct attention to my speech on the resumption of the debate on a Ministerial statement on the West Gate Bridge on 20th September, which is reported between pages 9691 and 9709 of *Hansard*. The figures are contained in the nineteenth report of the Directorate of Engineering entitled, curiously, "Visit to West Germany, England and Scotland" by H. G. Wolfram and dated 20th January, 1972. Mr. H. G. Wolfram was the principal opponent of Dr. Fairhurst's scheme A which involved constructing two additional piers under side spans 10–11 and 14–15, the two most dangerous stress points in the bridge, in addition to strengthening the cables. Mr. Wolfram pushed for adopting a lighter metal surface called "battledeck." I shall read to the House the details of the report.

Pages 7–8:

The following cost comparison was prepared, based on an earlier approximate estimate prepared by Dorman Long-Holland Joint Venture on 22nd October, 1971. The estimate amends the figures of the earlier joint venture estimate by adjusting the quantity of steel to allow for the reduced width over which the deck will be replaced, by excluding work in new span 10–11 for comparative purposes and by using a revised unit rate per ton of fabricated deck panels.

(*a*) ADDITIONAL COSTS.

that is, by adopting the Wolfram–Roik plan, Scheme "B"—

	$
1. Dismantle existing deck 1700T @ $25/ton	42,500
2. Fabricate orthotropic deck 3500T @ $420 per ton	1,460,000
3. Assemble orthotropic deck on boxes 3500T @ $85/ton	300,000
4. Erect orthotropic plate on cantilevers 1400T @ $60/ton	84,000
5. New ribs 70T @ $500/ton	35,000
	1,921,500
Say	2,000,000

(*b*) SAVINGS ACHIEVED.

that is, by rejecting the Fairhurst plan. Scheme "A"—

	$
1. Reinforcement	256,830
2. Soffit (Form and strip)	167,800
3. Edge Beam (Form and strip)	44,600
4. Concrete 4-in. slab	137,500
5. Concrete 1-in. extra thickness	15,240
6. Shear Connectors	72,000
	693,970
Multiply by 2415/2782 Say	600,000
7. Cost of 2 extra piers under side spans	700,000
8. Strengthening of piers (extra)	36,000
9. Strengthening of steelwork (extra)	34,000
10. Strengthening of cables	165,000
	1,535,000
Say	1,500,000

6. Hence extra cost is $500,000. No allowance has been made for possible savings due to reduction of construction time which might result from concreting of deck.

Those figures are an admission that in 1972 the Fairhurst scheme was admitted to have cost $500,000 less than the scheme adopted on the recommendation of Mr. Wolfram and Dr. Karlheinz Roik of West Germany. This report is a direct repudiation of the claim by Mr. Oscar Meyer, Chairman of the West Gate Bridge Authority, that the Fairhurst scheme was rejected because it would have cost more. If Fairhurst had been retained the bridge would have been completed by 1974 at a much lower cost and would have been even safer. Inefficient supervision by the Honorable R. J. Hamer, M.L.C., as he then was, and the Honorable A. J. Hunt, M.L.C., as successive Ministers for Local Government, has landed this State with an $80 million blunder.

This is further evidence in support of our request that the original Royal Commission on the West Gate Bridge ought to be reconvened so that the Fairhurst proposal can be re-examined.

Mr. Speaker, you will be glad to know about the good tidings that came out of the Australian Labor Party conference held at the Collingwood Town Hall last week-end. One of those good tidings was the adoption of a new road safety policy. As a Federal election is about to take place, one matter which ought to be raised during the election campaign is the cut-back by the Fraser Government of the amount spent on road safety measures, particularly on road safety research. The last Hayden Budget allocated $2·124 million for road safety compared with $790,000 allocated in the present Lynch Budget. When one realizes that one person is killed on our roads every two and a half hours and that approximately ten people are seriously injured every hour, it is hard to imagine a more extraordinary example of false economy than the Fraser Government's attempt to save $1·5 million.

The preamble of the road safety policy adopted by the Labor Party last week-end states—

> Road deaths and injuries are a major national disaster. Currently 90,000 people are injured and 3,700 killed on Australian roads each year, imposing an intolerable burden on families and the community. In Victoria, the totals are 18,000 injured and 800 killed each year—a cost to the taxpayer of over $340 million.
>
> Road trauma is a result of an increasingly motorized and competitive society, where citizens' interests are subordinated to market forces. Their influence on those under 30 in their use of cars and motor cycles is reflected by the fact that 63 per cent of injured belong to that group, 50 per cent are under 25 and 25 per cent are between 17 and 20 years.
>
> Victoria's motor accident death rate—per 10,000 vehicles or per 100,000 population—is about 10 per cent lower than the rest of Australia and the injury rate is about one-third lower.
>
> There are slightly more fatal accidents in the metropolitan statistical district compared with the rest of Victoria and more than twice the number of "injury only" accidents in the metropolitan area.
>
> An average of 85 per cent of drivers killed and 72 per cent of drivers injured in Victoria are male. About 73 per cent of road users killed and 63 per cent of road users injured are male.

Aggressive or drunken driving is overwhelmingly caused by male drivers. Over 50 per cent of the road trauma is associated with blood alcohol levels of 0·05 and over.

Excessive psychological dependence on the car has made it an increasingly expensive status symbol, an example of "mobile privatism"—where the isolated driver may feel that his car is an extension of home—an outlet for anxiety, masculine aggression (*machismo*) and compensation for sexual frustration, or a sense of personal inadequacy rather than a rational mode of transportation in urban areas.

Under the heading, "Drivers, riders, pedestrians (or human factors)", the policy states—

Faster and more powerful vehicles need rapid reflex response for safe use. However, ageing, fatigue, alcohol, loss of concentration and other related factors slow down human reflexes significantly. The widening gap between vehicle capacity and reflex response in drivers, pedestrians and other road users must be compensated for by greater understanding of how road systems work, improved driver education and reduced psychological dependence on the car.

Labor will plan education programmes at all levels and in the mass media to emphasize defensive driving and the concept of driving as a team sport in which survival depends on co-operative use of road space, not on competitive use. Such programmes would direct attention to anti-social and self-defeating elements in driving, such as speeding and the use of alcohol, drugs and analgesics. Its safety education programme will however be concentrated on those groups most at risk; children, old people, pedestrians, cyclists and motorists.

Labor will initiate immediate research into the specific factors in driver behaviour causing high incidence of road accidents.

Labor will ask the Commonwealth Government to restrict advertising campaigns for vehicles which emphasize that speed= power, and other factors encouraging aggressive driving.

Labor will increase penalties for using alcohol, drugs and analgesics by drivers, as, for example, under Swedish law.

The SPEAKER (Sir Kenneth Wheeler): Is the honorable member reading the whole of this?

Mr JONES: I have almost reached the end.

The SPEAKER: I remind the honorable member that the grievance debate is not an opportunity of expressing policy.

Mr. JONES: This is a matter of great grievance in the community, Sir. The policy continues—

Labor will repeal laws or regulations requiring provision of substantial car parking areas at hotels. To cope with peak drinking hours at hotels where public transport is available, provision of or access to a shuttle bus service shall be a condition of the issue or renewal of hotel licences.

Labor will introduce a system of graded licences in which further tests will be required before licencees are permitted to drive fast, powerful or poorly protected vehicles.

The point I am concerned to stress is that, as is often said, the most dangerous part in any car is the nut behind the wheel.

I draw attention to the valuable work carried out in this area by Mr. Colin Campbell, O.B.E., of Lions International road safety campaign.

Mr. SCANLAN: Hear, hear!

Mr. JONES: I am pleased to see that the Minister joins my commendation of Mr. Campbell's work. Mr. Campbell has campaigned most vigorously on the matter of road safety and he makes the point—with which I wholeheartedly agree—that something should be done about liquor advertising. Liquor advertising ought to contain a warning in the same way that cigarette advertising warns that "Smoking is a health hazard". Liquor advertising should include the warning that "Alcohol is a driving hazard". That point has not been hammered home sufficiently well. Surely enough death and carnage has taken place on the road. No honorable member would disagree.

The report of the Senate standing committee on social welfare issued yesterday said exactly the same thing about the misuse of drugs and analgesics in Australia. We all ought to regard it as a very serious problem.

Mr. WEIDEMAN: It has been said for the past twenty years, not just yesterday.

Mr. JONES: I agree there is nothing particularly new in it, but it is about time we got tough. There should be consensus on both sides of the House about doing something as quickly as possible.

I close by quoting the words of the American writer, Jack Burnham, who said about cars in his book *Beyond Modern Sculpture*—

> When we buy an automobile we no longer buy an object in the old sense of the word, but instead we purchase a three-to-five-year lease for participation in the state-recognized private transportation system, a highway system, a traffic safety system, an industrial parts replacement system, a costly insurance system, an outdoor advertising system, a state park recreation system, a drive-in eating and entertainment system—and, not least of all, the general economic system.

There has been a lot to grieve about today and the premature calling of the Federal election might be a good note on which to end.

Mr. EDMUNDS (Ascot Vale): On 29th October 1976, the Sunshine City Council purchased the G.U.D. factory in Burton Crescent on the banks of the Maribyrnong River for $260,000 on a deposit of $90,000 with possession being given to the council on 30th June, 1977.

The council bought the site because of its policy of purchasing areas on the banks of the Maribyrnong River which can be cleared and opened up for public purposes. The problem now is funding of the repayments, the difficulty being the downturn in the economy and the fact that the factory is on flood-prone land and has been flooded at least twice quite recently. Therefore, it requires a great deal of work. In an endeavour to recoup some of the money that has been outlayed, the premises are being advertised for lease. At the same time, in an attempt to continue with its dredging programme, the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works has written to the council requesting permission for access through the property for plant and equipment. The council cannot give permission because, under the terms of the contract of sale, no part of the building can be removed until the contract has been completed.

The council has acted in accordance with the Government's policy, and therefore I ask the Government to assist either the council or the Board of Works with funds to enable the contract to be paid out as soon as possible and thereby enable the council to remove derelict buildings so that the area may become open public space and the board may proceed with its river dredging programme.

Originally, the $90,000 came from the Federal Labor Government under the Department of Urban and Regional Development programme and, all along, the policy of the State Government has been to assist areas such as Sunshine to enable the Maribyrnong Valley to be beautified. It has been the Government's policy to develop the valley, and the Government should investigate the possibility of providing finance to the council or the board to enable this stage of the development to be completed.

On the Essendon side of the river in this area there is open space and pleasant sporting ovals and facilities. Currently, it is proposed to develop a nine-hole golf course on that side of the river. On the Sunshine side, the Hume pipe factory, the G.U.D. factory, and a transport centre are established on the banks of the river. All of the buildings are eyesores. The City of Sunshine wants the Board of Works to take over responsibility for developing the area because it has metropolitan significance.

From Medway golf course upstream, the development is progressing very slowly and from the course back to the Raleigh Road or Merrifield Bridge, as it is called, the area is enhanced by open space and parkland. I am advised that one difficulty is that the Hume pipe factory, which is on freehold land, is currently valued at $500,000 or more. The Board of Works ought to be negotiating to acquire that land as soon as possible.

Because the G.U.D. factory site is flood prone, it is difficult to get an entrepreneur to take out a lease at this stage. Only the Government can be involved. The Board of Works wants some buildings cleared so that it can proceed with the dredging programme. The council wants the board to take over the purchase contract, but the board has informed the council that at present it does not have the financial resources to do so.

Clearly, the responsibility rests with the Government, whose policy it is to enhance the area and beautify it. The policy is supported by everybody in the area. The buildings ought to be acquired and cleared to enable the continuation of the open-space programme and so provide a better environment in the Maribyrnong Valley.

Will the Treasurer examine the proposal and if necessary receive a deputation from people in the area, or at least advise the council whether the Government will be involved in any way in assisting the council with the repayments on the factory? After all, the council is actually continuing the Government's policy and disadvantaging itself because certain circumstances beyond its control have resulted in a reduction in funds and have caused some anxiety in the locality. It is in the interests of the people that these obsolete buildings should be demolished and that the Maribyrnong Valley be developed into a park for the betterment of the area generally.

Mr. KIRKWOOD (Preston): I bring to the attention of the House and the Minister of Tourism opinions which have been expressed by the Preston Fish Protection Society and Angling Club. The club protests at charges being levied at several boat ramps leading on to Port Phillip Bay.

Apparently, the grants received by the various municipalities or foreshore committees for boat ramps are made from the Tourist Fund but the ramps are now being used for the benefit of local residents only. In some cases, the councils issue concession and season tickets for ratepayers only. Accordingly, boat owners from outside the particular municipality are unable to use facilities which in part have been financed from State funds.

All boat owners should be allowed to use boat ramp facilities. Perhaps they should not be granted the concession rate that is available to local ratepayers, but anybody should be permitted to use a facility which has been provided from public funds. The Motor Boating Act provides that all moneys paid into the Tourist Fund from registration fees on motor boats shall be applied by the Minister of Tourism by way of loan or grant for any of the following purposes—

(*a*) The provision and maintenance of facilities and services and of areas for motor boating.

(*b*) The provision of services to boat users.

(*c*) The preparation and carrying out of educational programmes relating to water safety.

(*d*) Publicity and education programmes relating to boating facilities and boating services.

All boat owners pay a registration fee for their craft, depending on size, from $4 to $20, and as the funds are directed in this way, all boat owners should be allowed to enter Port Phillip Bay from any of the boat ramps around the bay. The Preston Fish Protection Society and Angling Club comments—

> Many of our members have travelled to our ocean beaches and along the New South Wales coastline where the boat ramps have been free and most with excellent facilities.

The Shire Engineer of the Shire of Werribee, which has received a grant from the Ministry of Tourism for the construction of a larger boat ramp, has stated in a letter—

> I wish to restate that council policy is to issue season tickets to use the Werribee South boat ramps only to residents and ratepayers of the municipality.

It is unfortunate that organizations within the community will disallow the common use of boat ramps to boat owners who pay registration fees. It is wrong that people should not be allowed to use boat ramps. After all, a motor boat is not like a small yacht. Most of the yachts on the bay do not need the facility of a ramp. They can be launched from any part of the foreshore. That cannot be done with a motor boat. One must drive a trailer down a ramp and put the boat into the water.

The suggestions made by the Preston club should be considered by the Minister. It has suggested to me that season tickets should be made available to all boat owners to cover all ramps on Port Phillip Bay. It has also been suggested, and I agree wholeheartedly, that these ramps must at all times be available to the general public. That is not an excessive demand in the interests of people who are associated with the sport of motor boating on Port Phillip Bay. The Government should recognize this and a grant should be made through the tourism fund so that these facilities can be available to the community.

There is also a matter, which the Minister of Education has been considering for a reasonable time, about which much concern has been felt in the electorate of Preston. I ask the Minister to do all he can to speed up the process. At present the City of Preston and the Preston Technical College are concerned about an area of land known as H. P. Zwar Reserve. The council has agreed to transfer the land to the Education Department and, in turn, the department is prepared to transfer other land in Preston to the City of Preston for use as a reserve. The council is concerned because of its funding programme. The Preston Technical College is most apprehensive because of funding which will be coming from the technical and further education grants. If no immediate action is taken, many students could be unable to participate in this educational facility in the next twelve months, which will be a tragedy.

I make another plea on behalf of the Preston Technical College. At present the college has an education programme for adults which has been well received by the community. I shall try to express this need as it has been illustrated by the college. Apparently the college is working through centres at Alphington, Broadmeadows, Brunswick, Bundoora, Coburg, Craigieburn, Coolaroo, Diamond Creek, Glenroy, Heidelberg, Lalor, Northcote, Preston, Reservoir and Upfield. However, a mini-bus is needed. Some months ago an approach was made to the Education Department for funding. Unfortunately, there has been no favourable response to this approach. A mini-bus would enable library and learning resources to be transferred from the college to the various centres after consultation with municipal libraries. For example, in the Diamond Valley and Lalor centres, 270 people attend the various groups. At Bundoora community centre, 60 people attend; at Coburg, 55; Brunswick, 90; and Campbellfield, 20. A number of people attend at each centre. The facility of a mini-bus would be deeply appreciated because at present it is necessary to use private cars for this purpose and this is proving to be unsatisfactory.

The next matter to which I refer also relates to the City of Preston. At present there is a draft statutory rule prepared by the Minister for Conservation for the purpose of controlling intruder alarms which have been a source of annoyance to residents at regular intervals in recent years. The Preston council supports these proposals, but it suggests that it should be compulsory for the occupier of every premises in which an intruder alarm is installed to lodge an after-hours telephone number and/or address at the local police station. As honorable members are aware, it is common for this type of alarm to ring for 36 hours or longer in various

areas. This noise is an intrusion on the rights of people who live in the vicinity. It should not be tolerated by any authority, whether municipal, State or Federal. I believe the proposal of the Preston council will be acclaimed by all honorable members. I heard the honorable member for Ascot Vale speak on this subject a few years ago when a similar complaint was made in his electorate. I ask the various Ministers and their departments to take immediate action for the benefit of people in residential areas.

Mr. FOGARTY (Sunshine): I raise a serious matter concerning the Sunraysia area of Victoria. It affects the Treasurer, the Minister of Agriculture and the Minister for Local Government, and the electorate of the honorable member for Mildura. On Wednesday, 19th October, in company with the Honorable Ivan Trayling, I visited Mildura with a view to seeing at first hand the damage caused by a storm in the area some weeks previously.

As an old sailor from way back and a person who has weathered many storms, personal, industrial and political, I realize that a storm can cause a great deal of damage. However, until I visited Mildura and saw the farms and vineyards that had been affected, I did not realize that so much damage could be done in fifteen minutes. It is estimated that the cost of the damage to farms and vineyards will be over $20 million, and the compounding effects will bring the total to more than $50 million.

Further costs will be incurred at harvest time because the labour that would normally be used in packing sheds, producing cartons and providing transport, will not be used. All these matters that have some direct relationship to this important rural industry will have a significant effect on the export trade. The problem is so serious that it is outside the normal rules of party politics. Members of all political parties should get together and support any efforts by the Shire of Mildura or any other authority to relieve the situation in Mildura.

Unemployment there at present is grave, as it is in all other Victorian country towns. I know that unemployment is general throughout Australia, but alternative job opportunities are not available in the country. Because 400 or 500 farms have been literally wiped out overnight, and no crop can be harvested this year, the farmers will have to work harder during the coming season but will receive no return, so the State and Federal Governments should consider ways of providing financial assistance to the Shire of Mildura for urgent public works.

The shire officers have been very active, and I do not detract from the efforts of the honorable member for Mildura and members from another place who represent the area because they realize how serious the situation is. The shire has made representations to the Premier and the Federal Government seeking financial and other forms of relief for the Sunraysia area.

Unemployment is the most important problem because the owners of the vineyards, generally known as "blockies" cannot leave their farms; they must maintain and treat the vineyards. If they left, the unemployment situation would be aggravated even further. As I said, not much can be done at the State level, and an injection of finance from the Federal area is needed to overcome the difficulties. All the Opposition can do now is to offer its assistance to the shire. If it becomes necessary for the Government to introduce legislation, the Opposition will co-operate in passing it.

Some of the vines have been ruined for one season; the buds are bursting, and although they may be ready for harvesting in the following season, that does not relieve the present situation. Unemployment in the area is severe, and farmers—whether grape or citrus fruit growers—are in a severe financial plight.

This highlights the problem faced by many newer settlers in the Sunraysia area, the first generation of people who are just off the boat; they have entered into contracts to borrow large sums of money to purchase vineyards on low deposits at high rates of interest. These people have no hope of surviving the crisis. Perhaps the Victorian Government could introduce legislation to control interest rates and the amount of deposit required, not only for the purchase of farms, but on all forms of hire purchase. This is an unfortunate aspect of the tragedy that has struck Mildura. About twenty newer settlers to this country will have to leave their farms.

The Opposition suggested to the Premier that a five-point plan should be considered by the Government. I shall read out part of the plan, of which the Premier has a copy—

1. The Rural Finance and Settlement Commission should be requested to adopt a liberal attitude to providing loans at low interest and of a sufficient term repayment period to enable proven growers to return to production capacity at the earliest opportunity. Implicity, this does not mean that growers who have recently moved into the industry paying over market value prices for farms with money borrowed at up to 20 per cent interest should be relieved of the consequences of bad financial investment.

2. For those growers totally wiped out or very badly affected, water rates should be deferred for one year, repayable then over seven years at 3 per cent interest.

3. The value of local government rates waived by the Mildura Shire Council to be covered by a Government loan at low interest repayable over a period of 20 years.

4. An urgent appeal to the Commonwealth Government for a grant of money to be paid through the State Government and administered by the Mildura city and Mildura shire councils for an approved capital works programme to assist with unemployment in the district.

If the Premier considers those points, it may go a long way towards relieving the situation in Mildura. I offer the honorable member for Mildura co-operation and assistance of members of the Opposition at all times.

I am being a little facetious on a serious matter when I say that perhaps after 10th December the Labor Party may be able to supply the necessary money for the funding of these programmes!

Mr. TREWIN (Benalla): I refer to several matters concerning the Public Works Department, and the first is the Nagambie police station. For many years the police officer there has looked after community affairs in Nagambie and those of the travelling public from a small office attached to his home. This has been the traditional method in which a country police officer, particularly at a one-man station, has carried out his work. One by one these types of stations are being eliminated, but it is some time since the first approaches were made to the Government to review the need for a new office at Nagambie.

The station contains only one room, and if the office is being used and someone comes in wanting something to be done in a hurry, everyone gets into the one conversation and it becomes difficult for the officer to conduct his business.

I made inquiries with the Public Works Department and found that the plans and contract documents have been drawn up, but Treasury consent for the expenditure has not been given. It was stated that the station has a No. 3 priority. I do not know what that means; whether the larger buildings are No. 1 priority, middle-sized buildings are No. 2 priority and small buildings are No. 3, or whether buildings out in the bush are given third priority while those in metropolitan areas are given first and second priorities.

However, as the plans and specifications have been drawn up and the approval of the Public Works Department and the Police Department for the building work has been given, and as the cost is only $34,000—I know that today delays mean increases in costs—I ask the Minister of Public Works and the

Treasurer to take the matter up and provide funds. This is an important station on the Goulburn Valley Highway through which pass thousands of motor cars and transport vehicles a week, particularly at holiday time. Between now and the New Year thousands of visitors will come to the area.

Nagambie is on the shores of Lake Nagambie, which is a vast water storage and provides excellent facilities for the public to partake in water sports. The one policeman in the area at times receives assistance from the road traffic section. At the police station he has only a small room in which to conduct his affairs and that is almost full of books and records. As he can hardly turn around, it is vital that something be done to provide better accommodation.

A further matter which I wish to refer to relates to the Public Works Department. I received an answer from the Minister of Public Works only two days ago to a question on notice I had asked about the construction of public offices in Benalla. For some years it has been acknowledged that the building would be constructed. The public servants in Benalla employed by the Department of Agriculture, the Public Works Department and two or three other departments are cramped into half the top storey of the present public offices. The Police Department has all the lower floor and half the top floor, and as Benalla is the centre of a police district, the Police Department is anxious to take over the whole building and something should be done urgently to provide additional accommodation.

In his reply the Minister indicated that the Geelong public offices, which is a large building, was in the course of construction. Public offices for Ballarat and Bendigo are also on a priority list and it appears Benalla comes next. The public offices currently under construction at Geelong are due for completion in September, 1978. Schematic designs have been prepared for the Ballarat offices. " Schematic " is a new, modern word which means that the plans and specifications are being prepared and it is expected that the contract for the construction of the building will be let during 1978. Site possibilities for the Bendigo offices are still being investigated but this is what the Minister said about Benalla—

> Schematic designs are being perpared for Benalla but no date has been fixed for the calling of tenders.

What concerns me is that a site is available in Benalla and all the facilities have been arranged and it is only a matter of letting the contract. I realize that it is a matter of finance, but three very important towns in rural Victoria are involved. Public offices in Geelong are to be completed in the near future, the Ballarat contract is to be let next year, Bendigo is to receive a building some time in the future and Benalla also some time in the future.

Is this fair to our public servants who toil in the interests of the State in these cities? Last night in another debate I mentioned that it would not concern me if the Melbourne underground railway was not completed this year but in 1985. It is not that important. What is important is that public offices should be constructed as soon as possible in these country centres. My plea is to get on with the job and to make the facilities available for our public servants. I am not going to say we will get a greater response from them if we do, because they are already doing an excellent job under difficult conditions.

The Police Department wants to use all of the present public offices in Benalla. The police are not able to carry out their work efficiently because of the lack of space, nor are the other public servants in the four or five other departments able to carry out their functions as well as they would like or could under reasonable conditions, which all honorable members know they should have.

Another important matter regards the marking of liquid tanker transports on our highways to indicate the type of liquid or fluid they contain. There are up to 400 tankers traversing the Hume Highway through Seymour, Euroa, Benalla and Wangaratta each day. They present an extreme hazard on the road and anyone who has driven on the highway knows how careful the drivers are and the excellent job that they are doing, but accidents are still happening every day.

The Urban Fire Brigade Association for the area, based within No. 12 regional fire-control area, and operating out of Seymour, Alexandra, Euroa and Broadford, is concerned because recently when it attended an accident involving a tanker carrying liquids, it was unable to identify the type of liquid or fuel in the tanker because there were no markings on the outside to indicate what was on the inside.

Honorable members know that on petrol tankers there is a red flame, which indicates that the tanker is carrying a highly volatile and inflammable fuel. Those tankers are easy to identify, but there are other types of fuels, chemicals and liquids that are being daily transported up and down the highways and it is up to the Government to ensure that the contents of the tankers are identified.

The men who man the urban fire brigades and bring the mobile units to fight the fires are mainly volunteers, whether they are from urban or rural fire brigades, and all that they are asking is for identification to be provided on the transports to indicate the type of fuel, liquid or chemical that is in these huge vats on wheels. It is not an impossible request and the Government should get on with promulgating a regulation or doing whatever is necessary to agree to the request.

We are approaching the fire season, which will be much earlier this year than in past years. I know that in the Benalla district half the pasture in the countryside could be burnt, and this is the first time I can remember that this has been possible so early in the season. We did not receive any spring rains or late winter rains, with the result that we have a severe dry period. Our wheat crops are maturing slowly but they are appreciating in value day by day.

With heat such as is being experienced today, it will be a real scorcher in the north. This year will be one of high fire danger and what concerns me is that some farmers have been seeking assistance to purchase fire-fighting equipment to place on their farm trucks so that they can be on the spot ready to fight a fire if one starts. In the past funds were made available to enable these units to be purchased, but I understand that those funds are not available now. In the next month or so the Government must take quick action to allocate funds to enable these people to obtain fire-fighting units so they have them available and ready on their properties in case of fire.

The larger farms probably have equipment but people on smaller farms, who cannot afford to supply that equipment, would like assistance. I present this point to Parliament in the interest of rural Victoria and of those who are interested in the protection and welfare of country districts.

Fires occur not only in the grasslands; they often start there and move quickly to the forest areas. More precautions must be taken. Only yesterday or the day before a fire broke out in Gippsland. Such an occurrence is almost unknown so early in the year. Victorian forests are as dry as they can be. The coming summer might be a dangerous time and, as one who lives in the country, I hope the Government will come forward with extra funds so that on the spot units can be available to deal quickly with fires. The first few minutes of a fire, when it can often be quelled and controlled, are the most important. Once five minutes have elapsed the fire can be out of

hand. In windy conditions, and at night time, a fire can travel for miles. It is important that this matter be taken up urgently.

Mr. ROSS-EDWARDS (Leader of the National Party): I direct the attention of the House to the extremely unsatisfactory situation regarding the availability of departmental files to members of Parliament. Last year I had occasion to request the Chief Secretary to allow me to study a file concerning a fire at the house of the honorable member for Caulfield. I had received approaches about this incident from a number of people who believed it had been dealt with in a somewhat irregular manner. I do not know whether it had been, because I have not seen the file.

In a question in writing towards the end of the spring sessional period of Parliament, some time in December, 1976, I requested the file from the Chief Secretary and, towards the end of the autumn sessional period of 1977, having received no reply, I brought the matter up during the debate on the motion for the adjournment. During the course of the winter recess I received a note stating that the file would not be made available. No reason was given. This incident illustrates some of the serious shortcomings in the accountability of State Government departments and Ministers to the people who pay the costs of Government departments.

I submit that the very basis of our democratic system is that people have a right to be informed by the Government concerning public business. They pay the costs of Government administration, and in the final analysis public servants must be accountable to the public of Victoria. We must establish the public right of access to official information.

Mr. CAIN: And to the public servants concerned.

Mr. ROSS-EDWARDS: Yes. This matter appears to concern the Victorian Government, but freedom of information Acts have been introduced in the United States of America, Sweden, Canada, England, New Zealand and France, to mention a few countries. I understand that the Federal Government is currently considering some legislation for Australia.

Mr. SCANLAN: The Commonwealth Government introduced legislation regarding privacy of information.

Mr. ROSS-EDWARDS: I appreciate the Minister's interjection. There are many problems connected with the practical application of such consideration, but I do suggest that legislation of this nature should be introduced without much thought and consideration, and that there is an urgent need for guidelines to be set down on the production of departmental files by Ministers. I submit that fundamentally all files should be produced to members of Parliament, not as a courtesy which is the present state of affairs, but as of right.

I am the first to agree that in certain situations, the Minister would be justified in refusing such a request, but if he refuses a request he should give a reason. It should be one of the headings of the guidelines to a refusal. Several reasons come to mind—the matter could invade a person's right of privacy; it could damage the economic interest of the State; or it could upset the course of justice. I suggest that the onus is on the Minister to show why the information should not be released in the public interest, and that he should not just give a flat "No" without any information, as was my experience when I attempted to study the circumstances concerning the fire that occurred at the home of the honorable member for Caulfield.

Guidelines should be laid down. This matter concerns all members of the House. I suggest that in a calm and considered way the matter should be referred to the Privileges Committee as an appropriate committee to draw up guidelines. If the Minister

should determine not to provide information, he should be required to give his reasons because rightly or wrongly, if the Minister says, "No", the matter is closed. It could go into history for two or three years and the file could be put away as being of no further interest.

It is hard to understand why the file is not produced. It raises the suspicion, rightly or wrongly, that someone is trying to cover up. It is not in the interests of good Government or of this Parliament that that should happen. I ask the Government to consider referring the matter to the Privileges Committee to set up guidelines on when a file should be produced and when it need not be produced. If the Government does not see fit to refer the matter to the Privileges Committee, it is time it took an initiative on such an important matter as this.

Mr. WILTON (Broadmeadows): I raise a matter which concerns the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works and in particular the board's sewerage farm operations and the costs that have to be borne by the ratepayers of the city of Melbourne. Several commissioners on the board who represent various municipalities, have discussed with me the matter of the financial burden that the board has to carry and, in particular, the fact that they believe the board is suffering from the restrictions that currently apply to the sale of livestock from the sewerage farm.

This debate has been going on for years and dates back to the 1930s when, because the board's cattle had a minute infestation of what is known as beef measles it was argued that this was a health hazard to the community, and an embargo was imposed on the sale of Board of Works stock. In the 1940s this embargo was eased, to some extent because it was wartime and Australia was short of beef, and because of a large influx of American troops into this country. From that period on, the board has been able to sell stock but only to export meat works, and the stock must be completely segregated from all other stock. These conditions are placing financial restrictions on the board and affecting its earning capacity. That, in turn, affects the rate charged by the board, particularly the sewerage rate paid by all ratepayers in metropolitan Melbourne.

The board prepared a document entitled, "Submission to the Parliamentary Meat Industry Committee in Relation to the Health Act 1958". The document sets out in some detail the history of the argument and also puts forward facts which show clearly that the restrictions and the grounds on which they are applied cannot be maintained. At page 5 the report states—

> The number of cattle sold by the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works and rejected for cysticercus bovis—

that is the cyst which creates beef measles—

> is a percentage of 0·02.

That shows that the incidence of beef measles in Board of Works cattle is low. The rejection rate of cattle from the Homebush Central Abattoirs in New South Wales for 1970–71 was 0·39 per cent and it was 0·26 per cent for 1971–72.

The argument put forward by those people who want the restrictions to be retained is that the beef is a public health hazard. Dr. A. H. Keech, M.B., B.Sc., prepared a technical report which is attached to the submission. This technical report gives the causes of the disease and the formula for its treatment and then says—

> In conclusion, it is submitted that the mere sporadic occurrence of the disease, the triviality of its nature, the efficacy of cure, and the fact that most countries do not regard it as a serious health problem, our own Commonwealth authorities do not require migrants or Australians returning to these shores to provide evidence that they do not harbor the infestation, all indicate that this infestation does not in fact at this point in our history constitute a health hazard.

The infestation to which Dr. Keech is referring is the *Taenia Saginata*, which is the tapeworm caused by eating raw beef that carries beef measles. I emphasize that the beef must be eaten in a raw state.

Returning to the main part of the submission, the board says—

> The estimated annual loss of revenue to the board, resulting directly from restriction imposed upon the sale of its cattle during 1973–74 was of the order of $313,000. This loss is equal to 12 per cent of the net *per capita* farm cost of sewerage purification, and if this saving could have been made it would have represented a ·05 cents in the dollar reduction in the sewage rate for that financial year.
>
> The primary causes of this loss are—
>
> (*a*) The restriction for immediate slaughter prevents the board maximizing its returns by marketing young and cull for age cattle for fattening and for breeding purposes, and
>
> (*b*) the need therefore to carry young stock over winter, reduces the breeding stock level some 19 per cent from its potential of 10,500 to the present level of 8,000.
>
> (*c*) The requirement to slaughter at an Export Abattoir under the Health Act 1958, and Sections 5, 6 and 7 of the Night Soil and Sewage (Contamination of Land) Regulations 1967, effectively eliminate small butcher participation at auction.

The report goes on to deal with the effect the board could have on the cattle industry if it were permitted to release the high quality cattle available at the farm for store market and breeding purposes. The board makes the following points in its conclusions—

> The board submits that the legislative restrictions under the Health Act 1958 and the Night Soil and Sewage (Contamination of Land) Regulations 1967—
>
> (*a*) Cannot be supported logically or scientifically and are out of line with the requirements of other States and developed countries including, among many others, the U.S.A. and United Kingdom.
>
> (*b*) Cause it to suffer an estimated annual loss of revenue of the order of $313,000.

In a letter addressed to me the secretary of the board updated that figure to $425,000 as at 7th March, 1977. The board's conclusions continue—

> (*c*) Cannot be justified as a public health measure, but in any event will not be necessary when uniform meat inspection under the Abattoir and Meat Inspection Act 1973 is fully implemented.

As I understand it that stage has now been reached. It is really a transfer of responsibility for meat inspection from the municipalities to the Department of Agriculture. That matter has now been brought specifically under the control of the newly-established Abattoirs and Meat Inspection Board.

> (*e*) Deprive the beef cattle industry of a source of high quality breeding and fattening stock, and
>
> (*f*) subject the board's cattle to unnecessary segregation.

The letter from the secretary of the board to which I referred earlier sets out the situation as the board sees it. The letter states—

> I refer to your request for information relating to the additional returns which would be available to the board—
>
> (i) If the present restrictions requiring the slaughter of its cattle were lifted; and
>
> (ii) with the advent of the vaccine which would enable cattle to be sold at a younger age.
>
> If the Act were amended as envisaged, the board would be able to sell steers and heifers as vealers and weaners instead of holding the animals until 20–24 months, thus saving carrying-over for a further twelve months and particularly over a second winter.
>
> By selling stock at 9–12 months of age, it is estimated that another 3,000 to 3,500 breeding cows could be kept at the farm.
>
> It is anticipated that the animals culled for age would continue to be sold in fat condition but the increased number of breeding cows would produce additional saleable stock.
>
> It is anticipated that the number of animals for sale would be increased by 10,000 head per annum which, together with the increased price which would be obtainable for animals sold last year under the old regulations, would provide an increase of $425,000 in revenue for the board.

That amount is calculated on the basis of the current market prices being paid for that class of stock.

It is clear that the Government, particularly the Minister of Agriculture and the Minister of Health, can no longer justify the retention of these restrictions on the sale of these cattle. In view of the restrictions

placed by both Federal and State Governments on the instrumentality and the responsibility the instrumentality has to provide sewerage services for the metropolis of Melbourne and also in view of the fact that the ratepayers of Melbourne bear the full cost of these services—they do not receive assistance from State funds as occurs with country sewerage authorities—it is reasonable for the board to be arguing that the restrictions should be lifted so that it can make full use of the cattle market to dispose of its stock, which is of the highest quality in the State. There is nothing in Victoria which can beat it. I am not referring to the stud herds, which is quite a separate matter.

On behalf of the many Board of Works ratepayers whom I represent in this House, I have put this matter to the Government. All honorable members who represent metropolitan electorates have a similar responsibility to inform themselves on this subject. I have been reading articles on the matter for some years, even going back to the 1935 report by the late Dr. Penfold, who was then the Medical Director of the Baker Medical Research Institute, which was located at the Alfred Hospital. At that time, he was commissioned by the board to undertake a research programme to ascertain facts of the so-called health hazard of the tapeworm to human beings. In his report, he points out quite clearly that this so-called disease, it is more of an infestation, cannot be transmitted from one human being to another and that beef measles cannot be transferred from one beast to another, even by breeding.

The Board of Works has carried on the fight in an attempt to convince the Government that there is no justification for retaining this restriction. The board has organized research to be undertaken by various bodies, including the Melbourne Veterinary School, Werribee. The latest report that I have been able to obtain results from research work undertaken by Mr. J. H. Arundel, Reader in Veterinary Parasitology at the veterinary school. The school carried out a research programme involving vaccination of cattle to overcome the problem. In the report, Mr. Arundel said—

> This trial has clearly shown that we now have the ability to protect calves against severe challenge and that for all practical purposes we can eliminate cysticercus bovis as a problem on the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works Farm.

In his conclusion, he states—

> A vaccine is now available that will, for all practical purposes, control cysticercus bovis on the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works Farm. The vaccine will probably be made commercially but we would be prepared in the short term to vaccinate the herd on a contractural basis.

This appears in the report prepared by Mr. Arundel for the Board of Works, a copy of which has been made available to me.

We have reached the stage where, firstly, even in 1935, the late Dr. Penfold exploded the arguments that were put up at that time on why the restriction should be retained. The results of his research clearly showed that the infestation was minor and found mostly in southern Europeans who come from countries where there is a tendency to eat meat in its raw state or close to raw state. Cooking and freezing of meat destroys the infestation of the cysticercus bovis. Now, more recently, following work undertaken by the Melbourne Veterinary School, Werribee, a vaccine has been perfected which, to all intents and purposes, will eliminate the existence of cysticercus bovis on the Board of Works farm.

The facts are irrefutable and yet the Minister of Health and the Minister of Agriculture still adopt a blind, mindless approach. Even as recently as this month, a deputation from the Board of Works discussed the matter with the two Ministers and produced the recent report to which I have referred and yet there is still the closed-mind approach which results in ratepayers of the

Board of Works still being required to bear the burden whereas they could be relieved of some portion of their sewerage rates. It is not suggested for one moment that action along the lines that I have suggested will eliminate the sewerage rate, but at least some relief would be afforded, particularly as both the State and Federal Governments have restricted their financial commitments to this statutory authority. The present attitude adopted by the two Ministers is unjustified.

I submit the argument on behalf of the Board of Works ratepayers whom I represent in this House and I suggest that all other honorable members should inform themselves on the matter so that they will understand in more detail how ludicrous it is for the Government to adopt this horse and buggy philosophy.

Mr. COX (Mitcham): I raise a matter for the attention of the Minister of Health concerning remarks made during the last Grievance Day debate by the honorable member for Brunswick on industrial deafness. The honorable member for Brunswick said that he felt that there had been a disgraceful delay by the Government in introducing legislation to combat industrial deafness. He continued—

> The trade union movement has been pressing for this type of action for many years and the Government has made a number of promises, but seems unwilling or incapable of introducing legislation by regulation which would prevent workers going deaf, as they are at present.

He went on to say that the Trades Hall Council had been very actively involved, and that the concern of members of the Opposition and of the union movement was that it took so long largely because of the arguments submitted by the employers group. The honorable member also said that even though the union movement was not completely happy with the standard and the model regulations which were finally developed, nonetheless, Stan Willis, one of the union members involved in the discussions, had made certain comments. He goes on further to say that the Victorian draft regulations issued by the Government were a complete cave-in to the pressures of the manufacturers.

I have a copy of submissions made to the Premier by the Trades Hall Council concerning the proposed draft regulations to combat industrial deafness. In this submission, certain points are made which were picked up by the honorable member for Brunswick. One of the criticisms by the Trades Hall Council, and picked up by the honorable member, was that, when setting down procedures of the working of the model regulations, one clause was omitted—

> Whenever personal hearing protective devices are lost or damaged it shall be the responsibility of the employer to provide a new set to the employee.

The Trades Hall Council said that, in its view, this omission made the Victorian proposal unsatisfactory. The honorable member for Brunswick expressed this in his speech. However, this clause appears in the noise regulations to combat industrial deafness. I do not understand how the honorable member for Brunswick can accuse the Government of omitting a clause which appears in the draft regulations.

The honorable member also criticized the alteration of another section as follows—

> No person shall for any length of time be exposed to a noise level in excess of 115 dB.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Any person exposed to noise level in excess of 115 dB (A) slow, shall wear a type of personal hearing protective device.

The honorable member also made the criticism that the wording of the Victorian draft proposal did not make it mandatory for an employee to wear this protective equipment. Surely it is the responsibility of the employee, not the employer, to make sure that he wears the protective device.

The honorable member for Brunswick claimed that the Trades Hall Council was involved in drafting these regulations. In fact, one of the criticisms of a member of the Deafness Foundation of Victoria is that the foundation has made personal representations on seven or eight occasions to the Trades Hall Council to send a representative along to that committee which was set up by the Department of Health in September, 1976, to discuss the regulations. On one occasion these people telephoned the Trades Hall Council one hour before a committee meeting to ask whether a representative could attend the meeting to help in the drafting of this regulation. To date no one has appeared. Yesterday, another committee meeting was held, and again, the response to a telephone call was that no one could come. The Government has certainly taken a step forward and the criticism of the honorable member for Brunswick is not warranted when the Trades Hall Council has been asked many times to make representations on this committee to assist in the drafting of regulations to combat industrial deafness.

Mr. CAIN (Bundoora): I should like to briefly comment on two quite unrelated matters. Firstly, I refer to the current land purchase inquiry being conducted by Sir Gregory Gowans. I have spent some time at the inquiry and it is obvious that not much will be learned from a number of witnesses other than what they believe will be disclosed from documents being produced to the inquiry and subject to consideration by Sir Gregory Gowans. They will not volunteer information unless they believe it will be obtained from some other source, thereby embarrassing them.

On a number of occasions the Premier has made clear in this place and publicly that it is the desire of the Government to get to the bottom of what has happened and that the Government will co-operate in every way with the inquiry in ensuring that whatever material is considered desirable will be presented to it. It appears to me that the promise is not being fulfilled in at least two regards. Firstly, I refer to a police report following an inquiry by the Valuer-General's Office in 1974. The report from the inquiry has been made available to Mr. Dowling who is assisting the board. On a number of occasions Mr. Dowling has indicated that the report cannot be made available to other parties. It is also apparent that material contained in the report is relevant. On 12th October I asked the Premier in a question without notice whether he would make that report available to legal advisers acting for other parties. The Premier replied that he had no knowledge of the matter, but would have it investigated. I received no response from the Premier.

This week the matter was raised again by the honorable member for Niddrie. The Premier again replied that he had no knowledge of the matter. After having heard much of the evidence and knowing something of the matters that are under consideration I believe this report is an important document. It also seems to me that it is a document which should be in the hands of all parties if they are properly to examine the witnesses who are called every day. Otherwise, the situation may arise where a party is unable to present material by way of cross-examination that he would wish to present. I believe the Premier should make an urgent inquiry into this report and ascertain whether it can be made available urgently to those other parties.

The second point I raise is that there is apparently a lack of co-operation in regard to a matter that I raised in a question this morning. Clearly no witness at the inquiry is going to say anything that he believes will not be discovered in some other way. It is like drawing teeth to find out what has happened. Some of the matters that have arisen over the past 48 hours give cause for

concern. I believe it will assist Sir Gregory Gowans—I use the words "I believe" in the sense the Premier used them—if he receives co-operation from witnesses and potential witnesses. It would be a refreshing change if witnesses were prepared to volunteer information and to co-operate so that the board can get to the bottom of what has happened. This morning I raised the matter of the disposition of funds by persons or companies concerned in these transactions with the Housing Commission. I should have thought that all honorable members would consider it their duty to co-operate and offer relevant information. It is clearly their duty to co-operate in view of the concern that the Premier has expressed regarding the material placed before the inquiry. I put it no higher than that and I say no more about it except to repeat that it would be refreshing if witnesses presented their evidence openly. I hope the Government will take steps to require people to co-operate in this regard.

I refer to another unrelated matter which is of a more parochial nature. It concerns the future of the mental health complex in the Bundoora electorate. In an area of approximately 800 acres are sited some seven or eight mental health institutions which are carrying out different functions in that general field. The largest is Mont Park and there are also Larundel, Plenty and Gresswell. On the fringe of the complex are some schools, Macleod Technical School, Greenwood High School and Greenwood Primary School, and of course the La Trobe University. The complex has a common boundary with those institutions, and also with a number of private homes.

The complex is a legacy from what one might call the bad old days when society simply shifted those persons who had to be isolated from it, because of mental illness of one kind or another, into large institutions on the fringes of the metropolitan area. In recent years the urban sprawl has extended beyond the mental health complex and there is now urban settlement on all sides of the complex.

It is a good thing that attitudes are changing. Clearly the days of the large mental institutions are numbered and we are moving away from the institutionalizing of many people who were previously sent to these complexes. The day when that place will be broken up entirely is probably some time away. However, a number of management problems arise with the complex. It is a large area, and clearly the various institutions comprising it have difficulty in managing the sections under their control. In recent years they have experienced difficulty in maintaining the boundary fences. The result of that has been that the entire mental health complex area has become a popular resort for the riders of trail bikes. These are mainly young people and they break through the fences and ride their bikes around trees and paddocks, generally to the annoyance of the adjoining householders and in some cases at some risk to the occupants of or persons using the mental health complex land.

As if that were not bad enough, on occasions fires have been lit, and especially during the summer months, they spread over some acres and have been a cause of alarm to the adjoining house occupiers and people using the buildings in the mental health complex.

The police and the persons concerned with the control of all the institutions are concerned about this and have done the best they can to eliminate or at least reduce the nuisance caused by these intruders. However, there is a limit to what they can do. The police say they cannot chase these young people who ride the bikes and generally cannot catch them because they cannot take police vehicles into the area and do not have motor cycles on which to pursue them, so that presents a problem of apprehension. It also presents for the

authorities the problem of excluding intruders and of maintaining the fences.

There is a case for the Mental Health Authority and the Department of Health to examine the whole future of this institution and the land on which it stands.

Five or six months ago I told the Minister of Health that there were 40 acres adjoining the Greenwood High School and adjacent to a golf course in the complex and suggested that that land could well be applied for wider community use. I suggested that the Shire of Diamond Valley would be prepared to assume responsibility for the area and make it available to the public at large, particularly to the two adjacent schools to provide playing facilities for the children. I understand that matter is still being considered.

What concerns me is the distinct reluctance by the Department of Health to shed any of the land it owns. Quite clearly, the Mental Health Authority will never use all the land. It has not used it in the past and, in view of the changing concept of the treatment of mental health patients, I believe it will not use it in the future. The authority and the department acknowledge that the land will not be used, but are reluctant to part with it to be used for any other purpose.

In view of what will occur in the breaking up of these large mental health institutions, plans ought to be made for the use of the land in the years ahead. The 800 acres ought to be the subject of a fairly intense study; it is what is commonly called a green space within a closely settled urban area, and it ought to be preserved. As I said before, the land can be used by the adjacent schools and the community around it, and the time is now ripe for the Department of Health to have discussions with the councils of the Shire of Diamond Valley, the City of Heidelberg and the City of Preston, all of which abut on the 800 acres.

I hope the time is not far away when the land will be broken up and not used for mental health institutions. Certainly the time has arrived when the department, the councils concerned and the community ought to have discussions about how the land can be put to the uses I have mentioned.

Mr. MACKINNON (Box Hill): I direct my remarks to some aspects of the recent appalling strike and to some thoughts that people should address themselves to in the future and some matters that perhaps the Minister of Labour and Industry should be examining.

Everybody has been concerned about the strike; certainly large numbers of people in the electorate that I represent were affected in one way or another—some extremely seriously —by the strike. Above all, we are all appalled that a mere handful of workers showed such a lack of concern for public interest.

That spells out where the trade union movement in Australia stands today. It is a parody of the movement that began in the early days of Australian history at the turn of the century. The movement has become an embodiment of sectional greed, comparative envy and social misery, Unions pursue their aims by coercion and disruption and are accountable to no one but their members. I should have thought I would have heard some voice, albeit a small one, from the Opposition benches giving a sign of leadership in the dispute and suggesting the way the action should have gone, calling to the attention of the trade unions that there is such a thing as public interest.

However, members of the Opposition are at the beck and call of the trade union movement and have no independence. As I said, trade unions are accountable to no one but their members, and often to few of them. A mere 2,300 workers in the Latrobe Valley have been creating poverty and unemployment on a monstrous scale and inevitably the

poorest, least skilled and most helpless members of the community suffer most.

The question is whether the grievance of the workers was real. I have not heard in the speeches of members of the Opposition any evidence that there was a real grievance.

Mr. EDMUNDS: You were not here when the honorable member for Reservoir spoke.

Mr. MACKINNON: I was here, but it did not sound like that. Was there any suggestion that the strikes were spearheading a struggle for the future on behalf of all workers? What was their complaint? They are paid a little less than workers in New South Wales in similar occupations, but a lot more than workers in similar occupations in other States. Nobody suggests that everybody should be paid equally. Perhaps some tradesmen in private employment in the Latrobe Valley are better paid, but is it suggested that they receive equal benefits and pensions to those received by the State Electricity Commission workers?

The trade union movement is imbued with old thought patterns suggesting a return to yesterday when " All for one and one for all " was the whole point. Today we should resolve disputes perhaps by engaging people who are prepared to work. If that were done I believe the Opposition would be supporting the trade union movement in a general strike.

Mr. EDMUNDS: We would not support scab labour—would you?

Mr. MACKINNON: The Opposition must think seriously about this. It must seriously question whether it supports every action of the trade union movement. If it blindly followed every action the unions took, that would be incredible, and a pretty poor show.

I direct attention to what Paul Johnson said when he denounced the degeneration of trade unionism into " a brotherhood of national misery ".

Mr. EDMUNDS: Who was he?

Mr. MACKINNON: He was a former member of the British Labor Party. We now need to examine whether we are going to take the necessary steps to ensure that we can expect more responsibility from the trade unions in the future. Members of the Opposition have said that the unions should be left alone. I do not think the Labor Party is game to touch them. The trade union movement will not help itself. It has a responsibility to the community, which should suggest the guidelines and, if necessary, impose the guidelines that the trade union movement should follow. I look forward to the Labour and Industry Act being amended in that fashion to complement the action taken at the Commonwealth level.

Now is the time for the Government to seriously consider taking the necessary steps to ensure that the trade union movement adopts a responsible role. The Liberal Party does not take a sectional attitude in this matter. It believes there is a proper place for the trade union movement, and I do not mean down in the back in a corner somewhere. The trade union movement should take a responsible and productive community attitude. I hope it will not be long before the Government ensures that those members of unions who are capable of showing leadership are given the opportunity of being elected to positions of responsibility in their respective unions. I should like to see union affairs and finances displayed openly to the community so that we can be sure the unions are conducting themselves in a fair and free fashion. I look forward to action being taken along those lines.

The question was agreed to.

RURAL FINANCE AND SETTLEMENT COMMISSION (AMENDMENT) BILL.

Mr. BORTHWICK (Minister of Lands): I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

It provides for a number of amendments to several of the Acts administered by the Rural Finance and Settlement Commission.

Since 1963, when the merger of the former Rural Finance Corporation and the former Soldier Settlement Commission was consummated, over $207 million has been expended by the commission in providing finance to rural industry, both primary and secondary, in rural adjustment, land settlement and schemes of special relief primarily designed to cover natural disasters.

In the period since 1963 there have been substantial changes, both in the rural scene and in the direction of many of the commission's activities.

The amendments proposed will not affect the rights of settlers under the Soldier Settlement Act and the Land Settlement Act, and the general financial administration of these Acts will remain as at present in that all receipts by the commission under these Acts will continue to be paid into the Consolidated Fund and the costs of administration will be provided each year by special appropriation.

The Act from which the commission derives its powers is the Rural Finance and Settlement Commission Act and amendments proposed to this Act provide for a change in the name of the commission and give increased flexibility in the management of the funds it administers. These important measures are covered in clauses 2 and 3.

Clause 2 changes the name of the commission to the Rural Finance Commission. The new name will more accurately describe to the general public the range of responsibilities of the commission. There are a number of provisions dealing with consequential changes throughout the Bill. I might add that today the Rural Finance and Settlement Commission is known throughout the countryside of Victoria as the Rural Finance Commission.

Clause 3 (1), (2) and (3) provide for amendments to section 25 of the Rural Finance and Settlement Commission Act. This is the section which deals with the operation of the Rural Finance and Settlement Fund, which is the main vehicle for the commission's financial activities. A significant exception at present, however, is those activities associated with the administration of moneys provided from the public account and administered by the commission.

The commission has authority to administer such funds on receipt of directions received from time to time from the Treasurer pursuant to section 35 of the Rural Finance Act, which is the Act which generally sets out the commission's powers in relation to lending to the rural community.

Examples of directions given by the Treasurer pursuant to section 35 include instructions to administer various schemes for rural adjustment which were developed between the Commonwealth and the States and which the commission administers in Victoria. Directions on disaster relief is another example.

The changes proposed to section 25 of the Rural Finance and Settlement Commission Act bring these so-called agency moneys into the Rural Finance and Settlement Fund, which is to be renamed the Rural Finance Fund. This means that all the activities of the commission, apart from its soldier and land settlement activities, would then be administered through this fund.

The proposed amendments, with the existing provisions, will allow for payment into the fund of all moneys on hand and to be received by the commission under the Rural Finance Act. This will include those funds at present held by the commission under directions given pursuant to section 35 of the Rural Finance Act. It will also provide for the payment into the fund of any moneys receivable in the future following directions given by the Treasurer. Borrowings by the commission by the

issue of inscribed stock, as provided for later in this Bill, and funds allocated to the commission from the works and service fund will also be paid into the fund.

All money lent under the Rural Finance Act and the associated cost of debt servicing of the various schemes and programmes will be paid out of the fund, together with administration costs.

The provisions of section 35 of the Rural Finance Act require the commission to account separately for Government agency funds and this will be continued, but within the ambit of the Rural Finance Fund rather than outside it. Loans under Part III. of the Rural Finance Act will remain within the ambit of the fund but in accordance with the general programme approved by the Treasurer.

Clause 4 allows, as in the case of other statutory authorities, for the payment of the premiums on an insurance policy insuring the members of the commission against accident or sickness arising out of or in the course of the performance of their duties. It also provides that any workers compensation premium shall be paid out of the funds of the commission.

Clause 5 is an amendment consequential upon the change in name of the commission.

The next important matter presented for consideration of honorable members is incorporated in clause 6 and relates to an amendment to the Land Settlement Act 1959. It provides an additional avenue for the disposal of land presently held by the commission under that Act. The changing circumstances of primary industry and the need to make concessions to national policies involving primary production have required an examination of the options available regarding the disposal of land held by the commission.

During the period of soldier settlement from 1946 to the early 1960s, the commission evolved policies and techniques of large scale land development, bringing a new concept to the development of formerly unproductive land and particularly Crown land. The general concept of development was that the commission would use its technical and financial resources to develop the land to a point at which it had a proven capacity to support the incoming farmer. In addition, the farm was also provided with all the necessary farm structures prior to occupancy.

Honorable members will recall that the development of formerly unproductive and virgin Crown land is not without its challenges, but I am pleased to say that development projects which the commission has undertaken have been conducted satisfactorily and with some credit to all who have been associated with them. In this regard I make mention of other Government instrumentalities which have helped so much, not the least of which are the Department of Agriculture, State Rivers and Water Supply Commission, the Commonwealth Scientific Industrial Research Organization and the Country Roads Board.

Projects for civilian settlers under the Land Settlement Act, namely, those not exclusively for ex-servicemen, involved development at Yanakie in Gippsland, at Invergordon in the Goulburn Valley, at Rochester in central Victoria, at Palpara in the south-west and also the largest project of its kind, namely Heytesbury, situated south of Colac, and Cobden in the Western District.

On all of these projects 625 farms have been developed and made available to settlers at a cost of just over $30 million. This total cost includes all the costs of development, including structures, interest capitalized during the developmental period, incidental expenses, including administration costs, and the cost of providing new roads to service these farms.

The settlers have been provided with these farms at a liability which has been based upon, but not exceeding, the market value for the farms at the time they were allocated. It has not been possible to include in the market value for these farms all the extraneous charges associated with development, and particularly, if roading costs are heavy, as they were at Heytesbury where an extensive and completely new network of roading was required.

Notwithstanding generally satisfactory progress, the vicissitudes of the market for primary products have caused interruptions to the settlement programme and finally a cessation for the time being of making land available. In addition, there is very little virgin land now available inviting large scale development for agricultural purposes.

In June, 1970, at the behest of the Commonwealth Government, it was decided not to make more dairy farms available for the time being. In 1973, however, following the phasing out of dairy subsidies by the Commonwealth Government, it was decided to complete the Heytesbury and Rochester projects and development and allocation of farms recommenced.

In the first half of 1976 a severe downturn in the market for manufactured dairy products was experienced and after a series of Commonwealth–State conferences and at the pressing request of primary producer bodies a decision was made on an Australia-wide basis not to issue further dairy farm licences. As honorable members will know, the Honorable Ian Smith, Minister of Agriculture, is currently negotiating a most difficult series of Commonwealth-State arrangements in respect of the dairy industry.

The situation in the dairy industry has, at least for the foreseeable future, eliminated the prospect of making new farms available for dairying on much of the land still held by the commission.

Market conditions for the beef industry do not afford a ready alternative to continue a policy of placing young men on the land who by definition have little or inadequate capital to take up farming without special provisions.

The new procedures provided for in clause 6 of the Bill deal with the existing land held under the Land Settlement Act. At present the commission has some 33,000 acres at Heytesbury, 7,200 acres at Palpara and 1,870 acres at Robinvale. The Robinvale land, for purposes of irrigation, commands a much larger area of Crown land highly suited for dried fruits production. It is being sharefarmed for dry land wheat production at present and is not earmarked for early disposal, although there are no present plans for Government sponsored expansion in dried fruits.

The commission is using the land at Heytesbury and Palpara to graze its own herd of cattle, presently numbering 11,000. This desirable herd of beef cattle has been built up over the years and used to graze on the developing pastures. Since the uncertainties in land allocation which commenced in 1970, the commission has considerably increased the size of the herd to cope with the pasture on the land which was increasing in productivity and, as I have mentioned, was not being made available to settlers as the programme normally envisaged.

The commission has been able to make profits with its livestock trading and still has a considerable credit in its accounts as the result of that trading. During the past three years, however, with the disastrously low prices for beef cattle and the increasing costs, particularly for superphosphate, the commission has incurred losses and is now confronted with the situation of submitting alternate means for land disposal or incurring considerable expense to intensify its present beef producing operation pending disposal of the land

It would be out of character with the commission's real function to intensify its beef producing activites to use the land to its full capacity. It is against this background that an additional method of disposing of land is proposed.

Settlement under the existing procedures of the Land Settlement Act will of course still remain open, and I might also say that on the acceptance of the amendments proposed by this Bill, it is not proposed to immediately place large areas of land on the market. The general intention is over the course of say the next five years or so to take reasonable opportunity in the light of economic circumstances which prevail in particular industries, to sell the land into the most appropriate land use. Proposed amendments to the Land Settlement Act allow for this with the greatest flexibility possible, consistent with public accountability in the procedures to be followed.

For example, in the event that Commonwealth–State arrangements for the dairy industry so allow, it will be possible, subject to suitable assistance, for an approved owner of a marginal dairy farm in another area to buy the more productive Heytesbury land and suitably establish himself as an efficient dairy farmer. In addition, it will be open for successful Heytesbury settlers who so decide to buy additional land at a fair market price for farm build-up. Likewise, it could be possible for a farmer in another area wishing to enlarge his enterprise, to sell his existing farm and buy an enlarged holding in the Heytesbury area.

The Land Conservation Council has suggested that some of the Heytesbury area could be used for softwood plantings, and these suggestions can also be met subject to those who may seek to plant pines being prepared to offer a reasonable price. The land that the Land Conservation Council has suggested might be suitable for those purposes is, on the whole, of the less productive category of soil type.

Under the procedures proposed the Governor in Council may direct the commission to dispose of land by sale on being satisfied on certification of the commission that changed conditions in primary industry justify this course.

On obtaining the Governor in Council's direction, the commission is authorized to enter into negotiations for the sale after due advertisement giving, if considered necessary, the preferred use for the land. The commission could for instance indicate that the land use preferred is for genuine farm build-up purposes rather than, say, for a hobby farm.

The commission may, if there are suitable offers, make recommendations to the Governor in Council concerning the sale of the land at which point the Governor in Council is authorized to sell the land. The sale may be on a cash basis or on terms and when the liability of the purchaser for the sale is paid there are provisions for the issue of a Crown grant.

In the event of a terms contract and it subsequently being advisable to substitute a mortgage for the balance of the liability under the contract of sale, provision is made for the purchaser to execute a mortgage over the land for an amount equivalent to the outstanding liability. The commission must satisfy itself that any security is adequate and may require the purchaser to give additional security. For example, where land is sold for farm build-up purposes a charge over the home farm may also be required. Rates of interest would be at the discretion of the commission but generally it can be expected that they would be in line with those current for loans under Part III. of the Rural Finance Act.

The procedures outlined above will, over the next several years, assist in disposing of the land held by the commission in an orderly fashion. It leaves open the present avenues of disposal and these will be used if

circumstances and a change in the present rural outlook make it reasonable so to do.

These proposed amendments to the Land Settlement Act are to meet particular circumstances and do not indicate that as a general policy the Government is not continuing its encouragement of young people to settle on the land. The commission, through the various schemes it administers in rural finance and rural adjustment, will be providing, whenever practical, means by which sons can take over from fathers and young people can purchase and settle on the farms of their choice. The Government will continue to examine ways and means of ensuring that young people have an opportunity of owning their own farms. I trust members will agree on the importance and the necessity to give the commission the flexibility it needs to successfully wind up its outstanding land settlement projects.

Pending disposal of the land at Palpara and Heytesbury either by settlement or sale, the commission will be continuing to carry out any necessary development and maintenance of the properties, including running its own beef cattle. The expenses of the development and maintenance and the running of the livestock are met from allocations from the Works and Services Account and the authorization for the amounts to be applied for this purpose is limited at present to $40 million.

As expenditure is currently approaching this figure it is appropriate to provide additional authorization and clause 6 (5) increases the authorization to $45 million. The increase in authorization will also allow for further development of allotments should it become possible to revert to the existing method of allocation and settlement. The receipts from the sale of land and other assets including the commission's cattle will be credited to the Consolidated Fund.

Clause 7 provides for important amendments to the Rural Finance Act 1958. It increases from $40 million to $55 million the amount that the commission may borrow for the purposes of this Act. Funds of up to $10 million may be issued and applied from the Works and Services Account for the purposes of the Rural Finance Act, which would leave $5 million to be raised by the issue of debentures or inscribed stock, which I shall cover later. Alternatively, the whole $15 million additional borrowing could be raised by the issue of debentures or inscribed stock.

The new provision in clause 7 provides for the commission, with the consent of the Treasurer, to raise loans by the issue of inscribed stock or debentures and gives the machinery provision for the raising of such loans and the issuing and recording of debentures. These matters are covered in considerable detail in clause 7 (4) and (6). The additional funds available from institutional lenders by virtue of these provisions will make a valuable supplementary form of funding for the commission's activities.

The net effect of this additional source of funds and the earlier amendments to the Rural Finance and Settlement Commission Act in relation to the Rural Finance Fund will enable the commission to release a significantly higher proportion of its increased cash flows for lending to the rural community.

Clause 7 (5) is a very important amendment which relates to the fishing industry. Changes in the industry involve new techniques and the exploitation of more distant fishing areas. Fishermen therefore require larger boats and more sophisticated equipment involving greater capital investment. The Government wishes to assist the fishing industry in meeting these new challenges and an initial allocation of $500,000 has been made in this year's Budget towards establishing a revolving fund to achieve those objects within the

ambit of the Rural Finance Fund. There are limitations under the Rural Finance Act to making loans to enterprises based within the metropolitan area. The proposed amendments to the Rural Finance Act will remove those limitations as far as they apply to the fishing industry and will enable the commission to provide finance which will encourage a more efficient industry wherever it may be based in Victoria.

In total the proposed amendments will enable the commission to more efficiently carry out its role and I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of Mr. FOGARTY (Sunshine), the debate was adjourned.

Mr. BORTHWICK (Minister of Lands): I move—

That the debate be adjourned until Tuesday week.

Mr. FOGARTY (Sunshine): I realize that there are certain limitations on honorable members but the Bill is important and, as the opening remarks of the Minister show, it provides for a number of amendments to several of the Acts administered by the Rural Finance and Settlement Commission. The Minister also said that in the period since 1963 there have been substantial changes, both in the rural scene and in the direction of many of the commission's activities.

Although fourteen days is the normally-accepted period, because of the importance of the Bill I ask the Minister to be a little more lenient as justice must be seen to be done in this case.

Mr. BORTHWICK (Minister of Lands) (*By leave*): I consider that Tuesday week is a suitable date. The House is not sitting next week, which will give all honorable members the opportunity of applying themselves to proposed legislation. Although I consider Tuesday week to be reasonable, I am certain the Government will be flexible if honorable members are not in a position to proceed at that time.

Mr. FOGARTY (Sunshine) (*By leave*): I accept that.

The motion was agreed to, and the debate was adjourned until Tuesday, November 8.

TRANSPORT WORKS AND SERVICES BILL.

Mr. RAFFERTY (Minister of Transport): I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

It authorizes the expenditure of $84·9 million for transport services from the Works and Services Account for the period from 14th August, 1977, until it is cancelled by a further works and services Act in 1978. Provision is made for expenditure until December, 1978.

The explanatory memorandum attached to the Bill includes a statement of expenditure during the year ended 30th June, 1977, proposed expenditure during the year ending 30th June, 1978, and the proposed provision for the eighteen-month period to December, 1978.

Total funds available to the railways for capital works in the current year, despite a substantial reduction in Commonwealth funds, have increased by 8·6 per cent over funds available in the previous year.

The Bill provides for the allocation of funds from both State and Commonwealth sources. The proposed expenditure during the current year of $46·96 million includes estimated Commonwealth grants of $6·85 million for urban development projects. This includes a new allocation by the Commonwealth of $1 million towards Victoria's train replacement programme, $3·56 million for the continuation of projects previously approved under the urban public transport agreement and an estimated $2·29 million for escalation. Honorable members will appreciate that the figure included for escalation is an estimate only and is subject to detailed calculation by the railways and approval by the Commonwealth.

The explanatory memorandum and the explanatory statement give honorable members detailed information on the expenditures proposed in this measure. This memorandum and statement show projects and areas of expenditure and I do not propose to duplicate that detailed information. here. There are, however, a number of important matters associated with expenditures authorized by this measure to which I will refer.

Substantial amounts are included in the Bill for the continuation of projects commenced in previous years to upgrade urban rail transport services. An amount of $22 million is provided for new suburban trains. A further ten new trains will be delivered this year. The replacement of old suburban electric trains is an essential element in the Government's programme to improve public transport services. The present delivery rate of ten trains a year will be continued. May I remind honorable members that the railways have recently called tenders for a further 50 new trains to ensure the continuation of this programme.

Provision is made in the Bill for further work on a third track, signalled for two-way operation, between Caulfield and Mordialloc; to duplicate the railway from Macleod to Greensborough and for the duplication of the single-track sections between Ringwood and Croydon, and Ringwood and Bayswater. These projects, when completed, will enable more express running of trains and reduce travel times in peak periods for rail patrons on these lines.

Work has been completed on the construction of two additional tracks between South Kensington and Footscray, and on the duplication of the Sunshine–Deer Park West line. The South Kensington–Footscray improvements, particularly, are aimed at improving service not only in the metropolitan area but to other urban areas including Geelong.

Work has commenced on the duplication of the last single-track section of the Geelong line between Little River and Corio. The Bill includes a provision of $1·7 million for this work and $600,000 has been allocated for expenditure in the current financial year. Sub-item 414 provides $1·5 million for electrification of the Geelong line between Altona junction and Werribee. These projects are further steps to upgrade rail facilities between Victoria's two major centres.

The Government's aim is to provide balanced transport and improved transport facilities throughout the State and I turn now to further provisions in the Bill for works outside the metropolitan area.

The Bill makes provision for the purchase of additional locomotives, the continuation of the wagon replacement programme, the development of further freight centres, the reconstrutcion of bridges and the purchase of plant and equipment to assist the railways to provide a better service to meet the needs of communities in the country. Of the 20 locomotives on order, 16 have been delivered. These include 6 of the 3,300-horsepower locomotives.

The amount of $11 million dollars has been provided for the continuation of the wagon replacement programme and to enable further new bogie wagons to be built in the railway workshops at Ballarat, Bendigo and Newport. Funds have been allocated to enable some 150 new wagons and vans to be built in the current financial year. Contracts have been awarded by the railways for the supply of 6 dry-bulk containers and 50 side-loading containers. Tenders will shortly be called for a further 100 side-loading containers. This is part of the continuing programme to improve the railways' capacity to handle goods in bulk and to provide competitive service for container-type traffic.

The Bill also includes provisions for capital expenditure to improve railway facilities and services, particularly freight centres. This improvement of facilities is part of a

programme to upgrade rail services in country areas and to enable the railways to be more efficient and more competitive.

The provision of capital and equipment alone will of course not serve the purpose and the railways have embarked upon a substantial programme of opening freight centres to provide a properly co-ordinated and better service. Centres have been established at Horsham, Warracknabeal, Nhill, Hamilton, Ararat, Portland, Warrnambool, Camperdown, Colac and Bairnsdale. More freight centres are planned to complete a State-wide network which should put the railways in a position to compete with alternative road services and provide better service to its customers.

Honorable members will be aware that it is Government policy, when the railways have the freight centres opened and the services improved, that road freedoms will be granted and the most efficient transport service will carry the traffic. A number of country areas are already getting the benefit of improved combined road-rail services.

Additional funds have been provided for the reconstruction of bridges, including a special allocation of $500,000 for the strengthening of road-over-rail bridges. A provision of $2·3 million has been made for new plant and equipment. This includes funds for the purchase of a new ballast cleaning machine, which is currently undergoing trials by the railways, and for mechanized handling equipment.

Provisions made under item 1—way and works—include funds for completion of track rearrangement at Stawell to enable higher speeds for freight trains and completion of the reconstruction of station buildings and track alterations at Mildura.

The Bill also makes provision for advances in respect of road transport services. The Government has, for many years, recognized the importance of the private bus sector of public transport throughout the State, and has extended its scheme of financial assistance to June, 1978. Provision is made in this measure for loans for $1 million in the current year for the purchase of new buses to help maintain and improve vehicle standards.

The Bill provides the necessary financial authority to go ahead with many transport improvement projects throughout the State and I commend it to the House.

On the motion of Mr. JONES (Melbourne), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Tuesday, 8th November.

YOUTH, SPORT AND RECREATION (STATE RECREATION COUNCIL) BILL.

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

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The main purposes of the Bill are to—

(*a*) create a State Recreation Council to advise the Minister on all matters pertaining to recreation in Victoria;

(*b*) integrate the staff of the National Fitness Council into the Department of Youth, Sport and Recreation while, at the same time, preserving the existing camps, programmes and services of the council; and

(*c*) convert the existing Sports and Recreation Council into a State Sports Council with an increase of membership from nine to fifteen.

The proposed State Recreation Council will continue the functions of the National Fitness Council. In addition, it will be responsible for advising me on policy on all aspects of recreation and, in particular, active recreation. At present this function is divided between the National Fitness Council and the Sports and Recreation Council.

The State Recreation Council will have responsibility for advising me on the means of achieving the objectives of section 3 (c) of the Youth, Sport and Recreation Act. These objectives relate to recreation in particular. They include the provision of additional opportunities for family recreation, improvement of facilities and services for recreation of all kinds, provision of assistance to community groups, organizations and municipalities for recreational purposes, co-ordination of governmental recreational services and development of high standards of safety in recreational activities.

The staff of the National Fitness Council, together with the "Life: Be In It" staff, will form a new division of the department to be called the Recreation Development Division. They will continue all existing camps, programmes and services of the National Fitness Council and will assist with the provision of additional "Life: Be In It" community activities.

There has been continuous consultation with the National Fitness Council in preparing for this action and in the drafting of this Bill.

There has also been similar consultation with National Fitness Council staff, including individual interviews to discuss and resolve questions about continuation of present roles and the nature and conditions of employment with my department. The Bill provides full protection of the salaries, classification, seniority, accrued benefits and all other entitlements of staff.

The Victorian National Fitness Council and others throughout Australia have assisted community recreation for many years. However, the Commonwealth Government has terminated its financial assistance for State National Fitness Councils and any State wishing to retain a National Fitness Council must provide all funds.

Mr. Dixon.

This fact, combined with the development of new government departments and agencies for sport and recreation has already resulted in the amalgamation of national fitness and sport recreation administrations in New South Wales, South Australia, Western Australia and Tasmania.

The advantages of the proposed amalgamation in Victoria will include the co-ordination of recreation policy by one council, economies in administration, rationalization of accommodation, improved career opportunities for staff and substantial improvement in the co-ordination of recreation programmes and services.

As a consequence of the consolidation of responsibility for recreation in the proposed State Recreation Council, the Bill provides for the creation of a State Sports Council to replace the Sports and Recreation Council. The latter council has approved the change.

The functions of the State Sports Council will include responsibility for advising me on policies to achieve the objectives of the Youth, Sport and Recreation Act described in section 3 (*b*) of the Act. This responsibility will include my department's sports assistance programme, the planning and development of community and State sports facilities, the expansion of sports coaching, training of sports administrators and the over-all encouragement of participation at all levels and competition in sport.

Provision is made to have up to fifteen members of the State Sports Council. This will enable the council to extend the use of committees to spread the council's workload and to give the full council more time for consideration of policy issues.

As issues will arise which will be of mutual interest and concern to the State Recreation Council, the State Sports Council and the State Youth Council, the Bill provides for not fewer than three joint meetings of committees of these councils to assist with co-ordination.

In commending this Bill to the House, I pay a tribute to the National Fitness Council of Victoria and to the chairman, members past and present, the chief executive officer and staff.

Since its inception in 1939 the council has developed and maintained recreational facilities and services which have been used and enjoyed by thousands of individuals and families. The council has been the forerunner of the Department of Youth, Sport and Recreation and it has established a fine record of service.

In conclusion I want to emphasize that the council's facilities and services and the work of the experienced council members will continue as before, but within the new organizational structure envisaged in the Bill.

There are some matters normally contained within the explanatory memorandum to which I should like to refer. The first is that the department will continue the practice of the National Fitness Council and charge fees for the courses, programmes, publications services and goods which are to be continued and to charge for other services which might be provided by the department. However, the Minister may not exercise this power in such a way as to compete unfairly with retail traders.

In addition, clause 5 empowers the Minister to delegate to the State Recreation Council power to provide training and coaching courses, and recreation programmes and camps, and to fix charges for participants in these activities. These are functions which are performed at present by the National Fitness Council. I believe the State Recreation Council should have that power delegated to it.

There are provisions for the transfer of the staff of the National Fitness Council to the Public Service. Any member of staff who does not wish to join the Public Service may elect to accept temporary employment from the Public Service Board.

Clause 7 empowers the Minister of Lands, on the recommendation of the Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation, to purchase land for the purpose of extending or establishing a camp or recreation facility. This is another power which is at present exercized by the National Fitness Council. 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 8.

RACING (MIXED SPORTS GATHERINGS) BILL.

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

That this Bill be now read a second time.

This Bill amends the Racing Act 1958, by relaxing the conditions governing mixed sports gatherings.

Mixed sports gatherings were originally minor race meetings which afforded the opportunity for legal betting in country centres where no licensed race meetings were held. The programme for a mixed sports gathering would include not more than four horse, pony or trotting races and other sport and novelty events, but the emphasis was on the horse races.

The important point about mixed sports gatherings is that they are deemed to be race meetings for the purposes of the Racing Act. This means that a bookmaker operating at these gatherings may make a book on horse races held on the same day at other venues.

Over the years permits were issued to promoters of a number of athletic meetings outside the metropolitan area which claimed that they needed to offer their patrons the opportunity to bet on metropolitan and interstate race meetings as well as on the athletic events, in order to attract a reasonable crowd. Usually only one or two token horse races were staged solely for the purpose of qualifying for a mixed sports gathering permit.

Representations have been made to the Government on behalf of the promoters of the Bendigo 2000, the Trentham Athletic Club and the Maryborough Highland Gathering, among others, to the effect that the horse race staged at these meetings serves no real purpose and is treated in some cases as a joke.

The Government accepts that these athletic meetings are important to the sport and to country people. It wishes to ensure that no unreasonable obstacles are placed in the way of their viability and has therefore agreed to create a second type of mixed sports gathering where no horse race is held.

Now, I shall briefly explain the provisions of the Bill. Clause 2 substitutes a new definition of mixed sports gatherings for the one which now appears in the Racing Act. Paragraph (*b*) of the new definition of "mixed sports gatherings", as contained in clause 2 (*a*), provides that a club or organization which does not wish to hold a horse race may be authorized to hold a mixed sports gathering. Each application will be considered on its merits. One important test which will be applied to each application for permission to hold a mixed sports gathering will be whether any licensed race meeting is scheduled to be held in the same area. A mixed sports gathering would not be authorized if it would clash with a licensed race meeting.

Paragraphs (*b*) and (*c*) make consequential amendments to sections 3 and 4 of the Racing Act. Paragraph (*d*) limits to 50 the total number of mixed sports gatherings which may be authorized in any one year.

As 37 mixed sports gathering permits were issued last year the Bill allows for a reasonable increase in the number of these meetings, but I should add that it is the Government's intention that mixed sports gatherings where the emphasis is on the horse races should be given preference over athletic meetings if more than 50 applications for permits are made in any year. Clause 3 makes consequential amendments to the Lotteries Gaming and Betting Act.

The Bill corrects a situation which has developed over the years and makes special provision for the needs of our rural communities, and I commend it 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 8.

ADJOURNMENT.

CREDIBILITY OF MINISTER—NEWPORT POWER STATION—FRAUDULENT ART REPRODUCTIONS—ECHUCA SPECIAL EDUCATION UNIT.

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

That the House, at its rising, adjourn until Tuesday, November 8, at half-past two o'clock.

The motion was agreed to.

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

That the House do now adjourn.

Mr. WILKES (Leader of the Opposition): I am deeply concerned about the credibility of the statement made by the Minister in another place which has been attacked in an article in tonight's *Herald*. The attack was purported to have been made by a former Minister, Mr. Meagher. I urge the Government to take some action to protect the credibility of the Minister in the interests of proper Parliamentary Government.

The article is written by Mr. Anthony Cheesewright, and it states, *inter alia*—

Mr. Meagher said today: "My memory is not quite so bad that I wouldn't remember an insult of the sort that is suggested was offered to me on that occasion.

"I am very concerned about the implication of Mr. Hunt's statement . . . it makes it appear that I was prepared to take money from property developers, although he wasn't."

"I refute this imputation completely and categorically."

Mr. Meagher said: "I am also concerned about Mr. Hunt's statement that I had thanked him after he had told me that he couldn't take money from a property consultant, but that I could.

"I regard that as an insult . . . and would certainly not have replied saying 'thank you.'

Mr. Meagher is reported as having made a number of other statements. The point I make and the advice I give to the Government is that if a Minister's credibility is being attacked in the newspapers by a former Minister, the credibility of the Minister and the authenticity of the statements made by the Minister in another place should be questioned by the Government of the day no matter of which House the Minister may be a member. His credibility should be established beyond all doubt. I urge the Government to take the first opportunity of doing this.

I have ascertained that this is not a matter of privilege, but it certainly goes to the credibility of a Minister. I strongly suggest that the Government should verify the authenticity of the reported remarks of the former Minister as compared with those of the present Minister for Local Government in the interests of the character of the present Minister. I urge the Government to take some action in the not-too-distant future to correct this matter.

The SPEAKER (Sir Kenneth Wheeler): Order! I shall elaborate slightly on this matter, because it is a little unusual. Standing Order No. 95 states—

No member shall allude to any debate in the other House of Parliament, or to any measure pending therein, except that whenever a member of this House believes himself to have been seriously misrepresented by statements made in the same session in the other House of Parliament, he may, having established to the satisfaction of Mr. Speaker that he had been seriously misrepresented, seek leave of the House to make a personal statement in refutation or by way of explanation.

This statement may not be debated.

I ask the Leader of the Opposition whether the Minister for Local Government in another place made this statement during a debate in the Legislative Council or in answer to a question.

Mr. WILKES: It was made in answer to a question.

Mr. FORDHAM (Footscray): I have recently been contacted by a number of constituents and bodies in the electorate I represent about an issue that has bedevilled them and the people of Victoria for a long time. I refer to the effect of the proposed or partly-constructed Newport power station on the communities of Newport and Williamstown.

The people who live in the district firmly believe that this station, if constructed, will have an extremely negative effect on their lifestyle and health and that of future generations. Of course, they are asking the Government to reconsider its determination to proceed with the construction of this major facility on that site.

Two matters in particular are being highlighted in representations that I and, I suspect, the Minister continue to receive from the area. The first is the decision of the Government to proceed with the construction of gas turbine units in the Latrobe Valley. I understand that the construction of further turbines in the Latrobe Valley is being considered.

If that is to be the case, and in view of the enormous amount of natural gas that will be required to maintain those turbines and their relative inefficiency compared with other units, the Government should question the availability of natural gas, given the amount that has been declared to be present in the Bass Strait area. In view of that situation, the Government should seriously consider the economic grounds especially, as well as the future energy requirements of the State, in developing the Newport power station.

The second aspect is the statement by the Government on the closure of the station on days when the Environment Protection Authority or the re-

levant authority at the time determines that it ought to be closed because of extremely unfavourable effects on the environment of Melbourne, particularly in the western suburbs.

The second report of the committee of inquiry into the Newport power station stated that the station may be required to be closed on 28 or more days each year. I have no doubt that as time goes on, it will need to be closed on more rather than fewer days. If that is to be the case, it means that the station will be required to close on a significant proportion of the working days in a year. What assurance can the Government give that that will be the case, and can it once again on the ground of economics consider the desirability of building a limited station which may or may not be required to meet the energy requirements of the time?

In view of those circumstances and the strong feeling of members the local council and the community, I hope the Government will not proceed blindly with construction of the station without having an ongoing look at the desirability of the siting of the power station.

An additional cost of $100 million for relocating the station in other parts of Victoria that were found to be more suitable has been mentioned. I hope the Government will continue to assess whether, in view of knowledge that has come to hand and recent trends of consumption and gas production, that $100 million would be better spent now in relocating the station elsewhere in Victoria.

Mr. JONES (Melbourne): I direct my remarks to the attention of the Minister of the Arts and refer to a multi-million dollar racket in art frauds in Australia. It appears that original art works of many Australian and overseas artists are being pirated in factories in Taiwan and Hong Kong and imported into Australia by an American importing company. I believe it is the duty of the Minister of the Arts—and I am sure he would concede that—to help to protect Australian artistic endeavours, and Victorian artists are well to the fore in this field.

Among the Victorian artists whose works are being forged, with copies being sold as originals, are Mr. Neil Savage and Mr. Bill Beavan, both of whom would be well known to honorable members. The point is that because they are reproductions done by hand and not done by any mechanical process, they are able to escape customs duty. They avoid the payment of 35 per cent customs duty and 15 per cent sales tax.

Mr. JONA: Are they signed?

Mr. JONES: Yes, they have forged signatures done by hand. Apparently a silk screen process is used; a template is placed on the texture of the canvas. The colour is then applied by hand to fit in with the original shapes.

Mr. COLEMAN: It is a template.

Mr. JONES: No, I am talking about a finished product here which is done by hand, but essentially it is done as part of a repetitive process. It is done by hand, but it is not an original art work. It is, paradoxically, a reproduction done by hand.

Mr. JONA: Like a stencil?

Mr. JONES: Like a stencil plus the——

Mr. RICHARDSON: Is it better than the original?

Mr. JONES: Not in the opinion of the original artists! Representations have been made to the Federal Department of Customs and Excise, and I understand that in Victoria some representations have been made to the Fraud Squad asking it to investigate the matter.

I am informed that the police Fraud Squad has either taken no action or has not informed the original complainants that action has been taken.

This is important as these are pieces of intellectual property, artistic creations that the artists are entitled to protect in the same way as books are protected, by copyright. Where people have not given rights for the making of reproductions and where people are actually perpetrating a fraud in order to evade import duties, then the Minister should take action.

I invite the Minister to do one of two things—firstly, to try to activate the Fraud Squad to see whether it can take some action against the importers; or secondly, to make representations to the Commonwealth Government—to the incoming Whitlam Government, or if in time, to the retiring Fraser Government—asking that investigations take place to determine whether or not these paintings are regarded as reproductions and, as a result, have heavy import duties imposed on them.

Honorable members will have seen the television advertising campaign showing these painting being sold in hotels and motels and through other avenues, and inviting people to obtain an original painting for as little as $50 or $60. I ask the Minister for the Arts to take some action.

Mr. HANN (Rodney): I raise a matter of a fairly urgent nature which I have discussed with the Minister of Special Education. It also affects the Minister of Education. It is the need for the appointment of an additional teacher to the special education unit at Echuca. The agitation for this appointment has been continuing from the commencement of this year. In October or November last year a meeting was held with representatives of the Special Services Division to discuss the possibility of establishing a small section of a special education unit at Echuca. It was considered that there was an existing need in the area to cater for ten to twelve children who had special learning difficulties.

Reports were submitted to the Special Services Division early this year and I first had discussions with the department in February. The discussions were then adjourned until May while reports were obtained. Everybody seemed to be in agreement that an extra teacher should be appointed to the special education unit to assist the children, but the problem of staff ceilings arose and this has continued on and on. Now, the end of this teaching year has almost arrived. It has been a very frustrating situation, both for myself, the people within the Special Services Division and also for the people in the local community, particularly those involved with Nepean House who have been very active in trying to have the extra teacher appointed. I understand that 31st October is the last day on which appointments can be made. We have literally reached the bottom of the barrel. This problem has continued for over twelve months and still no satisfactory conclusion has been reached.

There was one teacher who was eligible, who had the necessary qualifications and who was suitable for the position. I refer to Mrs. Copp, but I understand there are other unemployed teachers who have similar, suitable qualifications. The local people are not worried about who it is but they want a teacher to be appointed, even if it is only for the last five or six weeks of this year, to enable the children to have the benefit of special education.

I ask the Minister for Special Education, who is familiar with the matter, to confer with the Minister of Education as a matter of urgency with a view to appointing a teacher, even on a short-term basis, to assist these children, because it is the unfortunate ones who need the special care and education. I believe we have literally put the children back twelve months in their learning because of red tape in both the Education Department and the Special Education Department—all over a matter of policy in appointing an extra teacher.

Mr. THOMPSON (Minister of Education): The Premier was not in the House when the Leader of the Opposition spoke. Neither the Premier nor I have had the benefit of reading the remarks made in another place by the Minister for Local Government, nor have we seen the latest edition of the *Herald* The matter will be examined after we have done so.

Mr. BALFOUR (Minister for Minerals and Energy): The Deputy Leader of the Opposition asked the Government to hold another review of the advisability of building a power station at Newport. In the late 1960s and early 1970s a lot of effort was put into this matter and the construction of a 1,000-megawatt station was approved with the first 500-megawatt set to come into production in 1976 and the second set in 1978. I do not want to go over everything that has happened in the intervening years, but I am afraid next year and in the years after the people of Victoria will regret that the Government was not allowed to carry on with that project.

However, earlier this year, after quite a lengthy hearing, the Newport Review Panel recommended that a 500-megawatt station be built on that site and the Government is proceeding with that. I do not believe the fears expressed by certain people, including the review panel—that the station would be closed down for some 28 days during the year—are real. I doubt whether the station will be closed down as often as that. Even if it were, most of the closures would take place in the summer or late autumn and would not affect the electrical situation so much as if it were closed during the winter months.

The operations of the station will be monitored. I can assure the House that it will comply with the licences which are issued for its operations. I can also assure the House that it will be operating according to those licences and that the State Electricity Commission will adhere to any restrictions which may be placed upon it. I do not think the honorable member and the people who live in the western area have anything to fear from the station. In fact, in two or three years' time when the 500-megawatt set comes into production, the people of Victoria will be pleased that we have it in our system.

Mr. HAMER (Minister of the Arts): The honorable member for Melbourne raised the matter of art imitations or reproduction of Australian artists' works of art being made in Taiwan and Hong Kong and brought here for sale. The whole crux of the matter is whether the purchaser knows the painting is not an original or whether it is represented as an original and he does not know that he is buying a copy.

I ask the honorable member to give me any details that he has. I know that complaints have been made to the Consumer Affairs Bureau and, I believe, to the department which administers the Trades Practices Act. If there is anything that can be done——

Mr. JONES: There is also the matter of the stealing of intellectual property in the art works.

Mr. HAMER: By his interjection, I take it that the honorable member is referring to the unauthorized copying of original works of art.

Mr. JONES: Yes.

Mr. HAMER: I believe that is all tied up in the question, and I would be glad to have further information so that I can have further investigations made.

Mr. SCANLAN (Minister of Special Education): The honorable member for Rodney raised a matter of urgency and the facts he put to the House are substantially correct. I regret that some delay has been occasioned. The honorable member would be aware that this was due to a number of industrial factors, involving various

teacher bodies and unions which submitted that the employment of teachers who were currently unemployed should receive first priority in the employment of teachers for our schools and special educational units. I will have urgent discussions with the Minister of Education to ascertain whether something can be done to clarify the situation for the honorable member.

The motion was agreed to.

The House adjourned at 5.30 *p.m. until Tuesday, November* 8.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE.

The following answers to questions on notice were circulated—

SCHOOLS IN CORIO.

(Question No. 2366)

Mr. TREZISE (Geelong North) asked the Minister of Education—

1. What progress is being made towards the establishment of the new secondary school at Corio?

2. What progress is being made in the construction of the permanent school of Rosewall at Corio?

Mr. THOMPSON (Minister of Education): The answer is—

1. Documentation is completed on the first stage of a 75-1-900-type high school. Planning for a relocatable complex is nearing completion. The project has been delayed because of problems in finalizing the acquisition of the site; however, possession of the site is expected by the end of October and the school will open for 1978.

2. Permanent facilities are already under construction (at this stage foundations being dug-poured).

SCHOOLS IN OAKLEIGH ELECTORATE.

(Question No. 2580)

Mr. FORDHAM (Footscray) asked the Minister of Education—

1. How many students have enrolled in night classes at schools in the electoral district of Oakleigh in this year?

2. What subjects are being taught, indicating the number of students for each subject and the number of teachers employed?

Mr. THOMPSON (Minister of Education): The answer is—

	Evening students 1977
Huntingdale Technical School—	
Art	36
Basic baking	12
Basic computer programming	13
Copper enamelling	10
Dressmaking	58
Craft	22
Electrical hobbies	10
English	12
English for migrants	22
German	16
Hand spinning	15
Fitness and exercise	10
Jazz ballet	42
Macrame	16
Mathematics	18
Leather work	10
Pottery	39
Photography	17
Shorthand	38
Special English for handicapped adults	5
Surfing	13
Typewriting	41
Video production	11
Woodwork advanced	12
Woodwork beginners	16
Total	514
Number of teachers	26 persons = 4·5 equivalent full-time teachers.*
Oakleigh Technical School—	
Gardening 1	47
Gardening 2	23
Gardening 3	25
Pest control	31
Landscaping	45
Tree surgery	23
Turf technician	6
Shorthand and typewriting	55
Engineering technician	144
Total	399
Number of teachers	31 persons = 15 equivalent full-time teachers.*

* It should be noted that the Huntingdale Technical School evening classes are of a maximum duration of two hours a week.

The Oakleigh Technical School evening classes, with the exception of shorthand and engineering technician are five-to-eight-hour career classes and are highly specialized. The gardening evening classes are taken in small groups. This explains the difference in the numbers of equivalent full-time teachers at Huntingdale and Oakleigh.

The majority of teachers involved in the evening class programmes in the specialist areas of gardening and related subjects are employed on a part-time basis from industry and are not Education Department teachers.

WORKERS COMPENSATION INSURANCE FOR PART-TIME STUDENTS.

(Question No. 2788)

Mr. GUDE (Geelong East) asked the Minister of Education—

Whether any workers compensation insurance or other form of insurance cover is obtained by the Education Department to

cover part-time students undertaking extra studies to obtain additional qualifications; if so, how an injured person obtains benefits from the department; if not, whether the Government will examine this matter urgently with a view to ensuring that adequate cover is available?

Mr. THOMPSON (Minister of Education): The answer is—

The department does not provide any insurance cover for students whether full-time or part-time.

Should a student be injured during attendance at a departmental school the Crown incurs no liability unless the injury is caused by negligence of a servant of the Crown acting in his official capacity.

HOSTEL ACCOMMODATION FOR STUDENTS.

(Question No. 2804)

Mr. A. T. EVANS (Ballarat North) asked the Minister of Education—

Whether the Education Department is planning to construct additional hostel accommodation for students at Beaufort House, Alfredton; if so, why this accommodation is not being built at Mount Helen, adjacent to the new State College under construction on the campus of the Ballarat College of Advanced Education?

Mr. THOMPSON (Minister of Education): The answer is—

The Education Department is planning to consolidate its present student accommodation in Ballarat on the one site at Beaufort House. The department is not planning additional accommodation for students in either Ballarat or at Mount Helen.

Beaufort House has been chosen for consolidation because this is a large site and has an established substantial hostel already operating. Consolidation and upgrading of all the department's student accommodation in Ballarat on this well-located site is a far more economical prospect than the construction of a complete new hostel at Mount Helen.

REVENUE FROM HARRIETVILLE-HOTHAM ROAD TOLL GATE.

(Question No. 2827)

Mr. JASPER (Murray Valley) asked the Minister of Lands—

How much money was collected by the Department of Crown Lands and Survey at the toll gate on the Harrietville–Hotham Road in the financial year 1976–77, indicating how this money was applied?

Mr. BORTHWICK (Minister of Lands): The answer is—

1. The total amount collected at the entry control points to Mount Hotham was $52,102.

2. In accordance with section 26 of the Mt. Hotham Alpine Resort Act 1972 the money will be applied generally by the management committee towards the administration of the Act and the care, control and management of the resort area.

HOBSON PARK MENTAL HOSPITAL.

(Question No. 2887)

Mr. AMOS (Morwell) asked the Assistant Minister of Health, for the Minister of Health—

What was the number of admissions to Hobson Park Mental Hospital in each of the years from 1974 to 1976, and in this year to date?

Mr. JONA (Assistant Minister of Health): The answer supplied by the Minister of Health is—

The number of admissions to Hobson Park Hospital, Traralgon, in each of the years from 1974 to 1976 and in this year to date are shown hereunder—

Year	Mental hospital	Psychiatric hospital	Total
1974	83	429	512
1975	67	13	80
1976	55	228	283
to 20th October, 1977 ..	25	186	211

SUGARLOAF RESERVOIR.

(Question No. 2906)

Mr. MUTTON (Coburg) asked the Minister for Conservation, for the Minister of Water Supply—

1. On what date the tender for the Sugarloaf reservoir project was accepted?

2. What tender price was accepted and who was the successful tenderer?

3. Whether a separate tender was called for the water treatment plant; if so—(*a*) who was the successful tenderer and what was the tender price; (*b*) what area the treatment plant will occupy and what are the various methods required to prepare the water for human consumption; and (*c*) what capacity of water will be treated daily?

4. What is the comparable cost per megalitre of provision of water between the Upper Yarra system and the Sugarloaf reservoir?

5. What areas of the metropolis will be served by the Sugarloaf reservoir treated water?

6. Whether the Upper Yarra water supply system receives similar water treatment to that planned for the Sugarloaf reservoir; if so, where the treatment plant is located?

7. Whether the Sugarloaf reservoir water supply system will produce poor quality water due to turbidity?

Mr. BORTHWICK (Minister for Conservation): The answer supplied by the Minister of Water Supply is—

1. The Suparloaf reservoir project is being constructed under many separate contracts the first of which was for the manufacture, supply, installation and commissioning of the pumping station equipment for the Yering gorge pumping station, the tender for which was accepted on the 15th April, 1976.

2. The first tender accepted by the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works was for $5,231,625 and was submitted by Mather and Platt Pty. Ltd. (Kelly Lewis Pumps Division). The sum of the tendered prices for major contracts let to date is $44,551,808. Major contracts for the construction of concrete structures and the Clear Water reservoir remain to be let.

3. (*a*) Several separate tenders were called for the various parts of the water treatment plant.

The successful tenders for the two major components comprising equipment and civil works were respectively William Boby and Coy. (Aust.) Pty. Ltd. and Project Development Corporation Ltd. The sum of the tender prices for these two major components was $19,368,326.

(*b*) The treatment plant will occupy 18·4 hectares and the various methods of treatment to be employed are floculation, clarification, filtration, chlorination and fluoridation.

(*c*) The installed capacity is 450 megalitres a day.

4. The cost of water from the Upper Yarra system *ex* Silvan reservoir is $25 a megalitre.

The estimated cost in June, 1976, values of provision of water from the Sugarloaf reservoir is $112 a megalitre.

5. Sugarloaf reservoir treated water will be used to supplement as necessary the water supply to the northern and western supply regions of the Melbourne water supply system.

6. No.

7. No.

Legislative Council.

Tuesday, November 8, 1977.

The PRESIDENT **(the Hon. W. G. Fry)** took the chair at 4.48 p.m. and read the prayer.

GIFT DUTY (AMENDMENT) BILL.

This Bill was received from the Assembly and, on the motion of the Hon. V. O. DICKIE (Chief Secretary), was read a first time.

WATER SUPPLY WORKS AND SERVICES BILL (No. 2).

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.

ABSENCE OF MINISTER.

The Hon. V. O. DICKIE (Chief Secretary): I wish to advise that the Minister for Local Government has been delayed and may not be present during question time.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE.

HOUSING COMMISSION LAND PURCHASES.

The Hon. D. R. WHITE (Doutta Galla Province): Is the Chief Secretary satisfied with the report prepared by Assistant Commissioner Crowley in 1974 regarding land transactions at Melton, in which Assistant Commissioner Crowley recommended that no further action be taken, after failing to interview Colin Cooke, the source of the assertions, or Mr. O'Bree, the valuer, who, it is alleged, may have been a recipient of funds concerning that transaction?

The Hon. V. O. DICKIE (Chief Secretary): The answer to this question will come out before the board of inquiry which is the appropriate place at which the answer should be given.