member for good and stated reasons desires information on any specific lease or tenancy consideration will be given to the supply of that information on a confidential basis.

Legislative Council

Tuesday, 20 November 1979

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. F. S. Grimwade) took the chair at 4.48 p.m. and read the prayer.

JOINT SITTING OF PARLIAMENT
Council of Adult Education

The PRESIDENT announced that he had received a letter from the Minister of Education in the following terms:

Dear Mr President,

The Governor-in-Council has today accepted the resignation of the Hon. W. A. Landeryou M.L.C. as a member of the Council of Adult Education.

Section 66(1)(c) of the Education Act provides that three members of the Council of Adult Education shall be members of the Parliament of Victoria who have been recommended for appointment by a joint sitting of the members of the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly conducted in accordance with rules adopted for the purpose by members present at the joint sitting. Mr Landeryou was one of the three members so appointed.

I should be grateful if you could arrange for the coming joint sitting to recommend a member for appointment to the Council to replace Mr Landeryou for the term ending on 4 December 1981.

I have addressed a similar letter to the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly.

The President then announced that a message had been received from the Legislative Assembly acquainting the Council that they had agreed to meet the Council for the purpose of sitting and voting together to choose a member of the Parliament of Victoria to be recommended for appointment to the Council of Adult Education and proposing the Legislative Assembly Chamber at 6 o'clock this day as the place and time of such meeting.

It was ordered that a message be sent to the Legislative Assembly acquainting them of the Council's agreement.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

TAKEOVER OF HERALD AND WEEKLY TIMES LTD

The Hon. W. A. LANDERYOU (Doutta Galla Province)—In view of the widespread interest in the community in the proposed takeover of the Herald and Weekly Times Ltd by News Ltd, the Murdoch company, will the Attorney-General undertake to request the all-party Company Take-overs Committee to examine this proposed takeover?

The Hon. HADDON STOREY (Attorney-General)—All I know about the matter raised by the honorable member is the headline I noticed in the paper this afternoon, and I have not yet had time to read the paper. The all-party Company Take-overs Committee is a committee especially appointed under the Company Take-overs Act to investigate company takeovers where certain criteria are established. I have no reason to believe that any such criteria exist in this case. If they do, of course consideration will be given to this matter.

ELTHAM SHIRE COUNCIL

The Hon. RALPH HOWARD (Templestowe Province)—I direct a question without notice to the Minister for Local Government. Many residents of Eltham shire have recently received rate notices which have been very obviously altered, using the white-out and type-over technique, some of them altered in four places. At about the time the rate notices were being prepared for distribution, the shire offices were broken into and a typewriter was stolen from the rates section, another from the accounts section, and the key to the archives was taken at the same time. As there is reason to believe that at least some of the amended notices are no longer in accordance with the rate book, I ask whether the Minister is aware of these matters and whether he will investigate the situation in the interests of Eltham ratepayers.

The Hon. D. G. CROZIER (Minister for Local Government)—I am aware of these incidents: Firstly, I know of the break-in to which Dr Howard refers and, secondly, I have personally sighted certain of the erasures to which he alludes. As a consequence of an examination of these erasures and the information that has come to me, I have referred these matters to the Attorney-General who, I understand, has sought the advice of the Crown Solicitor.

LANDS DEPARTMENT STAFF

The Hon. D. M. EVANS (North Eastern Province)—Will the Minister of Lands inform the Council whether the report is correct that 26 men or thereabouts have been retrenched from the Lands Department? If so, will there be a reduction in the work of vermin and noxious weed control being done on roads and public lands, and will there be a handing over of some of the responsibility for this work, particularly in irrigation areas, to other bodies such as the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission?

The Hon. W. V. HOUGHTON (Minister of Lands)—It is true that 26 out of a total of 647 employees of the Lands Department have been retrenched because of the unavailability of funds for their employment. The honorable member asked whether the retrenchments will mean that some of the work formerly done by these employees will not be done. It is hoped that, by increased efficiency, the department will keep up with the work. More will be required of landowners in respect of the control of weeds along their own road frontages. There are no proposals that other statutory bodies will take over the function of the Lands Department in regard to the destruction of noxious weeds.

FOOTSCRAY TECHNICAL COLLEGE

The Hon. JOAN COXSEDGE (Melbourne West Province)—Is the Minister of Education aware of the uncertainty and apprehension of the staff of the Footscray Technical College with regard to Tertiary Education Commission funding of the proposed new buildings for the technical and further education regional college to service the western metropolitan region? Is the Minister also aware that, if the Tertiary Education Commission's deadline of 30 March 1980 is not met, funds in excess of $8 million to be available for stage two, phase one, of the new building programme will be lost to Victoria and reallocated to other States? What is the estimated cost of buildings required to be purchased by March 1980 to meet the Tertiary Education Commission's requirements for funding? What funds has the Education Department set aside for this purpose? As the demolition work will require the relocation of many classrooms and offices, what provision has been made for temporary accommodation of students and staff? Finally, has the Education Department entered into negotiations with the Footscray City Council with regard to the further requirement of the Tertiary Education Commission that Nicholson Street——

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. F. S. Grimwade)—The question is obviously long and detailed and probably it would have been better for it to have been placed on the Notice Paper. I invite the Minister of Education to consider replying to the question asked thus far. If the honorable member wishes to pursue the question any further, I suggest she do so by placing it on notice.

The Hon. A. J. HUNT (Minister of Education)—You took the words out of my mouth, Mr President. I was going to indicate to the House that this is a typical example of a six-part question of a kind that needs to be answered on notice. At least, the honorable member had reached six parts so far and I do not know how many more there are. The question went into considerable detail, and, in any event, relates to the portfolio of another Minister.

Mrs Coxsedge well knows that building matters are the absolute responsibility of the Assistant Minister of Education, Mr Lacy, and if she would care to pass to me the sheet from which she was reading, I shall endeavour to obtain prompt answers for her from the Assistant Minister, including answers to such parts of the question as might not yet have been asked.

TEACHING SERVICE

The Hon. CLIVE BUBB (Ballarat Province)—Is the Minister of Education aware of the report which appeared on the front page of the *Teachers Journal* under the title "Hunt Hits Again" and could the honorable gentleman inform the House about the operation of the proposed Victorian Teaching Service Conciliation and Arbitration Commission?

The Hon. A. J. HUNT (Minister of Education)—I have had three consultations with the major teacher unions, plus consultations with principals and also with the Victorian Association of Teachers on the Teachers Tribunal. All have agreed that it needs reform. Some of the unions want a wide area of direct negotiation and I am happy to grant that. Disagreement exists on what that area should be, and there is no unanimity of what type of reform should take place.

When I last met the unions, I agreed that I would have a paper prepared. A paper was prepared and I sent it out under cover of a letter which simply said, "I enclose paper prepared for me". One would have thought that the world was going to fall down tomorrow! I did precisely what I was asked to do and that was to have a paper prepared as a basis for discussion and I hoped there would be fruitful discussions on the subject of tribunal reform rather than threats of strike. It is not possible to have negotiation if, as soon as one produces a discussion paper, threats of strike are raised.

POSTPONEMENT OF UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS

The Hon. R. A. MACKENZIE (Geelong Province)—I ask the Leader of the Government in this House to ask the Commonwealth Minister for Social Security whether he is aware of recent instructions to all Commonwealth Employment Service branches from the Department of Social Security requesting officers of that department to impose a postponement of benefits of up to twelve weeks on recipients of unemployment benefits where it is believed by that officer——

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. F. S. Grimwade)—Order! The matter to which the honorable member is referring does not fall within the jurisdiction of the Government. If any part of the question does relate to the administrative responsibility of the Government, I invite the honorable member to ask that part of the question.

The Hon. R. A. MACKENZIE—Thank you, Mr President. My question relates to the rights of Victorians, and that falls within the responsibility of this Government.

The PRESIDENT—The jurisdiction the honorable member is referring to is the responsibility of the Federal Government.

NATURAL GAS DISCOVERY

The Hon. V. T. HAUSER (Nunawading Province)—I direct a question to the Minister of Water Supply representing the Minister for Minerals and Energy. I refer to today's strike of natural gas by Beach Petroleum NL in the Peterborough area. Can the Minister assure the House that, if this discovery proves economical, the company will be permitted to sell its product commercially on the open market to the highest bidder without artificial price constrictions and without regard to whether any of the gas or by-products therefrom are exported or not?

The Hon. F. J. GRANTER (Minister of Water Supply)—The finding of a new source of gas to which the honorable member referred is exciting. The commercial processes will, no doubt, be dealt with by my colleague, the Minister for Minerals and Energy, and the Gas and Fuel Corporation. This find would be particularly exciting to an honorable member who represented the areas of Warrnambool and Camperdown, which are currently using liquid petroleum gas but, no doubt, would want to switch to natural gas.

LITIGATION AGAINST MUNICIPALITIES

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

court case in which damages of approximately $980 000 were awarded against a municipality in New South Wales. Is the Minister aware of this and, if so, is he considering action which will protect Victorian municipalities against similar types of litigation. I might add that a number of municipalities have expressed concern about this matter to members of the National Party.

The Hon. D. G. CROZIER (Minister for Local Government)—I am not aware of the litigation to which Mr Wright referred. I therefore invite him to let me have the details, and I assure him that the matter will be given serious consideration.

FLUORIDE TREATMENT

The Hon. H. A. THOMAS (Melbourne West Province)—I direct the attention of the Minister of Health to the case of a child attending the Altona East Primary School. According to the Melbourne *Truth*, his mother, Mrs Susan Childs, alleged that her seven-year-old son had been banned from attending the school dental clinic because she would not allow his teeth to be treated with fluoride. Mrs Childs stated that she believed the dental scheme should operate for all children, not just those who consent to fluoride treatment. Will the Minister investigate this matter?

The Hon. W. V. HOUGHTON (Minister for Conservation)—I do not know whether the Minister of Health is a reader of *Truth*. I am not. I will direct his attention to this matter and ask him to reply to the honorable member.

ELECTRIFICATION OF RAILWAYS

The Hon. D. K. HAYWARD (Monash Province)—I direct a question to the Minister for Local Government as the representative of the Minister of Transport. Recently, there have been suggestions that electric trolley buses should be introduced into Melbourne as a fuel saving measure. Will the Government give consideration to further extensions of electric railways in country areas for the same purpose?

The Hon. D. G. CROZIER (Minister for Local Government)—As some honorable members are aware, the proposal for the introduction of electric trolley buses in the metropolitan area was made by the Chairman of the Melbourne and Metropolitan Tramways Board, Mr Dudley Snell, in the annual report of that board which was tabled in Parliament last week.

I remind the House that the sum of $1·4 million has been allocated for the electrification of the line to Werribee and the duplication of the Geelong line. The Government is always interested in pursuing fuel or energy saving methods and this may well include serious consideration of the electric trolley bus proposal and the extension of the electrification grid.

BOARD OF WORKS SCHEME 142A

The Hon. D. R. WHITE (Doutta Galla Province)—Will the Minister of Water Supply explain why the Government is opposed to a section 142A scheme within the Board of Works area, yet allows a section 120A scheme to proceed at Mount Helen, Chirnside Park and Mount Martha?

The Hon. F. J. GRANTER (Minister of Water Supply)—The 142A scheme was put up recently, as I explained to the House the other night, by the Chairman of the Board of Works following, no doubt, a meeting of the Board of Works commissioners. The chairman asked whether the Government was prepared to allow this to proceed under the conditions of the 142A scheme, as proposed by the board. The Premier, the chairman, and I met, and the Premier has indicated to me that he does not wish the scheme to proceed at present.

MAGISTRATES' COURTS (CIVIL JURISDICTION) BILL

The Hon. HADDON STOREY (Attorney-General), by leave, moved for leave to bring in a Bill to repeal the Magistrates' Courts (Amendment) Act 1978, to amend the Magistrates' Courts Act 1971 and the Magistrates (Summary Proceedings) Act 1975 with respect to the civil jurisdiction of

Magistrates Courts, to amend the Water Act 1958, and for purposes connected therewith.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

WRONGS (ASSESSMENT OF DAMAGES) BILL

The Hon. HADDON STOREY (Attorney-General), by leave, moved for leave to bring in a Bill to make provision with respect to the assessment of damages, to amend the Wrongs Act 1958 and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

CONVEYANCING

The Hon. HADDON STOREY (Attorney-General): By leave, I move:

That there be laid before this House a copy of the Interim Report of the Committee of Inquiry into Conveyancing.

I desire to make a brief statement in relation to the Interim Report of the Committee of Inquiry into Conveyancing.

In September 1978 I established a committee to examine all aspects of conveyancing in Victoria, except for estate agents' fees and stamp duty, and to make recommendations in respect of any necessary or desirable changes in existing conveyancing laws and practices and conveyancing costs.

The committee met under the chairmanship of the Solicitor-General, Mr Dawson, Q.C. The other members of the committee were Messrs David A. Crawford, accountant; John Delves, Examiner of Titles; L. E. Penttila of the Law Institute; Brigadier J. D. Purcell, Chairman of the Consumer Affairs Council; Mark W. Sibree, business representative, and James W. Davies of the Law Institute. The committee received more than twenty submissions from a wide range of persons and organizations, the contents of which were taken into account in the course of the committee's deliberations.

The committee has presented me with an interim report in relation to two aspects of the matters under inquiry—conveyancing costs and the application of deposit moneys pending the completion of a contract for the sale of land.

In respect of the latter the committee recommended that there be legislation to provide that a deposit upon the sale of land be held intact until completion unless all parties to the transaction agree otherwise and that the party holding the deposit hold it as stakeholder pending completion. As there is universal agreement that purchasers' deposits should be protected, subject to further consideration of the details of the recommendation, the Government proposes to introduce legislation as soon as possible to implement this recommendation.

With regard to the other aspect which the interim report covers—conveyancing costs—the committee has recommended that the performance of conveyancing work for reward be confined to qualified members of the legal profession and that scale fees for transactions other than at the levels of the average price for a block of land and for a house be dispensed with and that, for those transactions where scale fees are retained, the fees be fixed in accordance with a formula devised by the committee and set out in its report.

The committee was not unanimous on this matter, and one member delivered a dissenting report. In view of the importance of this question the report is being tabled so that the public can see what has been proposed and make comment on it. The committee is proceeding with its task of examining other aspects of conveyancing and will, in due course, deliver a further and final report in relation to those matters which will include, no doubt, appropriate recommendations for changes that the committee sees as necessary or desirable.

The motion was agreed to.

The Hon. HADDON STOREY (Attorney-General) presented the report in compliance with the foregoing order.

It was ordered that the report be laid on the table.

On the motion of the Hon. D. R. WHITE (Doutta Galla Province), it was ordered that the report be taken into consideration on the next day of meeting.

PAPERS

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

Dried Fruits Board—Statement of accounts for the year 1978.

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

Place Names Committee—Report for the year 1978–79.

Port of Melbourne Authority—Balance-sheet and statement of accounts for the year 1978–79.

Small Business Development Corporation—Report for the year 1978–79.

Superannuation—Report of the State Superannuation Board for the year 1977–78.

Town and Country Planning Act 1961—City of Horsham Planning Scheme 1973—Amendment No. 27, 1975.

On the motion of the Hon. E. H. WALKER (Melbourne Province), it was ordered that the reports and financial statements be taken into consideration on the next day of meeting.

WORKERS COMPENSATION (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) BILL

The debate (adjourned from November 15) on the motion of the Hon. Haddon Storey (Attorney-General) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

The Hon. W. A. LANDERYOU (Doutta Galla Province)—This proposed legislation has had more false starts than horses at Flemington prior to the introduction of the mobile barrier. One is entitled to conclude that the decisions of the starter and the motives of some of the jockeys in those days were just as questionable as the motives and actions of the Minister of Labor and Industry on the presentation of the somewhat revised Bill introduced in this place by the Attorney-General.

Interestingly, despite the time that has elapsed since the Harris inquiry and the many provisos attached to the recommendation of the inquiry, the Government still persists with its quite mistaken view—because it is committed philosophically to the protection of its insurance company friends—that one can continue to ignore the high costs of insurance that are associated with and are directly related to the hidden costs of the private insurance industry. This is a factor to which not only Judge Harris but also many others have applied their minds and indeed, the Insurance Commissioner, in report after report, has drawn the attention of the Government to the need for action.

As an aside, because of the high cost of premiums in Victoria for inadequate workers compensation, despite the low rates of benefits, many municipal councillors in the broader context of the city of Melbourne, collectively decided to recommend to their councils—a recommendation subsequently carried to a conclusion—that they should, as group employers, negotiate with the State Insurance Office. Those councillors were able to obtain a saving of nearly half a million dollars on the previous year for the same coverage. It is clear that the insurance industry in Victoria has overcharged employers and, aided and abetted by the Government, underpaid employees in benefits that have ensued.

There were possibly 41—and I could have missed 10 or so—amendments recently made to the original Bill by the somewhat inexperienced Minister of Labour and Industry. The handling of this Bill must rank as one of the most disgraceful performances in the history of steering proposed legislation through Parliament. I was not joking when I referred earlier to false starts. I know that the Attorney-General has had many heartburnings and difficulties in getting his propositions through Cabinet. On this occasion proposed legislation was unveiled, trotted back, hidden, covered up, again amended, and later introduced with some 41 amendments emanating from the Minister.

Many organizations affiliated with the Trades Hall Council have considered their position with respect to the Bill. If it is passed, it is quite clear that the type of activities of which I have talked previously when discussing this concept, will again be the stalking horse of the

market place; in other words, a situation will occur where those workers who are effectively organized and led will not have their rights weakened in any way. Employers will again be required to pay the premium coverage necessary to give workers 24-hour coverage and an absolute 100 per cent make-up of pay, as indeed any decent, modern, civilized compensation scheme should seek to do.

It is essential to the philosophy of my colleagues in the Labor Party that any compensation scheme must be related directly to the income of individuals concerned and be on the basis of not having to run the gauntlet of a false situation. It appears that the restrictive attitude of the Government —and I shall say more about that when dealing with the clauses of the Bill later —is quite clear. It pretends that, arising from the high cost of the premiums, it is necessary to revise the working man's compensation within Victoria. It believes, according to its public utterances, there is a social welfare aspect to the existing legislation, which it uses as the pretext to alter yet another definition to the injury clause. It also uses the excuse that workers compensation boards, in their various divisions, have misrepresented what the Government had in mind in 1975. It does not say that so succinctly but, nevertheless, that is clearly one of its motivations.

It appalls me that the Bill is before the House, despite the efforts of my colleagues in another place and of the very rational Secretary of the Trades Hall Council to talk common sense to the gentlemen of the Government who are, after all, representatives of capital —in the classical capital-labour conflict situation—and to urge the Government to use a human approach to the problem, pointing out the net result of the legislative measure. I say without the slightest fear of contradiction that the end result of the legislation will be to take the whole concept of reimbursing the industrially injured out of the hands of Parliament and put it into the hands of those at the negotiating table of employer and employee representatives.

Perhaps that is what the Minister and the Government wanted. It is a retrograde step. It will advance the interests of those who are better and more effectively and collectively organized than those who are not. Although that may be a strong argument for trade unionism, which I support, I emphasize that Parliament has concerned itself traditionally with social issues.

Nevertheless, in the future, the reality will be that approximately three-quarters of the work force will be covered in one form or another by accident make-up pay agreements. There will be an ever-increasing and eventually a substantial number of workers covered by some form of agreement other than that which Parliament prescribes for workers compensation. It may well be argued that in the context of the free enterprise ethic and of the private enterprise philosophy, it is good that the strong get greater protection than the weak. That approach is completely abhorrent to the Labor Party and Parliament will have cause to regret the course of action imposed on it by the unholy alliance in another place of the farmer representatives and those who represent the insurance companies.

The trade union movement has not lightly, but quite deliberately, considered taking the whole concept of workers compensation out of Parliament and out of the arena where Parliament has an influence. The record of the Government in this sphere is quite clear. Ministers have made all sorts of promises and have gone back on them. For example, the Chief Secretary in 1975 talked about quarterly adjustments for the revaluation of workers compensation payments, but nothing has been done about it in the intervening years.

The reality is that the trade union movement, in the interests of those they represent, will be forced to act. Up to now and prior to the Bill becoming law, employees have been covered for certain benefits. Once the Act takes away those rights and benefits, those unions which are intelligently and properly organized will insist that

those employer groups or individual companies cover their membership at least to the extent to which they were entitled prior to the insurance companies' Bill being passed by Parliament.

It is as simple as that. To pretend that the Government will be really concerned about the people this Bill will affect is, as described by the shadow Minister of Labour and Industry in another place, sheer hypocrisy. The effect of the amendment and the definition of the word "substantial" is one of considerable concern to the Labor Party. In *Strouds Judicial Dictionary*, the current edition, at page 2655, "substantial" is defined as a word of no fixed meaning. It is an unsatisfactory medium for carrying the idea of some ascertainable portion of the whole.

The amendment will ensure that there will be an enormous rash of litigation on the meaning of the word "substantial" or the words "substantial contribution." No honorable member, least of all the Attorney-General, will argue with that assertion. In other words, Parliament is inserting into the legislation a word which lacks legal clarity and definition. Therefore, Parliament is inviting the courts to define such a word, and the arguments will ultimately end up in the High Court.

The Hon. J. V. C. Guest—The trouble is that the present words are quite unclear; they have been interpreted one way in New South Wales and differently in Victoria.

The Hon. W. A. LANDERYOU—The problem with that type of approach is that, traditionally, the Workers Compensation Board has made decisions on what it considers to be the appropriate interpretation of that definition. If it was the Government's intention to wipe the slate clean with respect to those decisions and interpretations, the Government should say so with precision. Assuming that is the sole motivation of the Government, one would have thought it was not beyond the wit of even this Government to think up a more precise word than "substantial" to define a contribution to an injury.

In reality, the courts will be defining this legislation and I suggest that ultimately the High Court will determine the meaning of this proposed legislation.

The Government is inviting Parliament to consciously carry a piece of legislation which it knows, right from day one, lacks a definition which will subsequently be decided by the courts. In other words, injured workers will have their rights determined one way or another eventually by the High Court with all the consequential delays that are associated with that lackadaisical and incompetent approach.

An extraordinary inordinate delay already occurs in the hearing of contested claims under the existing Act. However, once the High Court has determined the meaning of this phrase, there will be a continuing glut of litigation on that question. That runs counter to the philosophies of those who have campaigned for reform in this area of the law.

Instead of moving lawyers and the legal profession further away from what, in the first instance, should be a no-fault situation, the Government, by this measure, is encouraging even more litigation and, therefore, further participation by the legal profession in what should be simple matters.

The Government has a responsibility to come before Parliament with precise and clear Bills. The Government has a notorious record of hiding behind so many institutions and statutory authorities. Yet the Government now says that it is not satisfied with those whom it has appointed to the Workers Compensation Board and the way in which that board has interpreted the legislation. The Government wants now to take it out of the board's hands and put it in the field of strict law. It is a sloppy measure, the sort that one can expect of a Minister who has grown old and useless, not from a Minister who has only recently joined Cabinet ranks.

The word "substantial" will cause a considerable backlog in litigation. The question will become whether a worker's injury or illness was or was not substantially contributed to by the work. The case will be put by doctors

representing the claimant and they will argue the claimant's case that work was a contributing factor. Then doctors will be called by the other side, presumably the insurance company, and those doctors will say that the claimant's work was not a contributing factor. There will be a line-up of members of the medical profession arguing that it was a contributing factor and other members of the medical profession arguing the counter point of view.

The Hon. Haddon Storey—Is that not the argument now as to whether it is a question of work contribution?

The Hon. W. A. LANDERYOU—The reality is that there is an eighteen months' delay in hearing cases. It is a pity that Parliamentarians are not directly affected by such legislation because an amendment in this form would not be before the House if it affected the livelihood of honorable members. Nevertheless, putting that value judgment aside, the Attorney-General suggests that that is what occurs. There is already, under the existing definition, an eighteen months' delay in contested cases. If honorable members who support the Bill could imagine being close to the breadline, as a large proportion of the Victorian work force is, and having to wait whilst on unemployment benefits or whatever for the board to make up its mind, they might realize what will happen when the first case under this legislation has to wait for deliberation by the High Court.

If a worker is involved in an industry which is not adequately protected by an employee organization which does not have suitable agreements with the specific employer, or the industry does not have an award which is adequate in covering such injuries, that worker may well be waiting for some years before his future is determined, whether his injury or illness was substantially caused by his work. That is a hopeless situation for a Government, which claims to be sincere, to place Parliament in. It goes to the question of whether the Minister is competent.

The costs associated with that considerable and appreciable delay will, once again, be borne by the employers who pay the premiums. The House is not faced with a proposition which goes to speed, aims at efficiency or provides additional benefits; rather the proposition forces employers to pick up a higher tab, threatens the employees' rights and caters for the barristers. That is an appalling state of affairs. My colleagues in another place have put all of these arguments, but the Government persists. As with the motives of jockeys, I question the Government's motives.

If the courts do apply, and I have no reason to suspect that they will not, a narrow interpretation to the new definition, the social effects on the individuals involved will be absolutely disastrous because individuals will be deprived of benefits to which they are currently entitled. Those who are least able to bear any sudden economic impost will be relegated to the unemployment or sickness sections of the community. That applies to the employees of this Parliament as well as the thousands of people honorable members know.

What will happen when Mr Jenkins, Mr Saltmarsh or Mr Stacey are confronted in their electorates in the months ahead by workers who have had their rights to which they were otherwise entitled diminished by this Bill? What will happen when those people are begging for survival? What does the Government propose to do about the worker at the Ford factory in Geelong who suffers a heart attack or the effect of some industry-related disease under the existing definition and the insurance company escapes the pay-out under the new definition? What will the Government party candidates say that will provide comfort and succour for that man's family and debtors?

One can pretend, like a member in another place who belongs to another party, that one has some compassion and concern about such workers but that is not how the member in the other place voted in the division. In those seats that count, one can expect the trade union movement to take the question to the electors. One can expect members to be under considerable pressure. It will be a question not only of saying, "I voted against it in the party

room" but also a matter of public record as to how that member voted because of the large number of divisions that will be called.

It will not be just a question of saying, "I did not want to go along with it but I had to do so because of the party Whip"; it will be a question of justifying one's existence in public life. It will be too late once someone has been subjected to the horrors and rigours of this social system, having spent some years waiting for the courts to make up their minds, to justify the stance taken now with regard to what will happen in the future. It is clear that under the present legislation, the injured would receive benefits, small and miserly as they are, at least minimum sums based on what is curiously termed the "table of maims", where benefits are not available under the existing social welfare legislation. To my knowledge, no social security benefit could be equated with the table of maims.

It is relevant how members of this Parliament vote. It is important that people who are hypocritical and who publicly say one thing and in this Parliament do another should be exposed, and they will be. Obviously the Government regards the word "substantially" as involving a work contribution of major proportions, certainly more than 50 per cent.

The Hon. J. V. C. Guest—No.

The Hon. W. A. LANDERYOU—I ask Mr Guest and every other honorable member to have regard to the debate which took place in another place and a contribution by a Government spokesman.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (the Hon. W. M. Campbell)—I do not think the honorable member should place too much regard on the proceedings in another place in relation to this legislation.

The Hon. W. A. LANDERYOU—I can assure you, Mr Deputy President, that I do not place much relevance on what Government members in another place have to say on any matter.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT—I ask the honorable member to be guided by what I have said with regard to another place.

The Hon. W. A. LANDERYOU—That is your judgment.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT—It is.

The Hon. W. A. LANDERYOU—It is up to you. The Government believes it will solve all the problems of the insurance companies and of the employers by the introduction of the word "substantially". Earlier, by interjection, Mr Guest said that the New South Wales legislation is interpreted differently. If I am right and if the courts apply that definition—I shall be interested to hear those with far greater legal skill than myself argue the counter view—it will make access to the workers compensation entitlement that this Bill prescribes, let alone the entitlements that already exist, more restricted than ever before.

At the relevant time I shall take the House through some of the decisions relating to those matters, but it is important that the House understands the real problem. If this Bill were to take into consideration the real entitlements of people who suffered from injury, accident or work-related illness, it would prescribe rates of weekly payment based on the principle of full pay—100 per cent make-up of pay. There is a precedent in the Parliament. I refer to the Motor Accidents Act. Under that Act, as I understand it, the average earnings for the ten weeks prior to the accident are calculated. The Act imposes a limit with which I do not agree, of 80 per cent, but nevertheless the formula is applied.

In other words, this Bill does not take issue with the very point which gave rise to the amendments in 1975 where the Government, through its then Chief Secretary, made it clear that it was Government policy periodically to update the weekly payments' schedule. If such a course of action were taken, presumably the insurance premiums that would apply from time to time would be far easier to calculate. I suggest that any compensation scheme must relate to loss of income. Particularly in the field of workers compensation there needs to be an updating, not only of figures but of approach. It must almost entirely be an updating of philosophy.

The Hon. J. V. C. Guest—Would you put an upper limit on the amount of income the person who is to be compensated would receive?

The Hon. W. A. LANDERYOU—Personally, that would be my philosophy. I cannot speak for my colleagues. I believe in that type of plateau approach for most things. I do not believe the higher paid should receive more than the lower paid in such situations. The irony is that the higher one is up the salary scale in the community, the fewer the problems. One does not have to worry about where next week's income will come from. For instance, if I broke my leg tonight on the steps of Parliament House or if I suffered some other injury and could not work in this Legislative Council, presumably my salary would continue.

The Hon. J. V. C. Guest—Where would would you put the upper limit?

The Hon. W. A. LANDERYOU—I would have to apply my mind to the matter. One would have to look at something related to average weekly earnings and try to work out a real mean. However, I am not applying my mind with precision to the question, but I am just trying to meet the question from the point of view of general philosophy. It is clear that the higher one is paid, the less threatened by the poor house one is.

It is also clear that the lump sums provided for residual disability—limited vision, affected hearing, and so forth—in the table of maims should be substantially increased. It is of considerable interest to me that the amount of money paid is hopelessly inadequate. This Bill denies those entitled to a payout any increase in the existing lump sum scale which was prescribed so long ago. The Bill does not deal with total or partial loss of many other faculties such as smell, taste, speech, sexual powers; or the functions of internal organs, such as heart, lungs, spine and so forth; or the situation of the person suffering from facial scarring or disfigurement. Those points to which Judge Harris, in his board of inquiry into workers compensation, drew the attention of the House, have been ignored. I accept that Judge Harris and his board took a different philosophical attitude from the attitude that I would take. However, he at least drew the attention of the House and the Government to the problem. I presume that at the appropriate time members of the Opposition will propose an amendment that the table of maims should provide for substantially increased lump sums for residual disabilities to limbs, sight and hearing.

An additional problem is coverage for the newer non-medical and paramedical forms of treatment. That should be introduced, obviously with proper safeguards. A Bill, in its recently amended form, goes part of the way. There is a strong argument for the Bill to provide for recognition of other forms of paramedical disability and some of the non-medical forms of treatment that many citizens undertake.

Most of the amendments in the Bill are outrageous but the most difficult thing to understand, from anyone's point of view, is the extraordinary passion that the Government has for continuing to impose a limit on recoverable funeral expenses. The legislation prior to 1975 provided reasonably well for funeral expenses. This Bill increases the expenses that can be claimed, but it is clear that the expenses are not sufficient to cover the cost of a reasonable funeral. During this debate evidence will be put with respect to the cost of a humble funeral. It is clear that the amendment does not seek to cover that expense.

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 later this day.

JOINT SITTING OF PARLIAMENT

Monash University: Council of Adult Education

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. F. S. Grimwade)—The time has arrived for this House to meet with the Assembly in the Assembly Chamber for the purpose of sitting and voting together to choose members to be recommended for appointment to the governing bodies of various institutions.

The sitting was suspended at 5.58 *p.m. until* 8.3 *p.m.*

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. F. S. Grimwade)—I have to report that this House met the Legislative Assembly this day in the Assembly Chamber for the purpose of sitting and voting together to choose members of the Parliament of Victoria to be recommended for appointment to the Council of the Monash University and the Council of Adult Education and that Ian Robert Cathie, Esquire, M.P.; the Honorable James Vincent Chester Guest, M.L.C.; and Neil Malcolm McInnes, M.P., have been duly chosen to be recommended for appointment to the Council of the Monash University; and that the Honorable Evan Herbert Walker, M.L.C., has been duly chosen to be recommended for appointment to the Council of Adult Education.

WORKERS COMPENSATION (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) BILL

The debate (adjourned from earlier this day) on the motion of the Hon. Haddon Storey (Attorney-General) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

The Hon. W. A. LANDERYOU (Doutta Galla Province)—Prior to the suspension of the sitting, I had taken the House through what I consider to be the effects of the amendment to the definition of "injury" and the real problems that arise from that cause and effect. It is associated with what seems to be an absurd preoccupation by the Government with what would normally be assumed to be reasonable funeral expenses. I reiterate the point that, in 1975, the definition of "reasonable expenses" was repealed, and specific amounts were prescribed in the legislation.

However, the present scandalous state of affairs with workers compensation—in particular, the delay of more than eighteen months in having contested claims heard by the existing workers compensation apparatus—is an outrage. Where a worker is injured and his claim is contested, it takes eighteen months at present for him to have his claim heard, and that is not a new position. It is a position of which members of the Opposition have often complained and the Government, as usual, has done very little, if anything, about it.

If one compares the situation in New South Wales with that which operates in this State, one sees that the divisions of the working man's compensation tribunals in New South Wales have twice the number of judges to hear contested claims as has Victoria. Although there is a delay in New South Wales, that delay is of six months' duration, which in itself is scarcely good enough. Nevertheless, in Victoria there is a delay of eighteen months.

I have taken the House through what Opposition members believe to be the major effect of the amendment, which is to allow judges to determine what this Parliament is invited to debate and decide on—that invitation being issued by the Government. An Act of Parliament was passed to set up a supplementation fund, ostensibly to increase workers compensation payments from 1 July 1975. That Act imposed a 20 per cent levy on all policy holders, who were required by law to take out workers compensation.

A vast sum of money had accumulated over that period and the insurance companies were able to recover 7/27ths of the amounts they had paid in payments arising from industrial accidents prior to 30 June 1975. There is a rumour amongst the legal profession that that fund was well in excess of $100 million. I have put it to those who have argued to me that such an amount is preposterous but, with the clarity of mind that the legal discipline imposes, they have insisted that one is looking at a substantial sum of money.

The Hon. W. R. Baxter—What is the definition of "substantial" in that instance?

The Hon. W. A. LANDERYOU—I am pleased that Mr Baxter embraces one of the arguments I have put.

The Hon. N. F. Stacey—And hardly understands.

The Hon. W. A. LANDERYOU—What an expert in clear thinking Mr Stacey would be! Fancy him sitting in judgment of what someone understands.

Clearly a substantial amount of money has accumulated in that fund. It has attracted interest during the period; and that interest is also a substantial sum of money. Honorable members can imagine claims still in existence since prior to 1 July 1975; and those claims have decreased to a very small number.

A number of rackets have, in my view, been operated by the insurance companies operating in workers compensation in that they receive moneys from that fund. An example is the settlements in the Supreme Court which have been returned to the Workers Compensation Board so that insurance companies can get their 7/27ths worth under that Act, the basis being that the industrial accident occurred on or before 30 June 1975. One can do nought else but pose this question: Is it any wonder that insurance companies have been well compensated for moneys they have received by way of premium? They are like the bookmaker. They take all bets and then do not want to pay out.

The Hon. Haddon Storey—Bookmakers pay out if the horse wins.

The Hon. W. A. LANDERYOU—As Mr Storey often accuses me of being ahead of him or of not listening to him, I can now level that accusation at him. I was about to say, except that the insurance companies in this field will take advantage of this amendment to the law, for which the Attorney-General is responsible, like the bookmakers who will take all the money but not want to pay. They not only do not want to pay, but they accept the money and invest it—as perhaps prudent money managers ought to do. They receive the premium which they invest, then pay claims and often a bonus from the supplementation fund to which I have referred.

Honorable members are at least entitled to ask, on behalf of the people of Victoria, what is to happen to that vast sum of money accumulated in that fund. They are entitled to pose the question, despite the rumours in the legal profession: How much money is in that fund and just precisely how much money is it anticipated that the new supplementation impost will raise? Honorable members have not heard about the previous fund from the Minister responsible for carrying the legislation in this House or in another place. What is envisaged with respect to the fund created under this Bill?

It is clear from the speech which the Attorney-General had prepared for him and which he put to the House, and from public utterances of Government spokesmen, in particular the Minister of Labour and Industry, that the existing Minister has had his back steeled by interests which ought not to be represented directly in this Parliament. It is quite clear that what normally would be construed is that a Minister who is new to the task, and clearly does not understand much about his portfolio, would listen intently to those who have strong arguments.

As I said earlier, the situation is that Mr Ken Stone has put very strongly to this Government, to Parliament and to the community, in his capacity as Secretary of the Victorian Trades Hall Council, that the Bill ought to be withdrawn. I spent a considerable period of my time and, indeed, my life as a negotiator; and I can accept that it is difficult for conservative minds to understand why the secretary of the organized trade union movement in this State would say to the Government, acknowledging that there are increases in benefits under the proposed legislation, "Stick the benefits, we want the definition." I understand the difficulties of that, but honorable members can understand my reluctance to acknowledge the tears of some members of the Government party, if they are anything other than crocodile tears, when I say that the Secretary of the Trades Hall Council has said to the Government, "You can keep the improved benefits, we will exchange those for the existing definition".

There must be some sparks of conscience that one can ignite in at least someone on the opposite side of this

Chamber when none other than the distinguished and respected—and acknowledge by the Government as such —voice of the Secretary of the Trades Hall Council, Ken Stone, says what he does about this proposed legislation. It must suggest that the doubts that have been expressed across the whole spectrum of the trade union movement have some validity and justification when pieces of proposed legislation are often not debated with the sincerity to which this House is entitled.

However, what is important to understand about this measure is that it is seen by the whole spectrum of the trade union movement as a piece of legislation which benefits the rich and attacks the poor. Given the enormous advantages that honorable members of this House have over the average citizen, I say to the House, as I have often said, that if Parliament is to be relevant as we race towards the 21st century, it must at least understand the call and the criticism of those who represent a large number of the citizens in the community.

Few honorable members from the Government side of the House would agree with me when I talk about the rights of the trade union movement, but is any honorable member opposite prepared to argue that an employee or his family should be denied entitlement because of the liabilities that are accrued from time to time by insurance companies? No analysis of the amount of between $385 million and $500 million which has been accumulated as benefits from the private sector was contained in the rationale behind the introduction to this proposed legislation, at least in the second-reading speech presented to this House by the Attorney-General.

One must confess to a growing degree of impatience with the Government, whose record in industrial relations is appalling and which has too often embraced the bull moose approach to solving difficulties.

Although it can be argued by the Government that a substantial period of time has elapsed between when the Bill was introduced and the present stage, one must put the Government to the test. Judge Harris recommended in his interim report some years ago that the Government should do something about compensation rates. The Government chose to ignore that advice. If someone as conservative in his professional training and political status as Judge Harris is critical of the existing legislation, at least some Government supporters must be prepared to embrace my concern.

I conclude my participation in this stage of the debate by putting to the House that there are many people in the community who share Mr Ken Stone's concern that the proposed legislation will turn the clock back.

Earlier Mr Guest referred by implication to a 1903 court decision which determined a status by which ordinary men and women who have nothing to sell in the market place but their labour can be compensated in the event of injury or illness. This Bill invites the Parliament to conclude that the whole basis of compensation should be determined by learned judges. With the greatest respect to the Parliament, the High Court and, as the Attorney-General interjected earlier, the Privy Council or its judiciary section and to members of the legal profession who apply their minds to this matter, the reality is that men, women and, indeed, children employed in the State will suffer as a result of this measure.

It is sheer humbug and window-dressing at its best—and the Government is notorious in approaching legislation by putting up a shop-front window—to suggest that because the rates will be increased, with no suggestion of an apology for taking four or five years to do it, that should be the sugar coating on the pill. I do not need to quote people of authority such as Hill, Carlisle or any of the learned counsel or to lay members of the Workers Compensation Board, but will rest with what was said by His Honour Judge Harris, who is hardly a well-known radical, that this proposed legislation will turn the clock back. It will

invite legal participation and encourage barristers' banquets in an area in which in my view, they ought not to be involved, and will take away from employees the rights they have won after a long struggle.

The Hon. Haddon Storey—Are you saying that Judge Harris said that this legislation will turn the clock back?

The Hon. W. A. LANDERYOU—It is crystal clear that Judge Harris, despite his fairly conservative philosophy, set out in his report to the Government and the Parliament the course of action that was open to the Parliament. The Attorney-General voted for legislation which lifted out the worst and most pernicious effect of the clauses recommended by His Honour with respect to the $500 nonsense, which is not working in the market-place. I told him that at the time and I tell him now that the proposed legislation will not work. Those whom the Attorney-General claims to represent will have to pay the price of the incompetence of the Minister of Labour and Industry. He put before the Parliament this legislation which will not work and about which the progressive and organized elements of the trade union movement will say—and use their strength to back them—to the employers, "You will cover the membership of our union with the same entitlement they had 5 minutes before this legislation came into effect". As a former trade union movement leader I would be proud to say that, but the weaker employees and unions which are not so well organized and led will accept the proposition. The Government can take some comfort from its philosophy of the jungle, that the stronger rule and ease out the weak.

The Hon. R. J. Long—Why are you worried about it if you make that statement?

The Hon. W. A. LANDERYOU—One of the reasons I came into this august body was to put to the Council that a more humanist approach should be adopted to some social problems and that all people in this State should be treated equally. Mr Long may not be worried about those who are unorganized, unrepresented and least able to defend themselves, but I am, and it concerns me greatly. Mr Long can speak for himself, and he will have the opportunity of doing so, if not in the House, within his electorate between now and the next election.

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. F. S. Grimwade)—Order! I remind honorable members that all interjections are disorderly.

The Hon. W. A. LANDERYOU—They are most disorderly, Mr President, but I cannot resist the temptation to try at least to meet the thrust of their argument.

Parliament has a responsibility to carry legislation regardless of whether it is supported by all factions of the Liberal Party. I wonder what Mr Smith, the Minister of Agriculture, will have to say on radio or television tonight about the proposed legislation. Was this Bill introduced as an act of political convenience or political compromise? What faction does Mr Saltmarsh, who is interjecting, line up with?

The Hon. D. N. Saltmarsh—Are you in politics or are you not?

The Hon. W. A. LANDERYOU—The suggestion from the honorable member is that this Bill arises from political considerations. True to form, the Liberal Party is representing the insurance lobby of Victoria. The people of the Waverley Province are humanists; let us see how Mr Saltmarsh votes on the Bill and let me hear him explain his attitude as he will have the opportunity of doing to the people who will become industrial cripples in the electorate he represents.

The Bill goes to the rights of the people who suffer from some form of illness or were injured as a result of an accident incurred while at work. Clearly the Government represents the insurance industry in Victoria; there can be no doubt about that. No one of any worth or note represents the real employers. I am not talking about the employers' union; I am talking about employer organizations, the large employers of this State who support the existing legislation because they know full well, despite the incompetence of

the Government as demonstrated by its factories legislation and its attitude to industrial health, that they have had to bear the cost through the years of providing for such industrial safety as exists in the large companies and for industrial health programmes, such as they are. Yet the State Insurance Commissioner in report after report has told the Government that it should give the State Insurance Office power to act. The Government's own inquiry recommended that the State Insurance Office be given the power to act, but the Government ignored that advice and has kept out of this field of insurance and compensation.

This is an historical decision because our young, inexperienced, immature Minister of Labour and Industry will turn the clock back without the advice and assistance of the people who put him in this place and of the trade union movement.

The Minister does so at the beckoning of the insurance companies of the State. It may be of some comfort to Government supporters because they work in the interests of the insurance companies. Mr Saltmarsh suggests that I am talking rubbish. There will be an opportunity for Mr Saltmarsh to enter these discussions, and it will be a matter of public record how he votes. The first person from his electorate who is injured will knock on his door and introduce himself according to how he votes tonight.

The Hon. D. N. Saltmarsh—Is that a threat?

The Hon. W. A. LANDERYOU—Promises are not threats. The reality is that the Government has lost its way and has introduced the proposed legislation at the behest of the insurance industry. The Government has suddenly discovered that it is in trouble. Employer organizations have endeavoured to put their views and have lodged a strong argument. As an advocate of some years experience, I think it would be an extraordinary position to reject an increase without justifying that argument. Mr Stone said—he received the acclamation of the Trades Hall Council—"We will accept the existing clause—you keep your increases". Mr Stone knows that there will be an attack by the organized interests of the working people of this State to protect their interests one way or another. The Government cannot have it both ways.

The Government can absolve responsibility like Pontius Pilate without taking issue with the real cause of the problem. Until Australia and Victoria have a compensation system which completely removes the question of fault, then Governments are only tinkering with the system. Members of the Opposition admit prejudice in tinkering with the system on behalf of the poorly paid in the community—those least able to defend themselves. This Bill does nothing other than tinker with the system in favour of the insurance lobby. Ultimately the people of Victoria will reject this measure. The Government may be proud of it, but I am sure that one day in the future I will introduce a Bill which will correct the anomalies and protect the poor, the underprivileged and the wage earners in our community.

The Hon. W. R. BAXTER (North Eastern Province)—Members of the National Party and of the Government party were expecting fire and brimstone from Mr Landeryou, but apart from a brief outburst towards the end of his speech it has been a low-key affair. I got the distinct impression that his heart was not in it.

The Hon. W. A. Landeryou—That is an unfortunate choice of terms.

The Hon. W. R. BAXTER—Mr Landeryou was playing to the gallery outside. He made a series of threats about what strong-arm union leaders might do if this measure becomes law. The employers and the people generally are sick and tired of actions by strong-arm union leaders. It is high time we stood up to them and stopped conceding. It is time to draw the line. Perhaps this is the issue on which to draw the line.

Honorable members ought not to be looking at this Bill as a social welfare measure, because it is not. It is not the responsibility of the employers of the nation or the State to provide social welfare measures. It is wrong for honorable members to attempt to turn the Act

into that sort of legislation. Social welfare is the responsibility of the social security legislation of the State and Federal Parliaments.

The high cost of insurance premiums to employers is a disincentive to employ additional staff. That is one reason for the high unemployment rate. In the productive timber and mining industries, for instance, insurance premiums are so high that the employers have to think twice before they employ an additional person.

It is extraordinary how some members of the Opposition think the insurance companies are to blame. Honorable members heard, by inference from Mr Landeryou and by direct interjection from Mr Butler, that the insurance companies were getting this money and the Government was providing for them. Insurance companies are the clearing houses; the money they pay out comes from the employers who have to be considered, as well as the employees who benefit from the proposed legislation.

Surely one cannot complain too much about the level of benefits envisaged in this measure because there is to be an increase of 44 per cent. That is a large increase in anyone's language. It might well be conceded that too much time has elapsed before increasing the benefits. That may be so. That argument was put in 1975 when rates had to be increased by a large amount simply because of the long period since a previous adjustment had been made. That problem is overcome in the proposed legislation because there will now be an annual adjustment of benefits. It is hoped that from now on, under the new formula, benefits will keep pace with inflation. It is obvious from workers compensation legislation that generous provisions were set in the past. I suppose we are stuck with that precedent.

Perhaps if one were to set about implementing the legislation afresh, one would consider whether an employee on his way home from work who may make numerous deviations would still be covered by workers compensation insurance, as at present. That is a situation we are stuck with. There is no way we can abolish it. It is an extraordinarily generous measure that anyone should be covered on his way to or from work no matter which route he takes or how many stopovers he makes in the process.

Be that as it may, the passage of this measure through Parliament since the election demonstrates democracy at work. The Bill was introduced by the Minister in another place in July and was debated, to a certain extent, in that place. In fact, I will go so far as to say that the honorable member who led the debate for the Opposition abused the forms of the House by speaking for 3 hours. The Minister decided to withdraw the Bill, not only because he wished to make a number of amendments but because a number of representations were received from many sources.

No doubt all honorable members have received many letters on the subject. I shall refer to one letter from the State Electricity Commission of Victoria branch of the Municipal Officers Association of Australia, which arose from a telegram I received from Mr Barry Brennan of Benalla. I responded to that telegram and in due course I received a letter from the secretary of that union setting out a number of objections to the Bill. On 25 October I answered the union letter congratulating the writer on the sound and reasonable manner in which he advanced his case. I concluded by saying:

> I would appreciate your views on the revised Bill currently before Parliament. It makes some alterations in the areas which concern you and it would be interesting for me to have your comments.

There has been no response to that letter, so I assume that the union is reasonably happy with the changes made by the Minister and the Government between the introduction of the original legislation earlier this year and the introduction of the Bill before the House.

The Municipal Officers Association expressed concern in its letter about the heart attack and stroke provisions and the provision for the Motor Accidents Board to pay compensation where a worker is injured going to or

from work in a motor car accident. Honorable members are aware that following representations that were made, the clauses dealing with the Motor Accidents Board have been amended. There is now a reasonable formula for insurance companies to recover from the Motor Accidents Board an amount of money equal to that which the Motor Accidents Board would have paid out to a worker injured in a motor car accident. That is reasonable and I congratulate the Minister on agreeing to the representations which were made along those lines.

With regard to heart attack and stroke cases, I invite Mr Landeryou, who is unfortunately not in the Chamber, to hear this invitation, to examine the relevant clauses in the New South Wales legislation and the Victorian legislation and note that the definitions are almost identical, yet for some reason there have been 1200 cases in Victoria and 200 cases in New South Wales. That indicates to me that the interpretation in Victoria has been too wide, has been over generous and needed to be trimmed to a more reasonable interpretation. I hope that this measure will go a long way to achieving that objective.

If honorable members are honest, they will agree that most heart attacks are due to one's style of living and not to one's occupation. I do not believe insurance premiums should be loaded to the extent that every heart attack and stroke case is compensatable. That is virtually what has been happening in Victoria. Obviously that could not be allowed to continue, because the high insurance premiums would break the employers.

I agree with Mr Landeryou's interpretation and definition of substantially. I agree with him that it could turn out to be a barristers' banquet, because it is open to wide interpretation. I am surprised and disappointed that the Minister did not go to more pains to find a better definition. I know of no reason why it had to be limited to one word, if the Minister had difficulty in finding an appropriate word to use. A constituent of mine gave me half a dozen examples over the telephone a week ago, but unfortunately I cannot recall them, nor can I find my notes. I will undertake to find out what the words were and let Mr Long, who is interjecting, know.

I shall give several examples of how "substantial" can be interpreted or misinterpreted. If I were a shareholder in a company in which there were 100 shareholders and 99 of them owned equal shares and I owned, say, 10 per cent, presumably I would be a substantial shareholder *vis-à-vis* the others. I am not sure that that is the type of interpretation of "substantial" that one would wish to be applied to the measure.

Another example is an interpretation wheat growers have had thrust upon them—and they are worried about it. It concerns the appointment of a gentleman from Wodonga as a member of the Grain Elevators Board. Many wheat growers believe this gentleman does not truly represent their industry because he does not grow grains to any large extent. They were so concerned about the matter that they took it to the court, which ruled that, although only 10 per cent of his income was derived from grain growing, that was a substantial interest and the Minister had not erred in appointing him to the board. I hope that interpretation does not become the interpretation of "substantial" that is applied under the measure because that would again mean that almost every heart and stroke case would be compensated. I certainly hope the interpretation of "substantial" that is applied is a great deal more than 10 per cent, but that remains to be seen. Unfortunately, many legal eagles will make a lot of money arguing the point. I should like to encourage the Minister and Mr Long to get their heads together and to come up with a better word than "substantial" as soon as possible.

I conclude my remarks by discussing responsibility. There are four avenues of responsibility that should be examined. Firstly, I refer to employees. From personal experience I know that some employees, although they are small in number, are malingerers. These employees have been able to ex-

tract, through the workers compensation provisions, a great deal of money to which they are not entitled. Their actions have affected the employment situation by forcing premiums higher still and giving the opportunity of having jobs to fewer of their colleagues. It behoves all employees to act responsibly in this matter and not to bludge upon their colleagues by being malingerers.

Secondly, responsibility also devolves upon employers to ensure that their work places are safe, that the risk of accidents is minimized and that adequate facilities are provided for their employees. Thirdly, the medical profession should act more responsibly.

The Hon. R. J. Eddy—Are you saying they are irresponsible?

The Hon. W. R. BAXTER—Yes, some are. I shall give an example. I recall a case of a sawmiller in a country town who injured his thumb. He went to the office of the local doctor and was attended by a locum. Before the doctor even looked at the injury he said, "How much do you want, a week or a fortnight?" The patient said, "Break it up. I own the place and I will be back this afternoon." That is an example of irresponsibility within the medical profession. There seems to be what I call the insurance syndrome in the community. It applies to workers compensation, to smash repairs to damaged motor vehicles and to any insurance claim. There seems to be an attitude of, "Well, the insurance company is paying, it does not matter what the costs are. Let her go". This comes back to the interjection made earlier by Mr Butler; it is not the insurance companies that are paying, but the policyholders, and that includes every man and woman in the community.

The fourth area of responsibility concerns insurance companies, some of which ought to pay up with a little more good grace than they seem to on occasions, rather than wasting so much money in litigation. On some occasions litigation is fully justified, but it seems to me that some insurance companies are too prone to rush off to the courts in an endeavour to save a dollar or two when they should, with good grace, pay up more easily.

The Hon. R. J. Eddy—Which way are you voting?

The Hon. W. R. BAXTER—If Mr Eddy has been unable to work that out by now, either I have wasted my time or he has not been listening. Members of the National Party are deeply concerned with the impact of workers compensation premiums on the employment situation. The National Party believes every possible step has to be taken to curtail the increase in premiums. It believes those who are injured are entitled to adequate compensation, but if there are avenues through which people have been compensated without just cause—and I think the heart and stroke cases are an example—it behoves Parliament to tighten up the situation. The Bill is an honest and genuine attempt to do that and the National Party supports it.

The Hon. CLIVE BUBB (Ballarat Province)—I support the Bill because I firmly believe it will not cause any worker who is genuinely injured at work to lose his just right to compensation. I am sure that no Government supporter or the Government would support the Bill if that were not so.

Despite what may have been said on behalf of the Opposition this evening, the Bill provides substantial benefits for the workers of Victoria. For instance, the weekly benefits, the death benefits and the maximum incapacity compensation will be increased by 44 per cent. Funeral benefits, despite the comments made by Mr Landeryou, will be increased by 50 per cent, from $500 to $750.

Importantly, the increased benefits will apply to people who are already receiving compensation for past injuries. The benefits will also be indexed and will be increased in line with seasonally adjusted average weekly earnings from 1 July each year. Even members of the Opposition must agree that those provisions represent substantial benefits to the workers of Victoria.

The Hon. D. R. White—We would give them up if you changed the definition.

The Hon. CLIVE BUBB—Mr White might, but he does not speak for everybody. The weekly benefits in Victoria are a fixed sum plus extra for dependants, and it is a little misleading to try to compare them with those that apply in other States because the compensation is disguised by the make-up payments that are prevalent in Victoria.

The agreement negotiated by the Trades Hall Council covers the vast majority of workers in Victoria and, despite what Mr Landeryou said earlier, most workers in Victoria would be covered by some form of accident pay make-up and in fact would receive, for the first six to nine months of their injuries, their ordinary weekly earnings. It is a misstatement to say that they will be disadvantaged.

So far as the specific injuries contained in the table of maims are concerned, I point out that the table of maims that operates in Victoria is comparable with that operating in most States in Australia. Western Australia leads the field. Although there has been no increase in the table of maims, it is clear that benefits payable to workers in Victoria under that table are comparable with those payable in most other States.

I will not go into detail, but much has been said about the views and attitudes of the trade union movement. I do not intend to canvass all of them, but I take exception to the fact that Mr Landeryou indicated that the unions will dictate who makes the laws in this State and will dictate, by strong-arm tactics, what will take place.

The Hon. D. R. White—They are prepared to go to the market-place and negotiate. This Bill is an example of strong-arm tactics.

The Hon. CLIVE BUBB—The unions are not prepared to do that. There are double standards here. I remind Mr White that Mr Landeryou said it appears that the Government is trying to put back the clock. I direct the attention of the House to a statement made by Mr John Halfpenny, that well-known supporter of the centre unity faction, who, when speaking about the fact that nuclear reactors exist in half the countries on earth, told an Australian Council of Trade Unions congress that just because something exists does not mean that it is right. I point out that this is a world of constant change, but that magnificent monolith, the trade union movement, seems to think it is exempt from change. It seems to think there should be no change in any of the conditions that apply to it.

Honorable members interjecting.

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. F. S. Grimwade)—Order! I advise Mr Butler and Mr White that they will have plenty of opportunity for debating the measure on their own behalf shortly.

The Hon. CLIVE BUBB—Many prominent trade union officials have expressed opposition to the proposed legislation, but I emphasize that they are trade union officials. I recently received a deputation from the Ballarat Trades and Labour Council, the members of which asked me whether I supported the Bill. I told them that I did support it because I believe it will provide benefits for the workers of Victoria. I had discussions with and received visits from a number of ordinary, rank and file trade unionists and I can advise honorable members that they do not express the same views as those put forward by trade union officials. They do not express implacable opposition to the Bill.

I return to the table of maims. I point out to honorable members that anybody wishing to take action for a particular injury still has a right at common law. That right has not been precluded. What is wrong with that? If one cares to look at what is happening in workers compensation, it becomes obvious that costs have risen dramatically because many workers choose to take their cases to common law. Mr White is apparently struck silent for the moment.

Page 6 of the submission on workers compensation by the Victorian Trades Hall Council to the Premier deals with heart cases and, in the second last paragraph, states:

> Judge Harris, sitting as a Board of Inquiry appointed by the Government indicated his conclusion in unmistakeable terms:
>
> "This Board considers that, in principle, heart attacks should be treated in the same way as any other condition. Thus there should be no special discrimination against diseases such as heart attacks, cancer or congenital malformations".

The crucial words are, "If the work is responsible then compensation should be paid". I ask honorable members to indicate the difference between what has been proposed to what Judge Harris said. The substance of the amendments which were made to the original Bill go very much to that point, and the Government is not trying to eliminate all heart and stroke cases. It is time to introduce a situation whereby an employee is entitled to be compensated for only that part of his disability which is attributable to his work. I believe that would be fair. It must be proved under the new definition that the employment contributed substantially to the disease.

Mr Baxter has canvassed a definition of "substantial", and quite frankly, in Victoria we must do away with the existing provision, whereby the most tenuous of association or relationship between the work and the heart attack or the stroke case is sufficient to allow the board to grant full compensation.

The Hon. D. R. White—What does the word mean?

The Hon. CLIVE BUBB—I am not a legal man, but I support the Bill as I believe the work must contribute substantially. Quite simply it should mean the person who is making a claim must be able to prove that the quantity of the compensation he is claiming is related to the contribution of his work situation.

The Hon. Joan Coxsedge—That is not fair.

The Hon. CLIVE BUBB—I think it is fair. I will not worry about it, because workers compensation premiums when determined on the ratio of heart and stroke cases are roughly 8:1 higher in Victoria than in New South Wales, and that factor causes an excessive cost which should be alleviated.

In relation to journey accidents, in the original Bill it was intended to transfer the total liability for journey accidents to the Motor Accidents Board. Under the amendments contained in this Bill, an employee involved in a journey accident can claim workers compensation and there is recourse for the insurer to recover benefits from the Motor Accidents Board. That is an entirely desirable situation and in no way prejudices the position of an employee who is involved in a motor accident. I commend that particular provision.

Turning to the provision which deals with the split actions, the situation is rather iniquitous in the sense that currently it virtually allows a claim to be made on two, three or more occasions for the same accident. This has added unjustly to the cost of workers compensation, and I commend the provision which takes away this right.

The Leader of the Opposition commented on the Insurers Guarantee Compensation Supplementation Fund, and asked a question concerning the position in relation to this fund. The net effect of the increased addition of the workers compensation supplementation levy will mean an extra 6 per cent increase in premiums rather than a 15 per cent increase, and I support that move.

One of the principles which is already embodied in the legislation is that the Government meets the cost of workers compensation premiums on all first year apprentices. It has done that since 1 January this year and it will now extend that cover to second and third year apprentices. I commend that provision.

The over-all objectives of the Bill are to be commended. I reiterate that they will provide a real benefit in terms of increased weekly benefits, death benefits and other compensation benefits which have been increased for workers in Victoria. The provisions of the Bill should reduce the delays in the hearing of cases and subsequent payments

Furthermore, as Mr Baxter said, the Bill should assist in preventing abuse of the system.

I do not accept what the Leader of the Opposition said as the opposition to this measure is centred around the organized labour movement and officials of the trade union movement. Once the measure has been accepted, the rank and file members of the unions will understand what the amending legislation will do for them in the form of providing substantially increased benefits. They will also realize that it will not preclude the genuine injured worker from claiming workers compensation or his just rights to be recompensed for an injury. The workers will accept the Bill and I commend it to the House.

The Hon. E. H. WALKER (Melbourne Province)—As an amendment, I move:

That all the words after "That" be omitted with the view of inserting in place thereof "this Bill be withdrawn and re-drafted to (*a*) preserve the established rights of injured workers to compensation payments; and (*b*) adjust all payments including the table of maims in accordance with an undertaking given by the Chief Secretary in 1975."

I am saddened that the debate is a farce. Regardless of the content of the arguments honorable members might put from this side of the Chamber and the true concern expressed by members of the community outside the House, it is clear that the Bill will be passed.

I suppose this is one of those occasions when honorable members must put up with the fact that the House is nothing more than a debating society and any point members of the Opposition make will have no effect on the hardened attitude of the Government. Nevertheless, I accept that members of the Labor Party must play along with that game and submit their case. However, I am saddened because the case of the Opposition is a good one and a critical one.

This legislation is iniquitious, to use a good biblical term, but it saddened me to hear Mr Bubb and Mr Baxter use the terminology which they did. Mr Baxter appears to be familiar with terms such as "malingerer" and "bludger", which I am sure he uses all the time. He also spoke about the "insurance syndrome" as if only one section of the community could be described in those terms. I resent his suggestion that working people in the community could be described in that way and could be referred to in such a specious fashion as the terms used by Mr Baxter.

The Hon. H. M. Hamilton—Mr Walker is taking the same line of argument.

The Hon. E. H. WALKER—I am trying to be critical and if Mr Hamilton believes it, I believe it, but honorable members should debate the Bill on a high level and not on the specious level that Mr Hamilton wants.

The Hon. H. M. Hamilton—I do not think it is very specious; it is factual.

The Hon E. H. WALKER—The matter has been dealt with cynically by many Government supporters. A worker deserves to receive compensation, regardless of the degree of work related injury or illness, to 100 per cent of his wage.

Until I entered this House a few months ago I was an employer. Almost no other honorable member—at least no member on the Government side of the House—has been a direct employer. I would not like to challenge Mr Hayward, who probably had many thousands of people under his care, but in a sense I was a direct employer and in my business I had to meet the payment of salaries every two weeks. It was necessary for me to pay workers compensation premiums and, therefore, I am aware of the costs and of the complaints associated with workers compensation. My partner and I were willing to pay workers compensation premiums because we understood the cover and the security those compensation payments provided. We were not unhappy to pay the premiums because we believed the cover was reasonable. In the same sense we were willing to pay tax, although I admit that, in recent years, I have been unhappy about paying tax to a Government which, in my view, totally mis-uses tax money. Nevertheless, it was the

responsibility of employers to pay tax and to pay for programmes such as workers compensation. It is in that sense, as a former employer, that I am most concerned, as the measure being considered provides that the security which the employees previously retained is now being withdrawn. As an employer, I would be conscious that the workers under my care would not be properly covered by the legislation. For that reason, I strenuously oppose the Bill. The way it has been put together is cynical.

It is wrong to claim that the Bill is a disincentive for employers. In my view, responsible employers understand this legislation. They understand that it is cynical. Employers generally accept programmes which benefit their employees. However, this measure withdraws those benefits.

The essential change in this new Bill is the withdrawal of the situation whereby any work-related injury or illness is covered. In future under this amending legislation, any injury or illness will have to be substantially work-related for the worker concerned to get compensation. To some extent, that change has previously been debated in this place and it was debated for a lengthy period in another place. Previously, any work-related injury or illness was covered and the relatedness was all that had to be proved. In future, any illness or work-related injury will have to be shown to be substantially work-related before coverage will be available.

The meaning of "substantially" is difficult to resolve. It has been said that "substantially" might well mean more than 50 per cent and in that regard the Leader of the Opposition made a strong point. It is a word which will make a lot of money for lawyers, just as it will make money for the medical profession. The amendment I have moved seeks the withdrawal of the Bill on that clause alone. In the view of the Opposition, it is necessary to withdraw the Bill, but it is not just the Labor Party that is calling for its withdrawal. I shall later quote the editorial of a well-respected newspaper in Melbourne which also called for the withdrawal of the Bill.

The amendment also relates to a promise or commitment made by the then Chief Secretary in 1975. I refer honorable members to page 5503 of *Hansard* of 29 April 1975 where the then Chief Secretary, Mr Rossiter, is reported as having stated:

> The Government intends to adopt a policy of annual review of benefits under the Act, and, if required, to bring down legislation in each autumn sessional period of Parliament to make adjustments in accordance with the most recent information available from the Australian Bureau of Statistics for the quarter ended 31st December of the preceding year.

The Chief Secretary went on to state:

> It is proposed that the adjusted benefits resulting from such review would operate from the following 1 July. The Government believes the new system of review would prove to be an improvement on the old one. It will bring increases in benefits on a regular basis to injured workers and will circumvent sudden huge rises in benefits and in insurance premiums.

What a farce! No adjustment has been made in the benefits between 1975 and 1979. What kind of treatment has been handed out to the workers? The increases to which the then Chief Secretary was referring have not occurred and one can hardly believe any of the promises that have been made concerning this Bill. It is a totally cynical exercise.

It was in the Bill at that time, but it was a promise made by the Government party, which appears to be not worried about keeping such promises.

I want to make one or two points in response to the assertions made by the Minister of Labour and Industry in another place, and in his second-reading speech made in this House by the Attorney-General. I propose to read portion of an *Age* editorial which is dated Monday, 5 November 1979. I think honorable members would have read it. It begins by commenting on the meaning of the word "substantial", but it then goes on to state:

> The amendment should make little difference to injury claims; it is usually clear-cut whether or not an injury was received on the job. Its real thrust is directed to claims for work-induced illnesses, particularly heart attacks and strokes.

Later on its states:

> The Minister for Labour and Industry, Mr Ramsay, claims that Victorian courts have adopted a very wide interpetration of the existing test which has led to compensation being awarded for seizures or strokes which had little to do with employment. In one year, he says, Victorian courts dealt with 1210 cases for compensation for heart cases, while New South Wales had only 105.

I want to make it clear that these figures represent the number of cases brought to court rather than the number of claims actually made. The figures show that insurance companies in Victoria denied more claims than insurance companies in New South Wales, and in so doing forced more claims into the courts in Victoria than in New South Wales. That is a critical point. It has been overlooked and it has caused this differential.

The legislation in both States is almost identical, and the guidelines in each State are derived from High Court rulings. This was a deliberate misuse of statistics by the Minister of Labour and Industry. It is a very poor use of statistics, and if I might quote Disraeli, "There are lies, damned lies and statistics", and this comes into the third category; it is the third degree of lie.

The Act in Victoria already requires proof that the illness was caused, aggravated or accelerated by work factors. The onus of proof has always been on the worker in that regard. The real motive for the changes has been to dramatically reduce workers compensation payouts in order to enhance insurance company profits. There can be no doubt about that. That is the cynical basis of this new definition, and the Opposition rejects it entirely.

The net effect of the increases established in 1975 and now will be that insurance companies will be paying out about 40 cents in each $1 received as compensation for the worker. The balance, 60 cents, will come from the subsidy fund produced by the two surcharges. These two surcharges will let the insurance companies off the hook; they will be paying 1972 rates. This is an iniquitous situation. The insurance companies are being given an open cheque to make profits. The insurance companies will still be paying compensation at 1972 rates, but making a profit of a kind they had not dreamt of in those days.

The real dispute is one of community value. Should workers suffer for insurance company profits? If it was put that way to the community, there would be no doubt about the answer. Workers should not suffer for insurance company profits. Workers compensation is a social welfare programme. In my view, it should never have been allowed to enter the hands of private enterprise. It is a programme which should be run responsibly by the Government so that political parties do not get into the argument about whether or not insurance companies are making unreasonable profits. That is not the essence of the Bill as it stands.

The Opposition rejects the Bill. I refer honorable members to the amendment I have moved, and I quote from the *Age* editorial of Monday, 5 November, with which I agree wholeheartedly:

> As the second version of the Bill is better than the first, a third might be best of all.

I commend the amendment to the House.

The Hon. D. K. HAYWARD (Monash Province)—The main thrust of this Bill is threefold. Firstly, it raises workers compensation benefits to more realistic levels. Secondly, it provides regular annual indexation of those benefits; thirdly, in the interest of maintaining increasing employment opportunities, it attempts to contain an increase in premiums.

I direct my remarks to the third element because that is clearly the most controversial aspect of the Bill. There is no doubt that workers compensation premiums are a major cost factor in employing people in Victoria today. Those premiums are especially burdensome on small business. They act as a disincentive to small business to increase employment.

I shall dwell for a moment on small business because it is not an exaggeration to say that small business is the backbone of this State. It provides a major portion of all the job opportunities in Victoria, and I believe it will be even more critical in the years ahead.

The question of employment is extremely relevant to this debate. We should not be under any misapprehension; the problems of employing people in the future in this State, and in Australia generally, are going to be great indeed. We do not yet know the full impact of technology upon manufacturing industry. I am concerned about the impact of technology on what is generally called the white collar worker, especially from data processing and word processors.

The key to providing job opportunities in this State and in Australia will be concentration on products and processes with which we can be internationally competitive, especially in the fast growing markets of South East Asia. To do this, we are going to need considerable enterprise, ingenuity, innovative technology and innovative design. This enterprising innovation will occur in small business so long as small business is not carrying cost burdens which it does not have the responsibility to bear and the cost of which will make it uncompetitive.

I do not see the over-all issue in terms of the classical conflict between capital and labour; I see it more in the balance of equities between the interests of the community as a whole and the interests of individual workers. The interests of the community as a whole are best served if there is no disincentive for employers to employ people because of high workers compensation premiums.

The interest of employees are best served by obtaining the maximum compensation. Where does that balance lie? There are two words which I believe are important in the vocabulary of Parliamentarians. Those words are "concern" and "compassion". There is no suggestion that Parliamentarians should not have concern or compassion for people who are in distress because of disease or injury. If such people need help they should be helped by the social security system. Workers compensation should not be used as an extension of the social security system because this will burden industry. It will reduce its international competitiveness and it will reduce its opportunity to create new jobs. Industry should be burdened only by such compensation charges which are directly attributable to the nature of the employment.

To my mind, the crux of this matter lies in the fact that employers should not be burdened through workers compensation insurance premiums for injury and disease which are not really attributable or connected with the nature of employment. This burdens the employer with inappropriate costs which will act as a disincentive to increase employment and will reduce the ability of employers to employ people in the future.

It has been with this objective of achieving a proper balance between the interests of the employee and the interests of the community as a whole that the Government has brought in these new legislative provisions and, in particular, the requirement that the nature of the employment should contribute substantially to the disease or the injury.

A matter of considerable relevance to this debate is that of industrial safety. I have not heard anybody on the Opposition benches raise this matter. It is much better to prevent injury than to provide compensation for injury. With the increasingly complicated nature of industrial processes, the provision of proper safety precautions and equipment often requires significant capital investment. There is no great incentive to employers to make these investments when they are faced with compensation claims which have little real connection with the job.

I draw attention to special problems in industrial safety connected with communications between companies and non-English speaking migrants. In many companies, non-English speaking migrants make up 50 per cent or more of the total work force. In some companies the percentage is as high as 70, 80 or 90 per cent. Many of these non-English speaking migrant workers are not even literate in their own language and come from a rural village environment. They are not familiar with complicated machinery in a noisy environment and they are often susceptible to industrial accidents.

Many companies are doing a woefully inadequate job in communicating with these non-English speaking migrants on safety matters. Many companies are paying little attention, in the induction process, to safety considerations and, where it is done, it is usually done in English. The only effective way to communicate with these migrants is in their own language. It is essential that companies pay more attention to this in the future.

The Victorian Government is making considerable effort in this regard. Within the Department of Labour and Industry there is an ethnic advisory group on industrial safety, and this group is providing excellent audio-visual aids which can be used effectively with non-English speaking migrants not literate in their own language. In addition, the Standards Association of Australia is producing standard symbolic safety signs which are especially valuable to these migrants as long as the purpose and the meaning of the signs are explained to them effectively in their own language.

There is a heavy responsibility on employers to improve communications with non-English speaking migrants on safety matters. In doing this they will make a major contribution to preventing accidents and this will help to contain an increase in workers compensation premiums.

The Hon. JOAN COXSEDGE (Melbourne West Province)—I oppose the motion and support the amendment. From the beginning of this century the increasing strength of the Labor movement has forced Victorian Governments, step by step, to liberalize provisions for workers compensation; at any rate, until 1965, when some restrictions were introduced. Despite Mr Baxter's extraordinary statements, at no time in our history have workers and their families received adequate compensation for sickness, injury and death caused by employment.

In the field of workers compensation, as in other matters, the workers bear the burden of our chaotic system of private enterprise. Scores of insurance companies are competing for the insurance dollar, with the resulting escalation of costs. In some cases the insurance company retains 42 cents for every dollar obtained from premiums.

The insurers view every claim with great suspicion and every claimant as a semi-criminal. They employ doctors who make a lucrative living out of defending the interests of employers against workers' claims. The legal profession prospers while the workers wait for justice. More than 7000 cases are waiting for hearing. I note that a Government supporter finds that amusing. There is an average delay of eight months before cases come to court.

Clearly, there is a need for legislation which would provide adequate compensation while minimizing costs and delays. Before the last election, when the Government barely hung onto office, it tried to convince the people that it was providing such legislation when it introduced the original version of the Bill. The mass protest against the measure, expressed by more than 100 000 signatories to a petition presented to Parliament, forced the Government to withdraw and redraft the Bill. As a result, the new so-called improved version, so hastily rushed through the Lower House, is a scale of lump sum payments for specific injuries which remain frozen at the 1975 level, despite the massive inflation presided over since that time by Liberal Governments in Canberra and Melbourne. There is a proposal for maximum compensation for a single worker of $105 a week and for a family, including a wife and two children, of $155 a week. After taxation such families would be well below the poverty line. As for children more than two in number, evidently the Government is prepared to let them starve. Adjustments in weekly rates are to be made only once a year, although the Federal Government has admitted the need for adjustments of pensions every six months. So much for Mr Hayward's indexing!

This anti-working class legislation is part and parcel of the Capitalist passion to keep the working class in its place. For all the concern of the bosses, that could well be a coffin. This legislative

measure is so miserable that even after one is killed while at work, the bosses will not pay to give one a decent funeral. All one's dependants will get is a measly $750, an amount which has not changed much since 1973. That will not provide much of a funeral; an ordinary, average funeral costs in the vicinity of $1200.

Twenty years ago the worker who suffered the terrible fate of losing both eyes or both hands or both feet was at least awarded 100 per cent of the maximum weekly compensation. Now, the Government proposes to allow him only 63 per cent. The worker who lost his right arm twenty years ago was given 80 per cent of the maximum weekly compensation. Now, he will get only 50 per cent. Mr Bubb evidently believes this is a fair situation. Mr Hayward talks about a balance of equity. Some equity! Previously, regardless of any workers compensation paid to a worker or his wife, the children were entitled to sue for further damages under the Wrongs Act. The present Bill, by preventing such split actions, celebrates the Year of the Child by denying the children that right.

Rebuffed in its previous attempt to limit claims for injuries sustained while travelling to and from work, the Government in its revised Bill shifts the onus in such cases from the insurance companies to the Motor Accidents Board. As a result, workers compensation claims increase and so do the workers motor registration fees, while the insurers cop it sweet—a classic case of socialization of losses.

The most retrograde of all proposed changes in the Bill is the requirement that workers must establish a substantial contribution by employment to all injuries or diseases for which compensation is claimed. The only ones to gain out of the so-called substantial clause will be lawyers, who will earn fat fees arguing with each other over its meaning when they try to work out whether employment substantially contributed to a worker's injury. This is impossible. The Government is re-introducing provisions similar to those which were discarded more than 30 years ago. These confront the worker with the almost impossible task of pinpointing a particular instance on a particular day which affected the progress of an insidious development of a condition that has rendered him or her totally and permanently unemployable.

The arguments that will inevitably take place between legal eagles are not matters that should be decided legally; they are political. The decisions that will be taken are certainly highly political. The costs of all the so-called legal experts, judges and lawyers, like Mr Guest, as well as the heavy administrative costs are all charged to money provided for workers compensation. This is yet another devious way of diverting money from the working class. In proposing the amendment to the definition of, "injury", in a blatant attempt to turn the clock back, the Government attempted to adopt an outmoded provision from New Zealand.

As my colleague, Mr Walker, said earlier, concern was expressed about payments for heart claims which, with stroke cases, make up 80 per cent of all contested claims—and no doubt this complaint initiated from insurance companies—whereas in reality, amendments proposed in 1965 substantially restricted such claims.

The Hon. J. V. C. Guest—What does, "substantially" mean?

The Hon. JOAN COXSEDGE—That is what the Labor Party is endeavouring to ascertain from the Liberal Party. Mr Guest is the so-called legal expert—God help us!

The Hon. D. N. Saltmarsh—Mrs Coxsedge does not know; she has not explained it.

The Hon. JOAN COXSEDGE—The Liberal Party has not explained it; the Labor Party is waiting for an explanation. The amendment flies in the face of previous legislation which required only that employment be shown as a contributing factor, as is the case in New South Wales and Commonwealth workers compensation legislation.

Have the insurance companies been kicking up because they have not been making enough profits? It is worth

noting that the two insurance companies involved in workers compensation are the State Insurance Office, which is owned by the Victorian Government, and the Federation Insurance Ltd, which happens to be the insurance company of the Victorian Employers Federation, in which the National Party has a minority interest. It is also interesting to note that recently the *Australian Financial Review* reported that the National Party intended to increase its interest in Federation Insurance Ltd, no doubt because its profit will now increase on the backs of the workers.

There is no reformist solution to this tatty, patchwork of legislation. The only answer is a comprehensive, universal, national compensation scheme which does away with the heavy administrative and legal costs by regarding injuries, whether or not they are work orientated, as requiring compensation. Thus, the Bill is a recipe for industrial chaos which must ensue as workers under the Victorian scheme compare their lot with that of workers under the New South Wales or Commonwealth schemes. There will be endless litigation and delay as the courts argue over the meaning of the word, "substantial". This disgraceful legislation will be a Christmas gift for the insurance companies, the doctors and the lawyers. But for the workers, it will come as an unwanted addition to Christmas stockings already overflowing with problems of rising costs, falling family incomes and unemployment. The Labor Party rejects the Bill wholeheartedly, and I support the amendment.

The Hon. H. G. BAYLOR (Boronia Province)—I support the Bill and I oppose the amendment. After listening to members of the Opposition, it is difficult to determine whether they really understand the provisions in the Bill or whether they have seriously and studiously avoided the actual interpretation of the Bill and its thrust. Members of the Labor Party have not commented over much on that. They have skirted around the essence of the Bill by deliberately referring to industrial chaos, and heaven knows what, without getting to the nitty-gritty of the Bill.

Apparently, members of the Opposition are in some doubt over the meaning of the word, "substantial". I should have expected that those honorable members speaking on the Bill would have taken the trouble of consulting the dictionary. For the benefit of members of the Opposition, I shall refer to the meaning of the word in the *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*. It is a different dictionary from that which Mr Landeryou quoted, but the *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* is the accepted authority in matters of dispute. The word, "substantial", has a very long meaning, and I will quote briefly from the definition. It states, *inter alia*:

> That is, or exists as, a substance; having a real existence; subsisting by itself.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Having substance; not imaginary, unreal, or apparent only; true, solid, real.

I hope that those few words of elucidation will make the meaning more clear. Much has been said about the objections raised by members of the Opposition. Mr Landeryou made a somewhat veiled threat to those supporting the Bill about their standing in their electorates. I am pleased to be able to say that I support the Bill and I shall certainly be saying so to my constituents. I support the Bill for sound, common-sense reasons. It has been stated by the Opposition that the rights of people have been taken away. In fact, the Bill makes the whole field of compensation much more fair and less open to abuse or misrepresentation.

There is no doubt that many people have been affected. One has only to compare the figures in Victoria with those in New South Wales. One uses New South Wales as the comparable figure because it is the other highly industrialized State and, therefore, the most comparable with Victoria. An examination of those figures reveals that over the years far more compensation has been granted in Victoria than in New South Wales? Why is this? It is due to a loose interpretation by the courts of "contributing factor" to the worker's illness.

It is important that this aspect of compensation should be carefully examined in an effort to keep the premiums down. There is no doubt, as Mr Hayward said, that high premiums are a severe disincentive to employment and that something must be done. Members of the Opposition speak of unemployment, yet the Bill contains a special provision which will minimize the problems of unemployment but the Opposition is opposed to it. That does not make sense.

I turn now to examine the question of "substantial contributing factor" to a worker's illness. I specifically mention heart attacks because they have been isolated. If one takes as an example a person who leads an unhealthy life style, that is, one who is grossly overweight, smokes and drinks heavily, and that person has a heart attack, it is probably fair to say that he or she would have suffered that heart attack regardless of what sort of work he or she was involved in.

There are a number of other contributing factors in one's lifestyle, not just those three that I mentioned. Other things that people do during the course of their lives, apart from their work, can contribute immensely to having a heart attack. Therefore, it is fair and just that a person who wishes to claim compensation for having a heart attack as a result of the work should be called upon to prove it in a court.

I received a letter from the Donvale Primary School sub-branch of the Victorian Teachers Union, and doubtless other members have received a similar letter. That sub-branch has taken up the issue of workers compensation. The letter augments my view that both these people and members of the Opposition do not fully understand the Bill. Their main objections to the Bill state, *inter alia*:

> Finally, we deplore the proposed amendments as yet another counter-productive move by Governments in relation to (*a*) the morale of public servants, and (*b*) the much-needed commitment by all workers to concerns and responsibilities beyond their own self-interest and welfare.

There is a much needed commitment by all workers to concerns and responsibilities beyond their own self-interest and welfare. If that typifies the type of objection, it is quite obvious those people have no understanding or conception of why the Government is making these changes. Obviously the whole thrust of the Bill is to commit workers to the interests of their fellow workers by not abusing the system, allowing more compensation to be granted more fairly and not using the system for every little thing they can possibly get, as is the case at the moment.

It is fair to say that there has been a lot of discussion and consultation by all parties interested in the Bill. The Government has sought the views and opinions of all people concerned. The Government has arrived at a sensible solution to a difficult problem.

One of the Bill's main aims is to contain the costs of premiums and minimize that disincentive to employment. It is ridiculous to say that the Bill in any way panders to the insurance companies because surely it is in the insurance companies' interests, as Mr Guest pointed out, to charge the highest possible premiums. The Bill seeks to lower the premiums which apply because of the huge pay-outs of unnecessary compensation.

There will be a continuing review as the proposed legislation will be constantly monitored by the Workers Compensation Consultative Council on which the trade unions are well represented.

The weekly benefits are to be increased by 44 per cent from $33 to $105. The death benefits will be increased from $22 160 to $33 160. Funeral benefits will be increased to $750. If somebody gave me $750 towards a relative's funeral, I would be most grateful. I do not expect the Government to pay all my bills for me. The new proposals will increase weekly benefits and death benefits while limiting the premium increases, and that is a sensible thrust.

I would have no difficulty justifying the Bill in my electorate. I will not be constrained by threats from anybody about the difficulties of facing up to my electorate. I will be glad to have the opportunity to face up to people in my electorate and I will seize every opportunity I can to tell them about

the Bill. They obviously need that, judging from a letter I received from a school in my electorate.

The Hon. G. A. S. BUTLER (Thomastown Province)—The House is indebted to Mrs Baylor. It is amusing that there were six definitions of the word "substantial" provided. The decks should be cleared. As Mr Walker said, the House is debating an issue that has been debated for some time in another place and between Ministers and members of the trade union movement and other interested parties.

The Workers Compensation Act was designed to protect the person who works and to ensure that if, for some reason or another, that person suffers a disability through no fault of his own, he will be compensated in some measure and his family will be looked after.

I reiterate that the purpose of the Act was to ensure that any person, be he or she a member of Parliament or any other person in industry, who through no fault of his or her own was injured within his place of work, then that person would receive some form of compensation.

From time to time a number of amendments have been proposed by different Governments which have suggested some improvement should be made to the Act. It is interesting to note that on this occasion, following discussions between the Labor movement and the Minister concerned, the working class has received no benefit but the Minister has made statements to the contrary. Will somebody please explain why, if the industrial movement thinks it has received some benefit, the Victorian Trades Hall Council secretary said to the Government, "We do not want a bar of any of it?"

I have negotiated industrial agreements and I have never refused to accept part of an agreement. I always said, "We want $50" and if somebody said, "You will have $25" then I said, "Right, we will accept that and argue about the other $25 later". Obviously the collective industrial movement is not satisfied with the Government's actions in tampering with this legislation.

Up to date, most Government members have been a little shy when talking about the proposed improvements. The Government has suggested that the weekly benefits will increase from $73 to $105, an increase of $32. The Government has said that the death benefits will increase from $23 000 to $33 000, an approximate increase of $10 000. The Government has said that the maximum compensation rate payable will increase from $25 000 to $36 000, an approximate increase of $11 000.

The Government has even gone so far as suggesting that the funeral benefits will increase from $500 to $750. Anyone who has been involved in a funeral should know better because one would be very lucky if one could bury someone for less than $1500. I can say that from experience, and I have no doubt other honorable members have had the same experience. Honorable members should bear in mind that I am talking about a funeral that is not the responsibility of the family concerned. I am talking about funerals like those that followed the West Gate Bridge disaster when, because of the Government's inadequacies, workers' families were penalized by the death of the breadwinner.

It was because of its stupidities of planning and engineering. That is what is being discussed in relation to workers compensation. The House is not discussing the normal cease of life factors; it is discussing death or serious injury caused by employment. During this debate tonight I heard one or two honorable members talk about how terrible it was that employers had to pay the insurance rates. All I can say to that is that if the employers had had any sense after 1972, they would have agreed to the proposal by the Whitlam Government for a national insurance scheme, and there would not be this hotch-potch of workers compensation and medical insurances. There would have been a total Medibank coverage and a total insurance policy and there would not have been profits for private insurance companies.

The Hon. J. V. C. Guest—Labor party senators advised against it.

The Hon. G. A. S. BUTLER—I know what I advised in the Victorian branch of the Australian Labor Party and, as far as I am concerned, it is the Victorian branch that is talking.

The Hon. N. F. Stacey—Which part of it?

The Hon. G. A. S. BUTLER—I assure honorable members that I am talking for the Victorian branch, just as the Liberals talk about the Victorian branch of the Liberal Party.

Honorable members should ask themselves what is actually being discussed. The benefits are there, the weekly payments are there and the death benefits —a number of things that involve total compensation rates. It is interesting to note that Mrs Baylor gave one definition of the word "substantial".

The Hon. J. V. C. Guest—I could give many.

The Hon. G. A. S. BUTLER—I could give one, and I suppose a number of honorable members could give one. That proves the point that members of the Labor Party were making in the first instance, that 50 lawyers will be arguing the workers compensation case about what the word "substantial" means. I am not a Rhodes scholar but I can tell honorable members what it means. It means that in relation to a workers compensation case, whereas before one could go before the tribunal which would say "in accordance with precedents you will receive 'X' benefits", now before the same tribunal one must prove substantially the merit of the case.

I had hepatitis three times, two of which occasions were covered under workers compensation. The third case was challenged. It is difficult to prove that hepatitis is compensatable under workers compensation, but I have no doubt that it is equally difficult with heart cases. How could an honorable member here prove if he dropped dead on the way out of the door, after having taken part in the debate on the Workers Compensation (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill, that his death was attributable to his employment? The Attorney-General says that it takes the matter to another level, but the fact remains that in the industrial field often it is difficult to prove that causation was directly attributable to employment.

As I understand it, to date workers compensation has erred on the side of the claimant. If I understood what was said earlier, it was suggested that that practice should cease. I find that suggestion reprehensible because I should have thought it ought to be the responsibility of Government, and certainly the responsibility of Opposition, to argue that when in doubt one should err on the side of the claimant, particularly in terms of workers compensation, because one is talking about persons who suddenly find that, for reasons beyond their comprehension, they are no longer able to work in industry. If that is the case, they ought to be entitled to some form of compensation to meet that disability. I should have hoped that the Government in any workers compensation legislation that it was bringing forward would have erred on that side. Initially the Bill provided that a person would not be eligible for workers compensation if he or she happened to travel to work in a motor car but would be eligible if he or she travelled to work by tram. After consideration and discussion of the matter, the Government revised its views.

The Hon. Glyn Jenkins—There is nothing wrong with that.

The Hon. G. A. S. BUTLER—I do not suggest for one minute that there is anything wrong with it. The only thing that concerns me is that the Government has now said that it will not do it that way but will charge the motor insurance companies to compensate part of the workers compensation. I do not think that is the proper thing to do. It demonstrates the lack of comprehensive insurance in Victoria.

The other day I noticed with interest that a member of the Police Force said that it was a good thing that the police at the courts did not have revolvers because, when a person was shot there, if the police had been armed they may have well taken action which could have ended in serious workers compensation litigation. Throughout industry,

not only in relation to so-called blue-collar workers, but also in relation to white-collar workers, there seems to be a hotch-potch of laws and regulations stretching from the Commonwealth down through the States. It may well be time that the Australian Governments got together and attempted to find a common denominator in this parade of legalisms. Unquestionably legalisms will be the result. In New South Wales 200 cases were opposed because of the structure of the Workers Compensation Board there and the fact that a Labor Government is in office. Obviously the insurance companies in New South Wales do not find it as profitable to argue with the Workers Compensation Board. Because 1200 cases were argued in Victoria, I draw the conclusion that the insurance companies perhaps find it more profitable to argue here about workers compensation.

The Hon. D. R. White—There should not be a need for it.

The Hon. G. A. S. BUTLER—I agree with Mr White's comment. I find it deplorable that a member of Parliament must argue the rights and wrongs of workers compensation. In this country and State, with its history, workers compensation and social welfare legislation should not be matters of argument; they should be matters of right. Perhaps it is time that Governments looked at themselves again and questioned whether, in arguing the toss politically for so long, they have forgotten that they have a responsibility to the people and the nation. They should be thinking in terms of necessary social legislation to bring this country up into the twentieth century. Australia was the foremost nation in the nineteenth century. When compared with Germany, Sweden, Britain or any other country, it has slipped far back.

I apologize to Mr Baxter; I forgot that he was from Wangaratta and not from Horsham and that Mr Dunn comes from Horsham. I should have known better after years of experience. It is a mistake that I probably will not make again because members of the National Party will not be seen in this place much longer. Whether Mr Taylor believes there are rattlesnakes or not, some decisions will be made which will determine whether members of the National Party will sit again in this Chamber. Nevertheless, while those members are here, it appals me to hear Mr Ross-Edwards claim that his only concern is to minimize the premiums paid out for workers compensation and that those premiums should be kept to a minimum. If I understood Mr Baxter's comments correctly, he seriously suggested that workers should not receive the maximum benefits. I cannot recollect any occasion when members of the Australian Labor Party have had discussions with people throughout the State after a tragedy or a disaster has occurred on which the maximum insurance and workers compensation claims were not sought.

The Hon. K. I. Wright—You did not listen to Mr Baxter very well. He applauded maximum benefits.

The Hon. G. A. S. BUTLER—I thought I did. Far be it for me to suggest that a farmer whose farm is destroyed by a storm should not receive compensation.

The Hon. W. R. Baxter—If he insures, he should be compensated.

The Hon. G. A. S. BUTLER—Whether he insures or not, he should be part of the natural situation. No worker who through no fault of his own is killed on the job should not receive the maximum compensation.

The Hon. K. I. Wright—He does.

The Hon. G. A. S. BUTLER—You want to have it both ways. The National Party will not have it that way much longer because it will not work that way politically. I think members of the National Party realize that. Its four members must face some responsibilities because, on the eve of the last election, they decided to have an open election. At the next election I am sure they know what will happen. The Liberals do, because they are well in front of the National Party members.

The Government has gone part of the way towards recognizing the views of the Trades Hall Council and the industrial movement. As this House is well

aware, the industrial movement is agitated and believes the inclusion of the term "substantial" in the definition of injuries is a retrograde step. They see this as an attack on their rights in seeking compensation for workers, be it for limbs, life or otherwise. We have asked legitimately that the matter be deferred. We have asked for a delay in its implementation because of the term "substantial" and the definition of industry. On behalf of the industrial movement, we are entitled to avoid conflict on what is a matter of social legislation.

However, I am also obliged to point out to honorable members opposite that if it is assumed that the industrial movement in Victoria will lie down and be kicked to death—this is not a threat it is a statement of fact—no employer organization would accept from this Government or any other body something that it considered interfered with its fundamental interests, and the trade union movement considers this Bill interferes with its fundamental rights. A fundamental right is the right of a worker to receive adequate compensation if he is injured in the course of his employment. Certainly the industrial movement interprets the proposed legislation to mean that the term "substantial" will lead to extensive litigation by lawyers about its meaning. That in itself causes another delay in the process, but it also inevitably means that those people who to date have received compensation will not receive compensation in the future or, at worst, will not receive compensation until after extensive litigation has taken place. Therefore, I suggest that the Minister should add his weight to the voice of opinion.

Many features of the Act would probably be better dealt with at a Federal level and at a co-joint State level with common workers compensation Acts and common insurance Acts, but unfortunately, that is not the situation at present. I suggest strongly from the industrial movement that serious consideration should be given to the withdrawal of the term "substantial" from the amendment. I hope worth-while discussions will then take place between the Minister and the Trades Hall Council so that the matter can be satisfactorily resolved to the benefit of the House and the industrial movement.

The Hon. R. J. LONG (Gippsland Province)—I am having great difficulty in understanding the Labor Party's opposition to the Bill. At one stage I gathered it was because there is no national insurance scheme. Fortunately or unfortunately we do not have a national insurance scheme. Therefore, honorable members are back to debating this workers compensation Bill. Perhaps the opposition of the Labor Party was all the more astounding when honorable members heard Mr Landeryou's startling threat that the trade union movement would go out into industry and use industrial muscle to put back these provisions into its awards. I shall make the Government's position clear. The Government believes that any person who suffers injury from genuine work is entitled to be compensated. There is no argument about that. The stage has been reached where there is identical legislation in New South Wales and Victoria and yet New South Wales has fewer heart cases than Victoria. In fact, to the tune of 1100 per annum. The Bill provides for where employment was a contributing factor to the injury. That is the wording in the Acts of both New South Wales and Victoria. Much more is being paid for heart conditions in Victoria that in New South Wales and it is obvious that something must be done about it. That is why the word "substantial" has been used.

Some years ago when I was practising law I was involved in two workers compensation cases which I recall readily. In one a farmer helped his neighbour to cart hay. He got on the back of the trailer and for 15 minutes was loading bales of hay. He suddenly collapsed and fell off the load, dead from a heart condition. His widow claimed workers compensation and, what is more, succeeded. How can it be maintained that that heart condition was caused by an employment of 15 minutes? The High Court has held and

said repeatedly that most heart conditions are a degenerative disease that goes on for years.

In another case a worker was picked up from a hotel by a contractor to load hay and a similar thing happened. This time the worker lasted 20 minutes, and then fell off the load dead. There was another claim for workers compensation and, again, the widow succeeded. Surely the heart condition must have some substantial connection with the work. That is all we are saying. I am positive that the Minister will monitor this legislation and if we get back to the same position that New South Wales is in at present, we shall be extremely happy. We will not want to go any further. This legislation is not aimed at the trade union movement. We simply want a reasonable solution to these heart conditions and I am sure that the proposed legislation and the way injury is defined will achieve that aim. I support the Bill.

The Hon. R. A. MACKENZIE (Geelong Province)—Honorable members should be receiving workers compensation for having to listen to some of the arguments put up by members opposite. It is a pity that most of them are not present because I should like to have had a show of hands to discover how many have been on workers compensation and actually know what it is all about. Not too many hands would go up. Workers compensation is not only an added benefit to workers; it is also the undeniable right of every worker to be properly compensated. I have been in the building industry for 30 years. I can remember going on a building site as a young apprentice in 1949 and I witnessed men being carted off the job in ambulances with bleeding heads and arms crushed in concrete mixers, falling from scaffolding and having their whole lives ruined.

The Hon. Glyn Jenkins—In those circumstances there is no question about their claims.

The Hon. R. A. MACKENZIE—But they never receive sufficient compensation for the following years of inactivity and the struggle of raising a family. We are talking about a just workers compensation. We are talking about the benefits, premiums and pay-roll increases. Between 1967 and 1975 payrolls increased 310 per cent. The benefits paid out in workers compensation increased by 365 per cent. The punch line is that the premiums increased by 469 per cent. The bleeding heart story we are getting from members opposite is the need for additional premiums for these insurance companies. Members opposite do not understand that the people who need this compensation who work in the factories and the building industry are often on an hourly rate. They are not given a week's notice when the boss thinks it is time for them to finish up because there is no work. They are given one hour's pay.

I worked for a building firm for nine years and one day I was given notice to finish at 4 p.m. because if I worked there for ten years the firm would have had to pay *pro rata* long service leave. That is the way these firms operate. Their employees are the people we are talking about—not the people in the professions whose companies make up their wages when they are sick and people in semi-Government bodies. We are talking about the poor people in the manufacturing and building industries who can be maimed and die of heart attacks and all the things I have seen happen on building sites. All I hear is the big case for insurance companies.

If the proposed legislation is not a worthless piece of legislation, why has there been so much opposition to it? Does the trade union movement come out in the street and oppose every Bill that affects it in some way? Does the Government redraft every piece of legislation? It does not. This measure was ill-conceived and thought out by people who do not understand what workers compensation is all about. The insurance companies are well compensated, as I have shown from the figures I have quoted. A large percentage of people in the electorates of Mr Bubb, Mr Knowles and Mr Jenkins belong to the group who work in the manufacturing and building industries on low-paid jobs who cannot afford to live on compensation wages. They do not get any kickbacks and *pro rata* payments from their employers. They have to live on this

pittance. They have to raise and educate families and struggle along, in many cases paying Housing Commission rents which the Government has increased unreasonably.

These are the people who will be suffering. Some Government supporters will be receiving deputations from angry people once their constituents know that their elected representatives have voted in favour of this Bill.

The subject of stress has been mentioned. Admittedly, industry has done a great deal over the past few years and we have heard some talk about safety, but what about stress? What have companies done to alleviate stress among their workers, to reduce the incidence of heart attacks? Do any of them employ industrial psychologists to study what is causing stress on workers and if there is stress? I have not heard of any. I have never heard of a company even such as the Ford Motor Company in Geelong, which employs up to 5000 workers, engaging industrial psychologists to determine whether stress is placed on its staff and to try to alleviate it. Employers do not worry about things like that.

I mention the word "substantial", for which Mrs Baylor provided the House with a definition. However, the definition which will most probably be used when workers compensation cases come before courts will be the definition contained in *Stroud's Judicial Dictionary of Words and Phrases*. That definition says, in part:

> SUBSTANTIAL. A word of no fixed meaning, it is an unsatisfactory medium for carrying the idea of some ascertainable proportion of the whole.

That is the word which, as Mr Baxter said, will create the barristers' bonanza. It is a completely inadequate word and the Bill could fail on this word alone. By pursuing this proposed legislation, the Government is precipitating industrial chaos, deliberately causing confrontation—there are no two ways about that. The Government does not need to do that. The Government could take this Bill back and redraft it. I know it would look foolish, but it has looked foolish before. That would be far better than having the confrontation which can be expected if this Bill becomes law. Demands for justice will have to be taken up in the work place and workers will be forced to make demands on their employers. Workers will demand the make-up pay difference to bring their remuneration up to the level of their weekly wages, and that is a reasonable request. Employers may have to transfer their workers compensation policies from private companies to the State Insurance Office.

The proposed legislation is even more complex than the previous Act, and there is no indication that the Government is any better informed than it was when it introduced the earlier legislation.

As well as working in the building industry as an employee, I have been an employer in a small business—in fact, they do not come much smaller —and I paid workers compensation insurance premiums. I have spoken to other small businessmen who have done the same, and I have never heard one complaint by employers about the sums workers were receiving in compensation, but I have heard a lot of complaints about the premiums. Not one employer said that workers were being paid too much or that the claims were too high. All their complaints were directed against the insurance companies and their high premiums, and that is the crux of the matter.

I commend the amendment moved by my colleague, Mr Walker, that this Bill be sent back for redrafting.

The Hon. J. V. C. GUEST (Monash Province)—Now we come to matters of substance. I had not thought of myself as an expert in workers compensation law and, indeed, I am not; but all things are relative and I am willing to be, not dogmatic, but after hearing honorable members opposite, fairly confident in some of the things I have to say.

The least shall be first, although that is a little unfair as Mrs Coxsedge is not here. I say "the least" in this context, because of what she said.

The Hon. E. H. Walker—That is a misquote.

The Hon. J. V. C. GUEST—Mr Walker is very astute indeed. "The least shall be first": That is how I should like it to be recorded. As a matter of fact, I had noted down something from what Mrs Coxsedge said in her usual courteous way of putting things from one side of this Chamber to the other. She asked, "What would you know about it?" Obviously, that was a reflection on my background, my education and my antecedents and a whole lot of things she supposed but would not know.

I was speaking of the causes of cardio-vascular accidents, as the jargon has it. Indeed, when I suggested that, in addition to lifestyle as mentioned by Mr Baxter, heredity is also a factor, and that these two were perhaps the most significant aspects of the etiology of cerebral and cardio-vascular accidents, I did know what I was talking about. I do not find it difficult to read the extensive literature of the National Heart Foundation on this subject, which is presumably soundly based and the work of experts, and the foundation has little difficulty in sourcing the main causes of heart attacks and strokes. Furthermore, when in one's family one has four close relatives who have had heart disease and one has had to determine whether one's father died of his third heart attack during his working years of war causes or work causes, then it is not surprising that one actually learns a good deal about these things.

I then had noted a little prematurely that Mrs Coxsedge was foolish when she departed from her script, but that was an incomplete observation because she is evidently foolish when she follows the script as I shall now show. I am sorry to say this in her absence, but, no doubt, by interjection she would contribute further evidence if she were here. However, I also have no doubt she will have every opportunity to reply in some other debate.

I am addressing myself to matters of substance in the argument for it is important when one finds Opposition members relying on bad, ill-researched arguments. It shows that there is some lack of bona fides in their case. They are not wholeheartedly putting forward what they purport to be putting forward. Mrs Coxsedge said that the Government had left the figure for funeral expenses at $750. It is perfectly clear that by clause 7 (3) of the Bill, section 26 (11) of the principal Act will be amended by substituting for the expression "$500" the expression "$750". Section 26 (11) of the principal Act states:

> Nothing in this section shall apply to or in relation to such part of the costs of the burial or cremation of any worker as exceeds the sum of $500.

It is a small point, but it is indicative of the approach of the Opposition to this matter even with a script, not just with an off-the-cuff remark. Mrs Coxsedge's choice from her library of scripts to be delivered in this place also showed that she had written her script before the present Bill was before the House. She was working on the previous one. She referred to a provision adopted from the New Zealand legislation. That was in the Bill debated last June, not the present one.

I come now to Mr Walker's remarks. I feel very sad to hear what he has to say in order to work his excellent purposes through the Australian Labor Party. As Mr Butler put it so frankly to us—and of course he was speaking in the wrong forum when he said this sort of thing—"We, on behalf of the industrial movement"—not representing the people of Victoria, not representing his constituents, but—"We on behalf of the industrial movement", "we" including, no doubt, his Deputy Leader, Mr Walker. It is a sad thing to hear Mr Walker forcing himself to walk on unfamiliar ground. He does not speak the language, so honorable members heard him say, in the worthiest possible way, that the worker "deserves" compensation for this and that. I thought it had something to do with needs. Is it rather moral merit that we are concerned with? Is Parliament setting itself to decide that people shall be remunerated according to their moral merit or compensated according to their moral merit? Mr Landeryou has a different and incon-

sistent version, although, he has it that compensation ought to be directly related to income earnings. He did say he believed there should be an upper limit. But, Mr Walker apparently believes it has something to do with moral merit. God forbid that that should be the case!

Mr Walker undoubtedly has the best intellect on the front bench of the Opposition, yet he did not essay any definition that could perhaps be inserted in this Bill. Notwithstanding that he put forward the only suggested amendment; he did not attempt any definition that would make the word "substantial" work for the purposes of the industrial movement which he and his colleagues in the Labor Party represent. No constructive suggestion came from the honorable member or from any member of the Opposition.

Mr Walker himself conceded, by saying that this debate is a farce, that this proposed legislation will go through. He can be quite sure that Government supporters would have listened to him if he proposed a definition that the word "substantial" should mean X, Y and Z. Government supporters would be delighted if he would put forward a form of words which would answer any doubts that may arise. Nor did Mr Walker, forcing his considerable intellect to bend itself to another unfamiliar subject, make any reference to common law cases, and that was an important omission. Much mention has been made of upper limits of workers compensation payments. Of course, there are such limits, but there is no upper limit on the damages in common law cases which deal with the vast majority of the real disasters which befall people at work. The same premiums are paid to cover that. I mention that simply because it is another large gap in the speeches of members of the Opposition.

I come to Mr Landeryou's contribution and I find that extremely interesting. I find him interesting when he speaks on a subject he knows something about, although he has now gratuitously cast doubt on that expertise in an aside. I took him as being somebody that one should listen to on the subject of workers compensation, but unfortunately we heard Mr Landeryou, the advocate, not somebody giving us the benefit of what he knows, because how can he explain these inconsistencies?

I have referred to Mr Walker's moral merits, and Mr Landeryou has yet another version which he has thrown into the pot of miscellaneous arguments, for want of a better word, that the Opposition has been putting forward. He says that compensation ought to be directly related to income, and, of course, by and large, it is, but this comes strangely from a party which likes to put itself forward as the party which looks after the needs of the people, the needs of schools and so on —it is constantly harping on the expression "needs".

Another inconsistency is to be found in the way that several speakers have put forward the ultimate answer. It is marvellous if one can get away from the inconsistency and the miscellaneous nature of all Opposition contributions and say, "I have a grand vision; there is something up there which will deal with it all, and that is the national compensation scheme".

Two former members of the Labor movement who knew more than anybody here about workers compensation and industrial law generally were Senator Jim McClelland, as he then was, and Senator John Button.

The Hon. E. H. Walker—They are not former members!

The Hon. J. V. C. GUEST—Mr Justice McClelland is no longer a member of the Labor movement. However, these people cannot disentangle their beliefs and their source of financial and preselection support from their duty.

The Hon E. H. Walker—What about Senator Button?

The Hon. J. V. C. GUEST—One of them is; one of them is not. Senator Button is still a very knowledgeable person in this area. The former Senator McClelland and Senator Button, with one other Australian Labor Party senator I think, sat on a committee which "did in" Mr Whitlam's pet scheme

for national compensation. It is the kind of idea that I like, too, but I do not know why these experts from the Opposition should demonstrate their total unfitness for the hard grind of government by floating these airy-fairy ideas. They purport to provide the ultimate answer for the people who are actually in Government doing some hard work.

The Hon. R. J. Eddy—You are carrying on like a fairy!

The Hon. J. V. C. GUEST—I suppose I should object to that interjection but, coming from Mr Eddy, whose judgment on almost any matter is so dubious, I really do not think I will bother!

The contributions to the debate by members of the Opposition have been a repetition of a whole series of broken records stating that the insurance companies tell the Government what to do. Last Thursday I pointed out the total illogic of this because the insurance companies' interest is to maximize the risks they have to cover so that they will receive larger premiums. Mr Landeryou no doubt scored his point admirably by having himself reported as having said—apparently without refutation—that the Liberal Party has produced this Bill at the behest of the insurance companies. Surely the Opposition understands that that is not so. I refer also to Mr Landeryou's point about the Bill being political and remind him that there are no votes from insurance companies.

I shall deal with one more point before I come to the definition of the word "substantial". I want to show that it is possible for people who know relatively little about workers compensation —and we all in this Chamber come into that category—to do something quite constructive, and to have a thought which has not been mentioned that could be raised in criticism of the proposed legislation.

I refer to the income tax consequences for Victorian citizens of the change in cover for certain motor vehicle journeys from the jurisdiction of the Workers Compensation Board to that of the Motor Accidents Board. Presumably exactly the same premiums will have to be paid to cover the same risks. Those premiums now will not be paid by employers; they will be paid by the owners of motor vehicles through their third-party insurance premiums. I do not know the exact figures, but I shall do a sum to prove my point.

Let us suppose, as one reasonably may, that all workers compensation premiums are wholly tax deductible. There are a few companies that make losses continually and never recover their tax losses, but by and large premiums are tax deductible. Suppose that only 40 per cent of third-party premiums are tax deductible because they are paid by businesses or by people for business purposes; if one takes the highest figure that I have heard suggested for that part of the workers compensation premiums which is now being directed to the area of third-party premiums, $5 million, one finds that the $3 million that is payable in premiums in Victoria is not to be tax deductible.

Taking an average tax rate on the taxable incomes in question of 40 per cent, one finds that Victorians will be paying an additional $1·2 million in income tax. I should have thought that the Opposition, in any bona fide attempt at being constructive, would have brought this up as something which might be considered relevant to the welfare of Victorians. Ultimately this argument—and I cannot say that $1·2 million is not the right figure any more than that $400 000 is the right figure—cannot be accepted, because fundamentally it would be wrong to put as a cost of employment that which is not related to employment.

If one wanted to shift on to workers compensation premiums the insuring of all risks which could conceivably be included in this area, naturally one would want to ensure that everybody's cardio-vascular accidents, old age and everything else were paid for out of a tax deductible premium, but it is on that principle that I will answer that point.

Turning to the word "substantial", I am a little surprised that Mr Landeryou or anybody should object to a word contained in a Bill simply because it would mean that the High Court

will have to draw the defining boundaries. After all, a party which advocates a Bill of Rights with about 50 clauses which are of such vast generality that every one of them would need what they call in America a "Federal case" one hundred times over can hardly object if in seeking to redefine what is already in the legislation a few employers or employees voluntarily push their cases hoping to advance the margin of definition by taking it to the High Court. That is another inconsistency; it is the core of the case put by the Opposition.

I have gone to two sources for a definition of the word "substantial" apart from the standard English dictionaries which are used in the courts. Naturally a lawyer would turn first to *Stroud's Judicial Dictionary of Words and Phrases*, as did Mr Mackenzie, and then perhaps to Butterworth. Let me just give a little more of the context of the sentence that Mr Mackenzie read out. At page 141 of the fifth volume of *Words and Phrases*, on what is meant by a substantial part and the remaining part of the premises, the definition given is:

> "Substantial" is not a word of a fixed meaning in all contexts.

It can have different meanings, of course, in different contexts. The definition continues:

> In certain associations it could be taken to stress the quality of solidarity or strength. It may be related to the appearance of some physical object. With other concepts it may refer to weight, volume, or area. Again it may be used to indicate worth, or stability. Used in a comparative setting, "a substantial part" as against "the remaining part", it suggests a dichotomy into the substantial part, and the not-substantial, a contrast, according to cubic contents, or area, between the greater and the less, as between the essential and the subordinate or incidental.

There is not much in that to support the definition that Mr Mackenzie read out. It goes on, after one more sentence which is not particularly relevant:

> It is an unsatisfactory medium for carrying the idea of some ascertainable proportion of the whole.

If Mr Mackenzie were going to rely on that one sentence, he should have defined the word "ascertainable" as in "ascertainable proportions". "Substantial" is not a word which can give 20 per cent or 22 per cent or anything which is to be made certain and precise like that. That shows that Mr Mackenzie read the wrong definition or part of the definition, because a number of other definitions are given which help to show how anybody on a workers compensation board who is not sure of himself could approach the matter with a little more confidence that boundaries can be set to a term intended to cover a variety of factual situations. For example, the fourth definition given by *Stroud*—and it should be stated that none of them is directly related to this kind of legislation, but they all help—refers to a lease and states:

> In a lease under which the landlord is liable for "structural repairs of a substantial nature", the word "substantial" is equivalent to "considerable", and the liability should be measured more by reference to the antecedent disrepair than the nature of the repair work.

It is not difficult to see that pointing to the fact that a person's antecedent state of health will be a help in deciding whether the employment contribution was substantial and surely any real cause of serious ill health has to be "considerable" or "substantial".

The eighth definition refers to a substantial amount of a rent being attributable to the amount paid for furniture. It states that out of a rent of 80 pounds per annum, 13 pounds was attributable to the amount paid for furniture, and it was held that this was a substantial amount, so those who are talking wildly about 50 per cent or more being what is meant by "substantial" in this Bill should consider a case here where less than one-sixth was the substantial amount when one was referring to fixed quantitative amounts.

Similarly, definition No. 12 refers to a "substantial number" in support of a development council and states that 1000 firms out of 6000 is not an insubstantial number. It was said to be not insubstantial in the context of having to decide what a substantial number was.

Definition No. 15 points out that "substantial" is not a term that demands a strictly quantitative or proportional assessment. That is perfectly obviously correct when one considers the multi-

farious ways in which cases of disease or injury come before the Workers Compensation Board.

Finally, under the fifth definition of the word "substantially", referring to the term "substantially impaired", Stroud states that substantial does not mean trivial or minimal; neither does it mean total. It is for the jury to decide whether the impairment is substantial.

That brings us to the real point, that it is not the lawyers who will determine that. There will, it is true, be one or two cases where people will try to advance the margin of the definition by taking it to the highest court available.

The unions should support such litigation because they have often put substantial funds into it, and no doubt insurance companies will find it worth their while to try to push the definition the other way.

That would be a minor part of the total picture. It is really a question of fact. Workers compensation boards look at the facts. They have a long history of dealing sensibly with matters according to established traditions, which one may disagree with, but they have established a way of looking sensibly at the facts. In a case like this, workers compensation boards would first seek, not the opinion of lawyers but that of medical experts, about the relevant disease. The position in future will not change because doctors will continue to give opinions, as they do now.

The Hon. D. R. White—Are you saying it will guarantee equity?

The Hon. J. V. C. GUEST—No, no one can ever guarantee equity. Doctors will give an opinion and after a time a practice will become clear and the parties will settle the cases as they do now. They will know which cases it is possible to push beyond what is customarily expected.

In a case of vascular accident the board would ask itself a question along the following lines, "Are the hours, the responsibilities of the job, or the physical requirements such that one would expect a number of people who do not exhibit known high-risk factors to suffer strokes, heart attacks or whatever the injury or disease might be?" It is not difficult. The appropriate medical experts will give evidence, as they do now. They will say whether one would expect work of this character, or under these conditions to cause a number of people—beyond those who are heavy smokers, who are grossly overweight, who suffer hypertension and so on—to suffer vascular accidents in the way one would not expect a person pushing a pen in an insurance office to suffer a cardiovascular accident if he were not exhibiting known high-risk factors.

To suggest that this has anything to do with the niceties of the law is a total misunderstanding of the work of lawyers, particularly those involved in workers compensation cases, and shows an ignorance of the large body of medical experts and practical experts involved in the work of workers compensation boards. It is beside the point to suggest that this Bill will benefit lawyers, just as it is beside the point to suggest that it is for the benefit of insurance companies. As the Bill will provide substantial improvements in the benefits payable to workers, and at the same time deal sensibly with the costs of employment in this State, no case has been made against the Bill and it ought to pass in its present form.

The Hon. G. A. SGRO (Melbourne North Province)—I hope that what Mr Guest says is not true, otherwise there will be a lot of litigation. Four or five people who have been from one solicitor to another visit my electoral office every day. In this country, 50 per cent of workers are smokers and 50 per cent are migrants. Yesterday and today I spent 2 hours each day at the North Melbourne railway workshops speaking to more than 200 people about the workers compensation Bill. I showed them the Bill and explained what it meant. I asked them to tell me what they thought about it.

The Hon. Haddon Storey—What did you tell them?

The Hon. G. A. SGRO—I told them what I believe and what I have heard from the experts on this type of legislation. The proposed legislation is complete rubbish.

The Hon. Haddon Storey—What did you tell them?

The Hon. G. A. SGRO—Two weeks ago I asked them to tell me what they think and I went back to hear what they had to say. They are worried that they will have to convince the insurance companies and the lawyers to keep their jobs, but there are language difficulties.

Up to now, the insurance companies have shown little interest in notifying people of their rights or in ensuring that people know how to operate machines. They do not intend to do that because they make money from the lack of knowledge. The insurance companies want this amending legislation.

The proposed legislation will create a welfare State. The taxpayers will have to foot the bill. At the moment, hundreds of people, after six months on workers compensation, have to go to the Social Security Department to receive benefits, but the proposed legislation will send thousands of people to the Social Security Department and will, therefore, create a welfare State. I understand Mr Guest is a lawyer. For half an hour he tried to persuade honorable members about the definition.

The Hon. Haddon Storey—I thought he made it clear.

The Hon. G. A. SGRO—I doubt it. I invite Mr Guest and members of the Government to come with me tomorrow to the railway workshops. It is not for me to come here and say that I have talked with 150 workers, so I invite honorable members to put their views to the people at the railway workshops so that they do not have only my viewpoint or that of the Labor Party, but they can hear what the members of the railway workshops have to say.

There are big problems because 50 per cent of the work force in this country are migrants. Millions of dollars are wasted because of the stupidity of the Government and the insurance companies. This morning, a man who had crushed his hand in a machine, came to my office. The foreman on the job told him not to use the machine, but he told him in English. The boss told him to use the machine, that it was all right. He used it and crushed his hand because of the stupidity of the employer. He received workers compensation and later social security benefits. Part of his right arm was permanently damaged and the insurance company offered him $3500. He is 42 years of age and will have to live on $3500 for the rest of his life.

The Hon. Haddon Storey—He is entitled to loss of wages.

The Hon. G. A. SGRO—I am not a lawyer, but migrants come to me with their workers compensation problems. Some people go to four or five solicitors because they do not trust anyone. The Government should introduce legislation to protect those people, not because of a specific case that has arisen, but to make them safe. The Government allows the insurance companies to spend millions of dollars on high-rise buildings which no one uses. The taxpayer has to foot the bill for the welfare State which the Government wants to create.

The Hon. W. V. Houghton—Do not you want a welfare State?

The Hon. G. S. SGRO—I should like a welfare State, but not at the expense of the taxpayer and not for the benefit of the insurance companies. An honorable member said that he saw two workers compensation cases a month. He is a solicitor. I invite him to my office because it is important to touch on reality and not sit in an ivory tower and see two people in one month.

The proposed legislation is rubbish and should be withdrawn for the sake of humanity and common sense. Members of the working class will suffer the consequences of the introduction of this measure. One alternative is to bring those people to Parliament to protest. I do not want to do that. Therefore, I support Mr Walker's amendment that the proposed legislation be withdrawn and redrafted.

The Hon. C. J. KENNEDY (Waverley Province)—The Bill gives a little and takes a lot. It increases the workers compensation weekly payments by 44 per cent, which sounds a lot, but that only returns it to the 1975 level. Lump

sum payments for the loss of arms, fingers and so on, will remain at the same value as they were four years ago.

It is obvious that the Government is in the pockets of the insurance companies on this matter. It has not shown concern for the suffering and hardship that will be caused by the introduction of this measure. The Government changes the definition for all injuries by introducing the word "substantial". According to the legal adviser of the Victorian Secondary Teachers Association, where there is a material or significant, but less than substantial contribution, compensation will not be recoverable.

Tonight honorable members have heard legal opinions about the definition of "substantial" but no one knows precisely what it means. A dictionary definition gave ten different meanings, so a lot of problems would arise. It will take lawyers a number of years to resolve that question. I wish to quote briefly from an article written by Mr Peter Manning, as a result of interviews with Dr J. Walker of the Workers Health Centre and Dr Rainsford of the Occupational Health Centre, which appeared on Sunday, 18 November 1979 in the *Sun-Herald* under the heading, "Is Your Job a Health Hazard?"

Office workers work with solvents in inks, correcting fluids and so on, and these can lead to complaints ranging from dermatitis to cancer. Fibreglass workers have to handle resins, which can cause dermatitis, asthma, bronchitis or lung cancer. It is easy to imagine the difficulties that would be experienced by someone attempting to prove that his work was responsible to a substantial degree for those diseases.

Spray painters, furnishers, metal trade workers, plastics workers, dry cleaners, chemists and printers work with industrial solvents. This can lead to dermatitis, dizziness, liver or kidney damage, or leukemia. Dentists, nurses and people involved in the manufacture of electrical equipment or chlorine and caustic soda have to handle mercury, which is an extremely toxic substance that can cause dizziness, headaches and long-term danger to the nervous system. Refinery and petrol workers have to handle organic lead, which can lead to brain damage.

Pest controllers, farmers using sheep dips and workers involved in textile printing and drug manufacture use arsenic, which can result in diseases ranging from dermatitis to lung cancer. Chrome workers, colour workers, calico printers, chrome tanners, photographers, litho etchers and chromate workers handle chromium, which can induce diseases ranging from dermatitis to lung cancer. Workers involved in the manufacture of X-ray and fluorescent tubes and people who repair electrical equipment deal with beryllium, which can cause a range of diseases from dermatitis to lung cancer.

Abattoir and farm workers—this should be of particular interest to members of the National Party—veterinarians, butchers and meat process workers have to deal with infected cattle. They can contract the serious disease, brucellosis. Builders, ship painters and asbestos miners have to handle asbestos, which, as everyone knows, is a particularly dangerous substance. It can cause lung cancer and cancer of the bowel or stomach. Plastics workers deal with vinyl chloride, which can cause liver cancer. Sandstone workers, jackpick operators, moulders and draggers and setters, use silica and asbestos, which can cause cancers that are usually fatal.

It is obvious that it will be enormously difficult for people suffering from the illnesses I have mentioned to prove that the diseases were substantially caused by their employment. In the past, compensation has been granted in such cases as a matter of course but in future that will not be so. That is why I vigorously oppose the Bill and heartily support the amendment moved by Mr Walker.

The Hon D. R. WHITE (Doutta Galla Province)—It is interesting to note that there have been only five speakers on behalf of the Government on this important measure. That is striking when one realizes that in other debates during

this sessional period, such as the censure motion involving the Victorian Development Corporation, which was directed against me, the Government was able to produce seven speakers. However, on this occasion, when the House is dealing with one of the most significant Bills ever to come before it, the Government has been able to dredge up only five speakers.

Some of those five speakers possess some expertise in the matter. I refer, of course, to Mr Bubb's experience with the Victorian Chamber of Manufactures, but Mr Bubb assiduously steered clear of the most important aspect of the proposed legislation. Mr Guest's contribution on behalf of the legal fraternity merely added confusion to the issue. No honorable member, apart from the Attorney-General, would take any view other than that when considering whether Mr Guest clarified the interpretation of the word "substantial".

The Government should attempt to come to terms with the arguments put by the Opposition. The Opposition is concerned that the current definition under the Workers Compensation Act requires only that an individual be able to demonstrate that his or her employment was a contributing factor to a disease that caused injury. The Opposition seriously contends that the definition now being adopted by the proposed amendment to section 3 of the principal Act will mean that it will be much more difficult for workers. The Government has offered no clarification of the meaning of the word "substantial".

The second point I raise may go even more directly to the heart of the matter —I intend no pun. The Opposition is of the view that although physical injury may still be included, it fears, with some justification, that in future it will be almost impossible to demonstrate that a disease constitutes a justifiable claim for workers compensation.

During the course of this extended debate members of the Opposition have waited for an assurance from the Government concerning an adequate definition of the word "substantial" and a clarification of which diseases, if any, will still be compensable. At least Mr Guest was honest when he said that the word will create a barristers' banquet. The Opposition believes the word should not be used if no member of the Government is able to provide an adequate definition and an assurance about the status of diseases as justifiable bases for claims for workers compensation benefits.

The Opposition regrets the introduction of the Bill. It is a punitive measure and it has not been debated adequately. The Government has not given the matter serious consideration. For those reasons I support the amendment moved by Mr Walker.

The Hon. R. J. EDDY (Thomastown Province)—Tonight honorable members have listened, as Mr White indicated, to a number of speakers from the Opposition side of the House who have the interest of the workers at heart, but the Government has seen fit to supply only five speakers and the National Party only one. I congratulate all members of the Opposition who have contributed to the debate on their contributions.

I shall review some of the remarks made by other speakers. Mr Baxter spoke eloquently on behalf of the farmers but I take strong objection to one of the statements he made. He said that a worker has only to present himself to some medical practitioner to be asked, "How long do you want off?" Mr Baxter was insinuating that some medical practitioners are not honest and I object strongly to that insinuation.

Mr Bubb then made his contribution to the debate. He spoke on the matter of workers compensation like a real "bub". It was obvious he knew nothing about the measure. Mr Hayward followed Mr Bubb and in most of his remarks he referred to safety precautions. I agree with most of the remarks he made on that subject because if one travels around the State visiting the various timber mills it becomes obvious that workers are working without earmuffs and they are working on crosscut saws with no guards. When workers are subjected to that type of treatment by employers it is no wonder that they receive the injuries that have been mentioned on numerous occasions by members of the Opposition. These

people should be compensated and they should receive the amount they were earning prior to injury, not the 50 per cent, 33 per cent or 60 per cent the Government is prepared to offer. I have worked in industry and have been subjected to this type of treatment after receiving injuries suffered at work. Over the years I have received the type of treatment handed out by insurance companies but tonight supporters of the Government have been defending those companies. It should be realized that the employers pay the large premiums to the insurance companies to cover the payments meted out to workers who are injured on the job or on the way to and from work.

The Hon. D. N. Saltmarsh—After going to the pub!

The Hon. R. J. EDDY—Irrespective of what Mr Saltmarsh might think, it would have been all right if they had been injured on the way to work and called in to where Mr Saltmarsh gave his sermon. I do not agree with the sentiments or remarks of Government supporters.

I have worked in industry and have received workers compensation payments following an injury. I have endeavoured to raise my family on the meagre payments handed out to me by the Workers Compensation Board, through the Victorian Chamber of Manufactures, an organization which Mr Bubb so ably defended in his contribution this evening. His remarks were typical of the remarks Opposition members have heard from Government supporters.

The Hon. D. N. Saltmarsh—Did you not understand Mr Guest?

The Hon. R. J. EDDY—Mr Guest would not understand what workers compensation meant—I doubt whether Mr Guest would know how to spell "workers compensation". I know the effects the legislation has on workers and the Opposition is not prepared to accept the Bill which the Government has submitted to Parliament. The original Bill was not proceeded with for many months because the Government found it had made many mistakes and the Bill had to be amended to correct those mistakes.

As submitted by Mr Walker, the Bill should be withdrawn and redrafted. The Opposition claims that the Government should do that with this ridiculous piece of proposed legislation which it has introduced into Parliament, at this late period of the spring sitting of Parliament. Once again the Government has introduced one of its major Bills at this late stage and in another place it even restricted the time allowed for debate, but fortunately that does not occur in this House. The Opposition welcomes the opportunity to explain the case on behalf of the workers and, as stated by the Leader of the Opposition, the Government will find that the workers are not prepared to accept this rubbish which it has introduced and which it is asking the workers to accept.

The Hon. Haddon Storey—What about the increased benefits?

The Hon. R. J. EDDY—Let us talk about the increased benefits. Not one member of the Government would have worked in industry or would have any knowledge of what the workers are subjected to if they are injured and asked to accept workers compensation payments. Over the years the Government has not been prepared to increase those benefits but it is now claiming the increase in benefits as one of the major reasons for the passage of the Bill.

Honorable members should consider the social implications. There should be social justice for the workers, but if a married man, with a wife and two children, is injured on the job he receives a payment of only $155 a week on which the family has to exist. In my opinion that payment is not even comparable to the payments of those who have to live on the poverty line. Although such workers are expected to raise a family on that meagre payment, honorable members who represent the big insurance companies, from which they receive many advantages during elections, are prepared to sit and remain silent, with their hands behind their heads or frequently to interject as they have done this evening. The Opposition is not afraid

of their interjections, and plenty are made in return, but interjections will continue to be made whilst the Government introduces legislation such as this which does not help Victorian workers.

Members of the Opposition are not prepared to accept this type of legislation. We support the workers and if they come to the steps of Parliament House and ask to speak to Government supporters, members of the Opposition will take them to Government supporters to let them put their case, and then let us see how honest those Government supporters are in the answers they give to the workers.

The Hon. J. A. Taylor—Steady on Mr Eddy, you are starting to convince me!

The Hon. R. J. EDDY—It would not take much to convince some Government supporters as the majority have been forced to vote for this Bill. In their own hearts, Government supporters know that the Bill will not help the cause of the workers. Those unfortunate workers who are injured will receive meagre benefits on which they have to raise a family.

It is ridiculous for the Government to ask members of the Opposition to accept the Bill, just as it is ridiculous to ask the workers in Victoria to accept its provisions and the increased benefits which the Government is offering through workers compensation payments.

In 1965, the then Attorney-General, Mr Wilcox, reduced the living standards of widows by reducing their workers compensation payments. Tonight Government supporters are doing the same by asking workers who may be maimed or injured in accidents travelling to and from work or who suffer from heart disease to accept payments which the Government is offering under the provisions of this Bill. On behalf of the workers, members of the Trades Hall Council and even members of the Workers Compensation Board, I say that it is a lot of rubbish and that is borne out by the fact Government supporters are not prepared to support the measure.

As I stated in my opening remarks, I support all Opposition members who have spoken. I know that members of the Opposition believed in their own hearts that what they said was in the interests of the workers. No Government supporter has been honest in his remarks in respect of what the Bill will do for the workers of this State. I may be cruel to the Government but I am being kind to the workers; I am concerned about the worker.

The Hon. W. V. Houghton—You will get your re-endorsement, Mr Eddy.

The Hon. R. J. EDDY—I am not concerned about my re-endorsement at the moment, but I am concerned about the workers in industry who, day after day, are injured and the Government is not prepared to pay them what they are entitled to be paid. If a person is receiving $200 a week and is injured on the job, that person should receive an identical payment through workers compensation payments. Do not give me the rubbish that because insurance premiums are high, the employers have to pay. It is the consumers of this State who have to pay because if the employer has to pay increased workers compensation premiums, he increases the price of his goods to cover those increases and that increase is passed on to the consumer whenever he does his shopping. It is about time the Government realized that, but it is not prepared to do so.

In the interests of Victorian workers members of the Opposition have stated their case whereas members of the Government have not been game enough to speak in support of the workers. They have spoken in favour of those who support the Government during an election, namely the insurance companies, which donate so heavily towards the election expenses of the Government party.

I have much pleasure in supporting the amendment so ably moved by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, and I support every word spoken by members of the Opposition.

The Hon. D. E. KENT (Chelsea Province)—I have been moved by the elo-

quence of my colleague, Mr Eddy because what he said obviously came from his heart, despite the derogatory remarks of the "Minister for Conversation".

The debate certainly relates to matters of substance and is about very important principles which clearly divide honorable members into various factions in this Parliament. Honorable members have to accept that society has a responsibility to meet the needs of those people who, through no circumstances of their own doing, find themselves in a situation of need. This is basically what it is all about.

Various forms of limited protection have been devised to enable commercial enterprises or professions to exploit the sufferings and the hardships of others for their own financial benefit. That is why honorable members have heard mention tonight of barristers' bonanzas and doctors' dinners. They, like so many people dealing with suffering, sickness, death and disease in our society, are trying to obtain the maximum financial benefit for themselves. That is why a conservative Government is intent on preserving these things for private company groups rather than supporting the concept of a national compensation scheme to cover the needs of all people who fall into situations of need.

Mr Guest was very disappointing in the debate tonight. I refer particularly to him because he endeavoured to substantiate a case by trying to tell the House what "substantially" means. Because of his background I had high expectations. He reminded me very much of a female solicitor who began practising, but kept on losing her "briefs". Unfortunately she had to leave the profession. It was not compensatable either.

It was disappointing to hear a person of Mr Guest's reputed ability not only confusing himself, but also, I believe, confusing the Attorney-General, who will find himself in a difficult situation in now trying to explain the meaning of "substantially". It emphasizes the point that the Bill provides for exploitation by doctors, lawyers, and insurance companies because the term is not precise. It will require cases to be taken to court. It will undoubtedly be the hope of those who are involved in the insurance industry to keep premiums down—they will still want them to be profitable—in the expectation that insurance companies will not be paying out large sums in compensation. Because there is not much clarification in the Bill, many cases will have to be taken to law if they are to be successfully prosecuted.

It is theoretical that British justice is open to all, but everyone knows that in practice it is more available to those who have the money to buy it. Honorable members know that many people, and particularly those in the most desperate circumstances, are intimidated by the fact that they will have to involve themselves in costly litigation to prove what they believe is their right.

The Hon. B. A. Chamberlain—Haven't you heard of legal aid?

The Hon. D. E. KENT—Yes, I have heard of legal aid and I have heard of what Liberal Governments have done to the legal aid system whereby only those who are basically desperate are able to seek legal aid.

The Hon. B. A. Chamberlain—You said a moment ago that no one can get assistance.

The Hon. D. E. KENT—It has been made very difficult. Of course the price has to be paid by someone. Mr Chamberlain knows, as well as others in this Chamber, what his party, at a State and Federal level, has done to legal aid. If it were not for that philosophy, Government party members would be supporting funding of an insurance company by a State or national Government. It seems inevitable, despite all that is heard about professional ethics from various professional men, that one of the problems with a scheme such as a national health scheme is exploitation by members of the medical profession. Mr Guest virtually assured the House that the legal profession will be endeavouring to exploit the community through this Bill.

I believe it is possible, in a society such as ours, and with the powers that are available to Government, to be able

to enact laws to protect the individual from exploitation by members of professions, and the Government should be strong enough to support those laws.

The other speakers for the Opposition have clearly indicated the many reasons why the Opposition objects to the Bill. It will cause people, who are in the greatest need financial suffering and distress, and many will have to wait long periods at a time when they are in great economic need and lack mental security.

Mr Long referred to two irrelevant cases. The Government should consider not only the people who are killed, injured or contract a disease at work, but also their families, and eliminate any distress to those people.

I very much deplore the fact that Government members have treated this matter with scant seriousness, considering the grave nature of the Bill, the effects it will have on those people who are affected by it and the traumatic effect it will have on the attitude of the whole community. It will have an effect on those who are directly affected, and will bring about feelings of insecurity. I commend my colleagues on having resisted the passage of the Bill, but I regret that we will not be successful.

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. F. S. Grimwade)—The Attorney-General has moved that the Bill be now read a second time, to which Mr Walker has moved an amendment. I will put the amendment in two parts, the first relating to the omission of the words.

The House divided on the question that the words proposed by Mr Walker to be omitted stand part of the motion (the Hon. F. S. Grimwade in the chair).

Ayes	28
Noes	13
Majority against the amendment	15

AYES

Mr Baxter	Mr Jenkins
Mrs Baylor	Mr Knowles
Mr Block	Mr Lawson
Mr Campbell	Mr Long
Mr Chamberlain	Mr Radford
Mr Crozier	Mr Saltmarsh
Mr Dunn	Mr Stacey
Mr Evans	Mr Storey
Dr Foley	Mr Taylor
Mr Granter	Mr Ward
Mr Hauser	Mr Wright
Mr Hayward	
Mr Houghton	*Tellers:*
Dr Howard	Mr Bubb
Mr Hunt	Mr Guest

NOES

Mr Eddy	Mr Trayling
Mr Kennedy	Mr Walker
Mr Kent	Mr Walton
Mr Landeryou	Mr White
Mr Mackenzie	*Tellers:*
Mr Sgro	Mr Butler
Mr Thomas	Mrs Coxsedge

The House divided on the motion (the Hon. F. S. Grimwade in the chair).

Ayes	28
Noes	13
Majority for the motion	15

AYES

Mr Baxter	Mr Hunt
Mrs Baylor	Mr Jenkins
Mr Block	Mr Knowles
Mr Bubb	Mr Lawson
Mr Campbell	Mr Radford
Mr Chamberlain	Mr Saltmarsh
Mr Crozier	Mr Stacey
Mr Dunn	Mr Storey
Mr Evans	Mr Taylor
Dr Foley	Mr Ward
Mr Granter	Mr Wright
Mr Guest	
Mr Hauser	*Tellers:*
Mr Houghton	Mr Hayward
Dr Howard	Mr Long

NOES

Mr Butler	Mr Trayling
Mrs Coxsedge	Mr Walker
Mr Kent	Mr Walton
Mr Landeryou	Mr White
Mr Mackenzie	*Tellers:*
Mr Sgro	Mr Eddy
Mr Thomas	Mr Kennedy

The Bill was read a second time.

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

That the Bill be now committed.

The House divided on the motion (the Hon. F. S. Grimwade in the chair).

Ayes	28
Noes	13
Majority for the motion	15

AYES

Mr Baxter	Mr Jenkins
Mrs Baylor	Mr Knowles
Mr Block	Mr Lawson
Mr Bubb	Mr Long
Mr Campbell	Mr Radford
Mr Crozier	Mr Saltmarsh
Mr Dunn	Mr Stacey
Mr Evans	Mr Storey
Mr Granter	Mr Taylor
Mr Guest	Mr Ward
Mr Hauser	Mr Wright
Mr Hayward	
Mr Houghton	*Tellers:*
Dr Howard	Mr Chamberlain
Mr Hunt	Dr Foley

NOES

Mr Butler	Mr Trayling
Mrs Coxsedge	Mr Walker
Mr Eddy	Mr Walton
Mr Kennedy	Mr White
Mr Landeryou	*Tellers:*
Mr Sgro	Mr Kent
Mr Thomas	Mr Mackenzie

The Bill was committed.

Clause 1 (Short title)

The Committee divided on the clause (the Hon. W. M. Campbell in the chair).

Ayes	26
Noes	13
Majority for the clause	13

AYES

Mr Baxter	Mr Jenkins
Mrs Baylor	Mr Knowles
Mr Block	Mr Lawson
Mr Bubb	Mr Long
Mr Chamberlain	Mr Radford
Mr Crozier	Mr Saltmarsh
Mr Dunn	Mr Stacey
Mr Evans	Mr Storey
Dr Foley	Mr Taylor
Mr Granter	Mr Ward
Mr Guest	
Mr Houghton	*Tellers:*
Dr Howard	Mr Hauser
Mr Hunt	Mr Hayward

NOES

Mr Butler	Mr Trayling
Mrs Coxsedge	Mr Walker
Mr Eddy	Mr Walton
Mr Kennedy	Mr White
Mr Kent	*Tellers:*
Mr Landeryou	Mr Sgro
Mr Mackenzie	Mr Thomas

The sitting was suspended at 12.22 *a.m.* (*Wednesday*) *until* 12.43 *a.m.*

Clause 2 (New sections substituted for sections 2B and 2C of No. 6419)

The Hon. HADDON STOREY (Attorney-General)—During the second-reading debate, honorable members heard many submissions from all sides of the House. It is an important Bill and that was acknowledged by everybody. I confess that I was disappointed with many of the contributions from the other side of the Chamber, which displayed a lack of understanding of workers compensation and how the Bill operates. I do not want to spend a lot of time on this, but I shall point out one or two things.

First of all, the nature of workers compensation is to provide compensation for a worker who is injured and the definition of injury includes disease. Mr Mackenzie and Mr Eddy spoke with a great deal of compassion and feeling about the problems of those who suffer injuries in a work situation. One can only applaud the sentiments they expressed. However, that is not the issue. The issue is whether, in all the circumstances, compensation should be provided and how it is determined that it should be provided.

The Workers Compensation Act has always imposed the onus on the worker to establish the entitlement to compensation. Therefore, there is nothing new in the Bill in that respect. It has always been necessary for a worker to apply for compensation. If it is agreed to be paid, that is fine. If it is not agreed to be paid, it has to go to one of the boards for determination. If it goes to the board, it may be settled by agreement between the parties, and if it is not settled it goes before the board and is heard. When it is heard, evidence has to be given to show that the worker is entitled to that compensation. The importance of that relates to the key clause which was discussed throughout the second-reading debate. That was the clause which alters the provision relating to entitlement to compensation in the case of diseases. The definition of disease alters, so that it requires that

the employment shall have substantially contributed to the occurrence of the disease.

Previously the Act provided that the employment had to contribute to the disease. Much of the discussion suggested something different in how the entitlement to compensation is to be determined. The difference is that there is a different definition, but it is still necessary to establish entitlement. Therefore, as it is necessary under the present Act to establish that the employment contributed to the occurrence of the disease, under those provisions it will be necessary to establish that it contributed substantially to the occurrence of the disease. It will still be necessary to call medical evidence, as it has always been necessary to call medical evidence.

There has been much discussion on the meaning of "substantial". It is not necessary for me to say much about this. Mr Guest explained it very clearly. Mrs Baylor and other members of the Government party also spoke. The meaning of "substantial" could be discussed all night by referring to various cases that have been decided. Every one of those cases has been decided in the context of a particular piece of legislation and particular facts. If one looks at all these cases one finds the meaning of "substantial" depends on the facts of a particular case. It is not a word that is capable of another set of words being used to say what "substantial" means. Substantial means substantial in the same way that contribute means contribute.

One can talk about a whole lot of other words and compare them with substantial, but they do not assist because it is a matter for the courts to decide in each situation whether there is a substantial contribution. Clearly it means something that is not insubstantial. It is comparative. It is substantial as against insubstantial. It is something that is real as against unreal or ephemeral. That would be decided in each case just as today under the existing Act the question of whether the work contributes to the disease is decided in each case. Of course it will be decided by the boards, and the boards will quickly indicate in particular cases that come before them whether on those sort of facts the work has contributed substantially to the disease. I do not believe there will be any need to have endless cases going to the High Court or anywhere else on that question.

There is already in the Workers Compensation Act the word "substantial" in relation to an interruption or deviation in a journey. It has been held clearly in relation to that section of the Act that it is a question of fact in each case whether it is a substantial deviation, and so it will be in this case. It is not a difficult question of law, as suggested by members of the Opposition. It is a question of fact that the board will be able to determine quite readily. I will not refer to the various other aspects raised because these were the major points and I believe that explains how the Bill operates.

The Hon. W. A. LANDERYOU (Doutta Galla Province)—In view of that response from the Attorney-General, I move:

That progress be reported.

The Hon. HADDON STOREY (Attorney-General)—I take it that honorable members want to reconsider their attitude to the Bill but at this late stage the Government would not consider it necessary to report progress.

The Committee divided on the motion (the Hon. W. M. Campbell in the chair).

Ayes	12
Noes	25
Majority against the motion	13

AYES

Mr Butler	Mr Walker
Mrs Coxedge	Mr Walton
Mr Eddy	Mr White
Mr Kennedy	
Mr Kent	*Tellers:*
Mr Landeryou	Mr Mackenzie
Mr Sgro	Mr Trayling

NOES

Mr Baxter	Mr Houghton
Mrs Baylor	Mr Jenkins
Mr Block	Mr Lawson
Mr Bubb	Mr Long
Mr Chamberlain	Mr Radford
Mr Crozier	Mr Saltmarsh
Mr Dunn	Mr Stacey
Mr Evans	Mr Storey
Dr Foley	Mr Taylor
Mr Granter	Mr Ward
Mr Guest	*Tellers:*
Mr Hauser	Dr Howard
Mr Hayward	Mr Knowles

PAIR

Mr Thomas	Mr Hunt

The Committee divided on the clause (the Hon. W. M. Campbell in the chair).

Ayes	25
Noes	12
Majority for the clause ..	13

AYES

Mr Baxter	Mr Houghton
Mrs Baylor	Dr Howard
Mr Block	Mr Jenkins
Mr Bubb	Mr Knowles
Mr Chamberlain	Mr Radford
Mr Crozier	Mr Saltmarsh
Mr Dunn	Mr Stacey
Mr Evans	Mr Storey
Dr Foley	Mr Taylor
Mr Granter	Mr Ward
Mr Guest	*Tellers:*
Mr Hauser	Mr Lawson
Mr Hayward	Mr Long

NOES

Mrs Coxsedge	Mr Trayling
Mr Eddy	Mr Walker
Mr Kennedy	Mr Walton
Mr Kent	
Mr Landeryou	*Tellers:*
Mr Mackenzie	Mr Butler
Mr Sgro	Mr White

PAIR

Mr Hunt	Mr Thomas

Clause 3 (Amendment of No. 6419, s. 3)

The Hon. G. A. S. BUTLER (Thomastown Province)—I note with some trepidation that clause 3 contains not only the word "substantially", but also the words "the recurrence, aggravation, acceleration, exacerbation or deterioration of any pre-existing injury or disease where the employment contributed substantially to that recurrence, aggravation, acceleration, exacerbation or deterioration". That will provide a heyday for the lawyers.

Mrs Baylor gave the House a definition of the word "substantial", and other honorable members have suggested what the term "substantially" means. The only thing the Committee will achieve by agreeing to this clause will be to give the lawyers a substantial field of argument for their definitions of the terms. I do not think there is any argument about what "substantial" means. It means that one would have to prove one's proposition overwhelmingly. I believe that is the meaning of the word, but obviously there is not a lawyer who will agree with that.

I repeat the suggestion I made to the Attorney-General, that that really is the bone of contention between the Opposition and the Government, that that is what honorable members are arguing about. The Opposition is not arguing about weekly increases or other factors, but about this word which will end up as a legal definition and which honorable members believe, until it is proven otherwise, will exclude many thousands of workers from justifiable workers compensation claims.

I would not have thought the Government was in the business of providing an extension to the legal system. I would have thought the Government would be supporting compensation payments in the sense that if a worker were injured at work he or his family would receive compensation either by way of a weekly benefit, a loss of limb benefit, a death benefit, or a family benefit.

I appreciate that the Attorney-General is a member of the legal profession and therefore may not find this Bill as difficult to interpret as I do. My experience with the legal profession in both the industrial movement and the political movement is that the moment one puts up an argument the legal profession will raise ten arguments about it.

The Hon. Haddon Storey—The Bill extends the range of cases which will be covered.

The Hon. G. A. S. BUTLER—I concede that. In 1975 the Governor-General, Sir John Kerr, decided to act on a word in a way to which I was totally and irrevocably opposed. Without being politically biased about it, I believe it was a matter of semantics. I do not believe a Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia had the right to dismiss a Government.

The CHAIRMAN (the Hon. W. M. Campbell)—I point out to the honorable member that the matter he is discussing has nothing whatever to do with the clause or the Bill, and I think he should withdraw the statement he has made.

The Hon. G. A. S. BUTLER—If that is your suggestion, Mr Chairman, then I will withdraw the remark. That is an issue on which some eminent lawyers have had a lot of discussion.

The wording now introduced into the Workers Compensation Act will lead to an exacerbation of argument about whether a worker is entitled to his just desserts. Perhaps that becomes a matter for a qualitative judgment, but I come down on the side that, if a person is killed in the course of his employment, his family and his children are entitled to the maximum compensation. If he is maimed by having his hand ripped off by a saw, as the result of the negligence of his employer, that employer should face a common law action and the employee should be fully compensated.

When I use the term "a worker" I invite honorable members to bear in mind that that includes all of us. It includes the officers of this Council. I hope that, if the Usher of the Black Rod happens to slip down the stairs as he leaves the Chamber, he is entitled to workers compensation; but I am concerned that if the measure is passed, whereas most of us would say that that was a tragic occurrence and that gentleman ought to receive the maximum compensation, there will be ten lawyers saying that he should not.

I have listened attentively since I have been in the House, and, as I said before, I do not claim to be a great scholar, but I am concerned that every piece of legislation that is introduced seems to erode the position of the people whom I represent.

The CHAIRMAN (the Hon. W. M. Campbell)—Mr Butler should not continue on what I classify as matters dealing with the second-reading stage While the Bill is in the Committee stage members may deal with the contents of the clause before the chair. Clause 3 is quite clear, and it will be the subject-matter of any comments by Mr Butler, and nothing else.

The Hon. G. A. S. BUTLER—I accept your guidance, Mr Chairman, because I know you are skilled in the procedures of the House. The essence of the Labor Party's opposition to the proposed amendments to the Workers Compensation Bill is in the word "substantially", and that is what we ask the Government to reconsider. That is dealt with on page 9 of the Bill, and on the following page a number of other words are set out. If one consulted a dictionary to find their meanings, one would find about twenty different interpretations. The Government did not need to bring in that change; all it had to do was to increase the benefits. Every trade union secretary and industrial officer of a trade union and every lawyer who represents workers seeking workers compensation will now find himself tied up trying to prove what is called substantial evidence of causation. I do not know how that can be proved. Anyone who has had experience in the industrial field would know that at times it is difficult to prove that.

I had hoped that the Attorney-General might have persuaded some of his colleagues to move away from the inclusion of that part of the Bill in the Act. That has not happened and obviously will not happen. If any member of the House believes he is going to intimidate the industrial movement, he has another think coming.

On another occasion I said that long, hard struggles have been fought in the trade union movement in Victoria,

throughout Australia and, for that matter, throughout the Western World, to improve conditions of employment.

The CHAIRMAN (the Hon. W. M. Campbell)—Mr Butler is again coming extremely close to making a second-reading speech and not dealing with the contents of clause 3. I also refer Mr Butler to Standing Order No 133, which deals with tedious repetition.

The Hon. G. A. S. BUTLER—Again, Mr Chairman, I apologize if a statement of my views is tedious repetition.

The CHAIRMAN—I am not talking about the contents of what Mr Butler is saying; I am concerned only about the Standing Orders of this House. I make that quite clear to Mr Butler.

The Hon. G. A. S. BUTLER—I accept that, Mr Chairman, but I also ask for leniency as a new member because I am not speaking from notes or a written speech but stating what I believe to be the honest situation. After all, one is not asking the Government to go ten miles in the other direction; the Opposition is simply speaking on an issue vital to the industrial movement and to any person who is covered by workers compensation, and that includes members of Parliament, everybody who works in this establishment, everybody who drives a train or tram and anyone who works in industry. It is a question of coverage in the event that a worker is killed in the course of his employment so that his wife and children receive some compensation. The area of maims has not been upgraded either.

I plead with the Attorney-General; he is well aware that the worst thing in the world in a legal sense is to introduce a collection of words, and that is precisely what clause 3 is all about. I am sure the Attorney-General appreciates that once these words are included in the legislation, an exacerbated legal argument about the legal definition will occur. That part of it should be dealt with to avoid further litigation so that the Act will stand as it is. We accept that increases in the benefits will be made as was promised by the Premier four years ago.

The Hon. GLYN JENKINS (Geelong Province)—I raise a point of order and submit that Mr Butler is indulging in tedious repetition. No new matter has been introduced into the debate recently, and under Standing Order No. 133 the member is now indulging in tedious repetition.

The CHAIRMAN (the Hon. W. M. Campbell)—I warned Mr Butler before and it would now be a fair comment to make that he has repeated himself considerably on clause 3. I ask him now to conclude his comments extremely briefly unless he is adding something new to the debate, but still pertaining to clause 3.

The Hon. G. A. S. BUTLER (Thomastown Province)—Yes, I suppose it is repetitious, but the House is responsible for passing legislation directed to the welfare of the people of Victoria, and this section of the proposed amendment to the Workers Compensation Act is most relevant and important. I apologize if my comments are repetitious, but I am obliged to put the case, and this is the kernel of the matter that the Labor Party opposes. It is a question of whether the Government is prepared to face up to its responsibilities to the people of Victoria, because if it does not do so, the industrial movement will, and the blame will be on the Government's head, not ours.

The Hon. R. J. LONG (Gippsland Province)—To illustrate the stupidity of the argument, if it was an argument, that was put by the previous speaker, I point out to Mr Butler that the words "recurrence", "aggravation" and "acceleration" are contained in the existing Act. The words "exacerbation" and "deterioration" have been added by the Government to work in favour of the workers whom Mr Butler pretends to represent, and he is complaining about them.

The Hon. W. A. LANDERYOU (Doutta Galla Province)—I am astonished at that comment by Mr Long, who has some reputation in the area he represents of being concerned about these matters, at least in a professional capacity if not as a Parliamentarian.

The Attorney-General conceded the argument that the Opposition put substantially earlier in the evening.

The Hon. Haddon Storey—To demonstrate its irrelevance.

The Hon. W. A. LANDERYOU—The reality is that we were asserting that Parliament was about to pass into law a proposition which would require the courts to determine by definition what the Parliament was writing into the law.

The Hon. Haddon Storey—As has always been the case.

The Hon. W. A. LANDERYOU—On the basis of a substantial change to legislation of this type, it has never been anything of the kind. It has never been the intention of Parliament to introduce a pension or to increase that pension substantially or otherwise and then ask the courts to determine that.

Clause 3 is the kernel of what the Labor Party opposes in the measure, as I indicated earlier, and if the chief advocate for the Victorian Trades Hall Council says, "We would rather keep the definition and you keep the other amendments", that must be cause for concern.

As the Attorney-General has conceded, there will be a rash of litigation on the meaning of "substantial" and "substantially" which will ultimately have to be defined by the High Court of this country, with all the consequent delays that are attached to that course. That is what the Attorney-General says to the House; he concedes the argument.

The Hon. Haddon Storey—That is what you say I said to the House.

The Hon. W. A. LANDERYOU—The Attorney-General has had bestowed on him the highest honour that Parliament can bestow on any member of the legal profession, yet he conceded that point in the debate. It is not new; it has been argued in another place in public and again here this morning.

The part of the clause that also concerns the Opposition is that it will go on, following that litigation, to delay even further those determinations of entitlement of employees who are injured or who suffer work-related illnesses.

Nothing has been said so far in this debate which leads to confidence on the part of the Opposition or suggests that the Government intends to take the necessary steps, following the decision of the House and the contribution by the Attorney-General.

Clause 3 creates a situation which will be an invitation par excellence to a barristers' banquet. There will be constant argument about what "substantially" means. The Attorney-General is irresponsible in introducing legislation which he knows substantially alters the *status quo* of the law and passes the buck from the Parliament to the courts. The honorable gentleman may be able to persuade the legal profession that this measure is revolutionary, but it will affect his reputation adversely.

The Attorney-General has not come to grips with the argument put forward by the Opposition. In fact, the honorable gentleman embraces the argument of the Opposition. The reality is that, because of the comments of the Attorney-General, members of the legal profession outside Parliament, who are unanswerable to Parliament, will be on notice to determine the definition of the word "substantially" that Parliament proffers to that profession. In other words, judges will be asked by Parliament to determine an attitude and define the word "substantially". This clause is nothing more than an apology for the insurance industry of Victoria. Not one member of the Government has seriously challenged that argument. Mr Guest presented a lecture but he was not present when I quoted from the dictionary. I suppose every building has to have a resident ghost and we have Mr Guest. The dictionary definition is one of many arguments that will be advanced for and against by the legal profession, which is renowned for arguing about words.

Parliament has the opportunity to speak to the community with clarity but instead it will cloud one area of legislation with confusion. Unfortunatey, it will not be solved by Parliament but, rather, in the workplace.

For those reasons, I urge the House to vote against the amendment. It is a retrograde step and should not be put before the House in its present form let alone defended in the way in which the Attorney-General has defended the action of the Government.

The Hon. R. A. MACKENZIE (Geelong Province)—I support my two colleagues in the debate on clause 3. As they both mentioned, this is the crux of the Opposition's objection. The Government was forced by the trade union movement and the community to withdraw previous amendments which discriminated against heart and stroke cases.

The Government has now taken a more devious approach, an approach which is potentially more destructive because the latest proposal seeks to change the definition for all injuries to restrict compensation claims in all cases, not just heart and stroke cases but cases of deafness, poisoning from asbestos, lung disease and other disorders. It has been done by introducing the word "substantially" in the definition of "injury". This action reverses the trend of workers compensation coverage. By inserting the word "substantially" the Government is moving away from the New South Wales and Commonwealth legislation.

The new provision will mean that an injured worker will be required to show substantial employment contribution to all diseases. The word "substantially" is open to the most restrictive interpretation. It could be interpreted to be more than 50 per cent contribution, which means that a claimant will be at a disadvantage in attempting to prove substantial contribution, whatever that may mean.

The Hon. H. R. Ward—It has never occurred before.

The Hon. R. A. MACKENZIE—It has now. In its executive report of 18 October 1979 the Trades Hall Council recommended:

> That the Trades Hall Council totally reject the new amendment to the Workers Compensation Act which requires a "substantial" work contribution to an injury/disease before compensation is paid.

The new amendment is even more insidious than the amendment it replaced. As it now stands, the amendment will impose on the worker a heavier burden of proof than has applied in the history of workers compensation. One of its immediate effects will be to put in doubt thousands of workers compensation cases that are currently awaiting hearing. It was recently estimated that up to 7000 heart cases were awaiting hearing. Has the Government considered what the alteration to clause 3 will mean to the 7000 people who are waiting for a case to be heard?

The Hon. D. R. White—It will increase the waiting list.

The Hon. R. A. MACKENZIE—That is correct. It will increase the waiting list of people awaiting compensation justice. The effect of inserting the word "substantially" in the definition of "injury" will create administrative difficulties and longer delays in hearings. The amendment is designed to disadvantage injured workers, despite what the Attorney-General and members of the Government, who pay lip service to what they call the protection of the workers, say. It is hypocritical for them to say they are concerned for the workers and their rights to compensation and then to allow a word like this to create so much hardship, not only for those 7000 people who are waiting for cases to be heard. That number only includes heart cases. The amendment is administratively unsound. The Opposition strongly opposes clause 3.

The Hon. G. A. SGRO (Melbourne North Province)—I will be accused again of repetition but no one, including the Attorney-General, has explained what the word "substantially" means. The people we represent are ordinary people. What are honorable members to tell those people tomorrow? What will happen if specialists or lawyers decide that a person who injures himself on the job is not covered and he loses the court case? Not only will he not receive compensation but he will have to pay costs. I ask the Attorney-General to tell me what I am going to

say to the people. What will happen to those people when they lose their court cases?

The Hon. R. J. EDDY (Thomastown Province)—Clause 3 casts shame on the Minister and the Government. The word "substantially" reduces the scope of the Workers Compensation Act. Explanations have been given tonight about the meaning of the word "substantially" but what concerns me is that the workers of Victoria will not fully understand what "substantially" means.

If a wife loses her husband because of injury she will be forced to take the matter to court and to engage lawyers at great expense. It may take months for a decision to be made. Medical practitioners will argue both for the worker and against the worker in favour of the insurance company. If the Government forces the Bill through the House, either later today or tomorrow, workers will unite, will stop work and hold meetings in an attempt to determine what is meant and how their families will stand with respect to the word "substantially". It concerns me that the Government is not prepared to listen, nor is it interested in the despair that will be caused to the families of workers in Victoria.

The Minister has not listened to responsible people, such as members of the Trades Hall Council and members of the Workers Compensation Board. I reiterate that the workers will be united and there will be unnecessary industrial unrest because of the inclusion of the word "substantially" in the Bill.

Honorable members have heard Mr Guest's explanation of the meaning of the word, but, in providing that explanation, the honorable member went around the world. Mrs Baylor offered the definitions contained in the *Oxford Dictionary*, but one would have to be an Oxford scholar to have followed them. The clause does nothing other than to antagonize the workers and the Government will learn that shortly.

The Hon. JOAN COXSEDGE (Melbourne West Province)—The Opposition believes the clause is the key provision in the Bill. So far, no honorable member on the Government side of the House, including Mr Guest and the Attorney-General, has been able satisfactorily to explain the meaning of the word "substantially".

The Hon. J. V. C. Guest—You were not here when I spoke.

The Hon. JOAN COXSEDGE—I heard enough to believe Mr Guest confused honorable members rather than clarified the situation. Members of the Opposition, who represent the labour movement, believe the introduction of that word is an endeavour by the Government to limit the number of instances in which workers compensation can be sought. This applies particularly to heart and stroke cases as well as so-called recurring back injury cases. Therefore, members of the Opposition believe the clause must be strongly opposed.

The interpretation of the word "substantially" will, as always, be in the hands of the judges of the Workers Compensation Board and the emphasis placed on the interpretation is likely to vary from judge to judge. The problem is that at present some judges require a higher degree of employment contribution to an injury than others in assessing whether compensation is payable and in what amounts. Therefore, the Opposition totally opposes the clause.

The Hon. J. V. C. GUEST (Monash Province)—Earlier I gave what I regarded as the approach the board would take, which was basically that one starts with the injury. Unfortunately, the Opposition has bemused itself. It has tried to start with the words and extrapolate from one word what would happen in every conceivable case, without the facts being before it.

Mr Sgro and Mr Eddy showed that they suffered from a fundamental difficulty. They do not seem to have read the clause, because they were talking about what one might say to a worker or the family of a worker when an injury has been suffered. It is quite important to distinguish between injury in the ordinary sense of a mental or

physical injury, and the real bone of contention, which is diseases to which employment has to contribute substantially. Mr Sgro and Mr Eddy can probably tell their constituents that they have nothing to worry about if a problem arises as a result of an injury in the ordinary sense. There is no cause for concern unless there is an unusual case of, perhaps, a vascular accident.

As I think has already been pointed out, the clause also provides for the widening of the definition by the inclusion of the word "exacerbation", and it is extremely difficult to understand why the Opposition is crudely and clumsily opposing the whole clause in view of that.

The Hon. C. J. KENNEDY (Waverley Province)—I listened with great care to Mr Guest, but he too had trouble with the word "substantially", and with "exacerbation" made the situation even worse. He then added "extrapolate" and lost me completely. However, the honorable member did say that members of the Opposition could tell their constituents not to worry. If one tells people not to worry, they will immediately worry. They will be worried sick, if not injured.

As I said earlier, the legal advisers of the Victorian Secondary Teachers Association—a name calculated to raise great ire in the Minister of Education and bring on a substantially work-related heart attack—after discussions at great length could not agree about what "substantially" means. I do not think anyone can decide that. The Attorney-General could not, Mrs Baylor could not and Mr Guest could not. That is the crux of the problem because it will cause repeated and expensive litigation. That litigation will be very expensive for the unions, which may have been the purpose. I also vigorously oppose the clause.

The Hon. D. R. WHITE (Doutta Galla Province)—This is the last opportunity members of the Opposition have of debating clause 3, which is the clause we are substantially concerned about. The contributions to the debate made by Mr Guest and the Attorney-General have not assisted in providing an understanding of the word "substantially" or its application. On behalf of the Opposition, I call on the Attorney-General to do better than he has done to date in providing some clarification of the meaning of the word.

Mr Guest offered approximately fifteen meanings and, if anything, the Attorney-General exacerbated the problem. The explanation offered by the honorable gentleman means that in each and every case it will be up to the Workers Compensation Board or the relevant judge to interpret the word. The Attorney-General has given no indication as to the range of meanings that may be given to the word. The process of establishing the application of the word in the practices of the board will take a considerable time and may cause the sorts of delays referred to by Mr Mackenzie, which will increase the costs involved in the cases that go before the board.

The Opposition received no clarification from Mr Guest or the Attorney-General, the only two members of the Government party who have addressed themselves to the issue, of the types of diseases that, in the normal course of events, would enable workers to make claims. I am referring particularly to heart diseases, hepatitis and other diseases that have been mentioned by honorable members from the Opposition side of the House. No indication has been given of the types of diseases that will provide an entitlement to workers.

As has been said so often this evening without eliciting a constructive response from the Government, the Opposition is concerned that most, if not all, diseases will be excluded.

The Hon. Haddon Storey—They are all included.

The Hon. D. R. WHITE—I remind the Attorney-General that, in the absence of an adequate definition of the word "substantially", no one can be certain which diseases, if any, will entitle a worker to adequate compensa-

tion. Because of the lack of any assurance, the Opposition vigorously opposes the uses of the word "substantially" in the proposed legislation.

The Committee divided on the clause (the Hon. W. M. Campbell in the chair).

Ayes	25
Noes	12
Majority for the clause ..	13

AYES

Mr Baxter	Mr Jenkins
Mrs Baylor	Mr Knowles
Mr Block	Mr Lawson
Mr Bubb	Mr Long
Mr Chamberlain	Mr Saltmarsh
Mr Crozier	Mr Stacey
Mr Dunn	Mr Storey
Dr Foley	Mr Taylor
Mr Granter	Mr Ward
Mr Guest	
Mr Hauser	
Mr Hayward	*Tellers:*
Mr Houghton	Mr Evans
Dr Howard	Mr Radford

NOES

Mr Butler	Mr Walker
Mrs Coxsedge	Mr Walton
Mr Kennedy	Mr White
Mr Landeryou	
Mr Mackenzie	*Tellers:*
Mr Sgro	Mr Eddy
Mr Trayling	Mr Kent

PAIR

Mr Hunt	Mr Thomas

Clause 4 (Amendment of No. 6419)

The Committee divided on the clause (the Hon. W. M. Campbell in the chair).

Ayes	25
Noes	12
Majority for the clause ..	13

AYES

Mr Baxter	Mr Houghton
Mrs Baylor	Dr Howard
Mr Block	Mr Jenkins
Mr Bubb	Mr Knowles
Mr Chamberlain	Mr Lawson
Mr Crozier	Mr Long
Mr Dunn	Mr Radford
Mr Evans	Mr Storey
Dr Foley	Mr Taylor
Mr Granter	Mr Ward
Mr Guest	*Tellers:*
Mr Hauser	Mr Saltmarsh
Mr Hayward	Mr Stacey

NOES

Mr Butler	Mr Walker
Mr Eddy	Mr Walton
Mr Kennedy	Mr White
Mr Kent	
Mr Landeryou	*Tellers:*
Mr Mackenzie	Mrs Coxsedge
Mr Trayling	Mr Sgro

PAIR

Mr Hunt	Mr Thomas

Clause 5 (Motor car accidents)

The Committee divided on the clause (the Hon. W. M. Campbell in the chair).

Ayes	25
Noes	12
Majority for the clause ..	13

AYES

Mr Baxter	Mr Jenkins
Mrs Baylor	Mr Knowles
Mr Block	Mr Lawson
Mr Bubb	Mr Long
Mr Crozier	Mr Radford
Mr Dunn	Mr Saltmarsh
Mr Evans	Mr Stacey
Dr Foley	Mr Storey
Mr Granter	Mr Taylor
Mr Hauser	Mr Ward
Mr Hayward	*Tellers:*
Mr Houghton	Mr Chamberlain
Dr Howard	Mr Guest

NOES

Mrs Coxsedge	Mr Trayling
Mr Eddy	Mr Walker
Mr Kennedy	Mr White
Mr Kent	
Mr Landeryou	*Tellers:*
Mr Mackenzie	Mr Butler
Mr Sgro	Mr Walton

PAIR

Mr Hunt	Mr Thomas

The Hon. J. V. C. GUEST (Monash Province)—On a point of order, Mr Chairman, I ask for a direction. Mr Walton and I credited Mr Thomas with voting "No" instead of Mr Trayling. The backs of their heads appear the same.

The Hon. J. M. WALTON (Melbourne North Province)—I was ticking off the names as Mr Guest called them to me. I certainly do not accept any share of the blame.

The Hon. J. V. C. GUEST (Monash Province)—I take the blame entirely.

The CHAIRMAN (the Hon. W. M. Campbell)—Order! The tellers, Mr Walton and Mr Guest, have ticked off the following honorable members: Mr Butler, Mrs Coxsedge, Mr Eddy, Mr Kennedy, Mr Kent, Mr Landeryou, Mr Mackenzie, Mr Sgro, Mr Thomas, Mr Walker, Mr Walton, Mr White.

Will the tellers please inform the Committee if something is incorrect, and explain the position so that the Committee can make a decision.

The Hon. J. V. C. GUEST (Monash Province)—The count was accurate, but one of the names is wrong. Mr Trayling was evidently present when I returned to my place, and it was not Mr Thomas recumbent on the back-bench opposite. The explanation of how it happened is quite simple, but I will not bore the Committee with that.

The Hon. I. B. TRAYLING (Melbourne Province)—Would it be appropriate in the interests of time, progress, and so on, if Mr Guest were excused from further counting?

The Hon. J. M. WALTON (Melbourne North Province)—I accept the explanation given by Mr Guest. I was only ticking off the names as Mr Guest called them to me. He has since pointed out that Mr Trayling was present and, as Mr Thomas is paired with the Leader of the House, and not present, I accept the explanation.

The CHAIRMAN (the Hon. W. M. Campbell)—With the concurrence of the Committee the record will be changed to show that Mr Trayling was present, and not Mr Thomas.

The Hon. R. J. LONG (Gippsland Province)—I move:

That clauses 6 to 11 be taken *in globo*.

The CHAIRMAN (the Hon. W. M. Campbell)—That being a motion, it will require the leave of the Committee. Is it moved by leave?

The Hon. R. J. LONG—On a point of order, I do not believe I require the leave of the Committee, but if that is so desired I will ask for leave.

The CHAIRMAN—It is a substantive motion that Mr Long is moving.

The Hon. R. J. LONG—I class it as a procedural motion.

The CHAIRMAN—If Mr Long's motion were agreed to it would be a procedural matter, but the motion is not. Mr Long should ask for leave.

The Hon. R. J. LONG—By leave, I move:

That clauses 6 to 11 be taken *in globo*.

The Hon. W. A. LANDERYOU (Doutta Galla Province)—Leave is refused.

Clause 6 was agreed to.

Clause 7 (Amendment of No. 6419 s. 26)

The Hon. E. H. WALKER (Melbourne Province)—I desire to make some comments on clause 7. As honorable members know, clause 7 provides for an increase in the maximum of funeral benefits payable under the principal Act and also provides for chiropractic and osteopathic services, the costs of which are to be recovered under the principal Act. In clause 7(1) and (2) certain words are taken out and replaced by other words. The words to be inserted are "optometrist registered physiotherapist registered chiropractor and osteopath" and they replace the words "optician registered masseur".

I have no major complaint about this replacement except I am a bit sad about the word "masseur" being taken out. There has not been a reasonable explanation for that. It is my opinion that it is a legitimate activity and a legitimate application. The person who applies massage is a masseur, and the word "masseur" has been taken out of the clause, which is a pity.

I accept that the words "physiotherapist, chiropractor and osteopath" are to be inserted, but they are not a full replacement. If it means that provision for legitimate massage, or massage of a broad description, is to be repealed, that is a pity because massage, in its traditional sense, should have been worth maintaining for certain industrial injuries. It seems that the baby has been

thrown out with the bathwater, as it were. It would be wise if there were some review of that deletion.

Clause 7(3) states that in section 26(11) of the principal Act for the expression "$500" there shall be substituted the expression "$750". There has been some comment in the second-reading debate on funeral costs, but it was not canvassed extensively and I should like to make a few points in this regard. This is another of those cynical sweeteners to try to make this Bill appear more generous.

I draw the attention of honorable members to the fact that prior to 1975 an amount was not mentioned in this legislation. There was provision for "reasonable" funeral costs. It seems odd to me that in this debate, where much discussion has gone on about the word "substantially" and the Government has tried to convince honorable members that that word should be retained and that it will be definable by courts of law and lawyers who will be quite happy to tell us what it means, that the word "reasonable" should have been deleted. The word "reasonable" in relation to funeral expenses is far more easily defined than the word "substantially" in clause 3.

Reasonable funeral expenses in different cases would vary. It would be a humane piece of legislation and of benefit to the workers if the word "reasonable" was used in the subclause. It would have been wise if the Attorney-General, or the drafters of this Bill, had seen fit to bring back that phrase because reasonable funeral expenses would have allowed for greater variation in what is spent.

I draw the attention of the Committee to the fact that there is no provision for travel expenses. It is quite possible for a person resident in Melbourne to be working anywhere in the country—northern Queensland, or the west—and there is no provision for the paying of costs for bringing back his body if he dies in a work-related accident, to his home town. This clause simply allows $750 for funeral expenses. More than that amount could be taken up in the return of the body to the home town of a worker. It is not unusual for workers to be working in work-related situations well away from where they wish to be buried. It is an unfair cost to load on a family when a worker has been away from home, which is deprivation enough. The $750 could be taken up in air fares in the return of the body, and then the burial would have to be paid for in the home town. This ought to have been debated more thoroughly during the second-reading stage. This is a most arbitrary omission.

There are significant cultural differences which should be taken into account in relation to funeral costs, because there are different funeral customs. As honorable members are aware, this is now a multi-cultural society and, to me, an arbitrary figure of $750 will probably cover the total cost of none of the types of burial. In cases where the costs are high it will be a small contribution towards the funeral. I refer to different religious and cultural practices where the people, who are now Australian, continue with customs established in their original countries.

This is an arbitrary provision and is in no way suitable. The word "reasonable" should have been retained. Even if it had been taken out in 1975, it should have been restored by this Bill.

The Hon. H. R. Ward—Would you explain from which section the word "reasonable" has been taken out?

The Hon. E. H. WALKER—I am talking of clause 7. I understand from my advice, which is at least as professional as that of Mr Ward's, that the word "reasonable" was used in the legislation before 1975.

The Hon. Haddon Storey—Would you take the words of the Act itself instead of those of your advisers?

The Hon. E. H. WALKER—I do not have it with me. The Attorney-General could assist the Committee by reading the relevant passage. If I am wrong, I stand corrected. If not, I will continue. I should be quite happy for the Attorney-General to read the relevant section and indicate the words that it uses.

The Hon. HADDON STOREY (Attorney-General)—I did not wish to force the honorable member to resume his seat, but section 26(11) in this Act as inserted by Act No. 8733 in 1975, states:

> Nothing in this section shall apply to or in relation to such part of the costs of the burial or cremation of any worker as exceeds the sum of $500.

That was inserted; it was not a substitution or an amendment to anything that existed before 1975. The section which did exist before 1975 to which the honorable member is probably referring is section 26(9), which refers to the payment of the whole of the reasonable costs of any service or burial or cremation pursuant to that section. That has not been amended or deleted, and it is not affected by the clause which the honorable member is discussing.

The Hon. E. H. Walker—It seems contradictory. Will you read it out again?

The Hon. HADDON STOREY—Section 26(9) states:

> The payment of the whole of the reasonable costs of any service or burial or cremation pursuant to this section, whether by agreement or upon an order of the Board, shall wholly and finally discharge the worker or his legal personal representative or dependants (as the case may be) and every other person from all liability whatsoever in respect of the costs of that service or burial or cremation.

That section is still in the Act and it was in the Act before 1975. The only amendment made in 1975 was to insert for the first time the provision that nothing in the section shall apply to or in relation to such part of the costs of the burial of any worker as exceeds the sum of $500. The present proposed amendment changes the sum of $500 to $750.

The Hon. E. H. WALKER (Melbourne Province)—I accept part of the explanation by the Attorney-General, but it appears that section 26(11), which was inserted, tends to override or at least put an upper limit on what is a more general provision in section 26(9). Prior to the figure of $500 being included, it would have been quite competent for someone to assess the word "reasonable" to be greater than $500. The provision inserted in 1975 gives the notion of a $500 limit.

The Hon. HADDON STOREY (Attorney-General)—Section 26 (9) is not concerned with the payments made to the worker but with a discharge of the worker from liability of general expenses. It is a different concept from section 26(11).

The Hon. W. A. Landeryou—Will you look at the definition of, "reasonable" and the spirit of section 26(3) and (4)? It is the point Mr Walker is making now about section 26(9).

The CHAIRMAN (the Hon. W. M. Campbell)—Order! If Mr Landeryou wishes to enter into the discussion, he should do so in the normal way and not by interjection.

The Hon. HADDON STOREY—I am prepared to accept what Mr Landeryou says in directing my attention to that definition. That definition defines "reasonable" and that is helpful in understanding the meaning of section 26(9).

The Hon. W. A. Landeryou—Section 26(4).

The Hon. HADDON STOREY—That is another one.

The Hon. H. R. Ward—It is clear to anyone who has been before the board five or six times.

The Hon. W. A. Landeryou—The Attorney-General is having trouble with it.

The CHAIRMAN (the Hon. W. M. Campbell)—Order! I call on Mr Walker to resume his remarks and the Attorney-General to answer any queries after Mr Walker has completed his speech.

The Hon. E. H. WALKER (Melbourne Province)—I appreciate the comments of the Attorney-General. He has not yet convinced me of his argument, but perhaps he will do so in his later comments.

The Hon. Haddon Storey—You are confused about the amendment to section 26 (11).

The Hon. E. H. WALKER—I shall move on to the next issue, of the notion of $500 being raised to $750. It certainly looks generous, as would any 50 per cent increase, but there is no provision for indexation. Earlier this evening, I drew attention to the comments of the former Chief Secretary, Mr Rossiter, that indexation would be a principle to apply to the provisions of the Act. The notion of "reasonable" for funeral costs would have been worth continuing because "reasonable" would have included the notion of indexation.

A fixed sum is arbitary and it is clear that if $750 is not suitable now, as it is not, it will certainly not be suitable six months hence and it definitely will not be suitable twelve months hence. I say that irrespective of which Government is in office in Canberra or Melbourne, because of the inflationary period the country faces. To say that the cost of funerals will remain static is nonsense. There has to be an indexation system. The word "reasonable" would take indexation into account. It is a retrograde step for the Government to institute a top level of $500, $750 or whatever. Mr Guest, by interjection, refers to keeping undertakers and workers in order, and he spoke like a true upper class member of the gentry. I do not believe undertakers or workers need to be kept in order.

The clause is one of the most cynical that exists in the Bill. It is intended to cloud the essential issue. It is in fact quoted by members of the Government party as if it were one of the more generous provisions. It has been made a part of the provisions to make it look as though the Government is generous, but in fact it only confuses the issue. It is cynical for the Government to take any pride in the sense that it has raised the amount of funeral benefits. Neither amounts for funeral expenses is acceptable. Neither will cover a reasonable funeral. The word "reasonable" is a better notion and I suggest a return to the earlier situation, which is what the Opposition called for in the amendment moved in the debate on the second reading of the Bill. The earlier situation was fairer and more reasonable whereas the new provisions are quite cynical. The Labor Party opposes the clause.

The Hon. R. J. EDDY (Thomastown Province)—I support the remarks of Mr Walker. As he adequately pointed out, the clause increases funeral benefits from $500 to $750. That is not sufficient. Mrs Baylor stated in her remarks during the second-reading debate that this sum was satisfactory and that it was a 50 per cent increase. However, members of the Labor Party believe $750 is insufficient to bury a person anywhere in Victoria. The cost of a plot alone exceeds $500. Members of the Government party are stating that the family of a person who dies through an injury at his place of employment must meet the extra cost of the burial. I defy any member of the Government party in all honesty to stand up and justify an increase of only $250. The amount of $750 will not even cover the cost of a decent coffin.

Members of the Government party are implying that the family of a worker who dies on the job because of injury is not entitled to a decent burial. Nowhere in the State can any person be buried for less than $1100 or $1200. If a person is fatally injured through no fault of his own, the total costs of the funeral should be covered by workers compensation. That person is entitled to the same type of burial as any member of Parliament. His family is entitled to ensure that he is buried decently—the same type of burial as any family would wish to provide. If a family wished a fatally injured worker to be cremated, that is just as expensive, if not more, and the family is entitled to make that decision. Honorable members are asked to support a provision that increases the funeral benefits by a measly $250 or 50 per cent from $500 to $750. That is grossly insufficient.

The Hon. W. A. LANDERYOU (Doutta Galla Province)—I draw the attention of the Committee to two

facts. On 29 April 1975, at p. 5507 of Vol. 322 of *Hansard*, the then Chief Secretary, Mr Rossiter, in another place, is reported as stating the intention of the Government, *inter alia*:

> The Victorian Funeral Directors Association claims its members are being unfairly prejudiced in their business dealings by the operation of this provision. This clause clarifies the position by providing that the employer shall be liable only for the reasonable costs of burial or cremation up to an amount of $500.

Up to April 1975, the legislation that applied enabled the Workers Compensation Board to determine what was reasonable. No honorable member can doubt that. The reality is that prior to that amendment the law was specific. An employer was liable where death resulted from an injury or disease to pay the reasonable costs of burial or cremation. "Reasonable" was defined but it was clear, when the Act was amended in 1975, that section 26 of the principal Act provided that compensation payable by an employer was to be the reasonable costs for medical, hospital, nursing and ambulance services and burial and cremation costs in certain cases. A working party recommended that the employer be also liable for the reasonable cost of giving aid to injured workers.

The then Minister held the view that, where death resulted from injury, the employer was liable for the reasonable cost of burial or cremation and section 26(9) of the Act provided that the reasonable cost be determined by agreement or by an order of the board.

Up until the time of the amendment, the board had the right to determine the costs and it was not until 1975 that the limitation of $500 was imposed. I am not in a position to judge whether $500 was an appropriate amount for a decent Christian burial or a decent Muslim burial in 1975. However, I am in a position to know that it is not possible within my electorate to have any sort of decent burial for $750. An extraordinary amount of money is now charged. When one examines the cost of living, one inevitably concludes that it is also expensive to die.

The Bill places burdens upon the employee. If a worker is injured or dies as a result of those injuries or as a result of an accident, the cost of the funeral will be met by someone else other than those responsible for that death. That is an extraordinary situation.

The Labor Party is astonished that the Attorney-General persists with the point. Surely the honorable gentleman would have preferred to have argued the point that has been so ably put by Mr Eddy and Mr Walker. Obviously the employer or the insurance company has the responsibility of meeting the cost of a funeral.

When the amount of $500 was set in 1975, it was envisaged, presumably by that over-generous man who was then the Chief Secretary, Mr Rossiter, that the $500, like his workers compensation table and weekly payments, would be in some way regularly reviewed quarterly. When he set the maximum all-up figure of $500, the Chief Secretary envisaged that that figure would be reviewed annually as he is reported as saying at page 5507 of volume 321 of *Hansard*.

The Committee has before it a proposal which has not been thought out. It is a 50 per cent increase which would be the argument the Attorney-General should seek some comfort in. Initially, the spirit of the Act was departed from in the 1975 amendment and, even on a most generous as possible interpretation of the speech made by the Chief Secretary in another place in 1975, it should be underlined that the Government's intention of imposing a limit beyond the definition of reasonable was also to impose a limit which was variable on an annual basis.

The Government has chosen to do neither since then and it has become the responsibility of Parliament to suggest to the Government that at least in this area a more satisfactory amendment is worth while. The Labor Party would suggest a return to the original wording of the Act, that is, all reasonable expenses incurred in the event of the death of an injured worker as the

result of an accident either immediately or as a result of prolonged illness or agony associated with that accident.

The legislation was clear. The law does not create confusion. Those who had some experience, like Mr Ward and others in the House, of practising under the Act prior to the 1975 amendment, would agree that that was the spirit of the Act. That was how the board operated. There was an expectation on the part of those who represented deceased workers that the dependents were entitled to receive recompense for reasonable costs associated with the burial of a loved one.

The Hon. H. R. WARD (South Eastern Province)—The section of the Act which determines burial costs corrects the situation where the family profits from the burial or cremation.

The Bill firstly provides that if a family is involved in a funeral, the family of the deceased is entitled to receive all moneys payable for the burial service. Secondly, if relatives are due for money from a fund to cover burial expenses, the money received does not discharge the employer at all; the employer must also ensure that the money is paid to cover the costs involved. Thirdly, if the payment is in excess of the costs incurred, money is left over. Fourthly, the limit is to prevent people in the case of death making money out of the funeral service. It is a separate matter altogether because the funds that are provided in the case of death are for the funeral expenses which are limited to cover the contingent liabilities.

The limit is provided to prevent excessive expenditure on cosmetic aspects, in other words, to prevent an extremely lavish funeral. The money is to provide for a reasonable funeral.

Those sections need to be read even as far back as 1965 when everyone connected with the Trades Hall Council possessed the 'bible' on this subject written by the late Mick Jordan.

If one reads the whole of the section in regard to the method of payment, the payments that are required and the amounts the employer is responsible for, Mick Jordan's book states that the compensation payable under the section shall be in addition to any compensation payable under any other provision of the Act but it does limit it to prevent the excessive use of cosmetic situations in the burial service undertaken. However, it does provide for a reasonable burial service.

The Hon. W. A. LANDERYOU (Doutta Galla Province)—I am astonished by Mr Ward's comments because, as a former representative of the employees in industry, he would have understood what was involved by the Act prior to 1975. There can be no argument that reasonable is reasonable. The board determined that matter over a long period and undoubtedly there are cases where Mr Ward represented the deceased beneficiaries' in a situation where amounts of money were paid. However, the Bill proposes in some way or another to overcome the problems associated with those who belong to a funeral benefit. That is not right. The current Bill makes a simple proposal to vary the amount of money payable for funeral expenses from $500 to $750. The Bill does not canvass any of the issues that Mr Ward talks about and, if one examines the original Act, it does not give Mr Ward's argument comfort at all.

There is logic in what Mr Ward says. I certainly do not agree that someone who receives a benefit through some other insurance fund should also be able to tote up and join the queue for another hand-out. I am not an advocate of that. All I am advocating is that those who are not in a position to pay reasonable funeral expenses ought not to have to pay those expenses if the death of their loved one results from an accident caused by work. That is all Mr Eddy and Mr Walker argued. That is a reasonable argument.

The argument put by my colleague has not been met by a Government spokesman. The original purpose of the Act was to provide for reasonable compensation or reimbursement of funeral expenses. That was the tradition, custom and practice for a long time. It was

amended in 1975 for the reasons outlined and the then Minister, in his second-reading speech, justified those amendments.

No argument has been put tonight to justify $750 as being a reasonable funeral expense. No honorable member can state in all honesty that a reasonable funeral can be obtained for $750. A ceiling was imposed for different reasons and Mr Ward has argued that a judicially imposed limit should apply. No one has introduced evidence to suggest that an extortionate charge was being levied by any practitioner, that a specific family was charged an amount which was excessive, or the board had granted costs associated with a funeral which would be beyond someone else's definition of what was reasonable.

Against that, the Government has to face up to the facts. It either says it is possible in Victoria to have a reasonable funeral at a price of $750 or lower or it agrees with Opposition members and, from the absence of interjections apparently with its own supporters, that it is not possible to do so. Clearly this provision does not meet the wishes of the House, and the House should return to the provision which applied prior to 1975. It is crystal clear, and despite the lateness of the hour it should not be beyond the capacity or the imagination of members of the Government party to devise a means of returning to that situation. The argument for a return to the former provision has been put with clarity and conviction by my two colleagues, and I commend them for the way in which they dealt with the matter.

The Hon. HADDON STOREY (Attorney-General)—Mr Walker raised two matters. In relation to the matter about which his Leader has just spoken, I have looked at the whole of the relevant section of the Act and agree that the effect of what Mr Walker was saying was so before 1975; reasonable funeral costs were payable. Mr Walker spoke of an amendment to sub-section 11 having created this effect and that is what distracted me from reading the whole of the section. When the former Chief Secretary, Mr Rossiter, introduced this provision in 1975, he did not undertake that there would be annual reviews. He was a little more cautious and said, as reported at page 5507 of *Hansard*:

> This figure may require review on an annual basis.

That figure was established in 1975. Had it been increased on some sort of annual basis, it probably would not have reached $750. The increases to benefits provided in this Bill represent an increase of 44 per cent. The increase in funeral benefits represents an increase of 50 per cent.

The Hon. W. A. Landeryou—Does that mean the inflation rate should be 50 per cent?

The Hon. HADDON STOREY—I have not heard any objection to the increase in weekly benefits. I am pointing out that this increase is slightly higher in percentage terms.

The other point raised by Mr Walker related to masseurs. The principal Act referred to registered masseurs. That Act was repealed in 1978 by the Physiotherapists Act. Accordingly it is no longer appropriate to talk about registered masseurs.

The Hon. E. H. Walker—Sub-clause (2) does not include the word "registered". I agree that in the first sub-clause the word "registered" is used, but not in the second.

The Hon. HADDON STOREY—We will not go into statutory interpretation at length. It is quite common to spell out in full in the first part of a section of an Act the description of something, and to refer to it in shorter form later on. As a matter of interpretation it should still be regarded as referring to registered masseurs. Whatever the position, today the state of Victorian legislation is such that we do not have in the legislation the concept of registered masseurs and therefore we do not have the concept of masseurs. We have the concept of physiotherapists and accordingly it is appropriate to substitute for the former reference to masseurs or registered masseurs the reference to physiotherapists. Although I appreciate Mr Walker's point that the services of

masseurs ought to be available to workers, I believe the only masseurs who are recognized in the law today are those who are registered physiotherapists, and this Bill has that effect.

The Committee divided on the clause (the Hon. F. S. Grimwade in the chair).

Ayes	25
Noes	12
Majority for the clause ..	13

AYES

Mr Baxter	Mr Jenkins
Mrs Baylor	Mr Knowles
Mr Chamberlain	Mr Lawson
Mr Crozier	Mr Long
Mr Dunn	Mr Radford
Mr Evans	Mr Saltmarsh
Dr Foley	Mr Stacey
Mr Granter	Mr Storey
Mr Guest	Mr Taylor
Mr Hauser	Mr Ward
Mr Hayward	*Tellers*:
Mr Houghton	Mr Block
Dr Howard	Mr Bubb

NOES

Mr Butler	Mr Walker
Mrs Coxsedge	Mr Walton
Mr Eddy	Mr White
Mr Landeryou	
Mr Mackenzie	*Tellers*:
Mr Sgro	Mr Kennedy
Mr Trayling	Mr Kent

PAIR

Mr Hunt	Mr Thomas

The Committee divided on the remaining clauses (the Hon. W. M. Campbell in the chair).

Ayes	25
Noes	12
Majority for the remaining clauses	13

AYES

Mr Baxter	Mr Jenkins
Mrs Baylor	Mr Knowles
Mr Block	Mr Lawson
Mr Bubb	Mr Long
Mr Chamberlain	Mr Radford
Mr Crozier	Mr Saltmarsh
Mr Dunn	Mr Stacey
Mr Evans	Mr Storey
Mr Granter	Mr Taylor
Mr Guest	Mr Ward
Mr Hauser	*Tellers:*
Mr Hayward	Dr Foley
Mr Houghton	Dr Howard

NOES

Mr Butler	Mr Walker
Mrs Coxsedge	Mr Walton
Mr Eddy	Mr White
Mr Kennedy	
Mr Kent	*Tellers:*
Mr Landeryou	Mr Mackenzie
Mr Sgro	Mr Trayling

PAIR

Mr Hunt	Mr Thomas

The CHAIRMAN (the Hon. W. M. Campbell)—The question is:

That I report the Bill to the House without amendment.

The Committee divided on the question (the Hon. W. M. Campbell in the chair).

Ayes	25
Noes	12
Majority for the motion	13

AYES

Mr Baxter	Mr Jenkins
Mrs Baylor	Mr Knowles
Mr Block	Mr Lawson
Mr Bubb	Mr Long
Mr Chamberlain	Mr Radford
Mr Crozier	Mr Saltmarsh
Mr Dunn	Mr Stacey
Mr Evans	Mr Storey
Dr Foley	Mr Taylor
Mr Granter	Mr Ward
Mr Hayward	*Tellers:*
Mr Houghton	Mr Guest
Dr Howard	Mr Hauser

NOES

Mr Butler	Mr Walker
Mrs Coxsedge	Mr Walton
Mr Eddy	Mr White
Mr Kennedy	
Mr Kent	*Tellers:*
Mr Landeryou	Mr Mackenzie
Mr Trayling	Mr Sgro

PAIR

Mr Hunt	Mr Thomas

The Bill was reported to the House without amendment.

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. F. S. Grimwade)—The question is:

That the report be now adopted.

The House divided on the question (the Hon. F. S. Grimwade in the chair).

Ayes	26
Noes	12
Majority for the motion ..	14

AYES

Mr Baxter	Dr Howard
Mrs Baylor	Mr Jenkins
Mr Block	Mr Lawson
Mr Bubb	Mr Long
Mr Campbell	Mr Radford
Mr Chamberlain	Mr Saltmarsh
Mr Crozier	Mr Stacey
Mr Dunn	Mr Storey
Mr Evans	Mr Taylor
Dr Foley	Mr Ward
Mr Granter	
Mr Guest	*Tellers*:
Mr Hayward	Mr Hauser
Mr Houghton	Mr Knowles

NOES

Mr Butler	Mr Sgro
Mrs Coxsedge	Mr Trayling
Mr Eddy	Mr Walker
Mr Kennedy	
Mr Kent	*Tellers*:
Mr Landeryou	Mr Walton
Mr Mackenzie	Mr White

PAIR

Mr Hunt	Mr Thomas

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

That this Bill be now read a third time.

The House divided on the motion (the Hon. F. S. Grimwade in the chair).

Ayes	26
Noes	12
Majority for the motion ..	14

AYES

Mr Baxter	Mr Houghton
Mrs Baylor	Dr Howard
Mr Block	Mr Jenkins
Mr Bubb	Mr Knowles
Mr Campbell	Mr Long
Mr Chamberlain	Mr Saltmarsh
Mr Crozier	Mr Stacey
Mr Dunn	Mr Storey
Mr Evans	Mr Taylor
Dr Foley	Mr Ward
Mr Granter	
Mr Guest	*Tellers*:
Mr Hauser	Mr Lawson
Mr Hayward	Mr Radford

NOES

Mr Butler	Mr Walker
Mrs Coxsedge	Mr Walton
Mr Eddy	Mr White
Mr Kennedy	
Mr Kent	*Tellers*:
Mr Landeryou	Mr Sgro
Mr Mackenzie	Mr Trayling

PAIR

Mr Hunt	Mr Thomas

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. F. S. Grimwade)—The question is:

That a message be sent to the Assembly acquainting them that the Council have agreed to the Bill without amendment.

The House divided on the motion (the Hon. F. S. Grimwade in the chair).

Ayes	26
Noes	12
Majority for the motion ..	14

AYES

Mr Baxter	Mr Houghton
Mrs Baylor	Dr Howard
Mr Block	Mr Jenkins
Mr Bubb	Mr Knowles
Mr Campbell	Mr Lawson
Mr Chamberlain	Mr Long
Mr Crozier	Mr Radford
Mr Dunn	Mr Storey
Mr Evans	Mr Taylor
Dr Foley	Mr Ward
Mr Granter	
Mr Guest	*Tellers*:
Mr Hauser	Mr Saltmarsh
Mr Hayward	Mr Stacey

NOES

Mr Eddy	Mr Walker
Mr Kennedy	Mr Walton
Mr Kent	Mr White
Mr Landeryou	
Mr Mackenzie	*Tellers*:
Mr Sgro	Mr Butler
Mr Trayling	Mrs Coxsedge

PAIR

Mr Hunt	Mr Thomas

ADJOURNMENT

Company Take-overs Committee—Lands Department employees—Queenscliff boat harbour—Victoria Grants Commission funds

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

That the Council, at its rising, adjourn until this day, at 2 p.m.

The motion was agreed to.

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

That the House do now adjourn.

The Hon. W. A. LANDERYOU (Doutta Galla Province)—I raise a matter of considerable importance which was raised in a question to the Attorney-General in this place earlier today and in another place. It concerned the Company Take-overs Committee and whether it was the Government's intention to ensure that the committee met following the takeover offer by News Ltd.

I understand that the committee clearly has a responsibility under the Act; it involves ownership or control of a company by a person or persons outside Australia or which would involve the establishment to a particular degree of monopolization of a particular industry or which would tend to substantially affect the economy of the State or prejudicially affect the employees of the company.

It is quite clear that the Companies Act can be related to the current takeover bid, and the point I raise is of considerable concern to most Victorians. Does the Government intend to ensure that the committee meets to review, in accordance with the Act, the actions that are proposed by News Ltd in respect of the takeover of the Herald and Weekly Times group?

The Hon. D. E. KENT (Chelsea Province)—I bring a matter to the attention of the Minister for Conservation. He may be aware of a press statement issued on 19 November concerning dismissal notices handed to 26 staff members of the Lands Department and the serious concern that these people have been taken out of field work because this will mean that control of vermin and noxious weeds will get out of control.

Mr D. Farrar, the Gippsland organizer for the Australian Workers Union, has been seeking a discussion with the Vermin and Noxious Weeds Destruction Board and presumably with the Minister of Lands. I ask the Minister to consider this matter, particularly as the Lands Department will be employing labour for obligatory spraying which will begin soon. I will raise the matter in further detail perhaps later this day.

The Hon. R. A. MACKENZIE (Geelong Province)—I address a matter to the Minister for Local Government, who represents the Minister of Public Works and refer to the boat harbour at Queenscliff. The fishermen from Queenscliff have expressed considerable concern that the boat harbour has been silting up over the past few months. Despite their efforts to persuade the Public Works Department to do something to eradicate the silting, they have had no success and have been forced to try to do so themselves.

Will the Minister take up this matter with the Minister of Public Works to try to get some action for the Queenscliff fishermen?

The Hon. C. J. KENNEDY (Waverley Province)—I direct a matter to the urgent attention of the Minister for Local Government. As he is aware, the municipalities of Oakleigh, Waverley, Springvale, Moorabbin and Caulfield have been awaiting an in-ordinately long time for funds to be disbursed by the Victoria Grants Commission. Can the Minister ascertain when the funds will be paid or whether they have already been paid?

The Hon. HADDON STOREY (Attorney-General)—The Government has no instructions on the matter raised by Mr Landeryou.

The Hon. D. G. CROZIER (Minister for Local Government)—I am tempted to suggest that Mr Mackenzie should have directed the matter he raised to the attention of my colleague, the Minister for Conservation, not because of his official capacity but because of his extensive personal knowledge of the approaches to Queenscliff harbour. However, I will definitely take up that matter with the Minister of Public Works to ascertain what plans the department has for dredging or desilting the harbour and will have a reply directed to Mr Mackenzie.

Mr Kennedy referred to the mechanics of disbursements of Victoria's share of funds by the Victoria Grants Commission. As I explained to the House last week the allocation has

been delayed pending the passage of the necessary legislation. This is now complete and the municipalities within Mr Kennedy's electorate should very shortly receive their allocations.

The Hon. W. V. HOUGHTON (Minister for Conservation)—The question Mr Kent raises has been raised earlier. The presumptions he made are incorrect. Out of a total of 647 employees of the Department of Crown Lands and Survey in country areas, 26 men have been retrenched.

The motion was agreed to.

The House adjourned at 3.51 *a.m.* (*Wednesday*).

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

The following answers to questions on notice were circulated—

ROAD FUNDS

(Question No. 44)

The Hon. K. I. WRIGHT (North Western Province) asked the Minister for Local Government, for the Minister of Transport:

(*a*) What funds have been allocated by the Country Roads Board for each municipality in the Horsham and Bendigo divisions for 1979–80, showing separate figures for maintenance and new construction?

(*b*) What were the figures for 1978–79?

(*c*) Are the ten per cent of funds withheld for new construction included in the above figures?

(*d*) Does the increase in total funds made available fully compensate municipalities for the effects of current inflation; if not, what is the extent of the shortfall?

The Hon. D. G. CROZIER (Minister for Local Government)—As the answer supplied by the Minister of Transport is lengthy 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:

(*a*) and (*b*). The funds allocated by the Country Roads Board for expenditure on main roads, forest and unclassified roads in each municipality in the Bendigo and Horsham divisions are as listed below:

ALLOCATION OF FUNDS 1978–79 AND 1979–80

(Excluding allocations made from special Treasury grants for works in conjunction with the Department of State Development, Decentralization and Tourism and the National Parks Service):

Municipality	1978–79 Final Allocations			1979–80 Current Allocations		
	Maintenance	*Construction*	*Total*	*Maintenance*	*Construction*	*Total*
HORSHAM DIVISION	$	$	$	$	$	$
Araplies Shire	64 996	199 873	264 869	72 000	201 200	273 200
Birchip Shire	149 755	140 315	290 070	166 800	138 050	304 850
Dimboola Shire	135 580	131 030	266 610	136 800	144 700	281 150
Donald Shire	136 730	132 820	269 550	117 200	161 950	279 150
Dunmunkle Shire	102 300	232 890	335 190	148 700	197 630	346 330
Horsham City	28 100	111 760	139 860	66 000	152 470	159 070
Kaniva Shire	103 720	120 630	224 350	49 700	196 300	246 000
Kara Kara Shire	205 046	146 848	351 894	164 400	168 600	333 000
Karakarooc Shire	151 790	113 620	265 410	236 800	108 750	345 550
Kowree Shire	196 528	269 600	466 128	188 700	231 500	420 200
Lowan Shire	133 604	99 746	233 350	170 450	94 240	264 690
Mildura City	19 400	76 040	95 440	3 800	96 000	99 800
Mildura Shire	30 000	295 360	325 360	42 900	297 500	340 400
St Arnaud Town	24 670	44 770	69 440	27 700	47 200	74 900
Stawell Shire	270 000	537 850	807 850	209 000	571 530	780 530
Stawell Town	14 600	99 520	114 120	18 800	97 300	116 100
Walpeup Shire	90 020	80 932	170 952	99 400	118 500	217 900
Warracknabeal Shire	155 680	106 630	262 310	183 350	84 300	267 650
Wimmera Shire	143 545	135 810	279 355	178 900	70 000	248 900
Wycheproof Shire	161 680	192 866	354 546	259 000	134 150	393 150

Municipality	1978–79 Final Allocations *Maintenance*	*Construction*	*Total*	1979–80 Current Allocations *Maintenance*	*Construction*	*Total*
BENDIGO DIVISION	$	$	$	$	$	$
Bendigo City	11 160	609 331	620 491	12 100	647 100	659 200
Bet Bet Shire	145 160	98 110	243 270	145 900	118 900	264 800
Broadford Shire	57 766	224 615	282 381	117 560	136 540	254 100
Castlemaine City	10 000	107 650	117 650	15 320	105 340	120 660
Charlton Shire	123 036	132 844	255 880	131 650	131 350	263 000
Cohuna Shire	137 332	165 858	303 190	130 950	184 770	315 720
Deakin Shire	101 540	256 760	358 300	152 060	223 070	375 130
Eaglehawk Borough	11 800	136 730	148 530	12 500	142 380	154 880
East Loddon Shire	63 096	286 873	349 969	135 560	250 740	386 300
Echuca City	18 300	27 790	46 090	24 100	23 950	48 050
Gordon Shire	288 250	121 153	409 403	269 240	182 230	451 470
Huntly Shire	77 846	195 165	273 011	70 590	193 810	264 400
Kerang Borough	57 722	14 400	72 122	35 800	40 100	75 900
Kerang Shire	239 872	300 718	540 590	240 050	309 020	549 070
Kilmore Shire	65 710	216 837	282 547	89 400	203 800	293 200
Korong Shire	213 636	192 342	405 978	232 250	178 370	410 620
Kyabram Town	44 380	32 720	77 100	16 400	36 000	52 400
Maldon Shire	85 542	104 525	190 067	114 860	87 320	202 180
Marong Shire	119 476	22 239	341 715	162 000	238 200	400 200
McIvor Shire	73 894	237 340	311 234	87 680	274 850	362 530
Metcalfe Shire	150 004	131 014	281 018	106 680	202 040	308 720
Nathalia Shire	90 054	157 560	247 614	98 710	181 890	280 600
Numurkah Shire	67 052	201 870	268 922	114 150	171 480	285 630
Pyalong Shire	40 632	135 038	175 670	39 600	143 660	183 260
Rochester Shire	180 856	233 660	414 516	182 250	235 250	417 500
Rodney Shire	101 638	302 967	404 605	137 750	307 930	445 680
Strathfieldsaye Shire	139 822	205 664	345 486	95 250	221 740	316 990
Swan Hill City	30 092	86 110	116 202	79 220	43 930	123 150
Swan Hill Shire	323 854	242 931	566 785	403 700	207 300	611 000
Waranga Shire	135 118	215 366	350 484	356 440	232 020	378 460

(*c*) Yes.

(*d*) The total funds made available to municipal councils in the Bendigo and Horsham divisions are 6·6 per cent greater than the funds allocated in 1978–79.

ESSENDON AERODROME

(Question No. 168)

The Hon. R. J. EDDY (Thomastown Province) asked the Minister of Education, for the Premier:

Have any discussions been held between the Commonwealth and the Victorian Governments over the future use of the Essendon aerodrome; if so—(i) what progress has been made; and (ii) when is it expected an announcement will be made?

The Hon. A. J. HUNT (Minister of Education)—The answer supplied by the Premier is:

A joint committee of Commonwealth and State officials is investigating airports planning in the Port Phillip district, including the future use of Essendon aerodrome.

(i) The Essendon aerodrome examination, which includes consideration of submissions from local municipalities and interest groups, is part of the review of general aviation facilities in the region whch is expected to be soon completed.

(ii) The Commonwealth/State committee will report to both governments, at which time this Government will consider and comment on the situation.

ROAD FUNDS

(Question No. 173)

The Hon. B. A. CHAMBERLAIN (Western Province) asked the Minister for Local Government, for the Minister of Transport:

(*a*) What allocation of Commonwealth road funds does Victoria expect to receive in 1979-80?

(*b*) In respect of those funds, what amount has been allocated to roads in each of the following categories:—(i) rural local; (ii) rural arterial; (iii) urban arterial; and (iv) urban local?

(*c*) In each of those categories, how do allocations compare with amounts recommended by the Commonwealth Bureau of Roads (Transport Economics)?

(*d*) What proportion of the 1979–80 allocation is to be spent on roads other than national highways?

(*e*) Will the Minister of Transport ascertain and inform the House how much Commonwealth revenue was raised in Victoria from petrol tax in 1978–79?

The Hon. D. G. CROZIER (Minister for Local Government)—The answer supplied by the Minister of Transport is:

(*a*) $113 683 000.

(b) and (c)

Road Category	Commonwealth Grants 1979–80	Commonwealth Bureau of Roads Recommendation Dated 15 December 1975 for 1979–80
	$	$
Rural local ..	21 841 000	18 400 000
Rural arterial ..	12 759 000	7 800 000
Urban arterial ..	25 518 000	89 200 000
Urban local ..	10 230 000	7 800 000

(d) 70·67 per cent.

(e) The Australian Bureau of Statistics figures state that petrol tax amounting to $194 717 000 and diesel oil tax amounting to $29 420 000 was paid in Victoria in 1977–78. The information is not available for the year 1978–79.

PENSION CHEQUES

(Question No. 224)

The Hon. H. A. THOMAS (Melbourne West) asked the Attorney-General, for the Treasurer:

Is it State Savings Bank policy to refuse to cash pensioners' pension cheques, even when presented with an identification card, in cases where accounts are not kept with that bank; if so, will the Treasurer take action to remove this anomaly?

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

Where accounts are not kept with the bank it is the policy of the State Savings Bank not to cash pensioners' pension cheques except in cases where identification is made by a well known customer. A pensioners' identification card is not regarded as adequate proof of identification because of the risk that it may have been stolen together with the pension cheque.

This policy is designed to afford some protection to the true owner of the cheque and at the same time provide a service to the pensioner tendering the cheque.

However, in cases where identification can be established by a customer well known to the bank, the bank would not refuse to cash a pensioner's cheque.

ROYALTIES ON SALT

(Question No. 254)

The Hon. K. I. WRIGHT (North Western Province) asked the Minister of Lands:

(a) What total amount of royalties was paid for salt mined in Victoria in each of the past two financial years?

(b) What amount was paid in respect of Sea Lake (Lake Tyrell) and Pink Lake, near Linga, in each year?

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

The amounts, so far as Crown lands are concerned, are:

(a) 1977–78 $10 809.33.
1978–79 $25 315.30.

(b) Lake Tyrrell.
1977–78 $5 709.39.
1978–79 $16 178.33.

Pink Lakes.
1977–78 $4 136.26.
1978–79 $2 048.82.

Legislative Assembly

Tuesday, 20 November 1979

The SPEAKER (the Hon. S. J. Plowman) took the chair at 4.6 p.m. and read the prayer.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

HERALD AND WEEKLY TIMES LTD

Mr WILKES (Leader of the Opposition)—In view of the concern in the community about the proposed take-over of the Herald and Weekly Times Ltd by the Murdoch group, will the Premier refer the matter to the Company Take-overs Committee as a matter of urgency for consideration and report back to Parliament?

The SPEAKER (the Hon. S. J. Plowman)—Order! The question really falls within the responsibility of the Attorney-General. I ask the Leader of the Opposition to direct the question to the Minister of Transport, who represents the Attorney-General in this House.

Mr MACLELLAN (Minister of Transport)—It is a matter that relates to Government policy, and I will check with the Attorney-General to see whether he has given consideration to the matter and ask him to advise the Leader of the Opposition.

TAX AVOIDANCE SCHEME

Mr ROSS-EDWARDS (Leader of the National Party)—In view of the concern being expressed by many public

companies in Victoria which have established charitable trusts, and as charitable trusts have been open to some suspicion, will the Premier consider naming the company which is alleged to have avoided the payment of pay-roll tax last year? As the Premier could readily imagine, many other reputable companies are most concerned about this matter. If the honorable gentleman is not prepared to name the company in question, perhaps he could go so far as to state the business in which it is involved.

Mr HAMER (Premier)—This is a difficult question for two reasons: Firstly, all taxation Acts contain provisions about secrecy and confidentiality. Secondly, no one has said or could claim that what the company in question did was illegal at the time the action occurred. Like many other such schemes, it is completely reprehensible, but not illegal, and in those circumstances any company which had practised a similar scheme would rightly be apprehensive that action may be taken if it persisted with it.

Any company or charitable trust which had taken similar action—that is, taken on to its own pay-roll employees of what is essentially an industrial organization for whom exemption from pay-roll tax was then claimed, as occurred in this case—would be branded as reprehensible. The Government has considered this matter and answered a similar question without notice last week. It is not proper to name in Parliament a company which was not acting illegally—on the contrary—under the provisions of existing legislation.

CABINET

Mr KENNETT (Burwood)—Is the Premier aware of a reported statement made last week by the President of the Australian Council of Trade Unions, Mr Hawke, advocating non-Parliamentary personnel in the Cabinet system? If so, will he give serious consideration to that suggestion?

Mr HAMER (Premier)—The answer is, "No". The essence of the Westminster system is that Ministers are members of Parliament. They are responsible in Parliament for the administration of their departments and, through Parliament, to their electors, for their performance. The suggestion by Mr Hawke is for a hybrid of the Westminster system and the presidential system in the United States of America and other countries. It would not work and it certainly would not work under Australian conditions.

I add that the Government is not so bereft of back-bench talent that it would have to consider bringing outside personnel into Cabinet. I cannot speak for other potential Governments because that would be stretching a long bow. Perhaps the idea appeals to the Labor Party with the likelihood of Mr John Halfpenny as Minister of Labour and Industry and Mr Bill Hartley as Minister of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs.

TAX AVOIDANCE SCHEME

Mr JOLLY (Dandenong)—In view of the disclosure by the Government that a company successfully and improperly avoided the payment of pay-roll tax of $400 000, will the Treasurer take steps to make the provisions of the amending legislation retrospective and name the company concerned? If not, why not?

Mr THOMPSON (Treasurer)—The question is basically the same as that relating to the question the honorable member asked the Premier on the issue of naming of the company. On the aspect of retrospectivity, I am examining the file at present.

CO-OPERATIVE FARMERS AND GRAZIERS DIRECT MEAT SUPPLY LTD

Mr HANN (Rodney)—Will the Premier advise the House whether the Government's decision to approve of the guarantee of $4·5 million to Co-operative Farmers and Graziers Direct Meat Supply Ltd, which was supported by all parties of the House, was based on sound and proper financial management of the time and not on political expedience as stated recently by the Minister of Agriculture?

Mr HAMER (Premier)—I do not accept the last part of the question as an accurate statement of the facts. In any case, the reasons for the guarantee being given were fully explained in the House. The arguments in favour were as hotly pressed by members of other parties as they were by members of the Government. All honorable members were in favour of the action and it had sound reasons to support it. I make no secret that the Government had not committed itself before the Federal Government agreed to give a guarantee.

Mr Ross-Edwards—You only had to say, "Yes" or "No".

Mr HAMER—That was in the end, and I said, "Yes". I do not regret that. There were good reasons, as were expounded by the honorable member for Rodney, who gave it full support. In fact, he was critical of the Government for not acting in this way before.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Mr RICHARDSON (Forest Hill)—Is the Minister representing the Minister for Local Government aware of an announcement that appeared in the November issue of the *Labor Star* which urges members of the Labor Party in Victoria to take over local government in this State? If the Minister is aware of the article, will he advise the House what steps the Government is taking to prevent the destruction of the independence of local government as a valuable third tier of government in the community?

Mr WILTON (Broadmeadows)—On a point of order, I submit that the question is hypothetical. The Local Government Act clearly sets out how persons can offer themselves as candidates and how those persons shall be elected to a municipality. It is only through that well-established form that persons can have themselves elected to councils and any suggestion of a proposed takeover of local government is purely hypothetical, having regard to the provisions of the Local Government Act.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. S. J. Plowman)—In his question, the honorable member quoted directly from the *Labor Star* and asked the Minister if he was aware of that quotation and how the Government intended to counteract what he saw as a threat to local government. The question is legitimate. I do not uphold the point of order.

Mr BALFOUR (Minister for Minerals and Energy)—I am aware of the article which appeared on page 11 of the November issue of the *Labor Star*. Having been involved with local government for 21 years, I do not believe local government is corrupt, inept, incompetent or irrelevant. Maybe the Leader of the Opposition wrote the article because it represents what he has said about the Government.

One must not necessarily be a member of the Australian Labor Party to have proper local government in any area. The municipal authorities of Port Melbourne and other areas mentioned in the article have done an excellent job but in other areas local governments have introduced infant welfare services, meals on wheels and libraries which are commonplace in local government today.

Members of local government should be independent and work on behalf of the people they represent. One does not have to be a member of a political party to achieve the things mentioned in the article. The Government can do nothing to stop a political party taking an interest in local government. Councillors should work for the people who elected them and achieve the things that are necessary.

SMORGON CONSOLIDATED INDUSTRIES

Mr EDMUNDS (Ascot Vale)—I refer the Premier to a question asked in the House by the honorable member for Rodney on 12 April 1978 which referred to reports that Smorgon Consolidated Industries had cheated Government departments and charitable institutions. The Premier gave an assurance at the time that he would investigate the matter. Can the Premier advise the House whether the investigations have been completed, or are they continuing? If the investigations have been completed, will he inform the House of the results of those investigations?

Mr HAMER (Premier)—The honorable member for Rodney asked the question seventeen months ago. I will have to ascertain how far the investigations have proceeded.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. S. J. Plowman)—Order! Honorable members last week complained about wasting time at question time. The continuous barrage of interjections does nothing but waste honorable members' time. I appeal to honorable members to listen to answers in silence.

CLOTHING INDUSTRY

Mr EBERY (Midlands)—What action does the Minister of Housing, in his capacity as Chairman of the Victorian Employment Committee, propose to take to increase employment opportunities in country areas, specifically in the clothing industry in Maryborough?

Mr DIXON (Minister of Housing)—Last week the Victorian Employment Committee visited Maryborough and was most impressed by the community's endeavours to promote local employment opportunities in conjunction with the clothing industry. Maryborough Knitting Mills (Cuttle) Ltd has paid the Victorian Government $156 000 in royalties on "Life: Be in It" logos by selling more than one million tee-shirts with the "Life: Be in It" logos on them.

On the innovative matters being undertaken in Maryborough it will interest honorable members to know that the Recycling Co-operative, the Energy Research Foundation and the Boot Strap Co-operative are operating in Maryborough.

The Boot Strap Co-operative arose from a meeting of townspeople who were seeking new ideas for the manufacture of various garments. The suit I am wearing is chamois and is made from either calf skin or goat skin. The co-operative says its major problem is in marketing the product. The Victorian Employment Committee wishes to assist with the marketing of the product and I shall endeavour to organize a fashion parade using garments made from chamois leather. During my forthcoming overseas trip I will do my best to help the promotion of the product overseas. There is no doubt this can be a viable new industry in the clothing and textile area. I advise honorable members that the Victorian Government has approved an advance of $8000 to assist the Maryborough co-operative with this work.

SMORGON FAMILY DONATION

Mr FOGARTY (Sunshine)—Is it true that since April 1976 the Premier has answered many questions without notice dealing with a proposed donation of $1 million from the Smorgon family for a hospital? In April 1978 the Premier indicated that the recipient would be the cancer institute. Can the honorable gentleman advise whether the money has been received by that institute and, if not, is it because of the reluctance of the Smorgon family to part with the almighty dollar or is it because of the incompetence of the Premier in negotiating the matter?

Mr HAMER (Premier)—It is quite true that the Smorgon family offered to make a donation. At the time I understood it was to come from members of the family in recognition of the fact that they had come to Victoria from Europe with nothing and had made a fortune from various activities. The donation was offered to enable a hospital to be set up somewhere in the metropolitan area. The main questions were what hospital would be suitable and under what conditions the family would make the gift. At that time the matter was handed over to the Minister of Health.

Mr Fordham—The matter or the money?

Mr HAMER—The matter of negotiations. I am not aware of the outcome but as far as I know the final proposal was that the family would make the contribution towards the development of the cancer hospital.

LIQUEFIED PETROLEUM GAS CYLINDERS

Mr JASPER (Murray Valley)—Because of the problems being experienced by people who own motor vehicles running on liquefied petroleum gas in having the necessary checks and modifications carried out on Rheem cylinders fitted to their vehicles, particularly

people in country districts, will the Minister for Minerals and Energy make a public statement about what actions are being and will be taken on the replacement and modification of these cylinders? Will the honorable gentleman also emphasize what will be done for people living in country Victoria who own vehicles that have been converted to the use of LPG?

Mr BALFOUR (Minister for Minerals and Energy)—Unfortunately, quite a number of people have had Rheem cylinders fitted to motor vehicles that have been converted to the use of LPG. The stage has been reached when some announcement can soon be made. That might be later this week. Some problems started in New South Wales when proper inspections were not made, and cylinders were possibly over-filled. However, a number of discussions have been taking place, particularly with Rheem, and I hope that, no later than the end of this week, some announcements can be made as to when these vehicles can go into service stations for inspection and be allowed back on the road.

VICRAIL LIVESTOCK OPERATION

Mr COLEMAN (Syndal)—Will the Minister of Transport elaborate on the proposed takeover of the Victorian Railways livestock operation by the Finemore group, and when does the honorable gentleman expect the arrangement to come into operation?

Mr MACLELLAN (Minister of Transport)—Interested though I am in acknowledging some of the exotic services of the Victorian Railways, I must point out that this is not proposed. There is no proposal for any group to take over any livestock business of VicRail. I understand that discussions have taken place between this commercial group and the Commonwealth Railways and that arrangements have been made except in relation to rates. I believe full arrangements have been made in New South Wales. VicRail and this group are discussing the possible provision of livestock wagons by the group. It would have its own bogey exchange in New South Wales to get those wagons onto the Victorian system. VicRail would contract to move those wagons which would be a net addition to the VicRail rolling-stock but would be exclusively used by that group.

The discussions between VicRail and the company are under way, and no conclusion has been reached on the matter. I am advised that agreement will be reached in the next couple of days. If the honorable member has any particular inquiries to make about the matter, I can chase them up with VicRail to make sure any representations he or any other honorable member may have on this subject will be put to VicRail before the negotiations are completed.

SMORGON FAMILY DONATION

Mr ROPER (Brunswick)—I address a question to the Minister of Health. It follows from the question asked of the Premier by the honorable member for Sunshine. Has the $1 million promised by the Smorgon family yet been received by the Government and/or the Health Commission? If not, what is the reason for the delay in determining the way in which the $1 million will be paid? When was the matter last discussed with the Smorgon family representatives? If the Minister is not aware of the situation, will he make a full statement to the House tomorrow?

Mr BORTHWICK (Minister of Health)—The actual $1 million that was spoken of has not yet been handed to the Government. As the Premier said, at the time of the offer of a gift to the Government, no particular hospital had been specified. It was subsequently established that the Peter McCallum Hospital would be an appropriate hospital. As the honorable member would be aware, that hospital is progressively being redeveloped. The family wanted a free-standing building as part of the total hospital, and this has required a considerable amount of negotiation between the board and the family or its representatives. At the same time, the family required that the Government should give an unequivocal undertaking to match the $1 million donation by $4 million.

Mr Fordham—That was not in the original terms.

Mr BORTHWICK—That is the condition, and at present those conditions are being negotiated in the light of the over-all building programme of the State.

ONE-MAN POLICE STATIONS

Mr A. T. EVANS (Ballarat North)—Has the attention of the Minister for Police and Emergency Services been drawn to an article which appeared on page 1 of the *Ballarat Courier* of 14 November 1979 to the effect that it was rumoured a number of one-man police stations in the central district were to be closed, including the police station at Clunes? The statement was made by the honorable member for Niddrie. Can the honorable gentleman inform the House whether there is any truth in that statement, or is it just another irresponsible statement from the honorable member for Niddrie?

Mr THOMPSON (Minister for Police and Emergency Services)—After reading the *Labor Star*, I did read the article in the *Ballarat Courier* and I am aware of the strange allegation, but there is no intention whatsoever of closing the police station at Clunes, no more than there is of closing the police station at Essendon.

VICTORIAN EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE

Mr McINNES (Gippsland South)—I ask the Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation, in his capacity as Chairman of the Victorian Employment Committee, whether he can advise the level of funds expended by the committee since its inception earlier this year, and the number of persons directly employed as a result?

Mr DIXON (Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation)—I estimate that the amount of money that has been directly expended would be about $200 000. The amount provided in the Budget is around about $570 000. Honorable members have had made available to them the report of the chairman dated 1 October, which outlines all of the projects that have been undertaken or are in the course of being undertaken by the Victorian Employment Committee. So far as results in terms of direct employment are concerned, I am unable to give any information to honorable members which would directly specify that there has been any direct increase in employment as a result of those programmes, but ultimately we will be able to say that the unemployment situation probably would have been worse without the activities of the Victorian Employment Committee.

GEORGE ADAMS ESTATE

Mr MATHEWS (Oakleigh)—I refer the Treasurer to an undertaking given to the House months ago to the effect that the beneficiaries of the George Adams estate would be ascertained and identified. I ask the Treasurer whether that undertaking will be honoured before the end of the current Parliamentary sittings, and, if not, why not?

Mr THOMPSON (Treasurer)—I have had discussions with a representative of the trustees and as a result of information he has given me, I am prepared to make that information available to the party Leaders on a confidential basis.

JOINT SITTING OF PARLIAMENT

Council of Adult Education

The SPEAKER (the Hon. S. J. Plowman)—I have received the following communication, dated 19 November 1979, from the Minister of Education:

Dear Mr Speaker,

The Governor in Council has today accepted the resignation of the Honorable W. A. Landeryou M.L.C. as a member of the Council of Adult Education.

Section 66 (1) (*c*) of the Education Act provides that three members of the Council of Adult Education shall be members of the Parliament of Victoria who have been recommended for appointment by a joint sitting of the members of the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly conducted in accordance with rules adopted for the purpose by members present at the joint sitting. Mr Landeryou was one of the three members so appointed.

I should be grateful if you could arrange for the coming joint sitting to recommend a member for appointment to the council to replace Mr Landeryou for the term ending on 4 December 1981.

I have addressed a similar letter to the President of the Legislative Council.

Yours sincerely,
A. J. HUNT
Minister of Education

Mr MACLELLAN (Minister of Transport)—I move:

That this House meet the Legislative Council for the purpose of sitting and voting together to choose a member of the Parliament of Victoria to be recommended for appointment to the Council of Adult Education, and proposes that the place and time of such meeting be the Legislative Assembly Chamber this day at six o'clock.

The motion was agreed to.

It was ordered that a message be sent to the Legislative Council acquainting them accordingly.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mrs TONER (Greensborough) (*by leave*)—Mr Speaker, I wish to make a personal explanation as I believe I have been misrepresented by the Minister for Community Welfare Services when he replied to a matter raised during the debate on the adjournment of the sitting last Thursday.

The implication made by the Minister was that I had placed a person's life in danger by revealing the secret name and address of a senior officer of the Correctional Services Division who was occupying a family group home at Coburg. The Minister said:

It is most important for that person that his address is not made known because of the sort of dealings and the relationship that he has with people with whom he could be at risk.

In fact, the person concerned has never attempted to hide his whereabouts and his name and address appear on page 1028 of the 1979 edition of the Melbourne telephone directory.

The Minister in his reply engaged in a personal attack on and misrepresentation of me again when he said:

But once again the honorable member for Greensborough has released to this House the confidential address of a person whose address is not publicised by the department for obvious reasons—because of the nature of the position which he holds in the penal system.

At no previous time did I reveal a confidential address, nor did I on this occasion, as is indicated by the entry appearing in the Melbourne telephone directory. The Minister further asserted:

It may be necessary for the occupants of that home to leave those premises.

In the light of my revelation about this confidential address and further, I understand, from checks I have made with officers of his department, the Minister has issued no instructions that an officer's name and address should be kept secret. Indeed, this most senior officer has chosen to make his address and telephone number available to anyone who can read a telephone directory.

In the light of such obvious misrepresentations of the facts, I believe a gentleman would apologize!

PETITIONS

Curtailment of liquor facilities

Mr McARTHUR (Ringwood)—I present a petition from certain citizens of Victoria praying that liquor facilities be not extended to universities and other tertiary institutions, theatres and cinemas, licensed restaurants, retail bottled liquor outlets, hotel and club bars and bottle departments on Sundays and that legislation be introduced to curtail the availability of alcoholic liquor. The petition is respectfully worded, in order, and bears 10 824 signatures. I desire the petition to be read.

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:

The humble petition of the under-signed electors of the State of Victoria sheweth our concern that recommendations in the Report of the Board of Inquiry into the Operation of the *Liquor Control Act* 1968 flagrantly disregard the warnings of numerous authorities in relation to alcohol, e.g.

"Alcohol is the major drug of addiction in Australia. It now constitutes a problem of epidemic proportions." (Senate Standing Committee on Social Welfare Drug Problems. October 1977.)

The recommendations would extend liquor facilities in Universities and other Tertiary Institutions, Theatres and Cinemas, Licensed

Restaurants, B.Y.O.'s, Retail Bottled Liquor Outlets, Hotel and Club Bars and Bottle Departments on Sundays.

Your petitioners therefore pray that in the interest of the citizens of this State, the Government will not implement such recommendations, but instead will introduce legislation to amend the *Liquor Control Act* 1968 to curtail the availability of alcoholic liquor.

And your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

It was ordered that the petition be laid on the table.

Abortion

Mr SKEGGS (Ivanhoe)—I present a petition from certain citizens of Victoria praying that action be taken to protect unborn children by prohibiting abortion in Victoria. The petition is respectfully worded, in order, and bears 1013 signatures. I desire the petition to be read.

Mr FORDHAM (Footscray)—Leave granted.

Mr MACLELLAN (Minister of Transport)—No.

It was ordered that the petition be laid on the table.

Mr A. T. EVANS (Ballarat North) presented a petition from certain citizens of Victoria praying that action be taken to protect unborn children by prohibiting abortion in Victoria. He stated that the petition was respectfully worded, in order, and bore 1909 signatures.

It was ordered that the petition be laid on the table.

Mr KENNETT (Burwood) presented a petition from certain citizens of Victoria praying that action be taken to protect unborn children by prohibiting abortion in Victoria. He stated that the petition was respectfully worded, in order, and bore 1205 signatures.

It was ordered that the petition be laid on the table.

Mr JOLLY (Dandenong) presented a petition from certain citizens of Victoria praying that action be taken to protect unborn children by prohibiting abortion in Victoria. He stated that the petition was respectfully worded, in order, and bore 343 signatures.

It was ordered that the petition be laid on the table.

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) presented a petition from certain citizens of Victoria praying that action be taken to protect unborn children by prohibiting abortion in Victoria. He stated that the petition was respectfully worded, in order, and bore 1125 signatures.

It was ordered that the petition be laid on the table.

Mr ROWE (Essendon) presented a petition from certain citizens of Victoria praying that action be taken to protect unborn children by prohibiting abortion in Victoria. He stated that the petition was respectfully worded, in order, and bore 1083 signatures.

It was ordered that the petition be laid on the table.

Dr VAUGHAN (Glenhuntly) presented a petition from certain citizens of Victoria praying that action be taken to protect unborn children by prohibiting abortion in Victoria. He stated that the petition was respectfully worded, in order, and bore 630 signatures.

It was ordered that the petition be laid on the table.

Mr McGRATH (Lowan) presented a petition from certain citizens of Victoria praying that action be taken to protect unborn children by prohibiting abortion in Victoria. He stated that the petition was respectfully worded, in order, and bore 407 signatures.

It was ordered that the petition be laid on the table.

PAPERS

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

Dried Fruits Act 1958—Statement of Accounts of Victorian Dried Fruits Board for the year 1978.

Education Act 1958—Resumption of Land at Footscray—Certificate of Minister of Education.

Place Names Committee—Report for the year 1978–79.

Port of Melbourne Authority—Statement of Accounts for the year 1978–79.

Small Business Development Corporation—Report for the year 1978–79.

Superannuation Board—Report for the year 1977–78.—Ordered to be printed.

Town and Country Planning Act 1961—Horsham—City of Horsham Planning Scheme 1973, Amendment No. 27 (1975).

CO-OPERATIVE FARMERS AND GRAZIERS DIRECT MEAT SUPPLY LTD

Mr WILKES (Leader of the Opposition)—I wish to move the adjournment of the House for the purpose of discussing a definite matter of urgent public importance, namely, the recent disclosure of the Minister of Agriculture of the improper reason for the Government guaranteeing 50 per cent of the repayment of a $9 million loan to Co-operative Farmers and Graziers Direct Meat Supply Ltd.

Approval of the proposed discussion was indicated by the required number of members rising in their places, as specified in Standing Order No. 26 (*b*).

The SPEAKER (the Hon. S. J. Plowman)—Order! I have studied this motion carefully and researched the various precedents and requirements for an adjournment motion of this kind to be brought before the House. The requirements are outlined in the seventeenth edition of *May*, particularly at pages 364 and 365. The matter must be definite. The matter must be urgent. The matter must be of public importance. The matter must involve more than the ordinary public administration of the law.

The matter is certainly definite. The matter is certainly of public importance. The matter does involve more than the ordinary administration of the law. However, on the question of urgency the Chair found difficulty with the motion. Page 365 of *May* states that the matter must be of recent occurrence. It might be argued that the statements by the Minister and the contrary statements by the Premier happened recently. *May* goes on to say that the fact that new information has been received regarding the matter that has been continuing for some time does not in itself make it a matter of urgency and also the facts having only recently been revealed does not make the occurrence recent.

In the view of the Chair the thrust of the motion deals with the 50 per cent Government guarantee of the repayment of a $9 million loan to Co-operative Farmers and Graziers Direct Meat Supply Ltd. The statement by the Minister and the refuting of the statement by the Premier is of recent occurrence. However, the matter under consideration is not of recent occurrence. I remind honorable members that a Bill came before Parliament, under Act No. 9092, in which Parliament—not the Premier or the Minister—gave approval to an Act to assist the Farmers and Graziers Direct Meat Supply Ltd in this matter. The House passed legislation which was proclaimed on 18 April 1978. Debate took place on this matter. In the view of the Chair the matter before the House has been brought as a matter of difference of opinion between Ministers. This matter can rightly be dealt with by a substantive motion. In the view of the Chair, the motion does not fall within the requirements of *May* relating to the introduction of adjournment motions. Therefore, I rule the motion out of order.

Mr FORDHAM (Footscray)—On a point of order, is it possible to put forward argument to you, Sir, on why the matter should receive your consideration, which is the normal practice in the House?

The SPEAKER (the Hon. S. J. Plowman)—Order! It is a matter for the Chair to determine whether the Chair considers that further argument would be of value to the House and to the Chair. I do not wish to have a lengthy argument on the matter. I would be prepared to hear a speaker from each party. If speakers can raise points that the Chair has not considered, I would certainly be prepared to give further consideration to the matter. I might say, the Chair has fully researched the matter and the ruling is not lightly given.

Mr FORDHAM (Footscray)—Thank you very much, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity of addressing you on the matter. I knew you would give the matter detailed consideration and I assure you that the Opposition has done the

same, Sir. The Leader of the Opposition, the honorable member for Bundoora and myself have considered the matter in some detail. The motion has been very carefully worded with that in mind. We are talking about the decision of a Minister of the Crown to disclose a certain matter. That disclosure was very recent indeed, certainly, since the last day of sitting. It was only last week-end.

In those circumstances it comes within the urgency motion of which you have spoken, Mr Speaker, and that is a reasonable opportunity since the statement was made. If the motion had simply dealt with some new information that could have been available some time ago when the original guarantee was made to the co-operative, clearly the adjournment motion would be out of order. However, honorable members are talking about a matter of definite urgent public importance. That is, the decision of a Minister of the Crown in the middle of a party conference to disclose, all of a sudden, a motive on which the Government has been acting. The Opposition believes that the action of a Minister in taking such a step at a party conference is in itself a matter of significant public importance. Judging from recent comments in the media and from various party Leaders, that certainly also seems to be their view.

Obviously, the disclosure was not made available when Parliament made its earlier decision, and that to some extent relates to the issue. However, the key point that the Leader of the Opposition ought to have the opportunity to debate, is simply the decision of the Minister to make such a disclosure. I believe the debate on that disclosure and the circumstances surrounding it are of key importance and of urgent public importance, given the Government's involvement, which is not in question. As such, on that reasonably narrow area, the motion should be allowed to proceed.

Mr WHITING (Mildura)—Mr Speaker, I am a little surprised that you have not been able to accept the motion as is, because to me and to members of my party the crucial words are, "the improper reason", that was given by a responsible Minister of the Crown. Whether at a Liberal Party conference or wherever, does not make any difference. The fact that a Minister decided to make a statement on why a certain action took place, should surely be the subject of a debate in this Parliament as a matter of urgency.

If that is not the case, the way would be open for Ministers to make similar statements on any number of issues that arise, knowing full well that they would then not be in a position to be criticized by Parliament at the earliest opportunity. Because of the forms of the House, obviously other means will have to be available if this motion cannot be agreed to at this stage.

I hope you, Sir, will give further consideration to the fact that this relates to the importance of a responsible and senior Minister of the Government making a statement under these circumstances that could not be debated at the earliest opportunity when it arose.

Mr MACLELLAN (Minister of Transport)—I think honorable members will share with you, Mr Speaker, the difficulties of trying to rule on this motion. The question to which attention must be directed is the test that the matter must be urgent, and I shall quote from the seventeenth edition of *May*.

Mr Wilton—Quote from the nineteenth edition.

Mr MACLELLAN—The reason for referring to the seventeenth edition is that the Standing Orders of the Victorian Parliament and those of the House of Commons were the same at that time. Those of the House of Commons have since moved in a different direction from ours.

The first test is that the matter must be prima facie urgent, and I do not think there is any argument on that question before you, Mr Speaker. The second test, referred to at page 365 of the seventeenth edition of *May*, is that the matter must be of recent occurrence, raised without delay. We can put aside the question of "raised without delay", but we must deal with the question of "recent occurrence" and the advice contained in *May* is:

> The fact that a grievance is *continuing* is not sufficient if it is not a recent occurrence.

The second part—that is the important part—states:

> If the facts have only been recently revealed, that does not make the occurrence recent.

What I direct your attention to, Mr Speaker, is that the proposed motion for the adjournment of the House relates to a guarantee which was made under an Act of Parliament, a matter that arose some time ago and which was discussed in Parliament. The fact that information about that has, in the mind of the Leader of the Opposition, been only recently revealed—if indeed the matters referred to are facts—does not make the occurrence recent.

I invite you, Mr Speaker, to adopt the test referred to at page 365 of *May*. For the matter to be urgent—and the matter must be urgent to qualify—it fails in respect of only one test, that is, the test that the mere revealing of information which is subsequent to all the events does not make it a matter of recent occurrence, but that whatever occurred took place back in time and therefore is not properly the subject of a motion for the adjournment of the House.

As I said, Sir, people will share with you the difficulties of these technical matters, and I know the type of advice you will receive from a study of this edition of *May*. However, other factors are involved. Today notice was given of a motion to be moved by the Leader of the National Party. Parliament may wish to proceed with debating it as an adjournment motion today rather than debating it tomorrow as a substantive motion, or, indeed, any motion that may substitute for the adjournment motion that has already been moved by the Leader of the Opposition. However, I am conscious, Sir, that you must guard the privileges, precedents and rulings of the House, and that to extend the terms of that motion as a matter of expediency is not available to you.

I urge you, therefore, even understanding the background of the circumstances in which you have to rule on the matter, to rule that the one test that should be applied in this adjournment motion is the test that if the facts have only recently been revealed, that does not make the occurrence recent, and that to be acceptable under the Standing Orders of the House the matter must be urgent, it must be recent, and it must pass that test.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. S. J. Plowman)—The Chair must decide on the grounds that have been discussed by the Minister and other members whether a matter can be the subject of an adjournment motion or whether it is more appropriate to be dealt with as a substantive motion by notice of motion.

The matter which is of concern in this case is whether the matter before the chair related to a recent occurrence. Certainly, as I said earlier, the alleged statement by the Minister of Agriculture and the alleged refuting of it by the Premier—I have not heard either—were of recent occurrence. However, they relate to something that is not of recent occurrence which Parliament has dealt with at some length. If a statement was made relating to the political overtones of the matter dealt with by the House at the time, that was the appropriate time for the House to decide on it, whether prior to or after the Government's action.

Therefore it is the view of the Chair that this matter should be brought forward as a substantive motion rather than as an adjournment motion.

Mr WILTON (Broadmeadows)—I raise a point of order to clarify a very important point in my mind. When you, Sir, were addressing the House prior to your recent remarks, you dealt at some length with the question of urgency. I ask you, Mr Speaker, whether, when you were considering this matter, you took into account rulings of your predecessors which clearly established that urgency is determined by twelve members rising in their places to indicate their support of the motion.

I also respectfully refer you to *May*, in which it is stated that in the House of Commons that matter is also determined by 40 members rising in their places to support the motion.

Finally, I point out that *May* is a guide and cannot overrule the Standing Orders of this Parliament.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. S. J. Plowman)—Unquestionably the rising in their places by the appropriate number of members expresses the point of view of those members on urgency. However, it is still the responsibility of the Chair—and, I might say, not a responsibility undertaken lightly—to decide whether a motion is appropriate to be the subject of a motion for the adjournment of the House. The Chair has that responsibility and must exercise it according to his best judgment, otherwise he will not be carrying out his responsibility to the House as a whole.

I have taken advice regarding precedents and prior cases from the Clerks of the House, who are here to advise all members of Parliament and the Chair. My decision was made in light of that advice in relation to urgency and all the other matters that have been canvassed.

JOINT SITTING OF PARLIAMENT

Council of Adult Education

A message was received from the Council acquainting the Assembly that the Council had agreed to meet the Assembly for the purpose of sitting and voting together to choose a member of the Parliament of Victoria to be recommended for appointment to the Council of Adult Education, and as proposed by the Legislative Assembly the place and time of such meeting being the Legislative Assembly Chamber at 6 p.m. today.

CO-OPERATIVE FARMERS AND GRAZIERS DIRECT MEAT SUPPLY LTD

Mr WILKES (Leader of the Opposition)—By leave, I move—

> That this House expresses its concern at the statement made by the Minister of Agriculture at the recent Liberal Party Conference regarding the reasons for the Government granting the $4·5 million guarantee to the Farmers and Graziers Co-operative, and the subsequent statements by the Premier rejecting the Minister's statement.

The decision-making processes of the Government are without doubt the worst of any Government in this country. Normally the Government just does not make decisions. One needs only to look at the casino fiasco and at the mess the Government made of a decision on casinos in Victoria for evidence of that. When the Government makes decisions, they are nearly always the wrong decisions, and that has caused the Opposition to move this motion today.

The land deals, the Vapold matter, the single tender contracts and all the other scandals in which the Government has been involved clearly show its difficulties in making decisions at an Executive level. Nevertheless, occasionally the Government makes a correct decision, but unfortunately when it does so it is nearly always for the wrong reasons. The Government is in such a mess that it never takes long for the truth about how wrong that decision was to come out.

The question of Co-operative Farmers and Graziers Direct Meat Supply Ltd has been debated several times in this Chamber. It is interesting to read some of the statements that were made in those debates because of the light they shed on the events that took place at the week-end. With the benefit of hindsight it is obvious that the Minister of Agriculture spoke nothing but the absolute truth at the week-end when he said at the Liberal Party State Council that:

> We were caught in a bind. The Federal Goevrnment had pre-empted us and elections were coming on—it seemed the politically wise thing to do although we were philosophically opposed.

Just how opposed was shown in the debate in the House on 8 March 1978 on a motion of want of confidence moved by the honorable member for Rodney. By interjection the honorable member for Keilor said, as recorded at page 129 of *Hansard* of that date:

> If the Victorian Government plans to underwrite the loans to 50 per cent, will that not entitle it to directors on the board?

The Minister of Agriculture replied:

> I would want to appoint all of the directors.

He went on to say:

> Farmers have a bad record in trying to run commercial undertakings. I refer to the potato board, the onion board, the meat board and a string of others. The Australian farmer is extremely successful as a low cost farmer, but because of that he is a rugged individualist who

is not trained or psychologically suited for the corporate management required by this type of exercise.

On that occasion the Minister of Agriculture said that he made no apology for saying what he did, and when the Leader of the National Party interjected and said, "That sums you up well", adverting to the Minister, the Minister said, "I do not mind going on the record as expressing that view". That is, about the capability of farmers serving on the board of the co-operative. Of course, the Government no doubt expects that farmers will continue to support the co-operative and its recent share issue, the prospectus for which is now available. It is interesting to try to understand the rationale of the Minister when he says that farmers are not capable, in his opinion, of being directors of the co-operative. That interesting interchange sums up the Minister's attitude to enterprises such as the Co-operative Farmers and Graziers Direct Meat Supply Ltd.

The Minister does not think farmers can run such operations, nor does he think they are entitled to run such operations. Earlier in the same debate in March 1978 the Minister said:

Where are the people who will operate the works to give it security and profit?

The Minister posed that question to the Parliament. He continued:

The answers to these questions must be known before the Government makes a firm commitment.

In other words, on 8 March 1978 the Minister expressed the strongest possible reservations about the co-operative, its management and whether the Government should help the co-operative.

The Premier spoke in the same debate. In fact, the Premier spoke before the Minister of Agriculture expressed those grave reservations. The Premier said the directors of the co-operative had approached the Government and asked for a guarantee, in conjunction with one from the Federal Government, but the Premier was unwilling to make a decision on this occasion and sent the directors to consult with his Federal colleagues.

On 7 March last year the Prime Minister sent a telex message to the Premier saying that the Federal Government would agree to such a guarantee. Honorable members will recall that a good deal of Federal money was involved in the co-operative and there was no doubt that the Federal Government was concerned to look after its interests and was at the same time concerned to have the support of the Premier in assisting the co-operative in that way.

On 8 March the Premier replied, by telex, stating:

In the light of your telex, I am pleased to inform you that the Government of Victoria would be prepared to guarantee the remaining 50 per cent of the proposed borrowings.

He further stated:

We would also require Co-operative Farmers and Graziers to agree to such appropriate changes in board structure and management as soon as possible as may be deemed necessary to ensure the best possible operation of the co-operative in the future.

A few things are patently obvious from these references. Firstly, the Government had grave reservations about supporting the co-operative. Those reservations were reinforced by the statement of the Minister and by the attitude and action of the Premier prior to his receiving the telex from the Federal Government. Secondly, those reservations extended to wanting a fundamental change in the management of the co-operative. Thirdly, the Government agreed to provide a guarantee to the co-operative only after the Federal Government decided to support such a guarantee. That background makes it much easier to understand what happened last week-end and what both the Minister of Agriculture and the Premier are now saying. On Sunday, the Minister made the comments I referred to earlier, that the Government had supported the co-operative because it was in a bind, because the Federal Government had pre-empted the action of the State Government and because, more importantly still, there was an election looming.

If there were any doubt about the statement of the Minister, he refused to repudiate it when he was asked to do so yesterday by the Melbourne *Age*. In this morning's *Age*—Tuesday, 20 November—he is reported as saying:

I think governments are entitled to make these sorts of decisions—politics is not a dirty word to me.

The *Age* states:

> Mr Smith did not repudiate his week-end statement that the part-guarantee had been provided to the co-operative because an election was coming up.

But the Premier did not agree with that. I do not know whether the Premier was correct, but he was quoted in the press as saying that "the Minister's memory was inaccurate". There is no doubt, according to the newspaper report, about what the Minister said on Sunday because a feature article appeared in every newspaper on the Monday morning concerning the fact that the Government was pre-empted into making a decision because an election was in the offing and it would be politically expedient to support the Co-operative Farmers and Graziers Direct Meat Supply Ltd because of the investments by certain members of Parliament and people that the Government would want to curry support from during an election campaign.

Mr I. W. Smith—On what grounds did you support it?

Mr WILKES—Members of the Labor Party supported it because they believed the co-operative could trade itself out of its problems. I am of the opinion that, given the opportunity, and if this Government stops its shilly-shallying on this question, there is a possibility that the co-operative could achieve that result. Of course, the Minister would have to consider the position of two abattoirs that are operating in this State contrary to the regulations of the Government and the regulations laid down by the Minister. If those abattoirs were forced to operate in line with the regulations of the Government, perhaps Co-operative Farmers and Graziers Direct Meat Supply Ltd would have some chance of trading itself out of its problems.

Mr I. W. Smith—Which two?

Mr WILKES—Newmarket is one and South Melbourne is the other.

Mr I. W. Smith—That is not true.

Mr WILKES—What about the regulations that were laid down under an Act of Parliament? Have they been met by the two abattoirs?

Mr I. W. Smith—Yes.

Mr WILKES—During a debate on a Bill which will take place perhaps later this week honorable members will be able to test whether the Minister is right or wrong. Given fair competition, Co-operative Farmers and Graziers Direct Meat Supply Ltd would have a chance of trading itself out of its problems.

Indeed, its recent share issue would have a better chance of being taken up if the Chernov report were tabled in Parliament by the Minister because it would give some semblance of confidence to the shareholders, but the Government is bent on not tabling the report. This is because the Chernov report might indict supporters of the Government. If it does, that is all the more reason for the Government to table the report. The Opposition sees no benefit, nor does Farmers and Graziers Direct Meat Supply Ltd, or anyone connected with it, in withholding that report. It is important to this debate and to the future of the co-operative to know whether the Government intends to proceed with the proposed actions—actions to be instituted against certain people—and to know what action the Government proposes to take on the charges made by the honorable member for Rodney in March last year when he said that clearly there was a case of embezzlement.

Mr COLEMAN (Syndal)—On a point of order, it is clear that the Leader of the Opposition is straying from the motion, which deals with the Minister's remarks. Mr Speaker, I draw your attention to the words of the motion.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. S. J. Plowman)—I do not uphold the point of order. The motion refers to the whole question of the Government granting a $4·5 million guarantee. The Leader of the Opposition is bringing in factors relating to the giving of that guarantee.

Mr WILKES (Leader of the Opposition)—One could say that the Premier has rebuked the Minister of Agriculture for being culpably honest. Unlike the Premier, the Minister of Agriculture was honest in what he said at the Liberal Party conference. He has been honest because he is the only Minister who

is preparing himself to sit in Opposition in this Parliament. I have not seen any suggestion from the Premier or from other Ministers that they are preparing themselves for Opposition. At least the Minister of Agriculture has shown that he wants to be culpably honest.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. S. J. Plowman)—The honorable member is now straying from the subject.

Mr WILKES—I am pointing out that if the Minister were not honest, he would not have made that statement, and that his honesty is preparing him for Opposition. The memory of the Premier and not that of the Minister is at fault. Yesterday the Premier said that he wanted to set the record straight. Obviously he did not do a very good job. Perhaps he should try again today during this debate. Indeed, it is imperative that the Premier attempts to set the record straight on this issue during this debate, and, at the same time, to set the record straight on some other issues.

For instance, what happened to the inquiry by the Fraud Squad into this matter? That question has to be answered. The Premier says, by interjection, that it has nothing to do with this debate. I can understand the reluctance of the Premier to adopt any suggestion about the investigation by the Fraud Squad. Honorable members are used to the Premier covering everything up. When the honesty of a Minister comes to the fore, the Premier still wants to cover up.

What happened to the charges that were to be laid? During debate last year the Premier said that interlocutory measures had been taken and that charges would shortly be dealt with. That was in March 1978. This is November 1979, but nothing has happened. I am sure that the honorable member for Rodney would be keen to get an answer to this question. After all, it appears that there was a similar assurance about the charges which led him to change his mind so dramatically when the affairs of the co-operative were last debated in this place. If the honorable member for Rodney were provided with that answer now, he would perhaps have another change of mind. What happened to the other investigation? What is the result of the other investigation?

How can investors be expected to provide the funds the co-operative is currently seeking when Ministers are saying that their support was purely for political reasons? How can investors be expected to continue their support when the Government continually tries to cover up the affairs of Co-operative Farmers and Graziers Direct Meat Supply Ltd or the inquiries that have been conducted into the affairs of the co-operative?

The Chernov report is the key. If the Chernov report were tabled and the Minister were to take action in regard to other abattoirs, there is no doubt that Co-operative Farmers and Graziers Direct Meat Supply Ltd would have a reasonable chance of trading itself out of its problems. The co-operative urgently needs more capital and the directors are working hard to ensure that it becomes available. The impact of the Minister's statement on those efforts is imponderable. There are broader questions about the matter that are even more important.

Is the Government in the habit of promising millions of dollars for the sake of winning seats at an election? That is the question being asked by people outside Parliament. They want to know whether all decisions of the Government are made on the premise that if an election is close and a certain action will enhance the Government's electoral prospects with certain people, that is the action that should be taken.

Is the Government in the habit of promising millions of dollars simply for the sake of winning seats? Honorable members will remember that prior to recent elections the Premier made promises in Geelong and Gippsland about public offices for Geelong and the Mitchell River dam for Gippsland. Each of those promises suggests that the honorable gentleman is very much in the habit of attempting to buy votes, and it has taken the honesty of the

Minister of Agriculture to show up the style and attitude adopted by the Premier. Can the Premier get his backbenchers, his Ministers or members of his party to agree on anything? As I mentioned before, the casino issue is the latest controversy. I do not believe the Premier can even get an answer on that.

Does the Government have any rational decision-making processes? I ask the Premier that question. He has been asked it before by the Opposition, but has resisted the temptation to answer it on other occasions. I put the question to him again: Does the Government have any rational decision-making processes? The record clearly suggests that it does not.

The Premier should set the record straight on all these issues and should explain why his Government consistently makes decisions in a haphazard, *ad hoc* and incompetent fashion. Sooner or later those decisions will catch up with the Premier, one after the other, if they have not already started doing so. He must explain how it is that the stories told by him and one of his senior Ministers—a man to whom I give credit for aspiring to the leadership of this State—can be so different. Both cannot be right. Which one is correct?

If one read the newspapers of Monday and today, one could be forgiven for not understanding whether the Premier was correct or whether the Minister of Agriculture was correct. One of them has to be wrong. The electors are entitled to know who it is. Both honorable members cannot be right. Either one of them has a bad memory or one of them is not telling the truth—which one is it? That is the question to be answered. Is the Minister of Agriculture forgetting things or is he not telling the truth? I do not believe he is forgetting things and has a bad memory, and I do not believe he is not telling the truth. Is the Premier forgetting things or not telling the truth? The Parliament and the public are entitled to straight answers to these questions, and this motion has been moved in an endeavour to obtain those answers.

Mr Ross-Edwards—They could both be telling the truth and just disagreeing.

Mr WILKES—I am not suggesting that either one is not telling the truth. I am saying that if one is not telling the truth, I want to know which one it is.

Mr I. W. Smith—That is a political statement.

Mr WILKES—It is convenient for the Minister to say it is a political statement after he has been admonished by the Premier for his free and frank statement at a Liberal Party conference. He did not repudiate that statement. Of course, as my colleague interjects, the statement is true—there is no doubt about that. How many decisions are made by the Government on the premise that if it can win votes by taking a certain course of action, political or non-political, it will take that course of action?

The Premier must also explain how his Government can be so cynical as to approach a multi-million dollar problem and consider only the electoral impact of the decision it makes. People could have been badly affected by any decision taken by Parliament not to guarantee the loan at that time. The Opposition took that view for a reason that was apparently different from that of the Government in deciding to guarantee 50 per cent of the amount. The Opposition took the view that Co-operative Farmers and Graziers Direct Meat Supply Ltd should be given the opportunity of trading out of the financial problems that existed at that time. It did so mindful of the actions then taken by the Government, from which nothing has eventuated.

However, there is nothing new about that. The Chernov report, the Fraud Squad report and the criminal proceedings themselves, the results of which have not been advised and are not likely to be advised, are further examples. It is commonly known around Melbourne that these inquiries have been held up. It is also commonly known that the Government will not release the Chernov report because it is fearful of an indictment of some of its own supporters. Everyone knows that Mr Chernov, in his report, has been highly critical of

certain people. The Premier knows that, as does the Minister of Agriculture. As far as they are concerned, those people will be protected and the cover-up will continue. It is a fine indication of the lack of leadership shown by the Premier. He is more concerned about winning a few votes in country seats than he is about the fate of millions of dollars of taxpayers' moneys.

At the week-end Victorians received a burst of honesty and candour from the Minister of Agriculture. The record strongly suggests that he was telling the truth and that his memory is as good as that of any other honorable members. He understood full well the decision that was made to assist the Co-operative Farmers and Graziers Direct Meat Supply Ltd and how it came to be made. I now invite the Minister of Agriculture to deny that he was being honest and that, as he said, it was a political statement. I deny that his memory is not as good as he imagined it might be when he made that statement at the Liberal Party conference.

Such honesty and candour from a Minister of this Government is welcome and it is also welcome to know that a Minister is not trying to cover up the maladministration and incompetency of the Government, but is explaining how haphazard the decision-making processes of the Government really are. However, it is not so welcome to observe that the Premier is upset by a burst of honesty from one of his Ministers.

How can the Premier repudiate a Minister of his Government? One wonders about the motives of a Premier who becomes upset when a Minister attempts to be honest when he believes the Government has done something wrong. One also wonders about a Government that would tolerate a Premier who is prepared to become upset about a fundamental issue of honesty and integrity, as portrayed by the Minister of Agriculture. However, one does not wonder about the public view of these matters. The quicker this brawling, divided, incompetent and miserable Government is voted out of office the better it will be for the people of Victoria. There is no doubt about that.

If the guarantee of the loan for the Co-operative Farmers and Graziers Direct Meat Supply Ltd did one thing for the State of Victoria, apart from what it was expected to do, it showed clearly the divisions within the Executive Government. If every decision made by the Government is made on the same premise, heaven help Victoria in the future! The sooner this Government acknowledges the honesty of the Minister of Agriculture, who is preparing himself for the Opposition benches better than any other Minister, and the sooner the Liberal Party acknowledges the honesty of the Minister, the sooner there will be better government in Victoria.

Mr I. W. SMITH (Minister of Agriculture) —I intend to defend myself against this dishonest and political attack. The way in which one uses or abuses the word "political" as it stems from the original statement I made needs clarifying. I should like to place on record the definition that I care to use of the word "political". According to *Webster's Dictionary* "political" means:

> Matters relating to Government as distinct from matters of law.

The *Oxford Dictionary* states that Gladstone said:

> The true political spirit is a faculty of nation-making.

If the Opposition likes to use the term "political" in its lowest sense it can do so and place on it the connotation argued by the Leader of the Opposition, but I should like to ask the Opposition what it believes a Government should base its decisions on. I submit that there are only three bases on which to make decisions—social, economic or political grounds.

In this debate I shall simply read sections from the *Hansard* report of the debate on the Co-operative Farmers and Graziers Direct Meat Supply Ltd Bill and then pose the question: On which of those three grounds did the Opposition make its decision to support the Bill?

The honorable member for Sunshine, who led the debate on behalf of the Opposition, said, as recorded at page 1134 of *Hansard*:

> Members of the Opposition do not oppose the Bill. They accept the proposition put last night by the Government that the House should proceed post haste with the Bill to meet the requirements of the Supreme Court regarding certain pending legal proceedings.

I remind the House that the Bill related to the guarantee of $4·5 million offered by the Government. The honorable member for Rodney, whose remarks appear at page 1137 of *Hansard* for 6 April 1978, said:

> I congratulate the Government for moving quickly. I regret that action was not taken to provide financial assistance to the co-operative at a much earlier date.

Did the National Party oppose the action taken by the Government? On what basis did it make its decision? Was it on social or economic grounds, or was it on political grounds?

I shall deal with the economic grounds and examine what Mr White, the honorable member for Doutta Galla Province, said in another place. His remarks appear at page 1285 of *Hansard*:

> The Opposition does not oppose the measure and it understands the urgency of it.

He also pointed out that a similar Bill had been introduced in the Federal Parliament. All parties in that Parliament supported the Bill. Mr White continued:

> It is the belief of the Opposition that in the near future the co-operative will come back to Parliament for financial assistance.

Many of the honorable member's remarks were in that vein. He continued:

> The Opposition agrees that the Government should provide this guarantee but there should have been an inquiry on the future prospects of the co-operative to ensure that the guarantee would not have to be taken up.

Clearly, Mr White, speaking on behalf of the Opposition, was expressing some doubts on economic grounds. He certainly did not suggest at any stage of his speech that the decision ought to be made on the basis of social grounds. Therefore, there can be only one basis for the support expressed by the Opposition—political grounds.

Each party received deputations from the farming community and from directors of the co-operative and each party supported the guarantee of $4·5 million. Doubts were also expressed by the honorable member for Melbourne on the financial capacity of the co-operative. The Opposition has made a fool of itself because it has identified to the House that the only basis on which it could possibly have supported this action through the Parliament was on political grounds. I am not being derogatory when I use the word 'political' because I have already explained the meaning of the word 'political', and it was in that context that I made the statement at the conference of the Victorian branch of the Liberal Party on Saturday.

If I am guilty of making a statement which gives a wrong connotation, the Opposition is similarly wrong in moving this motion, because that is the only basis upon which it could possibly have made its decision; that is clearly expressed. That is being honest.

I thank the Leader of the Opposition for the credibility that he gave to me but is the Opposition being that honest? I doubt it!

Mr HANN (Rodney)—The National Party is concerned about this matter. I must admit that, when I heard the news report of the statement attributed to the Minister of Agriculture, I considered it to be one of the most grossly irresponsible statements I had heard for some time, particularly from a Minister of the Crown in this State. The Government firmly agreed to support a financial arrangement on a share basis, by guaranteeing, in conjunction with the Commonwealth Government, an amount of $9 million. That decision was taken in April last year.

The Minister of Agriculture did not even make a contribution to the debate at that time so one can only assume that the honorable gentleman was quite happy to support the guarantee arrangements into which the Government had entered.

I emphasize that the Premier, on behalf of the Government, was particularly helpful in giving support to the

co-operative at that stage. I quote from a letter dated 17 April 1978 from the Premier, in which he stated, *inter alia*:

> I believe that the initiatives taken by the State Government, in co-operation with the Federal Government, in providing a Government guarantee for commercial borrowing by C. F. & G. is a clear indication of our willingness to provide concrete assistance to the co-operative in over-coming its current problems.
>
> As you are aware, a condition of this guarantee will be that Government approval be obtained for any management restructuring plan undertaken by the co-operative and details of proposed appointments to the board and top management positions will also have to be provided.

Those requirements were met by the directors of the co-operative and since that time it has been controlled by three of the original farmer directors with the other directors being appointees of the Federal and State Governments.

Since then we have been through probably one of the worst periods experienced in the meat industry for many years, going back before the last depression, because of a reduction in the number of livestock, particularly cattle and sheep. Despite those difficulties, which resulted in a number of major meat processing companies completely closing down their operations, during that period and up until the middle of last year, the co-operative managed to continue to operate and, having paid over $1 million in interest on the $9 million loan which was borrowed from Barclays Bank, it still managed to make a profit of $330 000 in the financial year ended 30 June this year.

It should be remembered that the result was attained during the worst year ever suffered by the meat industry. Prior to that, in the period when it was in the hands of receiver-managers, in 1977 the co-operative made a profit of $931 735 and, in 1978, a profit of $1 670 859. In fact the co-operative has been through its losing and profitable periods just as have other sectors of industry.

I remind honorable members that the directors are joint directors, being both elected and appointed with the approval of the Government. In their wisdom they have made a decision to issue a prospectus for the issue of 2 million ordinary shares at $2 each. The purpose is to raise additional capital so that it can partly repay the loan which the respective Governments have guaranteed and also have some working capital to continue its operations and ultimately to move away from service killing to conducting a contract killing business and a part trading operation in the future, an enterprise which has been most profitable over past years.

It seems to be an amazing coincidence that, at the very time the prospectus is issued to the 10 000 shareholders throughout Victoria, at the Liberal Party conference the Minister of Agriculture made a statement claiming that the decision to provide the guarantee was purely and simply one with political overtones, and virtually withdrew himself from any involvement in that decision and, I believe, deliberately attempted to jeopardize the proposed share issue.

That is the most serious aspect of this matter and it draws attention to the attitude of the Minister of Agriculture to the situation of the co-operative over a period of time. I propose to draw to the attention of the House the hypocritical nature of the Minister in this matter. In considering the history of the co-operative, one realizes that its operations have not always met with the approval of all sectors of the meat industry. It has had its profit situations just as it has had its loss situations. The co-operative has found itself in those situations from circumstances entirely beyond its control, circumstances which have aggravated the situation.

I remind the House that in 1974 the co-operative had a highly profitable period and for the first time in a number of years a dividend was paid to the shareholders. At that time the Government agreed to sell the meatworks of the Victorian Inland Meat Authority, which it owned, to the co-operative and, in the Minister's own words, that decision was made following a thorough investigation of the financial position of the co-operative.

I direct attention to a statement made by the Minister of Agriculture when opening the freezing room at the Co-operative Farmers and Graziers Direct Meat Supply Ltd in 1974 and I shall draw attention to the complete and absolute contradictions contained in a statement which the Minister made in Parliament last year. I draw attention to the fact the Minister tends to look at the opportunities at the particular time and makes his own decision relating to the circumstances at that time regardless of what he has said in the past. In 1974 the Minister of Agriculture said:

> I think it's about 12 years since I was here before with a heart full of hope and a very senior father at my right hand who had to be somewhat conned into making a small investment into farmers and graziers. I must say I was reminded time and time again over the subsequent few years until his death, what a lousy judge of financial investment I was. Thank God I've lived to see that I was right, unfortunately he hasn't.

Those were the words of the Minister of Agriculture commenting on the fact he had conned his father into making a small investment in the co-operative. He made that statement when he opened the freezing works in 1974. Honorable members should now consider what the same Minister of Agriculture said in the House on 8 March 1978 when a motion of want of confidence in the Treasurer and the Minister of Housing had been moved. As reported at page 127 of *Hansard* of 8 March 1978, the Minister stated:

> I well recall when the Co-operative Farmers and Graziers Direct Meat Supply Ltd. was first launched in 1959. The matter was discussed in our family and it was considered wise that we should buy a few shares—regretfully, with hindsight. My father, in his wisdom, made that decision and I think my mother inherited those shares—for what they are worth. I forget how many shares.

Mr I. W. Smith—You be very careful, or I will table the letter you wrote to me about this.

Mr HANN—I will table the letter the Minister wrote to me, if he wants me to; in fact, I will read it to the House. The Minister has now given me the opportunity, which I am delighted to accept, to refer to my letter and to his letter. Before doing so, I shall complete the point I was making. The Minister's address as factually recorded in 1974 when opening the freezing works was made at a time when the co-operative was operating at a highly profitable level for the first time in a number of years, but, in 1978, the Minister of Agriculture was not so high in his praise for the decision to purchase shares in the co-operative.

Mr I. W. Smith—It was not my decision.

Mr HANN—The Minister claimed that it was. Let me read it again. In 1974 the Minister said "I conned my father into making a small investment" and in 1978 the honorable gentleman stated that it was his father's decision and that he was opposed to it.

Mr I. W. Smith—That is right.

Mr HANN—The Minister has referred to a letter I wrote to him. I have been a strong supporter of the co-operative for many years because I believe in the right of the primary sector in this State to have a say in the operations of the meat processing side of the industry.

Mr Burgin—How many shares do you have?

Mr HANN—I do not possess shares in the co-operative.

Mr Coleman—That shows the level of your strong support.

Mr HANN—My family holds shares in the co-operative, but I do not because I was of a generation of farmers, as the honorable member for Syndal would know, which was not entitled to purchase shares. I do not hold any shares but I am happy to inform the House that I will be purchasing shares in the current issue.

On 28 February 1978—this will save the Minister from tabling the letter—I wrote to the Minister pointing out the situation regarding the co-operative and agreeing that there had been difficulties over the years. I indicated that the co-operative had operated as a meat processor and trader and that there had been substantial lifts in returns to meat producers. I further indicated that substantial profits were

being made by meat processing companies at that time, and that a large portion of the blame for the failure of the co-operative was related to the decision by the Australian Industries Development Corporation. I went on to indicate a number of matters which already appear in the records of this House.

I also made a number of requests on behalf of the shareholders and directors of the co-operative. Firstly, I asked:

> That the Attorney-General intervene in the Supreme Court to prevent, or defer, the sale of the meat works to Protean Holdings Ltd.

Secondly, I asked:

> That an immediate inquiry be established by the State Government to investigate all aspects of the failure of Co-operative Farmers and Graziers and to bring to justice those persons who were responsible for any illegal act.

Thirdly, I asked:

> That the State Government confer with the Prime Minister, and Treasurer, and the Australian Industries Development Corporation in an endeavour to encourage the Australian Industries Development Corporation to continue their financial support to the co-operative.

Mr BURGIN (Polwarth)—Mr Speaker, on a point of order, I fail to see what these letters have to do with the debate. The motion before the Chair relates to a statement made by the Minister of Agriculture the other day, whereas the letters refer to the operations of the co-operative at a much earlier date.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. S. J. Plowman)—Order! I shall rule on the point of order upon the resumption of the House after the suspension of the sitting.

JOINT SITTING OF PARLIAMENT

Monash University: Council of Adult Education

The SPEAKER (the Hon. S. J. Plowman)—Order! The time has arrived for this House to meet the Legislative Council in this Chamber for the purpose of sitting and voting together to choose three members of the Parliament of Victoria to be recommended for appointment to the Council of the Monash University, and one member of the Parliament of Victoria to be recommended for appointment to the Council of Adult Education.

The sitting was suspended at 6 p.m. until 8.4 p.m.

CO-OPERATIVE FARMERS AND GRAZIERS DIRECT MEAT SUPPLY LTD

The SPEAKER (the Hon. S. J. Plowman)—Prior to the suspension of the sitting, a point of order was raised by the honorable member for Polwarth regarding letters being quoted by the honorable member for Rodney. I have looked at the letters concerned. I understand they were referred to by the Minister of Agriculture. They are relevant and have been involved in the debate to date, and I do not uphold the point of order.

Mr HANN (Rodney)—Before the suspension of the sitting I was quoting extracts of a letter. I pointed out that I wrote to the Minister of Agriculture on 28 February and I raised a number of points. I will deal briefly with the last two. I asked whether the co-operative should be urged to prevent the sale of the meat works by not signing the authorization form. I also pointed out that the directors sought this action because the co-operative had been financially sound during the period a receiver-manager operated it. I also asked:

> That the assistance of senior Government advisers, in Treasury, Rural Finance and Settlement Commission, and the Registrar of Co-operatives be made available to the directors in an endeavour to restructure a board of management of the Co-operative.

In the letter, I referred to the fact that there had been a public meeting at Bendigo at which 600 people were present, and I indicated to the Minister that I believed, if the Government was not prepared to save the co-operative, there could be a backlash from the community. In the last paragraph of the letter, I wrote:

> I would be pleased if you could give consideration to the above points that I have raised in regard to this matter and I would hope that you will take immediate action to ensure that the Co-operative Meat Works are not sold off to Protean Holdings Limited, that every assistance is given to the Co-operative to enable it to continue in operation.

I will await further advice from you in regard to this matter.

The reply I received from the Minister was the worst I received from any Minister, and I had written to a number of Ministers including the Premier, the Minister of Lands, the Attorney-General and the Minister of Housing, just to name a few. They gave me detailed and carefully considered answers, generally supporting the co-operative.

The Minister of Agriculture, in a letter dated 14 March, replied in this manner:

Your letter of 28th February is just to hand and I am most grateful to you for advising me of your views in relation to the Co-operative Farmers and Graziers Brooklyn Meatworks which I shall bear in mind.

In other words, the Minister was not prepared to take any action. In opening the debate on behalf of members of the National Party, and putting the point of view of my party, I pointed out that we believe that the Minister seems to have a record of expediency in regard to these sorts of matters.

There is another matter that is applicable to this question of the Co-operative Farmers and Graziers Direct Meat Supply Ltd. It relates to the sale by the Government of the co-operative's meat works, which I mentioned earlier in a debate on the co-operative in 1974. The Minister referred to this matter when he opened the freezing works at Brooklyn in 1974. He said at that time that he was delighted to be at Brooklyn that week because the Government was concerned to preserve both the Ballarat and Bendigo works of the Victorian Inland Meat Authority as important industries in those cities to help decentralization. He went on to say that the Government had carried out a thorough investigation into the financial operations of the co-operative and it was satisfied that its decision to sell the works to the co-operative was appropriate. But, in a debate in the Parliament last year, when the Government made the announcement agreeing to make the loan, the Minister of Agriculture made this statement, which is recorded on page 127 of *Hansard* on 8 March 1978:

However, as a result of the interest I had in Co-operative Farmers and Graziers Direct Meat Supply Ltd, I was in a good position to assess its capacity. When it came to the time for the Government to make a decision about the Victorian Inland Meat Authority, there were many of my colleagues who wanted—and ultimately won out—the Victorian Inland Meat Authority at Bendigo and Ballarat to be sold to the Co-operative Farmers and Graziers Direct Meat Supply Ltd. I did not hold that view because in my commercial judgement the Co-operative Farmers and Graziers Direct Meat Supply Ltd was biting off more than it could chew. This company had limited profits at that time. The money it had available to it was being channelled by Mr Smart through Marquands into investments and, as the honorable member for Rodney has told the House, at a high interest rate—I believe of almost 18 per cent.

The Minister made no mention in 1974, when he opened the freezing works, that he even queried the sale of those works to the Co-operative Farmers and Graziers Direct Meat Supply Ltd. Yet last year the Minister said it was not his idea; he was not in favour of it, it was his colleagues who won the day.

The incident at the Liberal Party State Council at the week-end, when the Minister said that the Government, in joining in guaranteeing the loan of $9 million, did so as a matter of political expediency, again highlighted the Minister's attitude. He was apparently coming in behind a lobby group within the Liberal Party which is inclined towards the proprietary sector of the beef industry in this State.

In March, the Minister of Public Works declared himself as a shareholder and said he had supported the co-operative over the years. In the debate the Premier showed great sympathy with the co-operative and its principles, and said it was the desire of the Government to provide a share of the guarantee to support the co-operative at that time.

On page 1145 of *Hansard* there is a record of a comment by the Minister of Public Works that it was important that the Bill be passed quickly in the interests of the shareholders of the co-operative, and that it ought to be made clear that the actions taken by the Government had been in the interests of all shareholders throughout Victoria. The Minister of Agriculture did not make a contribution to

the debate on the Bill. There was no suggestion by the Minister of Agriculture that he was personally opposed to the guarantee, that the Government purely and simply provided this guarantee out of expediency.

The reality is that it was supported by all political parties in this House, and I was surprised at the approach adopted by the Leader of the Opposition in this matter today. He ignored the fact that the Labor Party, the National Party and the Government supported the guarantee. That was one point on which all parties were united.

At this stage, as an amendment to the motion before the House, I move:

That the following words be added to the motion: "and that this House censures the Minister of Agriculture for his public statements claiming that the only reason for the guarantee was an impending election, thus doing untold harm to the potential prosperity of the co-operative."

In other words, the announcement made by the Minister of Agriculture at the week-end could do untold harm to the potential prosperity of the co-operative.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. S. J. Plowman)—Is the amendment seconded?

Mr WHITING (Mildura)—Yes, I second it, Mr Speaker.

Mr HANN (Rodney)—The National Party is concerned that the Minister of Agriculture chose to indicate that, in his opinion, his Government made the decision to guarantee a loan to the Co-operative Farmers and Graziers Direct Meat Supply Ltd through sheer political expediency, and did not give proper and careful consideration to the implications of that guarantee. That seems to be contrary to what we have heard from the Premier in this House. The Premier has shown a sympathetic understanding of the needs of the co-operative, and the Government offered a great deal of support, both at the hearing before the Supreme Court and in the ultimate agreement to provide the guarantee, and that support was forthcoming from Ministers generally.

The Minister of Agriculture, who should be the leading spokesman in the State in support of the farmers, seems to have acted for political expediency.

The co-operative is now making a share issue, which I hope is successful. If so, it would immediately reduce the Government's commitment on the guarantee. The Minister of Agriculture should be anxious for that to happen. In their wisdom, the directors of the co-operative are seeking to raise $4 million which will be used to help pay out the $9 million loan. On that vital aspect, the Minister should have shown more responsibility in making his recent statement. The decision to issue more shares is made at a time when the co-operative believes it has a real opportunity of lifting itself out of the decline to which it was heading until the past twelve months when the directors were finally achieving control of the co-operative so that it would be able to play an important part in the industry.

I am concerned that the Minister appears to have adopted a line supporting the proprietary interests of the industry. I am surprised at the statements he has made in the House against the interests of the co-operative. It appears there was some malice in his timing because the Minister could have given some moral support to the co-operative in its endeavours to seek share capital from both shareholders and meat producers in Victoria. The Government should examine this aspect carefully. The Premier should give moral support to the co-operative now because it is in the interests of the Government to do so.

Interestingly, the co-operative is effectively doing what the Liberal Party was trying to do. The Liberal Party argued that the Government should not be involved in the private meat processing interests. The decision of the directors to make the share issue would reduce the level of commitment of the Government in the co-operative and, for that reason, the Minister of Agriculture should be strongly in favour of it and be prepared to support it. The only difference in this instance is that a large number of meat producers are involved in the industry, in a situation which is rapidly developing where the meat processing industry is moving into the hands of a few operators. That

is a dangerous trend, especially in view of the history of the processing side of the industry. Honorable members will recall that in 1976 meat producers were forced to shoot or slaughter thousands of cattle in other ways because the same meat processing companies—the private operators at the time—were not prepared to offer the farmers anything for the cattle in the market place. The Government provided a levy of $5 a head and suddenly there was a lift in the market place, albeit of $10, but at least it was $10 more than farmers were being offered at the time.

It is vital that the co-operative is maintained. If it is to be, it needs the strong support of all political parties on the share issue and it needs the support of the Government for its future operations, particularly in maintaining the guarantee arrangements until the financial position of the co-operative is improved. The co-operative aims at achieving that in a reasonable and frank manner. It needs further assistance from the Government on any action that results from the Chernov report, which has been in the hands of the Government for five weeks. Legal action has not yet been taken. The Government should either lay charges forthwith, if that is its intention, or should table the report urgently in the House. The report is relevant to the recent statements of the Minister of Agriculture that the co-operative has twice failed.

The Minister of Agriculture failed to mention in his statement—made shortly after he had opened a freezing works and had praised the co-operative and its financial management—that the Government was supposed to conduct a thorough financial investigation into the affairs of the co-operative because money was to be transferred into funds and could not be taken back. He claimed that the co-operative had twice failed and that the Government would not be prepared to support these organizations in the future. In fact, the Government was very slow to appoint an inspector to inquire into the reasons for the failure, but although it has had the report for five weeks, no action has been taken and no charges have been laid. One should need to wait only for a certain period before action is taken.

It is important to realize that the Victorian Government, like the Commonwealth Government, has provided a half share of a guarantee of $9 million. The valuation placed on the co-operative works, prepared by private companies prior to 1977 when they were to be sold, indicated an approximate replacement value of $15 million. The Government is well and truly secure in its guarantee and I cannot understand why the Liberal Party would wish to argue about that. The Government gave its total support in its half share of the guarantee of the $9 million loan and, although one can be grateful to the Premier and to the Government for that decision, one can only express sincere regret that the Minister of Agriculture should make such a rash statement at the week-end, for whatever reasons he did so.

Mr McClure—Why did you support the co-operative?

Mr HANN—The National Party strongly supports the co-operative as do members of the Government party and members of the Opposition because it is in the best interests of the meat industry that producers should have a direct involvement in the processing industry. One can only hope that the remarks of the Minister, in making the statement of expediency, does not jeopardize the share issue and any future progress of the co-operative. Members of the National Party believe the Minister should be censured for his statement. We express concern that unless the Government is prepared to offer its moral support, the co-operative will be damaged. To his credit, the Premier has already indicated that he dissociates himself from the statement. I should like him to indicate his support for the co-operative.

The co-operative is important to the meat industry. It affects the whole economy. If the industry is left in the hands of private proprietary processing industries, an occasion could arise similar to one referred to in the House

earlier of a company with a shady background—and one wonders if that does not apply to other sections of the industry. It is important that the co-operative should survive and be given strong support by all political parties. I hope the Minister of Agriculture has not damaged the future prosperity of the co-operative and I urge the Government and the Premier to strongly support the share issue. I also hope the Labor Party will support the co-operative; it has a strong, vested interest in maintaining employment in the meat industry. For those reasons I move:

That the following words be added to the motion:

"and that this House censures the Minister of Agriculture for his public statements claiming that the only reason for the guarantee was an impending election, thus doing untold harm to the potential prosperity of the co-operative."

I ask the House to support the amendment. It should not tolerate the Minister of Agriculture using expediency for his own ends, depending on current events, regardless of what he has said in the past. On at least two occasions, the Minister has either directly or indirectly completely changed his point of view of the co-operative. He should be strongly censured.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. S. J. Plowman)—Order! Honorable members will now be speaking on the motion and on the amendment.

Mr HAMER (Premier)—The motion is nonsensical and hypocritical. The co-operative consists of hundreds of farmer members and it operates in an area which, to say the least, is fraught with difficulty and littered with failures. I make it quite plain that there were good reasons for sharing in a joint guarantee with the Commonwealth Government in April 1978.

Mr Fordham—Will you say what those reasons were?

Mr HAMER—I will; I have only spoken a few sentences and I ask the honorable member to wait until I have a chance to complete my remarks. There were good reasons for supporting the guarantee. If a similar set of events occurred now, the Government would take the same course of action. At the time, there was a choice between the extinction of the co-operative, wiping it right off the books and liquidating its assets and paying the members of the co-operative 50 cents in the $1 on the one hand, and giving it a chance to carry on and trade its way out of its difficulties on the other.

I shall outline to the House the sequence of events leading to the choice being made, but, before doing so, I stress that the same choice would be made again in exactly the same way. For all sorts of reasons, it is plain that there are always problems for operators in the meat industry. The rather chequered career of the co-operative illustrates that point. The sequence of events leading to the guarantee really began in 1975 when receivers were appointed to the company for the second time. Then, the secured creditor, the Australian Industries Development Corporation, was owed about $6·5 million, and the unsecured creditors were owed sums totalling $7·8 million. It was a difficult situation. Nevertheless, in the two years that followed, the co-operative was restructured by the receivers and apparently traded reasonably profitably.

In October and November 1977, the receivers called for tenders for the sale of the abattoirs at Brooklyn and this set the cat among the pigeons, because, for the first time, it appeared that the receivers were about to wind up the co-operative and distribute its assets. Some frantic action was then taken to devise a scheme by which the co-operative could escape from receivership and could trade under its own name and at its own direction. That was the objective a group of shareholders in the Co-operative Farmers and Graziers Direct Meat Supply Ltd set themselves and they worked extremely hard over the December-January period.

The next event which forced the hand of everybody was that the co-operative put up a scheme for restructuring its debts but, on 1 February, that scheme was rejected by the Australian Industries Development Corpor-

ation. This was a critical moment, because the receivers indicated that they proposed to accept the most favourable tender for the sale of the abattoirs.

On the following day, the receivers announced that the abattoirs would be sold to Protean (Holdings) Ltd, subject to Supreme Court approval, for $10·25 million. Their scheme was that the proceeds of the sale, together with $5 million cash in hand, would enable all creditors, both secured and unsecured, to be paid in full, with sufficent funds remaining for the payment to shareholders of about 50 cents in the dollar.

As may be imagined, in view of all the action that had already been taken, that set a time clock in motion because it was obvious that, if the Supreme Court was not to give approval for this sale, there would have to be some viable alternative proposition. The co-operative had to put together such a proposition before the scheduled date of the Supreme Court hearing.

On the following day, 3 February, the co-operative sent a telex to the Prime Minister in Canberra asking for continued AIDC support. In other words, they said, "It is wrong for the corporation to force this sale. If the corporation is prepared to support the co-operative, we can go along to the Supreme Court and argue against consent being given". Many people were active at that time. On 14 February, I received a telegram from the Leader of the National Party. On 28 February, I received a letter from the honorable member for Rodney and Ministers and many back-bench members on the Government side were concerned about the proposed sale of the Brooklyn works to Protean (Holdings) Ltd. Time was short.

On 2 March, the co-operative made a submission to the Commonwealth Treasurer asking for Federal agreement to a joint Commonwealth-State guarantee to support a borrowing of $9 million. At that time, the co-operative had not approached the State but it initially made this proposal to the Federal Government.

On 3 March, the directors of the co-operative came to see me, and I would like to refer to notes taken at that conference because those notes illustrate the attitude of the Victorian Government to the whole proposition. The interview occurred on 3 March and it took place between Mr Gilmour, who is chairman of the co-operative, Mr Clive Brooks of Moule Hamilton and Derham, legal advisers to the co-operative, myself and the acting secretary of my department, Mr John Jack, who took the notes from which I am now quoting.

Mr Brooks said that he understood that a contract of sale for the Brooklyn meatworks had been signed by the receivers and the application to the Supreme Court was to be heard on 15 March which was in about twelve days time. He claimed that, despite many requests to the receivers, the board had not received complete figures which would enable it to put a scheme together. This was the main element he came to see me about. He complained that they did not really have the figures which would enable them to assess where the co-operative stood and how it could be restructured. He proposed that there be this joint guarantee to the co-operative to the extent of $9 million and he proposed that the Commonwealth should take $6 million and the State $3 million, which I wish had occurred but it did not. Mr Brooks believed he could raise the necessary finance on the commercial market.

Mr Fordham—Good old Barclays!

Mr HAMER—Good old Barclays. He told me that he had had discussions with the Federal Treasurer, Mr Howard, and the Prime Minister and that the Commonwealth Government appeared to be in favour of assisting the co-operative in the way suggested.

My reply then was that the Government had always been willing to try to help solve the problem. I had already spoken to the Prime Minister about it. The main question, so far as the Government was concerned, was who would run the new co-operative if

the Government freed it of its receivership to let it run under its own steam. Mr Gilmour indicated that they proposed to retain the general manager, Mr Dransfield, but a new board would have to be constituted and he recognized that it would have to be business orientated. That was the second part of our discussion.

I insisted that any new board would need to have a real business bias so that it could run the show with some prospect of financial success. Finally I said that I understood from the Attorney-General that the co-operative was having trouble meeting counsel's fees for the Supreme Court case against the receivers to challenge the sale of the Brooklyn meatworks. I said the Government would help it with counsel's fees if that was a problem. I finally said that I would make sure the Registrar of Co-operative Societies was instructed to require the receivers to provide the necessary facts and figures to the board which would enable it to put together a detailed proposition.

The meeting concluded. They went away to put together a proposition on figures which I had arranged to be supplied to them and that was the end of that meeting for the time being.

On the next day, the Government provided $2000 towards the cost of counsel's fees so the board could brief counsel for the Supreme Court case.

Mr Whiting—When are you coming to the statement of the Minister of Agriculture at the week-end, that is what the motion is all about, remember?

Mr HAMER—I am coming to the crux of the matter in my own time. As I said, that was the sequence of events up to that point.

The next event was a telegram from the Prime Minister on 8 March, five days later, saying that the Federal Government was prepared to support a guarantee for a loan of $9 million if the Victorian Government would meet 50 per cent of the guarantee. I replied the same day that the Government would do so.

The purpose of giving the House that sequence of events is simply to indicate that the Government was favourably inclined to try to help the co-operative. Neither the Government nor the co-operative had the basic information on which to make a detailed proposition and the Government arranged for the board of directors to have it and they were to come back.

When the Minister speaks of "our decisions being pre-empted" he is quite right. Before they had time to come back, the Federal Government had said, "We will support a guarantee. Will you do the same and share it? In those circumstances, the Government had no choice but to do it. The actual decision to that extent was pre-empted. I am not saying that it was taken out of the Government's hands.

Mr Ross-Edwards—Did the Government say "Yes" or "No"?

Mr HAMER—The Government naturally said, "Yes", because it was anxious to help this co-operative. The Government said "Yes" on the clear understanding that it wanted to have an equal say with the Federal Government in the terms and conditions of the proposed borrowing and the repayment of the loan. The Government has never varied from that. The Government also wanted a say in what the board's structure should be. That was the attitude the Victorian Government took and I do not believe the Minister was in any way wrong when he said the decision was pre-empted.

Mr Ross-Edwards—Were you pre-empted?

Mr HAMER—In that sense we were pre-empted. Since then, it has been a difficult time for all operators in the meat industry. On the information I have, the co-operative has traded reasonably well in all the circumstances. There have been many problems for the meat industry but the co-operative appears to be operating at a profit. However, I cannot tell because I do not have any of the latest figures.

That is the story of how the Government gave that guarantee. As I said, the Government would do the same now

in similar circumstances. Was it political? In the sense that one has to decide what is in the best interests of both the company and the community, it was a political decision.

Mr Fordham—It is not a dirty word.

Mr HAMER—It was a decision about a co-operative; whether it should go to the wall or whether it should be supported; whether it was in the best interests of the meat industry, the co-operative's members and the country, to do so. If it was a political decision in that sense, then it was shared by every member of the House, because every honorable member unanimously supported it. All honorable members considered, as did the Government, that it was in the best interests of Victoria that this guarantee should be given. In that sense it was a political decision. However, everybody shared in it.

It is therefore hypocritical to move a motion like this based on the word "pre-empt" or "political".

I come now to the statement about the election. I do not recall the slightest reference to any election. After all, most of this occurred in the latter part of 1977 and the first part of 1978. The final decision the Government made was on 8 March, some fourteen months before any election. In this respect I do not agree with the Minister.

Mr Fordham—You do not agree with the Minister?

Mr HAMER—I have said that. I do not agree with the Minister that it was a factor. If it had been a factor, it would have been a factor shared by every member of the House because all honorable members had the chance in April to say either "Yes" or "No" to the proposition and everybody said "Yes". That was a unanimous vote in the House.

Both the Opposition and the National Party, to their credit, not only supported the Bill but also hurried it along. In fact the time for the debate was shortened, as was the period of the adjournment of the debate, so that the Bill could be expedited. If anyone was thinking about elections then, everybody was thinking about elections.

Mr Fordham—An election was in the wind.

Mr HAMER—An election was not in the wind; it was 14 months before the election. Whatever the factors were, be they political, electioneering or whatever, they were shared by every honorable member.

I come now to the amendment. The amendment is based on an entire misconception of what happened. The Minister of Agriculture has never claimed that the only reason for the guarantee was an impending election. If honorable members read his statement, it was a very sideline reference. Any amendment based on that distorted type of statement must be rejected by the House.

All honorable members would want to wish the co-operative well. I hope that the new share issue is an entire success. I believe the problem the co-operative has is working capital. It is short of working capital and it is difficult at times of high stock prices for it to be otherwise. The best way of getting working capital is through raising equity, as the co-operative is seeking to do, and I wish it well. It has a chance of trading its way through this problem. Whether the co-operative is going to be a success, as it hoped at that time nearly two years ago, is another matter but if it takes longer, I believe the Government would again be sympathetic and would not insist upon full payment of interest and principal on the due date so long as the co-operative had a reasonable chance of trading its way out.

One cannot make promises about that. It would depend on circumstances, but that ought to be said because people do not want to put money into an enterprise that is likely to fail in the foreseeable future. I do not believe for a minute that the Minister of Agriculture implied that the only reason for the guarantee was an impending election. So far as I am concerned, the election was not impending, and whatever decisions were taken then would be taken now, two and a half years ahead of an election, because of the merits of the argument and because

that is what the co-operative needed. The co-operative will have support in full measure.

Mr FORDHAM (Footscray)—The Premier has spoken for approximately 15 minutes, notionally on the motion and the amendment, but the only relevant comment of the Premier, at least in relation to the motion, was his statement in response to interjections from this side of the House that he disagreed with the statements of the Minister of Agriculture. The honorable gentleman did not say that once or twice, but at least three times, in response to the interjections. In those circumstances, the Premier has no alternative but to support the motion. I remind the honorable gentleman of the simple and straightforward words of the motion. I repeat it for his benefit:

> That this House expresses its concern at the statement made by the Minister of Agriculture at the recent Liberal Party conference regarding the reasons for the Government granting a $4·5 million guarantee to the Farmers and Graziers Co-operative and the subsequent statements by the Premier rejecting the Minister's statement.

In substance the Premier has agreed, because he has put a significant distance between himself and the statement of the Minister of Agriculture, who is responsible for this important area of Government activity.

Mr Ross-Edwards—Would you not do the same?

Mr FORDHAM—I would do the same.

Mr Kennett—What are you talking about?

Mr FORDHAM—The honorable member for Burwood has obviously decided to support the Minister of Agriculture in the conflict that now faces the House. It is a problem and I appreciate the worried look on the face of the honorable member for Burwood. The problem that he and all other members of the Government party face is that the Minister of Agriculture has taken a certain stance on an issue and an openness to the public and his own party, but the Premier has taken a completely different view. That is the matter which the Opposition believes should be aired in Parliament. Honorable members should discuss the significance of that divergence of opinion. It is not a divergence of opinion concocted by members of the Opposition. The Premier has said that he disagrees with one of his Ministers and that divergence ought to be aired in the House and aired with the public of Victoria.

In the vast majority of his contribution to the debate, the Premier talked about the history of Co-operative Farmers and Graziers Direct Meat Supply Ltd. Frankly, all honorable members know it by heart. They have heard it not once, not twice but goodness knows how many times in recent years. The honorable member for Rodney once again gave a potted history of the background of the co-operative and its activities in Victoria. At the end of his speech, he added some general statements of concern at the Minister's comments, and I presume that means he will support the motion. In addition he proposed an amendment to add words to the motion. The Labor Party will support the amendment.

The matter is important because it deals with an obvious division of opinion within the Government of the day. Despite the rhetoric or other attempts that are made to raise side issues, let us deal with the matter before the House as outlined in the motion and the amendment. The Minister of Agriculture in his extremely brief reply indicated two things: Firstly his contempt for the Parliament in that he refused to talk about and outline in any detail the statement that he made to the Liberal Party at the week-end—and secondly, his attempt to evade and avoid the matters of principle that result from his decision to make such a public statement.

The honorable gentleman tried, in some sort of fourth form or middle school manner, to divide social questions, economic questions and political questions. For many generations philosophers and sociologists have attempted

to make such a delineation, but economic questions are very much part of our social life and political questions, political judgments and political determinations in turn relate to an understanding of the social and economic issues, whether separate and independent or integrated, that are before the House tonight.

Such a lecture or comment on civics, brief though it may have been, was irrelevant to the circumstances. The Minister went further and tried to define a political question. For the information of members of the Government party who were not in the House at the time, and not many of them were here, the Minister said that political matters were those relating to the Government as distinct from matters relating to law. What a fascinating dichotomy the honorable gentleman tried to develop. I wonder which member of the Government party, Minister, or back-bencher, would try to take up such a commentary. It is nothing less than cant and hypocrisy on the part of the Minister of Agriculture, whom I invite to try to delineate these social, economic and political questions. It just cannot be done. The Leader of the Opposition outlined properly and precisely the circumstances and background facing honorable members today. We must act responsibly and acknowledge the issue, the facts of the matter and the circumstances of the statement by the Minister of Agriculture.

I do not intend to reiterate the background of the Minister in relation to the Co-operative Farmers and Graziers Direct Meat Supply Ltd, but I wish to make one simple point. Since the Minister's indiscretion, and I do not think anyone will disagree that it was an indiscretion, that is, his talk on this question of politics, he has attempted to run away, because he did not talk of the matter being political. The Minister did not say that at the week-end conference.

Mr Fordham

Mr Ross-Edwards—An election was on the way.

Mr FORDHAM—I take up the interjection by the Leader of the National Party. The Minister said an election was on the way. There is a distinct and fundamental difference between a political matter and a straight party statement, that is, "an election is on the way". The Minister, by that statement, was indicating simply that the Government of the day and he as Minister—he made it clear reluctantly, and I admire him for doing so—were prepared to commit public funds in one way or another to buy votes. The amount of public funds involved was large—$4·5 million. It is as simple and straightforward as that. The Minister meant that, and at no stage has he denied that that is exactly what it is all about.

In March 1978, the expectation was an election later in 1978. There was trouble with the major group in the farming community—the Co-operative Farmers and Graziers Direct Meat Supply Ltd. The Minister of Public Works is interjecting. He obviously feels sensitive about this matter. I wonder what his stance is on the comment by the Minister of Agriculture about buying votes. That is what it was all about. The Minister and the Government of the day—perhaps against the advice of the Minister who talked about his philosophical principles—decided to go ahead with the guarantee. Philosophical principles are also often portrayed by the Government and sometimes forgotten, as the Minister will realize. He reminded the Liberal Party conference at the week-end, and the honorable member for Burwood would have gone along with him, that an election was on the way. It was not a matter of politics or some grand matter of social and economic principles. I agree that that is what politics is all about, but not to the point of being prepared to commit public funds for the sake of a seat or a couple of seats to enable the Government to survive.

Frankly, I admire the Minister of Agriculture for his courage in saying what he did at the Liberal Party conference. At least he had the guts to bring the matter forward. I wish I could express the same admiration of his contribution to the Parliament today. He spoke for 3 or 4 minutes and refused categorically to outline his attitude to the statement made to the Liberal Party at its State conference. He showed a contempt for Parliament and for the public of Victoria, which I did not expect from the honorable gentleman. I thought he would reiterate the attitude that he portrayed at the Liberal Party conference at the week-end and make quite clear his view.

The honorable gentleman is, of course, in a bind because the Premier has said, since the Minister's contribution, that the Minister was inaccurate and that he had a bad memory. The Premier reiterated in his contribution this evening that he disagreed with the Minister. I believe the Minister of Agriculture has no alternative but to speak on the amendment moved by the National Party. I challenge him to do so and make clear what views he held at the week-end and what views he now holds on this important matter.

I believe this to be the point that the Minister of Agriculture, in his own honest way, was making:

Mr Ross-Edwards—His usual tactless way.

Mr FORDHAM—It may be tactless. The activities of this Government since 1978 have had only one thing in mind, that is, an eight letter word, "survival". The Government has made decisions, whether of a legislative or administrative nature, that have had only one factor and interest—hanging on or surviving. Members of the Government party are restive. The honorable member for Niddrie will remember that before the election Government supporters told the House that there were no more land deals.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. S. J. Plowman)—Order! The honorable member is straying.

Mr FORDHAM—I am drawing a brief analogy in passing that this Government in its attempts at survival has not told the whole truth to the Victorian public, whether about land deals—

The SPEAKER—Order!

Mr FORDHAM—I will move on—whether about Government reserves or whether about the subject of the motion before the Chair.

The SPEAKER—Order! I have indicated to the honorable member that the motion is fairly clear and has nothing to do with land deals or other matters to which he is now referring. I ask the honorable member to confine his remarks to the motion.

Mr FORDHAM—I move back to my main theme, that the Government, if nothing else, has been consistent on issue after issue involving portfolio after portfolio. There has been a major attempt to evade and avoid the public of this State in dealing with this host of issues. The Co-operative Farmers and Graziers Direct Meat Supply Ltd matter is very much in this pattern. At the week-end the Minister of Agriculture, deliberately or not, opened up and said clearly that the decision of the Government was against the philosophy and beliefs of the Government but it suited it for election purposes; not for political purposes in the principled sense, but for election purposes.

Mr Austin—He did not say that.

Mr FORDHAM—I take up the interjection of the Minister of Public Works and refer him to the newspaper report of the day which indicate that the Minister said that the guarantee was given for election purposes. The Minister has since reiterated that statement. In following the comments of the Premier, the House has no alternative but to support the motion and express its concern at the statement by the Minister. The Premier has repudiated him. I believe subsequent Government supporters will not be supporting the Minister and I ask honorable members to support the motion and the amendment before the House.

Mr ROSS-EDWARDS (Leader of the National Party)—I support the amendment moved by the honorable member for Rodney. This is a narrow debate which concerns what the Minister of Agriculture said at the Liberal Party council meeting last Sunday—what he said and what he meant. I was not there, but we were fortunate that there were some able and senior journalists present. Their notes seemed to tally very well. Not many Liberals were present either on Sunday morning when rural policies were being discussed. Apparently the journalists outnumbered the delegates, but I gathered from the reports that at least the journalists' notes tallied very closely.

Briefly, these are some of the alleged comments made by the Minister of Agriculture. "The Government was caught in an election year bind." "Bind" is one of the Minister's favourite expressions. "The Minister said the loan had the approval of the Premier even though financing of that sort was against party philosophy". The Premier certainly disagreed with that.

Mr I. W. Smith—None of that is right.

Mr ROSS-EDWARDS—The *Sun* of Monday, 19 November states, "The Minister was caught in a bind". Then the *Age* on Monday said "Providing finance. Politically motivated. Caught in a bind". "The Government had decided to back the loan because it was an election year". That is what the Minister said.

Mr JONA (Minister for Community Welfare Services)—On a point of order, Mr Speaker, may I seek your guidance for the advantage of the debate. Is it in order for the House to continue to debate a motion on the basis of the accuracy or inaccuracy of a newspaper report rather than to proceed on remarks actually made at the State council meeting? I seek your guidance on whether the House is in order debating remarks which may or may not have been said at the meeting.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. S. J. Plowman)—Order! Honorable members will be aware that from time to time the media reports are not entirely accurate. However, those honorable members who were not present at the Liberal Party conference must rely for some of their information at least on press reports. I therefore cannot uphold the point of order. However, the Minister will have the opportunity of refuting those statements and correcting them if he chooses.

Mr ROSS-EDWARDS (Leader of the National Party)—Thank you, Mr Speaker. The debate could not have started if honorable members had not taken notice of the media reports. According to the Minister, the Government had decided to back the loans because it was election year and the Federal Government had already volunteered support. Obviously, the Premier was embarrassed and made one of the most ingenious comments I have ever heard from him. I congratulate him for it. His statement was simply that the Minister had an inaccurate memory. He said that the Minister of Agriculture was wrong in saying that the guarantee was advanced because an election was pending. According to the statements in the Melbourne daily newspapers, the Premier went on to say that there was unanimous Parliamentary approval for the guarantee. He has repeated that tonight.

The Premier went on to say that the decision which was made early in March 1978 had absolutely nothing to do with any impending election. He said that Government support of an industry did not mean that it was socialized. He also said that the co-operative was a free enterprise organization supported by individual farmers and the Government had decided to support it. In other words, it was not against Liberal Party philosophy. The *Sun* on Tuesday states, "Smith's memory a little inaccurate". The Premier went on to say and I quote:

> I do not know quite what he was referring to, because I think his memory is a little inaccurate.

The Premier said that support of the co-operative had nothing to do with the election.

Just to complete the picture, Senator Carrick, a distinguished Liberal Cabinet Minister in Canberra, said that there

was absolutely no thought in mind of any electoral expediency in the Federal Government's decision. All parties had agreed that the decision to guarantee the loan of half of $9 million had the unanimous support of Parliament. Of course, it had the full support of the Minister of Agriculture at the time. One can only assume that each and every member of this Chamber in March 1978 thought the legislation to be in the best interests of the State. It had their support.

What did the Minister of Agriculture mean when he said that financing of that sort was against party philosophy? If the Minister had made a detailed statement of what he said and went through the press cuttings it would have been of more help to this debate. However, he is now challenging the accuracy of the media and says it did not accurately report what he said. He has had his opportunity.

Mr Wilkes—Absolutely.

Mr ROSS-EDWARDS—Of course he has. How can the Minister say that? He supported the guarantee and, not for the first time since 1967, he supported financial assistance to another co-operative. So how can it be against Liberal Party philosophy? Was he expressing his true views to the council on that Sunday, after having given his support as a Minister of the Crown to the guarantee in the House? In my view on this occasion the Premier has shown remarkable tolerance with the Minister of Agriculture. He has simply said that the Minister has a bad memory. In other words, the Premier has made it clear that the Minister's statement last Sunday was not the truth. He has got a bad memory.

Mr Speaker, I will put three propositions to you. The first possibility is that the Minister has a bad memory. The second possibility is that he told an untruth to the Liberal Party council on Sunday. The third possibility is that what he said is his personal belief; that he is a cynic and he went along with the Cabinet decision as a necessary political move at the time. However, on Sunday, carried away with the electric atmosphere, he supported the mood of the meeting although not believing it to be in the best interests of the State. He went on to say that, despite the fact that it was contrary to Liberal Party philosophy, the guarantee was given. I will not try to guess what is the correct assessment; only the Minister can answer this question. Obviously it is a matter for his own conscience.

Mr Wilkes—He would have done better at the Labor Party conference.

Mr ROSS-EDWARDS—There would not have been such niceties at the Labor Party conference. However, I accept the Premier's statement that the Government made its decision to guarantee the loan in the best interests of Victoria and that the Minister's statement was wrong in fact. That is my assessment.

The question which confronts the Premier, the Government and the Parliament is: Can a Minister with such a bad memory remain a Minister of the Crown? When the Premier says that one of his senior Ministers has a bad memory——

Mr Wilkes—That is tantamount to saying he tells untruths.

Mr ROSS-EDWARDS—I did not say that and the Premier did not say the Minister told untruths. I put that as one of the possibilities. The Premier said the Minister had a bad memory. The Minister is under an obligation to the Premier, to his party, to Parliament, to the public of Victoria and, not least of all, to himself, to explain what he said. Why did he go out of his way to mention being caught up in an election year? Why did he mention the election year at all? If one says something it must mean something. That is an old court room saying but it is true—one must mean something when one says something. It must have some meaning and the Minister has to stand up on this amendment and say why he mentioned an election year. The next election coming up was a State and not a Federal election. The Premier must be equally mystified as I am or why did he mention the word? It is of no use the Minister using his usual excuse of blaming the Federal Government for whatever happens. As the Premier said, it was a case of the State Government saying yes or no and it said,

"Yes", supported by the Minister, the Government, the Opposition and the National Party.

Obviously the Minister has decided to tough it out. That is the nature of the man. I suggest to the Minister that for the first time since he entered this Chamber in 1967, he has to look at himself and either admit he was wrong and apologize, or, if he is not in agreement with a major Government decision, to resign his portfolio. It must be one or the other. I have never known him to admit that he has been wrong about anything. This is his opportunity. If he admits it, I will have a great deal of admiration for him for doing so.

There is a lot more I could say about the Minister, but in fairness to him I will refer only to what happened, to what he said and the spirit of what he said last Sunday. The Minister is not being condemned only by the National Party, by the Opposition or by his Government colleagues. He is being condemned by his own words which the Premier pointed out were wrong and said that he had a bad memory. Once again, I commend the Premier for his forbearance and patience.

Mr BURGIN (Polwarth)—As I listen to the debate this evening when there is a list of very important Bills which will probably keep honorable members into the early hours of the morning, it runs through my mind that we can be politically impotent in this Parliament. We are debating a motion moved by the Opposition and an amendment moved by the honorable member for Rodney. It seems to me that the motion and the amendment have been moved solely on the interpretation of press reports of what was said. It is seldom that I find myself able to agree with something that the Leader of the National Party has said, but I am pleased to be speaking after him tonight. I could go through the same press cuttings from the same newspapers and point out to the House that, although those reporters heard the Minister say certain words, they all reported them slightly differently, and the Leader of the National Party pointed that out to the House. However, he supports an amendment which says:

> and that this House censures the Minister of Agriculture for his public statements claiming that the only reason for the guarantee was an impending election, thus doing untold harm to the potential prosperity of the Co-operative.

How dishonest can he be? He has read out a whole list of other newspaper cuttings. I wonder who is being political in these matters. I happened to be at the conference and I heard what the Minister said.

Mr Remington—What did he say?

Mr BURGIN—I certainly did not write down the words as he said them and I could not state exactly what words he used and neither can members of the Opposition or the National Party who have spoken in the debate. If one looks at the press cuttings, one finds that they vary, too, and yet the Opposition moves a motion of this nature, taking up the time of the House.

When I was listening to the Minister of Agriculture, under no circumstances did I put the interpretation on his words "Poll hope in aid of $9 million". Under no circumstances could I put such an interpretation on what the Minister had said.

Mr Remington—But you did not hear him. You don't know what he said.

Mr BURGIN—Yes, I do; the honorable member for Melbourne did not listen. I said that I could not remember the exact words he used. The honorable member should not try to twist my words.

Do we never talk about political matters in this place? Do not members of the Opposition ever listen and remember what went on in debates in previous times? Probably the same reporters were listening to earlier debates. Let me remind honorable members of two or three little sections of the debate which took place on 6 April 1978, when the honorable member for Rodney is reported, at page 1138 of *Hansard*, as having said:

> Subsequent to that a great deal of activity was stirred up and the directors called a meeting in Bendigo of as many shareholders as they could get.

Believe me, they got a lot of other people as well: they were not all shareholders, but that is by the way. The honorable member continued:

They made numerous approaches to both Federal and State Governments.

Is that political pressure or not? The honorable member then continued:

After a great deal of pressure, particularly by members of the National Party in the State and Federal Parliaments, the Government finally agreed to provide a guarantee.

The next excerpt I wish to read is from the remarks of the honorable member for Benalla on the same day where, at page 1145 of *Hansard,* he is reported as saying:

When the co-operative first started it flexed its muscles a little too hard and got into financial difficulties, and was forced to draw in its horns. Later it again got into difficulties with the Victoria Inland Meat Authority and another abattoir. Once again it had to draw in its horns. Mr Smart was then appointed as administrator, and it is unfortunate that the co-operative is still paying for that mistake.

At last there is an opportunity of bringing the co-operative back to an even keel, and I thank the Premier and the Deputy Premier for honouring the promise they gave some time ago.

This had been going on for a long time. This was taking place in 1978. The honorable member added:

The National Party is also thankful that the Prime Minister has given Federal assistance.

The only other excerpt I wish to read for the benefit of the House is from the remarks of the honorable member for Reservoir, who as reported at page 1146 of *Hansard,* said:

I point out however, that the Bill has been introduced only because of pressure exerted by members of the Labor Party and members of the National Party. There was no evidence of this proposed legislation coming forward until approximately three weeks ago.

When speaking of political influence, is the Minister referring to the pressure that was put on all members of the Government by the National Party and by the Labor Party over this matter during a long period? The Labor Party and the National Party both claim credit for the pressure that was applied. In that sense, of course there was political pressure and every member of the House knows it; yet honorable members are tonight wasting valuable time debating something about which each one of us knows. All honorable members know what took place during that time. The House is debating this issue on press reports purporting to state what the Minister said, and the reports all use different words.

I reject the motion and the amendment. It is a waste of time of this House. The motion and the amendment will be defeated. If anything may be beneficial from this debate it is reference to the Co-operative Farmers and Graziers Direct Meat Supply Ltd because the company is making a share issue at the present time. In my opinion, it has never had sufficient financial backing and that has been one of its biggest problems. If the debate in any way helps the company to raise further money through a share issue, it will have been worth while and will not have wasted the time of the House; but for no other reason is this debate worth while. It is completely a political attack on the Minister of Agriculture. The Minister is being attacked because he has dared to say that the Labor Party would bring political pressure to bear.

Let me take honorable members back to the same kind of pressure and the same kind of kudos that were spread around the electorates by both the National Party and the Labor Party over the sale of the Ballarat and Bendigo meatworks to the Co-operative Farmers and Graziers Direct Meat Supply Ltd. In retrospect what a disaster that has turned out to be, because it was probably the straw that broke the camel's back. Political pressure was applied to the Government and philosophically the Minister was not in favour of entering into that situation. However, pressure was applied and decisions were made. As it has turned out, they were wrong decisions. I am confident that the decision on the $9 million guarantee for Co-operative, Farmers and Graziers Direct Meat Supply Ltd was not a wrong decision. I hope it does save the company and I hope the company will be able to raise share capital in the near future.

Mr FOGARTY (Sunshine)—Two areas of credibility are at stake at this time: One is the Minister and the other is the Co-operative Farmers and Graziers Direct Meat Supply Ltd.

When the motion was moved, I believed the motion related to the wrong person, that it should have related to the Premier. I thought he was the culprit and the person who was engaging in all sorts of political skullduggery as a means of gaining votes at a time when the Government's stocks were at their lowest. However, having listened to both the Minister of Agriculture and the Premier, I heard the Premier give a complete resumé of the history of the Co-operative Farmers and Graziers Direct Meat Supply Ltd. However, I was rather surprised at the short reply which the Minister of Agriculture gave. He did not do himself credit. He went along with the attitude of the Premier and he was indiscreet in the extreme. Having had no reply at all to the statements made by the Premier, I can only judge—and I believe honorable members can only judge—that the Minister of Agriculture is definitely guilty of the charges laid against him.

Accordingly, the Opposition has no alternative but to support the motion and the amendment "and this House censures the Minister of Agriculture for his public statements claiming that the only reason for the guarantee was an impending election, thus doing untold harm to the potential prosperity of the co-operative".

The only alternative now open to the Minister is to vote for the amendment. Otherwise he finds himself judged by his own party and found guilty. He has committed *hara kiri* by indiscreet statements which, at the time, he might have thought were made merely to the party conference, but he was wrong. They were public statements.

When I say that the credibility of the Minister and of the Co-operative Farmers and Graziers Direct Meat Supply Ltd is at stake, I believe the statements at that conference and the statements made by the Premier have had an adverse effect upon the future welfare of the company. I have the prospectus issued on 5 November 1979, only a couple of weeks ago, by which the company is seeking to raise $4 million by an issue of 2 million $2 shares to extend its working capital.

During the debate tonight, it has been widely stated and widely acknowledged that on three occasions the company has been in financial difficulties.

On the first occasion when the receiver was called in, the failure was due to mismanagement. It further reflects the Labor Party's view of this area that the Whitlam Government, through the Australian Industry Development Corporation, approved the original loan to allow the co-operative to continue. We have been very concerned about this, and a loan was floated to allow the co-operative to continue.

The receiver got the company out of serious financial difficulties. The only trouble was that someone then got into the till a little too smartly. Following that, further approaches were made to both the Federal and State Governments, and the Opposition, together with the Government and the corner party, agreed that a guarantee of $4·5 million be made to the co-operative through Barclay's Bank. The co-operative has traded out of its difficulties to a certain degree. The prospectus clearly shows that at 26 June 1979 the net profit was $333 739, but nothing has been paid off the principal.

The co-operative solicited the support of the three parties. It believes it can trade out of its troubles, but nothing will do the co-operative more harm at this stage than having matters raised in Parliament and voices continually saying that it is going bad. Debates like this, particularly arising from irresponsible statements made at a Liberal Party convention, can only lead to the co-operative having difficulty obtaining finance in the future.

A way in which the co-operative could survive would be if the Government tabled the Chernov report. That would mean that the Opposition and the National Party would be able to study the report at length, and the general public, the thousands of shareholders and the ordinary farmers who have contributed to the co-operative would be able to realize its potential and may possibly subscribe to its future well-being.

The Opposition is firm in its belief that the co-operative movement is the closest thing to socialistic ideals that exists at present. It believes that a co-operative meat works will be a buffer against the large multi-national and other large companies that now control the meat industry in Victoria. It has always supported the co-operative and will continue to do so in its endeavour to be a viable meat processing establishment. Many meat companies in Victoria are now closing their doors; Gilbertsons of Newport has been closed for some time, and other works are opening their doors only now for the first time in many months because it is the lamb season. It is gratifying to know that the farmers and graziers co-operative made a net profit during the period when the livestock industry was at its lowest ebb for many years.

The Opposition believes that the Minister has been a little lax in the administration of meat works through the Victorian Abattoir and Meat Inspection Authority in areas where he may have been able to assist the co-operative. In a conversation with the Minister, the honorable gentleman has expressed concern about the Newmarket abattoirs, which were mentioned by the Leader of the Opposition previously, and I have a similar view. When dealing with the Newmarket abattoirs, we are not dealing only with a run-down dump—that is all I can call it—which has been the subject of many reports by the Victorian Abattoir and Meat Inspection Authority, but with the livelihood of 300 to 400 people who work in that establishment.

If any decision has to be made, it must be made along the lines that these works should be phased out. To correct the Minister in his interjection to the Leader of the Opposition, I refer him to page 4 of the report of the Victorian Abattoir and Meat Inspection Authority, where it was stated:

> The abattoir, as at present constructed and operated, could not economically be brought up to the standards required by the legislation.

That is quite definite. If the Government is working in close co-operation with the co-operative and is supported by the Opposition and the corner party, it could come to an agreement whereby the Newmarket abattoirs may be phased out and the Brooklyn factory brought up to the standards of a service abattoir by modifying its operations and allowing a transfer of labour from Newmarket. That would be a means of killing two birds with one stone: Phasing out the dump on the outskirts of Melbourne and making the co-operative a viable proposition.

As a result of a question asked of the Minister some months ago, it has come to light that many abattoirs in Victoria—there were 37 at the time the report was made—do not meet the requirements of the Victorian Abattoir and Meat Inspection Authority.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. S. J. Plowman)—Order! The honorable member is digressing from the motion.

Mr FOGARTY—I am giving advice at the same time. If the two areas were brought into operation by the Minister in the future, it may assist the farmers and graziers co-operative to become a commercial proposition. The Opposition believes that the co-operative, with the assistance of all parties, can become a viable proposition. However, it will not do so if the Parliament continues to rubbish the company by allowing irresponsible statements to be issued from the Government benches. These will do nothing to assist the company in its endeavour to obtain working capital through the prospectus which it has now issued.

Mr McINNES (Gippsland South)—The motion expresses concern about the conflicting statements—whether or not they are true—by the Minister of Agriculture and the Premier. The Minister of Agriculture is reported as having said—we have only a press report of the statement—that a decision to extend the loan was influenced by considerations of a political nature and specifically because an election was pending. That is taking a very narrow view. Whether something like that was said at the meeting one would never know, but the Premier has recounted quite correctly the sequence of events leading to the underpinning by the Federal and State Governments of a

$9 million loan. That was strongly supported by the National Party and by all three parties in Parliament. Whether that was done to ensure employment at Brooklyn, to phase out the Newmarket abattoirs, or whether the Government had other reasons, as the Minister explained tonight, all three parties unanimously supported the proposal and took every action to expedite the passage of the legislation through the House.

I compliment the Premier on his responsible action to save the co-operative from being sold up when the Australian Industry Development Corporation first refused measures to make arrangements for the directors to continue when the receiver's time concluded. The Australian Industry Development Corporation said it would sell the co-operative to the highest bidder, and it had a bidder in Protean Holdings. It was then up to the Supreme Court to approve a scheme of arrangement with the farmers, the directors and try to get it back into the hands of the people who started it.

The Premier took responsible action and was supported vigorously by me and my colleagues, and we do not go back on that. The Premier, while loyally attempting to protect a Ministerial colleague by saying that obviously the action of the Government was politically motivated and by giving it the broadest possible interpretation, was speaking with tongue in cheek. He was endeavouring to protect or excuse the Minister of Agriculture from his unfortunate comments. The amendment moved by the honorable member for Rodney draws attention to the untold harm that may be caused to the potential prosperity of the co-operative, because it is what the public thinks, particularly those farmer members of the public who may be contemplating taking up shares in the equity share raising currently being floated by the director of the co-operative.

It is necessary for the co-operative to have that money to survive, and there are many reasons for it to be raised. The reported statement of the Minister of Agriculture—the senior person in the field of agricultural administration in this State—was bound to attract wide publicity. Any responsible Minister would have chosen his words more prudently. Whether at a party meeting he was attending, in a statement to the press or simply talking over the back fence to a neighbour, he would be well aware of the importance of any statement or comments that he might make and the impact those words could have if taken in the incorrect context. More than anyone else, the Minister, with his knowledge of the industry, should realize the difficulties confronting the Co-operative Farmers and Graziers Direct Meat Supply Ltd and the need for support for this important undertaking in its endeavours to restructure and place itself in a strong position to trade out of its debts and to regain a position of solidarity in order to carry out its original function. If the reported statements place that recovery in jeopardy, they are totally reprehensible.

Whether or not they were correctly reported is not really the issue. There is some doubt whether the statements were correctly reported, but nevertheless I am far from reassured by the fairly brief speech of the Minister tonight. One would have expected a total refutation of the statement if it were not true, and, as it came across to me, we did not really receive that. Therefore one must conclude that the statements contained some element of truth, despite what the Ministers have said.

The history of the co-operative has been well canvassed tonight and in earlier debates, and I will not go over that again. However, if one looks at its origins, one sees that it was a genuine attempt to obtain for the farming community a share in its own marketing destiny by providing a centre of operation for the smaller butcher and a large export standard abattoir for larger processors and exporters operating under contract with the co-operative.

There is now a distinct possibility that the meat processing industry will fall into the hands of companies operating

sub-standard abattoirs and operators who have acquired the reputation of shrewdness, toughness and even sharp dealings and market manipulation to suit their own ends. Even graver allegations that have not yet publicly come to light have been made. The co-operative has had a varied history and for part of that history an administrator was appointed by the Australian Industry Development Corporation with powers which were subsequently described as extraordinary in their scope and breadth. Honorable members must not forget that the accounts of the co-operative as set out in the share raising prospectus are still qualified, and $2 million is the subject of a court decision on funds advanced.

Members of the National Party wish to reiterate their confidence in the future of this co-operative if it is enabled to go ahead and raise the necessary funds —the $4 million—to restructure its financial position and believe, from their knowledge of the industry, there are sound grounds for the co-operative remaining in the market place and not falling into the hands of the predators of the industry. We join with the Premier in reaffirming our confidence in the co-operative in the hope that it will be given an even break. If the share issue is successful, the Government should sympathetically consider extending the deadline for the loan guarantee subject to the share raising being successful.

No doubt the Minister of Agriculture has his personal views, and he is entitled to them, but in the interests of Cabinet solidarity he should have supported the Premier and the Government in the course they embarked upon in support of the co-operative, and in the support of Parliament for the co-operative. The position of the Minister of Agriculture in agricultural administration in this State places upon him an extra charge to be most careful in comments he might make, wherever they are made. He must also ensure that his comments cannot be misinterpreted.

It is unfortunate if in fact the press interpreted the position wrongly, but that impression has been given. I hope that at some stage the Minister of Agriculture will make a public statement to restore confidence in the company and to remedy any harm that his statement has caused.

Mr EBERY (Midlands)—I do not propose to widely canvass the history of the Co-operative Farmers and Graziers Direct Meat Supply Ltd because that has been covered already. That is not the subject of the debate tonight. It is a matter of interpretation of the meaning of political motivation. The motion and the amendment counteract one another to some degree because the amendment states that the only reason for the guarantee was an impending election. There is an impending election at present. A Government is elected for a three-year period and therefore there is always an election pending.

I wish to refer to comments reported in *Hansard*. Probably every member of this House could be accused for having political reasons for supporting the $4·5 million guarantee. The honorable member for Sunshine, as reported at page 146, volume 336, of *Hansard* of 8 March 1978, stated:

> Members of the Opposition do not want the works to close. At the same time we do not want any further building of abattoirs in the western suburbs of Melbourne. The motion is definitely one of want of confidence.

Prior to that he stated:

> The works concerned border on my electorate and the greater part of the members of the work force are residents of Sunshine.

During the same debate in regard to a meeting that was held in Bendigo the honorable member for Keilor is reported as having said:

> There were members of the Liberal Party, the Labor Party and the National Party on the platform, and members of all political parties who were present made a public pledge to ask the Government to make a full inquiry into the matters now being discussed.

The honorable member for Sunshine could also be accused of having political reasons for supporting the motion, if the interpretation of this motion goes to the fundamentals of what is meant by political reasons. It is again a matter of interpretation and the accuracy or inaccuracy of the press report, so tonight honorable members have skidded over the fundamental reason for the debate

about the comments made by the Minister of Agriculture at a Liberal Party council meeting.

Honorable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. S. J. Plowman)—Order! Members of the Opposition were heard in almost complete silence. The Chair is of the view that this debate is degenerating by the constant chatter of interjections from one member or another. I ask honorable members to hear Government supporters in silence.

Mr EBERY—The same comment could be made to members of the Opposition who, prior to the recent election, made promises when they visited electorates throughout the State. They made statements for political reasons. It is a matter of interpretation of what is proposed. It returns to the question of buying votes. It is an interpretation of reporting by reporters who attended the meeting. In the circumstances, I know of no reason why this House should support either the motion or the amendment.

Mr REMINGTON (Melbourne)—I support the motion and the amendment. The whole thrust of the debate is the credibility of the Minister of Agriculture. Many Government supporters attended the Liberal Party council meeting, but I have not heard one of them say he was at the meeting and this is what the Minister of Agriculture said. When I questioned the honorable member for Polwarth he said he was at the conference, as were many other members of the Liberal Party, including the Premier and the Minister of Agriculture, but the honorable member for Polwarth too suffered from amnesia because he could not recollect what was said. The honorable member for Burwood frequently criticizes the daily media, but from my experience the daily media is 90-odd per cent accurate. Rarely are the principal papers in this State inaccurate in their reports. Many newspapers carried similar reports of the remarks that the Minister is alleged to have made and that adds weight to their accuracy.

It comes down to the question of whether the Government was in the market at that time to buy votes. That is the argument the House is now involved in. The Minister of Agriculture, the Premier and other honorable members can skate and slide around that, but the debate returns to the issue of whether the Government was on a vote-buying spree or whether the decision was made on proper financial and economic grounds. If the decision were made on proper financial and economic grounds, that would be to the Government's credit but it appears from a close analysis of the debate that took place on the motives of the Government for introducing a Bill in the hasty way it did, that the Minister of Agriculture was right and was truthful at the Liberal Party council meeting when he said that there were political factors involved in the decision and that there was an election in the offing.

An odd Bill was rushed through this Parliament at the time. If one analyses the debate, one finds that no economic considerations were put forward by the Minister. At the time I had been a member of Parliament for only eight weeks and I was concerned at the manner in which the Government went around committing $4·5 million of taxpayers' money and concerned that one Government supporter was ignorant of financial matters and said that it was only a guarantee. When one consents to a guarantee more often than not the chickens come home to roost and there are $4·5 million worth of chickens about to come home to roost.

A close analysis of the decision made at that time indicates that, more than probably the Government made a decision on political grounds rather than on financial and economic factors. Had the Government made a decision on economic and financial factors it would never have committed the Co-operative Farmers and Graziers Direct Meat Supply Ltd in the manner it did. The Government put that organization in an impossible financial position.

The State Government guaranteed a loan of $4·5 million at 12·75 per cent and that left the co-operative with $1 million of working capital after it paid out its creditors. After the $9 million was provided—$4·5 million guaranteed

by the State Government and $4·5 million by the Federal Government—the Government left the co-operative with a commitment to the lender on the State's guarantee of $1 million in the first year and $1 million in the second year. If one calculates the interest at 12·75 per cent one realizes that after having paid $2 million the co-operative would have reduced the capital amount of the debt by $500 000. At the end of three years, the co-operative would then be in a position where it could then meet a liability of $4 million to the State Government and $4 million to the Federal Government should those Governments have to honour their guarantees.

What concerned me about the debate on the Bill was the financial irresponsibility of the Government.

Mr EBERY (Midlands)—On a point of order, I ask what relevance this has to the matter before the House.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. S. J. Plowman)—Order! The matter has been amply discussed. There is considerable inference in the debate, but the honorable member is straying no further than other honorable members did regarding the financial position of the co-operative before this situation arose.

Mr REMINGTON (Melbourne)—I regret the lack of comprehension by the honorable member for Midlands. It fortifies my argument that Government supporters have little understanding of financial matters and the consequences of decisions made in the House.

It has occurred time and again. It has occurred on this occasion and there have been many other occasions on which the Government has got itself into such situations without proper consideration of the economic factors.

It all boils down to whether the Minister was telling the truth and really opening his heart in a sincere fashion when he said that the decision was made for political purposes and that the main incentive to the Government was the forthcoming election. The same attitude has been evident on this occasion as was evident in the land deals, in the Ballarat Province by-election and in the field of education.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. S. J. Plowman)—Order! The honorable member is now straying from the motion.

Mr REMINGTON—I am just about to conclude my remarks. There are grave doubts about whether the Minister's word can be totally relied upon. The Minister made a weak attempt to defend himself tonight and no member of the Government party has come forward and said that he was present and the Minister said such-and-such.

The Minister has abrogated his responsibilities under the Westminster system and has done the co-operative great harm because if the decision made by the State and Federal Governments to guarantee the $9 million was made solely on economic grounds there would be a feeling of confidence among people wishing to invest in the company to assist it to get out of the difficult economic circumstances it is now facing. However, if the decision was made on political grounds, potential shareholders will be careful about deciding to invest in the company.

Mr TREWIN (Benalla)—A report in the *Age*, which was written by Russell Skelton and Geoff Strong, states that the discussion at the Liberal Party conference took place as a result of a motion moved by the Benalla branch of the party. Without thinking very deeply about it, I would know who moved the motion, his motivation for moving it and also the likely reaction of the Minister. The motion referred to support for meat processing operations.

I do not know whether, as the Minister said, the Government was caught in a bind or whether the Minister stood on some bindi-eye and was spurred into action. Nonetheless, the Minister made some statements and the two reporters I have mentioned wrote articles about them. Another article by a reputable reporter concerning the Minister's statements also appeared on the front page of the *Sun*. No honorable member who has spoken on behalf of the Government or the Minister has denied that statements of the kind reported in the

press were made. That indicates that there may be some semblance of truth in the press reports. When I first read the newspapers on Monday morning I was greatly concerned and I said to myself, "Goodness gracious, how will shareholders or new farmers who wish to invest funds to meet some of co-operative's obligations react? The sooner the $9 million guaranteed by the State and Federal Governments is wiped off, the better". The response to the articles can do nothing but harm to the efforts of the Co-operative Farmers and Graziers Direct Meat Supply Ltd.

This evening honorable members have heard the background of the co-operative, which has been strenuously supported by farmers over the years in the hope that it would do something for the livestock and meat processing industries. Honorable members can say what they like about their personal feelings, but it must be recognized that there is a political flavour in many of the things members of Parliament do and say. The Minister may have been caught in a weak moment, but the question is: "Should Ministers have weak moments, particularly when dealing with matters of this nature and particularly when making statements about a co-operative such as this or any other organization that is dependent on support from the public?"

The Minister has risen quickly from being a young back-bencher to being a young and earnest Minister. He deserves respect for that, but he has always had a particular weakness—he has always been prepared to tip the bucket on somebody who is down. That has been obvious on numerous occasions. He took every opportunity of doing so to his Federal colleague in the coalition Government in Canberra.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. S. J. Plowman)—Order! The honorable member's remarks are straying beyond the bounds of the motion.

Mr TREWIN—I was illustrating the fact that the Minister has a particular characteristic that could have allowed him, quite comfortably, to have made the statements reported in the press, well knowing what he was saying, not under stress but of his own volition.

I support the motion and the amendment that censures the Minister for creating this issue out of what was a simple motion moved at a political conference to indicate the concern of some people in Victoria about certain conditions in the meat industry.

Mr GINIFER (Keilor)—There is a very close parallel between this motion and a motion that was before the House twelve years ago when Mr Bloomfield was under attack because of maladministration within the Education Department concerning the Rowville land deals. On that occasion Mr Bloomfield sat mute and had little to say. History proved that he was not to blame for the situation and that he had covered for the then Assistant Minister.

The Minister of Agriculture is doing the same thing. He has remained mute because he is trying to cover for the Government. The Minister's attitudes are well known to those of us who are aware of his policies on the role of primary producers in marketing authorities and co-operatives. He has introduced legislation displaying those attitudes—and there may have been good reason if one takes note of what occurred in the Onion Marketing Board. Nonetheless, the Minister cannot be protected by remaining mute in this debate.

Argument has ranged over what appeared in the press. I had the privilege of seeing the Minister on television and during that interview he said, "We were in a political bind". The honorable gentleman was not misreported. He was under no stress. He knew what he was saying. I was surprised at his frankness and honesty. It is that frankness and honesty that has caused his present problem. In being frank and honest the Minister has brought about a division in the Government because of the decisions taken about the co-operative. The easiest way out for the Minister is to

sit tight and say nought, to, as the National Party said, bluff the question out and hope it will go away.

Unfortunately, that is not the only aspect of the problem. Co-operatives have had a sorry history in Victoria but the Co-operative Farmers and Graziers Direct Meat Supply Ltd has attempted to do the right thing. It has been influenced by producers who may not have been the best managers but it is now attempting to recover and its recovery depends on confidence and its ability to inspire confidence among primary producers.

The Minister should indicate that he supports the co-operative and has confidence in its future operations. It has a service to provide, not only for primary producers but also for consumers. Confidence must be inspired among the people who are now being called upon to subscribe further funds to the co-operative. On that basis the Government stands condemned because its defence has consisted of silence. That is not conducive to confidence and I reiterate that confidence is required for the future of the undertaking.

The House divided on Mr Hann's amendment (the Hon. S. J. Plowman in the chair).

Ayes	40
Noes	40

AYES

Mr Amos
Mr Cain
Mr Cathie
Dr Coghill
Mr Crabb
Mr Culpin
Mr Edmunds
Mr Ernst
Mr Evans (*Gippsland East*)
Mr Fogarty
Mr Fordham
Mr Gavin
Mr Ginifer
Mr Hann
Mr Jasper
Mr Jolly
Mr King
Mr Kirkwood
Mr McInnes
Mr Mathews
Mr Miller
Mr Remington
Mr Roper
Mr Ross-Edwards
Mr Rowe
Mr Sidiropoulos
Mr Simmonds
Mr Simpson
Mr Spyker
Mr Stirling
Mrs Toner
Mr Trewin
Mr Trezise
Dr Vaughan
Mr Walsh
Mr Whiting
Mr Wilkes
Mr Wilton
Tellers:
Mr Hockley
Mr McGrath

NOES

Mr Austin
Mr Balfour
Mr Birrell
Mr Borthwick
Mr Brown
Mr Burgin
Mrs Chambers
Mr Coleman
Mr Collins
Mr Crellin
Mr Dixon
Mr Dunstan
Mr Ebery
Mr Evans (*Ballarat North*)
Mr Hamer
Mr Hayes
Mr Jona
Mr Kennett
Mr Lacy
Mr Lieberman
Mr McArthur
Mr McCance
Mr McClure
Mr McKellar
Mr Mackinnon
Mr Maclellan
Mrs Patrick
Mr Ramsay
Mr Reynolds
Mr Richardson
Mr Skeggs
Mr Smith (*South Barwon*)
Mr Smith (*Warrnambool*)
Mr Templeton
Mr Thompson
Mr Weideman
Mr Williams
Mr Wood
Tellers:
Mr Cox
Mr Tanner

The SPEAKER (the Hon. S. J. Plowman)—Order! The numbers being equal, in accordance with precedent and in order to allow the House to decide the question in its original form, I cast my vote against the amendment.

The amendment was therefore negatived.

The House divided on the motion (the Hon. S. J. Plowman in the chair).

Ayes	40
Noes	40

NOES

Mr Amos
Mr Cain
Mr Cathie
Dr Coghill
Mr Crabb
Mr Culpin
Mr Edmunds
Mr Ernst
Mr Evans (*Gippsland East*)
Mr Fogarty
Mr Fordham
Mr Gavin
Mr Ginifer
Mr Hann
Mr Jasper
Mr Jolly
Mr King
Mr Kirkwood
Mr McInnes
Mr Mathews
Mr Miller
Mr Remington
Mr Roper
Mr Ross-Edwards
Mr Rowe
Mr Sidiropoulos
Mr Simmonds
Mr Simpson
Mr Spyker
Mr Stirling
Mrs Toner
Mr Trewin
Mr Trezise
Dr Vaughan
Mr Walsh
Mr Whiting
Mr Wilkes
Mr Wilton
Tellers:
Mr Hockley
Mr McGrath

AYES

Mr Austin	Mr McCance
Mr Balfour	Mr McClure
Mr Birrell	Mr McKellar
Mr Borthwick	Mr Mackinnon
Mr Brown	Mr Maclellan
Mr Burgin	Mrs Patrick
Mrs Chambers	Mr Ramsay
Mr Coleman	Mr Reynolds
Mr Collins	Mr Richardson
Mr Crellin	Mr Skeggs
Mr Dixon	Mr Smith
Mr Dunstan	(*South Barwon*)
Mr Ebery	Mr Smith
Mr Evans	(*Warrnambool*)
(*Ballarat North*)	Mr Templeton
Mr Hamer	Mr Thompson
Mr Hayes	Mr Weideman
Mr Jona	Mr Williams
Mr Kennett	Mr Wood
Mr Lacy	*Tellers:*
Mr Lieberman	Mr Cox
Mr McArthur	Mr Tanner

The SPEAKER (the Hon S. J. Plowman)—Order! This is a motion which I believe should be affirmed by a majority of the House, not merely by the casting vote of its Presiding Officer. I therefore cast my vote with the Noes.

The motion was therefore negatived.

JOINT SITTING OF PARLIAMENT

Monash University: Council of Adult Education

The SPEAKER (the Hon S. J. Plowman)—Order! I have to report that, this day, the House met with the Legislative Council in the Assembly Chamber for the purpose of sitting and voting together to choose members of the Parliament of Victoria to be recommended for appointment to the governing bodies of various institutions, and that Ian Robert Cathie, Esq., M.P., the Honorable James Vincent Chester Guest, M.L.C., and Neil Malcolm McInnes, Esq., M.P., were chosen to be recommended for appointment to the Council of Monash University, and that the Honorable Evan Herbert Walker, M.L.C., was chosen to be recommended for appointment to the Council of Adult Education.

HOUR OF MEETING

Mr MACLELLAN (Minister of Transport)—I move:

That the House, at its rising, adjourn until tomorrow at half-past ten o'clock.

The motion does not terminate the sitting of the House at this stage.

The motion was agreed to.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. S. J. Plowman)—Order! The time appointed under Sessional Orders for me to interrupt the business of the House has now arrived.

Mr MACLELLAN (Minister of Transport)—I move—

That the sitting be continued.

The motion was agreed to.

RAILWAYS (BOARD) BILL

Mr MACLELLAN (Minister of Transport)—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The Bill amends the Railways Act 1958 to establish the position of Deputy Chairman of the Victorian Railways Board.

As honorable members will know, the Railways Act was amended in 1972 to incorporate the Victorian Railways Board and to enable the appointment of a board consisting of members with business and railway experience. The railway organization has also been restructured under a general manager, who is one of the members of the board, to streamline various functions and provide specialization in the management of operations.

The Railways Board consists of eight members of whom one is appointed as chairman and works full-time. Other members work part-time in their capacity as members of the board.

The day-to-day running of the railways is now the function of the general manager and senior management staff. The board addresses itself to matters of policy and additional capacity within the board is now required in the policy area.

The Bill creates a new position of member and deputy chairman to enable the board to thoroughly pursue the important task of developing the railways with innovation to meet the ever changing transport scene.

The deputy chairman would be appointed to work on a full-time basis concentrating on innovation and policy. Greater capacity in these areas is appropriate to an undertaking of the size of the Victorian Railways, particularly with the tasks it must perform into the future.

Clause 3 of the Bill amends the Railways Act to provide that a member of the board appointed by the Governor in Council shall be deputy chairman of the board.

The remaining clauses of the Bill make a number of provisions as a consequence of creation of the position of deputy chairman. Amendments are included to increase the number of members on the board from eight to nine and to make provisions for the new role of the deputy chairman in the proceedings of the board.

The creation of the position of deputy chairman will help the board to meet the challenges which all honorable members will agree are being faced by the railways. This is a critical time for the railways and transport, and the board must be given every assistance to enable VicRail to fulfil its proper role in the transport scene. 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 Tuesday, November 27.

CANNED FRUITS MARKETING BILL

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

That this Bill be now read a second time.

This Bill introduces a stabilization scheme for the marketing of canned peaches, pears and apricots, which is to commence on 1 January 1980, for five years.

The Bill is part of complementary legislation which has already been introduced in the Commonwealth Parliament and is to be adopted in the States of New South Wales, Queensland and South Australia.

The canned fruits industry has been through a difficult period in recent years. Up to ten years ago, the major market for Australian canned fruit was Great Britain, where entry was on a preferential basis. When Great Britain joined the European Economic Community, this market declined substantially and a major restructuring of the industry has been required.

Victorian production of peaches, pears and apricots from the three canneries in the Goulburn Valley has dropped almost to half the 1970 level. However, supply is still almost double the domestic demand and difficulties have been experienced by canneries in providing adequate returns to growers.

At the request of the canning industry, complementary legislation was developed by the Commonwealth and State Governments and is supported by growers and canners.

The legislation establishes a stabilization scheme. The selling arrangements under the scheme will distinguish between the countries which are to form an equalization market and other countries which are not part of the market. The industry has agreed that, initially, the equalization market will be Australia, the United Kingdom, Ireland, Scandinavia and Japan. The returns from sales within the equalization market will be equalized, but this will not apply to returns from other markets.

The Australian Canned Fruits Corporation will acquire all canned fruit produced each season. It will allocate a production entitlement to each canner for sales on the equalization market and will purchase the entitlement after production by the canner. The entitlement will be based initially on the previous sales record of each canner.

Canneries may produce fruit in excess of their quotas but the excess production will not be purchased by the corporation. It will be sold on behalf of the corporation to meet shortfalls on the equalization market or to non-pool markets. The net proceeds of all sales on the equalization market will be pooled, while the net proceeds of sales to non-pool markets will be paid directly to the cannery concerned.

The corporation is authorized to borrow from the Reserve Bank to finance the purchase of canned fruits and a major objective of the legislation will be earlier and increased payment to canners and, as a flow-on, earlier payments to growers.

The Australian Canned Fruits Corporation is established under the Commonwealth legislation, and will consist of the chairman and ten members, five representing canners, three representing growers, one representing the Commonwealth of Australia and one independent member.

An Australian Canned Fruits Industry Advisory Committee is also established under the Commonwealth Act, and the purpose of this committee is to advise the corporation on such matters as the countries to participate in the equalization market.

Notes on the clauses are available in the Bill. 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, December 4.

APPROPRIATION (1979–80, No. 1) BILL

(Budget Debate)

The House went into Committee for further consideration of this Bill.

Discussion was resumed of clause 2 (Application of Moneys)

COMMUNITY WELFARE SERVICES

Mrs TONER (Greensborough)—I raise the question of rate concessions for pensioners, which now constitute almost 30 per cent of the budget for community welfare services. It seems inappropriate that rate concessions for pensioners are slotted into the welfare budget, because it gives an inflated view of the amount of spending in respect of welfare. It is not strictly a welfare payment. There is also difficulty in the department supervising the spending of this money. There have been massive increases in this area in recent times. It should be the prerogative of the Local Government Department, which vets the payments in the first instance, to assume responsibility for appropriating money in this connection.

It is disturbing to note that the ceiling on rate concessions for pensioners is $120, and if their rates are more than double that figure they have to find the additional money out of their own purse. Pensioners will feel the pinch in respect of this matter.

I draw the attention of the House to the allocation for payments in connection with wards, probationers and honorary probation officers—reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses. Honorable members will note that these payments have decreased in real terms. That is one of the tragic feature of the community welfare services estimates, an admission by the Treasury that the probation system of Victoria is about to die out.

The provision of probation and parole was abandoned from 1 April 1978 because of regionalization. Responsibility was delegated at that time to regional offices, but there was little preparation for this alteration to the probationary system. Consequently, the probationary system does not appear to be working. The Government is not injecting funds or staff into it. The probationary system was accepted with great reluctance by the regional offices, and it has led to a cursory approach to probation at most regional offices.

People who are placed on probation usually sign a book and leave without being interviewed. There are many tragic instances of serious offences which may have been averted had there been a properly functioning probationary system. My colleague, the honorable member for Williamstown, directed the attention of the House to one of those instances last week. It involved a twelve-year-old boy from his area, for whom a probation officer could not be found. I would like to cite the instance of a young man. His solicitor telephoned me today. I have his name and address but I do not intend to give it, although I will be approaching the Minister later on.

Mr Roper—Is he in the phone book?

Mrs TONER—Yes, he is in the telephone book. He is eighteen years old. He was charged with assault occasioning actual bodily harm on 6 June 1979. He appeared before Mr Connolly, Stipendiary Magistrate, at Heidelberg court. His solicitor put forward the case that he was from a family of six. His eldest brother, earlier in the year, had been charged with the manslaughter of this man's mother, and he has been very disturbed since then. He was convicted of assault, and was released on probation for two years because of the circumstances relating to his emotional distress. He has had no supervision during the intervening period. He was just called upon to sign the book at the Preston regional office, and now he is on another charge. The consequences are therefore grave.

The Volunteer Resource Centre, which is a sub-group of the Victorian Council of Social Services, recently conducted a survey of 750 respondents.

It was discovered that 35·7 per cent of probation officers had no cases, that 29·1 per cent had only one case and that 30·3 per cent had only two or three cases. It appears extraordinary to people who are interested in volunteering their services that there is no screening to evaluate the appropriate means for volunteer workers to supervise young persons. Volunteer workers view their desire to be involved and their placement as probation officers as a confidence trick because they are not called upon to help 3000 probationers who are not receiving adequate supervision. Parents are expecting guidance and help for their children and the Department of Community Welfare Services, under its new arrangements, is unable to handle probation and the use of volunteers. Clearly, the responsibility of probation should be delegated to the Attorney-General's Department because the Department of Community Welfare Services cannot handle it. The department has no consistent policy on probation and it would appear desirable that the department set up a meeting between all regional superintendents and senior probation officers to discuss the matter.

At Moonee Ponds, one officer has made the system work and has provided a structure for involvement of honorary probation officers. That structure appears to be a necessity in other regions also because service to the client is vital and regional officers want to deliver a competent and professional service to their clients which they are unable to do at present because of shortages of staff and lack of experience. I quote a letter from the Outer Eastern Suburbs Regional Centre from which I have deleted the name of the young man concerned and the social worker. It states, *inter alia*:

> Further to your contact with . . .
>
> Due to the extremely heavy commitments of our field workers at this centre, we are not able to supervise your youth parole or provide you with ongoing support at the moment.
>
> However, other conditions of your youth parole are still applicable. For example, if you commit another offence you will breach your youth parole. You should also advise us if you change your address or employment.
>
> I am sorry that we are unable to help you at this stage but we will contact you as soon as there is a worker available.
>
> If you have an urgent query or if you were to experience a pressing problem, you are welcome to ring the duty worker at this centre.

Mr Roper—But you may not have anything done for you!

Mrs TONER—No, because the staff may be too busy. Moreover a memorandum indicates that the probation system in Victoria, which has made a marvellous contribution over the years, has disappeared altogether from the north-western suburbs. There is a minimal service in administrative arrangements at the various offices. The North-Western Suburbs Regional Centre (Broadmeadows) made the point in its memorandum on administrative arrangements of 31 July that:

> All pooled probation and parole cases, including supervision orders will be placed on formal reporting.

I had hoped the Budget would have provided for appointments of a correction officer for each region to concern himself or herself specifically with probation. This has not happened. It would have been appropriate, if it had happened, to suggest a change to the Children's Court Act for an allocation of

cases within 72 hours; that is, when a young person comes before the court and the magistrate states that the young person needs supervision and guidance, the case should be allocated within 72 hours. Under the present arrangement, that is not possible. As I indicated earlier, 3000 people are not receiving supervision. The problem extends right across the State. An inquiry should be held into probationary services in Victoria, as suggested by the Honorary Justices Association, and the necessity for which is highlighted by the failure of the Government to provide additional funds to overcome the problems of probation in Victoria.

Mr WILTON (Broadmeadows)—I refer to the plight of the regional office of Broadmeadows. The region which the office is expected to serve is far too large. Because of the reduction in staff being made as a result of Treasury direction, the region is not able to maintain its office. The office has had to drastically reduce the times at which it is open to the public. It is generally accepted by all sections of the community involved in welfare work that a regional office at Sunbury is urgently needed so that some of the load can be taken from the Broadmeadows office.

I know the honorable member for Gisborne supports the proposal, which has been put to the Minister in correspondence from municipal councils and various welfare agencies. Several honorable members have added their support to those representations and I urge the Minister to give serious consideration to this problem. Suitable accommodation could be provided in the Sunbury township for a regional office and the Broadmeadows office would be able to operate much more efficiently if the region it served were reduced in size.

I refer the Minister also to the loss of a school attendance officer at the Broadmeadows regional centre. The officer tendered her resignation some months ago. Representations for her replacement have been made to the Minister. I have received several letters from principals of schools within the region who have expressed their grave concern over the current situation. From inquiries I have made, the regional office has been advised that if it is able to recruit a school attendance officer from within the service there would be no objection to an officer transferring to the Broadmeadows regional office.

However, for many reasons, it is impossible for the Broadmeadows office to secure an existing school attendance officer to transfer to the Broadmeadows area. Unless the office is given permission to advertise and to recruit from outside the service, the position will remain vacant for some time, with disastrous results. Some of the practical work the officer was doing has been described to me by principals and deputy principals from the schools which the officer served, where young children were getting into difficulties. In some cases, this was a result of the misfortune of a one-parent family where the parent must work full-time and the children were not receiving desirable supervision.

The officer was heavily committed to personal contact with many students who were having difficulty. In some cases, the officer made a significant impression on the students and a major contribution to having children attend school regularly. Because the officer has left, a hiatus has been created. Many of those students are now falling back to their old habits. The children of today are the adults of tomorrow and it does not take much imagination for honorable members to appreciate the probable end result.

I urge the Minister, on behalf of the region and in particular on behalf of the very harassed and overworked staff at the Broadmeadows regional office who are struggling to promote some semblance of service and who are working under extreme handicaps, primarily because of lack of personnel, to alleviate the situation.

The Department of Community Welfare Services will be making a financial contribution to Treasury of an estimated $1·3 million. Surely, some of that

money could be used to provide additional staff for the regional offices scattered around the State. If a survey were taken, many regional offices would be in a similar situation to Broadmeadows. An allocation of money for staffing would make a significant impact on the problem of staff shortages.

Mr ROWE (Essendon)—I refer to the regional office in Essendon. Earlier this year, the Department of Community Welfare Services obtained a property at 4 Homer Street, Moonee Ponds, for use as a regional office. A lease was negotiated at $100 a week. The building was renovated, installation of telephones, the supply of furniture, filing cabinets, desks and so on was effected. However, under the allocation for salaries, the Government has not provided staff for the regional office. On many occasions the local council, members of the Moonee Ponds Court, myself and other community representatives have met with the Government and the Minister for Community Welfare Services has inspected the office. The department is paying the annual rent, but no allocation has been made for staff. The situation is ludicrous.

Many Ministers have been contacted for help. I wrote to the Treasurer and sought a deputation of representatives of the Moonee Ponds Court—the office was to be a probation office and the court was vitally interested in it, as the court cannot put young offenders on probation at present because of the lack of staff at the Homer Street, Moonee Ponds, office—justices, and representatives of the local council. Unfortunately the Treasurer was not able to receive the deputation because of his commitments. We then sought the advice of the Minister for Community Welfare Services, and, as I said before, he inspected the offices.

He replied in a letter that he would be making representations on behalf of his department in the forthcoming Budget for an allocation of funds for staffing of the office. That has not been forthcoming.

The Essendon City Council wrote to the Premier on 24 October seeking a deputation to discuss a matter. I also wrote to the Premier in support of that deputation and I received a reply that the Premier would not receive a deputation.

It is a crazy waste of money. The Government is paying rent on a building but will not supply support staff. The office is centrally located within the Moonee Ponds district. It services a population of 150 000 people in the Essendon-Keilor area. The community is concerned that there are no adequate probationary facilities. The centre is supposed to cater for youth probation, deserted wives and emergency relief as well as general community welfare services. The community is concerned that it will have to wait another twelve months for funding of staff for that centre.

Mrs TONER (Greensborough)—Some anomalies exist in family and adolescent services. Honorable members will note that there is a decline of $23 000 for postal and telephone expenses, yet there is an increase of $36 000 for motor vehicle purchase and running expenses.

The Department of Community Welfare Services already takes four to five months to answer a letter or return a telephone call. Officers may now have to travel directly by car to deliver letters to the appropriate recipient. The Minister for Community Welfare Services should explain why there was gross overspending and mismanagement last year on postal and telephone expenses. The Labor party would like the Minister to explain what will happen to the department's correspondence this coming year.

In "Other Services" there is a doubling of the allocation for rail travel for parents visiting youth training centres and rail travel for parents and siblings visiting wards in institutions. Either the amount provided last year was grossly inadequate or the Government anticipates there might be a vast increase in the number of young people in training centres as epitomized by the cutback in the probation system.

The Minister for Community Welfare Services should explain why people were sold extremely short last year

and whether there will be an anticipated upsurge in the number of young people in training institutions or the number of young people who are wards of the State.

There is a decline in the allocation for postal and telephone expenses in correctional services. The Minister should explain why his department has been so inefficient during the past year. The Minister should also explain whether letters take even longer to reach persons inquiring about those who are serving sentences in the State and whether prisoners will have their correspondence with their families cut back. That is quite disturbing because of the lack of appropriate explanation.

Dr VAUGHAN (Glenhuntly)—I note that the appropriation for the financial year ending 30 June 1980 for postal and telephone expenses of the Department of Community Welfare Services will be cut. Communication is the essence of good Government especially in community welfare services. I am disturbed by the reduction in this allocation.

As I mentioned when I spoke previously on the Bill, the cost of a telephone call or a stamp is not declining. However, the population is increasing. The facts speak for themselves. It is of concern that the allocations for postal and telephone expenses in all divisions of the Bill with which the Committee has dealt so far have decreased. The Minister should comment on that matter at the appropriate time.

Mrs TONER (Greensborough)—It is regrettable that the increase in the allocation for bursaries to students in youth leadership and child care and of training welfare officers is less than the inflation rate. Many people whom I have visited in institutions have not received appropriate training. It is vital that such training be made available. This is another example of a cutback in the opportunity for young people to pursue some worth-while training. It is a short-sighted economy by the Department of Community Welfare Services.

YOUTH, SPORT AND RECREATION

Mr ROWE (Essendon)—In my electorate of Essendon over the past three years two women's recreation programmes have been funded by the Department of Youth, Sport and Recreation. The programme was one of three programmes operating within the State. The other two programmes were conducted at La Trobe and Monash universities. The Essendon programme operated for three years at the Essendon community centre.

The idea behind the project was that 30 to 40 women within the community could undertake a recreational programme of nine weeks' duration conducted during the school term at a venue which provided child-care facilities by a qualified mothercraft nurse.

The participants in the courses paid a nominal fee of $30 and they were introduced to a range of crafts and hobbies such as pottery. They were introduced to nine different activities during the nine-week introductory programme. They then entered another nine-week programme which was more intensive and provided a more detailed examination of some of the crafts to which they may have been introduced during the first nine-week programme.

The idea was to enable women to get out of their homes, especially those women who were somewhat housebound with young children. It helped women who had been out of the work force for some time to get out and meet people and develop links within the community. The Government has callously scrapped two-thirds of the programmes.

The estimated cost of the programmes to the department is $500. The women's recreational programme which was conducted at Essendon and at La Trobe and Monash universities has been scrapped in the Budget. For a measly $500, the department has abolished two of those programmes.

When I contacted the department I was informed that one of the reasons behind it was that the women's recreation programme was not financially viable because the department did not

recoup the full expenses involved in running the programme. That is, the expenses of hiring the hall, providing the instructor and the child-care facilities, but the participants did pay $30.

A programme such as that meets the needs of a specific section of the community in establishing itself within the community and building links with other people in the same situation. Often women in that type of situation become somewhat shy and retiring and they are glad to get out of the house. Yet for a measly $500, the department has cut two-thirds of those programmes. The Government stands condemned.

Mrs TONER (Greensborough)—Hopefully the increase in funding for racing administration will cover matters relating to the introduction of equal opportunity on racecourses. I imagine the increase has been set aside for that purpose.

Honorable members will note that the Equal Opportunity (Clubs) Bill is still item No. 17 on the Notice Paper under General Business and, despite requests, it has not been brought forward for debate. It would have been nice had the Bill been debated prior to Melbourne Cup week. Nevertheless, the increase in the allocation for racing administration anticipates the Government's support for the Bill. I trust the Government will move into this area during next year.

Mr KIRKWOOD (Preston)—In Melbourne there are 271 Totalizator Agency Board agencies. Most people would not necessarily use those offices on race days but would read in the press the various happenings where staff are vulnerable to risk. Currently, the security system is non-existent.

A punch computer is situated at each agency and this is coded into the computer. That is why no one knows a holdup or a bashing has occurred because this does not take place until after the agency closes. It cannot be done to someone at the window. Information of any robbery must be relayed to the police immediately. The current methods of reporting such offences are very unsuccessful.

I do not know what the Government or those in charge of the Totalizator Agency Board are doing to deter the armed robberies, bashings and shootings that occur at regular intervals. Recently incidents took place at Clayton and Moonee Ponds. I remember reading an advertisement offering a reward for information about the Clayton occurrence. I imagine there must be enough security firms in Melbourne which would be prepared to offer their type of security system to any Totalizator Agency Board agency. The State Government or the board could make a proposal to the various top security firms to establish the credibility of their type of security. The staff must be protected; their health and lives should not be at risk. Attempts must be made by experimentation to find a solution to the problem.

LABOUR AND INDUSTRY

Mr SIMMONDS (Reservoir)—I draw the attention of the Committee to the amount of $1900 allocated to the Industrial Safety Advisory Council. This is only $200 more than last year's allocation. The Industrial Safety Advisory Council was constituted under an Act of Parliament following an inquiry in 1958 into the incidence of industrial accidents. It was charged with the responsibility of advising the Minister on measures to combat industrial accidents which are now costing the State $400 million. Last year the Minister stated that he wanted a programme to reduce accidents by 10 per cent, but the Chairman of the Industrial Safety Advisory Council saw fit to resign because of the Government's failure to provide the resources for the council to carry out its work.

In the field of rural industries, since 1970, 156 persons have been killed in tractor accidents; 34 of those killed were children under the age of sixteen years. It could be said that the Government is killing farmers by its failures in this area.

A Bill was introduced to require tractors to be made safe before being put on the market and it was subsequently amended to provide for municipalities to opt into those provisions, but only 32 of the 211 municipalities in

Victoria have opted in. There is clearly a need for legislation to deal with an alarming situation.

In the next twelve months at least twenty persons will be killed because the Government has failed to act. Last May, the rural safety officer of the Department of Labour and Industry resigned and he has not been replaced. The history of fatalities in respect of tractors and trench digging is such that the officers of the department can predict with certainty that 30 deaths a year will occur in these two areas of industrial activity until such time as effective measures are taken.

In answer to a question the Minister indicated that $3 million was being spent to combat industrial accidents. In the past twelve months some 31 courses were conducted in accident prevention, which were attended by 308 people; 9 courses were conducted in communication safety and involved 74 people; and 13 courses were conducted in mechanical handling which involved 157 people. The Government has failed to deal with the task and to educate people on this significant problem. It is certain that people will continue to be killed and injured in Victorian industry until the Government reforms the law or is replaced.

I draw attention to the increase in the number of fatalities mentioned in the reports of inspectors from the department since 1976. In 1976, 26 fatalities were reported; in 1977, 46 were reported; and in 1978, 43 were reported. In 1976, 31 500 accidents were reported to the department; in 1977, 29 485 were reported; and in 1978, 28 016 were reported. Those figures indicate that, although the number of deaths reported to the department has increased, the number of accidents reported to the department has decreased. The explanation for that is that the department is thirteen inspectors short of its establishment and consequently reports are not being made. Estimates have been made to me that only 10 per cent of accidents are being reported to the department and there is a total incapacity within the department to record and investigate even extremely serious accidents.

At present, when an amputation is involved, it may take up to one month for an inspection to be made. In answer to a question on notice, on 9 October the Minister indicated that some 30 000 safety inspections were being made annually in industry by 70 safety inspectors. The honorable gentleman did not advise the House that those 70 inspectors covered the whole ambit of Labour and Industry administration including registration of shops and factories, payment of wages, the observance and non-observance of awards and the closing hours of something like 40 000 shops and factories in Victoria.

It is ludicrous for the Minister to say that there were 30 000 safety inspections. Actually there were 28 000 reports but possibly 280 000 accidents which should have been reported. To illustrate a point, the latest figures available from the Australian Bureau of Statistics show that, in 1971–72, 32 100 reports were made of accidents involving a week's loss of work; in 1972–73, 33 920 reports were made; and in 1973–74, 36 500 reports were made—an increase in a two-year period of some 4400 accidents involving a week's loss of work or more. The figures were compiled from workers compensation statistics in Victoria.

In respect of the 28 616 reports in 1978, only 282 breaches were reported or acted upon. That represents 8·4 per cent of the accidents that were reported. I repeat that the capacity of the department to investigate even serious accidents involving amputations is such that one woman who had a finger amputated went to hospital and had a baby, and reported to work again before an investigation of the accident was able to be made. The $3 million mentioned by the Minister as being provided for industrial safety must surely be composed almost entirely of wages and salaries because the provision for the Industrial Safety Advisory Council is only $1900.

The Western Region Health Centre Ltd is to receive $500 towards an industrial safety poster competition. That

amount should at least be doubled because of the extremely successful competition conducted in recent years. Invitations to the Minister to present the prizes have not always been taken up, but I hope that in the future——

Mr Maclellan—What do you mean?

Mr SIMMONDS—I exempt the immediate predecessor to the Minister of Labour and Industry from that statement. The present Minister might well consider the importance of industrial safety poster competitions and particularly the involvement of school children in the competitions. There is no greater value for $500 in this State than the $500 being spent on the industrial safety poster competition.

The Inter-Church Trade and Industry Mission (Victoria) is to receive $12 500 for its consultation and social work on industrial matters and yet the Industrial Safety Advisory Council, which was set up after a full-scale inquiry in Victoria into the incidence of industrial accidents, is to receive only $1900. The Government has a miserable record on industrial safety.

The Bill contains no indication of reform. In the area of communications, which is probably of the greatest importance, the allocation for books and publications is only $15 700. The migrant sector of the work force is being denied information about the hazards of industry because of the failure of the Government. Very few publications are made available in the language of the work force in various industries, particularly the meat industry, and industries in which women are employed, with disastrous results in the incidence of industrial accidents. I draw the attention of the Minister to the fact that expenditure of money is one thing and the question of priorities in allocations for the various items under Labour and Industry is another. Those priorities indicate no real concern by the Government about industrial safety in Victoria.

Mr SPYKER (Heatherton)—I refer to the amount set aside in funds for workers compensation boards. Time and again it has been emphasized that the five boards which now operate are totally incapable of clearing the backlog which is causing enormous hardship to many injured people who are waiting to have their claims heard. It takes up to two years for most cases to be heard, and during that time those people and their families suffer. Their only income is social security benefits which are only at subsistence level.

Mr Roper—If they are lucky enough to receive them.

Mr SPYKER—That is correct. While New South Wales has eleven boards hearing workers compensation cases, Victoria has only five. I am aware that the fifth board was appointed earlier this year to help catch up on the backlog, but injured workers who claim compensation will be further delayed by the long arguments and alterations to the Act as the Workers Compensation (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill passes through the Legislative Council.

Insurance companies are now taking a tough attitude towards workers compensation cases. Cases which previously would have automatically passed through are now being challenged. This is clogging up the system, and little thought is being given to the injured workers or their dependants who are suffering hardship. I again urge the Government to seriously examine that matter, because in many areas the priorities are wrong. As the honorable member for Reservoir has said, the Industrial Safety Advisory Council is to receive only $1900 for fees and expenses. In the electorate that I represent, there are 1800 factories. They would each be entitled to $1. That does not take into consideration multi-lingual leaflets and other things that need to be provided.

In the Heatherton electorate there are many refugees who come from migrant hostels and who have no knowledge of the English language or the factory regulations. Far greater effort should be put into accident prevention which is much better than cure. Many attacks have been made on the hours lost in industrial disputes, but little has been said about the far greater number of hours lost as the result of industrial accidents.

Obviously anyone will agree that prevention is much better than cure. The Government is arguing consistently that the workers compensation bill is too high. Obviously, if more money is spent on industrial safety and on educating people on how to use tools and equipment at their place of employment, there will be a vast reduction in the number of industrial accidents, which can be avoided with proper education and guidance.

Mr GAVIN (Coburg)—The matter I raise relates to teachers and to a number of teachers declared in excess for 1980. I read in the *Sun* last Thursday that 800 teachers were going to be declared in excess throughout Victoria. That disturbs me somewhat if it is true. I doubt whether the Education Department would know exactly how many teachers have been declared in excess. If the number is high it will cause concern throughout Victoria because, if teachers are declared in excess all over the place, where will they go? Presumably many will go on the dole.

In the Coburg electorate there are a few schools where teachers have been declared in excess. One extraordinary example is Hadfield High School which has only 60 teachers of which 12 have been declared in excess. This is 20 per cent of the teachers. The population of that school has declined by only 50 and the needs component has only declined from 4·4 per cent to 2·7 per cent. It is extraordinary that the school is going to lose twelve teachers. Forty per cent of the students at the school do not use English at home, which is a fairly high percentage. One would think it is not as high as that of some other schools but it is high. I find it extraordinary that Hadfield High School will lost 20 per cent of its teachers.

Mr Lacy—How many students are there at the school?

Mr GAVIN—There are 750 this year and there will be 700 next year. As I pointed out, the school is going to lose 50 pupils. Strathmore High School is to lose 7 teachers; Fawkner High School, 5 teachers; and Upfield High School, which is outside my electorate, will lose 10.

There is a strange situation at Coburg High School. It is going to lose three teachers, but one teacher happens to be a migrant English teacher and the Greek parents are so incensed at losing this teacher that they have offered to pay the salary of that teacher for 1980. It will cost them much more than $10 000, I suppose. I am not sure what the teacher's salary is but this seems to be an extraordinary situation. The Greek parents believe it is absolutely necessary to keep that teacher at the school and they are prepared to pay out of their own pockets for that purpose. I shall be interested to know what the response of the Education Department will be. If it grants the request, it means one more teacher is employed but it will be an extraordinary situation. I would think it would be highly embarrassing for the department if the only way to keep the teacher employed is for the parents to pay the teacher's salary. After all, it is supposed to be a free education system. That term is often used. Perhaps the figure of 800 in the press report was plucked out of the air.

Mr Lacy—What was the first school you mentioned?

Mr GAVIN—Hadfield High School.

Mr Lacy—That has one teacher to every sixteen students for next year; 42 teachers for 700 students.

Mr GAVIN—I assume the Minister is correct. There were 60 teachers for 750 pupils this year.

Mr Maclellan—Do you think they should work or not?

Mr GAVIN—Of course I do. Clearly the effect of this policy will be that fewer subjects will be offered to students. Obviously class sizes will be larger. The idea of excess teachers must create a great deal of uncertainty, not only among teachers, but also among parents and students.

Mr Maclellan—And Parliamentarians.

Mr GAVIN—Yes. It will also create a morale problem with student teachers. I hope the situation is rectified.

The Budget refers to twenty extra migrant English teachers. I wonder where these teachers will be employed. Coburg High School is to lose one such teacher. but twenty extra teachers are supposed to be employed in 1980. The Greek parents are upset at this decision. As I said, the problem is Statewide. I appeal to the Minister to examine it sympathetically.

Mr SPYKER (Heatherton)—I should like to speak in a similar vein to the honorable member for Coburg. It is an alarming situation. I was a student after the war when schools had grades of 40-plus. If a student did not sit in the first half-dozen rows he did not get an education. I have always been a great advocate of parents having a choice of sending their children to either a Government school or a private school, with both schools offering equal opportunities for education. In the Heatherton electorate a problem arises because of slightly falling numbers and teachers being declared in excess, and at one school there are Lebanese migrants who come from a war-torn country. The school fell a little below the required number which means the only migrant English teacher is being removed as from next year. Surely these children are entitled to an equal opportunity and equal education even if they do not fully qualify in numbers. Surely the schools should be staffed according to needs. The parents are now losing confidence in the State schools' ability to offer their children a proper education. Is it the Government's intention to deliberately cause confusion and anxiety among parents and students so that people do their utmost to send their children to private schools? That is what worries me.

On Friday night I was at a school function. It was an art and craft show. The school's only music teacher is being removed next year. The teacher put an enormous effort into the school because most of the students were playing the guitar and involved in the school community. This is creating great uncertainty among the parents. No matter what school council meeting or function I attend in the electorate, I am repeatedly asked what is happening to our schools. I am aware that when schools have 1000 pupils at one stage and five or six years later the number is down to 600 pupils, that it cannot have the same number of teachers. However, there should be consultation and discussion so that the school morale remains high. There should be consultation with parents so that they know what is happening and what programmes the school will be able to run and not be able to run in the following year.

There are many rumours and great uncertainty and this has a demoralizing effect on the parents and students. Those parents pay taxes and have a right to know that their children are receiving a proper education. There should be a far more humane approach to staff ceilings. Schools should be staffed according to their needs because a minority of children have equal rights to an education. Extra effort should be put into making sure that young students are well educated. They need a better education now because the technological changes and the challenge before young people today are far greater than they were ten or fifteen years ago. The resources of the schools can also be used for adults who wish to return to school. Proper discussion is far better than sending a note from school saying that because the numbers have fallen it will lose so many teachers regardless of the effect on the school's programmes. I urge wide consultation with teachers and parents, because disharmony and dissatisfaction among parents, teachers and students can be avoided by proper consultation to ensure that schools are staffed according to their needs.

Mrs CHAMBERS (Ballarat South)—I wish to pick up a few points referred to by the honorable members for Coburg and Heatherton. I do not know whether the honorable members realize it, but the whole tenor of their speeches has justified the Government's policy on education over the past few years. I take up the last

point referred to by the honorable member for Heatherton about staffing according to needs. This has been heard around the State for a long time. That is precisely how the Government is working its staffing policy at present.

Mr Wilton—Why don't you come out and have a look yourself?

Mrs CHAMBERS—I have been round a number of schools. The point I am trying to make is that teachers talk about staffing schools according to needs. There is an open-ended need in schools. Some schools could be staffed on a one-to-one basis and would not provide a good education. One must also consider what money is available, how much the taxpayer can afford to pay and what is a good class size. The honorable member for Coburg has said that student–teacher ratios are something like 1:16 in his electorate. In educational circles, tests have been carried out to ascertain what class size is desirable and nothing has proved that one class size is any better than another. It is therefore no argument to say that the more teachers employed the better the education that will be provided.

The honorable member for Heatherton stated that there should be equal opportunity for all students in private schools and State schools. In the Ballarat South electorate, the class sizes at every private school are way above those in the State schools, but parents are accepting the choice of sending their children to these private schools.

Mr Cain—Why is that?

Mrs CHAMBERS—Because the education being offered in some of our State schools at the moment is not acceptable to these parents. It has nothing to do with Government policy. It is a fact that some teachers are too busy conducting political activities to give proper attention to their teaching duties.

The honorable member for Coburg made a point that there is something magical about teachers, that their jobs need to be preserved. It does not matter if caravan factories are closed; nobody whinges about that. Yet teachers seem to think they have a divine right to have their jobs kept for them by the Government. However, the Government must make decisions in the light of finances available and in the light of what it sees as needs. If teachers are out of work because of that, I am sorry for them, the same as I am sorry for any other worker who is out of work; but I reject the belief that teachers have a particular right to have their jobs preserved. Of course, many teachers in schools do not fall into the category of political activists. There is good work going on in schools and there are many teachers who are happy with classes well above the sizes provided for by the department. Teachers in many schools say that there should be more cuts in Government spending and more changes made in schools. I commend the Treasurer for the Budget he brought down and the Minister of Education for making the money go around.

Dr VAUGHAN (Glenhuntly)—I should like to use the opportunity of raising the matter of the Caulfield High School library.

Mr Lacy—It is a lovely library.

Dr VAUGHAN—I agree that it is a lovely library. The Assistant Minister of Education and I were privileged to be present at the opening of the Commonwealth Resource Centre at Caulfield High School and, as the Assistant Minister rightly says, it is a beautiful library. What he really meant was that it is a beautiful building, because it has a deficiency: it lacks sufficient books. I have raised the matter on this occasion because it was raised with the Assistant Minister by the school community and it would be remiss of me not to remind him of that. I would like to reinforce this point: Where is the sense in having a magnificent resource centre built into a high school with a deficiency of books?

Mr Lacy—It's an excess of shelves, not a shortage of books.

Dr VAUGHAN—I shall tell the school that.

Mr CATHIE (Carrum)—Speaking as one who has taught for some years in the secondary schools of this State and

as one who was in receipt of a Commonwealth grant to assist the development of special education for children with disabilities, particularly in English, because they lacked skills in communication, in language, in words, in putting the two together and being able to communicate at the age level at which they ought to be able to communicate, I regret the sort of attacks that have been made on teachers by such members as the honorable member for Ballarat South. Some members on the Government side of this House seem to suggest that a large majority of teachers are involved in political activity.

I assure the House that nothing could be further from the truth. The vast majority of teachers, whether in the private schools system or in the Government sector, are hard-working and dedicated people who work well beyond the hours often suggested by honorable members on the Government benches. Teachers do not see education as being a 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. job at all. They have a professional commitment and they work well beyond those hours in undertaking the extra work involved in teaching their own subject-matters or the extra work involved because so many of them accept the wider nature of their work and take children to school camps and involve them in all sorts of projects, such as the making of films or studying a film. It is quite wrong that there should be any suggestion that many teachers seem to be irresponsible, but that is what was suggested.

The great bulk of teachers working within the Education Department of this State are responsible, highly dedicated, hard-working people who have a professional commitment to the task of education. I regret the suggestions and the remarks emanating from the Government party, not only at question time, but even during the debate on these Estimates, that teachers as a body are irresponsible and involved only in strikes.

Mr Jona—You know the schools the honorable member was referring to.

Mr CATHIE—The Minister for Community Welfare Services seems to be suggesting that it is only in a certain group of schools that this situation exists. If that is the view he wishes to put, he does not know very much about the co-operative way in which teachers perform their work today. They do this in conjunction with school councils. They are also trying to decentralize the administration of education and to assist in co-operative development of schools. Parents, teachers and children are working together to achieve important educational objectives and goals. Teachers and parents today are particularly interested in developing a broader and more co-operative approach for the welfare of the children of Victoria.

Opposition members commend and praise the teachers of this State for the dedication that they have, not only to the welfare of our schools, but to the welfare of the children under their care.

Mr WILTON (Broadmeadows)—I propose to refer to the music teaching facilities available in technical schools. It is the most neglected area in the whole Technical Schools Division. There are 110 secondary technical schools in Victoria with a total enrolment of 66 490 students and there are 111 instrumental music teachers. Of that 111, not all are teaching on a full-time basis. That creates a situation that there is actually a little less than one teacher per technical school, or one teacher per 600 students. I do not know whether the honorable member for Ballarat South is prepared to accept that as being reasonable. I do not, and I believe the Technical Schools Division has been sadly neglected in this field.

In the northern metropolitan region, which takes in the Broadmeadows area, there are only fifteen instrumental music teachers and 11 105 students. There are only fifteen class-room music teachers in the entire northern metropolitan region. I do not know whether the honorable member for Ballarat South is prepared to accept that, but I am not.

Mr Lacy—How many technical schools are there in the region?

Mr WILTON—There are seventeen technical schools and eight of them have no class-room music teachers.

Mrs Chambers—Have they applied?

Mr WILTON—I am surprised that the intelligence of the honorable member for Ballarat South is so limited that she has to ask such a stupid question. It appals me. Eight of the seventeen technical schools in the region have no class-room music teacher. The honorable member for Ballarat South is attempting to establish that there would be eight schools which would not apply for a music teacher. I cannot understand the mentality of the honorable member; it is beyond me.

The reason for the shortage is that the Education Department has a policy of staff ceilings and the staff ceiling has been set at 100 music teachers for the whole of the Technical Schools Division throughout Victoria. This staff ceiling of 100 was set in 1976.

Mr Lacy—One hundred what?

Mr WILTON—One hundred instrumental teachers. It is extraordinary that nobody knows who set this ceiling or why it was set. Even the inspector does not understand why this figure was selected.

The other problem confronting this division in the shortage of class-room teachers is attributable to the Education Department's failure to grant studentships to music trainees. Recently, the department has decided that it will not grant studentships.

Mr Lacy—They are not granted to anyone now.

Mr WILTON—The department will not employ music graduates. More than 60 qualified students will graduate from training institutions this year and no employment opportunities will be available to most of those graduates because the department has set a ceiling of 100 instrumental music teachers for the whole of Victoria. As I said earlier, there are 110 secondary technical schools in the State and there are not even enough instrumental music teachers to provide one teacher per school. I ask the Minister whether he is aware of the situation that exists in the Technical Schools Division concerning music teachers. I doubt whether he is aware of it. I ask him how the ceiling of 100 teachers was set, who made the decision, and what is the reason for it? As I said, the technical schools inspector of music does not know how the ceiling was set or by whom; he was just advised that this would be the number.

I refer specifically to Broadmeadows Technical School in the electorate that I represent. In the past ten years the school has established a musical division as a result of the hard work done by parents, the school committee and the students in raising money and procuring an impressive array of musical instruments. This year more than 100 students of the total enrolment of 571 students are learning to play musical instruments. It is not a bad effort for a technical school to be able to engender such a high degree of enthusiasm. The school has established a school band which has been able to graduate to what is now known as the Broadmeadows City Concert Band. It is well received throughout the community and performs regularly at a host of functions, not only within the educational system but also throughout the community.

The real problem that is confronting the school is that the music teacher will be leaving at the end of the year. I understand that she has applied for and has been appointed to a position in a private school. The school council, the staff, and particularly the students, are worried that a replacement may not be available next year. I should be happy to extend an invitation to the Minister and the Assistant Minister of Education to visit the Broadmeadows Technical School. The school would be happy to give a practical demonstration of how much progress has been made in its music department. The Minister should talk to the students, because that is where they will

receive the feedback, and hear of their appreciation of the efforts that have been made by the teacher and other members of the staff and the support they have received from their parents and the school council.

The music department is quite significant, even to the extent of providing employment opportunities. I have been told by the school principal that, as the result of the start they received at the school, some former students are now playing in service bands, some are involved in the commercial recording business and some have even gone into music as a profession. Naturally, the school is proud of its achievement and it is most concerned to know whether it will receive a replacement for the teacher who will be leaving at the end of the year.

I ask the Assistant Minister of Education to take up the matter with his colleague, the Minister of Education, because we believe—and it is generally accepted throughout the Technical Schools Division—that the ceiling of 100 music teachers in the State is ridiculously low. As some 60 fully qualified trainees will be coming out of teaching institutions at the end of this year, there will be an adequate resource of qualified teachers to be recruited.

Again, one sees the extraordinary situation in this section of the Appropriation Bill—and I have mentioned it before—of staff ceilings. Government supporters talk about the need to restrict Government funds, yet in this profession the Government on the one hand is allocating funds to the Education Department and on the other hand will take $38·5 million from the Education Department in pay-roll tax in the current financial year. Technical schools—particularly the Broadmeadows Technical School—must pay pay-roll tax from their annual grants. As the money is forwarded to the school council to enable it to operate the school, one of its ongoing financial commitments is to pay to the Treasurer on a monthly basis pay-roll tax which is part of the $38·5 million. Private schools are exempt from the payment of pay-roll tax; private employers whose pay-roll does not exceed $84 000 are also exempt, yet a technical school must pay pay-roll tax. Collectively these schools will be paying $38·5 million in the current financial year. It is a cooking of the books, a sleight of hand, and the real effect of it is that the total allocation for education has been effectively reduced by $38·5 million. That is a truer statement of education affairs than one sees in the Budget document.

Mr HOCKLEY (Bentleigh)—I refer to a matter of staffing at the secondary component of the Moorabbin Technical College. I have been inundated with letters, many signed by both parents of children who attend the secondary component of the Moorabbin Technical College. The letters are written in the following form and state:

> As parents of students at the Moorabbin Technical College (Secondary Component) we were surprised to hear of Mr A. Hunt's recent decision to disallow the appointment of a separate principal to that component in 1980.
>
> Our college as you may know, has seen a rapid growth in the last three years. Enrolments at the secondary component have almost doubled and are approaching 700. Enrolments at the TAFE component are upwards of 7000. We fail to understand how, in view of these developments, the Minister can still expect one principal to oversee the operations of both components.
>
> There are other secondary technical schools in our area which have considerably smaller enrolments than ours (Caulfield Technical School 380, Brighton Technical School 390), but which, nevertheless, each have their own full-time principal. In addition to this, of course, they each have parent representation on their school council. We see no reason therefore why we should any longer be denied what has come to be regarded by parents of children at all other secondary schools as a fundamental right —the right to a say in decisions which affect the quality of education provided for their children.
>
> It is just such a concern which prompts the forwarding letter and we ask that you, our representative, approach the Minister on our behalf.

I have 134 similar letters which I shall offer to the Minister. I ask the Minister to take action to restore the democratic rights of these people and the many other people associated with the secondary component of the Moorabbin

Technical College who have contacted me.

Mr SIMMONDS (Reservoir)—I wish to refer to the Government's policy, implemented by the Education Department, of declaring teachers in excess and employing teachers under only a limited tenure contract. Representatives of technical and high school teachers in the electorate I represent, and other people, have contacted me on this matter. They believe the policy is a deplorable attack on the effective function of a school and regard it as an affront on the individuals concerned. At the Merrilands High School twelve teachers have been declared in excess and have been told that they must leave the school and either be transferred to another school or put on leave without pay.

This is leading to a situation within the schools that is regarded as a plot by the Education Department in its attack on the proposition that teachers ought to be able to perform on the basis of the needs of the students in the class-room. The concern of the teachers is that in certain cases the school principals will have to decide which teachers are to be "chopped off" from the staff, and that these decisions may often be made on the grounds of personalities, obviously principals will choose those whom they dislike. This would result in blatant victimization against the individual. The teachers regard it as a sad stain on the professional nature of teaching.

They state further that the Education Department's policy is clearly a campaign to cut back on education spending, and that the limited tenure of teachers will result in the rapid deterioration in the conditions of education throughout the State.

Mr Lacy—Will the honorable member table that document?

Mr SIMMONDS—I shall be pleased to do so, together with the accompanying letter which asks me to make the strongest possible protest to the Minister against the Government's policy in this respect. The letter contains the signatures of twelve teachers from the Merrilands High School who are so alarmed by the Government's action that they asked me to take this course.

I have been asked by numerous teachers in technical schools in the electorate I represent and other places to draw the attention of the Government to the fact that in this area, which largely services migrant children in both the technical and high school divisions of the Education Department, in some places where more than 70 of the students speak languages other than English, they are confronted with teachers who speak only English. This is depriving the children of receiving an education that will fit them to compete in the job market, which has degenerated to the position where only the most able and capable are likely to climb to the top of the employment scale and obtain job opportunities.

Not only are the children at schools being deprived of opportunities, but the families of migrant children especially are being deprived because of the later impact this proposal will have on the economies of the families in those areas where the children seek employment. They will be relegated to jobs as factory fodder for the Ford Motor Co. of Aust. Ltd, if they can get even such a job, or they may finish up in jobs, for instance, in the meat industry, where the Government again has shown little concern for safe working conditions, as I mentioned earlier.

There will be a generation of children scrambling out of an education system which has deprived them of teachers on a needs basis which was clearly established not only by teachers at the school but by the parents and the people concerned in education who have determined and made representations based on the needs.

In the northern region an alarming situation exists. Not only has this policy been carried out in the schools, but the concept of regions has been replaced in the usual sense and the director's main concern is for

students in the metropolitan area. In this case the director has been transferred from Sale, and his sole contribution to the position was to state that $3 million ought to be spent on sending children to school by bus instead of providing teachers at schools where they can be taught close to their homes and where family life will not be disrupted.

The Government stands condemned for its attitude in respect of these matters of education. To blame the Education Department for it is one thing, but one should understand that the Education Department is merely carrying out the whims of the Minister in another place and his lackey, the ex-parson, in this place.

Mr ROWE (Essendon)—I draw to the attention of the Minister of Education a matter about which I have been concerned for some time. I refer to a supplement which was published in the *Age* on 31 July this year relating to the Council of Adult Education programme. When one looks through the suburban classes one finds that of the 28 schools which provide suburban classes for adult education, 10 are in Glen Waverley, 20 are in Hawthorn, 6 are in Malvern, none are in Footscray, none in Sunshine and none in Essendon. I ask the Minister whether this imbalance can be changed.

Mr GINIFER (Keilor)—I use this opportunity to bring to the attention of the Minister the necessity for a re-appraisal of post-primary education needs in Victoria. Last Saturday the Assistant Minister of Education attended the official opening of the Movelle Primary School. St. Albans is a dormitory suburb for many people of the western suburbs and is based on secondary industry. It has one technical school and three high schools. In an historical sense, many people would believe it would be more suitable for such an area to have more than one technical school. In putting an argument for a technical school, one is confronted with the rejoinder from the administration of the Education Department that technical schools are far more expensive than high schools to establish and therefore one can have more high schools for the same outlay. It is time now to re-appraise the present system in Victoria.

In many respects, in the first four years of post-primary education in this State, there is little to choose between the subjects offered by high schools and technical schools. Wide programmes are available to boys and girls for domestic science or the practical field of subjects. Many people believe that the only difference in the two schools is that high schools teach a second language. Some technical schools teach a second language which can be taken as an elected subject.

That leads me to the proposition that the needs of the community should be a vital aspect in determining post-primary education which is available with courses tailored to the needs of the children or to the needs of tertiary education. There is a tendency in most secondary schools to believe that academic education is tailored to the higher school certificate examination. In many respects, this is far from the practical position.

I appeal to the Minister to determine whether it is possible to re-appraise the post-primary education that is offered in Victoria and to base it on the needs of the students. I realize that two separate empires have developed which have had a profound influence on educational administration and on Ministers of Education in the past. I ask the Minister to consider that the established empires of the secondary and technical school divisions are not the be all and end all of post-primary education. If the Minister wishes to make his mark in Victoria he should do something about the needs of post-primary education, and the needs of the students, rather than the two empires which have become powerful in Victorian education.

Mr JOLLY (Dandenong)—I draw the attention of the Assistant Minister of Education to the special education units in the Dandenong and Pakenham inspectorates because they are notable by their

absence. Only eleven inspectorates fall into this category.

A number of organizations within the Dandenong electorate have contacted my office concerning the lack of special education units in Dandenong and Pakenham. Given that the Government often blames the absence of numeracy and literacy in young people for the fact that jobs cannot be found for them, the Government does not provide special education units where they are needed.

In the past, the Minister used the excuse that there is a Special Services Division in Dandenong, therefore, special education units are not needed. I have discussed the position with the officers of the special education service who indicate that these units are needed. Education units identify the people who are suffering from literacy and numeracy problems, and provide much needed diagnostic advice.

Despite submissions that have been made with respect to the establishment of special education units in the Dandenong and Pakenham inspectorates, nothing has been done. That is disgraceful. I hope that in the year ahead the Assistant Minister of Education will ensure that special education units are established in those areas.

Mr GINIFER (Keilor)—I raise another matter with the Assistant Minister of Education, which I have already raised with him in correspondence. The Minister has indicated that he has called for a report from his department. To underscore the need, I refer to the St. Albans Special School and the deafness unit which is attached to that school. I hope that in any deliberations the Minister and his department will take into account the needs of the children in the area rather than the bureaucratic stresses which are employed in trying to re-organize them.

The present deafness unit is available for children up to the age of six years. From then on they are required to travel, by whatever transport is made available by either the parents or the department, to deafness units in eastern suburbs or at least on the other side of the river. This unit caters for deaf children not only from St. Albans but also from Werribee and Melton. The point that has been stressed to me on a number of occasions is the requirement placed on children between six and seven years. It is a serious proposition that they should be taken from as far away as St. Albans and Melton to deafness centres on the other side of the river.

When the Minister receives the report from his department I hope he will search the recommendations because it is the belief of the people from the St. Albans Special School that a saving in financial resources would be made if the teachers could continue to teach the children from St. Albans in the school rather than transport them, at a cost to the public purse, to schools beyond. I ask the Minister to consider this matter, not only in the interests of the children but for cost savings in education.

Mr McINNES (Gippsland South)—I raise a matter with the Assistant Minister of Education concerning the special education unit at Leongatha which serves Gippsland. As well as being a special education unit it functions as a counselling and guidance unit. The problem is not so much one of staffing. As the needs of the community have been identified the staffing numbers have been increased.

I wish to raise the question of the utilization of those specialists in the best possible way. Two problem areas are transport and secretarial assistance. Either twelve or thirteen specialist teachers work in the one building and although they go out and work on location at various schools many telephone calls are received which distract the remaining specialist teachers. Secretarial assistance would be of benefit to handle the office work, telephone calls and so on.

Because these specialists have to work in a large area—from Korrumburra in the west to Mirboo North and Yarram—they experience the common problem of costs for private vehicles. At this stage, that problem has been partly overcome but although these specialist teachers are using mainly

private vehicles there is a good case for providing one or two Education Department vehicles as two or more of these specialists can frequently arrange a roster at a school together. Because this is not always possible, there will be a continuing need for private vehicles, and it would be out of the question to provide every specialist with a car. The specialists employed in this school earn a high salary and hold the necessary qualifications so it would be more appropriate if secretarial assistance were provided to handle the office work and telephone calls.

I extend an invitation to the Assistant Minister of Education to visit this unit at the earliest possible time and to witness for himself the good work they are doing and to consider the possibility of altering the present arrangements.

Mr LACY (Assistant Minister of Education)—I point out to honorable members who have shown interest in special education units that there are 48 of these units operating in Victoria at present, roughly on the basis of one to each inspectorate. Some 200 people are employed in the units, which provide an outstanding service to students.

I advise the honorable member for Dandenong that I have approved of the establishment of a special education unit in Pakenham to commence in 1980. Initially, that unit will be staffed by two teachers. As well, two additional special education units will be established in 1980 and another will be extended. The service provided in the inspectorate of Pakenham will be to all students in the area and the unit will take into account the area's need for the service. This is in accordance with the Government's policy for the provision of special education units throughout the State.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Mr KIRKWOOD (Preston)—I am advised that it has become the fashion in various Magistrates Courts to disqualify a person, who has been found guilty of having a blood alcohol content exceeding ·05 while driving a vehicle, from holding a driver's licence for twelve months. Apparently another penalty has been added and the people involved are expected to attend rehabilitation courses. I should like steps to be taken to ensure that there are sufficient vacancies in these courses to allow the people to go through the courses during the twelve months for which they are forbidden to hold driver's licences.

I have been told that, if the people are unable to complete the courses within the twelve months, the period of disqualification is extended. That is not justice of any description. It is also not just that the people are not told about the courses, in some cases, until they return to the court to find out how to reapply for their licences. They are then asked whether they have completed the rehabilitation course. That is a travesty of justice. I have been told about one case in which this has happened and, as there are no courses available in Wood Street, Preston, it may be another six months before the person concerned is able to regain his licence.

The Attorney-General should ensure that the punishments imposed by the courts are prescribed by law. I doubt whether the various regulations provide for this punishment. Certainly, the matter was not brought before Parliament. If the regulation has come into force without the attention of Parliament being directed to it, that should be exposed.

Mr SIMMONDS (Reservoir)—I am concerned about the allowances made to witnesses who are required by the police to attend courts to give evidence. Witnesses are being presented with the magnificent sum of $1 to compensate them for travelling expenses. In this day and age it is ridiculous to expect a person to travel from, say, the electorate I represent to a court in the city and return home for only $1. I hope something can be done about this.

Mr CAIN (Bundoora)—I wish to comment on the apparent lack of any attempt by the Government to ensure that sufficient staff is provided for the Corporate Affairs Office. The votes for salaries and other allowances indicate

that there is to be no appreciable increase in the staff during this financial year.

The Corporate Affairs Office earns a great deal of income for the Government —between $11·5 million and $12 million a year. Less than one-third of the fees collected by the office are put back into its conduct and management. That is in marked contrast to the situation in New South Wales, where approximately 60 per cent of the fees collected are appropriated for the management and conduct of the Corporate Affairs Office.

The inevitable result for Victoria is that this State does not have the capacity to provide the resources to protect the public and prevent the corporate crime which is occurring. Some good advice for anyone who is determined to embark on a life of crime and who wishes to be successful would be: Go corporate! The chances of being detected or prevented from committing a corporate crime are much less than they would be in the case of any other crime.

I am concerned about the enormous cost to the community of corporate crime. I shall mention two aspects. The first is that, given sufficient staff, it is apparent that the Corporate Affairs Office could play an important preventative and educative role in the conduct of corporate affairs. The staff of the office believes that if sufficient staff were available, particularly skilled investigative staff, to detect corporate crimes before they cause great harm to the public, there would be a great saving in costs to the community.

The second role that could be played by the office if it had sufficient staff is not perhaps quite as well appreciated as that. The Companies Act is a complicated Act and many applications are made to the court under its provisions, both at the instigation of the Commissioner for Corporate Affairs and by companies seeking to vary the requirements of the Act. A role frequently played by the commissioner and welcomed and encouraged by the judges who hear the applications is that of providing expert assistance and advice. A great deal of time could be saved if the court had available to it officers from the Corporate Affairs Office who were familiar with and could advise and assist the court on the complex matters that came before it. On many occasions judges have referred to this in court and have expressed a desire that the Corporate Affairs Office should have available to it sufficient staff to provide such assistance.

I am afraid that the Government is being characteristically short-sighted in not providing the facilities and equipment needed to fight corporate crime, which is on the increase. There is no doubt about that. As has been known for years, the Fraud Squad within the Police Department is undermanned. There are some grey areas in which the work of the Corporate Affairs Office and that of the Fraud Squad overlap. Unfortunately, neither has the capacity or the facilities to do the jobs the community quite properly expects them to do.

I reiterate that the moneys received and collected by the Corporate Affairs Office could provide for the better management and conduct of the office, which would enable it to protect the community in a much more sophisticated and useful way than it is presently able to do.

Mr SIMPSON (Niddrie)—Honorable members would be well aware that much of the three and a half years during which I have been privileged to be a member of Parliament has been spent at the Corporate Affairs Office investigating numerous land deals. The results of those investigations may even be responsible, following the present Royal Commission, for the fall of the Government.

During my many visits to the office I have been made aware of the lack of staff. Because of the ceilings placed on the Public Service—and this is nothing new for the Victorian Public Service—Victoria has an increasing number of what are commonly referred to as corporate crooks. That was clearly illustrated by the honorable member for Bundoora.

One method of laundering and shuffling money in order to evade taxation is through the establishment of numerous companies, ranging from trust companies to nominee companies. They are usually companies with a paid-up capital of $2, and ten or even twenty of these companies can be established. It is clear that this is done for the purpose of shuffling and hiding money and evading taxation.

So long as the present laws remain there is nothing illegal about what is done, even though it is highly improper. So many new companies are being established that the work load of the staff of the Corporate Affairs Office is increasing significantly. The number of companies being registered is so great that they cannot be properly dealt with or processed.

It is apparent that there must be either a reappraisal of the formulas being used to evade taxation through the incorporation of companies or, if the Government intends to continue to acquiesce in the situation and the use of those formulas by so many corporate crooks, more people will have to be employed at the Corporate Affairs Office to relieve the tremendous strain being placed on the present staff, most of whom are young and dedicated.

I hope the Treasurer will examine the situation. The matter has not been raised with me flippantly; it has been brought to my attention by senior officers, who have asked me to raise it at the highest possible level and to request earnest consideration of the two propositions I have put forward.

Mr CRABB (Knox)—The Registrar of Estate Agents costs the taxpayers just under $250 000 a year and yet, through the activities of the Royal Commission into Housing Commission land purchases, honorable members are witnessing over and over again the lack of control the Government has over the activities of real estate agents. The reality is that for every real estate agent who is licensed under this board, there are something like ten people acting as real estate agents under sub-contracts to those licensees. It is common for a licensed real estate agent to sub-let his licence for a fee—I understand the going rate is of the order of $200. Most of the people who are operating as real estate agents are in effect sub-agents working under the licence of someone else.

The Act provides that a licensed real estate agent must be in bona fide control of an agency but is permitted to have a sub-agent working for him. There are many agencies operating in the metropolitan area, even in regional centres such as Ballarat where the estate agent is not a licensed real estate agent but a sub-agent, and the licensed agent does not come within cooee of the sub-agent's office.

In effect the Registrar of Estate Agents does not have the capacity to adequately control the estate agents' industry. Honorable members have only to look at the evidence given at the Gowans inquiry and the present Royal Commission. As an example, one finds that Mr Dillon, of Dillon and Inkster Real Estate Pty Ltd, is a member of the ethics committee of the Real Estate and Stock Institute of Victoria—that gives honorable members an indication of what is occurring.

Mr Mackinnon—That is a lot of nonsense, let us have a relevant contribution on the division.

Mr CRABB—The honorable member for Box Hill finds it a lot of nonsense. I do not consider it a lot of nonsense because with the kind of money people are expected to spend when buying a home——

Mr MACKINNON (Box Hill)—On a point of order, Mr Chairman, the division being considered by the Committee is narrow and I would have thought that the honorable member was travelling far afield in attempting to cover its provisions. My interjection was directed to that aspect, and I consider the contribution of the honorable member is far too wide of the subject under discussion.

The CHAIRMAN (Mr A. T. Evans)—Order! I have listened carefully to the

honorable member for Knox and I believe he is within the ambits of this division.

Mr CRABB (Knox)—I thank you, Mr Chairman. The operation of real estate agents is very important to the Victorian public. The fact that the vast majority of people who act as intermediaries in the sale of property are not licensed real estate agents would lead one to believe this organization, which one would imagine is responsible for licensing real estate agents, is not carrying out its function of licensing real estate agents. The allocation of just under $250 000 to operate this organization is false economy because in reality the money that is being spent is not being used to police the real estate agents' industry. People who believe they are dealing with licensed real estate agents are dealing with subagents who are not adequately trained and who do not possess a licence. That aspect has been seen time and again in the activities of real estate agents as revealed in evidence given at the Royal Commission.

It is incumbent upon the Government to spend more money to provide more facilities for the Registrar of Estate Agents to properly police the Act.

Mr HOCKLEY (Bentleigh)—I address myself to the administration of the Public Trustee's Office. The system of issuing certificates of infirmity is too loose and there are insufficient checks and balances built into the Public Trustee Act 1958. A recent report by a Master of the Supreme Court, Master Barker, which I have in my possession, proves this beyond doubt. I am prepared to make the report available to the House.

One of my constituents, Desmond Victor Hey, of 10 Paschal Street, Moorabbin, a man of 50 years of age, was certified by the Public Trustee to be an infirm person on 10 April last, following the signing of the certificate by two doctors. Six months later an application was made to Master Barker who had Mr Hey re-examined.

The Master was satisfied that Mr Hey was not of unsound mind or infirm within the meaning of section 39(c) of the Public Trustee Act 1958. Master Barker found the evidence of both Dr Rodney Malcolm Fredman and Dr John Melville Ludbrooke to be entirely unacceptable.

The Master found that Dr Fredman relied on what he was told by Mr Hey's sister, Mrs Muriel Edwards, as grounds for signing the certificate. In determining that Mr Hey was mentally incompetent, Dr Fredman applied tests applicable to an astute businessman. The Master also found that Dr Ludbrooke signed the certificate of infirmity because he was asked to do so, and for no other reason.

The Master said that Dr Ludbrooke acted with callous disregard of the consequences of his actions or of the pain and anguish he had helped to cause during the past six months. Master Barker said:

> I totally disregard the certifying evidence of the two doctors.

I ask the Attorney-General to examine the protected persons section of the Public Trustee Act 1958 because it is very disturbing that people without proper psychiatric training and expertise can sign certificates of infirmity which in turn can drastically affect the rights and obligations of people.

TREASURER

Mr JOLLY (Dandenong)—I refer to item 59 covering the cost of employment schemes including the special youth training programme. The figures indicate that the increase in this Budget is of the order of 288 per cent, the amount increasing from $1·6 million to $4·5 million. The figures once again emphasize the need for the Budget to provide information in a disaggregated form. From the way information is presented in the Estimates, it is impossible to know what has really occurred between 1978–79 and 1979–80. The presentation is in a very confusing form indeed.

Honorable members would be aware that the special youth employment training programme is really a job substitution scheme. The Federal Government provides funds for organizations

to employ young workers for a limited period. As I understand the position in Victoria, after these people had completed their training programme—in the past it was for a period of six months but I believe the period is now four months—they were effectively dismissed by the Victorian Government and thrown back into the employment market, and therefore had to find their own way into a more permanent job.

I am wondering what the position is this year in view of the increase in proposed expenditure. Does the Government intend to employ these people for a longer period than it has in the past; in other words, to extend the period of Federal Government subsidy? Will the Government give an indication that it will not dismiss these employees until it is satisfied that they can obtain alternative work in this State?

We must reach a point where these schemes create jobs rather than job substitution schemes because job substitution does not do anything to resolve the employment problems in this State.

It is also important for the Government to indicate precisely what other employment schemes are included in the allocation of $4·5 million as there is no indication in the Estimates or in the Budget as to what these schemes are. The Budget speech made some reference to aggregated data but no further details were given.

In the context of what the Government is doing in the field of employment, the sum of $4·5 million is a relatively large sum because only $500 000 has been allocated for the expenses of the Victorian Employment Committee. There is a need to present the data in a more disaggregated form so honorable members have a clearer idea of the employment schemes being introduced.

Mr GINIFER (Keilor)—I refer to the Advance to the Treasurer. It is clearly defined that the advance is to enable the Treasurer to meet urgent claims that may arise before Parliamentary sanction is obtained, which will afterwards be submitted for Parliamentary authority. An enormous amount of $95·5 million has been set aside and I am wondering whether these funds are being made available because of slackness in preparing the general estimates of the various departments.

One can understand that during a period of twelve months, items of an emergency nature requiring the provision of funds could arise. For instance, it could occur in the case of a national disaster, such as floods, a bushfire or in factors associated with the employment of youth.

The explanation which accompanies this item indicates that it is emergency funding until Parliamentary authority can be obtained. If such emergencies did arise, the opportunity would be provided for the Treasury to obtain Parliamentary approval during the autumn or spring sittings of the Parliament, so the Committee is not looking at emergencies which could arise during a twelve-month period whilst the Parliament was not sitting. The emergencies would occur during a period of four to five months.

The Treasurer ought to consider this matter with his officials because $95·5 million is a large sum to be held in an advance account to cover emergencies. In effect, it indicates that there is a lack of forward planning by the departments or a lack of confidence by the Treasurer in the estimates of Government departments.

The Committee cannot condone the allocation of $95·5 million without some passing comment, and I hope the Treasurer and the Government will take the necessary steps to reduce the large allocation of funds which may have to be utilized in cases of emergency pending Parliamentary approval. This is bearing in mind that the Opposition expects Parliament to meet for a reasonable period.

Mr JOLLY (Dandenong)—I also wish to make some brief comments on this $95·5 million. The amount appearing under Treasurer's Advances for 1979–80

is substantially larger than the amount which appeared in the Budget for 1978–79. That requires explanation, but one of the procedures used by Treasury when drawing up this system of accounts is that the $95·5 million, in part, allows for wage increases which are expected to take place during the financial year 1979–80 but which had not occurred at the time of the introduction of the Appropriation Bill. That in part explains the sum, but that would also apply in previous financial years and, in particular, in the last financial year. There is an obligation on the Treasurer to explain why $95·5 million is the sum chosen. Anticipated wage increases are in that sum and it should be noted in line with the Government's estimate that average weekly earnings will increase by about 9·5 per cent in the year ahead.

As it stands at present, there is no explanation of the item and, as I have indicated, the Opposition would like an explanation why it is $95·5 million this year, which is a much larger figure than in the previous financial year, and the increase is much higher than the rate of inflation.

Mr THOMPSON (Treasurer)—This is a system that has been used by the Government, and Parliament, through the years. There is an increase from last year. There is an increase of about $400 million in the total Budget. Admittedly, it is an estimate, and the main reason why this procedure is used is because it is not possible to estimate accurately wage and salary increases during the course of the year and the time at which those salary and wage increases will take place during the course of the financial year. This year the Government has had to meet payments in excess of $200 million over and above those it had to meet in the wage and salary field in the previous financial year.

For those honorable members who are interested, clause 6 of the Appropriation Bill appropriates money from the Treasurer's Advance from last year, and a detailed explanation is always contained in the Bill presented in the following year as to how that money has been spent. Although the initial figure is an estimate, the final explanation is given in considerable detail to the House, which I believe is justified.

Mr JOLLY (Dandenong)—I refer to the operations of the State Superannuation Board. It is a matter of concern and regret that the State Superannuation Board's annual report for 30 June 1978 has just become available. That means, of course, it is more than twelve months out of date. This problem has existed for some time. Obsolete information from an important financial authority is an indication of the inability of the Government to manage the State. Numerous references have been contained in past annual reports that the restrictions placed on the State Superannuation Board have prevented the board from upgrading the quality of its reports and reducing the gap between the date on which the report is released and the year on which it is reporting.

I wish to make some passing reference to the board's annual report this year, because a number of matters need close consideration by all honorable members. First of all, at the top of page 2 of the report, it states:

> There were several cases of ill-health retirements which occurred shortly after entry on full benefits, and it was felt that in most of these cases payment of full benefits could have been avoided if normal underwriting standards had been applied to the classification on entry.

That raises the question why normal underwriting standards were not used by the State Superannuation Board in the past. It requires explanation. The report goes on:

> Over recent years there has been a threefold increase in the number of ill-health retirements in the under 35 age range, and this provision was the first of a number of measures which were considered in order to reverse the adverse trend of ill-health retirements.

Of course there is more information included in the annual report on retirements due to ill-health, and they represent a large proportion of the board's pay-outs.

I wish to make some comments on the investments of the State Superannuation Board. I hope the honorable member for Box Hill listens because

he may learn something. In the investments for the year ending 30 June 1978, the total of new funds invested amounted to $68·5 million. This is indicated at the bottom of page 3 of the annual report. That is a substantial sum of money. The report indicates that investment in ownership of property represents only 9·7 per cent of the fund as at 30 June 1977. The report goes on to state:

> It is desirable that the Board's involvement in property purchases should increase in the future so that the Board can achieve a balance in the investment portfolio of the fund. With this in view, the Board is actively seeking new property investments at satisfactory prices with an adequate return on invested funds.

It is quite clear from that statement that the State Superannuation Board is willing to hold more assets in property than it held previously. This provides scope for the Government to show some imagination, and initiative, and to ensure that investments are made in urgent capital works in this State. I have said in the Budget debate, and in previous debates, that Government departments, such as the Education Department could sell off property—I wish the honorable member for Box Hill would listen because it is an important point. He should be aware that traditional areas of capital works have been cut back tragically in the Budget. He should also be aware that unemployment is high in this State and, according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics figures, Victoria's unemployment rate is greater than that in New South Wales and Queensland.

The CHAIRMAN (Mr A. T. Evans)—I ask the honorable member for Dandenong to relate his remarks more closely to the State Superannuation Board.

Mr JOLLY (Dandenong)—Thank you, Mr Chairman. I was indicating that the investments of the State Superannuation Board can be used in a way which will reduce the unemployment rate in Victoria. That is of fundamental importance to all members of the House. I am trying to explain that the board, in its annual report, indicated that it is prepared to hold a greater investment in property, and that provides the opportunity—as I was trying to indicate to the honorable member for Box Hill—for a department, such as the Education Department, to sell off land and property to the State Superannuation Board and, in turn, lease it back from the board.

That would provide additional funds for capital expenditure. It is well recognized that these additional funds are needed to bring back the traditional areas of capital expenditure to the real levels that prevailed in 1978–79. It would have the dual effect of increasing employment opportunities in this State and bringing forward urgent investment decisions. All honorable members agree they are the proper objectives.

Because of the statements included in the State Superannuation Board report, I urge the Treasurer, as a matter of urgency, to take this course of action.

Mr ROPER (Brunswick)—I wish to briefly raise a matter with the Treasurer concerning medical examination fees incurred by the State Superannuation Board. There has been an increase of 34 per cent in the amount of money allocated for medical examination fees this financial year.

I should like the Treasurer to explain the increase. A number of explanations are possible. One of the first is that the normal use of doctors from the Health Commission is occurring less frequently, and outside doctors, with their substantially higher private fees, are being used, or, alternatively, the State Superannuation Board is putting more public servants through a lot more tests than it once did. Nonetheless, 34 per cent is a substantial increase in the amount for that item, and it would be reasonable for the Treasurer to provide an explanation. If he has not got an explanation with him, he could provide an explanation afterwards.

Mr CRABB (Knox)—I draw the attention of the Treasurer, who haply is the only Minister present in the Chamber, to the allocation for electronic data processing expenses of the

State Superannuation Board. That item has risen from $600 000 to $750 000, and over recent years it has increased at an alarming rate. One could perhaps think that it was part of the technological revolution, but salaries and allowances have been increasing at a rate one would expect them to.

There is an expense for electronic data processing without any savings in salaries and allowances. I am not arguing in favour of computers putting people out of jobs. Computers cost a lot of money, and this electronic data processing equipment has not produced the data, the software, the hardware and the rest of it. It has cost the taxpayers a lot of money for nothing. It is not good enough for the honorable member for Box Hill, who is chairman of the Public Accounts Committee, to nod and smile and say, "This is so, what a funny thing". It is up to the Government to tell Parliament why this amount of money has been spent on electronic data processing equipment without any advantage to the taxpayers, contributors to the fund, or anyone else, so far as I can see.

I do not know which company supplied the software or the hardware, but it seems that mistakes have been made along the way. Over the past five years substantial sums have been spent on electronic data processing expenses with respect to the State Superannuation Board without any advantage to the people of Victoria or the contributors to the State Superannuation Board. I invite the Treasurer to comment on that item.

Mr THOMPSON (Treasurer)—On the matter raised by the honorable member for Knox, there is an expenditure estimated at $750 000. About $405 000 of that goes by way of salaries and ancillary costs, and machine rental is $189 000. They are the two major components.

On the matter raised by the honorable member for Brunswick, $280 000 is the sum listed. He queried the increase from $209 000. The cost of medical reviews and examinations and reports reaches the $243 000 mark, and the supply of money to the actuary totals $35 000, and medical supplies $1500.

Mr ROPER (Brunswick)—It might well have been part of past practice, but I wonder if the Minister can explain how the actuary gets a chop out of the medical examination fees. One would imagine, if a sum of $35 000 is payable for actuarial expenses, that it should be listed under a separate item and not under an item labelled, "Medical examination fees", which is a term honorable members clearly understand to refer to the examination of members of that low paid profession, doctors. Actuarial fees are quite different and should be properly marked in the appropriate part of the Budget.

Mr THOMPSON (Treasurer)—There may be some merit in the suggestion of the honorable member for Brunswick. If one goes to a doctor for medical treatment and receives actuarial treatment, one might be disappointed. I shall investigate that matter.

Mr CRABB (Knox)—I again raise the matter of electronic data processing expenses and I direct the attention of the House to item 2, General Expenses, No. 7, Electronic Data Processing—Expenses, where the cost of the computer expenses for the Taxation Office have increased from more than $300 000 to approximately $900 000—an increase of almost three times in one year. I am aware that the land tax assessments were put on computer last year for the first time.

Mr Roper—It cost $40 million.

Mr CRABB—Yes, and the land tax receipts were $40 million less than were estimated last financial year because the computer did not produce the assessments at the rate expected. It is bad enough that the Government has not collected the tax it ought, but when one realizes it is costing three times as much not to collect the tax, the situation is ridiculous.

I invite the Treasurer to give a better explanation of this item than the explanation he gave on the electronic data processing item in the previous division. Such an increase for a worse result than

obtained on a manual system is taking technological change to a ridiculous extent.

Mr THOMPSON (Treasurer)—I cannot give a detailed explanation of the technical difficulties being experienced with the computer. I am keen to ensure that it works more effectively this financial year than it did last year. It is true that there was a lag of $30 million in the collection of land tax and for the purpose of distinguishing between pay-roll tax, $18 000 was allocated to land tax collections and $19 000 to pay-roll tax collections. That is the apportionment. But I agree it is about time the true money's worth is obtained from mechanization.

Dr VAUGHAN (Glenhuntly)—I note that under item 3, "Other Services" there is listed an entry, "Bookmakers' and bookmakers' clerks' committee—fees of members", $7800. I cannot comment on the actual magnitude of the sum but I would appreciate the Treasurer commenting on it. I draw to the attention of the Treasurer the comparison of this figure with a figure discussed earlier under Division 280, Item 4, Other Services, Industrial Safety Advisory Council—Fees and expenses. I ask the Treasurer to comment on the relativity of those two figures of $7800 and $1900 respectively and to state whether the comparison reflects the priorities of this Government.

Mr CRABB (Knox)—Again, I refer to electronic data processing expenses. The figure has increased from $4416 to $17 000, an increase of four times. Again, there is no worth-while value in this exercise. One would tend to consider that the electronic data processing expenses of the Public Service have been somewhat randomly apportioned between various divisions in the Bill. The conclusion one could draw is that the aggregate costs of electronic data processing have risen enormously over the past three or four years and there is still no great advantage from it in cost or output of information. Parliament is not getting any extra information, nor is the Government. It is simply madness to spend this money on collection of data unless it is being used for a useful purpose. It is the taxpayer's money and if the data cannot be used to the advantage of the taxpayer, the exercise should not be undertaken.

Outside Parliament, it has been my experience that whenever an inefficient organization has tried to computerize its systems, it has resulted in costing the organization an excessive amount of money. For an organization that worked well manually, it was simple to convert its operations to computer and usually the computerization did not mean cutting staff. It meant obtaining considerable advantages from the computer operation.

It would appear from the Bill that there has been an inefficient manual system operating in the Public Service for which computerization has been attempted, an exercise which is proving extremely costly and inefficient. I urge the Government not to let the matter go on indefinitely but to call a halt somewhere and to reassess the entire computer programme.

Mr THOMPSON (Treasurer)—I take note of the remarks of the honorable member for Knox and I point out that $17 000 is a rather small sum for expenditure on electronic data processing.

Mr Crabb—It has increased four times over last year.

Mr THOMPSON—It is still a small sum in comparison with other sums available for land and pay-roll tax, where immeasurably greater benefits are expected.

In reply to the honorable member for Glenhuntly, no, of course it does not. It happens that that sum is larger. The Government of course attaches considerable importance to industrial safety. The fees of these clerks is a cost the Government has had to meet through the years, but it is a relatively small sum of money.

MINISTRY FOR CONSERVATION

Mr GAVIN (Coburg)—I refer to environmental study programmes and note that the expenses are down

$188 000. On 30 October, a question without notice was asked by the Honorable R. J. Eddy of the Minister for Conservation in another place concerning United Disposal Services Pty Ltd and the establishment of a waste treatment plant at Camp Road, Broadmeadows.

Mr Simmonds—Sir Henry Bolte has shares in that company, and so does Sir Reginald Ansett.

Mr GAVIN—Yes. The Honorable R. J. Eddy asked the Minister about an environmental effects study on the proposal and in reply the Minister stated, *inter alia:*

> Therefore, if the company is agreeable to producing an environmental impact statement, there will certainly be no impediment.

From that statement, one would imagine that the Minister was agreeable to the study. However, in a letter to the City Engineer, Mr R. J. Moody, of the City of Broadmeadows, received on 15 November, two weeks after the answer given in Parliament, the Minister stated, *inter alia*:

> I do not consider that the use of the Environment Assessment Procedure in relation to that planning decision, would be justified at this late stage in the planning process.

Clearly, there will be no impact assessment procedure, which is contrary to what the Minister said in his reply two weeks earlier. That is a broken promise, which is disgraceful. The Minister should stick to his promise. Quite clearly most people in Broadmeadows are against the waste disposal plant being located there. I note the concurrence of the honorable member for Niddrie. I cannot understand why the Minister opposes the study. Perhaps it is because there is not enough money available for environmental study programmes—the allocation for expenditure for this year has been cut by $188 000. If so, I appeal to the Minister for Conservation to change his mind and to the Treasurer to raise the estimates for these environmental study programmes for this year.

That waste treatment plant should not be based at Broadmeadows, which already has a waste treatment plant at Tullamarine. The City of Broadmeadows has suffered too much from waste treatment plants and I urge that the city should not be the location for another one. I appeal to the Treasurer to refer my remarks to the Minister for Conservation, to conduct an environmental study even at this late stage, and to reverse the decision he made in the disgraceful letter he wrote to the City Engineer of the City of Broadmeadows.

Mr AUREL SMITH (South Barwon)—I am pleased that the Treasurer has made provision of $300 000 for relocation expenses for the Marine Science Laboratory at Queenscliff. The money is to go towards the cost of major items of expense for relocating members of staff, including bridging finance for staff who have to sell their homes in Melbourne and buy new ones at Queenscliff, and for the cost of transferring furniture, legal costs, including stamp duties, and other incidental expenses. The new science laboratory is progressing favourably. Many buildings are on site and it is expected that they will be occupied early in the New Year.

The grant of $70 100 to the Victorian Institute of Marine Sciences is to enable the current staffing and administration costs of the institute to be met in the coming year. Over the past three years the Government has made grants to enable the establishment of the institute. The year before last the Government made a grant of $50 000. Last year the Government made a grant of $56 000 and this year the grant has been increased to $70 100, thus enabling the institute to continue its establishment procedures and maintain the present staffing schedule.

Dr VAUGHAN (Glenhuntly)—I note with some interest and much concern that the grant to the Environment Studies Association of Victoria has dropped from $28 000 to $20 000. As a former Minister of Education, I am sure the Treasurer is aware of the work of this voluntary body and its close link with the Education Department in the running of environmentally orientated training courses, as well as the many other activities it runs in co-operation with other Government departments.

I would appreciate some explanation from the Treasurer for the substantial drop in the grant to this organization, which is largely funded by members' subscriptions and fees for courses. A loss of $8000 in its revenue is a substantial drop.

I also note with concern that the grant to the Conservation Council of Victoria remains at $10 000 and the grant to the Victorian National Parks Association remains at $5000, despite inflation and the beneficial effects of the work of those bodies on the community. I ask the Treasurer to provide an explanation of why the grants to those conservation bodies have remained the same.

Mr JOLLY (Dandenong)—I refer to an announcement by the Government immediately prior to the State elections that the Lysterfield recreational area would be linked with the Churchill National Park to form one large park. Although the Lysterfield area is an ideal recreational area, it could be used by the public now. However people are not allowed even to walk through the area or, as I would like to have done on a number of occasions, jog through the area because it is locked up and members of the public are not allowed to enter that area.

Is it the Government's intention to open up the Lysterfield recreation area this financial year? The area is on the fringe of the Dandenong electorate. Lysterfield could service a large population. Will the Government take urgent action to ensure that this recreation area is made available to the public in the very near future?

Mr THOMPSON (Treasurer)—I will confer with my colleague, the Minister for Conservation as to how soon the Lysterfield recreational area will be made available for joggers and other athletic people such as the honorable member for Dandenong.

In relation to the Environment Studies Association of Victoria, a reasonable programme could be maintained with a saving of $8000 being effected at the same time. I will examine the nature of the programme planned and write to the honorable member for Glenhuntly about it.

Mr WILTON (Broadmeadows)—I take up the matter referred to by the honorable member for Coburg. The formation of a company by the name of United Disposal Services Pty Ltd has caused grave concern in the Broadmeadows area. The company has lodged applications with the appropriate authorities for the establishment of a waste disposal plant. Three applications have been made involving town planning, offensive trades and the Environment Protection Authority. The Health Commission, as the delegated authority of the Environment Protection Authority, has made a preliminary determination that a licence be issued subject to certain restrictions.

In 1978 the Government introduced the Environment Effects Bill. The Minister of the day who was handling that legislation, the then Minister for Conservation, now the current Minister of Health, is reported at page 1018 of *Hansard* of 5 April 1978 as saying, *inter alia*:

> It is designed to establish the legislative framework for the obtaining of information and advice on the likely environmental effects of projects by decision makers and those responsible for undertaking works in this State.
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> . . . . . .
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> Perhaps I could best describe the objective of environment assessment as being to ensure that environmental factors are fully considered in the decision making process.
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> but is should ensure that decisions about these works are taken in the knowledge of their environmental consequences.
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> . . . . . .
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> However, the Bill also extends the current practices being followed under the Premier's directive to enable the assistance of the Minister for Conservation to be requested by any person or body required by any Act or law to make a decision which could have a significant effect on the environment these provisions are designed to permit bodies such as the Town Planning Appeals Tribunal and municipal councils to request the use of these procedures for both private and public proposals requiring their decision.

The other important point is contained in clause 8. When he was dealing with the clauses of the Bill the Minister stated, *inter alia*:

Clause 8 is designed to enable bodies such as municipal councils or planning tribunals to use the assessment procedure. It provides that any person or body required by any Act or law to make a decision which could have a significant effect upon the environment may seek the advice and assistance of the Minister with respect to an environment assessment to enable the decision to be made.

When dealing with this registration the Minister is reported as having said:

Where the Minister advises the person or body that a preliminary environment report or environment effects statement should be prepared, the works become subject to this Act and shall not proceed and no decision be made until the report or statement has been prepared and the assessment considered by that person or body.

All honorable members know that, on town planning applications, municipal councils must make a determination within a certain time. The Health Commission, as a delegated authority of the Environment Protection Authority, is in the same situation. However, the purpose of the Environment Effects Act as described by the Minister is to ensure that environment effects studies are made before the decisions are taken on planning applications, offensive trade licensing applications and applications to the Environment Protection Authority.

Therefore, the Broadmeadows City Council wrote to the Minister for Conservation requesting that the Minister exercise his authority under the Environment Effects Act and call for an environment effects study.

There is no cost to the Crown in these matters because the Act also provides that the proponents of the proposal must meet the cost of the environment effects study. The Minister replied to the Broadmeadows council in the following terms:

The Health Commission as the delegated protection agency has made a preliminary determination to issue a licence for the disposal of wastes.

Again, no environment effects study.

The Health Commission can also arrange for a conference of all the parties concerned with the licence to discuss objections and the information submitted. I understand that objections have been received and it is intended to hold a conference.

Again, without the benefit of an environment effects study. The Minister further stated, *inter alia*:

. . . there are appeal provisions relating to the application under the Town and Country Planning Act and the registration of offensive trade premises.

Again, these matters will be determined without the benefit of an environment effects study. The Minister says that he has carefully considered the likely environmental effects without the benefit of an environment effects study. In the last part of his letter, the Minister writes that he does not consider that the use of the environmental procedure in this matter is appropriate.

What the Minister for Conservation in 1978 said is a sham. The Government had no intention of doing what the Minister said the Government would do. The purpose of bringing that Bill before Parliament and asking Parliament to pass the Bill was an exercise in semantics because, assuming what the Government said in 1978 applied to the current Minister for Conservation, the Broadmeadows council, being the authority to determine the application under the Town Planning Act for the licence of registered premises of an offensive trade, took a reasonable attitude and said to the Minister, "Before we make a determination on these applications we wish to have the benefit of being able to study the results of an environment effects study" because the council took the attitude that it believed what the Minister for Conservation said in 1978, namely:

However, the Bill also extends the current practices being followed under the Premier's directive to enable the assistance of the Minister for Conservation to be requested by any person or body required by any Act or law to make a decision which could have a significant effect on the environment these provisions are designed to permit bodies such as the Town Planning Appeals Tribunal and municipal councils to request the use of these procedures for both private and public proposals requiring their decision.

What would have more effect on the environment than the operation of a trade waste disposal plant which would accommodate both solid and liquid wastes? Already one trade waste

disposal plant is situated adjacent to the Tullamarine airport. At this time of the year, the first thing that the tourist receives on stepping off the aircraft at Tullamarine is a stinking whiff from the liquid trade waste plant. On ariving in our fair city of Melbourne the tourist is greeted by this aroma and accompanied by it for about 25 per cent of his journey into the city.

I understand the suspicion of the many people who will be directly affected by the operations of the proposed plant if it is allowed to come into being. The site is in Camp Road, adjacent to the military camp. On the opposite side of the road is a residential area in the electorate of the honorable member for Glenroy. Because of the prevailing winds the plant will also affect constituents of the honorable member for Coburg.

The question being asked in tne Broadmeadows district is: Why is the Minister for Conservation not prepared to accede to the request of the Broadmeadows City Council which everybody considers to be a reasonable request? Some work has been done to find out what sort of company is United Disposal Services Pty Ltd. I have here a photostat copy of a document headed "Who's who in United Disposal Services Pty Ltd". Reference: Jobsons year book for 1978-79". It states:

United Disposal Services Pty. Ltd., formerly Bendigo Pottery Pty. Ltd., is a group of companies including:

Transwest Haulage Holdings Ltd.
Clifton Brick Holdings Ltd.
Brick and Pipe Pty. Ltd.
Reads Enterprises Pty. Ltd.

Directors of Transwest Haulage Holdings Ltd:
E. J. R. Scott,
W. L. Ross,
M. N. Speyer,
J. A. Roche,
Sir Henry Bolte,
Sir Cecil Looker.

The directors of Brick and Pipe Industries Ltd are listed, as are the directors of Clifton Brick Holdings Ltd. They are not known to me personally because I move in different circles.

It is regrettable to find that the current Minister for Conservation has rejected the reasonable request from the Broadmeadows City Council to have an environmental effects study carried out prior to the determinations being made on the three applications that have been lodged under the town planning and offensive trade provisions. Whichever way the decisions go, there will be appeals. If the company is not granted its licences and permits, one assumes it will appeal to the appropriate tribunal. The whole matter will be processed without the results of the environmental effects study.

The legislation which Parliament passed in 1978, when honorable members were told that its whole purpose was to ensure that any works to be undertaken which could have a detrimental effect on the environment would be completely studied by the appropriate experts before any decision was made, was to be extended to municipalities, appeals tribunals and the lot. It is now obvious, by the actions of the current Minister for Conservation, that the exercise has become a sham. I wonder what municipalities will think when they learn that the request of the City of Broadmeadows has been denied. Local government may regard this as yet another example of the Government introducing legislation, placing it on the statutebook and then ignoring it.

The Government has a responsibility to honour the undertaking given to Parliament last year and given to the people of Victoria by the then Minister for Conservation, that this legislation, when enacted and proclaimed, would be used as required. Here is a clear case of the legislation being ignored by the Minister. It is regretted that the words "the Minister shall" were not written into the Bill rather than "the Minister may". In future, when Parliament enacts similar legislation the only way in which to ensure that the provisions of the legislation will apply is to have the word "shall" written into the Bill and not

the word "may", because one cannot trust Ministers of this Government to honour their undertakings. That is obvious from what has happened on this occasion.

The Minister has an obligation to honour the undertaking given by the Government last year. The people of Broadmeadows will not accept this type of operation, and I will give them all the support I can and will use every resource available to me, both inside and outside Parliament.

Mr CULPIN (Glenroy)—The matter raised by the honorable member for Broadmeadows affects me, as it affects honorable members who represent surrounding areas. If the Government were completely honest, it would tear that page from the Budget. The actions of the Minister in another place can be described with one word, "despicable", especially when one considers that the area concerned is the same area which the Minister in another place, when he was Minister of Health, was talking about as a site for a hospital to serve the City of Broadmeadows. In conversations with the Honorable Dolf Eddy about the subject, I learned that the Minister for Conservation made the comment, "Where is Camp Road?"

Not only has the Broadmeadows City Council sought an environmental impact study, but also United Disposal Services Pty Ltd, which has a lot of golden names and many well-known people in its ranks, has come along to discuss this matter with local members of Parliament—the honorable members for Broadmeadows and Coburg, Mr Eddy and Mr Butler, from another place, and myself. We listened to what was said. As a result of these meetings, United Disposal Services Pty Ltd agreed to support an environmental impact study. The study was rejected by the Government. The rejection would be the greatest insult paid to any municipality.

The responsibility for environmental protection should be with the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works and not with private enterprise to make a quick buck out of it. Honorable members who represent the area know the problems associated with the Tullamarine Liquid Disposal Depot and have discussed the matter with local residents. I hope the Minister realizes that more than 1000 people signed objections to this project. "Who's frightened of having an environmental impact study?". It is clear that United Disposal Services Pty Ltd is not frightened of it because it asks for it. Or was it asking for something that it knew it would not be required to do? When one listens to the list of people involved, one wonders what this matter is all about. One does not have to be extremely intelligent to work it out.

If the Government were completely honest, it would tear this page from the Budget because, as the honorable member for Broadmeadows pointed out, the former Minister for Conservation, the present Minister of Health, appeared to show a genuine concern about the environment. Now, some two years or less later, the proposition is being thrown out the door. It is not a good enough excuse to say that a new Minister has taken over. There are certain base standards, and one would assume that the Minister would examine all aspects of it. It is a sham. The correct terminology was used by the honorable member for Broadmeadows.

Both the council and the company have said that they want an environmental impact study. But the Minister has said, "No". More than 1000 people objected to the establishment of the plant. The area is surrounded by an Army camp, Telecom, residences and the heavy traffic community of Camp Road, and yet the Minister has rejected the environmental impact study. I hope the honorable gentleman will listen to the people who are affected in the area and if he is sincere he will have the guts to change his decision.

Dr VAUGHAN (Glenhuntly)—The matter I raise comes under the heading of General Expenses, item No. 9, Laboratory Services, Scientific Assistance, Materials, etc. Payments for 1978-79 amounted to $653 681. The estimate for

this financial year is approximately one-sixth less than that figure, $522 000. If I still worked in my former profession, this allocation quite likely would pay my family's food bill. At the moment it does not, but it is still of interest to me in that it would seem to infer a further winding down of the ability of the Environmental Protection Authority to do its job under an Act of Parliament. This should be of concern to all honorable members.

For the benefit of the House, I should like the Treasurer to clarify the reason for the decrease in the appropriations to the Environment Protection Authority for this financial year. I appreciate that other Government departments do much of the analytical and scientific work on behalf of the Environmental Protection Authority and that the authority has limited laboratory facilities of its own. I uderstand that the laboratories of the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission do the major part of the analytical work for the Environment Protection Authority. I assume that appropriations for that laboratory work would come under this division rather than that of the Ministry of Water Resources and Water Supply. I should like clarification from the Treasurer.

Mr SIMPSON (Niddrie)—I refer to a matter which concerns an area in Airport West, which is in the electorate of Niddrie. It is a residential area that abuts an industrial area. A factory recently built there has established a refrigeration plant for storage of food for a large company. This creates a lot of employment in the area, which we are pleased about, but unfortunately the plant makes such a noise that complaints have come to me. I have properly contacted the Environment Protection Authority, which has come out and conducted the necessary measurements and has concluded that the decibel readings are above what would be acceptable adjacent to a residential area. However, the legislation that was passed in Parliament to give this sort of protection to residential areas has never been proclaimed. Therefore, officers of the Environment Protection Authority came out, did the measurement, advised the people concerned that the noise is above an acceptable level, but there are no teeth in the legislation. Nothing can be done.

We have been obliged to speak with the municipality, the City of Keilor, and through the Health Commission it has taken action under a section in the Health Act and some relief has been afforded to the people concerned. I ask the Treasurer whether he can indicate when that Act will be proclaimed. There is no doubt that the situation will arise again in the electorate I represent, as it will in many other electorates. I ask for the protection that people thought was being given to them by an Act of Parliament which, I hope, will be proclaimed in the not-too-distant future.

Mr SIMMONDS (Reservoir)—I refer to funding, particularly of the items under general expenses. The Budget indicates something of the order of at least a 15 per cent to 20 per cent cut in expenditure of the Environment Protection Authority. That indicates the diminishing concern of the Government in this area. I am particularly concerned that licences issued by the Environment Protection Authority which permit and license the discharge of pollutants into the atmosphere by industries are not and will not be adequately monitored by the authority because of this reduction in expenditure.

I am particularly concerned about laboratory services and scientific assistance. The company, Nonferral Pty Ltd, as the honorable member for Keilor indicates, over a period of time, by constant public pressure, was forced to spend something like $250 000 to combat the fumes emanating from the reclamation of scrap aluminium. This aluminium contains substances such as hydrogen chloride and chloride gas which are extremely toxic and cause grave concern, not only to residents in the immediate vicinity but also to the dense pedestrian traffic in the area which at times is affected by the fumes emanating from this company's premises. Over a period there was a degree of improvement, but recently the degree of output and the level of production has been increased.

The popularity of the aluminium can, the reclamation of scrap aluminuim, and the failure of the Environment Protection Authority to provide effective control over the company means that the position is becoming worse. It is fast approaching the position that existed before the authority was established and licences were issued.

Mr Ginifer—Tell them about the lady's cat again.

Mr SIMMONDS—One family had a white cat and it was presented as evidence of having turned grey from the effects of the pollutants being emitted by the factory over a period. That is one instance that affected a pet, but the position is much more serious in that residents in the area are constantly being submitted to pungent fumes at all hours of the day and night, particularly in the summer months, on hot, humid nights. This company appears to indulge in the practice of using the fluxes which are necessary to purge the scrap aluminium of the impurities in the metal and the paint and so on, associated with the varnish on the cans during the normal sleeping hours of the community in the surrounding area. I express my concern that this year in the summer months the residents in the area will continue to be confronted with this problem.

I also raise the question of not only the installation of equipment ordered by the authority, but also the servicing and maintenance of that equipment. A screw extractor which is supposed to take grit, dust and fumes out of the plant has become so worn that the grit gets between the screw and the cylinder and every 5 seconds intermittent screeches are emitted by the plant. Therefore, in addition to the problems of fumes, there is the additional problem of high-pitched noise at 5-second intervals, which is causing concern to the community. It is compounded by the fact that previously the company was fined as a result of an action taken by the Preston City Council. The fines were of the order of $40. The company was fined on a number of occasions and paid approximately $140 for charges proved in court. The Environment Protection Authority now issues licences which permit the emissions and this has led to a position where the emissions continue under the licence which determines the amount and quantity which can be emitted, but there is no adequate supervision of whether these licences are complied with. There is no indication in the Budget that this position will improve.

The Environment Protection Authority installed a 24-hour answering service, which is simply a recorded message. From my experience and the experience of my electors, one might as well be talking to a brick wall, or a Minister, because the effect is the same—nothing happens. I am concerned at the development of the aluminium industry in the State in the interests of the multinational companies which are bound to use the cheap energy resources of Victoria. The likelihood is that the almost 60 000 residents in the Reservoir and Thomastown areas will be confronted with further pollution as this industry develops. The reclaiming processes will be developed as aluminium is produced in greater quantities, the marketing of drinks and other consumer goods in aluminium cans continues to increase at its present rate, and aluminium cans continue to be collected by boy scouts and others. The receptacles are stuffed into furnaces in the Keon Park area and the fumes are emitted to the electors in the electorate during the early hours of the morning. This will continue unless something is done about the situation.

I commend the honorable members for Glenroy and Broadmeadows for their contributions on industrial and liquid waste disposal. The concern they expressed has been raised by the Opposition on a number of occasions and is shared by the great mass of metal trade industry employees in the State, who some years ago, were confronted with a position where their industries were virtually being threatened with closure because of the failure of the Government to provide adequate disposal sites. The problem has been well known to the

Government for a long time. The problem was to dispose of 750 000 gallons of liquid waste from Victorian metal industries alone. This problem has not been adequately solved and will not be adequately solved until the Board of Works is given the resources and the authority to develop an adequate waste disposal project.

The industries of this State are destroying the board's system by discharging pollutants into the sewerage system. This will ultimately mean that large sections of the system will have to be replaced. The board has correctly issued certain controls which are not always enforced because some people are prepared to dump toxic waste into it to the detriment of the whole system.

There are two ways of combating this problem. Either the contaminants should be dealt with at the source of manufacture and rendered harmless to a degree where they can be disposed of through the conventional systems of sewerage or the various methods of refining can be developed to cope with the problem and enable industries to dispose of these wastes.

I draw the attention of the Treasurer to the position in the City of Baltimore in the United States of America which made a grant available for a pyrolysis plant some six years ago on the basis that the valuable solids contained within most liquid wastes are recoverable and are capable of being repossessed and marketed. I understand that a large number of cities in the United States of America have now taken up the proposition. It is a system of introducing the liquid waste into a controlled heat situation where the various components are broken down and reclaimed. This is a much more practical proposition than the proposition this Government is indulging in of selling out again to a monopoly situation where a consortium will have control of liquid waste disposal in this State.

I will come back to the question of cost. Employers in this State are not happy at the prospect of one liquid waste disposal operator having access to one plant or one disposal system and being able to set rates for disposal and hold industry to ransom in the process. The only just and equitable way of dealing with this problem is to have an authority under the direct control of the Government so that there is a fair and rational approach to the cost structure involved. It is only in this way that Victoria will get the most technologically advanced approach to the problem rather than the solution which is likely to be adopted by this consortium of finding a suitable hole in the ground in a working-class suburb and dumping its filth into the quarries and the aquifers in a manner which the largely multi-national-owned consortium in the western suburbs did in thirteen bores. They polluted the aquifers in the western suburbs to an extent which alarmed the Department of Minerals and Energy. It has expressed grave concern about the future of the aquifers. That is damage which has already been done.

At Tullamarine, Brambles have a plant which could well be leaching and causing irrevocable harm to the earth in the surrounding districts. The problem is that it is too late when the damage has been done; it is not possible to reverse the process. There is no way of knowing it has happened until the leaching is identified by tests to determine the extent of the leaching, and when it has happened it is irreversible.

This is too delicate and too important a matter to hand over to a consortium of the Henry Boltes, the Reg Ansetts and the Shergolds of this State. In the interests, not only of employers and industry, but also in the interests of the people of Victoria, this matter sould be brought under the direct control of the Board of Works so that the Government of Victoria can be held responsible for controlling the disposal of industrial wastes in the same manner as it controls the discharge by industry of pollutants into the atmosphere.

Mr FOGARTY (Sunshine)—During a recent debate dealing with the fishing industry, the Minister of Health, as

the representative of the Minister for Conservation, made an observation that the quantity of fish in the Australian fishing zone was beyond expectation. I agree with the Minister. Since that time it has been learned that there will be as many as 50 foreign fishing vessels operating off the Victorian coast within the Australian fishing zone. The Opposition readily acknowledges that the fishing agreements are basically of a Federal nature, but they are entered into with the co-operation of each State.

I acknowledge that the fishing industry is progressing beyond expectation and that, under the agreement, in most cases 10 per cent of the catch finds its way to the Australian market. That means that the quantity of fish coming into Victoria will be many times greater than at present, and this will have an impact on many areas under Division 441. The heading of this division is "Fisheries and Wildlife". I can see no affinity between fishing and conservation, but the Fisheries and Wildlife Division is expanding to such a degree that the Government must give serious consideration to transferring it to the control of the Minister of Agriculture. It has more affinity with primary industry. It would be doing the industry a great service if it were transferred into the field of responsibility of the Ministry of Agriculture. In some areas, it becomes a division unto itself. Not only is the proposition sound and attractive, but it is also Australian Labor Party policy.

PUBLIC WORKS

Mr ROPER (Brunswick)—Under Division 480, dealing with public works, there is a most dramatic example of the escalation in electronic data processing to which my colleague, the honorable member for Knox, referred. Electronic data processing expenses have leapt by about 700 per cent from $30 000 to $250 000, and there must be some simple explanation for that. If the Minister does not know what that simple explanation is, I suggest that he should find out. It clearly demonstrates that, from being a comparatively small user of electronic data processing, the various Government departments between them are now spending well in excess of $2 million a year. There should be some reasonable explanation why, in the Public Works Department, there has been this huge increase.

Mr REMINGTON (Melbourne)—I draw attention to the disgusting and deplorable conditions in which police at the Elizabeth Street Traffic Control Branch are forced to work. I have had communication with the Minister on this matter and I have been involved in some public discussions through the media on the conditions in which police have been required to work at that office since they moved into that area on a temporary basis in about 1964.

I will have to refer to notes because the list of appalling conditions there is so long that I could not possibly retain them in my memory. It is obvious that not $1 has been spent on the property since the police occupied it in 1964. The agents for the property are Richard Ellis, Sallmann and Seward Pty Ltd of 60 Collins Street, Melbourne. I do not know whether those agents are usually prepared to rent out premises of the standard of these premises. They are not renting this building out cheaply because my information some years ago was that they were getting about $3.75 a square foot for it. These are certainly slum conditions. I inspected the premises and there is no other word to describe the conditions in which the police work.

I refer the Minister to the Police Association's publication of September 1979 which contains some colour photographs and a description of the conditions in the office. Obviously, the walls and ceilings are practically falling down. There is no mechanical ventilation. The water for tea-making is taken from a tap which is located about 20 inches from the back of a urinal. I have never seen staff amenities and working conditions which are so deplorable and disgusting as these.

I will give the Chief Commissioner of Police his due. When I raised the matter publicly, he said that he was

concerned and he has written to me on it. Perhaps the Minister has been too busy or not sufficiently concerned to visit the place. I hope he has made an inspection. If he has done so, he is carrying out his duties as the Minister. If he has not made an inspection, it detracts from him in a personal way because he is obviously not doing his job as the Minister.

There is no mechanical ventilation in the place. Some time ago, a citizen was arrested who was slightly inebriated and, seeing the door there and believing he was on the ground floor when in fact he was on the third floor, while nobody was paying attention to him he decided to make a dash for it. He dashed through the doorway, out onto the balcony and hopped over the railing, expecting to land on the footpath. His life was saved only because he landed on a cantilevered verandah about three floors below. There is a lack of security and there are no cells in which to hold detained persons. The fourth and fifth floors are extremely unsuitable for police premises. There is no separate entry for police, the only entrance being by way of a side lift which is used by the public and other office workers. The constables are at risk when confined with dangerous prisoners. I have mentioned that there is no mechanical ventilation; in addition the windows must be shut and it is stuffy. The traffic noise from outside is almost intolerable. I found that it was almost impossible to carry on a normal conversation with the police who are required to work there.

The sergeants' area, which is also on the fourth floor, measures 14 feet by 14 feet. That is even worse than the chook house, and I thought I would never find conditions as bad as that anywhere. The small area in question is allocated to thirteen sergeants. Obviously, they are not all in the office at the one time because they work shifts. In addition to the thirteen sergeants who work over a period of 24 hours, there are also some 24 lockers crammed into the space. The sergeants are expected to change their clothes and work in this area. Only one typewriter is provided for them. The communications section is unbelievably cramped and leaves a lot to be desired. There is a security problem there because the officer who mans the communications set is at the counter where the public have access so that one has only to stand at the counter to overhear stolen car reports and other police information.

I have referred to staff amenities. There is a very old table and there is no plumbing connected. The police must go into a urinal to obtain water which is carried in a plastic bucket and poured into an old urn. There is a slop bucket alongside it where people empty the dregs of their coffee and tea. Naturally enough, many of the police will not use it because they believe it is a health hazard and, of course, it would be. There are only four toilets, one urinal and one shower for the use of the entire staff. On one of the floors I visited, 135 policemen were using a general locker room. They will not use the lunch room because it is so outdated and undesirable, so the policemen go to the expense of eating in cafes or buying take-away food. The traffic training section, where young policemen are taken in and given instructions on traffic control, is located on this floor. It must be disconcerting for a young man to enter the Police Force with high hopes and aspirations, to be told he is to attend the centre and then find ramshackle conditions where the policemen are herded together in a confined area.

When I drew this to the attention of the Minister he wrote back a brief note, virtually only acknowledging my letter, and proudly enclosed a press release that his public relations people had dished out to the media in an endeavour to get off the hook, stating that the Public Works Department had been trying unsuccessfully for some time to get the owner of the building to improve conditions for police pending the transfer of the station to a new location.

The men have been working in nothing better than pigsty conditions since 1964. The building might have been

painted then; it certainly has not been painted since. A senior Cabinet Minister says that he has been trying unsuccessfully to get the owner of the building to do something about improving it and that difficulty has been experienced in trying to obtain alternative premises. These difficulties have been in existence since 1964, when the police moved in there. Regular correspondence has been exchanged between the officer in charge of the station and the police administration since 1970, and nothing has been done.

I have been told that many people are buzzing around near the old Ball and Welch building. An immense amount of development has occurred in Melbourne since 1970 and a great deal of vacant space is available in a number of locations that could have been obtained.

The policemen are suffering because they do not have a militant union. I am not necessarily advocating that the police should have a militant union, although I certainly advocate it for most unions. Government supporters are quick to kick a union. In this case a union, because of the peculiar position in society that the police hold, feels constrained not to take industrial action, and this is the pay-off it gets.

When I was President of the Australian Bank Officials Association and we struck bad conditions, we solved the problem by placing a black ban on the premises and not allowing anyone in or out. We picketed a bank in Kings Cross and said, "From tomorrow no customer gets in or out", and very quickly the problem was fixed.

The police have a responsible union, and it is keeping out of that type of activity. If I had been the leader of the Police Association I would have told the workers to report to Russell Street Police Station and picket Elizabeth Street.

Mr Jasper—But you are a militant unionist.

Mr REMINGTON—I get results. I would not have tolerated for 1 hour the conditions under which workers have had to work at that police station. That is their penalty for belonging to a moderate and responsible union. Unless a union protests, demands and demonstrates, nobody takes any notice of it.

I have had correspondence with the Chief Commissioner of Police who is concerned about the conditions under which his officers are working and he stated that he agreed entirely that members of the Police Force should not be expected to work under these conditions and that the problem could be solved only through the due process of government. He is rightly pointing the finger back at the Minister.

I have been told that people have been running around the Ball and Welch building trying to find out if they can convert it for accommodation for the police. I believe the Minister ought to consider using that building, but not on a permanent basis. It will be necessary to have police in the central business district for many years to come, certainly throughout our lifetimes. I understand that the State Bank is constructing modern premises in the city, and I doubt whether the whole of that building has been let. I feel certain that, because of the way in which most buildings are built today, areas could be set aside for letting out. The Minister should thoroughly investigate the new State Bank building, and if floor area is available, it ought to be properly converted to a police station with suitable access for policemen and prisoners to provide proper security in retention cells as well as amenities for the policemen who will work there, not just today but for those who will be working there in 50 years' time.

It would be a bad permanent move to try to shore up the Ball and Welch building and use it for this purpose. The Government should consider the State Bank building, and if that is not suitable, it should find another new building under construction, take a long-term lease on it and provide proper amenities for the officers of the Victoria Police Force who are now required to work under disgusting pigsty conditions.

Mr Simmonds—You should put the Minister in there for a week.

Mr REMINGTON—The Minister should visit the police station and see how the policemen work there to gain an understanding that somebody apart from a back-bench member of the Opposition is concerned about their welfare. Leadership ought to be shown. As I said earlier, policemen are a vital factor in society and I am astonished that police who have to work under those disgusting conditions can maintain such a high level of morale.

If the affairs of this House are so badly managed that a member must speak at 2.40 a.m. on an important measure such as this, that is not my fault. Most speakers on matters of concern in this Bill have been from the Opposition benches. It seems that the members from Mitcham, Forest Hill, Box Hill and Noble Park have no worries whatever.

I invite the Minister to make a personal visit to the police station with me one day next week, possibly next Monday, to see the conditions under which police in the central business district are forced to work.

Mr THOMPSON (Treasurer)—In reply to the point raised by the honorable member for Brunswick, the allocation of $250 000 was for the Public Works Department recording network which commenced operation on 1 October 1979.

I am aware of the bad conditions at the police station referred to by the honorable member for Melbourne. I have asked the Public Works Department, through the Department of Police and Emergency Services, to expedite the finding of alternative accommodation, because I do not believe any good can be achieved by endeavouring to get the unsatisfactory landlord to repair the existing premises. I will be visiting the premises before Christmas.

VALUER-GENERAL

Mr REMINGTON (Melbourne)—I refer to the section relating to the administration of local government. I am sure the Minister would have been concerned about statements made by the honorable member for Syndal in the House recently about the Oakleigh City Council's financial position. He alleged that the council had an overdraft of $1·43 million—I am surprised that he got that information. He went on to link that statement with the manager of the branch concerned and stated that the city was anxious to determine when the dispersal of the money would take place so that the bank account could be brought back into order.

I have spoken to the bank manager concerned and he assures me that he was horrified at the inference made that he had been divulging confidential information.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN (Mr. Birrell)—Order! The Committee is dealing with division 516, relating to the Valuer-General. The division related to local government has been called and dealt with.

Mr REMINGTON—I was really dealing with salaries and payments and I thought it was a matter that would come within the ambit of the secretary. If I am slightly technically out of order, Mr Deputy Chairman, I seek your indulgence.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN—I have the greatest difficulty because the division dealing with local government has been called. The honorable member for Melbourne should try to find a later opportunity of dealing with this matter.

Mr REMINGTON—It will mean that the debate will be held up on the third reading.

AGRICULTURE

Dr COGHILL (Werribee)—I note that it is now 2.45 a.m. so it is difficult for any honorable member to give proper consideration to this important Bill. I am not performing at my best at this hour and I am sure other honorable members feel the same. It is unfortunate that the Minister responsible for Agriculture is not here when this item is being considered. At the moment, one of the big problems in agriculture is that

there is disarray in the policy pursued by the Government. Many people inside and outside the Department of Agriculture believe that the department is running round much like a headless chook, to use an agricultural term, and there is no clear policy.

Indeed, if one looks at the divisions under the heading of agriculture there is little more than a further illustration of the arrogant incompetence of the Government and the Minister of Agriculture in agricultural matters. Not only are the matters included in disarray, one should also look at the overall matter of rural policy which is laid out in the Budget speech and which alludes to the activities of the Rural Finance Commission. That commission is under the control of the Minister of Soldier Settlement, despite the fact that almost all of its dealings relate to Department of Agriculture officers. The commission has very few dealings with the Public Service, other than with officers of the Department of Agriculture which is the responsibility of the Minister of Agriculture. Therefore it is more appropriate that the Rural Finance Commission should be the responsibility of the Minister of Agriculture, even if he were appointed as the Minister of Soldier Settlement for that purpose.

Mr Jasper—The Rural Finance Commission does a pretty good job.

Dr COGHILL—They do a good job, but liaison could be improved between the department and the commission's officers.

The honorable member for Sunshine said that commercial fisheries should be included within the Department of Agriculture, as at the Federal level and in South Australia when it was under the control of a Labor Government. There are other areas of conflict within the Public Service because of the poor definition of responsibility relating to agriculture. I draw particular attention to deer farming. There is conflict between officers of the Fisheries and Wildlife Division who try to assume the responsibility for all aspects of deer farming, and officers of the Department of Agriculture who seek responsibility for commercial deer farming in Victoria. These are conflicting questions which should be resolved by proper and competent Government administration. One would hope that adequate annual reports would be available for the Department of Agriculture. No such annual reports are now being prepared. The most recent report appears in the *Journal of Agriculture* for December 1978, on pages 423 to 446, which tells very little about the priorities and expenditure of the Department of Agriculture and how its activities are carried out. A picture of the Minister of Agriculture appears with the note:

> In the past two years the Department of Agriculture has published a selection of reports of its work in a separate publication. This year we present a similar selection in the *Journal of Agriculture* so that journal readers as well as the usual receivers of the reports may read them. We hope you enjoy them.

Readers may enjoy them, but they will not be much the wiser about the activities of the department. One hopes that the department will resume the previous activity of preparing reports on its priorities and how they will be executed. There is no indication in the Budget speech of a sense of direction on agricultural policies, or of leadership in agricultural policy being implemented by this Government. The Treasurer alluded only to a number of aspects of agricultural policy which were being implemented in the Budget.

There is nothing in the Budget or the Budget speech which will overcome the low morale of officers of the Department of Agriculture. The personnel of almost every office of the Department of Agriculture is not satisfied with the leadership they are receiving. Indeed, it is almost impossible to find a person who has praise for the Minister or believes that he is doing his job well. There is concern that the former Director-General of Agriculture announced his retirement following the re-appointment of the present Minister as Minister of Agriculture. One can only hope that the new Director-General will be able to establish a more

satisfactory relationship between the Minister and the Department leading to a better level of morale and direction for agricultural policy in Victoria. Earlier in the debate a further illustration of how the present Minister has antagonized the people of Victoria was given.

In his statement on Saturday the Minister placed the Co-operative Farmers and Graziers Direct Meat Supply Ltd abattoir in more jeopardy than it otherwise would have been. Grain growers are disappointed by appointments made to the Grain Elevators Board by the Minister; meat producers are disappointed by his attitude on meat marketing; the poultry industry is concerned about how the new Chairman of the Victorian Egg Marketing Board was appointed and does not enjoy the support the former chairman received.

The honey industry is well known to members interested in rural matters. Members of the honey industry were bitterly opposed to proposals to control Paterson's curse by biological means, but they were sold down the drain in the quest to have Paterson's curse controlled on a basis which may well be of doubtful economic validity. Honorable members will recall the bitter divisions created within the dairying industry by the manner in which the new authority was handled.

Concern has been expressed about other aspects of the administration of the Department of Agriculture. I refer to the Government policy on decentralization. On 30 October, in answer to a question on notice, the Premier said that in 1972 the Government, as a matter of policy, asked all Ministers and their departments to decentralize their administrations as soon as possible and to do this on the basis of the regionalization policies adopted by the Government. That answer to question 969 appears at page 3937 of *Hansard*.

The Department of Agriculture should be the most decentralized department in Victoria because of the nature of its responsibilities. The department's Melbourne head office employs 542 personnel—this department deals primarily with farming matters—and 46 per cent of its staff are located in the metropolitan area. Some of those sections would be difficult to relocate. There are sections which could readily be relocated. I particularly refer to the reconstruction of the veterinary research institute. My former professional colleagues who work at that institute may well disagree with me but I believe that is a prime example for relocation to a regional metropolitan or to a non-metropolitan location rather than further developing the site behind the Royal Melbourne Hospital.

If one compares the Victorian performance with the South Australian performance, regionalization was implemented to a high degree under a South Australian Labor Government to the extent that each region had its own budget rather than being centrally controlled, as is the case in Victoria.

I now refer to the specific provisions of Division 570. In the Department of Agriculture, as in other departments, a number of the votes that are cited operate as nothing more than contingency funds, almost slush funds. They are funds which are set aside each year by the Public Service for purposes which are stated but which are flexible. If one examines the expenditure over a twelve-month period one may discover that the bulk of money remains unspent for nine or ten months and is spent during May or June. Stricter control is needed over how the funds are used and how new allocations are made. I have no arguments with the over-all allocation of funds in Division 570 but some queries should be raised and answered by the Minister when he is able to reply. I refer particularly to items 4 and 5 under the heading "Other Services" in Division No. 570—Central Administration. Both of those items could more properly be listed in Division No. 582—Plant Services.

It is also reasonable to suggest that item No. 3, the Kerang Agricultural Research Farm and Item No. 7, the Swan Hill Irrigators Research Farm, could also be more properly located

somewhere other than under "Other Services" in Division 570—Central Administration of the Department of Agriculture.

The other point on which I seek clarification is why a new allocation for the La Trobe University School of Agriculture has been included. It was not provided for in the previous year and no explanation has been given.

Progress was reported.

The House adjourned at 3.3 *a.m.* (*Wednesday*).

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

The following answers to questions on notice were circulated—

FUTURE OF SOCIAL WELFARE IN VICTORIA

(Question No. 734)

Mrs TONER (Greensborough) asked the Minister for Community Welfare Services:

Whether the ten top priorities set by staff of the Social Welfare Department in 1978 and listed in appendix seven of the Report on the Future of Social Welfare in Victoria are being considered for implementation; if so, what action he or his department proposes?

Mr JONA (Minister for Community Welfare Services)—The answer is:

It should be recognized that the White Paper on the Future of Social Welfare in Victoria involved consultations with a broad cross section of the community and promotes policies which draw heavily on the submissions received. Those submissions include the detailed survey of departmental staff opinions.

The department is currently in the process of introducing integrated planning which includes adoption of a comprehensive set of objectives together with defined programs, projects and priorities required to clearly target efforts and available resources toward the achievement of those objectives.

The results of staff consultations have strongly influenced the department in the adoption of this method of planning which, in a rapidly changing community environment, will allow for a continuing input of staff perceptions, particularly from those staff working with clients in the community, and for the utilization of those perceptions in policy formulations.

STATE SUPERANNUATION BOARD

(Question No. 1168)

Mr CATHIE (Carrum) asked the Treasurer:

How many applications and approvals, respectively, for housing loans have been received and granted by the State Superannuation Board in each of the past three financial years and in this financial year to date, indicating—(*a*) the annual amount; (*b*) the total amount invested; and (*c*) the number of applications and approvals each month?

Mr THOMPSON (Treasurer)—The answer is:

(*a*) Annual amount granted for housing loans:

1976–77	$8 872 115
1977–78	$11 946 508
1978–79	$10 844 606
1-7-79 to 24-10-79	$2 577 800

(*b*) The total amount invested during the period 1-7-76 to 24-10-79 was $34 241 029.

(*c*) Applications and approvals by month.

Month	1976–77 *Received*	1976–77 *Approved*	1977–78 *Received*	1977–78 *Approved*	1978–79 *Received*	1978–79 *Approved*	1 *July* 1979 *to* 25 *October* 1979 *Received*	1 *July* 1979 *to* 25 *October* 1979 *Approved*
July	9	9	30	30	38	37	32	32
August ..	16	15	40	39	42	40	23	23
September ..	38	37	27	27	34	34	11	11
October ..	36	36	47	46	29	29	14	14
November ..	29	29	60	56	28	28	..	..
December ..	34	33	35	35	16	15	..	..
January ..	26	26	35	35	38	37	..	..
February ..	38	37	26	26	39	39	..	..
March ..	37	36	43	41	28	28	..	..
April ..	29	29	36	35	25	25	..	....
May.. ..	40	40	39	39	51	49	..	..
June.. ..	26	25	45	43	27	26	..	....
Totals ..	358	352	463	452	395	387	80	

BROADMEADOWS RAILWAY LINE

(Question No. 1189)

Mr GAVIN (Coburg) asked the Minister of Transport:

In respect of each railway station on the Broadmeadows railway line, what was the number of outward passenger journeys in 1978–79, and what was the percentage decrease compared with 1974–75 and 1977–78?

Mr MACLELLAN (Minister of Transport)—The answer is:

	1978–79	1977–78	1974–75
Kensington			
Outward Passenger Journeys	288 797	315 034	430 652
Percentage Variation	—8·32	—26·85	..
Newmarket			
Outward Passenger Journeys	212 360	230 604	365 568
Percentage Variation	—7·91	—36·92	..
Ascot Vale			
Outward Passenger Journeys	294 014	311 489	483 725
Percentage Variation	—5·61	—35·61	..
Moonee Ponds			
Outward Passenger Journeys	455 071	457 272	655 788
Percentage Variation	—0·48	—30·27	..
Essendon			
Outward Passenger Journeys	828 116	860 262	1 144 260
Percentage Variation	—3·74	—24·82	..
Glenbervie			
Outward Passenger Journeys	165 284	169 117	222 603
Percentage Variation	—2·27	—24·03	..
Strathmore			
Outward Passenger Journeys	232 779	244 315	368 644
Percentage Variation	—4·72	—33·73	..
Pascoe Vale			
Outward Passenger Journeys	397 726	439 721	608 782
Percentage Variation	—9·55	—27·77	..
Oak Park			
Outward Passenger Journeys	404 163	435 968	621 387
Percentage Variation	—7·30	—29·84	..
Glenroy			
Outward Passenger Journeys	895 357	907 665	1 162 931
Percentage Variation	—1·36	—21·95	..
Jacana			
Outward Passenger Journeys	184 419	255 652	410 053
Percentage Variation	—27·86	—37·65	..
Broadmeadows			
Outward Passenger Journeys	824 869	849 953	1 028 055
Percentage Variation	—2·95	—17·32	..

TOTALIZATOR AGENCY BOARD

(Question No. 1213)

Dr VAUGHAN (Glenhuntly) asked the Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation:

1. How many Totalizator Agency Board agencies are situated in the electoral district of Glenhuntly, indicating where each is located?

2. Whether it is envisaged that additional agencies will be established in the electorate in the forseeable future; if so, where?

3. What was the financial turnover of each such agency in each of the past five financial years?

4. What was the financial allocation from the Department of Youth, Sport and Recreation for facilities within the electoral district of each of the past five years, indicating which organizations received these allocations over this period, the date the allocation was made, and the amount in each case?

5. What projects and organizations within the electoral district are planned to receive such financial assistance in the 1979–80 financial year?

Mr DIXON (Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation)—The answer is:

1. Four—the agencies are located as follows:

Railway Entrance, 45 Royal Avenue, Glenhuntly.
20 Derby Road, East Caulfield.
53–55 Koornang Road, Carnegie.
439 North Road, Ormond.

2. No.

3. I am unable to disclose the annual turnover for individual agencies for security

reasons, but the total annual turnover of the four agencies during the past five financial years is as follows:

	$
1974–75	5 219 208
1975–76	5 480 300
1976–77	5 898 832
1977–78	6 174 682
1978–79	6 415 174

4. The Department of Youth, Sport and Recreation has made the following allocations to organizations within the electoral district of Glenhuntly in the last five financial years:

1974–75	*Date*	$
City of Caulfield—Duncan	24 November 1974	110 000
McKinnon Recreation Reserve—Argonaut Youth Club	2 December 1974	500
Highett Community Youth Club	3 December 1974	10 000
Exodus Youth Club	24 December 1974	10 000
Highett Girl Guides	17 December 1974	1 000
1975–76		
City of Caulfield—Fun and Fitness Track	2 February 1976	1 000
Cheltenham North Girl Guides	28 May 1976	10 000
5th Central Moorabbin Scouts	6 May 1976	1 800
City of Moorabbin—Highett Indoor Pool	24 February 1976	250 000
1976–77		
2nd Moorabbin North Scouts	8 November 1979	4 000
6th Moorabbin North Scouts	8 November 1979	5 000
1977–78		
Chabad Youth Group	12 July 1977	4 724
2nd Moorabbin Scout Group	15 August 1977	8 000
1978–79		
Cheltenham Girl Guides	29 September 1978	500
City of Moorabbin Soccer Club	12 October 1978	600

5. The organizations that will receive financial assistance in 1979–80 will depend on which organizations apply for assistance, the department's assessment of the application and the availability of funds within the area in which the organization applies.

HOSPITAL KITCHENS

(Question No. 1243)

Mr ROPER (Brunswick) asked the Minister of Health:

In respect of the kitchen facilities to serve the Mayday Hills Hospital and the Ovens and Murray Hospital for the Aged under a joint agreement:

1. What is the reason for the delay in using the kitchen at Ovens and Murray to service Mayday Hills?

2. Whether the delay is due to the failure to appoint necessary staff to the Mayday Hills Hospital establishment?

3. When it is expected that staff will be provided so that this multi-million dollar kitchen facility can be used?

Mr BORTHWICK (Minister of Health) —The answer is:

The operation of the regethermic food handling system at the Ovens and Murray Hospital and the Mayday Hills Hospital at Beechworth was delayed pending the issue of clearances for appointment of additional staff.

The Honorable the Treasurer has now approved of funds for the appointment of 19 additional staff to service the kitchen and it is hoped that the facility will be in operation in the near future.

GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS

(Question No. 1359)

Dr COGHILL (Werribee) asked the Minister for Community Welfare Services:

In respect of each building in the central business district and nearby inner suburban areas of Melbourne partly or wholly occupied by a State Government Department or Instrumentality for which he is responsible but not owned by the Victorian Government—(*a*) what is the address; (*b*) what is the floor area; (*c*) what is the form of tenancy; (*d*) when the tenancy commenced; (*e*) when the tenancy was last extended; (*f*) when the tenancy agreement is next subject to renewal, extension or termination; and (*g*) who are the occupants including the name of the section or sections of the Department or Instrumentality, specifying the number of personnel accommodated and the type or use of tht area occupied?

Mr JONA (Minister for Community Welfare Services)—The answer is:

It is not the practice to answer vexatious questions of this nature which simply engage upon a fishing expedition. To endeavour to do so would involve enormous cost to no apparent benefit or purpose. Furthermore, it is contrary to established policy to publicly divulge details of leases or tenancies granted or accepted by departments or instrumentalities as this involves disclosure of the private business affairs of third parties. If the honorable mem-

ber, for good and stated reasons desires information on any specific lease or tenancy, consideration will be given to the supply of that information on a confidential basis.

(Question No. 1360)

Dr COGHILL (Werribee) asked the Minister for State Development Decentralization and Tourism:

In respect of each building in the central business district and nearby inner suburban areas of Melbourne partly or wholly occupied by a State Government Department or Instrumentality for which he is responsible but not owned by the Victorian Government—(*a*) what is the address; (*b*) what is the floor area; (*c*) what is the form of tenancy; (*d*) when the tenancy commenced; (*e*) when the tenancy was last extended; (*f*) when the tenancy agreement is next subject to renewal, extension or termination; and (*g*) who are the occupants including the name of the section or sections of the Department or Instrumentality, specifying the number of personnel accommodated and the type or use of tht area occupied?

Mr HAMER (Minister for State Development Decentralization and Tourism)—The answer is:

It is not the practice to answer vexatious questions of this nature which simply engage upon a fishing expedition. To endeavour to do so would involve enormous cost to no apparent benefit or purpose. Furthermore, it is contrary to established policy to publicly divulge details of leases or tenancies granted or accepted by departments or instrumentalities as this involves disclosures of the private business affairs of third parties. If the honorable member, for good and stated reasons desires information on any specific lease or tenancy, consideration will be given to the supply of that information on a confidential basis.

(Question No. 1361)

Dr COGHILL (Werribee) asked the Premier:

In respect of each building in the central business district and nearby inner suburban areas of Melbourne partly or wholly occupied by a State Government Department or Instrumentality for which he is responsible but not owned by the Victorian Government—(*a*) what is the address; (*b*) what is the floor area; (*c*) what is the form of tenancy; (*d*) when the tenancy commenced; (*e*) when the tenancy was last extended; (*f*) when the tenancy agreement is next subject to renewal, extension or termination; and (*g*) who are the occupants including the name of the section or sections of the Department or Instrumentality, specifying the number of personnel accommodated and the type or use of the area occupied?

Mr HAMER (Premier)—The answer is:

It is not the practice to answer questions of this nature. To endeavour to do so would involve enormous cost to no apparent benefit or purpose. Furthermore, it is contrary to established policy to publicly divulge details of leases or tenancies granted or accepted by departments or instrumentalities as this involves disclosure of the private business affairs of third parties. If the honorable member for good and stated reasons desires information on any specific lease or tenancy consideration will be given to the supply of that information on a confidential basis.

(Question No. 1362)

Dr COGHILL (Werribee) asked the Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation:

In respect of each building in the central business district and nearby inner suburban areas of Melbourne partly or wholly occupied by a State Government Department or Instrumentality for which he is responsible but not owned by the Victorian Government—(*a*) what is the address; (*b*) what is the floor area; (*c*) what is the form of tenancy; (*d*) when the tenancy commenced; (*e*) when the tenancy was last extended; (*f*) when the tenancy agreement is next subject to renewal, extension or termination; and (*g*) who are the occupants including the name of the section or sections of the Department or Instrumentality, specifying the number of personnel accommodated and the type of use of the area occupied?

Mr DIXON (Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation)—The answer is:

It is contrary to established policy to publicly divulge details of leases or tenancies granted or accepted by departments or instrumentalities as this involves disclosure of the private business affairs of third parties. If the honorable member for good and stated reasons desires information on any specific lease or tenancy consideration will be given to the supply of that information on a confidential basis.

(Question No. 1372)

Dr COGHILL (Werribee) asked the Minister of Health, for the Minister of Lands:

In respect of each building in the central business district and nearby inner suburban areas of Melbourne partly or wholly occupied by a State Government Department or Instrumentality for which the Minister is responsible but not owned by the Victorian Government—(*a*) what is the address; (*b*) what is the

floor area; (c) what is the form of tenancy; (*d*) when the tenancy commenced; (*e*) when the tenancy was last extended; (*f*) when the tenancy agreement is next subject to renewal, extension or termination; and (*g*) who are the occupants including the name of the section or sections of the Department or Instrumentality, specifying the number of personnel accommodated and the type of use of the area occupied?

Mr BORTHWICK (Minister of Health) —The answer supplied by the Minister of Lands is:

It is not the practice to answer vexatious questions of this nature which simply engage upon a finishing expedition. To endeavour to do so would involve enormous cost to no apparent benefit or purpose. Furthermore, it is contrary to established policy to publicly divulge details of leases or tenancies granted or accepted by departments or instrumentalities as this involves disclosure of the private business affairs of third parties. If the honorable member for good and stated reasons desires information on any specific lease or tenancy consideration will be given to the supply of that information on a confidential basis.

HISTORICAL PARKS AND MUSEUMS

(Question No. 1395)

Mr CATHIE (Carrum) asked the Minister for State Development Decentralization and Tourism:

What funds have been disbursed in each of the past five years into historical parks and folk museums, and local and country museums, indicating—(*a*) the funds disbursed through the Major Tourist Projects Committee to each project; (*b*) disbursements from other funds and the projects concerned; and (*c*) the total amount from the above sources?

Mr HAMER (Minister for State Development Decentralization and Tourism)—The answer is:

(*a*) *Major Tourist Project Fund*

Project	1974–75	1975–76	1976–77	1977–78	1978–79	*Total*
Ballarat Historic Tramway	..	..	..	..	29 522.93	29 522.93
Bank of Victoria—Yackandandah	..	..	..	3 278.68	1 635.41	4 914.09
Bellarine Peninsula Railway	..	..	..	..	75 249.00	75 249.00
Bendigo Trust	11 072.79	20 000.00	60 998.00	8 979.78	40 694.65	141 745.22
Bright Railway Museum	800.00	..	..	..	..	800.00
Burke Museum—Beechworth	15 298.08	50 257.47	77 238.49	23 637.43	11 373.00	177 794.47
Centenary Park Log Cabin—Wycheproof	..	600.00	..	..	..	600.00
Chiltern Athenaeum	..	5 000.00	..	..	..	5 000.00
Coal Creek—Korumburra	17 618.58	46 664.02	64 335.98	80 782.77	97 577.17	306 978.52
Colac Historical Centre	631.71	..	..	..	..	631.71
Coonanga Homestead—Numurkah	..	662.64	..	711.63	..	1 374.27
Daylesford Technical School Museum	5 000.00	..	..	..	..	5 000.00
Port of Echuca	96 284.16	101 634.58	40 764.18	20 371.64	22 001.61	281 056.17
Emerald Tourist Railway (Puffing Billy)	..	..	..	..	104 005.60	104 005.60
Flagstaff Hill—Warrnambool	60 000.00	112 250.00	181 132.00	..	124 783.68	478 165.68
Huntly Historical Display Centre	459.13	140.87	..	..	..	600.00
International Village—Shepparton	103 735.41	41 568.79	35 960.08	83 615.17	..	264 879.45
Kerang Historical Museum	726.51	..	133.34	..	..	859.85
Kyneton Historical Centre	1 410.25	4 085.66	10 894.21	1 105.79	..	17 495.91
Long Tunnel Mine—Walhalla	..	..	..	20 000.00	..	20 000.00
Maryborough Museum	..	10 000.00	..	..	..	10 000.00
Mini World, Stawell	98 585.47	66 000.00	71 294.74	101 000.00	1 000.00	337 880.21
Nathalia Mechanics Institute	225.00	499.66	..	..	..	724.66
J. S. Neilson Cottage—Nhill	18.76	..	313.33	..	..	332.09
North West Agricultural Museum—Warracknabeal	..	..	7 017.66	10 354.08	10 544.33	27 916.07
Oil and Gas Centre—Sale	..	..	..	1 000.00	..	1 000.00
Old Gippstown—Moe (formerly Gippsland Folk Museum)	50 000.00	55 000.00	20 648.10	28 369.57	26 333.13	180 350.80
Old Mildura Homestead	20 000.00	20 000.00	41 000.00	23 227.00	..	104 227.00
Omeo Courthouse Museum	..	1 851.19	51.52	3 473.14	..	5 375.85
Pioneer Settlement, Swan Hill	..	..	102 882.23	39.238 .35	85 159.35	227 279.93
Port Albert Maritime Museum	..	4 000.00	..	..	..	4 000.00
Port Fairy Museum	..	..	10 000.00	..	..	10 000.00
Pyramid Hill Museum	..	600.00	..	..	..	600.00
Sale Museum	182.42	..	..	..	..	182.42
Sovereign Hill—Ballarat	62 059.00	50 000.00	51 000.00	101 035.00	106 819.00	370 913.00
Sovereign Hill Gold Museum—Ballarat Curators Salary	..	..	6 384.01	14 751.23	2 609.40	23 744.64
Sugar Beet Factory Museum, Maffra	..	..	1 515.81	8 734.54	933.88	11 184.23
Wandilagong Historical Society Hall	1 000.00	..	..	..	..	1 000.00
William Barkell Memorial Arts Centre Clunes	..	..	1 215.58	1 784.42	..	3 000.00
Wimmera-Mallee Pioneer's Museum Jeparit	4 892.73	..	..	..	..	4 892.73
Yurunga Homestead—Rainbow	..	..	1 054.38	445.62	..	1 500.00
Miscellaneous	..	22 650.00	1 625.00	..	3 000.00	27 275.00
Total	550 000.00	613 464.88	787 458.64	575 885.84	743 242.14	3 270 051.50

(*b*) Other Funds.

(i) Gold Lotteries.

Project	1977–78	1978–79	*Total*
	$	$	$
Burke Museum—Beechworth	11 091	32 523	43 614
Coal Creek—Korumburra ..	..	14 213	14 213
Emerald Tourist Railway (Puffing Billy)	12 299	118 115	130 414
International Village—Shepparton	..	10 683	10 683
Long Tunnel Mine—Walhalla	..	15 952	15 952
Melbourne Zoo	..	78 934	78 934
Old Gippstown—Moe ..	677	10 225	10 902
Pioneer Settlement—Swan Hill	30 559	54 883	85 442
Polly Woodside	250 000	..	250 000
Sovereign Hill—Ballarat ..	489 967	285 033	775 000
Total	949 589	640 565	1590 154

(ii) Federal Grants paid through the major tourist projects committee.

Project	1974–75
	$
Burke Museum—Beechworth	100 000.00
Coal Creek—Korumburra	100 000.00
Port of Echuca	100 000.00
Sovereign Hill—Ballarat	65 000.00
Total	365 000.00

(*c*)

1974–75	1975–76	1976–77	1977–78	1978–79	*Total*
$915 000.00	$613 464.88	$787 458.64	$1 525 474.84	$1 383 807.14	$5 225 20.50

PROPOSED TROTTING COMPLEX

(Question No. 1396)

Mr HANN (Rodney) asked the Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation:

With regard to the proposed Keysborough Trotting complex:

1. Whether it is proposed that any of the existing meetings will be transferred from Moonee Valley; if so, why?

2. Whether the decision to try and proceed with the project was fully discussed and supported by all members of the Trotting Control Board; if not, which members—(*a*) supported; and (*b*) opposed the project?

3. Whether the financial aspects of the Keysborough project have been investigated and approved by four separate organizations including two Government departments as quoted in *Harness World* July 1979; if so, whether he will provide full details of any reports of these investigations?

4. Whether any offer was made by a bank to provide $7 million to fund the Keysborough project; if so, which bank, when the offer was made and whether it is still current?

Mr DIXON (Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation)—The answer is:

1. Should the Keysborough project be proceeded with it is not the intention of the Trotting Control Board to transfer any of the existing 43 meetings from Moonee Valley.

2. The project was discussed at a board meeting on 7 February 1979. It was resolved that the development be proceeded with. No board member present dissented. However, one board member was absent.

3. The financial aspects of the Keysborough project were not investigated nor approved by four organizations as reported. The Trotting Control Board Chairman was of that opinion but has publicly acknowledged his mistake. My department has examined the financial aspects of the proposal and its views are set out in its Second Supplementary Report tabled by me in the Parliamentary Library.

4. An indicative offer of $7 million towards the Keysborough project was made by the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney on 21 December 1977. The application for the loan was withdrawn by the board on 31 March 1978. Upon a further inquiry by the board the bank forwarded an indicative offer of a loan of $7 million in a letter dated 14 September 1979. However, the bank stated that a commitment of such a loan could only arise from approval by the bank's administration of a formal application by the board. This offer is still current.

(Question No. 1397)

Mr HANN (Rodney) asked the Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation:

With reference to the inquiry of the Department of Youth, Sport and Recreation into the feasibility of constructing the Keysborough Trotting Complex:

1. When the Keysborough project was first considered by the Trotting Control Board?

2. Who prepared the board's financial report on the project and what was the basis of the report?

3. Whether the board sought the quotation from Costain Australia Ltd, indicating the cost of the quotation; if not, who sought the quotation?

4. Whether the board is committed in any way financially to Costain Australia Ltd; if so, what amount is involved?

5. Whether tenders will be called when the board proceeds with the construction of a complex as detailed in Recommendation No. 1.

Mr DIXON (Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation)—The answer is:

1. The development of a trotting complex at Keysborough was first considered by the Trotting Control Board at a board meeting on 28 August 1973.

2. The board's financial report was prepared by officers of the Trotting Control Board. It was based on—

(*a*) income and expenditure forecasts for Moonee Valley and Keysborough projected to 1991;

(*b*) Anticipated funds from the Racecourses Development Fund; and

(*c*) Anticipated distribution based on Totalizator Agency Board projections of turnover.

3. Yes. Costain Australia Ltd has not submitted any claim for the cost of the quotation.

4. The board considers that it has no legal commitment to Costain Australia Ltd for costs incurred to date.

5. If approval is given for the board to proceed with the Keysborough project the board will be required to obtain competitive tenders.

PARKS AND RESERVES

(Question No. 1418)

Mr GAVIN (Coburg) asked the Minister of Health, for the Minister of Lands:

How many reserves or parks have been renamed on the initiative of the Minister in each of the years 1976 to 1978 inclusive, indicating the respective parks and reserves?

Mr BORTHWICK (Minister of Health)—The answer supplied by the Minister of Lands is:

Under the Survey Co-ordination Act it is the sole prerogative of the Place Names Committee to initiate action to alter the names of places.

TELEPHONE BETTING ACCOUNTS

(Question No. 1438)

Mr TREZISE (Geelong North) asked the Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation:

Whether the Totalizator Agency Board inquiries into the character or criminal record of an applicant for a telephone betting account before opening such an account; if so—(*a*) how many telephone account applicants have been rejected for various reasons since the telephone system commenced; and (*b*) what are the respective reasons for rejection of such applications?

Mr DIXON (Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation)—The answer is:

The Totalizator Agency Board does not inquire into the character or criminal record of applicants for telephone betting accounts.

(Question No. 1439)

Mr TREZISE (Geelong North) asked the Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation:

What check is made by the Totalizator Agency Board to ensure that clients opening a telephone betting account are listed under their lawful names?

Mr DIXON (Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation)—The answer is:

No check is made to ensure that clients opening telephone betting accounts are listed under their lawful names. Clients are required to complete an application for a telephone betting account and the signature of the applicant certifying the information provided is all that is required to process the application.

CASINO OPERATIONS

(Question No. 1443)

Mr TREZISE (Geelong North) asked the Premier:

Whether it is proposed that a proportion of Government revenue derived from casino operations will be applied towards the local municipality concerned; if so, for what reasons, if not, why?

Mr HAMER (Premier)—The answer is:

Proposals for a casino in Victoria are being considered in principle, not detail, and the point raised by the honorable member has not been considered.

CASINO APPLICATIONS

(Question No. 1444)

Mr TREZISE (Geelong North) asked the Premier:

1. Whether the Government has fixed any standard for assessment of casino applicants in Victoria based on the percentage of foreign and local shareholdings in such applicant companies; if so, what are the respective requirements?

2. Whether he is aware that the Northern Territory Casino Review Committee considered the advice of "Interpol" in screening casino applicants; if so, whether "Interpol" will be similarly requested to advise upon Victorian casino applicants and; if not, why?

Mr HAMER (Premier)—The answer is:

1. No.
2. No.

INQUIRY INTO MEAT INSPECTION

(Question No. 1535)

Dr COGHILL (Werribee) asked the Minister of Agriculture:

Whether he will make available to the Member for Werribee a copy of the written submission by the then Director-General of Agriculture, Dr D. S. Wishart, to the Committee of Inquiry into Meat Inspection and any subsequent submissions to the Committee by or on behalf of the Department of Agriculture or the Minister?

Mr I. W. SMITH (Minister of Agriculture)—The answer is:

Arrangements will be made to make available to the honorable member a copy of the submission by the Government of Victoria to the Committee of Inquiry into Meat Inspection in Australia and also a copy of a subsequent submission made by the Chief Veterinary Officer.

TRANSPORT PLANNING AND RESEARCH PROJECTS

(Question No. 1556)

Mr GAVIN (Coburg) asked the Minister of Transport:

What are the transport planning and research projects for 1979–80?

Mr MACLELLAN (Minister of Transport)—The answer is:

Transport Planning and Research Programme

Approval for 1979–80 Victorian Programme

Project No.	*Title*
VMOT 78/4	Priority Bus Lane, Johnston Street, Collingwood
VMOT 79/1	Staggered Working Hours at Fishermens Bend
VMOT 79/2	Modal Interchange Study
VMOT 79/3	Models for Evaluation of Bus Service Ojectives
VMOT 79/4	Updating Estimates of the Costs of Motor Vehicle Use
VMOT 79/5	Behavioural Intentions as a Predictor of Travel Behaviour
VCRB/MMBW/77/1	Joint Road Planning Group—
	(*a*) Outer Ring Study Diamond Creek–Ringwood
	(*b*) Review of the Public Participation Process in Planning
	(*c*) R6 Corridor Camberwell–Moorabbin
	(*d*) Surface Access to Melbourne Airport
	(*e*) Oil Prices in Australia—The Effect on Travel
VMOT/RO 77/1	Metropolitan Bayside Councils Corridor Study
VJ 79/1	Public Transport Priority within Area Traffic Control Systems
VMMTB 77/1	Tram and Bus Operations Studies
VMMTB 77/9	Bus Operations—Doncaster Area Study
VMMTB 77/5	Use of Computers in Scheduling Rostering and Timetabling
VMOT 74/3.1	Vehicle Control System
VMMTB 78/1	Market Research
VMMTB 79/1	Bus and Tram Lanes
VMMTB 79/5	Driver Aptitude Study
VMMTB 79/3	Trolley Bus Study
VMMTB 79/4	Alternative Fuels for Buses
VVRB 77/1	State Contribution to Australian Railway Research and Development Organization Program
VVRB 97/1	Suburban Passenger Train Loadings—Station and Time Profiles
VVRB 77/12	Operational Research Studies—Developing Performance Indices
VVRB 77/10	Research Surveys of Travel Patterns and Characteristics
VVRB 75/32	Communications Systems
VVRB 78/3	Improved Current Collecting from Overhead Traction Wiring
VVRB 78/4	Freight Bogie Performance

Project No.	*Title*
VVRB 78/7	Design Requirements for Corrugated Metal Culverts
VVRB 79/2	Investigation of Railway Bridge Design
VVRB 77/5	Metropolitan Freight Handling Study
VVRB 78/18	Short Circuit Tests on 1500 Volt Equipment
VVRB 79/3	Metropolitan and Commuter Passenger Market Research Study
VVRB 79/4	Impact Analysis of "Off Peak" Frequency and Fare Reduction
VVRB 78/13	Improved Methods of Mitigation of Stray Current Electrolysis
VVRB 79/5	Track Research Studies
VVRB 79/6	Brake Performance of Suburban Trains
VVRB 78/12	Car Park and Bicycle Facility Usage
VVRB 79/7	Rail Service Reliability
VVRB 79/8	Market Needs for Containerisation and Handling Facilities at Regional Freight Centres
VVRB 79/9	Investigation of Methods to Renew Contact Wire—Overhead Traction System
VVRB 79/10	Effects of Vehicle Movement on Overhead Current Collection
VVRB 79/11	Electrification Versus Other Means of Supplying Service
VVRB 79/12	Rail/Road Distribution Bulk Products
VTRB 79/1	Evaluation of Alternative Forms of Road Based Transit in Developing and Established Areas
VTRB 79/2	Comparative Fuel Costs for Road Vehicles
VCRB 74/107	Collection of Traffic Data
VCRB 74/116	Demands on Roads and Conservation Areas Due to Recreational Travel
VCRB 74/121	Level of Noise from Motor Traffic
VCRB 74/201	State Contribution to the Australian Road Research Board Program (See Attachment 2)
VCRB 74/207	Research into Bituminous Road Surfacing
VCRB 74/210	Monitoring of Skid Resistance as a Basis for Continuing Research
VCRB 74/234	Research into Piles Socketed into Rock
VCRB 74/243	Research into Traffic Management
VCRB 75/310	Research into the Adequacy of Road Pavements
VCRB 75/322	Design Procedures and Methodology of Roadside Drainage Installations
VCRB 75/342	Fundamental and Structural Aspects of Bridge Design
VCRB 77/351	Effects of Vehicle Emmissions on Air Quality
VCRB 77/460	Research in the Use of Models to Investigate Flood Conditions in Rivers as a Guide to Bridge Location and Design
VCRB 77/461	Road Constrution Standards and Dimensional Tolerances
VCRB 78/464	Development of Improved Trip Distribution and Assignment Models
VCRB 78/465	Development of Improved Economic Analysis Techniques
VCRB 78/474	Before and After Study on Effect of Town By-Passes
VCRB 78/476	Sub-soil Drainage Materials and Design
VCRB 79/478	Road Inventory Data Base
VCRB 79/480	Automatic Control of Linemarking Machines
VCRB 79/481	Energy Considerations in Transport
VCRB 79/482	Accident Black Spot Program on Declared Roads
VRO 78/4	Review of Metropolitan Clearway System
VRO 78/2	Speed Deterrent Devices
VRO 78/1	Bus Priority-Oriel Road
VRO 76/50	Evaluation of Goulburn Valley Driver Training Complex
VRO 76/53	Alcohol Publicity Evaluation
VRO 76/52	Demographic Data on Drinking Drivers
VRO 79/1	Traffic Management for Pedestrian Safety
VRO 79/2	Accident Black Spot Program within the Melbourne Urban Area
VMUN 79/1	Northern Area Transport Study
VMUN 79/2	Study into Bicycle Facilities in Horsham
VMUN 79/3	Ballarat Bicycle Track Study

Project No.	*Title*
VMUN 79/4	Mordialloc Bicycle Track Study
VMUN 79/5	Werribee Bicycle Track Study
VMUN	Bacchus Marsh Bicycle Track Plan
VMOTO 78/6	Bendigo Bike Plan
VMUN 79/7	City of Collingwood Bicycle Route System Study
VMUN 79/8	Collingwood Environmental Capacity Study
VMOTO 78/2	Caulfield City Council Transport Planning on a Neighbourhood Basis
VMMBW 76/61 ..	Continuation of the Re-Planning of Roads in the Planning Scheme—Non-Urban Areas
VMMBW 79/1	The Transport/Energy Implications for Various Densities of Development

Programme approved at a total estimated cost of $3 684 000.

Australian Road Research Board—Approval for 1979–80 *Programme*

Transport Planning and Research

Project Nos.: NMR 74/17, VCRB 74/201, QMR 74/1, SH 74/60, WMR 74/1, TMR 74/1

Project No.	*Title*
ARR 74/118	Field Performance of Bitumens
ARR 74/155	Transport Statistics
ARR 74/172	Mineralogical Factors in Basalt Durability
ARR 74/207	In-Depth Accident Study, Adelaide
ARR 74/215	Quality Control—Dimensions in Construction
ARR 77/250	NAASRA Study of Road Maintenance Standards and Costing
ARR 77/253	Vehicle Operating Costs
ARR 77/258	Generation of Road Surface Noise
ARR 77/259	Experimental Catchments
ARR 77/262	Maintenance Management Studies in Roads in Tasmania
ARR 77/264	Dynamic Truck Suspension Performance
ARR 77/267	Retroreflective Delineation of Rural Traffic
ARR 77/269	Design Charts for Large Span Metal Arch Culverts
ARR 77/273	Quality Control—Materials in Construction
ARR 77/274	Dynamic Loading Data Acquisition Systems
ARR 77/276	Instrumentation for Road Surveys
ARR 77/278	Monitoring of Environmental Impacts
ARR 77/280	Road Geometry and Overtaking Behaviour
ARR 77/281	In-service Acceleration and Deceleration Behaviour
ARR 77/284	Rumble Strips
ARR 77/286	Use of Rubbers in Bituminous Surfacings
ARR 77/290	Warrants for Auxiliary Lanes
ARR 77/293	Accident Economics
ARR 77/294	Tolerable Deflections for Pavements
ARR 77/295	Relationships between Country Board Road and Elastic Modulus
ARR 77/297	The Visual Interruption Technique as a Measure of Driver Behaviour
ARR 78/303	Pavement Cross Section Experiment, Cairns
ARR 78/305	Bituminous Mixes for Residential Streets
ARR 78/306	Aggregate Packing
ARR 78/307	Vehicular Traffic Noise Models
ARR 78/308	Judgement of Distance at Night
ARR 78/310	Use of Marginal Aggregates
ARR 78/311	Application of Social Impact Assessment
ARR 78/312	Effect of Traffic Patterns on Fuel Consumption and Emissions
ARR 78/313	Overtaking and Passing
ARR 78/314	Seasonal Variation in Skid Resistance
ARR 78/316	Urban Goods Transport Forecasting
ARR 78/317	Subsoil Drainage Systems
ARR 78/318	Loop Detector Systems in Pavements
ARR 78/319	Town Planning and Road Safety
ARR 78/320	Temperature of Bituminous Concrete (Darwin)
ARR 78/321	Dynamic Stresses in Bridges
ARR 78/322	Pavement Performance, Canberra
ARR 78/323	Lateral Dynamic Performance of Articulated Vehicles
ARR 78/324	Multivariate Model of Traffic Speed on Two-Land Rural Roads
ARR 78/325	Method for Measurement of Bitumen Flow at Low Temperature
ARR 78/326	Concrete Connections for Steel Bridge Beams
ARR 78/327	Evaluation of Short Range Delineation
ARR 78/328	Bridge Loading Programme (New South Wales)

Project No.	*Title*
ARR 79/329	Full Scale Pavement Test Facility
ARR 79/330	Pavement Design–Residential Streets
ARR 79/331	Analysis of the Sydney Co-ordinated Adaptive Traffic Control System (SCAT)
ARR 79/332	Hazard at Roadworks
ARR 79/333	Driver Behaviour at Turn Slots
ARR 79/334	Driver Behaviour in Residential Streets
ARR 79/335	Tactile Speed Control Devices
ARR 79/336	Car Following Behaviour under Different Lighting Conditions
ARR 79/337	Normal Driver Attributes
ARR 79/338	The Road User Manual—A Guide to Positive Road Use
ARR 79/339	Management of Streets and Traffic in Existing Residential Areas
ARR 79/340	Traffic Generation of Sites and Activities
ARR 79/341	Environmental Capacity—The Concept and its use as a Traffic Planning Tool
ARR 79/342	Planning and Monitoring Transport System Management Schemes
ARR 79/343	Perception Accessibility and Travel Behaviour
ARR 79/344	Constraints on Travel Behaviour
ARR 79/347	Signalised Intersection Survey Method
ARR 79/348	Development of Signing Systems for NAASRA
ARR 79/349	Single Track Vehicle Travel Demand and Mode Choice
ARR 79/350	Development of Travel Demand Techniques
ARR 79/351	Road Public Transport Planning and Operation
ARR 79/352	An Analysis of Traveller Decision Making
ARR 79/353	Relation Between Dimensional Variability and Road Performance
ARR 79/354	Development of a Method to Calibrate NAASRA Roughness Meters
ARR 79/355	Long Range Delineation at Night
ARR 79/356	Compactability Criteria for Bituminous Plant Mix
ARR 78/1073	Formulation of Skid Resistance Spcifications for Pavement Surfacings
ARR 78/1080	Urban Public Transport Economics
ARR 78/1081	Preliminary Survey of the Hydraulics of Gully Pits
ARR 78/1082	CRCP Experiment (Botany Bay Road) New South Wales
ARR 78/1083	Hitch Forces in Road Trains
ARR 78/1085	Improvements in Transport Services through Changes in Land Use
ARR 79/1086	Implications of Changing Energy Costs on Costs of Providing Road Space
ARR 79/1088	Cost Benefit Analysis of Rural Road Design Standards
ARR 79/1089	Multiple Vehicle Ownership and Use Forecasting

Australian Railway Research and Development Organization
Approved Programme for 1979–80
Transport Planning and Research
Project Nos: NTC 77/1, VVRB 77/1, QQR 77/13, WGR 77/1

Project No.	*Title*
ARO 78/P1.1	Railway System—Accounting Statement Simulation and Projection
ARO 78/P1.2	Railway System—Revenue Submodel of Corporate Financial Model
ARO 78/A1.1	Survey of Rail Deficit Contributors
ARO 79/A1.2	Identification of Rail Deficit Contributors
ARO 78/A2.1	Costing Practice in Railway Management
ARO 78/A3.1	Indicators of Effectiveness of Rail Systems
ARO 79/A3.2	Measures to enhance Performance of Railway Operations
ARO 79/A4	Energy in relation to Railway Systems
ARO 79/B1.2	Demand for Rail Services
ARO 79/B1.3	Rail Marketing Strategies
ARO 78/C1.1	Defining the Government/Railway Contract
ARO 79/C1.2	Quantification of the Government/Railway Contract
ARO 78/C2	National Rail Network
ARO 78/D1.1	Railway System—Pricing Practice
ARO 79/D2	Railways Intersystem Pricing
ARO 79/D3.1	Investment Appraisal—Methods
ARO 79/D3.2	Investment Projects—Appraisal
ARO 79/D4.1a.. ..	Management of Fixed Assets
ARO 79/D4.1b.. ..	Management of Moveable Assets
ARO 79/D4.2	Inventory of Assets—Railway Systems
ARO 79/D4.3	Maintenance Procedures—Railway Systems
ARO 79/D5	Railway Technology

Joint Sitting of the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly

Tuesday, 20 November 1979

Monash University Council: Council of Adult Education

Honorable members of both Houses assembled at 6.2 p.m.

Mr HAMER (Premier)—I move:

That the Honorable Sidney James Plowman, M.P., Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, be appointed President of this joint sitting.

Mr FORDHAM (Footscray)—I second the motion.

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. S. J. Plowman)—I draw the attention of honorable members to the extracts from the relevant legislation, which have been circulated. It will be noted that the joint sitting must be conducted in accordance with rules adopted for the purpose by members present at the sitting. The first procedure, therefore, will be the adoption of the rules.

Mr HAMER (Premier)—I desire to submit rules of procedure, which are in the hands of honorable members, and I accordingly move:

That these rules be the rules of procedure for this joint sitting.

1. On any debate arising the same shall be conducted according to Parliamentary usage.

2. A Member, addressing himself to the President, shall propose Members/a Member to be recommended for appointment to the
(as the case may be)

and any such proposal shall be duly seconded. When any Member is so proposed, his proposer shall state that such Member is willing to be so recommended for appointment, if chosen.

3. If no more than the required number of Members are proposed and seconded for the various vacancies, the President shall declare such Member(s) as having been chosen to be recommended for appointment thereto.

4. If more than the required number of Members is proposed and seconded in respect of the vacancies, the Member(s) to be recommended for appointment shall be chosen by ballot in the following manner.

5. In the ballot for the vacancies on each governing body, the President shall announce the names of the Members proposed and shall cause each Member present to be provided with a ballot paper initialled by the Clerks of the two Houses. The Member shall write on such ballot paper the name(s) of the Member(s) he wishes to be recommended for appointment; and if any ballot paper contains more than the appropriate number of names, it shall be rejected. Having marked his ballot paper as provided, the Member voting shall place it in a ballot box provided for the purpose.

6. The President shall appoint three Members to be scrutineers, who, with the Clerks, shall ascertain the number of votes for each Member. The Member who shall be reported to have the greatest number of votes shall, in the case of a single vacancy, be deemed to be duly chosen to be recommended for appointment. In the case of a multiple vacancy, the appropriate number of Members who shall be reported to have the greatest number of votes shall be deemed to be duly chosen to be recommended for appointment. In case of doubt arising through two or more Members having an equality of votes, the scrutineers, by drawing lots, shall determine which of such Members shall be duly chosen to be recommended for appointment.

7. No informal vote shall be taken into account.

8. The President shall be entitled to a vote.

9. As soon as a ballot has been concluded the President shall declare—

"That
have/has been chosen to be recommended for appointment to
(as the case may be)."

10. The President shall advise the appropriate Minister of the Members chosen to be recommended for appointment to the respective governing bodies.

11. The records of the proceedings and the ballot papers shall be retained by the Clerk of the Parliaments of the State of Victoria, who

shall be the custodian thereof, and shall keep the ballot papers safely for one year and thereafter destroy them.

Mr FORDHAM (Footscray)—I second the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. S. J. Plowman)—The rules having been adopted, I am now prepared to receive proposals from honorable members for three members to be recommended for appointment to the Council of the Monash University.

Mr HAMER (Premier)—I propose:

That Ian Robert Cathie, Esquire, M.P., the Honorable James Vincent Chester Guest, M.L.C., and Neil Malcolm McInnes, Esquire, M.P., be recommended for appointment to the Council of the Monash University.

They are willing to be recommended for appointment to the council if chosen.

Mr FORDHAM (Footscray)—I second the proposal.

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. S. J. Plowman)—Are there any further proposals?

As there are only three members proposed, I declare that Ian Robert Cathie, Esquire, M.P., the Honorable James Vincent Chester Guest, M.L.C., and Neil Malcolm McInnes, Esquire, M.P., have been duly chosen to be recommended for appointment to the Council of the Monash University.

I am now prepared to receive proposals from honorable members for a member to be recommended for appointment to the Council of Adult Education.

Mr HAMER (Premier)—I propose:

That the Honorable Evan Herbert Walker, M.L.C., be recommended for appointment to the Council of Adult Education.

He is willing to be recommended for appointment if chosen.

Mr FORDHAM (Footscray)—I have much pleasure in seconding the proposal and look forward to the honorable member's contribution to this important body.

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. S. J. Plowman)—Are there any further proposals?

As there is only one member proposed, I declare that the Honorable Evan Herbert Walker, M.L.C., has been duly chosen to be recommended for appointment to the Council of Adult Education.

Mr HAMER (Premier)—Thank you, Mr President, for presiding at this joint sitting with your customary expedition. The meeting has gone very well and has been completed in practically record time.

Mr FORDHAM (Footscray)—I have much pleasure in joining with the Premier and thanking you, Sir, for your guidance in this important deliberation.

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. S. J. Plowman)—I thank the Premier and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition for their thoughts.

I declare the joint sitting closed.

The proceedings terminated at 6.7 *p.m.*

Legislative Council

Wednesday, 21 November 1979

THE PRESIDENT (the Hon. F. S. Grimwade) took the chair at 2.21 p.m. and read the prayer.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

WASTE TREATMENT PLANT AT BROADMEADOWS

The Hon. R. J. EDDY (Thomastown Province)—I ask the Minister for Conservation whether a report was prepared at the request of the City of Broadmeadows for an environmental effects study to be made on the proposal of United Disposal Services Pty Ltd for a waste treatment plant in Camp Road, Broadmeadows. If so, will the Minister make available a copy of the report and, if not, why not?

The Hon. W. V. HOUGHTON (Minister for Conservation)—If a report were made, certainly I would give the honorable member access to it. Mr Eddy has repeatedly raised this matter. I am perfectly happy to co-operate in any way. I gave him a copy of the letter I sent to the City of Broadmeadows hot off the press and before the council had received it. The matter is subject to a whole range of planning procedures. There are environmental concerns which are of a fairly low level priority. If there is any way in which I can help the honorable member in this matter I invite him to discuss it with me.

The Hon. E. H. Walker—You can require an environmental effects statement.

The Hon. W. V. HOUGHTON—I could, but I do not intend to do so.

CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOL

The Hon. B. P. DUNN (North Western Province)—I ask the Minister of Education: What action does he propose to take to ensure that the important responsibility of the Correspondence School, which serves 4000 students in Victoria, is maintained? Is the Minister prepared to meet a further deputation of persons interested in the future of the school before any decision is made on its future? Will he give consideration to specific points that have been raised, which include enrolment policy, the school council, curriculum, staffing, home-school co-operation and the visiting teacher service provided by the Correspondence School?

The Hon. A. J. HUNT (Minister of Education)—Earlier this year, a high-powered committee of eleven reported on the future of the Correspondence School and on various matters necessary to enable it to operate most effectively and efficiently. The report was almost unanimous but not quite because 9 of the 11 members presented a majority report and the 2 representatives of the staff association of the Correspondence School presented a minority report. It is to be expected that there are aspects upon which they would have some different ideas from those looking at the school from outside.

Because of that element of dissent, the Minister of the day threw the report open for comment. Comments were originally to be presented by September. That period was further extended. It has now expired but comments are still being received. They are being evaluated and, shortly, an analysis and evaluation of all the comments will be presented to me.

It will be appreciated that I must consider every view and not simply the view of the staff association which, I understand, has been adopted by the unions. There is no truth in any suggestion that the effectiveness of the Correspondence School will be whittled away. That will not be allowed to happen. I saw a deputation from unions and the staff association of the school as recently as a month ago. They put a written submission to me. There is little point in having a further deputation from them at this stage.

If the honorable member wishes to see me either alone or with other honorable members to consult on the various issues, I suggest that the appropriate time to do so would be early in December, and I would be happy to hear any views he had to express, which would be considered before any final decision was made.

SEWERAGE COSTS IN BALLARAT

The Hon. H. R. WARD (South Eastern Province)—I ask the Minister of Water Supply whether he saw an article in the *Ballarat News*, on 14 November, headed, "Don't Pay Sewer Costs, Shadow Minister". If so, does he know whether owners of property in that area have been overcharged by at least $200 for capital works projects and whether they are paying for old works and current works? Further, does he consider the comments made by the member of Parliament to be irresponsible and to be interpreted as putting people in danger of possible court charges over non-payment?

The Hon. F. J. GRANTER (Minister of Water Supply)—I am aware of the press article. Mr White wrote to me and told me of the action he intended

to take; that is, that he would urge people not to pay the charges under the section 120A scheme. It is a vexed question. People in the areas of Mount Helen and others want sewerage and it is desirable that they should have it. The capital cost of funding these projects is considerable and there is a shortage of funds for the supply of sewerage to these areas. I assure Mr Ward that I am doing all I can to find a more equitable solution.

The Hon. D. R. White—Obviously, there is a double payment.

The Hon. F. J. GRANTER—It is very hard to explain it in a few words. Mr White says it is a double payment. I am not sure, because the people who want the sewerage pay the capital cost and they pay the rate. I only hope a solution can be reached to enable Victoria to be fully sewered, especially in backlog areas because those are the areas that I am mainly considering. The other areas, new subdivisions and so on, are funded when the subdivision is made and, after a period, the difficulty with sewerage costs will be a different matter.

FLUORIDE TABLETS

The Hon. H. A. THOMAS (Melbourne West Province)—I ask the Minister for Conservation, as the representative of the Minister of Health: Is he aware that a major *Truth* investigation has forced the Queensland Government to launch a programme aimed at ensuring that parents do not accidently poison their children with too much fluoride? A survey was undertaken at Proserpine in North Queensland and a report compiled by two senior Government officers who spent two weeks examining 339 children.

Seventy per cent of Victorians drink fluoridated water. As fluoride tablets are indiscriminately available without prescription in Victoria, is the Minister of Health presently investigating or prepared to investigate the availability of those tablets in this State?

The Hon. W. V. HOUGHTON (Minister for Conservation)—I find it difficult to understand precisely what Mr Thomas is asking. Mr Thomas is asking for an investigation into the problems of fluoride. When I was Minister of Health, the Government established a committee to examine the case against fluoride. That committee has been working for more than six months. When I spoke to the chairman of the committee recently, he informed me that there was a wealth of material opposed to the use of fluoride.

Fluoride is beneficial for the dental health of children; the statistics demonstrate that. One only has to look at Bacchus Marsh where fluoride has been used for twenty years. The incidence of dental caries in that area would convince one of the benefits of fluoride. If one is not convinced by that argument, one should examine the statistics of dozens of other places. One should examine the statistics in New South Wales where the dental health of children is far in advance of the dental health of Victoria's children because New South Wales fluoridated water supplies long ago.

I am an unrepentent supporter of fluoridation of water supplies, but, so far as the investigations are concerned, the Government is doing all it can to ensure that it is on the right track.

DELINQUENTS

The Hon. P. D. BLOCK (Nunawading Province)—An excellent system of dealing with children in trouble, which is used in South Australia, has come to my notice. It is called a juvenile aid panel whose prime responsibility is the interests of children. One capacity of the aid panel is to require parents and guardians to attend upon it, and they can be warned or made to give undertakings in writing concerning the training of or a scheduled programme for the child.

If people do not attend the panel they can be brought before the juvenile court and required to attend the panel; if they refuse to do so they can be fined $100. This has a very salutory effect on dealing with children at a lower level than the courts and has pre-

ventative capacity. Will the Attorney-General give consideration to such a system being adopted in Victoria?

The Hon. HADDON STOREY (Attorney-General)—Victoria does have a system of dealing with children who have committed offences and that system is called the Police Early Warning System. Under that system, children and their parents are requested to attend before a senior member of the Victoria Police Force who administers something in the nature of a warning to the children in the presence of their parents. That does have a very salutory effect of the kind suggested by Mr Block.

Additionally, there is a committee with representatives of the departments of Community Welfare Services, Health and Law reviewing the various recommendations made in the past three or four years about Children's Courts. That committee has visited South Australia and examined the scheme there. It has examined what is happening in other places and I will ensure that it pays particular attention to the point raised by Mr Block. I will ask the committee to express its views on the matter in its report.

TOXIC CHEMICALS

The Hon. E. H. WALKER (Melbourne Province)—I refer to an article in today's *Age* headed, "Two Warn of Toxic Chemicals in Bay". The Minister for Conservation will know about this because the article indicates that a report has been prepared for him. It is a frightening article, which states that the level of highly toxic polychlorinated biphenyls in Port Philip Bay is as high as that found in the industrial regions of the United States of America. The article indicates that these chemicals have been responsble for cancers and the disfigurement of more than 1000 people in the Japanese town of Yusho.

This is a serious issue and I ask the Minister if he would confirm that that information is correct. Does the Minister agree it is a most serious matter and will he take immediate action to trace the source of these chemicals and prevent further dangerous poisoning of the bay?

The Hon. W. V. HOUGHTON (Minister for Conservation)—I acknowledge that the problem of PCBs in Port Phillip Bay is considerable, as are the problems of heavy metals and all other pollutants of the bay. A study has been made on the effects, worldwide, of PCBs in waters around industrial areas and an attempt has been made to relate the total world problem of PCBs to the specific environments of Australia's cities.

The report referred to by Mr Walker indicates that there are PCB problems of contamination in Port Philip Bay. That is nothing new. The Government has been aware of a report on Corio Bay for some time. The source of PCBs is historical. It goes back some considerable time because, currently, licences for the discharge into water are required from the Environment Protection Authority, which will not licence any discharges of PCBs.

The health problem arises as it has been deduced from a study of mullet and mussels that PCBs become evident in the level of contamination in those two fatty marine animals. The fatty tissue of the animal absorbs the PCBs and the two fish I have mentioned are used in studies to assess the danger of PCBs. Those two fish have been used for studies of Port Phillip Bay, which is well within the limits of the World Health Organization standards. Therefore, while there is a problem, it is not a bad problem.

The Government believes that PCBs are historical in origin and at present there is no additional contribution to this problem in the bay, but the situation is being constantly monitored.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON DRUGS

The Hon. G. A. SGRO (Melbourne North Province)—I move:

That there be a Select Committee of eight Members appointed to examine and evaluate the available reports of inquiries into drugs and related matters, and to make recommendations as to action considered necessary to

be taken as a result thereof; the Committee to have power to send for persons, papers and records; three to be the quorum.

As a new member, my intention was to listen to other honorable members and learn the procedure before I began to move motions and make long speeches. However, in the past couple of weeks a report from the New South Wales Royal Commission on Drugs has been released.

I, and many other people in this State, and for that matter in the whole country, after the publicity which was given to the disappearance of Mr Mackay in the town of Griffith in New South Wales, were looking forward to a report which would condemn those guilty of wrong-doing, but which would, at the same time, clear the name of thousands of Italians—hard-working, law-abiding Australian citizens of Italian origin. That has not happened.

Going through the Woodward Royal Commission Report, I found many Anglo-Saxon names, but the report did not tell us where they came from; whether those people were American born, English, Scottish, or from any other English-speaking country. But when it came to the people with Italian names, their full identities were published, that is, their dates of birth, provinces where they were born and their towns. And the report referred to them all the time as ethnic", although they are Australian citizens.

The first thing I learnt in this country was that the system of English justice says a person is not guilty until he is proven guilty. But that was not the case with those people who had Italian names.

The judge makes the point, and I quote:

> I disassociate myself with any attempt to label persons of certain ethnic origins as being connected with the illicit cultivation and trafficking of marijuana other than those specifically named in this report.

The judge went on to say that the delinquent persons were of Calabrian descent.

Those associated with growing marijuana are the only people whose ethnic backgrounds are named in the report. All the Smiths, Joneses and others do not have their ethnic backgrounds referred to in any way at all.

Throughout the report there are constant references to Calabrians. I would like to inform honorable members that Calabria is part of Italy.

I understand that, in recent years, more than 1000 discoveries have been made throughout Australia of marijuana growing, ranging from pot plants to many hectares. In the town and district of Griffith, only three have ever been recorded. In the whole of Australia there have been 22 discoveries, out of the more than 1000, that involved people of Italian descent.

There was no reference in the report to the ethnic backgrounds of the many hundreds of others who have been arrested in connection with the production of marijuana. Since there is so much detail about people whose origins were in Calabria, and so little attention paid to the heroin traffickers and to the network of people peddling drugs, it is little wonder that the Commissioner for Community Relations, Mr Grassby, made the point:

> It would seem one Australian of Italian background growing marijuana is worth ten times the attention of ten Anglo-Australians peddling heroin.

The group defamation and double standards are serious enough, but the other major concern is that although all this money has been spent chasing 22 Italians, the other 978, whose ethnic origins have not been specified and whose people have not been subjected to the same group defamation by the media, have been ignored. In fact, ethnic slander would seem to me to be used as an alibi to do nothing effective to combat the cruel and criminal trade in drugs.

The report did little to focus attention on the heroin trade, which is estimated to be turning over $59 million a year in New South Wales and a similar sum in Victoria. It should be recorded here that citizens of Italian origin, together with Greek and Chinese Australians, have the lowest crime rate of all the many nationalities in the population.

It is the duty of all honorable members to combat slanders in whatever form—whether on a religious, political or nationality basis. It is the duty of all of us to ensure that we unite people, from whichever part of the globe they come, and one must remember that this is a multi-cultural society.

The press and media coverage of the report in this and other States did much harm, and did little to solve the problems that face this State. I respect and fight for the right of all journalists to inform people. However, I condemn them when they sensationalize the event.

It was incredible to read in some Melbourne newspapers that "Death was their only escape", that Italian migrants were without shoes and beds, and lived in crumbling hovels. For the sake of unity and sanity in this State, I invite journalists who want to write about other countries to go and live in those parts of the world for a while, and mix with ordinary people. Then they might at least get their facts straight.

The newspaper headlines tried to convince Australians of British descent that all people who come from Calabria, which, with the second and third generation make up half a million people in this country, are criminals and members of a secret society. I strongly condemn this smear, and I invite all honorable members to join with me in support of this motion.

The entire episode is a sorry saga in the history of Australia's community relations and I believe a committee of the Victorian Parliament could examine this, free from prejudice. It could draw from the law-enforcement agencies operating in Victoria the facts of the situation, not the fancies of the headline-grabbing writers. We can still ensure that justice is done to 1 million Australians of Italian birth or origin and establish the truth about the illegal drug trade in this State.

History has shown that in the long run drugs are worse than wars. They have destroyed societies in the past. I hope that we do not allow that to happen in Australia. I commend the motion to the House.

The Hon. K. I. WRIGHT (North Western Province)—The motion that has been moved so ably by Mr Sgro proposes the appointment of a Select Committee to examine and evaluate the available reports on drugs. I take the opportunity of congratulating Mr Sgro for the content of his speech, with which the National Party agrees. My comments will come under two headings. My first comments deal with reports. I do not propose to go deeply into the drug issue because I understand that it will be discussed by other speakers. Secondly, and most importantly, I refer to the unfair stigma that has been cast on Italians in this country. The first report to which I refer is that of Mr Justice Woodward of the New South Wales Royal Commission. The commission took two years to produce its report, which cost more than $3 million and consisted of more than 2080 pages.

Briefly, the report found that police action had been misdirected, ill-co-ordinated and restricted. It mentioned that 90 per cent of arrests made for drugs were for illegal drug usage and less than 6 per cent of those people had actually been charged with trafficking in drugs, which is by far the major offence. Mr Justice Woodward recommended that in future the police enforcement agency should concentrate 65 per cent of its efforts on detecting trafficking in drugs and 35 per cent of its efforts on detecting the street level dealing in drugs.

In addition, Mr Justice Williams is conducting a Federal commission and on the bringing down of Mr Justice Woodward's report he recommended that the Federal Narcotics Bureau should be disbanded and the Federal police should take responsibility for this. It would be fair to say that not only in Australia but also throughout the world we are fighting a losing battle against drugs; it is a national problem and a world-wide problem.

Fifteen years ago, the Cusack report was made, following violence at the Melbourne market. Mr Justice Cusack referred to extortion, prostitution and sly grogging, but the main thrust of my

address today is aimed at what I believe is an unfair, unwarranted slur on the people in Australia of Italian origin. I refer particularly to the comments made about Calabrians.

Mr Justice Woodward referred to the organizations of Calabrians. He mentioned extortion and criminal activities, and stated that a large proportion of Calabrians were detected growing marijuana. Mr Sgro pointed out that only 22 of 1000 detected were, in fact, of Calabrian descent. That is a very telling point. Mr Justice Woodward stated in his report that the vast majority of Italians and Calabrians are decent, law-abiding people. Nevertheless, the Italians, particularly those of Calabrian origin, in Australia have been unfairly branded and much of this has stuck and caused them concern and mental anguish.

Incorrect conclusions have been drawn and fear and panic have been caused. As I said, the National Party shares Mr Sgro's concern. In the north-west and north-east of Victoria thousands of farmers and businessmen are of Italian descent, particularly in the North Western Province. They are engaged in fruit-growing at Mildura, Robinvale and Swan Hill. What are the facts? In the fruit-growing areas there is a huge Italian community.

At Red Cliffs there is a large soldier settlement of 750 properties and no less than one-third of the properties are owned by Italian families. Currently, 50 per cent of the properties that are changing hands are being purchased by people of Italian descent. They are people with strong family units. The whole family undertakes to work on the farm and they assist each other in the purchase of properties. A property may be for sale and require a 25 per cent deposit, say, $10 000, and various Italian families who have succeeded on the land will contribute perhaps $1000 each and lend the deposit to a person who, in turn, in five or six years will succeed and contribute to the next family.

Therefore, Italians have a succession of assistance to each other that is to be praised and not condemned. As I said, they are hard-working and industrious and work long hours with the whole family involved. Family break-ups are practically unknown, and I have not heard of any divorces in these families. Furthermore, they remember with pride the heritage of their home country. Nevertheless, they are integrating into the Australian community. In football teams and cricket teams there are many people of Italian descent who have received awards for being best on the ground and who make centuries and so forth. They are succeeding there.

Sweeping conclusions have been made which are most unwarranted and unjust. I will give an illustration of one family named Cua at Red Cliffs. Six years ago the two brothers in the family, Frank and Felix, asked me to assist them to become naturalized citizens. I took this up with the support of the present shire president, Councillor Denis Ryan, Mr Fisher, the Federal member of Parliament, State members and, eventually, Mr Jona, the then State Minister of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs. We found when contacting the Commonwealth Immigration Department that we struck virtually a brick wall in obtaining approval for naturalization. We were unable to find a reason for this and, reading between the lines, I suggest that there was some connection with the Cusack report on the Melbourne market because the men had a brother, no longer resident in Australia, who perhaps had some type of involvement in the issue.

We asked the department for the report, and said that we would answer allegations, if there were any. The department refused to show us the report, but several months ago we were successful, and the two brothers joined their wives as naturalized citizens in Australia. Had we not persevered with this and taken the matter as far as it could go we would not have succeeded. There are probably a dozen other cases where people have failed to press on with the matter.

Much criticism has been made of ethnic groups in the Mildura district following the detection of marijuana growing last year. Claims were made

that the Italian community, and Calabrians particularly, were almost universally involved. What is the truth of the matter? Seven cases were eventually tried in the County Court and of those seven cases, only two were persons of Italian descent. I know that one of those two people was not a Calabrian and I am fairly sure that the other was not. Out of those seven people, probably none was actually of Calabrian descent.

Other members of the National Party will speak in more detail and at greater length on this vexing drug problem. The National Party completely rejects out of hand the criticism, veiled or open, that has been made of Italians and particularly Italians of Calabrian descent.

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 later this day.

EDUCATION

The debate (adjourned from November 13) was resumed on the motion of the Hon. B. P. Dunn (North Western Province):

That the views of honorable members with respect to the aims and objectives of education in Victoria and the strategies and administrative changes necessary to implement them be referred to the Minister of Education for consideration in connection with the current Ministerial review of education policies.

The Hon. D. N. SALTMARSH (Waverley Province)—In the absence of Mr Ward, I will respond to the worthwhile and worthy motion moved by Mr Dunn on education and where it is going in Victoria.

It is also fair to comment that the motion created much interest within this Chamber and some worth-while contributions were made by all speakers. When something has started to run, has built up a degree of impetus and is then deferred for some time, it is difficult to come back and develop the same momentum and intensity.

I should like to make one or two preliminary observations. Firstly, in my own family, we have a proud tradition within the teaching profession going back for two or three generations. I was reared in a situation where a teacher was regarded as a person of high standing in his local community and the teaching profession was regarded as being of high status. However, over the past decade or perhaps a little longer, there has been a significant shift in the public image of and the public attitude towards the teaching profession.

Some of this may be summed up, in my view, by two reports which have come to me recently from two senior people within the Education Department, one of whom was involved in travelling to lead a district seminar on education. In the course of his movement to the country centre concerned, he decided he was running late and so he travelled faster than the law permitted.

When he was apprehended, he was advised that he should be represented in court and he was advised by his counsel that he should not mention in court that he was a school teacher. It was believed, on the basis of some previous experience in the court, that the attitude of the court towards school teachers was such that it was likely he would be given a fairly difficult hearing. I find it rather sad that a person in what I regard as a noble profession should be advised not to be proud of indicating in a court of law that he worked as a teacher.

In the same week during which I heard that rather sad story, I found it was supported by a similar story of a person who was advised in a more serious traffic accident case that in any response in court he was to indicate that he was a public servant and not a school teacher. In that instance a jury was involved and, because of the changed image of the teaching profession within our society, it was believed the jury may, for a number of reasons, not be kindly disposed towards a person from the teaching profession.

I indicate those matters because they are of concern when it is understood and recognized that teachers are immensely important people within our society, people who exert a tremendous influence over young people and assist in the development of their social values

as well as their educational skills and so on. It is important that every effort be made to restore this image of the importance of the teacher and to restore the profession of teaching to a high status within our community.

I indicate also that, at the present time, the Minister has taken a commendable lead. Unfortunately, because of the sorts of traditions which have grown up recently within the education community and especially within the teaching profession with the various industrial groupings, it seems that, rather than there being any trust, genuine goodwill and an attempt to provide the very best conditions with the maximum resources to enable the teaching profession to develop and produce the outputs that are desired by a sophisticated society, even the best motives can be misrepresented.

I find it a sad commentary that there is so little trust. If the community is able to perceive the genuineness of a person such as the Minister of Education in a genuine desire to listen to the education community and to find responses from within not only the teaching profession but also from those who are more broadly called the education community—the school councils and the parents as well as the students —some realistic and responsive new strategies will be able to be devised to lead us into the 1980s.

It is heartening that more than 500 submissions have been received by the department in response to the inquiry that is currently under way. Obviously many more submissions will be forthcoming from schools and school councils as well as from interested people as the various reports are produced, the Green Papers are distributed and discussed and, finally, an even better strategy will be developed for the 1980s.

I suppose strategies must refer directly to the process of education, and within the process of education there is concern about curriculum. Some of the questions that need to be asked about the curriculum, for example, would seem to be whether curriculum development should be centrally controlled or community controlled; whether there should be a balance between central curriculum development and local school community development; whether in fact the curriculum should be developed on a school-based programme. There may be many permutations of those alternatives whereby there should perhaps be a centrally-developed range of curricula for schools to adapt to and adopt.

The Hon. B. P. Dunn—You mean a core?

The Hon. D. N. SALTMARSH—There should be many possibilities, I believe, of a core. One of the interesting concerns coming through, even in relation to some of these school curricula, may lie currently in the field of English literature within the senior sections of secondary schools.

Recently I was speaking to an old, retired gentleman schoolteacher, a former principal, who was concerned with some of the students he is at present coaching, one of whom attends a State high school and requires coaching in literature. The text books prescribed for the fifth year in a secondary school seemed to have a strong predilection towards fairly specific and fairly obvious sexual novels of a kind that are extremely popular at present. There seemed to be an overwhelming concern about one aspect of human and social development. On the other hand, this gentleman pointed out that, in some of the other schools with which he is at present involved, there is still concern to introduce students to some of the great literature of our culture and they were prepared to be studying, of all people, Shakespeare.

The Hon. E. H. Walker—That is pretty sexy.

The Hon. D. N. SALTMARSH—It may be, but it is certainly expressed in quite a different way from *The Catcher in the Rye*, I would suggest. In my view, there seems to be room at least for a more rational approach whereby the particular views or even some of the concerns of a specific teacher should not exclude his students from an introduction to the broader areas of literature.

The strategy of delivery of the curriculum services must be related to the structure of the department. On the structure of the department, some of the questions honorable members must address themselves to—and clearly the Minister will be required to give much care and attention to these—will be whether there should continue to be the divisions which currently exist within the Education Department; are these divisions currently such that they are building their own empires; are they the sorts of divisions which prevent effective flow in the normal development from pre-school to primary, to middle school, to senior secondary, to tertiary and so on; are the resources being utilized in the best way, because of the empire building and the empire preservation of the current divisions that exist within the schools and the waste of resources that obviously results from many of these inefficient structures at present?

The Hon. D. R. White—You have not yet stopped teacher bashing.

The Hon. D. N. SALTMARSH—Structures and strategies are inter-related in terms of the power that exists within the schools and within regions. Within the regions a proper and new balance ought to be achieved where many of the powers have still been retained centrally by the department—and I am not speaking about teachers here, Mr White, but about the department—for the department and the various divisions. In many ways, the resources of the regions have been starved so that there is an inability for the regions to carry out many of the anticipated benefits of this decentralization of opportunity.

The strategy being adhered to at present is not effective because the resources of the central headquarters are far too powerful and are not giving proper autonomy to the regions and to the local schools. This question must be resolved and resolved early, because morale within the Education Department is being seriously affected, and this, in turn, is causing unnecessary conflicts at this level.

Honorable members need to be asking should the regions be competing for the scarce resources; should these regions have the sort of autonomy which enables them to compete for the scarce resources; or is there a need for an over-all review which exercises more central control and is able to allocate to the regions the resources so that then the regions can decide how to use those resources? Within the strategies, there needs to be a plan of service delivery and the structures must enable that service delivery to be made effectively and efficiently.

Another area that should be raised is the strategies between teacher training institutions and schools. Clearly, at present an employers' market operates within the teaching profession. Some questions arising from this are: Will the Minister exercise more control over the type of programme being developed within the teacher training institutions? Are the schools gaining the desired product? Are the schools able to indicate the sorts of skills and resources which they should expect from people who are professionally trained? Are teachers being placed in the invidious position of having certain expectations and certain professional goals which are obviously at variance in many instances with those of the school community and the education community?

If one is talking about liberal education, that implies not only greater autonomy within regions and for schools but also a choice for parents and students. So the question of zoning must be carefully examined and it must be determined whether this concept poses a real threat to teachers or provides a new opportunity for students as well as for teachers. I can well imagine that at times, if zoning is removed and parents are free to choose the school to which they will send their children, some teachers who believe they have been teaching very well may suddenly find themselves without students, because parents and the education community may well decide that that product is not the product they desire. Nevertheless, it raises a number of issues which need to be examined sensitively and carefully.

I believe parents should have far more choice and that a more liberal approach should be taken to zoning in the education system because this would enable a much greater diversification of skills and educational opportunities to be made available. The diversity in choice and the possibility of the removal of zoning barriers is clearly a major issue in educational strategy at present.

Another problem which must be addressed is whether we should be examining the assessment of basic skills and certain other educational outputs and the degree of accountability required of schools, and the teaching profession, to the community. The question is raised: To what extent should schools be accountable overall? A parent should be able to ask a teacher, of, say, a child in grade 3 how that child is performing and developing and what type of skills the child is gaining. That parent should also have the opportunity of being able to test the relationship between this grade 3 child and other grade 3 children, perhaps in the same school or even in nearby schools, so that a form of effective assessment can be developed.

One difficulty in that area is that wrong pressures may then be applied by parents to children to perform in the way that the parents desire. Some honorable members have seen in children the rather sad results of the wrong pressures having been applied in schools by some parents who have a tremendous need for their children to achieve what they perhaps missed out on in their own childhood.

The adoption of an effective across-the-board assessment leads to the possibility of establishing a more effective planning policy in the education system. How do we identify these children who have special needs and special resources? How can we identify these needs on an objective and rational basis? If we can identify groups, localities or teaching styles or skills, it would be most desirable for this to lead to a more efficient planning process to plan the outcomes that are needed from teacher training institutions.

The Hon. D. N. Saltmarsh

If we do that we must be careful to avoid conducting witch hunts and allowing certain people who are not professionally competent to become master inquisitors of those who are deprived of certain strengths and resources within their own department.

The Hon. D. R. White—It is necessary to assess remedial needs.

The Hon. D. N. SALTMARSH—I believe that is so, but should the Education Department and the schools demand teaching skills in a wide range of styles? Can schools then state whether they desire teachers with skills that may be called modern progressive teaching styles or the more traditional conservative teaching styles? Should the schools have the opportunity of asking the school communities for those requirements through their councils? There is a large question mark about that point.

Another obvious issue of great concern within the teaching profession is that of autonomy within the class-room. Should methodology be seen as the capital resources that a teacher has and which can be tested? If one style is not effective within a class-room environment, should the community demand through the school council that the teaching methodology change? How will that affect the autonomy of the teacher?

The question of in-service education must also follow if within this issue of autonomy there is a changing to and from between the school community and the professional educator. To what extent should the system of education be responsible for updating the skills, methods and capital resources of the professional teacher? To what extent should the teacher be responsible for that updating? Should it be possible or is it desirable for a school principal or inspector to be able to say that on assessment a certain method has been found to be ineffective, and therefore for the teacher to maintain a professional status within the department he should undergo further intensive summer-school training.

Many other areas may be discussed and related to the sorts of resources that the department needs to make available to schools to make some of the existing policies on decentralization work effectively. Should people who are more qualified in the area of public accounting be available to deal with the large amounts of funds that are now being diverted through schools to the educational community?

We should not talk about education relating only to primary and secondary education. Obviously there is a need to follow through to tertiary education and ensure a consistency of approach and educational opportunity. Recently a difficulty was raised with me at the Caulfield Institute of Technology, when concern was expressed about one of the courses in which a group of people, including me, have been involved for some time. A leading doctor raised the issue of whether the community was now asking children to do the impossible by expecting them to indicate their preferences which will determine their educational styles for the next ten years or so, and expecting either eleven-year-old or twelve-year-old children to decide whether they will move into the humanities or the science-oriented sectors. How can an eleven-year-old or twelve-year-old child be expected to make such a significant decision right now? Are our systems based on the right approach?

This doctor indicated that when he did his training some years ago, once he had decided the area of technology into which he wanted to move, it was expected that he should have an education based on the general humanities area at the secondary level. Therefore he had to concentrate on literature and become aware of the culture of society. He was able to broaden his outlook and approach to humanity, and by the time he went to university he had had time to concentrate on and develop the scientific and technical aspects of his training.

Knowing him as a professional medical man, I suggest that the breadth of humanity that he displays and which many people trained in that same style now display and their ability to communicate with patients as people is a most significant and important aspect. It is important to raise this issue: Are we requiring our children to make vital decisions affecting their future vocations at far too early an age, especially as many educationists are speaking of the need for people to have a flexible approach to lifestyles and to vocational choice with a possible change at least two or three times within their working life? There may well be a need to move into two or three different major sectors of a profession or occupational activity.

The choice to which we now limit children is so restricting as possibly to be damaging in the long run. By raising these questions I hope I have indicated some of the areas of concern. A more efficient decentralization with a more effective administration of increasing responsibility in the local regions and certainly in the local school community is needed. If greater options can be provided within schools, for parents and children, we will be achieving a significant new approach to education.

One of the other significant areas is whether we now regard education as only a technical skill development programme. Do we see it as being much broader and deeper and helping people to adjust as they grow through life? Is it related to social issues and interpersonal relationships? Is it related to living in a disturbing society—in many instances, in a very fluid, flexible and changing society? Is the emphasis to be placed on these aspects rather than on more technology, or do we regard education simply as a precursor for employment opportunity? If we opt for the wrong choice we will be doing our children and our children's children a grave disservice.

Those are the most important areas of strategies and structures with which we have to grapple and as we deal with these aims, the objectives and goals of education may emerge even more clearly.

Concern has been expressed by schools in the past few weeks because they are worried that, having made a submission based on the aims and goals of education, they may have missed the

real point of this evaluation or review which is currently under way. For many of these people, structures and strategies are more important, at this stage of discussion, than to indicate once more the aims which will be generally accepted. The Government should move more positively and more creatively towards a review of structures and strategies in order to involve the community in helping to determine the types of education and the opportunities for individuals in future.

The Hon. JOAN COXSEDGE (Melbourne West Province)—I thank Mr Dunn for giving the Opposition the chance to speak on the important subject of education. I shall make specific and general comments on different aspects of education.

The first point is that there is not enough money for education and despite the recent appointment of Mr Hunt as the Minister of Education not nearly enough planning is done. It would not be an overstatement to say that the entire education system in Victoria is chaotic, and even if the Minister of Education knows, no one else seems to know the future of the education system. This is frustrating for the many hard-working people involved with local schools. More of these people are realizing that the Victorian education system is effective only in educating people in low expectations of themselves.

In the area of employment in the next ten years, 2·5 million jobs will need to be provided for school leavers alone. Declining enrolments, birth rates and migrant intakes are the justification given by the Government for lower expenditure on schools.

The Hon. H. M. Hamilton—Will Mrs Coxsedge table the document she is quoting from?

The Hon. JOAN COXSEDGE—I am quoting from my own research. There are declining enrolments in the Primary Schools Division, but it will be years before the impact is felt in secondary and technical schools. There is a decline in the retention rate in technical schools from year 7 to year 12, but for other reasons. The retention rate in 1975 of 41 per cent has fallen to 36 per cent in 1979 because of the anxiety about employment by parents and students. Children are encouraged to enter the work force as soon as any positions, no matter how unskilled they may be, become available.

Limited tenure teaching appointments could lead to a large increase in part-time teachers who are not eligible to join unions and who have little or no commitment to the children. The position regarding temporary teachers is also unclear. All of these factors could easily lead to instability and a selection of so-called good teachers—conforming teachers—in other words a conservative work force.

The Hon. D. R. White—Subservient.

The Hon. JOAN COXSEDGE—Yes, subservient.

The Hon. N. F. Stacey—This is fiction.

The Hon. JOAN COXSEDGE—This is not fiction. I inform Mr Stacey that for the first time in history the three teacher unions have combined to go on strike. So much for Mr Stacey's idea of fiction.

There are approximately 3000 unemployed teachers in all divisions.

The Hon. P. D. BLOCK (Nunawading Province)—On a point of order: There is a jealously guarded and long-term tradition in this House that debates will be conducted by honorable members without reading their speeches. Although I sympathize with Mrs Coxsedge and think she reads very well, debates will suffer if this becomes the standard practice, which it seems to be doing. Mr President, I seek your guidance about the attitude of the Chair towards its continuation. Is it a general practice that will be granted to all members?

The Hon. D. R. WHITE (Doutta Galla Province)—On the point of order, I noticed that during the course of the debate on the workers compensation Bill last night Mr Bubb and Mr Hayward quoted extensively from notes and Mr Block did not raise a point of order. If notes have been prepared—Mr Hamilton uses clippings from the *New Statesman* for most of his speeches—it is most important that honorable members have the opportunity, as does Mr Hamilton, of using those notes to form the basis of their speeches, especially if the notes are

prepared by the honorable member. Mrs Coxsedge has informed the House that she is using notes which she prepared for the debate. I believe there is no point of order.

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. F. S. Grimwade)—This matter has been exercising my mind for some time. It is obvious that if honorable members read speeches the cut and thrust of debate and the ability to handle interjections and make a meaningful contribution based on what has gone before are lost. I am apprehensive of the way we tend to be heading. However, I have to balance that, as the Presiding Officer, with the need, particularly for the newer members, to become familiar with a variety of topics. Many of the Bills are detailed and technical and it is necessary for honorable members to refer to notes; often it is necessary for them to have their proposals in the right order and to express them in the right way.

I am watching the way in which the newer members are following the lead of the older members of this place. It seems to me that many honorable members should take note particularly of the Leaders of the three parties in this Chamber, who manage to make excellent speeches without extensive reference to notes. I intend to continue watching carefully and I will shortly exercise my judgment on honorable members reading speeches and request them not to do so.

In this case, in my opinion, Mrs Coxsedge has been referring to her copious notes. However, what she is saying is of interest to the debate and I invite Mrs Coxsedge to continue but only to refer to her notes rather than to read from them directly.

The Hon. W. A. LANDERYOU (Doutta Galla Province)—On a point of order, perhaps before Mrs Coxsedge continues and to assist you, Mr President, in carrying out your ruling, which I wholeheartedly support and do not take issue with, the lighting in this Chamber in the back row on at least the Opposition side of the House—we have not had the opportunity of sitting on the other side of the Chamber often—is poor.

Although I enjoy 20–20 vision and it never worried me when I sat in the back row it worries my three colleagues, Mrs Coxsedge, Mr Butler and Mr Sgro, who sit behind me, and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, who has not made the bold decision that his optician suggests, is also somewhat troubled. People as close to the ground as I am can read from a bench of that type, but it is difficult for those honorable members who do not enjoy 20–20 vision.

Perhaps at some future time, Mr President, in your capacity as President, you can ask the relevant people to consider the improvement of the lighting facilities of the back benches of this Chamber.

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. F. S. Grimwade)—I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his comments. I will certainly ask the House Committee to request the Public Works Department to look at the lighting of this Chamber. I should not like to change the lighting in any particular way, but I should like to be assured that there is sufficient lighting for honorable members to be able to look at their notes rather than to read them.

The Hon. JOAN COXSEDGE (Melbourne West Province)—Mr President, thank you for your ruling. There is a major problem regarding cyclic maintenance of schools as many small jobs, such as painting, become major jobs if they are not attended to regularly. Many schools are still using portables, relocatables, transportables, demountables or, in this year's jargon, corepluses. Little regard is paid to the students in the western suburbs. The asbestos ceilings were removed at the Braybrook Primary School while the chairs and tables were still in the room. The one tertiary institution in the area, the Footscray Institute of Technology, is in deep economic trouble.

Previous speakers made the point that we will never make any sense out of the chaotic Victorian education system until there is proper regionalization with adequate funds and regionalization of other Government services, such as public works, so that decisions can be made closer to the work plan, the local school and with

more effective participation and consultation with local communities who are best equipped to recognize the needs of their children. In order to make regionalization work effectively there must be guaranteed adequate levels of funding, at least on a triennial basis. Another vital service to students and families is, unfortunately, in the same bad position as the Teaching Service because of staff ceilings, namely, the Counselling, Guidance and Clinical Services Branch. This lack is particularly noticeable in the western suburbs, which have a lower distribution of professional people. The current high level of social problems means that many families are in a state of stress but the counselling, guidance and clinical services are not staffed nearly well enough to provide an adequate service with ready availability to students and families.

The Hon. B. P. Dunn—The same problems are experienced in the country.

The Hon. JOAN COXSEDGE—Yes, I am sure Mr Dunn is right. These problems exist particularly in areas of employment where early school leavers have not been adequately catered for in the school curricula and are not eligible for unemployment benefits until they are sixteen years of age. More must be done in family counselling. It would be better if more jobs were found for the young people.

On the subject of the Counselling, Guidance and Clinical Services Branch, perhaps that branch might have liked to comment on the damaging psychological effect on students preparing to sit for their higher school certificate examinations from 19 November of a statement by Mr Jack Ford, the Director of Education of the Victorian Secondary Schools Division, reported in the *Australian Financial Review* of 29 October this year. Mr Ford said he expected thousands of students to fail their higher school certificate examinations this year because of poor teaching. He said that some teachers in schools who have achieved poor results should be relieved of their duties. A statement like that must do a lot to lower the morale of teachers who have to endure that sort of public attack.

What about the higher school certificate students who fail because they are unable to study the subjects they want to because staff ceilings in many schools mean that full academic courses at the higher school certificate level cannot be offered. It is possible to cite example after example of that situation. Obviously, Dr Ken McKinnon, the Chairman of the Schools Commission, did not agree with Mr Ford. Dr McKinnon is reported in the *Sun* of 30 October as saying:

> The Schools Commission has warned of a sharp drop in morale unless problems in schools are tackled in a positive and practical way.

The Hon. D. R. White—Mr President, I direct your attention to the state of the House.

A quorum was formed.

The Hon. JOAN COXSEDGE—I was quoting a rebuttal of Mr Ford's statement by Dr McKinnon of the Schools Commission. That rebuttal continues:

> In a submission to the Senate standing committee on education and the arts, the Schools Commission chairman, Dr Ken McKinnon, said accusations of teacher laziness did not find solutions.
>
> "It will not be easy to confidently recommend solutions," he told the committee.
>
> Dr McKinnon said the proportion of lazy or uncaring teachers was relatively small, and most were concerned about the increasingly uncertain futures of their students and how to prepare them for it.
>
> "They are genuinely perplexed as to how to do this," he said.
>
> The problems could also not be blamed on progressive or modern education, with most teachers using orderly disciplined methods.
>
> "There are problems in our schools, but libertarianism is not one of them.
>
> "Lack of concern by teachers for the literacy and numeracy of students is not the problem," he said.

The Footscray Technical College, which is in the area I represent, is an example of a school that is suffering extreme frustration because the finance from the Tertiary Education Commission for its proposed new building is in doubt. This saga has been going on for ten years. The staff of the college are worried and frustrated because they know that if the deadline set by the Tertiary Education Commission of 30 March next is not met, more than $8 million, which

was to be available for stage 2, phase 1, of the college's building programme will be lost to Victoria and reallocated to other States. That is a scandalous situation.

I shall now advise honorable members of details of Education Department buildings and land involving a considerable wastage of money and a total lack of planning. The Barassi building in Latrobe Street, Melbourne, was leased two years ago by the Education Department for the College of Decoration. The department has paid for the lease for at least the past two years, but the building is not being used for training purposes.

A Collingwood factory site has been leased by the department for three years and it was intended to use it for the training of cabinet-making apprentices. Because of a disagreement with the Collingwood council over parking, the site has never been used and the department now apparently intends to give up the lease.

A factory in Cubitt Street, Richmond, is an annexe of the Richmond Technical College. Part of the factory has been renovated at a cost of $800 000 and is being used for training in sheet-metal work. The factory has been leased since 1977 at a cost of $100 000 a year. The Cabinet sub-committee of 1975 recommended the purchase of the property, but the purchase price is now the subject of a Supreme Court action. This could mean that the Government will be hit with a further bill involving a percentage of the cost of the improvements already carried out. The building is owned by a company that has its headquarters in Israel.

The Rolla building in Richmond is probably now owned by the State College of Victoria at Hawthorn. It has acres of floor space that are now housing only approximately twenty people. It is a complete and utter waste of facilities. The Millers ropeworks building in Brunswick was purchased by the department two years ago at a cost of approximately $3·85 million. No one seems to know what for. It is certainly not being used for training purposes.

The Pizzey's building and land in River Street, Richmond, was purchased five years ago with a Commonwealth grant of approximately $3 million. Nothing has been done to the property, except that $75 000 has been spent this year on land clearing. The Batman Automotive College is owned by the department and is under used because insufficient funds have been made available to bring the building up to the proper standard for training purposes, in spite of promises made by the Premier about an increase in the intake of apprentices in the automotive trades.

An additional $1 million has been spent on the Box Hill Technical College because of a lack of proper investigation of the site, which was formerly part of the Box Hill gasworks. Foundations had to be strengthened because of the former use of the site. Finance for the project was made available by the Commonwealth, but because of the lack of proper site investigation it is now likely that the Federal Government will not pay the additional $1 million involved. Therefore, the State will have to foot the bill.

The present Treasurer promised that the Shepparton driver training complex would be established. Work has commenced on the site, but it has not yet been purchased by the department. Once again there is a grave risk of public money being wasted.

I conclude my remarks with some comments on the broad philosophical aspects of education, which have so far been lacking in the debate. The first question with which I shall deal is: What is happening in the education industry? It is very difficult to integrate the various perspectives that can be brought to bear on education issues. This is partly due to the fragmentation within the education system and partly due to the way in which it is isolated from other economic, industrial and social forces.

The fundamental contradictions in the education system are that, although the public pays for education as a community service, the service is expropriated to serve the interests of private

capital. As a corollary, although education promises to and should develop critical understanding in people, it actually operates to induce conformism. Although the school promises to provide skills and mobility for people in the work place, it actually functions to legitimize their positions in a hierarchical division of labour.

The Hon. J. V. C. Guest—Do you believe no conformism is desirable, or do you believe children should be reared with a certain degree of it and, if so, what degree?

The Hon. JOAN COXSEDGE—If Mr Guest waits patiently, I shall answer his question. Although the school is supposed to be for liberation, it in fact operates as an instrument for keeping the workers in their places. That provides an arena for conflict—working class demands, on the one hand, related to schooling and the demands of capital on the other.

The Hon. GLYN JENKINS (Geelong Province)—I raise a point of order. I hate to delay Mrs Coxsedge in the delivery of her remarks, but I point out that there are many precedents, particularly in *May*, to indicate that an honorable member should not advance arguments by reading a speech. From my observations, Mrs Coxsedge is doing just that. I am concerned that if this trend continues the life and the cut and thrust of Parliamentary debate will be put in jeopardy because the debate will consist of the mere reading of prepared speeches and no one will know whether the words being used come from the honorable member concerned.

The Hon. D. R. WHITE (Doutta Galla Province)—On the point of order, a similar point of order was raised earlier this afternoon by Mr Block, and if the Secretary to the Cabinet had remained in the Chamber throughout the afternoon——

The Hon. Glyn Jenkins—I was aware of it.

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. F. S. Grimwade)—Order! To ensure that the matter is quite clear I intend to read what *May* says about the rules governing the time and manner of speaking in connection with the reading of speeches. The comments appear at page 413 of the nineteenth edition:

> In the House of Commons a Member is not permitted to read his speech, but may refresh his memory by reference to notes. A member may read extracts from documents, but his own language must be delivered *bona fide* in the form of an unwritten composition. The purpose of this rule is primarily to maintain the cut and thrust of debate, which depends upon successive speakers meeting in their speeches to some extent the arguments of earlier speeches; debate decays under a régime of set speeches prepared beforehand without reference to each other.

May then states that the rule is relaxed in certain cases. As honorable members would know, it is relaxed for Ministerial statements, the second-reading speeches of Ministers and the first speech of a member who is moving a substantive motion.

I have already said I intend to enforce the ruling that appears in *May*. The problem I face, as a Presiding Officer, is that, unfortunately, some of the newer members of the House are taking up a habit that has been practised by those who should know better.

I reiterate that I intend to enforce the ruling and I strongly suggest that Mrs Coxsedge should now finish her remarks with only scant reference to her notes.

The Hon. JOAN COXSEDGE (Melbourne West Province)—Thank you, Mr President. The education industry is now so huge that its bureaucrats have their own institutionalized demands, which can act to inhibit changes to the system that might be necessary. However, if the State shifts in the way in which it functions to more directly serve the requirements of business, as it appears to be doing during this period of restructuring, these contradictions will be heightened at all levels.

I shall now comment briefly on the impact of technology on education. I am sure all honorable members will agree that is an important subject. The range of technologies now available has been designed to increase productivity and to reduce wage costs by displacing labour. This has meant taking control away from the workers, reducing the range of skills that the majority of

workers use and dividing the work processes into fragmented sections that can be isolated within a factory or an office.

The two major effects of technology are basically a reduction in the number of jobs and a degradation of the entire labour process—it is the de-skilling of workers.

What does this mean to the education system? The functioning of education as a social wage is under increasing threat and if education is gearing more directly to serve the needs of capital by becoming increasingly narrow in its vocational orientation, it would be more accurate to describe education for the future purely as industrial training.

So, the existing system is attacked not only for being out of date so far as corporate business is concerned, but also for being wasteful and inefficient, siphoning off too much money, and not delivering the goods in terms of literate, numerate and compliant workers who can be cheaply retrained in short courses. These attacks are being made now just as we are witnessing the beginning of this strategy.

I wanted to say a few words about the Williams report on education, training and employment. The report was released in March 1979, which was two and a half years after the committee of inquiry was established in October 1976.

It was criticized in many quarters for being procrastinated, expensive, verbose, less than profound and basically proposing a continuation of the *status quo*. The report, although confusing, attempts to provide a rationale for the conservative line it advocates by reference to the conservative tradition in historical documents relating to the development of education in Australia.

The Hon. J. V. C. Guest—When are you going to answer my question?

The Hon. JOAN COXSEDGE—Later on; Mr Guest should have patience. The report also bases its proposals on selected pieces from submissions to the committee and an equally arbitrary selection of partial data. To appreciate the significance of the regressive moves in the Williams report, honorable members need to understand something of the historical development of the education system at all levels in Australia and in Victoria.

We should understand these developments within the context of the changes that were occurring in the economic and political structures at that time.

We need to ask, firstly, when and why was it that liberal ideas in education began to displace so-called conservative ideas? Secondly, when and why was the university sector expanded, the advanced education sector created and the technical sector favoured?

The answers to these questions are obviously complex because they are grounded in the rate of our economic growth in Victoria and also the ability of labour to achieve gains in the form of social wage spending and to the structural conditions which we have in the labour market. I suppose honorable members could spend all afternoon going into the background, which I certainly do not propose to do, but a few brief words are necessary.

The expansion of the post-school system in Australia occurred largely in the long post-war boom period of 1948 to 1970. The schools operated as a partial screening device for the selection of a small élite for access to university education for the professions.

The majority of the population passed through the primary schools and then the lower end of the secondary schools, emerging directly into the work force or maybe they made the transition via apprenticeship training systems, supported by the technical colleges.

The different paths followed largely reflected the class position of the students, with an increasing appearance of upward mobility for working class children as the labour market expanded.

The schools operated to reinforce a kind of individual achievement based on a competitive performance in external examinations. The initial expansion of the post-school sector followed the Murray report of 1957, which was an extremely élitist document. The

report was issued as the economy was requiring a greater number of professionally trained people to lay the scientific basis of further economic development.

The Martin report of 1964–65 saw the need for middle level professionals with a concern for the so-called practical needs of industry. The initial distinctions between the university and advanced education sectors that evolved were based on the alleged differences between individuals with so called practical as opposed to theoretical minds.

The Martin report was written when the economy was becoming more dependent on the contributions of the mining sector and when the services sector was expanding rapidly as manufacturing began to decline. The report was not implemented in its original form. It was not implemented until the Federal Labor Governments of 1972 to 1975, promoted the concept of equality of opportunity in education and increased funding was provided to expand access at the post-school levels. The advanced education sector expanded rapidly at that time—between 1972 and 1975.

As the growth in the economy contracted, the concept of education as an investment was again re-assessed. The Williams committee now considers that the spending rate on education is moving beyond the means of the economy and in a direction inconsistent with its needs.

A broad description of the emerging scenario for the Australian situation is clearly stated in the Williams report on page 68 when it states:

> The demand for skilled manpower increases as production increases. This leads to an "investment demand" for post-secondary education.

It argues that school leavers could be made more productive by ensuring they achieve acceptable standards of literacy and numeracy, and that as a result economic growth can be assisted. For example, the report states on page 117—

> Making school leavers more productive may add to employment in two ways. It may help to check the substitution of captial for labour and it may contribute to economic growth from a more effective use of existing equipment.

The Hon. Joan Coxsedge

At best, I suppose all one can say about such a statement is that it is wishful thinking. Fundamentally, it is economically naïve, if not deceitful. It is virtually saying that the educational experiences of young people should be restricted to allow greater exploitation of labour in the workplace.

The Hon. P. D. BLOCK (Nunawading Province)—Mr President, on a point of order. I listened very carefully to what you had to say and the points you made to Mrs Coxsedge about her continuing to read her speech at great length. Once again I bring your attention, Mr President, to the jealously guarded debating atmosphere of this Chamber and urge you to ask Mrs Coxsedge to take notice of and to pay due regard to your ruling.

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. F. S. Grimwade)—I invite Mrs Coxsedge to take note of what I said. Mrs Coxsedge is referring to her copious notes much more frequently than she needs to. I invite her to continue her speech making fewer references to her notes. If Mrs Coxsedge persists in reading, I will be forced to ask her to sit down and call the next speaker.

The Hon. J. M. WALTON (Melbourne North Province)—On your ruling, Mr President, over many years I have witnessed honorable members read speeches in the House. Indeed, one of your predecessors read speeches from end to end, particularly in his early days in the House. I do not think anybody from the Opposition side of the Chamber, apart from a little chiacking, drew the attention of the President to this fact.

I am surprised that Mr Block should do so on this occasion because Mrs Coxsedge has, in the main, apart from quoting other people during the course of her speech, not read her notes. It is difficult not to read quotes because if one does not read them they may be inaccurately rendered. I watched Mrs Coxsedge carefully and I thought she was conforming very well with the standards set in the House and built up during many years of experience.

The PRESIDENT—Order! I hope Mr Walton is not disputing my ruling.

The Hon. J. M. Walton—No, Mr President.

The PRESIDENT—If Mr Walton took note of what I said on three occasions during this debate whilst Mrs Coxsedge has been making her speech, he will understand the situation. I invite Mrs Coxsedge to continue.

The Hon. JOAN COXSEDGE (Melbourne West Province)—Thank you, Mr President. I conclude by claiming that, from the way in which the education system is operating and the trends which are developing in this society, the system is being used as a mechanism of social control.

The Hon. ROBERT LAWSON (Higinbotham Province)—I represent a group of fairly old and settled suburbs, which in the main are residential. Those areas share a problem that is common to similar suburbs in Melbourne, that is, they have seriously declining school populations.

I should like to quote some figures I have obtained to illustrate my point. I have a list of seven high schools located within the Higinbotham Province and I shall quote the enrolment figures of three of those schools for various years, commencing with 1976. The first school is the Beaumaris High School. In 1976 it had an enrolment of 736 which had declined in 1979 to 423 and the projection given for 1982 indicates a further decline to 265.

I move on to the Cheltenham High School, which in 1976 had an enrolment of 970. Its present enrolment is 713 and in 1982 it is projected there will be 578 students attending that school.

The next school is the Moorabbin High School, which in 1976 had a student enrolment of 635. Its present enrolment is 482 and the projected figure for 1982 is 395.

One can readily appreciate that those figures show a dramatic decline in the number of pupils attending those schools—if my mathematics are correct, the figures represent a decline of more than one-third. The decline must be seriously regarded, because if the rate of production of a business decreased by that margin it would be on the verge of bankruptcy.

The children who come into the education system are in the nature of raw material and obviously something must be done about these declining enrolments. I read an article in the *Age* last week which referred to statements made by a demographer who had indicated that the young women who were born during the baby boom after the war were now reaching child-bearing age and that the number of pupils commencing school should start to increase. It was an interesting article and in an endeavour to verify its conclusions, I referred to the Victorian year books and also to the Abstract of Births, Stillbirth, Deaths and Marriages, which appears on the Notice Paper as Item No. 41 under General Business—Orders of the Day. I thought I would compare the figures to ascertain whether what the demographer was claiming was correct. I could not find any significant alteration in the number of births which had taken place.

As the statisticians would call them, these are raw figures, and if one is attempting to project the number of pupils who will appear in the school system in a certain year, one must not only pay attention to the figures of live births but also take into account immigration, emigration, the movement of people around the State and in and out of the State.

As a guide, the abstract is handy, but it reveals that the number of live births in 1978 was slightly more than 58 000, which was a decrease on the previous year and on the year before that and so on.

The number of births increased in about 1971, and since then the number has declined. It is obvious that the existing conditions at the school to which I have referred will continue for some time.

Perhaps there will be an increase in the number of pupils, but this will not happen yet. I have had conversations with the Principal of Moorabbin High School and she told me that, because of the serious decline in the number of pupils going through that school, the same number of teachers cannot be employed. The consequence is that various

classes and courses have to be dropped because there are not enough pupils to justify them. She mentioned the teaching of the Spanish language. It would not worry me if this language were not taught, but it is a commercial language and if children wish to go into commerce they may have to deal with Spanish speaking people. If the families of children attending the school come from South America or Spain, it is important to them to be able to learn Spanish at school. They are considering dropping various other courses at this school because of these difficulties. Some, but not all, of the subjects to be deleted are art, craft, graphic communication, pure and applied mathematics and history.

This is an unfortunate state of affairs, but these things must be looked at. When these courses are taken away from young people, some students will drop out of the school entirely because a particular course or group of courses is not available. This is a disaster to them, a disaster to us, and a disaster to the community, because these people will not be as fully educated as they could be.

Other students remove themselves from high school and go to TAFE colleges. This could deny them entry to some forms of higher education, such as universities. Other pupils, because they cannot study a course at a certain school, will opt for other courses and this is not a satisfactory state of affairs.

It appears that, if this situation continues in the foreseeable future, the rational use of schools must be considered. I have mentioned a group of high schools, Beaumaris, Bentleigh, Cheltenham, Hampton, Highett, and Moorabbin, within an adjacent area, which could be grouped one with another. I believe suggestions have been made to the Education Department on this subject. One proposal which is worthy of consideration is that one of these schools should be a senior high school catering for years 11 and 12; there should be several four-year high schools or four-year comprehensive schools. A TAFE college is in the Moorabbin area and would fit into this scheme.

There is also need for a sufficient number of technical schools. A prerequisite of that would be the removal of zone barriers. There will be obstacles to such a course. Teachers may object to being committed to a career in one type of school, that is, a four-year high school. However, this problem has been faced and overcome to a large extent in the Australian Capital Territory, Tasmania and, I have been told, to a lesser extent in Bendigo. Teachers have become reconciled to this position and the system has been going along smoothly.

Children in a certain area may be reluctant to attend a school elsewhere, but this can be overcome. When I went to school there was a similar system. I attended Gardenvale Central School, which accepted pupils from other primary schools for the purpose of training them to go on to Melbourne High School. This has been done before and can be done again, and I suggest this system for consideration by the House.

This action would require the establishment of a research section in the Education Department, and this section would provide funds and/or personnel for the cluster of schools. Another purpose of this group would be to publicize the changes I have envisaged. There would have to be a breaking down of the secondary school divisions and the establishment of a post-primary division, which could hand down policy of this kind without destroying the concept of secondary liberal, and technical vocational, education.

I believe also that concomitant with this the regional director would have the responsibility of carrying out such a rationalization within his regional boundaries. This idea relates to only a small part of the education system in Victoria, but it is well worth considering for a possible course of action in the future.

The Hon. C. J. KENNEDY (Waverley Province)—I take advantage of this excellent opportunity afforded to honorable members by Mr Dunn of the National Party. I commend him for his forethought. It is rarely honorable members get this opportunity. They usually have only 2 or 3 minutes on the adjournment debate to raise a matter. Questions without notice are not worth a crumb, and questions on notice are not worth much either.

In 1974 there were 618 601 students in the State education system, covering primary, secondary, special and correspondence. In 1978 there were 633 714. The number of children in our schools has increased by 15 000.

The 1978 figures were the latest provided by the Education Department. I thought it better to write to the department, because I have had several questions on notice and they have not been answered. These figures are worth considering when one talks about there being too many teachers.

On the 1978 figures, if 633 714 students paid approximately $100 per annum for school fees, that would be close on $60 million a year. That is an enormous amount of money, bearing in mind that the Minister said his department does not charge fees.

There was recently an article in the *Sun* newspaper, which I mentioned in the House. It related to 71 Government schools in Waverley Province billing parents for up to $2 million for various so-called contribution fees. I mention this because the Minister has failed to answer a question on notice which I asked him relevant to this matter. I wanted to know what fees were charged at Government schools in Waverley Province. The Minister said that these payments are a matter for local decision and are not recorded. The Minister may challenge the accuracy of my figures, but at least they are better than his. Children in our schools are charged subject fees for mathematics, language material, art and craft, so-called composite fees—which were supposed to have been banned in the 1972 Budget, but they pop their ugly head up every so often.

Mrs Jan McKenzie, President of the Victorian Federation of State School Parents Clubs, said that school councils have the responsibility for setting fees.

The Hon. N. F. Stacey—That is right.

The Hon. C. J. KENNEDY—Mr Stacey said that it was the Government's responsibility to buy materials and equipment for education. Mrs McKenzie said there is evidence that some schools are making exorbitant charges. Honorable members should be aware of this, but I do not think they are.

These things happen despite what the Minister's predecessor said in another place on 12 March 1975. As recorded at page 4012 of *Hansard*, Mr Thompson, the then Minister of Education, in answer to a question asked by Mr Fordham, Deputy Leader of the party, of true justice in Australia, said:

> There is no authority for any school within the State system to compulsorily levy any fees.

The Hon. N. F. Stacey—That is right.

The Hon. C. J. KENNEDY—I am glad Mr Stacey admits that. It has come to my notice that for some time some schools have been charging too much. One school in the province I represent charges $75, but another very fine school charges $25.20 for grade 4 students less the educational allowance of $23, leaving a balance of $2.20.

The Hon. J. V. C. Guest—Would you object to the principle of ability to pay?

The Hon. C. J. KENNEDY—Is Mr Block making an objection.

The Hon. P. D. BLOCK (Nunawading Province)—On a point of order, for the sake of the accuracy of *Hansard*, I very much hesitate to have myself represented as speaking the thoughts of Mr Guest.

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. F. S. Grimwade)—There is no point of order.

The Hon. C. J. KENNEDY (Waverley Province)—The Minister of Education replied to me on a similar matter which I raised on the motion for the adjournment of the sitting, and which is recorded at page 3844 of *Hansard* of 30 October. The Minister made a striking admission, bearing in

mind that millions of dollars are involved and said that a parent who does not want to take advantage of these changes can at his request have the education allowance paid to himself. I said by way of interjection, "Since when?", and the Minister said:

> That is a fact, and he can buy the requisites and materials himself. I do not recommend that course because the parent who normally wants the book allowance paid over is not always the parent who will spend the money on educational requisites and materials but that can be done.

That is an admission that the parents can have the allowance if they want it. A primary school which charges $75 can spend that money much better than the department.

The Hon. A. J. Hunt—You know that is nonsense.

The Hon. C. J. KENNEDY—I am always glad when Ministers interject. Earlier this year, the *Waverley Gazette*, the leading newspaper in the province I have the honour to represent for at least the next six years and possibly for future terms——

The Hon. W. A. Landeryou—The Labor Party will have been able to change the boundaries by then.

The Hon. C. J. KENNEDY—Indeed. The *Waverley Gazette* referred to the exorbitant charges for school books, which were costing at least $50 a head for every child in the State. Prior to the last election, the *Waverley Gazette* tackled the then Minister of Education, who said that the Government would investigate an improved system, and made vague references to bulk buying, which got him over the hurdle of the impending election. I may add that one or two other people in that area were elected who would not normally have been elected in different circumstances. On 19 September I raised a matter with the Minister of Education during the debate on the motion for the adjournment of the sitting, during which I referred to the Government's 57 varieties of promises. I spoke of books and nothing but books in that short speech. The Minister's reply is reported in *Hansard* at page 2621, and states, *inter alia*:

> The fact that individual schools cannot obtain the same discounts as bulk purchasers through the Education Department itself——

The Hon. A. J. Hunt—You are misleading the House.

The Hon. C. J. KENNEDY—I am reading from *Hansard* and quoting the Minister's reply, which continued, *inter alia*:

> . . . is well recognized and a new system is well under way. Schools will be able to avail themselves of it if they so desire. That new system will be briefly outlined in the next issue of the *Education Gazette* which will be available to all honorable members and I certainly invite Mr Kennedy to read it when he receives it, which will be soon.

The few people who read the Minister's reply in *Hansard*—and I received telephone calls from school teachers, councils, parents and others—looked for the next chapter in the *Education Gazette*. I did not obtain a copy of it, but the local newspapers in the province I represent were well aware of the events to which I refer and published an interesting feature article.

The Hon. A. J. Hunt—They gave a very misleading release, as Mr Kennedy well knows.

The Hon. C. J. KENNEDY— The *Sun* reported an article on school bulk buying on Wednesday 24 October and referred to a row developing in the Education Department. I claimed, quite correctly from the Minister's reply reported in *Hansard*, that the Minister had obviously promised a system of bulk buying. The next reference to it was made by Mr George Clayton, Director of Administrative Services of the Education Department. It is ironic that when good news is to be distributed it is done by the Minister, but when bad news is to be given, the public servant carries the can. The *Sun* article reported, *inter alia*:

> Mr George Clayton, director of administrative services, said Mr Hunt's statement in Parliament referred to a bulk purchasing scheme based on credit, not to the selling of school textbooks.
>
> Mr Clayton said each school would be given a store credit balance, according to enrolment.
>
> Deductions will be made when basic supplies such as glassware, cleaning equipment, toilet paper or office requisites are obtained.
>
> "The department is not in the business of handling textbooks," he said.
>
> "To supply 2000 schools, each doing its own thing, is just not possible."

I will give $100 to charity for every time in the Minister's answer to my comment mention is made of toilet paper, fly spray, glass and so on. These items are not mentioned. The Minister's response is cruel to the parents and the 633 714 children attending the State education system.

One school manages, no doubt with the connivance of the department, to incorporate the best and worst of both worlds. It sells books on the premises—which is presumably Education Department property—it collects fees on the premises and the firm that sells the books and has the franchise at a 10 per cent commission also collects fees. This is a most unusual circumstance in any State Education Department in any country. It amounts to a private fee collector! I am interested to know whether the Government authorized this procedure.

The third part of the trilogy in the disastrous education system is school uniforms. Once again, it is difficult for parents to get out of buying school uniforms for under $100 each. In March, 1972, the previous Minister admitted, in answer to a question by the then shadow Minister of Education, Mr Doube, in another place, that there are no specific regulations covering the wearing of school uniforms. Most schools have an official school supplier, which makes the uniforms as expensive as possible by adding bits of braid and trimming, special patterning, knick-knacks and do-dads so that parents can buy school uniforms only from one particular source—a firm describing itself as an official uniform supplier.

Two years ago a firm advertised extensively in the education section of the *Age* suggesting that it would pay the school a commission for giving that firm exclusive rights to outfit the children at that school. Obviously, the advertisement was successful for it ran for many months. The clear inference was that the uniform firm would pay commissions to the schools. That system got under way in 1977, and picked up last year. It can be quite a game contacting schools to determine whether they were sucked in by this advertisement; quite a few were. Children are expected to attend school at a certain time; they are lined up in Army fashion, measured and so on, and their parents then have to purchase the uniforms. I shall be interested in the comments of the Minister on that aspect.

In conclusion, I state that none of the charges for books, fees and uniforms is necessary. Firstly, there is no reason why fees, which are totally voluntary, although every honorable member is aware of the pressure put upon children to force parents to pay them, should be charged. The Government increased the grant in Mr Hamer's 1972 Budget, before an election and again in 1973, a few months before an election. A State election is always preceded by an increase in grants to schools. The Liberal Party has a strong instinct for survival, although it will run out of luck one day. This year, the same thing occurred. The Government made $20 million in grants available for primary education, but whatever the grant, it never seems to be enough because in some areas parents are still being charged astronomical fees.

The Hon. N. F. Stacey—Who? Do you mean the school councils?

The Hon. C. J. KENNEDY—I will not go into too much detail because time is running out. I am always grateful for interjections from the honorable member for "Murray"—that is, Arthur Murray. Many schools exist without children being required to wear school uniforms, and it appears to have no effect on the children's learning capacity. Books should be supplied through an improved system by the Education Department. Obviously, in other areas, everything the Government buys is in bulk. If the Government did not buy in bulk through tenders, honorable members would immediately say the Government was not performing its duty, and most people would say the Government was cheating the taxpayer because it was paying too much for the product. There is no reason why school books cannot be bought in bulk. In fact, it is often said by many people that if the schools had a proper system for purchasing, which, as I have said, the

Minister and his predecessor promised, school books would be half the price they are at present.

I thank the Chair and the House for the indulgence given during my speech. Education is an important topic. Now is the time to raise these issues. I have received letters, telephone calls and representations on these matters, as have, I am sure, the Minister and the Education Department. I hope the Minister will take note of the matters raised.

The Hon. P. D. BLOCK (Nunawading Province)—Initially, I thank Mr Dunn for the opportunity of participating in a debate on education. Members of Parliament tend to gain a clear insight into educational problems more than the average citizen because they are frequently called upon by parents, schools, teachers and members of the community to deal with educational problems. Education is certainly a topic that has exercised my thinking over the period in which I have been a member of the House and I welcome the opportunity of expressing my views on education before the Minister of Education has reached a decision on the review of education which his department has undertaken.

As one enters the latter part of 1979, one is aware that the whole market for the selling of education has changed over the past few years. When I first entered Parliament, there was a sellers market because there was an enormous shortage of teachers and the community clamoured for a larger teacher-pupil ratio. The teacher unions were successful in supporting this clamour with industrial action, representation and so on. So it came to be that Victoria has one of the best teacher-pupil ratios of any State in any country in the world. One considers this extraordinary fact with the realization that as a result, instead of there being a general and vast improvement in the education system, there has been an evening out of the standard of education and, in some instances, a lessening of it. I welcome the new broom sweeping through the Education Department in the form of two new Ministers and I certainly welcome the change in education from a sellers market to a buyers market. At last a careful examination can be made of the calibre of teachers entering the teaching profession. Rather than the quantity, the quality of teachers should be examined. For many years students have been inducted into the teaching profession without enough consideration being given to their qualites. Certainly not all teachers are inadequate; many are dedicated, imaginative and make fine teachers. But there has been a high proportion, higher than anyone would wish, of people entering the teaching profession, firstly, because there was a shortage of teachers and, secondly, because that was about the only profession society provided for one on the completion of an arts degree or a course at a teachers' college for the qualification of a diploma. Therefore, people entered the teaching profession for many motives.

Teaching is the most important profession in society and should also be one of the highest paid professions in society. Teachers should be rewarded in direct proportion to the benefit that they confer upon the society in which they live. However, in return for the high pay, high quality work should be demanded from teachers, but this has not always been the case.

Undue emphasis has been placed upon academic capacities when children are put through schools and trained by heavily academically orientated members of the teaching profession for professions which in many instances no longer exist. Instead of practical skills that they can use in a worth-while creative way, the students find they are emerging from an education system with skills that the market place and society no longer want.

I would be misrepresenting Mrs Coxsedge if I said that she was advocating that children should be trained for the market place because she was doing exactly the opposite. One of the problems is that society went through a phase in the 1960s and into the 1970s, which is diminishing somewhat as society enters the latter part of the 1970s, where it took the

child and tried to nurture its little psyche to fit into a world that did not exist. Society had abandoned the standard demanding skills in the three Rs: reading, writing and arithmetic, and specialized skills.

Society started to adopt fancy concepts such as Cuisenaire, look-see spelling and other concepts which have since gone down the educational drain and been abandoned. Whole generations of children have been trained for a society which no longer accepts them and they wander through life finding themselves not wanted.

Honorable members interjecting.

The Hon. P. D. BLOCK—I am frequently critical of the Government, but I commend the Government for finally taking note of the problems and attempting to do something. I am not here as a "Yes" man for the Government or to support all its systems. Honorable members are here to inject into the House and its debates some concepts that the Minister can take and perhaps apply to the educational system.

The Hon. E. H. Walker—Let us hear a few.

The Hon. P. D. BLOCK—I will come to that. That is why I am debating the matter. Some time ago I organized a debate on the concept of the new versus the old education. The debate was held at my house and about 80 or 90 people attended. The debate was between two people who represented the different polarities of view: Mrs Rivtah Matthews from the education section of La Trobe University and Dr Frank Justtead who is now deceased. Those two people discussed the merits of the new versus the old education systems.

There is no question that many of these concepts of the new education system have failed. They take the child who has a bent towards paper hatmaking and creative capacities and attempt to develop those capacities to their fullest.

The Hon. E. H. Walker—Those are 1930 theories, that is not recent. There is the Monsori method, why do you not do some reading?

The Hon. P. D. BLOCK—Why does Mr Walker not add his views to the debate? I will listen to him with interest. The major concept I discovered from listening to that debate was the paying of close attention to what appears on the surface to be an attractive concept of spontaneously creating and nurturing human beings. Who can argue against that? On the one hand there is the attractive point of view and on the other hand there is the vigorous, hard-nosed point of view of learning by rote, that is, strict attention to grammar and the subjects that our grandparents adhered to.

Many children have been harmed because these less attractive features over a period have been more or less abandoned by the education system which is only now starting to recover. Any close examination will reveal that a child is much better equipped in the competitive job market and social market if it has a basic foundation of learned skills and the learned skills are those classified as the three Rs. I do not want to dwell too long on that because I have a theory which I consider to be important.

One of the problems concerned with schooling is the enormous Russian roulette involved in the luck of the draw and whether one is lucky in obtaining a good teacher. Mrs Coxsedge raised that matter.

The Hon. E. H. Walker—It is whether one has wealthy parents or not that is the luck of the draw.

The Hon. P. D. BLOCK—That is an insult to the State teaching profession which comprises many fine, dedicated, high quality and creative teachers. It has nothing to do with whether one is born of wealthy parents or one attends a State or a private school. It is the luck of the draw whether or not one's mind is opened by a creative and imaginative teacher.

The reason I raise this matter is that there is another educator in the community. That educator is an invidious one which is omnipresent and ever involving of children. I refer to the medium of television.

There is no question that more and more children are watching long hours of television. Many of them spend more time on watching television than they spend in school. In many instances this is degrading the quality of children's education. Because of the commercial structure of television, television stations aim at the least common denominator of taste. Instead of bringing people up to a standard, television reaches down to the lowest standard. As a result, children are being instructed in low-grade methods. They are being instructed in violence and all sorts of anomalous situations.

The Hon. Joan Coxsedge—Who sponsors the programmes?

The Hon. P. D. BLOCK—I am sorry, but we live in a mixed society. Is Mrs Coxsedge against the mixed society and free enterprise concept? I am in favour of a range of choice. I am not trying to deny people watching a load of old codswallop if that is what they wish to do. However, I am in favour of a choice being provided and this is why I commend to the Education Department the possibility of an experiment in this area.

One of the things that has always intrigued me is that some brilliant teachers have enormous capacities to open mental doors, open the imagination of children, be it in English literature, science or mathematics. If one is lucky enough to have one of these teachers, all sorts of possibilities and potentialities are opened up. If one is not lucky enough these doors are closed forever.

One thinks of the imagination, for instance, of a Julius Sumner Miller in presenting science subjects to children and how he excites imagination through the medium of television. I can think of other teachers. Mrs Mollie Missen is one of the brilliant teachers in English literature whose work is known throughout the State and who still fills Wilson Hall at least once or twice a year giving lectures in English. She is no longer a professional teacher. That lady should be captured via the medium of television for whole generations of children.

If television were used instead of letting it take over and was presented through schools to children, some of the finest teachers from our society and other societies could be used. The medium would then be used instead of that medium using society. I commend to the Minister a thorough investigation of the possibility of using this important innovation for communication.

The Hon. E. H. Walker—How about a State-run television channel, would you support that?

The Hon. P. D. BLOCK—That would be fine. The Government spends close to a half of the State Budget on education. Millions and millions of dollars are used for education, but what a counter-productive force television is. How many millions of dollars of expenditure are cancelled out by this negative influence on children? The teachers speak badly and use shorthand methods of teaching. That teaches children all sorts of spurious ways of obtaining instant success that is never observably achieved through hard work.

If the medium of television is used properly it would be of immense benefit to the education system. Television is used to its best advantage in the island of American Samoa in the town of Pago Pago where a central television station transmits to class-rooms throughout the various islands. They import from America the finest teachers they can find and those teachers sit in a central television studio and give lessons in their specific capacities. Around the islands in the class-rooms there are monitor teachers who are trained to a certain level of skill, not necessarily a very high academic level, but those teachers almost always have a capacity to relate to children and like children, which should be one of the prime qualifications for anybody entering the teaching profession. Those teachers have the capacity to involve children in questioning and imaginative concepts.

Those children are probably receiving one of the best educations money can buy. They have the advantage of having their imaginations opened by the finest teachers available and of having the person to person communication with people who have a genuine skill and love of children. I commend that concept. It is a revolutionary concept

for a society which has used the shotgun technique of sending out as many teachers as it can and hoping that the shot will ultimately fall somewhere and a child will be educated. I ask the Education Department to give serious thought to the use of the important electronic innovation of television.

I turn to the right of the Education Department to dismiss people who are less than capable in the profession of teaching. In the province of Boronia—and I will not mention the name—there is a high school that had a principal who virtually placed a dead hand over that high school for ten years. The teachers lacked motivation. The principal was waiting to retire. For ten years, that school churned out children who had a dead feeling about the impact of the education system. There should be a much simpler way of taking somebody who does not have the necessary skill, quality or ability and removing that person from the control of children. These children are society's most important asset. Without being derogatory, Mrs Coxsedge spoke on the need to protect teachers within the profession. It is even more important that children be protected and the way to protect them is to ensure that the finest teachers are available. If a teacher does not measure up to the system then he should be removed.

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 later this day.

MAGISTRATES' COURTS (CIVIL JURISDICTION) BILL

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

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The main objects of the Bill are to increase the amounts recoverable within the civil jurisdiction of Magistrates Courts to $3000 and to standardize and modernize procedures applicable within that jurisdiction.

The Magistrates' Courts (Amendment) Act 1978, which has not been proclaimed, increased the financial limits of the ordinary jurisdiction to $1000 and the special jurisdiction to $3000. That Act is to be repealed by the Bill as it is now intended that there be one civil jurisdiction with two procedures to allow for the recovery of debts and liquidated demands and unliquidated damages.

The Bill follows upon substantial consultation with the representatives of the Law Institute of Victoria, the Bar Council and the magistracy. I should like to pay credit to the time and effort freely given by the people involved.

For many years there have been two jurisdictions for civil cases in Magistrates Courts. The reasons for these jurisdictions appear to be historical, but they have led to different procedures and rules in each of the jurisdictions. The Government believes that, in the interests of simplicity and clarity, there should be only one civil jurisdiction with flexible procedures designed to cope with all types of cases.

The monetary limits of the civil jurisdiction of Magistrates Courts was last increased in 1963. Obviously the monetary value in real terms of the limit of the civil jurisdiction of Magistrates Courts has been markedly reduced by the effects of inflation and general increases in the prices of consumer goods. This trend can be demonstrated by the fact that in 1975 a total of 156 228 cases, within the civil jurisdiction, were processed in Magistrates Courts whereas in 1978 the total of such cases had declined to 122 328.

The jurisdiction of Magistrates Courts is intended to cover areas where many members of the community who have recourse to the law, particularly persons attempting to recover debts, and persons claiming modest sums by way of damages, are likely to have a cause of action. The low monetary limits applicable at this time have forced litigants with civil claims to use the more costly and elaborate procedure within the jurisdiction of the County Court.

The proposal to raise the Magistrates Court jurisdiction up to $3000 will enable members of the community to initiate action in "local" courts with a

resultant saving in costs and inconvenience. The increase in the monetary maximum will bring into Magistrates Courts cases involving contracts and torts of considerable complication. Accordingly, it is proposed that the jurisdiction to hear and determine civil cases will be restricted to stipendiary magistrates.

It is essential that litigants be able to pursue their claims with a minimum of legal complexity and expense. Court procedures should be designed to assist the speedy determination of cases at minimum cost to the parties. This is especially true when the amount at stake is not high. In addition the proposal to increase the civil jurisdiction will remove many cases from the County Court with a corresponding increase in the work of Magistrates Courts.

It is therefore necessary to modify existing systems to allow the case load to be efficiently and effectively disposed of in the interests of the parties and so far as possible within existing resources. Accordingly, the Bill provides new procedures. First, these will allow orders to be made, in uncontested cases, without the necessity of a court hearing. Such a "default" procedure has been available for many years in claims where the cause of action is for a liquidated amount and is to remain the basis of the proposed procedures.

Under the Bill, in uncontested cases involving causes of action for unliquidated damages, an order may be made, after assessment of damage, by a stipendiary magistrate in chambers. This procedure will benefit the public as there will be no necessity to appear and call witnesses in open court. A corresponding benefit to the public and the courts will be that only contested matters will be listed.

The Bill also provides for the listing of cases by the clerk of courts. At present, there is no listing procedure in Magistrates Courts, the date of hearing being chosen by the complainant, or his solicitor at the time the summons is issued. Choosing dates without any reference to the court often results in cases being part-heard or simply not reached on the date specified. The proposal to allow a clerk of courts to fix dates of hearing by reference to the volume of other matters pending in his court on any particular day will enable court facilities to be effectively utilized and avoid unnecessary inconvenience to the parties and legal representatives. It is hoped that the spectacle of large numbers of people waiting around court for their cases to be heard will disappear in civil cases with the advent of these procedures.

The listing of defended cases in the proposed way will also allow optimum use to be made of modern court facilities which currently exist at such places as Prahran and Heidelberg. Acceptance of the provisions of the Bill will make better use of present resources and will reduce costs and inconvenience to the public in actions within the civil jurisdiction of Magistrates Courts.

The proposed changes to existing procedures are:

1. Originating process will not specify a date of hearing and is to be issued out of the court where the matter is returnable. At the time of issue, the clerk of the court will retain a copy of the summons which will form the official record and enable the court to have control over the listing of defended cases. It is an inevitable consequence of the proposed procedure that justices of the peace will no longer be able to issue default and special summonses. The proposed practices are consistent with present procedures in the Supreme and County courts of Victoria and courts of summary jurisdiction in New South Wales.

2. Exclusive jurisdiction, in undefended cases, is conferred upon a stipendiary magistrate sitting alone as it is envisaged that many matters of a complex and technical legal nature will come before these courts as the result of the substantial increase in jurisdiction.

3. A case will not be listed for hearing unless the defendant, by filing a notice of defence, indicates that there are matters in dispute. Upon receipt of this notice, the clerk of the court

will allocate a date of hearing by reference to matters already pending in the court. Such a procedure, by allowing the court to control the listing of cases for hearing, will make better use of present resources and facilities thereby assisting the court, litigants, witnesses and members of the legal profession.

4. In uncontested cases for debts or liquidated demands, an order may be made by the clerk of the court upon a request for an order being filed by the complainant or his solicitor. In uncontested cases for unliquidated damages, an order may be made in chambers by a stipendiary magistrate after considering written proof of damage and upon request for an order being filed by the complainant or his solicitor. A magistrate in chambers, in the course of considering a matter involving an uncontested claim for unliquidated damages, may, if he considers that further information is required or that it is desirable in the interests of justice so to do, adjourn the matter for hearing in open court. The parties will be notified accordingly.

5. It is proposed that the rules to be made under this Act will not prescribe a scale fee in uncontested cases where the amount claimed is $50 or less. Although professional costs will not be prescribed in these claims, a complainant who prepares his own process or engages a solicitor for that purpose, will recover "out of pocket" expenses incurred; for example, the cost of service and the cost of issuing the process.

6. It is proposed that the present involvement of clerks of courts in the civil jurisdiction of Magistrates Courts will be increased in a further way.

At present, complainants who obtain a court order are required to choose a method of enforcement which is considered most appropriate to obtain satisfaction. Without diminishing the right of a complainant to issue the type of enforcement process of his choice, the Bill provides that, at the request of the complainant, the defendant will be required to appear before a clerk of courts in chambers to be examined as to his means and ability to satisfy the order. This provision will avoid the stigma attaching to an examination of this nature when it is conducted in open court.

In this procedure it is proposed that the clerk of the court nearest or most convenient to the place of residence or business of the defendant will perform the duties thereby reducing inconvenience to the judgment debtor. It is anticipated that these proceedings will be conducted by the clerk in the absence of the complainant, although the complainant has the right to attend should he so desire.

The provisions contained in the Bill are set out in detail in the explanatory notes and explanatory memorandum circulated with the Bill for the information of honorable members.

The introduction of these provisions will mean substantial amendments to the forms and rules of court applicable in Magistrates Courts. The opportunity is being taken to prescribe the forms in simple modern language. All citizens should be able to easily understand the meaning and effect of court documents served upon them, and I hope that this aim will be achieved. In addition, it is intended that the forms will clearly set out what the defendant should do upon receipt of the documents, and the options open. I believe that this will have a material effect in ensuring that justice is done to all who are concerned in these proceedings.

I believe the Bill represents a significant advance in the field with which it deals, and I commend it 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 Tuesday, November 27.

WRONGS (ASSESSMENT OF DAMAGES) BILL

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

That this Bill be now read a second time.

On 8 October 1978, the High Court delivered its judgment in the appeal of *Atlas Tiles Ltd v. Briers*. That case

involved a claim for damages for wrongful dismissal, and by majority decision the High Court held that the plaintiff's claim for loss of earnings should be assessed upon the basis of his gross weekly income, that is, his earnings before income tax, as at the time of his dismissal.

In reaching their decision, all judges agreed that it was necessary for them to consider whether the decision of the House of Lords in *British Transport Commission v. Gourley* in 1956, a case involving a claim for damages for personal injuries in which loss of future earning capacity was a significant element of the damages, should still be followed in Australia. In Gourley's case, the House of Lords held that the correct approach in calculating damages in respect of future economic loss was to make the appropriate assessment on the basis of the net earnings of the plaintiff, that is, the earnings after income tax, as at the date of his injury.

The majority judgment in the Atlas Tiles case held that Gourley's case should no longer be followed, so that damages for loss of earnings or earning capacity in the future, should be assessed upon the basis of the plaintiff's gross earnings.

The majority judgment in the Atlas Tiles case became established as a binding precedent upon courts throughout Australia called upon to assess damages for loss of future earning capacity. Although the Atlas Tiles case itself involved an action for wrongful dismissal, the methods of assessing damages for loss of future earning capacity also has application in personal injury damages actions.

As a result of the decision in the Atlas Tiles case all insurers issuing policies of indemnity insurance in respect of liabilities for personal injury are faced with the prospect of significantly increased expenditure on claims. As the greatest number of claims for personal injuries involve policies of compulsory third-party insurance, it is in this area where the effects of the Atlas Tiles decision are most seriously felt. In Victoria the State Insurance Office is now the sole insurer transacting this type of insurance business and any increased expenditure on claims will cause a deterioration in the present underwriting loss situation of that office, which in turn will require an increase in third-party insurance premiums.

The Government has decided that the most effective method of negating the effects of the Atlas Tiles decision in this area is by suitable statutory amendment to ensure that damages for loss of earning capacity in the case of personal injury are calculated on the basis of earnings after income tax. The amendment does not affect the assessment of damages in actions for wrongful dismissal. Clause 2 of the Bill inserts a new section in the Wrongs Act 1958 to implement this decision.

Clause 3 is a transitional provision which will ensure that no injustice occurs to plaintiffs who have already received an entitlement to damages calculated in accordance with the decision in the Atlas Tiles case. Actions which are "finally concluded" as that term is defined in clause 3 (3), will not be able to be reopened. On the other hand, those plaintiffs whose actions are commenced, but not finally concluded, at the time the Bill becomes an Act will have their damages for loss of future earning capacity assessed net of the tax that would have been paid on the lost future earnings had they been received. 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 Tuesday, November 27.

ADJOURNMENT

Red Cliffs court house—Herald and Weekly Times Ltd—Geelong wool sales—Psychiatric facilities at Pentridge—Alpine study area—Traffic signals in Ballarat Road—Lands Department staff—Closure of police stations

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

That the House do now adjourn.

The Hon. K. I. WRIGHT (North Western Province)—The matter I raise is addressed to the Attorney-General and concerns the court house at Red Cliffs. Some years ago when it was decided that this court house would not operate, a case was presented by local members and various community organizations, including the Shire of Mildura, to have the court house reopened for hearings once or twice a month and the Minister agreed to this.

It has been learned that these sittings are now to be discontinued. The Shire of Mildura, the Country Women's Association and various organizations in the area have requested local members to make representations to have the court house continue to operate. Many court houses throughout the State are of a poor standard, but the court house at Red Cliffs is in good condition and I urge the Minister to intercede to have it continue to operate.

The Hon. D. R. WHITE (Doutta Galla Province)—I direct a matter to the attention of the Attorney-General. Earlier today on the adjournment of a matter raised by my colleague, the Leader of the Opposition, Mr Landeryou, the Attorney-General informed the House that the Government had not yet given consideration to the proposed takeover of the Herald and Weekly Times Ltd by News Ltd.

Once again, I direct the attention of the Minister to the Parliamentary Committees (Take-over Offers) Act and in particular to section 44E which was inserted in the principal Act by that legislation, and I ask him whether the proposed takeover by News Ltd falls within the criteria laid down by that legislation. In particular, I refer him to section 44E which states, in part:

> . . . the take-over scheme involves the general public interest because the scheme involves the transfer of ownership or control of the company to a person or persons outside Australia or would involve the establishment of a substantial degree of monopolization in any particular industry or would tend to substantially affect the economy of Victoria.

The Opposition considers that this matter should be considered by the Company Take-overs Committee on the ground that the proposed takeover satisfies two of the criteria laid down in the legislation, namely, that the proposed takeover could lead to the establishment of a substantial degree of monopolization and may prejudicially affect the employees of the company.

For those reasons, I again ask the Attorney-General whether the Government has given further consideration to this matter, and I request him to indicate to the House whether the proposed takeover falls within the two criteria I have specified.

The Hon. R. A. MACKENZIE (Geelong Province)—I raise with the Minister representing the Minister of Agriculture a matter of grave concern to the people of Geelong, the possibility that, following the impending decision of the Wool Council of Australia, there will be a three-month trial of centralized wool selling throughout Australia. Such a decision would mean that wool scheduled for sale in Geelong would be sold in Melbourne. Although it is to be for only a trial period, the people of Geelong are very concerned and have held several meetings to discuss the matter. For 122 years Geelong has been a city famous the world over for its top-quality fleeces. Generations of Western District farmers have sold their wool only in Geelong and this has created a close affinity between them and the people of Geelong. It is important that this traditional selling base be retained.

I ask the Minister representing the Minister of Agriculture to ensure that every step is taken by the Government so that the Geelong wool selling centre is retained.

The Hon. R. J. EDDY (Thomastown)—I address my remarks to the Minister for Conservation in respect to a question I asked some time ago. The question, No. 215, was answered on Thursday, 15 November. I asked the Minister for Conservation, representing the Minister for Health:

> (*a*) How many psychiatrists are presently employed at Pentridge Prison?
>
> (*b*) How much of their time is devoted to prisoners requiring urgent treatment?

(*c*) How much of their time is devoted to the preparation of court reports, and how much is spent within the courts in respect of those reports?

The answer supplied by the Minister was, in part:

(*a*) Two psychiatrists are at present employed at Pentridge Prison full-time.

(*b*) Time employed in treatment, which should all be regarded as urgent, is 75 per cent of one psychiatrist, the remainder being employed in reports to classification committees, attendance at classification committee meetings and preparing reports for the Adult Parole Board on prisoners in country prisons.

I point out to the Minister that in the *Age* of 11 November 1975 when he was the Minister for Social Welfare there was a headline "Mental boost for gaol". Under that heading there appeared an article which stated:

A full-scale psychiatric service will be established for Pentridge prisoners next year.

Staff at the Pentridge psychiatric clinic will be increased from four to 24.

The acting chairman of the Mental Health Authority (Dr Jack Evans) said yesterday the upgraded unit would provide the first real treatment programme for Pentridge prisoners.

Psychiatric nurses would be employed for the first time at Pentridge.

Dr Evans said the existing service, consisting of two psychiatrists, a psychologist and a stenographer was "inadequate".

The Pentridge superintendent (Mr John Van Groningen) told a phychiatry seminar at St Vincent's Hospital yesterday that many prisoners considered in need of psychiatric attention were not getting it because of the manpower shortage.

Dr Evans said the MHA wanted to make sure that Pentridge prisoners had equal access to psychiatric services—if not more—than the community.

"Prisoners have a reasonable incidence of psychiatric disorders and they should be treated," he said.

Will the Minister inform the House how the psychiatric service is still operating at Pentridge with two psychiatrists, as stated in the answer supplied to me by the Minister last week, when four years ago it was stated that there was to be a boost to 24? What has happened to the other 22?

The Hon. D. M. EVANS (North Eastern Province)—I raise with the Minister for Conservation a matter arising from the wide-ranging debate on the alpine study area last week when the House finally passed a Government sponsored motion as an amendment of the original motion which I moved. That resolution says:

. . . in making a decision on the final recommendation to take into account the economic effect of those recommendations on the whole community.

This is a significant policy pronouncement and direction by the Government which is of interest to a wide range of people. I request that the Minister prepare a Ministerial statement or similar policy document to spell out clearly the methods to be used in this assessment of factors that need to be taken into account during the implementation of that policy decision.

The Hon. H. A. THOMAS (Melbourne West Province)—I direct to the attention of the Minister for Local Government, as the representative of the Minister of Transport, a matter concerning the installation of pedestrian traffic lights in Ballarat Road near Darnley Street. I was assured that this work would be completed by June this year but there is still no sign of its even being started. This is a dangerous crossing where there have been many accidents, some of which were fatal. I put a question on this subject on notice about three or four weeks ago and it has not yet been answered. I ask the Minister to take it up as a matter of urgency.

The Hon. W. R. BAXTER (North Eastern Province)—I raise with the Minister for Conservation a matter asked of him yesterday by my colleague, Mr Evans, concerning the retrenchment of Lands Department vermin and noxious weed destruction staff in country areas. I appreciate the financial constraints placed upon the Minister by the warped priorities adopted by the Government. However, I am concerned that this example appears to be one that is seen so often and one that was seen recently in the Forests Commission and in the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission where retrenchments were made and the employees retrenched were men in the field, not office workers.

Whilst I hold no brief for any employee who is incompetent, inefficient or lazy, I ask the Minister to examine closely the retrenchments in this latest instance. I refer him to the case of one employee of the department at Chiltern, a man aged 62 who has been employed by the department for 29 years. Unless there is a good and valid reason, it would seem to be a severe injustice that he is being dismissed. Two employees are also being retrenched from Wodonga, and I understand that both of them have some period of service to their credit.

My concern is that, as a result of these retrenchments, noxious weeds will get out of control, particularly with the establishment in Victoria of so many hobby farms run by people who, through lack of understanding, have no appreciation of the problems of noxious weed control.

The Hon. B. P. DUNN (North Western Province)—I raise a matter with the Minister representing the Minister for Police and Emergency Services. I refer to investigations being undertaken by the Victoria Police aimed at closing down many of the smaller, one-man police stations throughout Victoria, whether they be in the suburbs or in the country.

I ask the Minister to ensure that Parliament has the opportunity of debating such proposals in full before any move is given the go ahead by the Government. National Party members believe it is an important area of police duty and a necessary part of life in small country towns that these small police stations be allowed to continue. Difficulties have been experienced in the past when stations have been manned for only brief periods at week-ends. If emergencies occur in a town, the residents have no protection and no representative of the law to whom they can turn. The proposal by the police to serve the small towns from regional headquarters is getting away from the real thrust of what we should be aiming for.

The Hon. W. A. Landeryou—We should be aiming the other way.

The Hon. B. P. DUNN—Yes, towards developing this police and community contact type of approach. I ask the Minister to ensure that no action is taken by the Government in this matter until the community and members of Parliament have had the opportunity of making extensive representations on it and debating the issue fully in the House.

The Hon. HADDON STOREY (Attorney-General)—First, I should like to explain to the House that the Minister of Education, the Leader of the House, has had to leave the House to represent the Government on Government business and therefore could not be present during the debate on the motion for the adjournment of the sitting.

Secondly, the effect of the motion for the adjournment of the sitting is that the House will meet at 11 a.m. for 11.15 a.m. tomorrow.

Mr Wright referred to the Red Cliffs court house and outlined its history, stating that it had closed and was reopened after representations were made. I am not sure whether it ceased to conduct business recently or whether it is proposed that it cease to conduct business. My recollection is that it is still gazetted as a court house and can still conduct business. I am not aware of any immediate proposal to close it down.

However, I point out that although naturally every community would like to have its own court house, a time comes when the amount of business that is conducted makes it necessary to consider whether it is proper to spend the community's funds on maintaining such a court house if another suitable place nearby is available for the hearing of cases. I state that as a general principle, but I shall be pleased to give further consideration to the matter to ensure that no decisions are made until I have had the opportunity of doing so.

The Hon. K. I. Wright—They may have to hold the Mi'dura sittings there as well because the Mildura court house is in such poor condition.

The Hon. HADDON STOREY—I am aware of that, and were it not for restraints imposed on the funds of the State, the Mildura court house would certainly be renovated. Perhaps it would be a sensible suggestion from the point of view of the residents of Red Cliffs that Mildura cases could be heard at Red Cliffs. It would, of course, be open to lawyers to set their cases down at Red Cliffs if they chose to do so because the facilities there are superior to those at Mildura. I am pleased to assure Mr Wright that I will consider this question and advise him in due course.

Mr White raised a matter that was raised this morning on the adjournment of the sitting about the take-over offer for the Herald and Weekly Times Ltd group. As I said then, the Government had not given consideration to referring the matter to the Company Take-overs Committee. I do not recall having said "as yet"; I simply said that we had not given consideration to that matter, and that position still applies.

In any event, the events that occurred today suggest that there may be a cessation in the continuance of the take-over procedures because, according to the report in tonight's *Herald,* the Trade Practices Commission has asked News Ltd to stop buying shares in the Herald and Weekly Times group for a month. The provisions of the Trade Practices Act refer to a group being in a position to control or dominate a market for goods or services, and that is a rather different test from that in the Parliamentary Committees (Take-over Offers) Act, which refers to monopolization. It is more appropriate to be used in this case because no matters have been placed before me in relation to the take-over offer and therefore no consideration has been given to referring the matter to the committee.

The Hon. D. R. White—A takeover fits within the guidelines of the legislation.

The Hon. HADDON STOREY—The question would have to be considered very closely. As I said, nothing has been placed before me on this takeover. Whether it amounts to a monopolization is a matter which would have to be carefully considered, because the implications of referring an offer to this committee are substantial. The action taken by the Trade Practices Commission suggests that the matter will be closely examined by the commission in accordance with the powers it has.

Mr Dunn raised the matter of the closing down of single-man police stations. He made some pertinent comments about the importance of these police stations to small communities. It depends very much on the locality of the police stations being discussed and the nature of the community. In some cases it would be inappropriate to shut them down; in other cases one can see that it would be a sensible re-organization of the Police Force strength to close them down. It is difficult to be dogmatic and say that what Mr Dunn said applies to all such police stations.

The Hon. B. P. Dunn—I did not say that.

The Hon. HADDON STOREY—No, but I think the implication may have been in what Mr Dunn said.

The Hon. B. P. Dunn—No, I just asked to be able to debate it; that is all.

The Hon. HADDON STOREY—I will certainly pass on Mr Dunn's request to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services so that he may consider whether he believes that any plans for shutting down these stations should be deferred pending discussion taking place in Parliament. It is open to the honorable member to raise this matter for discussion in Parliament if he wishes to do so.

The Hon. D. G. CROZIER (Minister for Local Government)—Mr Thomas referred to question No. 240 on the Notice Paper which relates to a proposal to install traffic lights at the corner of Darnley Street and Ballarat Road, Braybrook. He was critical because, although the question has been on the Notice Paper for three or four weeks, he has not yet received a reply.

The Hon. H. A. Thomas—I omitted to add that they were promised by June of this year.

The Hon. D. G. CROZIER—I assure Mr Thomas and the House that I will bring this matter to the attention of the Minister of Transport, but I point out that in the interests of expedition it would be better to direct questions on the Notice Paper to the most appropriate Minister. This question was directed to the Attorney-General representing the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, and that is one reason why Mr Thomas has not yet received an answer.

The Hon. W. V. HOUGHTON (Minister for Conservation)—Mr Mackenzie brought up the matter of centralized wool selling and the importance of the City of Geelong as a wool-selling centre. Although the Government is not directly involved in organizing wool-selling centres, nevertheless it has, I suppose, a stake in it from the community point of view. Newcastle in New South Wales is another centre that is in a similar situation.

As a wool grower, I tend to believe that wool growers like to sell their wool where they can do so at the least possible expense to themselves. If that can be accommodated with the need to ensure that wool-selling centres other than those in central cities continue, I am sure it ought to continue. I will take up the matter with the Minister of Agriculture.

Mr Eddy complained about an answer he received to a question about the services of psychiatrists at Pentridge Prison. I apologize that we could not please Mr Eddy about that matter, but he will have to draw his own conclusions on it. The answer is accurate, and it is the answer to the question he asked.

Mr Evans raised a matter during the debate in the House last week about the Land Conservation Council recommendations and the determinations that were made by the House. I will consider making a Ministerial statement on the matter; I do not really believe it is important. The important thing is that we do what the House decided ought to be done on that occasion, but consideration will be given to Mr Evans's suggestion.

Mr Baxter referred to the retrenchment of 26 out of 647 Lands Department employees in the field and mentioned a special case, which I shall certainly examine and consider the reasons for action having been taken in that case. A certain amount of concern has been expressed that noxious weeds will get out of control as a result of the retrenchment of 26 of the 647 employees. Let me make it clear that it is my intention to ensure that the landowners who are responsible for spraying noxious weeds on roads, which responsibility has largely been undertaken by Lands Department staff for some years, carry out their responsibilities in that respect. If I do that, I can foresee the situation improving.

The motion was agreed to.

The House adjourned at 5.42 *p.m.*

Legislative Assembly

Wednesday, 21 November 1979

The SPEAKER (the Hon. S. J. Plowman) took the chair at 11.6 a.m. and read the prayer.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

GEORGE ADAMS ESTATE

Mr WILKES (Leader of the Opposition)—I address my question to the Treasurer. In view of the statement made by the Premier during the debate on the Tattersall Consultations (Amendment) Bill in July last year, when he said there was no reason why the names of beneficiaries should not be disclosed, can the Treasurer say why, in answer to a question yesterday, he said he was prepared to provide a list of names of beneficiaries to the Leader of of the National Party and myself? Does the Treasurer believe that is a satisfactory way of handling the situation in the light of what the Premier said during that debate, that in his view the

names of the beneficiaries should be disclosed? I inform the Treasurer that I find that most unsatisfactory in light of what the Premier said.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. S. J. Plowman)—In asking the question, "Does the Treasurer believe", the Leader of the Opposition is seeking an opinion. I rule the question out of order.

Mr WILKES—Mr. Speaker, may I ask the question again?

The SPEAKER—I ask the Leader of the Opposition to rephrase his question.

Mr WILKES—Is it a fact that the Premier made those statements during the debate on the Bill in July last year, and if it is a fact can the Treasurer reconcile himself to those statements in view of the answer he gave yesterday?

Mr THOMPSON (Treasurer)—The Leader of the Opposition has correctly stated the view expressed by the Premier at that time, but it was during July of this year and not last year.

I concur with the view expressed by the Premier. That statement having been made, I raised the matter with the trustees and they made available to me the names, on the understanding they would only be revealed in confidence to the Leaders of the other parties. I suggest that that course of action be first followed. I will be pleased to discuss the matter with the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the National Party when they have looked at the document.

ROAD SAFETY

Mr WHITING (Mildura)—Because of the harsh penalties sometimes inflicted upon young drivers for road traffic offences, I ask the Minister for Police and Emergency Services whether the road law handbook has not been available since May this year. If so, will the Minister give an undertaking that some of the high taxes that are imposed upon motorists are used to maintain an adequate supply of this vital information?

Mr THOMPSON (Minister for Police and Emergency Services)—It is highly desirable that these booklets should be issued with driving licences and, with that course in view, action has been taken to have the booklet reprinted and to bring it up to date in all respects. It is the Government's desire to follow that practice invariably in the future.

There is no doubt that the success of the road safety campaign in which the media have played a conspicuous part has resulted from the multi-pronged approach; that is, a legislative approach, a public relations approach in the media, an educational approach through the schools together with a contribution from car designers have contributed in recent years in helping to reduce the road toll by helping to prevent road accidents. I welcome the National Party's suggestion, which is in the course of implementation.

LIVESTOCK IMPORTS FROM TASMANIA

Mr AUREL SMITH (South Barwon)—Is the Minister aware of allegations that the ban on beef imports from Tasmania was lifted before the results were known of testing carried out overseas to determine an unknown pig disease in that State? Can the Minister outline the relative circumstances in this matter?

Mr I. W. SMITH (Minister of Agriculure)—I am aware of some concern in the rural community about the lifting of a ban on the importation of livestock from King Island. Following the disease scare on the mainland of Tasmania, a ban was placed upon livestock imports from land under the administration of the Tasmanian Government, which includes King Island.

However, because of an approach by the Tasmanian Minister of Agriculture on behalf of the farmers of King Island and, as there was no reason why stock should be confined to the island, I permitted cattle and other livestock to come from King Island to the mainland. That permission was not extended to Tasmania until the threat of the disease was given the all-clear as a result of laboratory tests in England. Therefore, those farmers who are concerned have no basis for their concern.

POLICE SPECIAL BRANCH

Mr CAIN (Bundoora)—In view of the facts that have emerged from the Blunt case in the United Kingdom, can the

Minister for Police and Emergency Services indicate what guidelines in the published guidelines relating to the Police Special Branch or other arrangements currently exist which would ensure that if a similar situation arose the Special Branch would consult with the Government of the day regarding any deals being done to grant immunity or to deal with any other matter of consequence that might arise?

Mr THOMPSON (Minister for Police and Emergency Services)—That is an interesting question without notice. It is a blunt question that deserves a blunt reply. There would certainly be consultation with the Government of the day if any such action were ever proposed along similar lines here.

DAIRY FARMING

Mr HANN (Rodney)—Can the Minister of Agriculture advise whether the Government is releasing more farms in the Heytesbury area for dairying and other purposes; if so, does this indicate that the Government has decided to change its policy on the restriction of dairy licences and is, in this instance, making provision for approximately nine new dairy farms?

Mr I. W. SMITH (Minister of Agriculture)—The question should probably be answered in two parts, the first part being answered by the Minister who in this House represents the Minister of Lands. However, I can answer it. Yes, the Rural Finance Commission is releasing additional land in the Heytesbury settlement area.

In answer to the second part of the question, which relates to dairy farming licences, following the termination of an agreement between Ministers of Agriculture in all States the Victorian Government's policy has been to study individually the case of each applicant. Generally, licence approvals have been confined to people within the industry, such as the sons or daughters of dairy farmers, share-farmers or other farmers who are actively involved in farming. That policy has also been extended to people who have previously had experience in the industry but who, for a period of their commercial lives, have engaged in other activities and now wish to return to dairy farming.

The release of land in the Heytesbury area does not necessarily mean that licences will be issued to those who do not come within the categories I have mentioned. However, it is clear that those who wish to buy the land and use it for dairying will have to make application for licences. I am sure the Government will examine those applications sympathetically as conditions in the dairying industry have changed considerably in the past eighteen months because of the Government's efforts in establishing the Victorian Dairy Industry Authority, which is helping to market the dairying industry out of its problems.

I foresee a pending shortage, of raw material for manufacture in particular, and it seems to the Government wise for this land to be used to give opportunities to people who would be able to purchase what is, in the main, excellent dairying land.

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES PROGRAMME

Mr REYNOLDS (Gisborne)—Can the Minister for Community Welfare Services advise the House when approval is to be given for community service grants under the Family and Community Services programme for this year, and is the honorable gentleman able to indicate what amounts will be available under those grants?

Mr JONA (Minister for Community Welfare Services)—During the next three weeks I shall be approving community service grants amounting to approximately $1·14 million as part of the over-all grants within the framework of the Family and Community Services programme. That amount will apply to the 1980 calendar year.

I point out that the number of applications for this year is the highest that has so far been received and the regional committees have, amongst themselves, decided to give priority to those applications that have particular emphasis on prevention within the social and

welfare fields. I expect that all chairmen of the various regional consultative committees and all honorable members will be advised of the specific grants to be made within the individual regions or electorates during the week commencing 10 December.

MOTOR REGISTRATION CONCESSIONS

Mr CRABB (Knox)—Does the Treasurer recall answering a question without notice on motor registration concessions, asked by the honorable member for Sandringham on 25 September this year? His answer was in the following terms:

> It is intended that the new system for a 50 per cent concession in third-party premiums and motor vehicle registration of card-carrying pensioners will operate from 1 January 1980.

As the proposed reduction in third-party premiums was not mentioned in the Budget, which was delivered the next day and has not been mentioned by the Government since, and as none of the measures introduced since makes provision for the concession, did the Treasurer mislead the House in the answer to the question and, if so, will he explain the circumstances that caused him to do so?

Mr THOMPSON (Treasurer)—It was a deliberate answer. It is still intended that the concession will apply from 1 January and will be absorbed as part of a restructuring of third-party fees in Victoria.

TROLLEY BUSES

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster)—I ask the Minister of Transport whether his department is considering the introduction of electric trolley buses to Melbourne, particularly on the Eastern Freeway and other Doncaster routes.

Mr MACLELLAN (Minister of Transport)—I do not wish to delay the House by repeating an answer I have given on the same matter. The question of trolley buses is being studied, as honorable members will have noticed from the annual report of the Melbourne and Metropolitan Tramways Board. I do not know which routes are involved.

"VICTORIAN BUDGET 1979–80 SUMMARY"

Mr EDMUNDS (Ascot Vale)—Will the Treasurer advise the House of the reason for the publication at public expense of the little blue book entitled *Victorian Budget 1979–80 Summary*? As it is clearly not a reasonable summary of the Budget documents and nothing but a public relations exercise for the Liberal Party, will the Treasurer provide similar facilities to the Leader of the Opposition to publish the correct version of how the Budget affects the community?

Mr THOMPSON (Treasurer)—There is a need for a pocket book summary of this type, and I believe this to be a reasonable summary of the main points contained in the Budget. The booklet was produced at a very low cost, which would be a small percentage of the cost of some of the documents emanating from the Premier's Department in New South Wales.

JOB ADVERTISEMENTS

Mr BROWN (Westernport)—Is the Minister of Labour and Industry aware of advertisements currently appearing in the job vacancy columns of newspapers, which appear to offer permanent employment but which in fact offer jobs on a commission basis only? If so, is the honorable gentleman prepared to investigate the matter with a view to requiring newspapers to state that the advertisements do not offer permanent employment? I understand that some people have taken employment believing it to be permanent and have later learnt that it is merely on a part-time basis.

Mr RAMSAY (Minister of Labour and Industry)—There seem to be two major problems relating to the advertising of job opportunities in the daily press. One was referred to by the honorable member, where an advertisement appears to offer a permanent job but in fact offers only a part-time job. The other is the advertising of what is held to be an opportunity for obtaining a franchise or perhaps a pick-up or delivery service. In both these cases there is a misleading element in the advertising, in the one suggesting that a job is permanent and

full-time where it may not be, and in the other suggesting that the possible returns from a franchise would be well beyond the amounts that in practice prove to be available. This has been reflected in a number of complaints received by the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, indicating that people have been led into taking on these franchises and subsequently finding that the returns fall far short of those which had been offered.

The Commonwealth Trade Practices Act prohibits a corporation from publishing or causing to be published an advertisement seeking a person or persons for employment, whether by the corporation or by another person, that contains a statement that is false or misleading in any particular material.

At the moment the Ministry is investigating whether there is some means whereby the Government can introduce a similar general provision applying not only to corporations but also to individuals. In the meantime the Ministry is taking steps to warn people about these advertisements, particularly those relating to what can only be described as bogus franchises.

In stating that, I am not condemning all franchising arrangements because franchising is a genuine and fair business operation. However, bogus franchises which are being advertised in the employment columns of the newspapers are something about which people should be warned, and before taking on any of those jobs they should take care to check them out very carefully.

WHEAT RESEARCH INSTITUTE, HORSHAM

Mr JASPER (Murray Valley)—I refer the Minister of Agriculture to the proposed development at the Wheat Research Institute in Horsham and the centralization of wheat research activities at that institution. Will the Minister indicate to the House whether this will affect the research activities which are currently being undertaken at other research stations throughout the State, particularly the Rutherglen research station?

Mr I. W. SMITH (Minister of Agriculture)—The honorable member for Murray Valley asks about the effects of proposals, for development at Horsham, on other research stations when the development occurs. There will be very little immediate effect because funds have not yet been made available for the construction of the new building to house the influx of wheat researchers from other stations to Horsham as a result of the creation of the grain research institute. When funds are made available and researchers from other institutions around the State are centralized in Horsham, there will be a declining activity in research stations, such as Rutherglen, in which the honorable member is interested.

Nevertheless, field trials will still need to be carried out as a result of research undertaken at Horsham, so the Rutherglen research station will not totally disappear, but it's activities will certainly be scaled down. This can be justified because of the benefits to the State and the wheat growing industry as a whole which will flow from a more competitive spirit which will be engendered by bringing this mainly academic research staff to one locality and providing them with a more competitive environment in which to work.

SECURITY IN COURTS

Mr MILLER (Prahran)—Will the Minister for Police and Emergency Services cause an inquiry to be instigated on why no steps were taken to secure the safety of the late Mr Bennett, who was murdered at the Melbourne Magistrates Court last Tuesday, following the very intensive security precautions taken during his trial and in the light of the number of threats made against his life over a long period of time?

Mr THOMPSON (Minister for Police and Emergency Services)—Following this highly regrettable incident I requested a conference to take place between officers of the Department of Police and Emergency Services, the Police Force, the Law Department and the Department of Community Welfare

Services to discuss the question of security within courts and within the precincts of courts.

A report was received by me from that committee, which makes certain suggestions for closer liaison between those departments to ensure as great a degree of security as possible. Following an incident concerning Judge Martin in 1978, certain additional precautions were taken in most of the courts. Any specific recommendations emanating from the report of the committee which met last week will be carried out. However, some of the measures that would be necessary to make a court room absolutely security proof would not be acceptable to members of the judiciary or to those who support the present legal system.

LAWN BOWLS WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

Mr WEIDEMAN (Frankston)—The Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation will recall my question in reference to the lawn bowls tournament to be held at Frankston in January next year and my request that he make representations to his colleague, the Commonwealth Minister for Post and Telecommunications, to see whether a stamp will be struck in honour of the event. Will the Minister inform the House what representations were made and what was the result of those representations?

Mr DIXON (Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation)—I made representations to Mr Staley who replied that it would not be possible to produce a stamp in time, as approximately two years is the period required for taking the necessary action. However, the Minister has said that there will be a special commemorative pre-stamped envelope available at a cost of 25 cents. It will be available from 16 January 1980 for a period of twelve months at post offices throughout Australia, including the Frankston post office, and from the Philatelic Centre. I believe that this effort by the Federal Government will adequately recognize the tremendous significance of this world bowls championship at Frankston.

PRICING OF LIQUEFIED PETROLEUM GAS

Mr AMOS (Morwell)—In the light of Federal Treasury officials' clear recommendation for world parity prices for energy, and in view of the stated preference for world energy pricing for liquefied petroleum gas by both the Federal Minister for National Development and the Federal Treasurer, can the Premier inform the House whether, in the likely event of his "new federalism" colleagues again rejecting this Parliament's call for the abandonment of the world parity price for liquefied petroleum gas, he will demonstrate his sincerity by fixing a maximum price for liquefied petroleum gas sold in Victoria in order to reduce the heavy financial burden that country Victorians and industrial users of liquefied petroleum gas have had to suffer as a result of the impost imposed by the Federal Government and the oil industry rip-off?

Mr HAMER (Premier)—The honorable member for Morwell is asking me a speculative question on what might happen in certain events and I am not going to reply in those terms. There have been continuing discussions between the Minister for National Development, Mr Kevin Newman, and the Victorian Minister for Minerals and Energy, Mr Balfour. Those talks have been progressing reasonably well and there is reason to believe that the Federal Government is now responding to the unanimous resolution of this House that liquefied petroleum gas prices should not be equated to so-called world parity prices, which I do not believe exist, or that some other arrangement should be made which would have the effect of protecting country users of liquefied petroleum gas in the towns and cities of Western Victoria and industries and farmers. From the information available to me, I believe approval for a scheme of that sort is imminent.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT COSTS

Mr McINNES (Gippsland South)—Is the Minister of Transport aware of statements attributed to a Federal backbench committee severely criticising the costs of State public transportation? If

so, can he divide kilometre costs or capacity-per-mile costs of comparative efficiency between Federal and State rail systems or other public transportation?

Mr MACLELLAN (Minister of Transport)—The honorable member asks if I am aware of a critique by a Commonwealth back-bench committee. No, I am not. I should not be surprised if there were such a critique and if the critique was based on inadequate information, since they rarely ask for information from States and seem readily able to come to conclusions which are not based on facts. As to comparative costs per kilometres of operation of various transport mediums, I think the per kilometre cost of operations would not be comparable because the circumstances of operations would not be comparable, nor would the rail traffic be comparable.

However, if the honorable member can persuade his Federal colleague to make the cost of the Federal system available to me, I will see if I can make available the appropriate comparative costs from the State system.

IRRIDESCENT VESTS FOR BREATH-TESTING OFFICERS

Mr McARTHUR (Ringwood)—I direct my question to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services. I refer to a visit made by myself and the honorable member for Mitcham to a random breath-testing station a couple of weeks ago. At the inspection it was averred to both of us that the policemen who had to go out into the middle of the road at night to hail the cars into the breath-testing station did not have a safety irridescent vest available to them. This was caused by some lack of organization. I ask the Minister, because of the danger to policemen, whether he could make sure that irridescent vests are made available to breath-testing officers when on night duty?

Mr THOMPSON (Minister for Police and Emergency Services)—I thank the honorable member for Ringwood for the keen interest he has shown in the operations of breath-testing stations in the eastern suburbs. His suggestion is a constructive one and I will take it up with the Chief Commissioner of Police to see what can be done to implement it as soon as possible.

JOB FORECAST BUREAU

Mr SIMMONDS (Reservoir)—In view of the lack of information about job opportunities in Victoria, and the present high level of unemployment, can the Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation indicate when the proposed Job Forecast Bureau will commence operations? Has it commenced and, if so, when funds will be allocated and what funds will be allocated in the next financial year?

Mr DIXON (Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation)—Funds will be made available for the employment of three officers in the Job Forecast Bureau. Those positions have been approved and the Government is currently seeking people to fill those positions. I expect that the bureau will be in operation some time reasonably early in the New Year.

CONVEYANCING

Mr MACLELLAN (Minister of Transport)—I move, by leave:

> That there be presented to this House a copy of the Interim Report of the Committee of Inquiry into Conveyancing.

The motion was agreed to.

Mr MACLELLAN (Minister of Transport) presented the report in compliance with the foregoing order.

It was ordered that the report be laid on the table and be printed.

STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE

Mr A. T. EVANS (Ballarat North) presented the report from the Standing Orders Committee on "Sub Judice", together with appendices.

It was ordered that the report be laid on the table and be printed.

PETITIONS

Abortion

Mr CRABB (Knox) presented a petition from certain citizens of Victoria praying that action be taken to protect unborn children by prohibiting abortion

in Victoria. He stated that the petition was respectfully worded, in order, and bore 564 signatures.

It was ordered that the petition be laid on the table.

Mr COLLINS (Noble Park) presented a petition from certain citizens of Victoria praying that action be taken to protect unborn children by prohibiting abortion in Victoria. He stated that the petition was respectfully worded, in order, and bore 269 signatures.

It was ordered that the petition be laid on the table.

Mr McKELLAR (Portland) presented a petition from certain citizens of Victoria praying that action be taken to protect unborn children by prohibiting abortion in Victoria. He stated that the petition was respectfully worded, in order, and bore 405 signatures.

It was ordered that the petition be laid on the table.

PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES (PUBLIC ACCOUNTS AND EXPENDITURE REVIEW COMMITTEE) BILL

Mr HAMER (Premier) I move:

That I have leave to bring in a Bill to make provision with respect to the establishmment of a Joint Select Committee of the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly to review the public accounts and public expenditure of Victoria and for other purposes.

I seek leave to have the Bill read a second time later this day.

Mr FORDHAM Footscray)—Leave will be granted, but I ask the Premier to give a brief indication of what is contained in the Bill, a little more than the description he has already given.

Mr HAMER (Premier) (*By leave*)—This Bill carries out an undertaking given by the Government to introduce a greater degree of expenditure review by Parliament over the departments. It expands both the size and the role of the existing Public Accounts Committee and commits to the new Joint Select Committee the role of, so to speak, watchdog over the departments and their use of the allocations made to them.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

WHEAT MARKETING BILL

Mr I. W. SMITH (Minister of Agriculture) moved for leave to bring in a Bill relating to the marketing of wheat, and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

YOUNG FARMERS' FINANCE COUNCIL BILL

Mr I. W. SMITH (Minister of Agriculture) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to establish a Young Farmers' Finance Council and to amend the Rural Finance and Settlement Commission Act 1961.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

VICTORIAN ARTS CENTRE BILL

Mr LACY (Minister of the Arts)—I move:

That I have leave to bring in a Bill to constitute the Victorian Arts Centre Trust, to make provision with respect to the management and operation of the Victorian Arts Centre and for the use and promotion of the theatre complex in the centre and for other purposes.

The Bill provides for the continued construction of the Victorian Arts Centre and for the absorption of the powers of the Victorian Arts Centre Building Committee into the new trust. It provides for the establishment of a trust of nine persons and for the functions and powers of the trust. It has other provisions that relate to the financial accounts for the trust, for the operation of the centre and for the appointment of staff.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

LIQUOR CONTROL (AMENDMENT) BILL

Mr RAMSAY (Minister of Labour and Industry)—I move:

> That I have leave to bring in a Bill to authorize the sale and disposal of liquor at the Melbourne Food and Wine Festival, to amend the Liquor Control Act 1968 and for other purposes.

The Bill provides for a small amendment to the Liquor Control Act to enable a community food and wine festival to be held in the City of Melbourne once a year and to adjust the principal Act to meet certain difficulties raised by the Subordinate Legislation Committee.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

KEYSBOROUGH LAND PURCHASE

Mr TREZISE (Geelong North)—I move:

> That this House appoints a Select Committee of six members of this House to inquire into and report upon all aspects of the purchase of land at Keysborough for the proposed establishment of a trotting complex by the Trotting Control Board.

The motion arises from information gathered by my colleagues and me in recent weeks about the purchase in August 1975 of three separate but adjoining areas of land at Keysborough proposed to be set aside to provide the Trotting Control Board in the future with a new metropolitan trotting complex on that site. The House will agree that on the evidence to be submitted by members of the Labor Party, many queries need to be answered on what appears on the surface to be a scandalous mismanagement of public funds by either the Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation, his department, or the Trotting Control Board.

All honorable members are aware of the trouble that has affected the proposed Keysborough complex. Many honorable members have been approached by various sections of the trotting world who are either in favour of or against the complex and are interested to know, if there is to be a complex, the size and cost of the project. That is a separate question from the motion. The motion relates purely to the purchase of the site.

The Opposition began its investigation on the land purchase following publication of an article in the *Age* of 4 October 1979, under a heading, "What price Keysborough".

It appears from the article that at least one or two members of the Trotting Control Board questioned the financial aspects of the purchase by the board, because in the first column of the article a permanent member of the board states:

> I know about finance facts and figures. On Keysborough they do not add up. From the very start it has been a cock up.

One can assume that that board member believes there is something wrong or that investigations should be made.

The Leader of the Opposition, the honorable member for Dandenong and I—the honorable member for Dandenong strongly favours a trotting complex on that side of Melbourne—carried out an investigation and spoke to people in the area who knew the relative values of land, and, on the evidence, it is submitted that the amount paid for the land by the board was totally excessive and that, for several months of the year, the land is under several inches of water. Therefore, this could be yet another land scandal, for which the Government has become so infamous in recent years.

The site at Keysborough is bordered by Springvale Road, Hutton Road, Keys Road and Pillars Road and according to the Titles Office the purchase was registered on 5 August 1979 from Mervyn Lindsay Keys by the Trotting Control Board. The Opposition submits that the land was purchased with the full knowledge of the Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation. The land was purchased in August 1975 and a question was asked in the Legislative Assembly on 15 April 1975 by Mr Curnow, the former member for Kara Kara, which is reported at page 4982, volume 321, of *Hansard*. Mr Curnow asked, *inter alia*:

> Whether the board has any options to purchase land; if so, where, and for what price?

The Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation replied:

> The board is in the process of purchasing 219 acres at Keysborough close to the Keysborough golf course at an estimated cost of $1 423 000.

There is no doubt that the Minister knew the transaction was taking place —he knew where the land was and the price. It is clear from the application that the land was purchased either by the Minister, with the consent of the Minister or at least with the acceptance of the Minister. The Racing Act is unclear about who is responsible for the purchase.

Section 127 (1) of the Racing Act, which relates to the purchase of land for a racecourse, provides that:

> The Minister on the recommendation of the Race-courses Licences Board may purchase any land which he considers necessary or desirable for the purpose of establishing or extending a race-course.

Mr Dixon—That is if funds are required.

Mr TREZISE—Section 126 (4A) of the Racing Act provides:

> The Race-courses Licences Board may with the approval of the Minister authorize payments out of the Fund—
>
> (*a*) to assist any person or body of persons to make permanent improvements or to provide totalizator facilities on any licensed race-course or to construct or to make permanent improvements to a training track or to any facilities ancillary thereto which are under the management of any race club or committee of management;

Mr Dixon—And no funds were required.

Mr TREZISE—If the Trotting Control Board has power to pay out millions of dollars, section 47 (1) of the Racing Act provides:

> The Board shall on or before the thirtieth day of September in each year furnish to the Minister a report of the proceedings of the Board during the year ending on the preceding thirty-first day of July and each such report shall contain a full account of the income and expenditure of the Board audited by a practising public accountant to be appointed by the Minister.

That means that the Minister has the right, the duty and the responsibility, through his own privately appointed auditor, to find out the facts relating to the previous year. In August 1975, the financial affairs of the Trotting Control Board were privately audited and escaped the scrutiny of the Auditor-General, the public and members of Parliament. At the time the Keysborough land was purchased, the only person who had access to the financial reports of the Trotting Control Board was the Minister. The financial affairs of the board were privately audited and presented to the Minister. Therefore, the Minister held full responsibility, under the Act, to closely peruse the land deal. He spoke of it himself in detail, giving the purchase price, three months earlier.

The land was purchased under three separate titles and, to the nearest acre, the areas were 118 acres, 19 acres and 78 acres. There was a total of 215·5 acres. The total price which is verified by the Minister was more than $1·4 million, an average of more than $6500 an acre. These funds came from the trotting industry, which is experiencing financial difficulty today. Trotting clubs are receiving less finance from the Totalizator Agency Board than they received last year. Like all racing industries and clubs, the trotting industry is in a difficult financial position.

The investigations of the Opposition in recent weeks, particularly in conjunction with people in the area, show that the market value of the land was then and still is far less than the $6500 an acre paid on behalf of the Trotting Control Board. The Opposition is informed and would like to be contradicted that the true value now is only one-half of the $1.4 million paid in 1975. If that is true then $700 000 of trotting industry funds went down the drain. That money could have been spent on developing another race track or could have been given to the trotting industry to get it out of its present difficulties. It is interesting to note that when the land was purchased it was zoned general farming, like the other infamous land deals the Minister of Housing has sent to the Royal Commission for inquiry. It is beyond the comprehension of members of the Opposition, people in the trotting world and in the Keysborough district why and how the land was purchased in the first place. It appears that

an excessive price was paid for the land and, according to the classification in the Metropolitan Planning Scheme, 40 per cent of the land is in a stream and floodway zone. This prohibits and racecourse development.

Mr Dixon—You know that is rubbish.

Mr TREZISE—The only permitted use for a stream and floodway zone is agriculture and minor sports grounds. I doubt whether this includes training tracks, as the Chairman of the Trotting Control Board is reported as having said in the *Age* today. If it does and the land is under water for much of the year, how much will it cost the trotting industry to get rid of that excess water? That is an interesting question for the Minister.

I refer to the three areas concerned. The first area purchased was under 20 acres and was zoned 100 per cent swamp land or 100 per cent stream and floodway zone. What was the value per acre of that land? The second area was 78 acres, again zoned 80 per cent swamp land or stream and floodway zone. The third area is the 115-acre title for the racecourse development in the Minister's report that he presented to Parliament and tabled in the Library some weeks ago. The Minister agreed in the report that the special area would cost the Trotting Control Board an extra $175 000 in contributions to the Upper Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges Authority towards assisting with drainage to clear the floodland. What will be the ultimate cost of draining the other floodlands purchased? The Minister further states in his report that that will be an extra cost, again to the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works for a contribution towards the cost of extending the sewerage main. Therefore, those purchases contain further hidden, financial loadings.

Why did the Government purchase land that is 100 per cent stream and floodway zone at $6500 an acre? To demonstrate the Minister's laxity in scrutiny and the false valuation per acre paid out on behalf of the Trotting Control Board, I point out that, before the board became the owner of the land in August 1975, the Country Roads Board served a notice of acquisition upon the best part of the land, the non-swamp land. It served an acquisition order upon 2·76 acres for road widening works along Springvale Road. Of course the Country Roads Board had a valuation which was accepted, presumably, by the Trotting Control Board and the Minister and/or his department, and that valuation was not $6500 an acre.

The Country Roads Board paid a cheque to the Trotting Control Board in November 1975, twelve weeks after the Trotting Control Board purchased the land for $6500 an acre. The Country Roads Board acquired the best part of the land for $3804. That is a massive difference and that is the main key so far as the queries from this side of the House are concerned.

How could someone buy land for $3804 upon a valuation when, six weeks before, the land was transferred in title to a body which paid an average of $6500 an acre for land that was inferior and zoned practically swamp? In other words, the Country Roads Board paid little more than half the price that was paid for the same land on behalf of the Trotting Control Board.

Therefore, I ask the Minister and/or the accountant auditor appointed to check the Trotting Control Board's transactions to justify the 50 per cent increase in valuation payments when $1·4 million was paid on a double valuation.

The Minister or his department must have known the facts. I read most of the racing books on greyhounds, horses and trotting. To demonsrate that the department was fully behind the situation I refer to *Harness World*, July 1979 edition at page 48, where the Chairman of the Victorian Trotting Control Board, Mr Cochran, is reported as having said, *inter alia*:

> Let me say at the outset that I do not believe trotting in Victoria can realize its full potential without Keysborough. The only substantial reason given against its development is that the Victorian TCB cannot afford it. Yet, no one has produced any authenticated evidence to support this argument.

Mr Dixon—The chairman has apologized for that sentence.

Mr TREZISE—The Minister is saying the chairman is telling untruths around the place. The chairman is further reported as having said that the financial aspects had been thoroughly investigated and approved by finance experts from four separate organizations, including two Government departments, presumably the Minister's department and Treasury.

Mr Dixon—You know, from the report tabled in the Library, that could not be the case.

Mr TREZISE—The Minister is now saying that what the chairman said is untrue. The Opposition challenges the Minister and the Government to instigate an immediate revaluation of that site, if there ever was a valuation in the first place, and that is a major point. The Labor Party claims—and its argument stands to be shot down in flames—that no sworn valuer can be produced who could visit Keysborough and value the land for half the price paid on behalf of the Trotting Control Board in 1975. That is a simple challenge to the Government to clear the air. The Labor Party and a major portion of the public and the citizens of the district believe the whole deal again reeks of incompetency, carelessness and lack of supervision by a person in a position of authority.

When the Minister assumed the Housing portfolio, he was anxious to unload the burden from his previous colleague. The Minister sent 117 land deal files to the Royal Commission to have the facts cleared. There shou'd now be 118 files checked. This is one land deal that can be laid squarely at the Minister's feet. The Labor Party asks the Minister to show his interest, sincerity and genuineness by sending this file to the Royal Commission to be examined. The Country Roads Board's figures were not available at the time of the financial report to Parliament because it was a private report of the financial dealings between the board and the Minister. The Labor Party wants the facts.

The Minister must remove the veil of mystery that covers the story of the Trotting Control Board's purchases at Keysborough. The Labor Party and the public at large want to know whether the Minister knew that the valuations varied or whether the valuations had been queried. Did the Minister know that of the three titles involved, one title related to an area that was zoned completely storm and floodprone? If the Minister did know the situation, what has he done about it? Was there a valuation? That is the first simple question, because surely, when the Minister was told the Government was purchasing land at Keysborough for $1·5 million, and he had a private auditor, the first questions and responsible Minister would ask would be: Is there a valuation? Who was the valuer and what was the value given? Was the same valuation used by the Country Roads Board when it paid half the price that the Trotting Control Board had paid for the best land? How closely has the Miniser supervised the original purchase and dealings in the meantime? Was the same price paid per acre for the three titles or was the best land purchased for $6500 an acre and the swampland purchased for less than $6500 an acre? Was and is the Minister satisfied that the whole of the area is suitable for a trotting complex?

To sum up the motion, the Opposition asks the Minister, the Government and Parliament to accept the suggestion that a Select Committee be appointed to clear the air. It is fair, proper and reasonable that the committee should consist of three members of the Government party, two members of the Opposition and one member of the National Party. Such an all-party committee could call evidence and bring the facts back to Parliament. It would be able to decide whether money has been wasted scandalously. The committee could immediately obtain a valuation of the area.

If the Minister, the Government and Parliament will not accept the motion, I ask the Minister, in the interests of justice, to order an immediate revaluation of the site and to report back to

Parliament so that the truth of the situation can be revealed. The Opposition does not yet know all the facts. I hope the riddle can be solved—in his contribution to the debate the Minister might answer some of the questions that have been raised—by honorable members turning away from party political issues, because this matter concerns public funding. I ask honorable members to accept the motion.

Mr DIXON (Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation)—The Government rejects the motion moved by the honorable member for Geelong North, which seeks the establishment of a Select Committee of six members of the House to inquire into and report upon all aspects of the purchase of land at Keysborough for the proposed establishment of a trotting complex by the Trotting Control Board.

I shall put before the House the circumstances in which the purchase was made by the Trotting Control Board, but before doing so I shall comment on one or two other matters. The first of those is that the purchase was made by the Trotting Control Board acting autonomously.

Mr Wilkes—So, it was responsible?

Mr DIXON—I am merely saying the purchase was carried out by the board acting autonomously. The date of the purchase was 24 May 1974.

Mr Wilkes—The contract of sale was signed in 1975.

Mr DIXON—The Leader of the Opposition is wrong. It was signed on 24 May 1974 and the settlement was effected in August 1975.

Mr Trezise—It is the same thing.

Mr DIXON—It is not the same thing. The contract of sale was signed on 24 May 1974.

Mr Trezise—When was the Country Roads Board valuation carried out?

Mr DIXON—If I am able to believe the statements made by the honorable member, it was shortly before the actual consummation of the sale.

Mr Trezise—No, it was February 1974. That was the date of the acquisition note. They paid over in October.

Mr DIXON—I am unaware of the time of the valuation. The honorable member for Geelong North said earlier that it was three months before the consummation of the sale. I do not know which statement of the honorable member to believe. I know the contract was signed on 24 May 1974.

Mr Crabb—By you?

Mr DIXON—It was signed by the Trotting Control Board and at that time the Minister and the Racecourses Licences Board had no knowledge of the details of the contract.

Mr Wilkes—Why?

Mr DIXON—Because the Trotting Control Board was acting as it was empowered to act under the provisions of its Act.

Mr Trezise—Under the Minister.

Mr DIXON—No, not under the Minister, but under its Act. The Trotting Control Board was established with power to act as a corporate body and to purchase land. Indeed, if honorable members cared to examine the debates which took place at the time and which dealt with the functions of the Trotting Control Board—I have not had time to read them, but I have been told this is so—it would be apparent that in those debates honorable members made some point of the fact that the board ought to have that degree of autonomy and ought to be free from direct Ministerial control to carry out its functions under the provisions of the Act. The only qualification required under the Act applies when the board has to borrow funds from the Racecourse Development Fund. The board did not need to borrow funds at that time.

Mr Trezise—Bull!

Mr DIXON—No funds were required to be borrowed at that time. I do not seek to duck any responsibility; I simply wish to put the facts before honorable members. The facts, as I understand them, are that the board was legally empowered to buy the land without

specific reference to the Minister. That is what occurred. The Minister at the time had no knowledge of the purchase of the land. What the Minister did have knowledge of was a request from the Trotting Control Board and the Sandown Greyhound Racing Club for the making of a joint purchase of land in the area. The Minister decided that that matter should be pursued, and asked the Crown Solicitor for an opinion.

Mr Jolly—Who was the Minister?

Mr DIXON—I was the Minister. The Minister asked the Crown Solicitor for an opinion on whether the Sandown Greyhound Racing Club and the Trotting Control Board could become joint purchasers of the land. The opinion of the Crown Solicitor was that there could not be a joint purchase. He considered that, if the land were able to be purchased by the Trotting Control Board, the board could not purchase it in conjunction with the Sandown Greyhound Racing Club. I informed the board of that opinion.

The next the department knew was that the land was purchased by the Trotting Control Board, without a valuation. However, I wish to establish—and this is a vitally important point—that, because of all the work done by the Sandown Greyhound Racing Club at the time, there is no doubt in my mind that the purchase price of $6500 an acre for the land was, in the climate of the time, a reasonable price.

I shall point out to honorable members the work that was carried out by the Sandown Greyhound Racing Club, which was the initiator of the project. I shall table the document from which I am about to quote. It comes from Mr Snell, the Secretary of the Sandown Greyhound Racing Club, and states:

> The attached summary of Sandown Greyhound Racing Club's knowledge and involvement in this matter is perhaps longer than intended by me or required by you.
>
> It contains more recollection than fact—the brief version is:
>
> (*a*) The only positive document I have is annexure "A" quoting $10 000 an acre for land in the area.

Annexure "A" reveals that the land is:

> Known as Lot 2 Springvale Road Keysborough, and of an area of approximately 39–40 acres, the property is situated on the east side of Springvale Road adjoining the north boundary of the Keysborough Golf Club—

As honorable members know, that is directly opposite the land now being discussed—

> . . . and has approximately 655′ 0″ frontage by a depth of 2600′ 0″.
>
> Our client is asking $400 000, including all improvements thereon, with settlement within 90 days of exchange of contracts.

In other words, $10 000 an acre was the price of land in the immediate vicinity.

Honorable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. S. J. Plowman)—Order! I ask honorable members to cease interjecting. It simply inhibits the rights of other honorable members to put their points. Whether members agree with the points is immaterial. Honorable members will have the opportunity of making their contributions to the debate. The honorable member for Geelong North was heard almost in silence. I should not like all interjections to be banned because the proceedings of the House would become sterile, but I ask honorable members to exercise some degree of common sense.

Mr DIXON—This is the only document the Sandown Greyhound Racing Club has that deals with prices, and the price for nearby land was $10 000 an acre.

Mr Crabb—The asking price?

Mr DIXON—That is correct. The other point in this note is:

> No formal records of other negotiations have been kept by me as such negotiations were virtually terminated once sellers/owners started mentioning $8000-plus per acre.

That was the sort of climate in which this purchase was made, when the asking prices for the land around that area were from about $8000 to $10 000 an acre.

The next enclosure is a letter to the Trotting Control Board offering the Keys property at about $6000 an acre, and quoting other sites at higher prices. It is signed by Mr Mooney and

dated 15 June 1973. It is addressed to Mr Gebert, the Secretary-Manager of the Trotting Control Board, and reads:

Further to our recent telephone conversation regarding the proposed trotting track in the South Eastern area, I wish to confirm the availability of a site which may suit your requirements, and have enclosed sketches and plans for your perusal.

Located on the South East corner of Springvale and Hutton Roads at Keysborough (Melway Map 93 H2), the land is of a total area of approximately 274 acres in three lots, dissected by the unmade Keys Road. Described as being flat and generally level with a small low lying area, the present zoning is rural although the M.M.B.W. amendment proposes a zoning of General Farming.

Transport facilities are excellent with buses running along Springvale Road and to all main centres, and rail transport is available at Mordialloc (3 miles) and Springvale (4 miles).

It must be made clear that the Keysborough complex is every bit as viable as was VFL Park, Waverley, when it was established. The acreage there is greater than that at VFL Park, Waverley, which currently has parking provision for 5000 vehicles. There is no problem of accessibility or transport. The letter continues:

Our client is asking around $6000 per acre—

This client was Mr Keys, the person from whom the land was bought. It continues:

which we consider to be very reasonable in the light of recent sales in the immediate area which include a 16 acre site (not highway frontage) for $9000 per acre. Other vendors in the area are asking between $12 000 and $15 000 for broad acre sites. However, the vendor will give careful consideration to any offers (cash or terms) either for the land as a whole or in part.

Mr JOLLY (Dandenong)—I raise a point of order. Will the Minister make the documents from which he is quoting available to the House?

The SPEAKER (the Hon. S. J. Plowman)—The Minister has stated that he will make the documents available to the House.

Mr DIXON (Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation)—The complete document, every word, will be made available.

Mr Simpson—Does it include a valuation?

Mr DIXON—No; no valuation was obtained. I am telling honorable members the circumstances of the time which led the Trotting Control Board to believe it was entering into an extremely good contract in view of the prices being asked for surrounding land. Honorable members should take that into account when weighing up this matter.

On 21 October this year, of its own volition, the Trotting Control Board asked for a completely new valuation of the Keysborough site. The reason for asking for that valuation was that since the procurement of the land the whole of this Parliament had agreed unanimously that 30 racing dates should be allocated to Keysborough, and it was a reasonable proposition. I believe my department has exercised the utmost discretion and rigour in its negotiations with the Trotting Control Board on whether Keysborough should be developed. That question has still not been answered; it is still being considered.

I now return to quote Mr Snell's informative document. It reads:

At no time during our search for land, either alone or jointly with the Trotting Control Board do I recollect any figure below $6000 per acre being discussed.

$6000 was considered the minimum offer that we could make or expect to have made to us.

An extract of notes being prepared to present to the Greyhound Racing Grounds Development Board indicates that we were aware that we would have to pay in excess of $6000.

I am quoting from notes of information made available to the Greyhound Racing Grounds Development Board when it was in a joint venture with the Trotting Control Board. They continue:

At present negotiations are in course to obtain an option on 60–80 acres at $6000 per acre.

Cost—$360 000–$480 000

Early indications were that this would be favourably considered. A second unsubstantiated report is that $8000 per acre has been offered for this or adjoining land.

It would appear that we may have to allow up to $500 000 for approximately 60 acres.

These were the investigations being undertaken by the greyhound racing club and the information being made

available to the Greyhound Racing Grounds Development Board by Mr Snell.

Next is a plan of the area, attachment D, which shows three sites jointly considered by the Trotting Control Board and the Sandown racing club. All of these various matters are referred to in considerable detail. They list the sorts of prices being asked in the areas. Those prices were greatly in excess of the $6500 finally negotiated by the Trotting Control Board in May 1974. I will run through the valuations of some of the sites:

Site D—75 acres acquired by the Country Roads Board for a freeway junction. An announcement was made that the freeway was not to be built.

The Country Roads Board were not not prepared to sell this at cost but advised that it would have to sell by tender if they sold.

This was not pursued after the initial enquiry as it appeared to involve long delays and would result in paying "market" prices for the land in the area. (Site B being offered at $10–$12 000).

Site "E"—Market garden owned by Marriot family. Uncertain of acreage. There appeared to be a feeling in this area that the land would soon be rezoned residential and I feel sure that $8000–$10 000 was mentioned for this property.

Site "F"—60 acres only, was offered to us verbally as a result of our agents enquiries at $9000 an acre.

The offer to the Sandown Greyhound Racing Club was at $9000 an acre.

Mr Fordham—Did they pay too much or not?

Mr DIXON—I believe that at the time the price paid was reasonable. There is no doubt in my mind that when the valuation comes before the Trotting Control Board, which it has ordered, it will show that the value is substantially lower than the price it paid. There were private vendors who purchased land in that area around that time. I received a verbal report this morning that the purchase price of one parcel of land was $220 000 but the vendor has been unable to obtain $100 000. There is no doubt that the land situation, particularly in the outer suburban areas of Melbourne, has changed, and honorable members know that.

Mr Cathie—Flood prone?

Mr DIXON—I will come to the question of flood-prone land shortly. I table a document which substantiates the statements I have made to the House. The price which was paid at that time was reasonable and, in view of the prices being asked for land in the surrounding areas, the Trotting Control Board negotiated a reasonable deal.

Honorable members should remember that at that time the trotting complex at the Moonee Valley racecourse had not been negotiated, and in fact in the minds of many honorable members might not have been thought about because at the time trotting was being conducted at the Royal Agricultural Showgrounds and honorable members were wondering whether a suitable deal could be negotiated with the Royal Agricultural Society, which would enable a big trotting complex to be established at the showgrounds.

Nevertheless, it was accepted, despite the proposal of establishing a big trotting complex at the Royal Agricultural Showgrounds, that there was still a need for a second trotting track. That was mentioned by members of the National Party and the Opposition and indeed, the honorable member for Dandenong at the time, Mr Alan Lind, indicated that he believed there certainly was a need for a trotting track in that area but that it ought to be established in Dandenong.

As the responsible Minister at the time I insisted that the Sandown greyhound complex be examined with a view to establishing a trotting track at that locality. I also insisted that the Trotting Control Board examine the feasibility of establishing a trotting track at the Sandown Racing Club but that location was considered unsatisfactory because, if a trotting track were established at the Sandown Racing Club, it would have meant that the trotting track would have been a long way removed from the existing grandstand facilities and it was thought by the Trotting Control Board that the difficulties involved in going to the Sandown Racing Club were insurmountable.

This Parliament and this Minister approved the Keysborough proposal in principle, but the actual negotiations were left to and, in fact, were carried out by, the Trotting Control Board, which subsequently informed the Minister what it had done when it had completed the negotiations.

Mr Trezise—Did Mr Keys get any more money outside this?

Mr DIXON—Yes, in relation to the total purchase price, Mr Keys did receive a minor amount of money. That is true.

Mr Trezise—What for?

Mr DIXON—I will provide the honorable member with chapter and verse. Mr Keys received some extra sums and I think they might have amounted to something like $50 000 or $60 000. I have the actual figures here.

Mr Trezise—More perks! The old land deals!

Mr DIXON—The matters to which the honorable member refers are very important and if I have time I shall quote them in detail but they were necessary to enable the sale to be concluded. I stress that at the time the Trotting Control Board believed, on the basis of evaluations of the surrounding areas, that the value put on the land by the estate agents, who were seeking to sell to the Trotting Control Board, were reasonable. It was common knowledge that the greyhound and trotting control boards wanted land in that area and certainly the Trotting Control Board was itself going ahead in an endeavour to obtain land.

In my view, members of the Opposition have some sort of mystique about valuations—it seems to be in their heads. There is certainly no doubt in my mind that the values which were established in that region were applicable to that area and if a valuation had been obtained it would have substantiated the price which was paid by the Trotting Control Board. I make it clear that I believe a valuation should have been obtained.

Mr Cathie—Did you not give that instruction?

Mr DIXON—I have no power to make that instruction.

Mr Trezise—What about the silent perks we have just heard about? How much was involved? It has not been brought out until now.

Mr DIXON—I turn to the question of whether the land is suitable for trotting. The information which I have obtained indicates that the Trotting Control Board has received a permit to establish a trotting complex which it has indicated is the reason for the purchase of the land. A permit has been obtained from the City of Springvale, the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works and the Dandenong Valley Authority. The permit was obtained because all of those bodies believe the proposal to establish a major trotting track on the land is viable, just as is the establishment of a training track and parking facilities. In other words, over the totality of the site, what the Trotting Control Board wishes to pursue is a viable proposition.

There is no doubt that in consideration of that viable proposition, the existing value of the land should be taken into account when the Trotting Control Board finally makes up its mind. Under the Act it must go to the Racecourses Licences Board and finally submit the application to the Minister for approval. Unlike the original circumstances when the Trotting Control Board was able to purchase the land from its own funds, and did not need my signature, any future development at Keysborough will rely on borrowed funds and will require, firstly, the approval of the Racecourses Licences Board and, secondly, the approval of the Minister.

That is why since that time the Department of Youth, Sport and Recreation has worked very closely with the Trotting Control Board and has asked it on numerous occasions to produce the feasibility studies which have been associated with the development of the Keysborough complex. To date the department has not been satisfied that the Keysborough complex should go ahead and I believe the department has satisfactorily carried out its investigations.

This morning the honorable member for Noble Park contacted the Dandenong Valley Authority and was informed that all of the requirements in relation to water or whatever it might be which concerns the Dandenong Valley Authority have been satisfied.

Mr Crabb—What does that mean?

Mr DIXON—The total proposal is eminently suitable, under the requirements of the Dandenong Valley Authority, for performing the functions which it is required to perform. Mr Thompson has informed the honorable member for Noble Park that even the flood prone area is highly suitable for training and for parking purposes. In other words, the area which has some sort of classification as being flood-prone is nevertheless suitable.

I own a small property at Narre Warren North and portion of a corner of that property is classified as flood prone but I have never, in my time in that area, which is about ten years, seen it under water. Honorable members are aware that when an area is classified as flood prone it means that in some highly exceptional or unusual circumstances there will be some water. For trotting and for the purposes of the other complexes to be developed, the land is appropriate.

In the mass of documents which have been assembled for me this morning there is the original report from my own department. It is the report which was made prior to the report which has been tabled in the Library. I hope I can put my finger on the exact sentence. If I may quote the sense of the sentence, it is that, so far as my department is concerned, in its reinvestigations of the proposal, it believes the land is suitable.

I should also like to make the point again in regard to transport that beginnings have been made on the joining-up of Greens Road and Hutton Road. When this through road is completed there will be a connection between the Frankston–Dandenong road and Springvale Road and, indeed, a further access down Governors Road to Mordialloc. I believe the accessibility and transport will meet the requirements of the development, if and when it takes place.

In regard to the additional amendments agreed to, in a sense, outside the actual price of the contract, there was half the commission which amounted to $14 365, there was a solatium of $20 000, there was a cost of $14 000 for the construction of an access road on Keys's property and there is yet a possible obligation on the Trotting Control Board for some boundary fences. I do not have an estimate of the cost of that item. The additional amounts to be added to the $1·4 million are approximately $50 000. As I said before disclosing these sums, relative to the $1·4 million they are not of great significance and were sums necessary to clinch the deal. The Trotting Control Board believed it made a sensible arrangement.

I believe the Government has shown that there is no need to inquire into and report upon all aspects of the purchase of land at Keysborough. I believe the price paid at the time was reasonable, given the sorts of values being asked in 1974 and the sort of climate that abounded at that time. I believe the probability is that, when the valuation is ultimately obtained by the Trotting Control Board, it will be substantially lower than that valuation, and I believe that is the information which is required when assessing what needs to be done in the future for Keysborough. That is the area of responsibility of the Minister and that is the area where he is accepting it to the fullest possible extent.

I should like to make one other comment about responsibility for the future because it must be of concern to honorable members that this matter be determined. I have one pertinent comment to make upon that and it is this: The Government has established the Department of Property and Services to examine and give its approval to sales and purchases of land on behalf of the Government or authorities such as the Trotting Control Board which may seek to purchase or sell land valued at more than $100 000.

That safeguard instituted by the Government, as a result of the Gowans

inquiry, which had ramifications for all purchases and sales of Government lands, is eminently sensible. As the whole question of the future development of Keysborough is examined, matters which have been raised in this debate will have relevance —in particular, the question of the obtaining by the Trotting Control Board of its most recent valuation.

Mr Simpson—Will the Minister get a valuation from the Valuer-General? He will not answer that.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. S. J. Plowman)—I have asked honorable members on a number of occasions this morning to cease interjecting. The honorable member for Niddrie will have his opportunity to ask questions and make a contribution, if he wishes to do so.

Mr DIXON—I believe the private valuation which is being obtained by the Trotting Control Board will represent an effective valuation. If, during the future course of events, in determining whether it is viable to proceed with the development of Keysborough, it is considered by the Government or by the Trotting Control Board that the Valuer-General's valuation would be an asset, then I am sure the Trotting Control Board will give consideration to that and certainly the Minister, in exercising any over-all approval, will also give consideration to that. I do not believe there are any facts which the proposed committee of six members of this House could discover which have not already been made available to honorable members.

The honorable member for Geelong North made some reference to reports being available only to the Minister. I wish to make it perfectly clear that any reports made available to me in connection with this matter are at the disposal of honorable members of this House. I believe that is the case in respect of any matters that have been of concern about audited reports by the Trotting Control Board.

The Government rejects the motion.

Mr WILKES (Leader of the Opposition)—I want to congratulate the honorable member for Geelong North on the way in which he put the case in regard to the gross wastage by the Government in the purchase of land at Keysborough. Having listened carefully to the Minister, I have no doubt as to the truth of this matter.

Let me develop that argument. When delivering his speech the Minister used what appeared to be a file concerning the asking price of surrounding land. There is a big difference between the asking price and the comparable sale price of land in any area, and I can well understand the attitude of land owners in the Keysborough area, a rather large area. As the Minister knows, the only real development in and around the land in question is the development of Haileybury College in Springvale Road, a nursery on the western side and a golf course on the western side. There is no development other than that on the eastern side within a reasonable distance of the land in question and no evidence was submitted by the Minister to the House today in relation to comparable sales which would suggest that the price paid for the Keysborough land in 1974 was comparable to any other price for comparable land in that area.

Before dealing with the purchase itself, I invite honorable members to examine what the Minister said. He said that he was asked about the legality of a joint purchase of the land by the Trotting Control Board and the Sandown dog racing club, and that the Solicitor-General had advised him that a joint purchase was not legal. The Minister interested himself sufficiently to ascertain whether a joint purchase of land for the purpose of the development of the two complexes was legal, but he did not interest himself sufficiently to establish, when the singular purchase was proposed by the Trotting Control Board, whether that purchase was in the best interests of the Trotting Control Board and whether it was the best

use of the money that board was prepared to pay for land. Had the Minister interested himself to that extent, he would have questioned the Chairman of the Trotting Control Board or any other responsible member of the board on the value of the land before the purchase was made. Any valuation would have had to take into account the nature of the land and the fact that 40 per cent of the land was zoned as stream and floodway. It is no good the Minister talking about parking cars on that land. Boats could be parked on some of it. One border is the Mordialloc main drain. The Dandenong Valley Authority has certain regulations on the filling of land. I would not be surprised if the Dandenong Valley Authority insisted that no more than 1 metre of filling could be used on any portion of that land. I suggest to the Minister that there would need to be substantial filling of that land, which I have loooked at twice, to make it acceptable for the purpose for which the Trotting Control Board obviously purchased it.

The board produced a brochure in relation to the proposal. There has been a lot of indecent haste by the board to get the development going. Perhaps the Minister can be given some credit for holding up the development, because what he says is absolutely correct—the contingent price paid for the land will have a big bearing on the amount that the board is able to borrow, if and when the Government gives it permission to develop that land.

There is no banking institution or lending institution in this State that will lend money to the board, based on the price it paid for that land.

Mr Dixon—The board, in a letter of intent, said the money will be made available.

Mr WILKES—Let us consider what the board is paying for that land. I would be surprised if that lending institution does not obtain its own valuation, and when it does, its valuation will be $500 000 less than the board paid, which was $1·4 million. In addition to the $1·4 million, as the Minister pointed out, there was a solatium paid to Mr Keys, the vendor, of $20 000. There was $14 000 paid for the vendor's commission. For what purpose? Did the Minister not want to interest himself in why the board, according to the Minister, was getting a bargain because of these asking prices in the vicinity?

Mr Dixon—I did not say a bargain. I said a reasonable price.

Mr WILKES—The asking price in the area had no relation to comparable sales or comparable prices, or prices paid at all, and it would have no relationship to any valuation which I challenge the Minister to obtain from the Valuer-General or any competent sworn valuer in Melbourne. There is no doubt that the contingencies relating to the land are an inhibiting factor—how the land can be developed, and what is paid for it. If land is zoned by the planning authority as stream and floodway, it will cost money to fill that land to make it suitable for the proposed use. I am not guessing. Honorable members can go down and look at the land. There is no development within the immediate vicinity of the land, so it is useless for the Minister to say that, because these people were asking $600 000, that has something to do with the value of the Keysborough land. It does not.

There has been no development at that asking price, or any of those asking prices, and the only development down there is the development of Haileybury College, which is a considerable distance away from the particular land. The Minister said that he approved of the purchase of the land.

Mr Dixon—I did not. I said that I approved of the principle. Specifically, I was not referred to for approval of the purchase.

Mr WILKES—The Minister is ducking for cover. He was consulted on the dual purpose of the Sandown greyhound association and the Trotting Control Board, but he was not consulted on the singular purchase; or he would have us believe he was not consulted on the singular purchase.

Mr Dixon—That is right.

Mr WILKES—I find it difficult to accept that a Minister, as responsible as the Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation, would not be concerned, if two bodies were attempting to purchase a large area of land for $1·4 million and he found out that that was illegal, and that only the one body was going to purchase the land. I am equally surprised that the Minister did not ask what the Valuer-General's valuation was, or what the valuation was that should have been secured by the Trotting Control Board before any attempt was made to buy the land. Obviously the Minister is quick to say that there was no valuation. He said he regretted it; there should have been a valuation.

When the Minister was quoting all these asking prices, he went on to say that even the Country Roads Board was interested in land for a freeway, but it did not want to go on with the purchase. The Country Roads Board was interested in widening Springvale Road, and that encouraged the board to become interested in the very land the Minister was not advised of—the singular purchase.

However, the Country Roads Board, unlike its Minister and the Trotting Control Board, before letters of intent went out, had the land valued. The land was valued at $3804 an acre, but the Minister allowed the Trotting Control Board to pay $6500 an acre. The Country Roads Board did not want to purchase that land that was zoned flood-prone. It did not want to have anything to do with that land in the widening of Springvale Road because, if it were forced to buy that land, the cost would have been astronomical. The Country Roads Board wanted to buy the best portion of that land and, for that, it was prepared to pay only the honest, sworn valuation which was accepted by the Trotting Control Board at $3804 an acre, not $6500 an acre. That was in 1974.

It is no use the Minister using as an excuse that these asking prices had some relationship to the value or the excessive price that the Trotting Control Board paid for that land. I can understand the people in this area asking excessive prices. Look at what the Government paid for Pakenham. At that time one could sell this Government the Town Hall clock, no matter what the price. One could not blame these ruthless speculators for saying. "Let us have a look at it."

Mr Dixon—What date was the Country Roads Board purchase?

Mr WILKES—1974.

Mr Dixon—What date?

Mr WILKES—I do not have the date. These people, who saw the opportunity to get in and make a quick quid, said, "We are asking this price. This is the best land available." I invite honorable members to look at the Minister's file. I can only obtain a fleeting glimpse of it here, but I invite honorable members to see who wrote those letters and upon what they based their asking price. I venture to say it had no relationship to the value whatsoever. The true relationships to value were comparable sales in that area, prior to and when the Trotting Control Board purchased that land.

The sitting was suspended at 1 *p.m until* 2.4 *p.m.*

Mr WILKES—Prior to the suspension of the sitting for lunch, the Opposition had determined that the land in question was purchased at almost treble the price at which any independent valuer of note would value it today.

Mr Dixon—No one has established that.

Mr WILKES—During the debate, the Opposition established that the land would not be valued by any competent valuer at more than $500 000.

Mr Dixon—Have you tried to get a valuation?

Mr WILKES—No, I have not, but I have discussed it with valuers and, no doubt, the Minister has done so, too. The valuers with whom I have discussed the matter are satisfied that the valuation now would not exceed $500 000.

There would have been only a minimal depreciation in the value since 1974.

Mr Dixon—Rubbish!

Mr WILKES—The Minister says, "Rubbish", but any competent valuer would advise him that there would be only a marginal difference in value if the land had been valued in 1974 and again today. The Minister can test that, and any of the back-benchers can test it by obtaining a valuation.

The Opposition believes the land was purchased for three times its value in 1974 and that 40 per cent of the land was zoned stream and floodway. That has already been determined. Now it appears that the three lots of land have been mortgaged by the Totalizator Agency Board. The Minister did not inform the Parliament of this. I am convinced that there is a mortgage on the land, although I do not know why the board saw fit to mortgage it. I know that when the board took out the mortgage, it was not legally entitled to do so because the Act was changed in Parliament two months after the mortgages were listed. On each of the titles to those three areas of land is a mortgage to the CBC Bank registered on 8 March 1977. An examination of the Act reveals that on 10 May 1977—May as against March—the Racing (Amendment) Act became operative, and the amendment required the insertion into section 39 (1) of the principal Act of the word "mortgaging". This amendment gave the Trotting Control Board the right to mortgage any land or any asset it had at that time. Prior to that time, the board did not have that right. The Minister cannot deny that.

However, the board entered into a mortgage agreement with the CBC Bank. The Opposition has ascertained this information at least, and it has also ascertained that the Minister was legally responsible for any action taken by the Trotting Control Board.

Section 127 (1) of the Racing Act provides that:

> The Minister on the recommendation of the Race-courses Licences Board may purchase any land which he considers necessary or desirable for the purpose of establishing or extending a race-course.

We are discussing a trotting track, and the Opposition does not see much difference between a trotting track and a racecourse. However, it sees a clear responsibility of the Minister spelt out in this Act. Yet the Minister said today, "It was not my fault. It was the fault of the Trotting Control Board because it bought the land."

Mr Dixon—Read the Act.

Mr WILKES—The Minister should read the Act, and he will see that it states that the Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation has that responsibility.

The Minister was quick to shift the blame—if blame is established—to the Trotting Control Board for paying three times more than the land was worth. According to the Act, the Minister is personally responsible, to a large degree, for the board's finances, and he cannot deny it. Over the past three years a series of amendments has been made to the Act to give the Minister that responsibility. Considering the actions of this Minister, I doubt the wisdom of such a measure. The Minister laughs at my comment. He admits that, in his opinion, a valuation should have been taken; he admits that the land may have been purchased more cheaply if a valuation had been called for in the first place.

Mr Dixon—I did not say that; I said there should have been a valuation.

Mr WILKES—The Opposition believes that if a valuation had been made, there is no doubt that the land would have been purchased much more cheaply than it was. No specific information on the financial transactions of the Trotting Control Board is available at present. It was not until 5 December that the accounts of the Trotting Control Board that were privately audited by an auditor appointed by the Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation were made available. That procedure has now been changed and the Auditor-General is now responsible for auditing the accounts of the Trotting Control Board.

The board is required to submit to the Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation audited accounts, the balance-sheet and reports, and the Minister is required to lay the annual report and the balance-sheet before the Parliament. This is a relatively new requirement.

Mr Dixon—It is a good requirement.

Mr WILKES—Of course it is a good requirement, but it is a pity that it did not operate in 1974.

Mr Dixon—I agree.

Mr WILKES—At the time of the Keysborough land purchase and up until December 1978, the only person who had access to information about the financial position of the Trotting Control Board was the Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation. Up until that time the financial affairs of the board were privately audited by an auditor appointed by the Minister under the provisions of the Act. None of these reports was made public.

If the board, an authority or anybody else is in the business of purchasing land for any specific purpose, one requirement that must be adopted is that of obtaining a valuation. Why else do we have a Valuer-General? Honorable members do not know what the Trotting Control Board is up to; they do not know how much land it has. We do not know, but we believe, the board has land at Keilor. We do not know whether the board is building a land bank, but if that is the case, it is paying three times too much to do so, and that suggests some similarity between the present case and the former position of the Victorian Housing Commission. Honorable members know what happened there.

The purchase of land at Keysborough should have been the subject of investigation by the Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation. The Minister should at least have interested himself in the single purchase after having called for legal advice about the dual purchase, but he did not do so. He did not deem it necessary to ascertain whether a valuation had been called for and the price the board was prepared to pay.

Mr Dixon—There is only two months difference between the time we got the Solicitor-General's advice and when we informed them of the purchase.

Mr WILKES—The Minister has not even bothered to ascertain why the Trotting Control Board mortgaged land prior to the passing of the enabling legislation.

Mr Dixon—Where is the mortgage?

Mr WILKES—The mortgage is registered with the CBC Bank.

Mr Dixon—You show it to me. I know of no such mortgage.

Mr WILKES—The Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation says he knows of no such mortgage. Even though the Minister was given additional powers under a recent amendment to the Act, he has not bothered to ascertain the financial position of the board. He does not know why it mortgaged the land. We want to know why the board was either compelled or wished to mortgage the land that it bought at such a high price.

Mr Dixon—So now you are altering your tune. There is no such mortgage.

Mr WILKES—A mortgage is registered over the land; if the Minister is diligent, he will be able to ascertain that. The question that must be answered is why the mortgage was registered two months before the enabling Act was passed. It is not uncommon for organizations associated with the Government to move in first and get the stamp of approval afterwards. That is precisely what has happened in this case.

I invite the Minister to ascertain why it was necessary for the board, not only to pay the price it paid for the land, but also to mortgage it within three years. Other questions that ought to be answered are: On whose authority was the land mortgaged? Why was the land mortgaged to the CBC Bank? For what purpose was the mortgaged land used? These questions should interest the Minister, who has some say in the

administration of the Trotting Control Board. After all, the Executive Council appoints the chairman of the board.

The Minister, in effect, appoints the members of the Trotting Control Board. Therefore, one would think it would be within the competence of the Minister to ascertain the reasons for the mortgages. The site has not yet been developed, so it is more important to ascertain the reasons for the mortgages. Was the change in the legislation an attempt to justify the mortgages? That question should also be answered. The only person who knows the answers to the questions is the Minister.

Mr Remington—He does not know the answers.

Mr WILKES—The honorable member is right. One has to understand that the board was not accountable to the Parliament but to the Minister. That makes it a matter of urgency for the Minister to ascertain the mystery surrounding the purchase of the Keysborough land and the mortgages on the land.

In September 1979, the Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation said that a decision on the development of the Keysborough land would be made within three months. The Opposition has deliberately attempted to concentrate on why the board purchased the land and why it paid the price it did, not whether it was necessary for the development of a trotting complex at Keysborough. The Opposition is not prepared to argue that question at this stage. The Opposition knows that not only $1·4 million was paid but a $20 000 solatium was paid for any inconvenience that might have been caused to Mr Keys because the board rushed in to buy the land at three times its market value. The Opposition also knows about the $15 000 the board wanted to pay the vendor agents as commission and the other $14 000 that was paid—for what we are not sure, but it was paid. On top of the massive price that was paid for the land, $50 000 additional was paid. No doubt the details are in the contract of sale.

That money could have been used for another complex in Cranbourne. The Minister knows that there is a complex in Geelong that is worthy of any trotting event of the year. This money could have been spent on that facility. If the Keysborough project is to develop in the way the Minister wants it to, lending institutions will have to be satisfied that the price paid by the Trotting Control Board, unbeknown to the Minister, was the correct one if it is to be used as collateral for loan funds. The Opposition does not believe it was the correct price. One Minister who was concerned with land purchases is no longer here and another is no longer a Minister. The Minister of Housing called in the police to investigate 117 land deals. The Opposition suggests he should establish a committee to thoroughly investigate the land deals of the Trotting Control Board for its complex at Keysborough.

Mr COLLINS (Noble Park)—The Leader of the Opposition talks about accuracy and the need for factual information. I believe valuations should take place when land is bought. Be that as it may, the Leader of the Opposition disagrees with his own shadow spokesman on this subject. The honorable member for Geelong North said that approximately twice as much had been paid for the land as it was worth, that $3204 an acre was its value. The Leader of the Opposition went one step further and said the land was worth only one-third of the purchase price—he has come down to $2150 an acre. He does not have a valuation either, but he is very knowledgeable.

The land at Keysborough was acquired by the board after arriving at a decision to proceed to develop a new facility. It was commonly known that the Trotting Control Board and another sporting organization, the Sandown Greyhound Racing Club, were seeking land. One cannot keep that sort of information quiet for ever because inspections must be made of the site and estate agents make offers and counter-offers. In its wisdom at the time, the Trotting Control Board believed it was the best possible site south-east of Melbourne.

The site is suitable for the development of a trotting complex, a soccer stadium, a mortuary, a motel complex because of the discretions permitted for those purposes within the ordinance. Amendment No. 21 of the Melbourne Metropolitan Planning Scheme rezoned the land from rural to general farming A with a minimum subdivision of 100 acres, but discretions within the planning scheme permit a wide variety of potential uses.

The Trotting Control Board approached the Springvale council and the Board of Works and submitted a comprehensive proposal for a multi-purpose development on that site. The proposed development included not only a trotting complex but also a sporting complex the community could use seven days a week.

In this House on 31 October 1974, the honorable member for Geelong North stated as reported at page 1818 of *Hansard*:

> As I said, the Bill will provide for 50 extra meetings in the country and 30 extra meetings in the city.

He referred to the Royal Agricultural Society's showgrounds and then stated:

> In future, the board will operate on land at Keysborough, but that has not yet been developed.

In 1974 the honorable member for Geelong North was happy about the land at Keysborough being developed. He knew how much had been paid for the land, with or without a valuation, and subsequently a question asked on 15 April confirmed the price being paid for the land.

From October 1974 to 15 April 1975 the honorable member for Geelong North had no queries about the proposals. The matter was not raised in Parliament. When a question was asked of the Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation as to the proposed development by the Trotting Control Board, the price given was $1·423 million. Why did the honorable member for Geelong North not ask a question in the House? The honorable member for Geelong North must have done his homework because on 31 October 1974, page 1819 of *Hansard*, records that the honorable member stated:

> The board has purchased land at Keysborough, where, with the support of the Springvale City Council it will develop a track to enable the board to conduct meetings on its own land. The area will be developed as a multi-purpose sporting facility with financial assistance from the Racecourse Development Fund, or the Department of Youth, Sport and Recreation, whichever is the appropriate authority to provide finance for the project.

At that stage the honorable member for Geelong North was more than satisfied that Keysborough was a viable proposition and that a multi-purpose facility would be developed, because he did not raise any query during the debate on the Racing (Further Amendments) Bill.

The honorable member for Benalla, who is without doubt one of the characters of this Parliament, on 31 October is reported at page 1822 of *Hansard* as having said:

> The Country Party supports the proposed legislation, which deals with several areas of racing, including trotting, greyhound racing, the purchase of land, the use of development fund money and the operation of the Totalizator Agency Board.

The honorable member for Benalla had many other things to say, including a reference to Waverley and Sandown.

Honorable members know that VFL Park at Waverley is an enormous success. If the Keysborough complex is given support, no doubt with correct promotion and development, trotting will succeed at Keysborough just as Victorian Football League football has succeeded at Waverley.

On 31 October 1974 all members of Parliament agreed to the provision of 30 extra race meetings at Keysborough. Clear cut approval for the proposed purchase was given. Subsequently, a question was raised about the price paid for the land. It has taken the Opposition four and a half years to come to the conclusion that the land was too expensive.

In his statement to the House the Minister said—and I believe he is correct—that it would have been appropriate for a valuation to have been

obtained. The Trotting Control Board, acting in its own fashion, decided to proceed with the project. A lot has been said about values by the honorable member for Geelong North and the Leader of the Opposition. At least the Leader of the Opposition did not refer to the Government as a weak, miserable, incompetent Government—he has deleted that sentence from his repertoire. If anyone is incompetent today it is the Leader of the Opposition.

The Leader of the Opposition was wrong about the location of the land, the various levels of the land and the possibility of its flooding. There has not been a couple of feet of water over any part of that land since 1932. That was the last recorded occasion on which the section of the land regarded as flood-prone had enough water over it for one to need gumboots to walk through it.

The Leader of the Opposition echoed the words of the honorable member for Geelong North, who told honorable members that he had this information on the good authority of the honorable member for Dandenong, who had it on good authority from people who live in the Keysborough area—all these good authorities—that for a couple of months of the year the land is under water. Not only do I deny that—I remind honorable members who are interjecting that the honorable member for Geelong North said that and *Hansard* has no doubt recorded it—but I also invite the honorable member for Geelong North, with or without his gumboots, at any time of the year to visit the area, and, if the honorable member has to wade through water, I will pay him $100.

Over the years, as a result of works that have been carried out by the Dandenong Valley Authority, the water table has fallen considerably. The honorable member for Carrum would be aware of that and would know of the problems that occurred in the Edithvale wetlands because of the fall in the water table. It was necessary for a pump to be installed and water to be pumped in to enable birdlife, flora and fauna to prosper and survive. I understand the water table in that area has fallen between 5 feet and 8 feet. Until ten or fifteen years ago it was possible to graze stock on that land without any trouble, but today large parts of the land are not useful for grazing because it does not sustain a good growth of grass for any time.

Some of the land proposed to be used as a trotting complex is designated as flood-prone. That means that the responsible authority sets a reduced level for lands that could be subject to flooding under certain conditions. The lowest level of any of the land acquired by the Trotting Control Board is 8·23 feet above the low tide level. The honorable member for Carrum would also be aware of that. A level of 6·7 feet, which was mentioned earlier, would mean that the whole of Chelsea, which is about a mile and half down the road, would be flooded. Admittedly, this part of Keysborough is not affected by tidal waters. If it were, and the level was that which has been suggested, the whole of Chelsea, Edithvale, Aspendale, Patterson Lakes and Bangholme would be flooded. As the honorable member for Carrum would be well aware, the flood-prone land at Keysborough is considerably higher than that at Edithvale.

The only flooding that could take place on that land would be as a result of water from tributaries upstream. It would require an excess of water with which the drainage system could not cope. What has the Dandenong Valley Authority done to combat this over the years?

Reference was made to a contribution that will have to be made by the Trotting Control Board to the Dandenong Valley Authority within a number of years. However, I point out that every developer has to make a contribution to the authority on the basis of so much a hectare, and every developer has to make a contribution per hectare to the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works for sewerage works, irrespective of what is proposed in the development of the land concerned. Therefore, $175 000 is a minimal

amount in comparison with the contributions paid by the developers of Patterson Lakes and Chelsea Heights. The contribution is fair and just and it would be irresponsible of me, as a member of Parliament, to suggest it is not.

Mr Don Thompson, the Chief Engineer of the Dandenong Valley Authority, has stated that the use proposed by the Trotting Control Board would be one of the most appropriate uses for the site. The proposed use has met all the Dandenong Valley Authority's criteria.

The land purchased comprised three parcels, the principal parcel consisting of approximately 118 or 119 acres. I understand that this land could not have been bought for less than $10 000 an acre in 1974. I invite honorable members to get their yardsticks out and to talk to the people who bought or sold land in the area at that time and discover what they paid. It may have been too much, but it is not possible to stop people from speculating. If the price was too high, why did the Westfield corporation secure two parcels of rural land at the five-ways corner, one of 25 acres, which was purchased well before the Trotting Control Board bought the land now being discussed, and the other of 20 acres, at an average price of more than $20 000 an acre in the hope of carrying out a development?

The land zoned rural has since been rezoned intensive agriculture with a minimum subdivision of 40 acres. It could not be used for the purpose the corporation had in mind. In turn, the corporation sold the land to other developers who knew about the new zoning and that the minimum subdivision was 40 acres. No houses could be built on the land and no shopping centre could be developed, but the developers paid $1·2 million for 45 acres some time last year. That was more than $25 000 an acre and speculators are still paying an average of $20 000 for land in the area.

Mr Crabb—It is residential.

Mr COLLINS—The honorable member for Knox is sadly wrong again. The land is zoned for intensive agriculture with a minimum subdivision of 40 acres. No housing and no commercial development is allowed. The honorable member could plant his carrots there, after paying $20 000 an acre.

This site is superb. I have had an interest in the Springvale area for some time, as a councillor until August of this year and also as a member of Parliament. The Trotting Control Board approached the Springvale City Council, if I remember correctly, in 1976 and advised the council of its proposal to proceed with the development of a trotting complex. It sought council assistance and an expression of confidence in what it was planning. At the same time it sought advice about the conditions it would have to meet. The council, with its usual vision, sought a detailed report from the town planner, who is respected throughout local government for his detailed knowledge. The land lies in a non-urban growth corridor, which is part of the over-all planning scheme. Discretionary uses are allowed and the trotting complex is one such discretionary use.

I made a note of a number of statements made by the town planner and I can make them available to honorable members if they are required. In 1976 he said:

> The subject land is considered exceptionally well-located for the proposed use.
>
> It has excellent road access to the north and south, and reasonable secondary access to the east via Hutton, Chapel and Cheltenham roads. Access to the west will be considerably improved when Governor Road is constructed and to the east it will improve when Greens Lane is continued through from the South Gippsland Highway.

That is the kind of advice that was tendered to the Trotting Control Board. By then it had purchased the land but that is the sort of advice it sought. It certainly looked at the maps and plans for the freeways being developed, the Dingley by-pass, Freeway F.6 and the proposed extension through Greens Lane from Hutton Road.

The honorable member for Dandenong would be well aware that the Dandenong section has been completed and we are now waiting for the Springvale people to move a little faster so

it can be linked with the Dandenong through road, which has been completed.

The honorable member for Geelong North and the Leader of the Opposition referred to the surprise of people in the area at the proposed purchase and the honorable member for Geelong North said that local residents were very surprised. I point out that, firstly, one would have to struggle to find local residents because there are not too many. There is Haileybury College, but it has only temporary residents who return to their homes at night. The college recently acquired additional land at $10 000 an acre. That land was zoned as general farming A.

A little farther down the road there are some market gardens and then there is the Keysborough Golf Club. That could hardly be classed as residential and it has been there for some time. To find local residents one would have to go back to Mr Keys, who still owns 50 acres of land abutting the Trotting Control Board land. Mr Keys's home is classified by the National Trust and it is worth a visit. It is a superb, early Australian homestead, which was built in 1845 or 1855. It even has a wattle and daub section. The Keys family purchased the land in the early days and that is why the area is called Keysborough. I do not believe Mr Keys, his father, his grandfather or his great grandfather ever got their feet wet when they walked out of the front door in the mornings.

Mr Bowman lives a little farther down the road. In Perry Road, his land has some high areas and some low areas. The low-lying land is substantially lower than the land purchased by the Trotting Control Board.

I can illustrate the present value of land in the area by informing honorable members that the Gaelic Football Club, shillalaghs and all, recently purchased 20 acres for approximately $80 000. Another sporting organization purchased 18 acres of so-called low-lying land for $100 000. Some is designated as flood-prone, but it will be marvellous for soccer and will be used for that purpose. It is only one mile and a quarter from the Trotting Control Board land.

On the other side of Springvale Road, an area of 5 acres realized $100 000, another 5 acres $127 000. Other land has realized $15 000–$20 000 an acre.

Some of the land on the other side of Springvale Road is substantially lower than the land owned by the Trotting Control Board, and from Governor Road down it is 4 feet lower. The Sandridge company has applied to the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works to have its land rezoned sand extractive. If the planning authorities support that rezoning the land, strangely enough, would be worth $25 000 or $30 000 an acre.

If the Trotting Control Board did not proceed with its proposed development at Keysborough, possibly the sand could be dug out of the land and it would be worth $30 000 an acre. We could all then have a good time at the showgrounds in three months' time. I reject the motion.

Mr ROSS-EDWARDS (Leader of the National Party)—My Parliamentary colleagues and I have long been concerned about the purchase of land at Keysborough by the Trotting Control Board. The land has already been bought. That is history, and if too much money was paid there is very little that can be done about it now. It has been done. I agree with the Minister and other honorable members that a valuation should have been obtained—that is elementary—but it was not.

Mr Roper—The Minister made a mistake again.

Mr ROSS-EDWARDS—I am not condemning the Minister now. A valuation will be obtained and it will be of academic interest.

During the debate the Leader of the Opposition said there was a mortgage registered on the title and the Minister said there was no mortgage. It would be interesting if the Minister could have one of his runners find out during the next half an hour whether

there is a mortgage. The Minister was specific and precise about it and I hope he is right.

Mr Dixon—In relation to this property?

Mr ROSS-EDWARDS—On the Keysborough land. The Leader of the Opposition said there was a registered mortgage.

Mr Dixon—There is a mortgage.

Mr ROSS-EDWARDS—The Minister's credibility is destroyed, because he said there was no mortgage on the Keysborough land. He did not say, "I do not know of it", which any thinking person would have said.

I hope the Minister does not try to change his *Hansard* proof because quite definitely he said that there was no mortgage on the land at Keysborough. The Minister did not add "not to my knowledge" as any prudent and sensible Minister would have done. The honorable gentleman rushed in where angels fear to tread and said that there was no mortgage, whereas the Leader of the Opposition said that there was, after which fireworks occurred back and forth between the Minister and the Leader of the Opposition. It was stupid of the Minister to make a statement on something about which he had no knowledge.

Mr Dixon—I shall make a personal explanation.

Mr ROSS-EDWARDS—The serious thing is, and this has happened before, that a Minister makes a specific statement, just like some children do, without knowing anything about it. If the Minister had said "No, I do not know", he would have gained more respect as a Minister but to come out and make an unsubstantiated statement without sighting the title or having it checked is very close to telling a lie.

The future of the Keysborough land is a key factor in the development of trotting in Victoria. What happens at Keysborough affects the whole State. Honorable members should make no mistake; they should be aware that trotting is a State-wide organization, sport and industry and that Victoria leads Australia in the trotting industry. It is not a case of what is best for Melbourne, but what is best for the sport and for Victoria.

For those reasons I move:

That the word "for" be omitted with the view of inserting in place thereof the word "and".

Mr WHITING (Mildura)—I second the amendment.

Mr ROSS-EDWARDS (Leader of the National Party)—The reason for the amendment is that, although it is interesting to investigate the purchase of land, what should be done is to examine the development of Keysborough before it commences. Two matters concern me about the proposed development. Firstly, I understand that two members of the Trotting Control Board are against the proposal. Secondly, although it is only hearsay, I understand that the country trotting clubs voted on whether Keysborough should be developed and the result was sixteen to five against the proposal. I do not know whether that has been brought to the attention of the Minister—it is not a laughing matter.

Mr Dixon—I was not laughing. I think the vote was of that order, but I cannot be absolutely sure.

Mr ROSS-EDWARDS—When there is a division between the members of the Trotting Control Board and country trotting clubs in this State vote sixteen to five against the proposal, surely those decisions are red flashing lights of which the Government should take notice. It is a disturbing state of affairs. I understand that it was the late Sir Robert Menzies who said that those who cannot learn from the mistakes of the past are going—I forget the rest of the quotation, but let us say that they are very foolish.

When the Moonee Valley complex was developed, I understand the Trotting Control Board made a contribution of approximately $2 million—it may have been more. What disturbs members of the National Party, and this has been raised in the House on previous occasions, is that Moonee Valley

was being proposed despite it being virtually acknowledged amongst the trotting fraternity that the development at Moonee Valley was an interim measure only and was not to be the permanent home for the Trotting Control Board.

The development at Moonee Valley was to be an interim measure but the concept of Moonee Valley was sold to the trotting industry before the development of Keysborough was proposed. On the surface there were good reasons to move to Moonee Valley. The track at the Royal Agricultural Society's showgrounds was small, and the Trotting Control Board was only a tenant. What was not made clear was that the Trotting Control Board would be an even more minor tenant at Moonee Valley than at the showgrounds, and a full-size track could have been established.

Mr Dixon—It is a magnificent track at Moonee Valley.

Mr ROSS-EDWARDS—Of course it is, but just as good a track could have been constructed at the showgrounds. I would have been happy for the Trotting Control Board to move to Moonee Valley if it had said that Moonee Valley was to be its home, that it was the intention to make Moonee Valley the headquarters for the Trotting Control Board. However, the Trotting Control Board had a vision to go elsewhere and the expenditure of $2 million was only an interim measure.

My real criticism of the Government and of the Trotting Control Board is that the Keysborough purchase, to my knowledge, was made without the consent of the Government. The Trotting Control Board did not have to have the consent of the Government, but eventually it has to receive consent before it can develop the Keysborough trotting complex. It was stupid of the Trotting Control Board to spend $1·4 million and then sit on the land for years knowing that, in the long term, the Government might say "No". The Minister will agree that the Government might say "No".

Mr Dixon—There is no doubt that the Government might.

Mr ROSS-EDWARDS—That is right. If a businessman wants to build a factory, before he purchases the land he knows what he will put on it. Perhaps the Trotting Control Board was thinking that if it had the land the Government could not say "No", but the Trotting Control Board might get a shock because Parliament might say "No", not the Government.

By way of interjection the Minister of Public Works asks whether I favour the complex at Keysborough. The honorable gentleman should know that I have moved an amendment to provide for the proposal to be investigated before any development takes place at Keysborough, because honorable members do not want another VFL Park or Sandown racecourse fiasco.

I am concerned to ensure that, before any development takes place at Keysborough, Parliament thoroughly investigates the concept. It has already been estimated that the lowest possible cost to develop the Keysborough complex would be in excess of $7 million and that the total cost, together with contingencies and interest payments, could take the figure to $14 million. That is why it is necessary to have an all-party committee examine the proposal before it commences.

Mr Dixon—I put the proposal on the table in the Library so that honorable members could make a contribution.

Mr ROSS-EDWARDS—All honorable members have contributions to make but the Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation does not show much interest when he is asked questions. Any future development of a trotting complex, whether it be at Keysborough, the Royal Agricultural Society's showgrounds, Moonee Valley or elsewhere must be thoroughly investigated.

If the Minister had not been so stubborn about Moonee Valley, today the trotting industry would have been in a much better financial position. I suggest the $2 million expended at Moonee Valley will, in the long term, be wasted.

Mr Dixon—It has a 50-year lease at Moonee Valley.

Mr ROSS-EDWARDS—But horses cannot be trained at Moonee Valley. The track is used only for trotting meetings and even then the trotting industry is limited in the number of meetings it can conduct. Moreover, it has problems at night and runs into other community problems.

Therefore, another trotting complex has to be established and perhaps that could be located at the showgrounds which could be used for training. At the moment, the Trotting Control Board has got the Victorian trotting industry into a serious position.

The future of the industry must be debated and inquired into by Parliament. The next step to be taken should be to determine where the headquarters of the sport will be located in this State. I am fearful that the Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation will authorize some move, as he did at Moonee Valley, without a proper investigation being undertaken. The purpose of the amendment is to allow an inquiry to occur into the development of the trotting complex at Keysborough. If the Minister wants to re-word the amendment, the National Party is prepared to accept any such proposal, but I suggest that an inquiry should be made and the best decision made for the trotting industry in Victoria.

Mr SKEGGS (Ivanhoe)—I desire to make a personal explanation. I advise the House that I have declared a material interest in trotting in the Register of Members' Interests. Because of that I do not propose to take part in the debate. However, I do not have a direct pecuniary interest in the substance of the motion and will therefore vote on the motion.

Mr FORDHAM (Footscray)—By way of explanation, Mr Deputy Speaker, it was arranged between the leaders of the House that a 2-hour debate should ensue and I suggest that the honorable member for Dandenong, who has just received the call, misunderstood the arrangement. I understand the honorable member for Dandenong now does not wish to proceed with his contribution.

The House divided on the question that the word proposed by Mr Ross-Edwards to be omitted stand part of the motion (the Hon. S. J. Plowman in the chair).

Ayes	38
Noes	38

AYES

Mr Austin	Mr McClure
Mr Balfour	Mr McKellar
Mr Birrell	Mr Mackinnon
Mr Borthwick	Mr Maclellan
Mr Brown	Mrs Patrick
Mr Burgin	Mr Ramsay
Mrs Chambers	Mr Reynolds
Mr Coleman	Mr Richardson
Mr Collins	Mr Skeggs
Mr Crellin	Mr Smith (*South Barwon*)
Mr Dixon	Mr Smith (*Warrnambool*)
Mr Dunstan	Mr Templeton
Mr Ebery	Mr Thompson
Mr Evans (*Ballarat North*)	Mr Weideman
Mr Hayes	Mr Williams
Mr Jona	Mr Wood
Mr Kennett	*Tellers:*
Mr Lacy	Mr Cox
Mr Lieberman	Mr McCance
Mr McArthur	

NOES

Mr Amos	Mr Miller
Mr Cain	Mr Remington
Mr Cathie	Mr Roper
Dr Coghill	Mr Ross-Edwards
Mr Crabb	Mr Rowe
Mr Culpin	Mr Sidiropoulos
Mr Evans (*Gippsland East*)	Mr Simmonds
Mr Fogarty	Mr Simpson
Mr Fordham	Mr Spyker
Mr Ginifer	Mr Stirling
Mr Hann	Mrs Toner
Mr Hockley	Mr Trewin
Mr Jasper	Mr Trezise
Mr Jolly	Dr Vaughan
Mr King	Mr Walsh
Mr Kirkwood	Mr Wilkes
Mr McGrath	Mr Wilton
Mr McInnes	*Tellers:*
Mr Mathews	Mr Ernst
	Mr Gavin

PAIRS

Mr Hamer	Mr Whiting
Mr Tanner	Mr Edmunds

The SPEAKER (the Hon. S. J. Plowman)—The numbers being equal, it falls to the Chair to give a casting vote. In accordance with precedent, I shall cast my vote against the amendment so as to give the House the opportunity of deciding the question in its original form.

The amendment was therefore negatived.

The House divided on the motion (the Hon. S. J. Plowman in the chair).

Ayes ..	..	..	38
Noes ..	..	..	38

AYES

Mr Amos	Mr Miller
Mr Cain	Mr Remington
Mr Cathie	Mr Roper
Dr Coghill	Mr Ross-Edwards
Mr Crabb	Mr Rowe
Mr Culpin	Mr Sidiropoulos
Mr Evans	Mr Simmonds
(*Gippsland East*)	Mr Simpson
Mr Fogarty	Mr Spyker
Mr Fordham	Mr Stirling
Mr Ginifer	Mrs Toner
Mr Hann	Mr Trewin
Mr Hockley	Mr Trezise
Mr Jasper	Dr Vaughan
Mr Jolly	Mr Walsh
Mr King	Mr Wilkes
Mr Kirkwood	Mr Wilton
Mr McGrath	*Tellers:*
Mr McInnes	Mr Ernst
Mr Mathews	Mr Gavin

NOES

Mr Austin	Mr McClure
Mr Balfour	Mr McKellar
Mr Birrell	Mr Mackinnon
Mr Borthwick	Mr Maclellan
Mr Brown	Mrs Patrick
Mr Burgin	Mr Ramsay
Mrs Chambers	Mr Reynolds
Mr Coleman	Mr Richardson
Mr Collins	Mr Skeggs
Mr Crellin	Mr Smith
Mr Dixon	(*South Barwon*)
Mr Dunstan	Mr Smith
Mr Ebery	(*Warrnambool*)
Mr Evans	Mr Templeton
(*Ballarat North*)	Mr Thompson
Mr Hayes	Mr Weideman
Mr Jona	Mr Williams
Mr Kennett	Mr Wood
Mr Lacy	*Tellers:*
Mr Lieberman	Mr Cox
Mr McArthur	Mr McCance

PAIRS

Mr Edmunds	Mr Tanner
Mr Whiting	Mr Hamer

The SPEAKER (the Hon. S. J. Plowman)—The numbers being equal, it falls to the Chair to give a casting vote. In accordance with ancient precedent, and this matter not being a continuing grievance, I declare myself with the Noes.

The motion was therefore negatived.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr DIXON (Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation)—Mr Speaker, by way of interjection I told the House that there was no mortgage over the Trotting Control Board land at Keilor and Keysborough. I made a mistake and I apologize to the House.

I shall briefly explain the reason for my mistake. There are mortgages held over Keilor and Keysborough, against the overdraft facility of $1.5 million pending the annual instalment from the Racecourses Licences Board to pay out Moonee Valley. Honorable members will recall that the trotting tracks and lights and so on, were valued at about $2·7 million. My interjection related to any possible mortgage facility for any future developments at Keysborough.

Mr Ross-Edwards—You said there was no mortgage.

Mr DIXON—I agree that I said there was no mortgage, and I apologize for that. I was wrong. I made that interjection in the context of the debate because it was mortgages which had been discussed with reference to any possible development at Keysborough.

AGRICULTURAL CHEMICALS BILL

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

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The Bill amends the Pesticides Act of 1958 in order to introduce stricter controls over the use of pesticides in Victoria. Its major purpose is to increase the options available to the Government in restricting the use of agricultural chemicals when necessary.

The word "pesticide" has been changed to "agricultural chemical" to allow more items, such as dairy cleansers and dipping oils used for dried fruit, to be included.

Because the Bill contains a number of amendments which are purely procedural and which are dealt with in detail in the explanatory memorandum, which is available with the Bill, I propose to deal only with the more significant matters.

Household insecticides, which were previously exempt, are covered under clause 4(*g*). However, they will still remain subject to the Health Act and the two pieces of legislation will complement one another.

Clause 4 (*r*) inserts a new sub-section in section 3 of the principal Act to extend controls to cover such persons as pest control operators who provide a service rather than selling a substance or a product. It will also cover cases where agricultural chemicals are given away either in association with a pest control service or in association with the sale of another product.

Clause 8 of the Bill inserts two new sections after section 8 in the principal Act. These will streamline the renewal of registration of agricultural chemicals in those cases where the renewal procedure is a matter of straightforward routine.

Clause 11 inserts a number of new sections after section 10 of the principal Act. These are designed to make it possible to control the purposes for which agricultural chemicals containing certain ingredients are to be used.

The Governor in Council may prohibit the use of agricultural chemicals for specified purposes. This will mean that chemicals with certain ingredients or constituents can be restricted in their use to avoid contamination. Permits will be needed for the experimental use of agricultural chemicals and these will be issued by the Director-General of Agriculture or his nominee. Failure to comply with the conditions laid down in these sections can lead to fines up to $1000.

The remaining provisions in the Bill relate principally to procedures for the administration of the legislation and are dealt with in detail in the explanatory memorandum. Although the Bill is quite complex because of the number of amendments to the principal Act, the effect is to create a simple, flexible and effective means of controlling or prohibiting the use of some agricultural chemicals. I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of Mr WILKES (Leader of the Opposition), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Wednesday, December 5.

WODONGA AREA LAND ACQUISITION (VALIDATION) BILL

Mr I. W. SMITH (Minister of Agriculture)—On behalf of the Premier, I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The purpose of the Bill is to validate the acquisition of certain properties in the Wodonga area purchased as part of the Albury-Wodonga growth centre programme.

The lands involved fall into two categories; firstly, those properties on the edge of urban Wodonga which were included in stages 1 and 2 of the Wodonga area land acquisition programme and, secondly, those properties which are partly inside and partly outside the designated area. In the first category there are four properties purchased from K. G. Renwick Home Units Pty Ltd, A. G. Richardson, C. M. Cole and D. C. Kruss.

Prior to the formal designation taking place, the Ministerial Council responsible for the growth centre project directed that two areas, comprising a number of properties immediately adjacent to the existing edge of urban Wodonga were to be purchased. These areas were publicly identified and announced as stages 1 and 2 of the land acquisition programme.

Each of the properties was included in either stage 1 or 2. The properties were to be purchased under the provisions of the Wodonga Area Land Acquisition Act 1973, which at that time gave the Minister power to acquire land in Victoria within a circle the centre of which is a point on the centre of the carriageway and equidistant from each end of the union bridge and the radius of which is 55 kilometres.

The selection of these areas was designed to provide for the quickest

possible growth in the early stages of development. For example, the property acquired from K. G. Renwick was quickly developed as part of the corporation's first industrial estate, offering fully serviced and attractively priced land and a number of small factories for prospective industrialists. These early development incentives have paid off in terms of employment creation and continuous vigorous growth.

Since 1973 more than 40 basic industries large and small have established in Albury-Wodonga.

Before the project commenced 15 800 people were employed in Albury-Wodonga. This number has grown to more than 20 800.

Manufacturing employment in Albury-Wodonga rose by 6 per cent during the last financial year compared with an Australia-wide rise of 1 per cent.

Capital investment in 1978-79 rose to almost $82 million and it is estimated that more than $150 million will be invested in the area during the current year. Investment *per capita* in Albury-Wodonga during the past six years has been 32 per cent higher than the *per capita* figure for Australia as a whole.

All of this expansion has supported a growth rate in Albury-Wodonga which is faster than in any other provincial centre in Victoria or New South Wales, and the absolute increase in population in 1978 was higher than any other Victorian non-metropolitan area.

Of the properties purchased in stages 1 and 2, in four transactions the contracts of sale were exchanged after 1 January 1975, the date on which the Wodonga Area Land Acquisition (Amendment) Act 1974 came into operation. This amending Act restricted the Minister to the purchase or acquisition of lands in the designated area only, as distinct from the larger Wodonga area, which had applied until the amendment came into operation. The amending Act also provided section 5:

> Nothing in this Act shall affect anything done in relation to the purchase or compulsory acquisition of land under the principal Act prior to the commencement of this Act and where notice to treat has been served or a contract of sale has been entered into in respect of any land under the principal Act prior to the commencement of this Act the acquisition or purchase of the land concerned may be completed as if the principal Act had not been amended by this Act and for the purposes of sub-section 6 of section 15 of the Albury-Wodonga Agreement Act 1973 if any such land is not in a designated area it shall be deemed to have been purchased or acquired prior to the commencement of this Act.

In all four cases in this category serious negotiations were commenced under the original legislation prior to 1 January 1975, and the Minister at the time agreed to conclude those transactions, no doubt believing the provisions of section 5 of the amending Act empowered him to do so.

The legality of these purchases was first raised by the Auditor-General at the completion of his audit of the accounts of the Albury-Wodonga (Victoria) Corporation. Advice was then sought from the Crown Solicitor, who subsequently advised that section 5 of the amending Act did not empower the Minister to take this action as the Minister's powers were specifically limited to the designated area unless a notice to treat had been served or a contract of sale entered into prior to 31 December 1974.

The second category of properties the Bill covers those which were divided by the designated area boundary, part being designated and part being immediately adjacent to the designated area. The policy of the three Governments involved was handed down by the Ministerial Council on 27 September 1974, when the council resolved that, where a property was cut by the designated area boundary, negotiations should be conducted on the basis that minimum disruption should be caused by the acquisition programme, and, bearing in mind that part acquisition could bring about a claim for severance, proper regard was to be paid to the continued viability of the remaining holding.

At the time, the Ministerial Council was comprised of representatives of the

three political parties—a Federal Labor Minister, a New South Wales Country Party Minister and the Victorian Liberal Minister. The policy adopted by the Ministerial Council was based on the basic principles of fairness, justice and common sense. This policy was actively supported by all local members of Parliament backed by strong public support at several community meetings with the Ministers at that time. It is a matter of record that the community strongly advocated that a landholder's future position should be of paramount consideration should his property be partially designated.

Six properties fall into this category; those purchased from F. S. & R. A. McFarland, V. J. & E. M. Tobin and Co. Pty Ltd, J. W. Proctor, D. A. Wallace, B. W. Harvey and N. J. & I. J. Rowan. The property of A. G. Richardson, included in the first category, could also have been included in this category as it was also divided by the designated area boundary.

There is no doubt that the Minister and the Ministerial Council acted in good faith with the best interests of the individual landowners in mind at all times. The whole land acquisition programme was carried out in such a manner as to ensure that the landowners were disadvantaged to the least possible degree, and in this regard officers of both the Victorian Public Works Department and the Albury-Wodonga Development Corporation are to be commended.

Notwithstanding these commendable motives, the Crown Solicitor has advised me that the Minister had acted beyond the powers conferred by the enabling legislation at the time. Ideally the boundary of the designated area should have been drawn so that the whole of these properties was either totally inside or totally outside the designated area. However, several important factors have to be taken into account.

Firstly, the initial identification of the growth centre was a circle with a 55 kilometres radius in which many hundreds of properties lay. Quite understandably there was a great deal of local pressure to fix the designated area boundary quickly so that the large number of property owners who eventually would be excluded from designation could be relieved of their concern. Secondly, all of the preliminary work was performed by a task force established by the Canberra-based Cities Commission prior to the establishment of the development corporation, and the commission may not have had full relevant ownership details in every case.

The only appropriate action in the circumstances is for the Government to recommend that Parliament now validate the acquisition of these properties. The transactions have been concluded, the corporation now owns the lands in question and in some cases development has already taken place on those lands.

I should refer here to my response to a matter raised by the honorable member for Knox during debate on the motion for the adjournment of the sitting on 30 May this year, in which I indicated that I had been advised that the purchase of eight properties would need to be covered by the Bill. Since that answer was given to the honorable member, the Auditor-General has re-examined the files of both the Albury-Wodonga (Victoria) Corporation and the Public Works Department and has now indicated that a further two transactions appear to have been completed contrary to the Wodonga Area Land Acquisition Act as amended and proclaimed from January 1975. These involved the properties purchased from C. M. Cole and D. C. Kruss.

Mr CRABB (Knox)—On a point of order, I realize the Minister is deputizing for the Premier, but he is reading the notes in the first person.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. S. J. Plowman)—It is quite clear the Minister is reading the speech on behalf of the Premier. Honorable members should be able to interpret that the Minister is speaking on behalf of the Premier.

Mr I. W. SMITH (Minister of Agriculture)—I had contemplated this matter when the first person arose and I did say that I was reading the Bill on behalf of the Premier. So long as the House clearly understands that, I do not see the difficulty.

The Minister for Planning has asked me to record that the firm Harris Lieberman and Co., of which he was then a partner, acted as solicitors for the vendors in certain of these transactions, but this was prior to his election to Parliament. I also record that Messrs Smith and Emmerton, the law partners, acted as solicitors in the Wallace transaction. I had no interest, material or otherwise, in the sale. I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of Mr CRABB (Knox), the debate was adjourned.

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

That the debate be adjourned until Tuesday, December 4.

Mr CRABB (Knox)—All honorable members are aware that the Auditor-General has been carrying out investigations into these matters. It is inappropriate that the Bill should be debated prior to the tabling of the Auditor-General's report, which should be tabled within a fortnight. The Opposition would be satisfied with a two-week adjournment but it would be grateful for an undertaking that the Bill will not be debated prior to the tabling of the Auditor-General's report.

Mr I. W. SMITH (Minister of Agriculture) (*By leave*)—The Attorney-General is autonomous in these matters. I have been advised by the Premier, who has just returned to the Chamber, that the Government cannot give that undertaking.

Mr FORDHAM (Footscray)—I am sure the Minister did not deliberately choose his words in that way. It should be made clear to all honorable members that the Government is choosing not to give that undertaking. The point made by the honorable member for Knox is obviously crucial. It is well known that the Auditor-General has been investigating the matters directly referred to in the Bill and it is essential that Parliament have the advantage of the Auditor-General's report before the Bill is debated.

It is not as if the Government has to defer the matter until the next sessional period. The Auditor-General's report could be tabled tomorrow or next week, although it is usually tabled at the end of November. The Labor Party is asking for a two-week adjournment of the debate, which will be early December, and an assurance that, if the Auditor-General's report is delayed by a few days, the debate on the Bill will not be forced on by the Government.

Honorable members know that Parliament will sit until mid-December. The Opposition again asks the Premier to confirm that there is no way in which the Government will shy away from the implications of the Auditor-General's report.

Mr HAMER (Premier)—The Auditor-General has already reported on some of these transactions and if his report is available for the year just ended in time for the debate, the session will be concluded in that way. The Government does not control the Auditor-General. I presume the report will arrive and, in the light of that, the Government will certainly discuss it.

Mr GINIFER (Keilor)—In the past few years, the Auditor-General's report has lobbed into the Chamber just after the Budget Bills have been passed. The Opposition has not had the opportunity of examining the Auditor-General's report in conjunction with the Budget Bills. One can assume that perhaps the Budget Bills will be passed within the next two weeks and the report will then arrive.

It is incumbent upon the Government to provide members of the Opposition and other honorable members with the opportunity of examining the report and understanding the recommendations made. It is not a proper practice in the legislative process to expect the

Opposition and the third party to debate the Bill without having the same opportunity of access to the advice and objective assessment of the Auditor-General.

Mr WHITING (Mildura)—I should like clarification by the Premier, who said he hoped the Auditor-General's report will be tabled, in which case debate will proceed. However, the Premier did not clarify what will happen if the report is not tabled—whether the debate will continue.

Honorable members should note that this is validating legislation which is quite different from an ordinary Bill. It is important to have the full report of the Auditor-General on all these transactions prior to the Bill being debated.

Mr HAMER (Premier) (*By leave*)—The Government is attempting to anticipate a situation which may or may not ever arise. I said I believed the report would be tabled. Following what has occurred in previous years, it will be tabled. I understood the Deputy Leader of the Opposition to say that the Opposition did not want to delay the passage of the Bill until the autumn sessional period. That would be undesirable. I was merely safeguarding the position in case, for some reason which is not known to me, the report is somehow delayed. I do not think it will be. Parliament can discuss the matter in the light of what happens in the next couple of weeks.

The motion was agreed to, and the debate was adjourned until Wednesday, December 5.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr COLEMAN (Syndal)—(*By leave*)—Mr Speaker, I wish to make a personal explanation. During the debate on the motion for the adjournment of the sitting on 1 November, I raised a matter in connection with the distribution of funds by the Victoria Grants Commission. I made reference to a bank manager. It is possible to conclude from my comments that a bank manager provided me with information.

My comments were made without reference to or information from any bank manager or officer and, inasmuch as I may have misled the House, I tender my apologies, which are also extended to the gentleman concerned.

GRAIN HANDLING IMPROVEMENT AUTHORITIES BILL

The SPEAKER (the Hon. S. J. Plowman) 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 Grain Handling Improvement Authorities Bill.

Mr I. W. SMITH (Minister of Agriculture), pursuant to Standing Order No. 169, moved for leave to bring in a Bill to establish certain authorities to undertake the development and construction of various improvements in relation to the transport and storage of grain in Victoria and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

VICTORIAN ARTS CENTRE BILL

Mr LACY (Minister of the Arts)—I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

Its main purpose is to provide for the appointment of a Victorian Arts Centre Trust in such a way that completion of construction of the performing arts sections of the Victorian Arts Centre is achieved without disruption, through an evolvement process in which the new trust accepts its role of operator of the centre in a pattern of smooth progression.

Observation of the establishment of performing arts centres in other parts of Australia and throughout the world points to the wisdom of providing operating powers and the opportunity for specialist staff recruitment well in advance of the opening of the centres to the public. Those centres which have not followed this course have found to their bitter regret that

it has taken some three or four years to learn to use their buildings to best advantage.

The trust will be the successor in law of the Victorian Arts Centre Building Committee in every respect. Its powers are so established to attract tax deductible gifts or bequests.

The buildings are being provided by the Government of Victoria for the leisure-time use of all the people at a time of pronounced social change and new thinking in the theatre and the entertainment industry generally.

It is the objective of the Government that the centre should be a place where performances can be presented as finely as anywhere in the world, and that these programmes will be complemented by a wide range of presentations which will relate in popular terms to the whole community.

Those responsible for the operations will be required to promote an atmosphere of lively, friendly enjoyment of leisure time by creating events of high quality of which we shall all be proud and which will give pleasure to people of all ages and of all interests.

The building of the National Gallery of Victoria which was completed in 1968 was the first stage of development of the Victorian Arts Centre. No one needs a reminder of its success. The move of the gallery collection from its former home in Swanston Street, shared with the State Library, the National Museum and the Science Museum, to the present building in St Kilda Road, opened the way for increased enjoyment of the arts.

The success of the trustees of the gallery in caring for the collection, of providing exhibitions of its treasures and those of other galleries is known to all.

Because of the placement of the theatres, the Melbourne concert hall, the gallery and the Victorian College of the Arts side by side, the State of Victoria has an unparalleled opportunity and challenge to present total programmes in the arts which should encourage creative exchanges between the art forms, give inspiration to students of the arts and provide for the public an experience which few places in the world can match.

The proximity of the Sidney Myer Music Bowl, the siting of such extensive and beautiful gardens extending to the east and along the Yarra River, the availability of public transport and the placement of the centre in relation to the central business district of the city of Melbourne ensures the ready participation of the public in the wide range of events which will be conducted in the area south of the river.

To help achieve the links with the National Gallery of Victoria and the Victorian College of the Arts, thereby ensuring close liaison between both bodies having responsibility for major aspects of the Victorian Arts Centre, two members of the trust shall be appointed from members of the National Gallery trustees by nomination and one shall be appointed on the nomination of the Council of the Victorian College of the Arts. Provision is also made for representation of the trust of a member with an interest in the arts, who lives outside the city of Melbourne.

The Government is most appreciative of the energy and expertise and dedicated service given by present and past members of the building committee to the building of the arts centre. This truly magnificent project, the merits of which have been endorsed by all parties, will have the grateful thanks of future generations of citizens of Victoria.

The management of the centre will be directed towards the efficient achievement of artistic goals in St Kilda Road reaching out to the whole community. This will integrate with the State-wide policy of the Government expressed through the Ministry for the Arts, and will ensure that maximum advantage is taken of the magnificent facility which is being provided for citizens of and visitors to the State of Victoria. Well before opening, the

artistic policy, which has been gestating and budding over a period of years, will have the chance to emerge and be tested.

Co-operation with other organizations, such as the performing companies who will be using the centre, will be an essential task of the new trust.

The general manager and other staff will be appointed by the trust with the approval of the Minister. This method of appointment will allow the trust the flexibility necessary to attract the best people to these positions.

Staff will be appointed on either a temporary or a permanent basis under appropriate awards or determinations as circumstances warrant as a means of achieving high standards of excellence in the performing arts. In coming to its decision on staffing, the Government has had the benefit of consultation with operators of other centres, in particular the management of the Sydney Opera House and the Adelaide Festival Centre.

The theatre industry is a highly specialized field, and planning has involved co-operation between the public service board, the Ministry for the Arts and the office of industrial relations co-ordination. In drafting this Bill, detailed consideration has been given to the need to provide a framework of operations which will be efficient and businesslike.

This Bill provides the means to encourage revenue-producing activities and services such as car parking, catering, souvenir sales, ticket sales, and guided tours to be major contributors to the financing of operations. The building has been designed to last for centuries and to require minimum maintenance. Clearly, well-managed ancillary services will help further to minimize the need for subsidy.

Clause 4 provides for the establishment of a body corporate to be called the Victorian Arts Centre Trust. The functions of the trust as defined in Clause 5 are to complete the construction of the concert hall and theatres, to control and manage all parts of the centre except the National Gallery of Victoria, and to be responsible for the care, maintenance and improvement of all facilities on the Victorian Arts centre site.

Clause 6 (1) provides the trust with the necessary general powers to enable it to perform its functions. These powers are more specifically detailed in clause 6 (2) under the following headings—

(*a*) Acquisition of any personal property for the centre.

(*b*) Granting of leases or licences to use any part of the centre.

(*c*) Ability to contract or make arrangements to improve facilities.

(*d*) Acquisition and installation of equipment.

(*e*) Acquisition of a liquor licence.

(*f*) Registration or purchase of inventions, copyrights, trademarks, patents, etc. and the ability to develop or dispose of these.

(*g*) Broad contractual ability for the operation of the centre.

(*h*) Installation, use and maintenance of broadcasting equipment and the ability to grant rights under terms, conditions and charges as determined by the trust.

(*i*) Control of the printing, reproduction or publishing of any material relevant to the functions of the trust.

The remaining paragraphs (*j*) to (*o*) provide the following powers of the trust—

Commissioning of theatrical works.

Purchase, operation or letting on hire of theatre, cinema or other equipment.

Establishment and operation of a performing arts museum and a music library.

Ability to lease any land to facilitate carrying out the functions of the trust.

Ability to seek and administer all forms of donations.

Clause 7 provides in particular that the trust may, with approval, subject to such terms and conditions imposed

by the Treasurer, borrow moneys from any bank by way of overdraft and obtain temporary financial accommodation secured or arranged in such manner and for such period as approved by the Treasurer.

There is a mistake in the printed copies of the second-reading speech that have been circulated. The numbers should be moved forward by one.

Clauses 8 and 9 provide for, and state the terms and conditions of the appointment of nine members to the Victorian Arts Centre Trust by the Governor in Council to carry out the functions defined earlier in this Bill.

Clauses 10 to 13 enable the appointment of a chairman and deputy chairman and outline procedural matters including the initial constitution of the trust.

Clause 14 enables the trust with the approval of the Minister to employ such persons as are necessary for the purposes of this Bill. Flexibility to engage the best creative personnel will therefore be available to the trust and it is expected that substantial economies will flow from this. The trust will be able to offer the advantages of the State Superannuation Scheme to appropriate officers.

Clause 15 enables officers of the Public Service to maintain existing benefits including superannuation should they be appointed officers of the trust.

Clauses 16 and 17 provide for the various financial recording and reporting aspects of the trust including the annual audit of accounts and the publishing of an annual report to be presented to the Parliament.

Provision is made in the schedule to repeal the whole of the following Acts:

National Arts Gallery and Cultural Centre Act 1956,

National Gallery and Cultural (Amendment) Act 1959, and

Victorian Arts Centre Act 1971.

It is further provided that this Bill will be scheduled to the Ministry for the Arts Act 1972.

In framing this legislation the Government has been guided by its strong belief that the performing arts sections of the Victorian Arts Centre will be major contributors to the life of city dwellers and of visitors from regions throughout the State.

The Government's investment in the project to date has been substantial. Its commitment to it has been a strong one. This Bill provides a means of protecting that investment by establishing an operating style that is flexible, business-like and expressly designed for the needs of a major performing arts centre. The centre is not just a set of buildings.

The powers which this Bill confers on the trust and the responsibilities which members of the trust are called on to honour and observe will ensure that the buildings are used to their utmost. This centre will give talented Australian actors, musicians, singers and dancers the chance to perform before an ever widening audience. It will encourage innovation and new creative talent. It will inspire composers, playwrights, designers and choreographers to challenge performers to rise to even greater heights than have been achieved to date, and it will provide for the technicians in the theatre, arts equipment of such an advanced design that Victoria will be placed in the very forefront of world theatre for decades.

As well as support for local talent at the highest level, the provision of these high quality performance spaces will attract artists of international calibre to our State.

Already the Victorian Arts Centre is a member of a confederation which links the major centres in each State of Australia. The completion of our centre and the one about to be constructed in Brisbane will provide a circuit of venues which will open wider horizons for the national and State performing companies and make it

more possible for Australians to observe and enjoy the arts of Europe, America and Asia.

Provision of the Victorian Arts Centre is one of this Government's major achievements. It will be recognized not only next year or in the next decade, but also in the next century and beyond.

Already the buildings are attracting praise from right around the world for the way in which they provide for theatre patrons and artists alike. The sense of anticipation amongst performers and the public is strong. I can assure the House that anticipation will be well rewarded when the Melbourne concert hall opens in 1981 and the arts centre theatres open in 1982. I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of Mr CATHIE (Carrum), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Wednesday, December 5.

APPROPRIATION (1979–80, No. 1) BILL

The House went into Committee for the further consideration of this Bill.

Discussion was resumed of clause 2 (Application of moneys)

The ACTING CHAIRMAN (Mr Birrell)—Last night when the Bill was debated progress was reported on Division 576, Agricultural Education and Extension Services.

AGRICULTURE

Dr COGHILL (Werribee)—Last night or, more correctly, early this morning, I was speaking about the arrogant incompetence of the Government in handling agricultural policy in Victoria. During that debate the Minister of Agriculture was absent and again today left the Chamber shortly before consideration of the measure. This is in direct contrast to the conscientious interest shown by the shadow Minister, the honorable member for Sunshine. He has sat through the entire debate to date and I am sure that at a later time he will make a valuable contribution.

The Government has failed to implement a policy of decentralization; there has been a lack of leadership in agricultural matters; throughout Victoria there is a lack of confidence in the Minister of Agriculture; and in the Department of Agriculture there is a general low morale. It may well be said, as I said last night, that many people believe the Department of Agriculture is running around like a headless chook, without a sense of direction. I look forward to a considered contribution of the honorable member for Burwood on agricultural matters. I have yet to hear him make a contribution on these important issues central to the Victorian economy, and I hope he will make that contribution this afternoon.

Division 576 refers to agricultural education and extension services. One asks why agricultural education should be divorced from all other education in Victoria and placed under the responsibility of the Ministry of Agriculture. The reasons are historic, but it must be seriously questioned whether they are still valid. They may not be and serious consideration should be given to assigning the agricultural colleges to the Education Department so that they become part of a comprehensive plan for education of all types for all vocations. As it is, despite good co-operation between the Department of Agriculture and the Education Department, there is difficulty in liaison simply because different departments and different Ministers are involved. A number of colleges are concerned.

Honorable members who look at the allocations this year and compare the figures with last year's expenditure are entitled to an explanation which the Minister could give if he were here. In the case of Dookie Agricultural College, the expenditure is down by 4 per cent on last year's figure so that, taking inflation into account, the expenditure on Dookie will probably be reduced by something like 14 per cent. That is a matter of concern to people at the college. There are other aspects which are of concern to people in the Dookie area as well as to people

actually at the college. There are rumours that some of the land at Dookie Agricultural College will no longer be required for teaching purposes. This speculation is creating some difficulty in the local community; and it must be affecting land values in the area and the consideration which the local farmers give to their future development plans. Once again there is need for an explanation from the Minister on the proposals for Dookie Agricultural College, what its development is to be and the reasons for the severe cuts in its funds.

I turn next to the College of Horticulture at Burnley where I find an extraordinary increase of 39 per cent, which again has not been explained. Perhaps it is part of the Government's Garden State activity, although most of that activity has been funded through the Garden State Committee. However, that increase has not been explained to the House. There has been no press release, no statement on the suggestion that Dookie Agricultural College is to be the site of the College of Horticulture and that it is to be transferred from Burnley. Right throughout the allocations for these colleges, one finds gross inconsistencies which have not been explained.

In the allocation for the State Agricultural College at Longerenong there is a fall of about 4 per cent representing an effective cut of about 10 per cent when inflation is taken into account.

Other matters under this division are also important to debate; they are matters on which the Minister should offer an explanation to the House.

Under "Other Services", item 4, honorable members will see that there is a large increase in the grant to be made to the Royal Agricultural Society for the purposes of the Victorian Young Farmers. That increase may have something to do with the Minister's foreshadowed Bill to encourage young farmers to take up land, or it may not. There has been no explanation and the House deserves an explanation.

Dr Coghill

I turn now to item 8 which deals with departmental publications. It has been widely stated by the Minister and by others concerned with agriculture in Victoria that the Department of Agriculture should be expanding its activity, the quality of its publications in the extension area. The Minister made an announcement late last year that the *Journal of Agriculture*—I have the last issue of that journal and it is dated December 1978—would be replaced by *Fact Sheets* or *Agnotes*.

It was said in December 1978 that this service would be available in about three months' time, during March 1979. It took three times that long—nine months—before *Agnotes* became available. It may be normal for the Government to take three times the planned time to actually achieve an objective, but that is not an acceptable standard of Government administration and it is something on which the Government stands condemned. Perhaps it reflects the circumstances of the decision to replace the *Journal of Agriculture* with *Agnotes*. The decision was made in the panic which followed within days of the result of the Ballarat by-election being known. In other words, within days of the actual election date, the Department of Agriculture was suddenly thrown into turmoil and told that it had to throw aside its publication of some 70-odd years and create a new system of printed information. The situation is simply not acceptable. The farmers of Victoria demand, and are entitled to have, a far better service from the Victorian Department of Agriculture and the Minister responsible for it.

The next item, for which there has again been a reduction in the allocation, is the production of departmental films, radio programmes, exhibits, and so on. The reduction of about $494 represents only a small amount but a very high proportion because of the small total allocation under this vote. Again, the Minister has offered no explanation of the policy the department will follow in film production, whether film production will be transferred to the State Film Centre or some other

body or whether there is some other explanation for this significant cut in available funds.

The final point I wish to make on this item is in respect of the Agricultural Economics Branch. There is a large increase in the allocation for that branch. This has been a result of the reduction of the Commonwealth Extension Services grant money which previously supported a number of salaried positions in the Agricultural Economics Branch. Because of poor economic planning by the Government, these salaried positions have had to be transferred from the Commonwealth Extension Services Grant into the State vote area. That transfer has had serious repercussions in other areas: It has reduced the funds available for the production of departmental films, radio programmes and other exhibits. This, again, is an irresponsible piece of management of the Department of Agriculture and the agricultural policy of this State.

Mr FOGARTY (Sunshine)—Under Division 582—Plant Services—item 26 of section 3 relates to plant quarantine costs. Some two years ago I reported a finding by the horticultural section of the Victorian Farmers and Graziers Association that more than $500 000 worth of flowers and plants had been imported into Australia over a given period of twelve months. The Opposition accepts the role of the Commonwealth in this important area, but it also accepts the role of individual States in inspecting plants, flowers, and the like to ascertain whether there are insects or bugs in them. About two years ago the lucerne crops of Australia were devastated by the alfalfa aphid and I sincerely hope that will never occur again.

There is an area of debate on how the alfalfa aphid arrived in Australia. It has been suggested in one area that it was introduced by a person in another area in a plant. I believe the most logical conclusion is that it arrived in Australia in a plant. At the time the report was made to the Government on this matter, it was suggested that the Victorian Government should approach the Commonwealth with a view to tightening the control of the quarantine area. In the past it has been the practice of quarantine officers to take samples at random. The Opposition believes this is not good enough. The horticultural section of the Victorian Farmers and Graziers Association accepts that flowers being imported into Australia in many areas are imported for snob value only; but it also believes that an extension into growing flowers in other areas of Australia may be a means of diversifying production where there is a shift in areas of primary industry production. The rise in the estimates for the year is minimal and will apply only to the shift in the labour content.

I hope the Government will give further consideration to approaching the Federal Government with a view to extending the quarantine services so that there will be stricter controls over plants and flowers entering Australia and that there will not be reliance on spot checks. Once a bug or an insect enters Australia, boundaries between States do not matter, as was found by the great-great-grandfather of the Minister for Property and Services when he imported rabbits into this country.

Dr COGHILL (Werribee)—The increases and the decreases in allocations for the various agricultural research stations are rather puzzling and require explanation on exactly why they are made. There are reductions ranging from a fall in actual money terms of 0·2 per cent for the Agricultural Research Institute at Knoxfield—when the inflation factor is added it it about 11 or 12 per cent—to an increase of 11·3 per cent for the research station at Mildura. The second highest increase is for the Tobacco Research Station at Myrtleford where there is an increase from $5210 to $5700, an increase of 9·4 per cent, about the expected level of inflation.

If reductions were necessary, one would have expected that they would be in allocations for prosperous industries which have the resources to

finance research. Clearly, the tobacco industry is such an industry. The Tobacco Research Station at Myrtleford plays a valuable role in the tobacco industry which, for both the producers and the manufacturers, is a prosperous industry and could well afford to make a large commitment to research for the benefit of the industry.

Honorable members may be interested to learn that tobacco growers are amongst the few friends that the Minister has in the agricultural community in Victoria. That may be the explanation for the increase, but the House is entitled to know why such large increases have not also been granted in essential areas such as horticultural research at Knoxfield.

I mentioned earlier that experimental and extension work—particularly the extension component of it—is one of the major priorities of the Department of Agriculture, yet the allocation under "Plant Services" for experimental and extension work has been cut to $161 000 from $175 620. The plant industries, like every other industry, rely heavily on the Department of Agriculture for the dissemination of new information on improved production of land, improved methods of handling, tilling, planting, irrigating and all other aspects of production. Given that and given the importance of the plant industries in Victoria there should have been an increase in funds at least commensurate with inflation rather than making the savage cut that was made in experimental and extension work in this area. The only other possible explanation could be that this is one of those so-called contingency funds to which I referred last night which is not used for a specific purpose but is used by the chief of the division to administer plant services as the need arises rather than following a planned programme.

The final aspect to which I shall refer under this division is the decentralization of the Department of Agriculture and other agricultural facilities in Victoria. If one reads this week's *Weekly Times* one sees a report on the opening of the Grain Elevators Board's new head office. Given the location of grain-growing centres in Victoria, the distribution and storage facilities and the transportation system, one might expect that the Grain Elevators Board would establish its headquarters outside the metropolitan area. It could have done so in Geelong; Melton is another area which would be most appropriately in line with the Government's decentralization policy, and Ballarat, Portland and Horsham are other areas which should have been considered for the new office of the Grain Elevators Board. Clearly the Minister of Agriculture has not followed the Government's decentralization policy, which was established in 1972, of decentralizing the administration of Government departments and instrumentalities in Victoria.

Mr FOGARTY (Sunshine)—A fortnight ago I had the good fortune to attend a meat industry meeting which was also attended by the Minister of Agriculture, the Minister of Labour and Industry, the honorable member for Reservoir, who is the shadow Minister of Labour and Industry, and me. Bill Dooley would not lay that on a quadrella! In addition, Mr Jack O'Toole and Mr Davies, two representatives from the meat industry, also attended the meeting, together with a doctor from the Department of Agriculture. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the diseases brucellosis, zoonosis and Q fever, and other industrial diseases which are peculiar to the meat industry. The relationship of the diseases to the Cattle Compensation Act and their effect upon the employee—the meat worker—was also discussed. The meeting enabled discussion to take place on the possible relationship of those diseases to the Victorian Workers Compensation Act. In discussions, it was ascertained that the New South Wales Government had proposed certain amendments to the New South Wales Workers Compensation Act with a view to including coverage for brucellosis and other similar diseases.

In the past Victorian legislation dealing with brucellosis has complemented

the Federal legislation and in the main deals with the effect of the disease on the animal. However, the disease has a far greater impact on the employee in the meat industry who, in the past, has not been given consideration.

Through the Australian Agricultural Council, the Victorian Government in close co-operation with the Australian Meat and Livestock Corporation has entered into a brucellosis eradication campaign that must be completed by 1984. The Opposition has given that campaign every support. However, it believes that if eradication is to be achieved, the programme should be expedited; it does not believe that it should extend until 1984. Brucellosis should be eradicated as soon as possible.

Naturally, the concern of the meat industry union is for the general welfare of the industry because it affects the general welfare of the worker in the industry. By the same token there is also deep concern for the physical welfare of the worker in the industry. The Opposition believes that when allocations are made towards the campaign for the eradication of brucellosis and other diseases associated with the meat industry, the campaign should also be mounted in other areas to ascertain the impact and the effect of these diseases upon the worker in the industry.

These diseases are different from any others, and, as the Minister of Public Works would know, they are not easily diagnosed. They often lie dormant and sometimes considerable time elapses after the employee leaves the industry before their presence is detected. This fact is generally accepted by the medical profession. However, not all medicos can diagnose the disease. It is very hard to diagnose in humans and in animals, and in many cases two tests at different times may give different reactions.

The meat industry has set aside quite a substantial sum of money to allow a graduate in veterinary science, on completion of his course, to carry out a complete investigation of the impact and effect of brucellosis, Q fever and like diseases on employees in the meat industry. If the meat industry union can use such an initiative on behalf of its members, surely the Government can take similar initiatives, not to eradicate the disease from the animal—which is important not only to Victoria's overseas trade but also to its local trade—but to eliminate the disease and its cause to benefit the important people working in the industry. I certainly hope the Government will give serious consideration to investigating the possibility of allowing a person who has completed a course in veterinary science to continue experimental work on the impact of brucellosis and similar diseases upon workers in the meat industry.

I refer next to carcass classification. Once again agreement has been reached between all States of Australia and the Australian Meat and Livestock Corporation that carcass classification shall be the means of describing a carcass. Three of the four areas of identification are easily defined; that is, age, weight and sex. The fourth area, fat content, presents great difficulty. I raise the matter at this stage because I know the Victorian Government is working in close co-operation with the Australian Agricultural Council and the Australian Meat and Livestock Corporation and is initiating methods on its own behalf. I should like to know how much money has been expended in this area in Victoria to carry out investigations, checks and experiments. An experiment was undertaken at the Donald meatworks and I should like to know whether the experiment was successful and whether the Government intends to experiment further in this area in the future. It is not easy to determine the fat content of the carcass, but, as so much money has been expended on the experiment, I believe we are entitled to receive a report.

Dr COGHILL (Werribee)—I congratulate the shadow Minister of Agriculture on his understanding and knowledge of this important matter. It is clear to all honorable members that he has a much better grasp of the subject than the Minister of Agriculture. The Minister's best contribution

might be to lead the Liberal Party into Opposition.

I refer particularly to the item dealing with other services, and point out that although an allocation has been made to the Cattle Compensation Fund, in another part of the Estimates, under the heading "Special Appropriations" at page 9, line 3, an allocation of $450 000 is made to the Cattle Compensation Fund, although there was no contribution in 1978–79. Rather than dealing with a contribution of $20 000 we are dealing with a total allocation of $470 000. Once again the House deserves an explanation of how this has come about.

The $450 000 allocation is made under the provisions of section 10(4) of the Cattle Compensation Act 1967, which states:

> Any sum which the Treasurer of Victoria at any time certifies to be required for payment by way of compensation under this Act (so far only as the Fund is insufficient to pay any sum payable under this Act out of the Fund) shall be paid out of the Consolidated Revenue which is hereby to the necessary extent appropriated accordingly.

It is clear from that provision that there is a shortfall in the Cattle Compensation Fund of $450 000 as at the end of the financial year. That conflicts with the position twelve months ago as reported in the document entitled *Animal Health in Victoria*, the Annual Report of the Animal Health Group, Department of Agriculture, Victoria for the year ended 30 June 1978, which stated that the balance in the Cattle Compensation Fund as at 30 June 1978 was $521 290.95. That would imply that there has been a drop from a surplus of over $500 000 to a deficit of almost $500 000—in other words, a net loss to the fund of almost $1 million within the financial year, yet no explanation has been given to the House of how this came about.

One can speculate that it arises from the increased compensation that was paid as a result of legislation passed during the autumn sessional period which validated increased compensation payments, particularly for the slaughtering of brucellosis reactors. The total amount involved resulting from that legislation was $660 454 but the net cost to the Cattle Compensation Fund was $40 561.61. Clearly that is no explanation for this extraordinary shortfall in the Cattle Compensaton Fund.

It should be remembered in this context that brucellosis eradication is going well, and relatively few reactors are now being slaughtered; so that is not a drain on the fund. Some other explanation must be offered. The only other explanation I can give is that there has been a gross delay in the increase in the contributions to the fund as a result of stamp duty on cattle sales. That is because the Government refused to convene Parliament early this year for the autumn sittings.

Had an amendment been made to the legislation late last year or in March this year, the contributions to the Cattle Compensation Fund from stamp duty could have enabled the fund to balance its books at the end of the year and possibly show a sizable surplus as in the previous year.

Administration of the department by Dr Brian Rushford, who is the chief veterinary officer, has been excellent. He would not have allowed this position to arise had the legislation enabled him to avoid it. An explanation is required on how this deficit arose and why it was necessary to overcome the deficit in this way.

Mr SIMMONDS (Reservoir)—I join with the honorable member for Sunshine, the Opposition spokesman on agriculture, in discussing the question of brucellosis, zoonosis and Q fever and their effect on livestock and employees of the meat industry.

The Minister of Agriculture and the Minister of Labour and Industry conferred with representatives of the meat industry—Mr O'Toole, Mr Davies and myself—and agreed that a working party would be set up to deal with this important problem. Animal diseases are being transmitted to the work force and some of the methods of combating these diseases should be investigated.

Both the Federal Government and the New South Wales Government have accepted the proposition that where certain medical practitioners with some experience in diagnosing brucellosis are prepared to say there is a possibility of that disease being the cause of a worker's condition, that condition is accepted under both the Federal and New South Wales compensation Acts and entitles the worker to compensation. Part of the representation was made to achieve the same position in Victoria. The reason for this approach is that it is difficult to diagnose brucellosis. One hopes that the incidence of the disease will decrease by isolating the brucellosis reactors and by slowing working to half-pace to allow workers to wash the areas which may be contaminated, thus preventing contamination of carcasses and eliminating some of the disease. It is important that people in the medical profession understand the difference between hepatitis and diseases like brucellosis. Too often workers affected by brucellosis have had their condition incorrectly diagnosed and have been treated for something else.

It is hoped that the Government will accept the initiative taken by the Meat Industries Employees Union in New South Wales in seconding a post-graduate person to study at the Sydney university and to develop a capacity to deal with this situation. I hope the position will be reached in Victoria where similar arrangements will take place in an effort to eradicate this problem. The capacity of the Government to do this will be limited by the Budget provisions. There are no provisions in the Victorian Budget for this approach, but at least the Ministers have agreed to work with the employees, and the chief of the Department of Agriculture has agreed to the proposition, which is based on substantial comments by the unions, and is accepted by the Minister for Labour and Industry and the Minister of Agriculture.

I hope that in future Budget debates we will talk about the positive measures which have been taken to eradicate these diseases and their effect on the work force. Not only does it concern the workers directly dealing with carcasses, but the diseases are apparent in maintenance workers in the meat industry. That may surprise some honorable members but in some areas, instead of the clothes being treated on the abattoir premises, meat workers take their overalls home to be washed and in the process they carry the infection home to their families. The disease is transmitted to the community in this way.

Another disease is zoonosis which is prevalent in goats, and the slaughtering of feral goats is one area of risk. I ask that future consideration be given to developing a capacity to handle not only livestock diseases but a prevention programme in industry and proper coverage for employees. The trade union movement, seeking a solution to this problem, ran into a situation where a highly organized union was entirely unco-operative in this area, and thwarted activities of the union seeking a solution to the problem.

Some general practitioners should be designated as persons with some capacity to identify brucellosis and should be registered. The employees in the industry can carry a card to show where they work for the benefit of the general practitioners who will then have some chance to diagnose the disease. This has been opposed by the Australian Medical Association on the ground of interference with the strong trade practices doctors have been able to enforce through that organization.

I hope that some of the regulatory provisions applied by the medical profession will be relaxed to enable some degree of expertise to be developed by practitioners so that workers will have every chance of having a serious disease adequately diagnosed and treated.

Mr TREWIN (Benalla)—I refer to Division 585—Animal Health, and the expenses of veterinary research stations and laboratories. The 1979–80 estimate is $1 007 680 and the payments for

last year were $926 082—an increase of $81 598. One can assume that that amount reflects the natural increase in salaries and wages at the six veterinary research laboratories around Victoria. But it appears that is not so as fewer people are employed at some of these laboratories than in the past.

At the Benalla Regional Veterinary Laboratory, at the moment, there are four areas of acute shortage of staff which restrict the ability of the laboratory to carry out its work effectively. When a person retires or takes long service leave he is not replaced.

Mr Simmonds—Mr Acting Chairman, I direct your attention to the state of the House.

A quorum was formed.

Mr TREWIN—I was referring to a shortage of staff at the Benalla Regional Veterinary Laboratory. As staff members have left, the full complement of personnel has not been made up at that laboratory, and it cannot be. One must remember that the amount of money invested in this and other laboratories makes it essential that staff numbers stay at the required limit.

The funding of three of these laboratories was from the Cattle Compensation Fund. Item 16 refers to compensation under the Cattle Compensation Act 1967, No. 7615, with an allocation of $20 000 this year compared with $16 631 last year. One wonders why that was necessary as the Cattle Compensation Fund has always been self-sufficient—in other words a stamp duty is charged against each beast sold and it is paid into the Cattle Compensation Fund.

There was $5 million or $6 million in this fund until legislation was introduced allowing the money to be used to build the last three regional veterinary laboratories at Bendigo, Bairnsdale and Benalla. A large investment was needed from that fund—money contributed by the industry and used in its interests. During the brucellosis eradication campaign, the laboratories were used extensively and additional contributions were made by both the State and the Federal Governments. As the staff of the laboratories are paid by the State, the Government has made a considerable contribution to animal health. Goodness knows how much further it will be necessary to go, but if the brucellosis eradication campaign is to succeed to the full it is essential to maintain the staff of the laboratories at maximum strength.

At present the laboratories charge a fee for the treatment of each horse, cat, dog, goat or other animal that is brought in for testing or diagnosis. That is proper because the construction of the laboratories was paid for from the Cattle Compensation Fund. As no contribution has been made by the owners of the other animals, it is only reasonable that a charge should be imposed for their testing and diagnosis.

The division makes an allocation for the carcass classification scheme. Victoria has done a certain amount in this area and the other States and the Federal Government have also made small contributions. I do not know why the Government did not come to an arrangement with some of the abattoirs to make equipment available and provide one or two staff members if the use of the equipment and the operation of the scheme were included in the operations of the abattoirs. The only exception to the private ownership of abattoirs in Victoria is the Co-operative Farmers and Graziers Direct Meat Supply Ltd and the Government should have obtained the co-operation of that organization and one or two other large meat processing companies.

The only meatworks at which the equipment was installed was the Donald meatworks and, unfortunately, it is no longer operating. I have been told by departmental officers that useful information was gained through the operation of the equipment, even though the conditions were not entirely satisfactory. Through the activities of the department and with the assistance of the Minister, Victoria was able to

obtain some information about carcass classification. Although that information is not useful at present, it may prove to be useful in the future.

I pay tribute to the officers of the Department of Agriculture in the Division of Animal Health. Reference has been made to Dr Rushford, who is the chief veterinary officer. He is one of a long line of distinguished veterinarians who have made tremendous contributions to animal health in this State.

During the recent outbreak of an unknown disease in Tasmania the laboratories were able to make a small contribution in endeavouring to obtain the results of testing as quickly as possible. It is unfortunate that samples had to be sent overseas for more extensive testing and diagnosis. The Federal Government should be given a jolt in an attempt to ensure that the proposed new laboratory is constructed as soon as possible.

The outbreak of a type of blue tongue in northern Australia illustrates that the day is coming closer when something more serious could happen. Australia has had plenty of time in which to prepare but the days are running out and a serious challenge to the health of the animals of this nation could be faced.

Mr AUSTIN (Minister of Public Works)—The honorable member for Werribee asked a question concerning the run-down of the Cattle Compensation Fund. The reason why there has been a run-down is that heavy costs were incurred in the brucellosis eradication campaign and the compensation payment was increased from $175 a head to $250 a head. The heavy payment for the brucellosis eradication campaign has now been made so there should be no difficulty in building up the fund in the near future.

Dr COGHILL (Werribee)—Division No. 588 deals with the Division of Animal Industries, which is probably one of those divisions of the department that has most often been criticized for a lack of leadership and direction. It varies a lot from industry to industry and the dairying industry section, for example, is highly respected for the services it provides to dairy farmers. Other sections are not held in the same high regard.

An examination of the research proposals implemented by the Division of Animal Industries reveals why. A significant number of those projects seem to have no relevance to the problems concerning sections of the grazing industry. Some of them seem designed more to give officers a bit of research experience and keep them in useful employment than to improve the productivity, profitability or viability of certain sections of the grazing industry. That does not apply only to the grazing industry. The allocation for poultry investigation and advisory work for this year is $49 500. That relatively small allocation is not enough to allow the section properly to service the industry and to keep pace with it. It is being maintained at an inefficient level.

No doubt the department and the Minister cannot afford, for political reasons, to be without a poultry section, but, apart from the individual skills of the officers, it is poorly equipped to meet the needs of the industry. Indeed, the industry has reached the stage where it is mostly conducting its own research and carrying out its own advisory activities because the section has not been funded sufficiently to allow it to keep pace with industry development.

Another area that is of concern to people in the community is deer farming. This week's *Weekly Times* and many other recent issues contain a great deal of comment about the future of deer farming, but deer farming is not being helped by the Government. In Victoria, deer farming is subject to the Wildlife Act, which specifically charges the Fisheries and Wildlife Division with responsibility for just about every aspect of deer farming, including slaughter. Despite that, the Department of Agriculture is responsible for the slaughter of all animals for human consumption. The Department of Agriculture is trying to get into

the act by providing management advice and there is a clear conflict between the people in the Fisheries and Wildlife Division, who want to protect their little empire, and the people within the Division of Animal Industries of the Department of Agriculture, who want to build up their little empire as they are experiencing less demand for other services, particularly in the grazing industries.

There is so much public interest in the future of deer farming that the Government has a responsibility to resolve this conflict between sections of the Public Service and Ministers, and to give some leadership to people who want to enter the industry. The Government should ensure that the industry is properly supervised in the best interests of those who wish to enter it and the community in general.

HEALTH

Mr ROPER (Brunswick)—The Committee has now reached that part of the Bill that deals with the second largest area of Government spending—health. There is an urgent need for the reconsideration of health administration and the way in which the Health Commission is operating.

I am sure the Minister of Health is aware that at 555 Collins Street, the head office of the Health Commission, he presides over a highly centralized and thoroughly bureaucratized—not necessarily in the best traditions of the bureaucracy—system of decision-making on health. Even the most minor decisions about the most minor matters have to be made by public servants who live and work in Melbourne and who, in many instances, have not even visited the hospitals or the areas about which they are making decisions.

Mr Trewin—That could not be!

Mr ROPER—I can assure the honorable member for Benalla that numerous decisions made about the health services in the electorate he represents are made by people whose only knowledge of the hospitals or the buildings to which they are giving approval is gained from the study of plans.

Mr Ross-Edwards—I get them up to the electorate I represent.

Mr ROPER—That is an interesting remark, because substantial difficulties were encountered in the electorate of Shepparton, as the honorable member would be well aware, because the Health Commission did not completely understand some of the problems that can exist in a base hospital such as the Goulburn Valley Base Hospital at Shepparton–Mooroopna.

During the construction of that hospital, the committee of management was informed that it could not have an infectious diseases area because all cases of infectious diseases were to be taken to Fairfield. After a great deal of time and effort the bureaucrats in Melbourne were convinced that that was not necessarily the most appropriate way in which to deal with people who had an infectious disease, particularly children, and a small area was eventually made available.

Mr Ross-Edwards—It was sorted out.

Mr ROPER—It was sorted out, but those kinds of decisions could be made in a more appropriate manner if the people making the decisions were nearer to the institutions and the municipalities about which the decisions were being made. The present system can lead to ludicrous situations.

Mr B. J. Evans—They would not be able to have such deep-pile carpets if their offices were out of Melbourne.

Mr ROPER—I think the length of the pile relates to seniority in the service rather than the area in which an office is located. In the hospital area, decisions are not made as intelligently and sensibly as they might be simply because the decisions have been made by people who sometimes have little or no understanding of the local situation.

I recall the situation which developed at Inglewood-Wedderburn, where a committee was building a community health centre which was joined to an elderly citizens' centre project. That was a desirable proposition but no one from the Health Commission ever visited the

place to discuss the project. The committee had to bring the plans with them every time they wanted to discuss the development of the project. Indeed, to make matters worse the committee was never able to arrange a meeting between the architect involved with the former Hospitals and Charities Commission and the architect involved with the former Commission of Public Health. Finally, when the plans were agreed upon, there had to be two separate entrances, one entrance paid for by the hospital section and the other by the public health section. If one looks at the plans one will see, depending on which side of the road one comes down, how one is admitted to one area or the other of the health centre.

There are other areas where decisions could sensibly and logically be made by local government and even come under the supervision of local government, but the decisions are still made by the Health Commission. Suppose a pre-school committee operating independently, or under the auspices of the local council, wanted to plan the erection of an awning on the pre-school building. At my home, I would just do it, but in this case the plans have to come to Melbourne accompanied by the necessary fee, receive the authorization of various officers in Melbourne, and then be returned to the committee. This course of events leads to a waste of the time and energy of public servants over quite minor matters.

Many similar situations prevail, such as that surrounding the construction of a sandpit at the Swan Hill child care centre. The plans were forwarded to Melbourne for approval but because the proposed sandpit did not have the correct number of sides, the plans were returned and subsequently had to be resubmitted showing five sides instead of four sides as originally proposed.

I am suggesting to the Committee that the Government needs to urgently consider a different style of health administration in Victoria. The Government should decentralize decision making in the same way as the Government decentralized the making of decisions in the education field.

What we have is a centralized system of decision making where many decisions should be made at a decentralized level. This does not necessarily apply only to the country and provincial areas; it is also essential that it apply to the metropolitan area as well and the Government should develop a system of decentralized health regions.

It is three years since the Health Commission Bill was introduced into the Parliament and during the debate on that Bill an amendment was moved asking the commission to take into account proposals for the establishment of regions. Regretfully, little action has occurred in that area.

I recently attended a seminar at the Alexander Hospital in Castlemaine where the policy of the Health Commission on this aspect was put forward. Regretfully, so far as the Health Commission was concerned, it was virtually looking at a system under which a regional officer and a secretary would be employed in one pilot health region and that person was expected to start assessing and planning health services for that region. Listening to the paper, it seemed to me that it was a much too cautious and tentative approach to adopt.

That is not to say that there are no problems involved in decentralizing administration, as I am sure the Treasurer, being a former Minister of Education, would know. Fortunately, some of the problems which may arise have already been faced in New South Wales where the authorities have learnt a great deal from the regionalization operations, lessons we do not have to learn again.

Apart from those general remarks on health administration, there are four other matters to which I wish to specifically refer. Sub-item 10 of item 2 under Division No. 620 reveals the absolutely ludicrous amount of money which is being provided for research and investigation into the maltreatment of and conditions affecting the development of young children. It would be harder to imagine a greater insult in the Year of the Child than spending the massive sum of $3050 this year on research and

investigation into maltreatment and conditions affecting the development of young children.

The department will not be able to purchase much in the way of research from that allocation. Research has already been carried out by the Mental Health Authority and the public health people with the assistance of the Royal Children's Hospital. A report was completed in 1977. That is referred to in the report of the Mental Health Authority for that year but still that report has not been released.

I do not know what conclusions the research report contains which the Government wishes to suppress, but clearly the report was ready to be printed in 1977 and it should have been printed by late 1978. The Government has deliberately not had the report printed.

Equally, the Government has once again failed to provide, as speedily and effectively as possible, the results of a research programme into accidents amongst young children. In 1976 the fresh-faced, enthusiastic young Assistant Minister of Health announced an $80 000 programme to inquire into and investigate childhood accidents in Victoria. Dr Murray Clarke from the Royal Children's Hospital was to supervise the research which was to extend over a three-year period.

For a variety of reasons, chiefly relating to difficulties and changes in computer policy on where the project would be processed, in the last week of the last financial year the research assistant who had assisted in that programme was informed by the Health Commission that her employment was to be terminated. It was only because of protests that there was a couple of weeks delay and holiday pay was made available to her. The project was then handed over to Health Commission officials who had no experience in the project, or background in the area of childhood accidents.

Fortunately for the State, Dr Murray Clarke has continued in a voluntary capacity, finishing his work on the project. This was a major project which had investigated more than 5000 children's hospital accident admissions over the three-year period. The report was expected to consider ways and means by which childhood accidents could be reduced and eliminated. The inquiry was also to consider the question of making treatment more effective. If the Government had provided funds to enable the programme to continue for a few months longer, that project would have been completed by now. An amount of only $20 000 was required. If those funds had been provided it could have led to an improvement in treatment services in this important health area.

When honorable members were considering the Business Franchise (Tobacco) Bill, I put the view of the Opposition that more funds should be spent on medical research. I will not raise the matter again but it is worth noting that there has been no increase whatsoever in Budget allocations for medical research this year. In fact, the allocations have fallen back significantly from last year's allocations, and many of the research projects which have been conducted by the various institutions have been set back accordingly.

The last matter I wish to refer to under this division is sub-item 1 under item 3—Medical Board, Hospital Accreditation Committee and Foreign Practitioners Qualifications Committee —fees and other expenses. It is poor public administration when the Medical Board collects a large sum of money from medical practitioners and then carries out its activities in secret. The Parliament has never received a report from the Medical Board even though the legislation governing the activities of the Chiropractors and Osteopaths Board provides for honorable members to obtain details of the activities of those boards for the relevant year.

It seems that the Medical Board and various other boards should report to the Minister. I was surprised to learn that many of these organizations do not have to do so. If a report was provided, the Minister could then table that report in the Parliament.

I will be raising other matters in relation to health administration but I

will hope in the foreseeable future honorable members will see progress made in the area of decentralizing decision making to ensure that decisions are made by people who are familiar with and understand the local situation.

Mr SIMMONDS (Reservoir)—I support the propositions advanced by the honorable member for Brunswick who raised the question of decentralization of responsibility in the administration of health services.

I direct the attention of the Committee to the situation which has developed as a result of Government policy in this area, particularly as it affects the East Preston Community Health Centre and other community health centres desirous of providing dental services for the patients of those centres, which were established to enable the introduction of a broadly-based preventative and diagnostic programme in all health areas but, as a first step, in the area of community health.

As a result of action taken by responsible persons in the dental hospital area, in respect of services provided on a sessional basis at the East Preston Community Health Centre, a decision was made yesterday that in future a means test should be applied for these services given in the community health field.

Whilst this proposition might be a legitimate subject for consultation and perhaps negotiation, I was extremely alarmed to discover that during the period when the East Preston Community Health Centre has operated, two dental clinics could not be used because of the policy of the Government not to provide staff to operate these services, just as the Government has not provided pharmacy staff to operate in the pharmacy field in these community health centres. Arrangements had been made between three community health centres to share a dentist from the Royal Dental Hospital on a sessional basis.

The administration of the East Preston Community Health Centre was alarmed to find a survey had been taken by the dentists on the means of clients who were being treated by the dentist. At no time was the administration or the management committee of the community health centre advised of the survey. The first indication of the survey came when an approach was made to introduce a means test for the clients treated by the dentist.

I point out that the only patients receiving dental treatment at the East Preston Community Health Centre are those who are referred by social workers, the general practitioner and other operatives within the centre.

The reason for this restricted service is the high percentage of young people in the area who have been described as dental cripples following the survey taken in the area. As an aside, I mention that the School Dental Service has been upgraded because of its mature approach to this problem, particularly in the field of dental care.

What has occurred at these centres is another indication of the complexities of Government policy. It was disclosed yesterday by Dr Dawkins of the Royal Dental Hospital that the survey had been made, unknown to the administration or members of the management committee. The dentist who had been engaged for the purpose of treating child patients was inquiring into the financial position of their parents and asking questions about the capacity of the parents to pay for the treatment.

I ask whether this is in conformity with Government policy and the principle of establishing community health centres in deprived areas. In respect of the application of the means test as it affects the East Preston area, the implementation of a means test cannot be accepted by the Federal and State Governments because a survey revealed that 23 000 residents in the area were socially deprived and in need of the services which were recommended in the original submission.

This included the provision of five general practitioners, two dentists, a pharmacist, and a range of other services in that area. The centre was built

at a cost of $850 000, and its continuing development has been restricted by lack of finance and lack of staff. This is highlighted by the centre being forced to move into other areas to attract services on a sessional basis to provide for the needs of the people in the area.

The community health centre is now faced with persons recruiting staff on the basis of the full philosophy and understanding of the centre, and working with a person who has secretly been performing surveys in the interest of a Government instrumentality associated with the health field. I understand that Dr Wiseman and Dr Hawkins have been in collusion on community health and dental services. No attempt was made previously to advise the administrator or the management committee of the centre of this proposal.

In the face of this, people are now asked to accept the implementation of the means test for dental health services. I understand that demands are being made on the limited resources of dental health care and that public servants will have to rationalize resources and limit them in conformity with Government policy. That should not be pursued as it is now, with one person investigating what is taking place in a centre and then reporting to somebody outside the centre. The person conducting the investigation is trained in dentistry. It would be different if the person determining the application of a means test had some experience in deciding on capacity to pay. That may or may not be an acceptable proposition. However, when a person who is operating professionally in the centre is conducting an investigation, that indicates that the centre does not have the capacity to deal with this problem realistically.

The Government has a responsibility to come clean on the question of finances in this area, to indicate whether it is in favour of community health centres, and to end the situation in which dentists, doctors and other people in professional associations are determining policy for people seeking private services.

I asked Dr Wiseman yesterday whether community health centres can have a dentist on a salary or a fee for service basis and whether that conforms with Government policy. I was told that in one instance a fee for service dentist is operating in a community health centre, but that this was a camel standing on its own because of some obscure political decision.

I should like to know whether obscure political decisions are being made in respect of one community health centre which are not generally applied to other centres, and whether it is Government policy. I also ask whether the Minister of Health is in control of the community health programme at the dental care centres, and whether these things are unknown to him.

Mr BORTHWICK (Minister of Health)—The honorable member for Reservoir referred to the so-called camel situation that exists at the St Albans Community Health Centre, which I visited with the honorable member for Keilor. He and I, to our mutual surprise, found that the committee had installed a modern dental chair without the knowledge of the commission. It is not, as the honorable member or I would understand it, a fee for service arrangement.

The community health centre at St Albans allowed a person to enter into private practice utilizing that facility. It was purely a private arrangement. As the honorable member for Keilor knows, the commission recommended to me that that practice be stopped immediately. I allowed the practice to continue. It is not a fee for service or a salary situation, and I understand that there is a shortage of dentists in the area. The centre had installed the chair, and that person was prepared to work there and look after her own accounts. Therefore, as she was providing a service which would not otherwise have been provided, I decided that she did not breach the policy.

Mr Ginifer—And she was fulfilling a need in the community.

Mr BORTHWICK—That is right. She was not adding to the cost of the centre, or anything else.

I should like to speak in more detail with the honorable member for Reservoir because he is disturbed about something that has occurred in that centre without the knowledge of the management. I can well understand his feelings about it. I understand—I may not be correct and may need to do more homework on it—that all installed dental chairs in community health centres in Melbourne are an extension of the Royal Dental Hospital; they come under the control of the hospital and are run and managed in the same way.

It is in the ultimate plan for Broadmeadows that there will be many chairs.

Mr Roper—It is not like at Churchill; that is salaried.

Mr BORTHWICK—I am not sure of the position at Churchill, but I understand the policy of the Royal Dental Hospital is that it will impose a means test because it cannot provide a total service for all people who may need it. The hospital is particularly concerned that those people who can least afford dental service are unable to get it.

I would be pleased to have more details of the honorable member's disturbance at the manner in which this investigation has been undertaken without the knowledge of the particular committee.

Dr COGHILL (Werribee)—I draw the attention of the Minister of Health to the need for improved funding and administration of the health education centre, that the Minister will be aware operates from the Health Commission's main building at 555 Collins Street, Melbourne. There is no specific provision in the Appropriation Bill for the health education centre.

Mr Roper—It is hardly a centre.

Dr COGHILL—I will come to that. It rates very poorly as a centre. I am sure that the Minister is aware of the importance of preventive medicine and of advising people how they can protect their health by hygienic and other measures. People can improve their own lives by their standard of health.

The health education centre operates on a shoe string, according to the funds it can gather from here and there within the Health Commission.

When I visited the centre on Monday last, no one was in attendance. There was a notice indicating that people wanting information or copies of literature on display could go to the eleventh floor. Most people are not willing to do that sort of thing. They want something that is easily accessible but, more importantly, there should be literature and advice available to the community under the auspices of the health education centre. It is clear, from the lack of any specific funding and from the present operations of the health education centre, that this service is not available.

On Monday, eighteen items of literature were on display. Of those, only five were produced under the auspices of the old Department of Health. None was indicated as the product of the Health Commission. Two of those five were headed "Health Education Centre", and the other three had a note on the back, "Department of Health". The others were from all sorts of areas. Three related to the International Year of the Child; one was from the Handicapped Persons Information Bureau of Victoria, under the auspices of Yooralla. One was from the Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital; one was from the Victorian Deaf Blind and Rubella Children's Association, one from the Australian Association for Better Hearing, one from the Community Child Care Association, which the honorable member for Brunswick would know well, one from the Deafness Foundation (Victoria), and four from the National Information Service on Drug Use. There was obviously a very limited range of diseases covered in that sample. The literature on display was inadequate for anyone

wanting information on a large number of specific disorders, such as head lice, scabies or even hepatitis.

The record of the Victorian Health Commission compares poorly with its interstate equivalents. Even the Queensland Government devotes more money and higher priorities to health education and the publication of health education literature than does the Victorian Liberal Government through its instrumentality.

The Health Commission in New South Wales has a long and proud record of publishing a wide range of material on health matters. This has gone on under a range of Governments in New South Wales. The New South Wales Government not only prepares material, but also ensures that it is widely distributed and widely known.

Mr B. J. Evans—Are New South Wales people healthy as a result?

Dr COGHILL—The New South Wales people have a better opportunity of being well informed. If one visits an agricultural show or a trade fair in New South Wales, one is certain to find a display by the Health Commission and a broad range of literature on things such as head lice. The New South Wales Government is particularly good at this whilst the Victorian Government is weak at it.

At country shows in New South Wales, information on hydatids is displayed, and farmers and others who may contract the disease are well informed of the danger to themselves, to the community and their families, and are advised about what they should do.

I strongly suggest to the Minister that there should be a large specific allocation in the next Budget, and that he should explain the basis of funding for the health education centre this year under this Budget.

Mr SPYKER (Heatherton)—I direct the attention of the Minister to the fact that funds are set aside for the Australian Kidney Foundation, the National Heart Foundation and the Anti-Cancer Council, but no funds are set aside for diabetic research. Diabetes is the third most prevalent disease in Victoria and Australia, and it seems a shame that Parliament does not set aside funds for research in this area. People who are engaged in this research are mainly volunteers, and have to apply overseas for grants. About 2·5 per cent of the Australian population are not aware that they are diabetics or they are reluctant to come forward and admit that they are.

I have spoken to diabetics who are concerned that if they admit to suffering from diabetes they will suffer the consequences of reduced superannuation, and so on. I reiterate that much money is being spent on health to cure something when the damage has been done. Money would be better spent on research for improved medical services so that more people are treated before the disease has reached its late stages. Ultimately, that course of action would reduce the total health bill of Australia. Avoidance is always better than cure. People who unfortunately suffer from diabetes can also suffer from blindness and other illnesses associated with the disease if it is undetected.

An education programme should be mounted in the community so that people are alerted to the symptoms of a disease in its early stages. They should be aware that as sufferers of a disease they would still be accepted as part of the community. They should know that treatment is freely available. Machines used to detect diabetes are freely available through various centres. For instance, the Lions Club purchased a machine and donated it to the Diabetic Research Foundation. The machine is being set up around various shopping centres so that shoppers can be tested for diabetes. Depending on the stage of diabetes being detected, much can be done so that a diabetic can lead as normal a life as possible. Obviously, detection at an early stage is important, especially so that diabetics can make use of a proper diet applicable to the disease. Many other things can be done for diabetics, of which most people are not aware.

To properly control a disease, money needs to be set aside for research. The Federal Government has totally absconded from its responsibilities in that respect. The Diabetic Research Foundation had to apply overseas for funding. It should be noted that the authorities in the United States of America have set aside $480 million for research into diabetes, and it is shameful that Australia has not set aside a large amount of money for research. Victoria should play its part and institute research and to interchange that research with what has been done in the United States of America and in other parts of the world to ensure that diabetics can either overcome or cope with the disease. Obviously, research also needs to be carried out on the cause of diabetes. Unless funds are set aside for that purpose, the cause will never be known.

Australia has a reasonably proud record of funds being set aside for research into many illnesses. Australian people have worked hard and contributed to a whole range of programmes for eliminating other diseases. Although the main responsibility for research belongs to the Federal Government, it is also the responsibility of the Victorian Government to emphasize the need for research by the Federal Government.

Mr SIMMONDS (Reservoir)—I thank the Minister of Health for his response to the particular problem I raised. I indicate that it was not my concern to attack the people within the dental hospital services but rather to illustrate the conflict that will develop as a result of a philosophy which is alien to the community health centre programme. I invite the Minister to visit the East Preston Community Health Centre to examine the facilities and to make an analysis not only of the dental service but also of the other services so that something can be worked out between us to provide the resources needed for the centre.

I understand from recent press reports that there is a glut of dentists and that 41 graduates are finding difficulty in obtaining employment. The centre to which I refer could immediately employ three full-time dentists. It is prevented from doing so by lack of resources and, if a funding process could be organized which would not involve the State in the payment of other salaries or whatever else is associated with the dental aspect but certainly the resources to provide the materials for the dentists to practice, because the surgeries already exist, the problem could be overcome. I hope the Minister can make arrangements to visit the centre soon.

Mr ROPER (Brunswick)—Public health is probably the area of Health Commission expenditure to which the worst has happened in the Budget. There has been a substantial assault on services, particularly for children. It makes the International Year of the Child that has been so useful as a source of press releases for the Minister for Community Walfare Services look like the public relations exercise it has been rather than any kind of effective programme. Unlike the Minister I am interested in more than press releases; I am interested in the production of services.

I shall clearly demonstrate to the Minister what he and the Government have been party to in the International Year of the Child, because the Budget, as from the end of the calendar year, which is only six weeks away, kills off the preschool dental services that have been operating in approximately twenty suburbs throughout Melbourne.

Mr Jasper—What about country children?

Mr ROPER—I also have figures to which I shall refer for pre-school dental services for country children, and I invite the honorable member to restrain his enthusiasm for a moment. I was most surprised at the reduced amount of money in the Budget for the clinics, and certainly it is alarming that all capital and maintenance grants to municipalities from the Health Commission will be cut off. The Minister of Health and the Assistant Minister did not even bother to inform the Royal Dental Hospital, the organization which provides the staff for the services, of their decision. Yesterday, when I contacted Professor Storey at the dental hospital, he was unaware of it. The management of the hospital was informed by the councils, not by the Health Commission or the Minister.

The pre-school dental service has been operating free dental clinics for the past twenty years. The dentist and nurse are provided by the Royal Dental Hospital and the local council pays all the costs involved, for which a partial reimbursement is received from the Health Commission. Among the suburbs affected are Altona, Brunswick, Doncaster, Eltham, South Melbourne, Port Melbourne, Whittlesea, Prahran, Sandringham, Springvale and Essendon. In the electorate I represent, the Brunswick pre-school dental clinic costs $31 000, of which the State Government contributes $14 300. Last year there were 4484 attendances and 3255 treatments in Brunswick alone.

Over the years, hundreds of thousands of Victorians have had their first experience of the dentist either at the clinics or at the invaluable visits the clinics organized at local kindergartens. Many honorable members will be aware of how important it is to convince young children that the dentist's chair is not a fearful place and the pre-school dental clinics have been an excellent method of ensuring that children's first views of dentists are not fearful.

Dental health in Victoria is disastrous. A study carried out by two social worker students and personnel of the Royal Dental Hospital and the Faculty of Dentistry—it was carried out from my office —showed that of five and six-year-olds in Brunswick only 6 per cent of children were free of caries. A study at the Olympic Village Primary School in Heidelberg showed that 97 per cent of children needed treatment to restore their teeth and that only 13 per cent received regular dental care. Surveys carried out by Professor Storey and his staff confirm this position in many areas of Victoria. There has been substantial improvement as a result of fluoridation but other preventative measures are required also. Fluoridation does not solve all the problems of dental care; it only reduces them.

As a result of the mean decision by the Government, which saves at the most $150 000 in a full financial year and $60 000 this year, most local councils will be forced to close their clinics because of their inability to pay the total cost. I am sure honorable members are aware that other increased burdens have been placed on local councils. Councils should not have to bear the extra burden when the State and Commonwealth Governments change a subsidy to their own advantage and to the disadvantage of the municipality or of the service.

The total cost of the clinics, which see more than 30 000 children a year, is only $150 000 for the State Government. The decision of the Government is mean and shortsighted and in the long-run it will cost the community more than the tiny amount that has been saved.

It is made worse by the fact that school dental services in Victoria are totally deficient. This year, fewer than 10 per cent of all school age children in Victorian schools will receive attention from the School Dental Service. That is significantly lower than the percentage in any other State. The Tasmanian Government this year will ensure that all its primary school age children are visited and attended to by the school dental service in that State. Every other State has more than doubled the level of its performance compared with Victoria.

Earlier, the honorable member for Murray Valley asked about country children. In an answer I received to a question on notice on 3 July, I discovered a major lack of school dental services in country areas: In 1978 only 139 schools were visited by the dental service; 51 in the north east, 23 in the Western District, 7 in the Otway Ranges, 40 in the Mallee, 18 in Gippsland west, none in the Goulburn Valley and none in Gippsland. This was reduced from 187 schools attended to in 1975. The number of children visited in country schools has decreased from 6500 to 4900.

That also suggests to me that the increase in children being seen by the School Dental Service is almost totally occurring in the metropolitan area and in Geelong. The survey shows that the dental health of country children is no better than that of their city cousins. Indeed, this suggests that there needs

to be a far greater effort in dental health services, not a smaller effort which is the thrust of part of this Budget.

However, unlike the Government the Opposition did not campaign for the Federal Government which broke its promise on the School Dental Service and reduced the subsidies. That is one area where there has been an assault on health services.

In the infant welfare area there has been another assault. The total increase in subsidies to municipalities towards the cost of infant welfare has risen only 6·4 per cent which is significantly less than the rate of inflation and significantly lower than the amount that would be required to catch up subsidies for awards and conditions for infant welfare sisters.

The Town Clerk of the City of Brunswick has kindly prepared for the council and myself a study of Government grants and subsidies and the Brunswick situation is not unique in this area. In 1978–79, the subsidies from the Health Commission accounted for only 34 per cent of the infant welfare costs, so that in capital and maintenance, the amount provided by the Health Commission was significantly less than the costs involved. This was completely alien and opposed to the proposition put forward by the late Mr Louis Voumard Q.C. that municipal councils should have to pay only one-third of the costs. Instead, the State Government is paying only one-third of the cost.

Another mean and not very useful decision has been to cut out subsidies for infant welfare care and mothercraft training schools. I have been in contact with the Infant Welfare Special Interest Group of the Royal Australian Nursing Federation (Victorian Branch) which is extremely disturbed by the Government's action in sacrificing the vital eight weeks' in-service programmes offered to infant welfare nurses. A letter from that group to the Assistant Minister of Health states, *inter alia*:

> This irresponsible decision further perpetuates the *ad hoc* gap filling approach which is wasteful of resources, and further fragments service delivery. We see it as essential that nurses be represented on this committee—

That is the Early Childhood Services Policy Committee on which the group and infant welfare nurses are not represented:

> prior to such a far reaching decision being made affecting a nursing service that has been established and well accepted in the community for over three generations.

To make matters worse, scholarships in the past offered by the Health Commission for nurses participating in the training course have now ceased. That money has gone forever which means that some nurses who would have undertaken the community health nursing diploma and the maternal health child elective will not be able to do so. That will substantially damage the level of infant welfare services throughout the State.

Research carried out by Dr Howard Williams, formerly of the Royal Children's Hospital, demonstrates that one of the cheapest and most effective ways of ensuring both child health and the health of the community is through the existing infant health and welfare network rather than creating brand new and extravagant propositions like early childhood development complexes.

I am sure the Minister will agree with that proposition. There is already a network that needs some additions. Capable additional sisters and additional centres and additional staff such as interpreters and pediatricians to provide advice. However, the Government is reducing those services and seems obsessed with ECDP's.

In subsidies to municipalities towards the cost of preventative health services, including immunization for infectious diseases, there has been an 8·4 per cent increase in the subsidies to municipalities towards the cost of immunization for infectious diseases.

The subsidy to the City of Brunswick last financial year was only equal to 17 per cent of the cost of running the service because, while there is a subsidy, albeit insufficient for the doctor, there is no subsidy for various other municipal employees and the running costs involved. Once again the municipalities are bearing the cost of

this vital campaign. The Government should be stepping up its campaign against whooping cough, rubella, tetanus, measles and poliomyelitis, etc. In Great Britain there has been an outbreak of whooping cough amongst children because the level of immunization was reduced. Polio cases occurred last year in Victoria for the same reason.

This year fewer children than last year are being immunized against rubella. The Government's attitude to immunization services was to set up a committee on which local government was not represented. The Government then kept the report of that committee hidden.

The subsidy for delivered meals was equal only to 54 per cent of the net costs and the same applies to the employment of municipal welfare officers, home help services and various other services. This is anything but a children's budget or a municipal council budget. The problem may well be that child care services come within the administration of a most junior Assistant Minister as compared with the Minister at the table, the Minister of Health.

The public health area has suffered more severely than other aspects of the health expenditure and more severely than various other items of expenditure. The Opposition is strongly critical of the various decisions that have been taken on dental services and municipal services. Far more services could be effectively provided throughout the community at a comparatively small cost to the community through local government. The Budget has set health services back rather than brought services forward.

The Budget makes the exercise of conducting inquiries into local government activities in health and welfare quite meaningless when the Government not only ignores the results of those inquiries but actually acts to make the position of local government worse than it has previously been.

Mr SPYKER (Heatherton)—Subsidies to infant welfare and mothercraft training schools have been slashed. I urge the Minister to revise the Government's attitude to these subsidies. Currently mothers live in more isolated conditions. The spread of the metropolitan area has broken the family link whereby the husband is away for most of the day and the wife leads a lonely existence.

There is a natural assumption that we are all natural parents and all mothers are natural mothers who need only to attend the infant welfare centre to have the baby weighed and to be advised on feeding methods. Some imagination should be used in the use of infant welfare centres by making those centres a contact point for mothers to meet and discuss their problems. It is no good a centre being staffed three mornings a week or two half-days a week; a long queue forms and the young mothers are put through like sausages through a machine. The needs of mothers and children are not catered for.

It is shameful that the Health Commission has not considered this matter and done something about it. I am sure those centres could be used during the hours the mothercraft nurse is not present, and mothers could meet in the afternoon and the young children could play together. Young mothers could discuss their problems, or perhaps a qualified person could assist them. Young mothers are often isolated—they are away from their families and feel isolated in their own homes because their neighbours either are not at home or are doing something else. It would not cost much or require much motivation to do this. Some church groups are trying to grapple with these problems.

One church in the electorate that I represent has a group of young mothers who meet there two afternoons a week. The children are cared for by a couple of women so that the mothers can join in pottery, woodwork and weaving classes and other activities. That is good for young mothers. It is better than the mothers taking the babies home from hospital and not being sure what to do for the babies because they are left in isolation.

The philosophy seems to be that because a person suddenly becomes a parent she is a natural mother and automatically knows what to do. That is wrong. It is part of the problems experienced in many marriages. I ask the Minister to urge his department to ensure that facilities and centres are used more extensively so that young mothers can benefit from these facilities.

Mr SIDIROPOULOS (Richmond)—The matter I bring to the attention of the Minister of Health has been completely overlooked by society. One section of the community does not receive the benefits of services provided by local councils and the Health Commission, namely, the elderly migrant. Elderly migrants become a problem because they cannot enjoy the facilities which Australians enjoy, such as elderly citizens' clubs, the meals-on-wheels service and nursing homes. Elderly migrants do not take advantage of those services because of the lack of communication.

In Collingwood, a group of 45 elderly migrants have formed a club, but the Collingwood City Council is not able to provide the necessary special funds for the project. The club meets twice a week at the Collingwood Town Hall. The members have to pay $2 for the barbecue or the food they eat. I ask the Minister to consider this problem because it does not apply only to Collingwood. It is a growing problem. These people should receive the benefits that other people receive.

Mr Borthwick—Is this an elderly group?

Mr SIDIROPOULOS—Yes.

Mr Borthwick—What nationality?

Mr SIDIROPOULOS—Greek; the same principle applies to other ethnic groups. In five or ten years, the problem will increase because of the lack of communication. Old Australians do not like to communicate with these elderly migrants. Endeavours are made to integrate these people into the community, but they go to live in an area and they stay there all day. One elderly person suspiciously looks at another and they do not help each other. The problem is growing. These people help to look after children by baby-sitting at home. Most of them came to Australia under the family reunion scheme. Some cannot cope and have to return to their homeland.

There are other people, such as invalid pensioners, partially incapacitated people and people over the age of 45 or 50 years, who have been retrenched from their work and are permanently unemployed, and who, because they do not have a skill to get another job or they do not have a knowledge of the English language, permanently receive unemployment benefits. That brings them into the category of being more or less permanently unemployed or incapacitated for work. Those people are lonely and do not enjoy the social facilities which other citizens enjoy. I ask the Minister of Health to consider this growing problem and to help to make these people and their children happy.

Mr BORTHWICK (Minister of Health)—The honorable member for Richmond has raised a pertinent matter. A working group of officers of the Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs and the Health Commission is looking at the utilization of existing elderly citizens' clubs, the design and general manner in which they operate, to ascertain whether they can be better utilized and set up initially in a better way to allow particular groups to use them.

I agree that one of the social problems in the near future will be the aged first generation migrant, because it is commonly known that the aged, even if they have a grasp of the new language, frequently revert to their language of origin as they get older. There are a variety of community services that will have to be closely examined to ascertain how they can be provided for groups of ethnic origin.

I should like the honorable member to speak to me privately about the service that is operating at the Collingwood Town Hall. As a result of that I may be able to arrange for the

honorable member to speak with some of the officers of my department and perhaps an investigation can be undertaken to discover whether there is any way in which these people can be helped under the present set-up.

Mr ROPER (Brunswick)—It is important for the Government to explain what has occurred in the dental health services area. The Government has quite successfully killed the services off by stealth. It has made no announcement. The first occasion on which local government heard of the decision was on Monday, when letters from the Health Commission were received. The Government should justify the decision, if it can, because the record of the centres was extremely good, although many children who needed the services did not attend them. The solution to that problem is to ensure that the children attend the centres rather than killing the centres off.

It was not a situation in which money was being wasted. The work being done was cost effective, so far as the dental hospital is aware and certainly so far as I am aware. The Government must publicly justify its action in this area and in the infant welfare services area.

The letter sent by the infant welfare special interest section on 15 October has still not been replied to by the Minister's colleague. That is not good enough. The Government should be improving rather than diminishing these two important areas of public expenditure. As the honorable member for Heatherton said, the infant welfare sisters say that the services currently provided should be improved. They are concerned that they are not able to provide follow-up services because a number of mothers, particularly those who are less well organized or who do not speak English, do not present themselves at the infant welfare centres after the first couple of weeks after bringing their babies home.

More research should be done on this to discover the proportion of mothers and children who drop out of the infant welfare service system in the first couple of months of the babies' lives. Doctors and nurses have suggested that some of those children are most at risk not only of maltreatment but also of general nutritional and other deficiencies.

The Government must make sure that there are adequate doctors and staff, not only in the lucky municipalities and regions of the State, but also all over the State. The maldistribution of infant welfare services throughout the State, as shown by the most recent figures available—those for 1967-77—is of grave concern. It appears that the services a family can obtain depend upon where it lives.

Parliament, the people and the municipalities require an explanation of why a good service is being chopped out.

Mr BORTHWICK (Minister of Health)—There has been a general increase in the allocation for dental centres, clinics and mobile services.

Mr Roper—It is less than the full-year costs.

Mr BORTHWICK—The increase is $1 456 470 and that has been provided despite the fact that at 1 July 1976 the scheme was fully funded by the Commonwealth Government but since 1 July 1978 that Commonwealth assistance has been reduced by 50 per cent.

All governments in Australia have fiscal problems and that cannot be helped, but the State has made an effort. The increase is substantial. The allocation for the School Dental Service this year is $4·685 million, an increase of $1 456 470.

Each honorable member who has spoken on every field of health has advocated increased expenditure in the areas in which he or she is specially interested. I acknowledge that and it is right that honorable members should be able to put forward their views and to press for them as hard as they can. However, this is a difficult time and difficult decisions have to be made.

Whether honorable members agree with the areas in which cuts have been made or wheher they commend the increased expenditures, the judgments have to be made and they are not easy to make. That is the only explanation I can give of why there have been substantial increases in some areas and substantial decreases in others.

The sitting was suspended at 6.12 *p.m. until* 8.3 *p.m.*

Mr ROPER (Brunswick)—Before the suspension of the sitting for dinner the House was discussing the question of funding of dental clinics. The allocation this year is increased because of the full year costs of the facilities which were already in existence and those which had been constructed in the past few months. Unfortunately, I suspect the same problem exists in relation to hospitals. During the second-reading debate I had incorporated in *Hansard* a table which showed an increase of 11·2 per cent in hospital funds for this financial year. Although it seems to be a substantial increase, it will be just sufficient to pay for the full year increase in costs for rises occurring last year, an allowance for cost increases this year for the proportion of the year they must be paid, the full year costs of additional staff provided last year, and an amount of about 0·3 per cent for the fact that this year is a leap year and involves those who operate on a seven-day week basis in additional amounts of money.

That means that no funds remain for increased services this year, so that those facilities that came on line last year and were not developed, and new services that are ready for occupancy now will not be able to go ahead unless equivalent services elsewhere are reduced. I remind the Minister of what he said in answer to my colleague, the honorable member for Heatherton, on 1 November this year when asked about the Alfred Hospital, which has 100 beds ready for use but which are not being used. The honorable gentleman said that for the past two years there had been a problem about the Commonwealth not agreeing to new services. The Minister would know that the Commonwealth put a blanket control on new facilities only as of 1 July this year. Indeed, many new services were staffed with Commonwealth agreement in 1977–78. What can the Minister inform the Parliament about the future of Victorian hospital services? Can the honorable gentleman tell honorable members when the 100 beds at the Alfred Hospital will be used? Can he say how it is intended to staff the additional facilities that are being constructed? Can he inform the Committee how the Government intends to staff the Austin Hospital and what can he say about the additional beds which are currently being built at Essendon?

Victoria seems to be running into a situation similar to that in New South Wales where significant numbers of beds have had to be closed in order to open facilities that were being built. That situation already exists at the Alfred Hospital and it will occur in other areas in the next eighteen months to two years.

What steps is the Minister taking to improve the administrative ability of the officers in the Health Commission? I find it incredible that not one person in the commission has managed an acute hospital for any length of time. Certainly the chairman has briefly been an executive officer of the Royal Women's Hospital, which would be the best funded hospital in the system. Apart from that, in the Health Commission, there is a distinct lack of people with senior hospital administrative experience. That has fairly serious effects on hospital budgets. It is a bit like sending out a new first constable in the Fraud Squad to investigate the books of Associated Securities Ltd. It just does not work.

Mr Williams—Do not be so nasty.

Mr ROPER—The honorable member for Doncaster does not believe the books of Associated Securities Ltd needed investigating?

Mr Williams—Talk about some of your own affairs.

Mr ROPER—Any person guilty of major fraud would need to be investigated by somebody more experienced than a first constable. I suggest that the difference in administrative background and experience between the officers of the commission, who have to go out to the major teaching hospitals, and the management of those hospitals is detrimental to the over-all running of the State system.

Mr Crellin—How much administrative experience have you?

Mr ROPER—I think I could run a lolly shop better than the honorable member for Sandringham. Unlike the honorable member, for a brief period I have at least been an acting permanent head of a department in the Commonwealth Public Service and have had a variety of contacts with the Public Service over fifteen years.

If the honorable member for Sandringham thinks about it at length, possibly with the help of an additional explanation from the Minister of Health, he may be able to understand the effect of having additional senior administrative and experienced personnel attached to the Health Commission. I have never been made more welcome than when I visited the Sandringham and District Memorial Hospital because its administrators were pleased that a member of Parliament was interested in their activities.

The Royal Melbourne Hospital, the Alfred Hospital, the Austin Hospital and the major teaching hospitals plus provincial hospitals, such as the Geelong and District Hospital, have senior administrators who possess much experience, not just in the hospital in which they are now employed but in other hospitals as well. The finance officers and other senior administrative officials are also greatly experienced. The people who are sent out by the Health Commission to investigate hospital budgets——

Honorable members interjecting.

The CHAIRMAN (Mr A. T. Evans)—Order! The Chamber is becoming disorderly and I ask all honorable members to co-operate with the Chair and return the Chamber to the decorum to which it is accustomed.

Mr ROPER—Despite the interjections coming from the noisy honorable members on the Government side of the Chamber, what I am trying to suggest is that there needs to be——

The CHAIRMAN—Order! I ask the honorable member for Brunswick to also co-operate with the Chair. The honorable member is being unnecessarily provocative and encouraging the Chamber to become disorderly. I ask him to extend to the Chair the respect to which it is accustomed.

Mr ROPER—I invite Government supporters to discuss these matters with senior hospital administrators so that they might learn a few things which clearly they have not learnt from experience. It is necessary that senior administration officials engaged in the hospital field be used more by the Health Commission in its activities.

The first experience of the Health Commission in this area concerned the Queen Victoria Medical Centre, and it was instructive for the commission's officials engaged in the hospital field. There is a need to use experienced senior administrators, such as Dr Ian Brant, to assist hospitals to improve their budgetary systems, for in the end that will save the State considerable sums of money. The Government is unable to spend money on new services or in areas of important health activity such as mental retardation and public health services. This can occur only if the Government can ensure that there is no waste in the system.

I am not suggesting that many of the hospital administrators are not proficient, but I am suggesting that there is a need to combine the various skills available in the health field to obtain the greatest effect from every dollar spent.

I would not expect the honorable member for Sandringham to understand these matters, but I hope the Minister of Health understands the need

to introduce a system whereby senior administrators from the hospitals are available to the Health Commission for various periods up to two years to advise hospitals on how best they can improve their efficiency.

The honorable member for Frankston represents an area which has a hospital about which more promises have been broken than most. The honorable member would understand that there are people within the hospital field who are regarded as being senior and experienced administrators and who could be most effectively used by the Health Commission in improving the budgetary system.

Mrs Patrick—Have a go at the Alfred?

Mr ROPER—I can understand the honorable member for Brighton becoming upset about the Alfred Hospital. I can understand her concern because that hospital has many beds which are not being used and will not be used in the foreseeable future.

The matter I raise with the Minister of Health relates to the need for a greater transfer of personnel between the Health Commission, particularly those within the hospitals division, and the major public hospitals so services can be improved and provided at all levels, and to further increase efficiency.

Division No. 631 refers to mental retardation, which is the Cinderella area of health services in Victoria. Clearly the Budget shows that the Treasurer is not Prince Charming so far as mental retardation services are concerned. Indeed, one could suggest that the Treasurer and his Minister of Health are the ugly sisters.

The CHAIRMAN (Mr A. T. Evans)—Order! The honorable member for Noble Park is out of his place, and out of order by interjecting.

Mr ROPER—I take up the interjection of the honorable member and suggest that the Premier's committee report, which has been prepared for many years but which has not been acted upon, rather than being the glass slipper it should have been, the Government has turned it into a cheap, imported plastic thong because it has not delivered the services which one might have expected.

In 1974 the Premier announced a major inquiry into mental retardation services in Victoria. The committee which was set up met on numerous occasions and dealt with all the submissions which were placed before it, and also made a number of interim recommendations. In August 1977 the Premier received the report of the committee, a very significant and important report. It was not until the following March that there was any publication of the report to enable the Victorian community to read its details.

Since that time no opportunity has been provided for the Parliament to debate the report. Members of the Opposition, including myself, the honorable member for Oakleigh and others, have asked for an opportunity to debate the report and the Government's activities in the field of mental retardation, but the Premier has constantly refused that opportunity.

The Opposition is now challenging the Government, the Minister of Health, the Premier and Government supporters to debate mental health services and mental retardation services in Victoria through the medium of the Appropriation (1979-80 No. 1) Bill because the Bill provides an opportunity for honorable members to examine what the Government has done or what it should have done.

The report contained 137 recommendations and regrettably most of them have not been acted upon. Indeed, the response of the Government to the report has not been what I would call excellent. I was staggered when I received a copy of a memorandum, dated 21 September 1978, from the Minister of Health to all other Ministers.

There was a recommendation to Cabinet for the implementation of policies on mental retardation. One must remember that this document came up after years of supposed discussion by the Government about mental retardation services and more than twelve months after the Government had received the

report of the committee. As honorable members will understand when they hear quotations from this document, it was very weak indeed and did not suggest that the Government was doing much in the way of providing mental retardation services. I should have liked to have the document incorporated in *Hansard,* but I understand that is not possible, so I shall read the minute:

There has, during the last decade or so, been a complete reorientation in thinking regarding the needs of the mentally retarded, and ways of coping with these needs. Throughout the world, there is a movement away from hospital-type buildings and institutions towards hostels and group homes as similar as possible to those which exist normally in the community; away largely from the medical and nursing approach, except where it is appropriate, towards a psychological, social and educational approach; away from centralization of services for the retarded towards decentralization and the provision of services and care as much within the community as possible.

The concept of "normalization" (i.e. the right of the retarded person to live, and be trained to the greatest possible extend so to live, as normal a life as possible, as defined by normal community standards) is now universally regarded as the underlying principle of the provision of services for the handicapped, and it includes the fostering of a life-style within the normal community surroundings making use of normal community facilities and accepted, as far as possible, by the community as being part of it.

One can only, by way of editorial comment, contrast those remarks with what happens at places like Sunbury, Pleasant Creek or St. Nicholas Hospital. The document continues:

However, it is recognized that there are still, by virtue of the existence of handicap, special needs which have to be met and these necessitate the provision of a wide and comprehensive spectrum of support services in the community which provide both parents and retarded persons with a flexible range of options from which to choose.

These proposals coincide with recommendations made by the Report of the Victorian Committee on Mental Retardation to the Premier of Victoria.

In order to enable the next phase of planning for Mental Retardation Services to proceed in accordance with modern thinking, a policy commitment is required from the Government to:—

(*a*) Approve proposals for the development, management, staffing and financial support for community residential units.

(*b*) Approve proposals regarding subsidies to Day Training Centres, including payments to provide adequate supportive staff and a more imaginative approach. The areas for consideration are:—

(i) Professional staff;

(ii) Administration/clerical Staff;

(iii) Rental subsidies;

(iv) Early Intervention Programmes (e.g. "Early Childhood Project.")

(*c*) Approve a proposal for a new policy of de-institutionalization for the Mental Retardation Service.

(*d*) Approve proposals for the phased-in development of community based clusters of small residential facilities.

(*e*) Approve a policy for planned regional development of Intensive Programming Homes and Developmental Group Homes which would meet the needs of the severely retarded and multiply handicapped persons on the most urgent and urgent waiting lists and also those currently resident in institutions.

(*f*) Ensure that the Mental Retardation Services receive an adequate staff establishment both centrally and on a regional basis, to provide for the development, supervision and the necessary support for the abovementioned proposals.

Extensive documentation is available to demonstrate the standards, staffing and funding required to implement the proposed policies.

Nothing in that Ministerial document circulated to other Ministers was unknown or unavailable when the Premier's committee was set up in 1974. None of that was unknown to the Minister of Health in August 1977 when the report of the committee was given to the Government—after a number of interim reports had traversed the same ground—but twelve months later all that has come from the former Minister is a document which demonstrates practically no progress in the provision of those services which people in Victoria have known for years were required.

The Government's response to the committee has been to make grand statements to conferences of concerned people such as the statement made by the Premier in his address to the Australia Association for the Mentally Retarded in September of last year. It is full of grand phrases but very little substance. It is full of talk about the the five-year plan, and I would remind the Minister that the five-year plan was the proposal of the Government of which he was a member. The Premier said:

We have just completed a five-year plan for a wide ranging improvement of our mental health services.

That was the five-year plan. In Parliament, when asked by my colleague, the honorable member for Morwell, about the five-year plan, the Minister of Health said:

> I am not familiar with the five-year plan to which the honorable member refers or the progress that has or has not been made under it.

The fact is that year after year the Premier and his Ministers have been talking about the five-year plan. It was mentioned in the 1973 Mental Health Authority report, which examined it under the heading, "Five-year programme", as a marvellous proposal by which services to the mentally retarded would be drastically improved.

The 1975 report talked about the great things to be achieved in the Loddon–Campaspe area. Those group homes in that area are still not being used, despite the fact that their planning and the proposal are contained in the 1975 report.

In the 1976 report the philosophy which formed a large part of the Premier's committee of inquiry is set out and again almost totally ignored in practice.

Again in the 1977 report, the last that we will ever see from the Menal Health Authority, reference is made to what would occur in the Loddon-Campaspe area, in the south-west region and in Gippsland. My colleague, the honorable member for Morwell, will show that, despite all the promises and all the undertakings, nothing has been done in Gippsland. As far as building and staffing are concerned, the five-year plan is a dead letter. Most of the buildings proposed have still six years later not been commenced.

Earlier this year, after expressing his concern about the mentally retarded in the *Age* of September 6, the Minister said he would provide additional staff for Sunbury. I remind the Committee and the Minister that those additional staff were actually promised on Wednesday, 11 February 1976, after a coroner's inquiry in Melbourne. Dr Evans promised additional further positions in response to a tragic death. Thirty-nine staff positions were made available immediately and a further 100 positions were to be provided for in that year's State Budget. Those 100 staff have never arrived at Sunbury and the staffing and the capital works programme in the mental retardation service are an absolute disgrace.

Few of the facilities in Victoria are up to standard. During the suspension of the sitting for dinner I visited and opened a new part of a private hospital. If the requirements imposed by legislation on private hospitals were enforced in mental health and mental retardation centres, both in capital and for staffing, it would be necessary to close down almost all the units in the State. The mentally retarded have been consigned to the bottom of the financial, emotional and political priorities. The meagre increase in this year's Budget allocation will do nothing to assist in meeting recurrent costs, and there is a reduction of $2·5 million or 30 per cent in the capital works allocation.

The answer I received in 1976 from the then Minister of Health indicates that at least twenty major works which were supposed to be being carried out in this area in fact have not been carried out.

Institution after institution is apallingly staffed. Honorable members should realize that and also realize that something should be done about it.

Institutions like Kindilan on the Peninsula have been completed at great expense but are not being used because staff have not been made available. I attended the opening of Kindilan, and the president of the Kindilan committee said that it was a disgrace that the staff had not been made available. The honorable member for Westernport knows that was said, and he also knows that staff should be made available.

Mr Brown—A portion of the staff.

Mr ROPER—Too, the member says only a portion of the staff. There are huge waiting lists and difficulties in residential accommodation, and the Kindilan centre would be able to provide services tomorrow if it had approval to do so. The Opposition is concerned

that most of the recommendations made in the report on mental retardation have not been put into effect—nor has anything been done about them.

On page 14 of the report, reference is made to a task force of legal experts, professionals and parents, with a full-time legal officer, to inquire into a wide range of issues that the committee did not have the time or expertise to conclude. There was talk about the need for much greater effort the sexuality of handicapped persons. Nothing has been done about that either. There was a proposal that children have additional health screenings in the first year of life, and then at ages two and four. The services provided by the Health Commission are as incapable as ever of carrying that out.

It is recommended that child health nurses, day nurseries and kindergarten staff receive additional initial in-service training in early child development. In this Budget, the courses and assistance in that area have been cut.

Very few of the recommendations set out in the report have been put into effect. It is suggested that funds be allocated for short-term residential services development over a two-year period—that has now finished—to provide approximately 140 residential places in intensive training units for severely handicapped people, approximately 100 respite care places, and approximately 100 places in group homes for adults and children. Even those places bought two years ago in the Loddon-Campaspe area, particularly in Bendigo, have still not been staffed to allow them to be used. It was grand purchasing and later lamenting through not providing the staff.

Mr Ebery—There were union requirements, too.

Mr ROPER—I am sure the union would have been most happy to cooperate with the previous Minister and the present Minister, to make sure those services were available to children in the Loddon-Campaspe area. The houses were purchased and, in one case, they were not used for two years after they were purchased. The additional facilities mentioned in the report have neither been built nor purchased, nor has staff been provided for them.

The five-year plan has been and gone, and regrettably it now looks like the Victorian Committee on Mental Retardation report has been and gone. The Government has still not taken the action required for mentally retarded children and parents in this State. Society should be judged by the way it looks after its handicapped and disadvantaged. Our most handicapped are our mentally handicapped children and adults. By that test of civilization and justice in society, we fail dismally. This Budget provides none of those services, none of those insights, none of those requirements, that would enable us to hold up our heads. It is no good having five-year plans.

The CHAIRMAN (Mr A. T. Evans)—The honorable member has one minute left.

Mr ROPER—There is no use having committees on mental retardation made up of good people and not acting on their recommendations. The Opposition believes that far greater effort should be made in providing mental retardation services. We should as part of a modern society provide those services. The facilities available to the mentally retarded are an absolute disgrace and should not be permitted in any society whatsoever.

Mr AMOS (Morwell)—I support the remarks of my colleague, the shadow Minister of Health. The Government's treatment of the intellectually handicapped in Victoria shows deplorable neglect. I am disturbed, and even shocked, by the use made by the Premier and the Government of the minus children, those intellectually handicapped children in this State, to obtain cheap publicity in the past for electoral purposes, without at least paying some debt of gratitude to those unfortunate persons, their relatives and friends, who for years have had to

suffer disadvantage and extra difficulty because of the neglect of the Government.

I refer to the Victorian Premier's stated concern for the so-called minus children. That term "minus children" was adopted by the *Age* newspaper in Victoria when journalists of the *Insight* team indicated to all Victorians the neglect of the mentally retarded and intellectually handicapped persons in this State. The word "minus" connotes disadvantaged, forgotten. Indeed, they have been forgotten and neglected. After the *Age* started to publish a number of searching articles, which were highly critical of the present Liberal Government of this State, the Premier appointed a committee on mental retardation which reported to this Parliament in 1977.

I direct attention to the remarks of the Premier when presenting this report to Parliament in 1977. He said:

> I believe it to be a milestone in broad concept and forward planning.

"It" being the report. Did he mean it to be obsolete, because milestones are no longer used now that we have adopted the metric system? How many milestones does one see on the highways of this State? How much concern does the Government give to the intellectually handicapped in this State? Notwithstanding the fine work done by the Victorian Committee on Mental Retardation, and the 137 recommendations it made to Parliament and to the Government, recommendations which covered decades of neglect, have not been taken up by the Government. We are now about to enter 1980 and the Government has still not started that great move forward for the parents, friends, relatives and others concerned about the intellectually handicapped, who were given hope in 1977.

I refer to the plight of the intellectually handicapped in Gippsland. My colleague, the shadow Minister of Health, dealt in general with the plight of the intellectually handicapped throughout Victoria, but I shall use Gippsland as an illustration. Government supporters with any conscience should no longer be satisfied with the allocation made for mental retardation.

I remind the honorable member for Burwood, who is interjecting, and who perhaps did not have the same concern for the intellectually handicapped before the debate that he now appears to have, that in 1955 a conservative Liberal Party Victorian Government promised to establish residential accommodation for the intellectually handicapped in Gippsland. It purchased the land and set up the first—and the only one to this day—day training centre at Traralgon. It set aside the land purchased for the accommodation of intellectually handicapped people in that part of the State. I remind honorable members that that promise was made in 1955.

Eighteen years later, in 1973, reference was again made to the need to provide accommodation for the intellectually handicapped in Gippsland who could not be accommodated at home because of the severity of their handicap. They had to be accommodated in places far away from Gippsland such as St Nicholas Hospital, Sunbury Training Centre, and Beechworth Mental Hospital which are hundreds of miles away from their place of abode, their friends and their families.

The matter was again raised with the formation of a committee to push for the establishment of a residential unit to cater for their needs. When we speak about mentally retarded persons we are speaking about as much as 1 per cent of the population, irrespective of the size of the population of a region. It was demonstrated then that between 300 and 500 persons urgently required accommodation in the Gippsland region. There was no accommodation for them east of Dandenong. The names of hundreds of people are still on the most urgent waiting list for accommodation in the State's institutions and some parents have had to wait for years to obtain accommodation for their children, some of whom are severely retarded.

In 1974 the Government announced its five-year plan, which was designed

to be the saviour of mentally retarded persons, and people were led to believe it would relieve the plight they had faced for many years. When the committee referred to earlier was formed, it was told by the then Minister of Health not to worry because Gippsland had been included in the programme. The committee was given hope that at least by 1979 it would have some accommodation for the mentally retarded in the Gippsland region. It is now 1979, and 1980 is fast approaching, and still no accommodation is in sight.

When I raised the matter a few weeks ago with the Minister of Health —albeit not the Minister who promised to institute the programme in 1974, but nevertheless a Minister in the same Cabinet as his predecessor—he said he had no idea that such a five-year programme existed. I suppose if the Government continues to neglect the mentally retarded, in a couple of years from now—if the present Government remains in office—it will say that it did not even know that Victoria once had a Premier who received a report from the Victorian Committee on Mental Retardation, so the minus children and the mentally retarded will remain a forgotten race.

Mr Kennett—What a load of rubbish.

Mr AMOS—I take up that interjection and look forward to hearing what the honorable member proposes the Government should do and what he has done as a member of the Government committee to aid the mentally retarded in this State. I suspect that his contribution will be brief.

As I mentioned, it is now the year 1979–80 and barely $300 000 more than last year has been allocated for mental retardation. Under the heading of "General Expenses" on the next page one finds that the total allocation has increased from only $9 million to $10 million—barely $1 million more in general terms. That will barely keep up with inflation let alone implement one of the significant recommendations made by the Premier's committee on mental retardation, a committee that he was greatly concerned to gain publicity about.

I have already indicated that a committee was formed in Gippsland in 1973 to push for a residential unit for intellectually handicapped persons. I told the House that hundreds of mentally retarded children were on the most urgent waiting list for accommodation and that many parents in Gippsland were travelling thousands of kilometres a year to visit those children fortunate enough to be located in place such as St Nicholas Hospital and Sunbury Training Centre. Nonetheless, very little progress has been made.

The committee that was formed in 1973 made numerous representations to the Government, initially in respect to the accommodation needs of the Gippsland people included in the Government's five-year programme. How do those parents feel now when they realize that the Government has denied any knowledge of such a five-year programme? What does one tell them? As a member of the Gippsland Regional Planning Committee on Mental Retardation, established by the Health Commission, I am disappointed and disgusted that the Government has not implemented any of the committee's recommendations for the provision of services for the mentally retarded in Gippsland.

Mr Kennett—Have a break!

Mr AMOS—I again draw attention to the inane interjection by the honorable member for Burwood. Does he mean that the intellectually handicapped can at last have a break, or does he mean that they ought to give it away altogether and make these children the forgotten children, not the minus children?

In 1978–79 the Victorian Committee on Mental Retardation, which was set up under the auspices of the Health Commission, made a direct recommendation to the Government and the predecessor of the Minister of Health for the preliminary establishment of services in Gippsland which would assist the handicapped—a similar programme to that which had been commenced in

the Loddon-Campaspe area. The Labor Party is asking the Government, after these decades of neglect and broken promises, for a few people to assist the handicapped and to provide some desperately needed relief. The Labor Party is not asking for a 1000, 500, or 100-bed residential centre of the type now located in Colac and only partly used; it is asking for a reasonable number of people to assist—a superintendent, medical specialist, psychologist, social trainer, vocational and allied services psychologist, training officer and physiotherapist and administrative workers.

Mr Crabb—What did you get?

Mr AMOS—The answer is easy: Nothing. Following decades of neglect, after being promised inclusion in a Government programme and after the work many people put into the committees on mental retardation to look into the needs of the intellectually handicapped in Gippsland, we got nothing.

I put to the Minister of Health the need for him to make a greater contribution than his predecessor in arguing in Cabinet for a place for the minus people. I will not be so parochial as to state that all the funds or a significant part of them ought to be allocated to Gippsland, because Gippsland is but one part of the State. I have had some experience in this area but I know all other parts of Victoria outside Melbourne face the same disadvantages. So do the parents of these children and, more importantly, so do the children. What occurs in Gippsland certainly occurs in Bendigo, Ballarat, Geelong and every other region in the State.

The Minister of Health should demonstrate his sincerity by informing the Committee now that he will take to Cabinet a submission for a restructuring of the priorities for making money available to assist the disadvantaged mentally retarded and intellectually handicapped people of Victoria. I hope that by then the Gippsland people whom I represent in part will obtain some relief and response to their needs.

I conclude by reminding the Minister of Health and all Government supporters, particularly my friend, the honorable member for Burwood, who I believe needs some insight into the requirements of those more disadvantaged than himself, of the submission made by the Minister's predecessor, the Honorable W. V. Houghton in another place, to Cabinet on 21 September 1978 of which he, as a Ministerial colleague, would have been aware. I ask him to read the submission again and to reconsider the plight of those less fortunate than honorable members in the Chamber.

Mr BROWN (Westernport)—The main point I derived from the comments of the honorable members for Morwell and Brunswick is how painfully little they know of the achievements of the Government. I shall inform those honorable members of some magnificent achievements.

It is true that 30 years ago, if parents wanted something for their intellectually handicapped children they had to go out to work for it. Now State-wide, parents can take their intellectually handicapped children to day training centres that have been provided by the Government. It is an incredible statement to say that the Government has had no achievements in this field.

The honorable member for Brunswick quoted the recent opening of Kindilan, a centre in the Westernport electorate, and rightly stated that it is not fully staffed and occupied. I can assure the honorable member that 75 per cent of the establishment is working. Certainly, I share his view on its full operation and I shall be pleased to continue to work on behalf of the centre until it is fully staffed. There is also an appropriation before the Government for the provision of a new adult activities centre this financial year at Wonthaggi, which is also in the Westernport electorate. This activity unit will cost $450 000. If that is not a significant milestone for the benefit of the intellectually handicapped in south Gippsland, I do not know what is.

The existing Moonya School was established four years ago, again with considerable assistance from the State Government. All intellectually handicapped children in South Gippsland can avail themselves of the school bus services established from such areas as Leongatha, Bass, Corinella and surrounding districts. It is a free service similar to others throughout the State.

Both programmes are funded by the State Government to allow intellectually handicapped children to attend training centres. That is a significant step forward from 30 years ago when there were no facilities of this type.

If the honorable member for Morwell says that no significant benefits have been achieved in the past 30 years, he should visit the electorate that I represent, and I will show him the significant milestones that the Government has achieved. He could then return to the electorate that he represents and work to ensure, as I did, that these services are provided.

Mr CAIN (Bundoora)—In the electorate I represent many institutions are concerned with providing services required by the community in the field of mental health. What I propose to say reflects what I understand from conversations I have had with people in the electorate and with staff of those institutions. I do not for a moment suggest I can reveal anything in this place that has not been revealed by the honorable member for Brunswick, who so competently handles this portfolio for the Opposition, but I do have territorial responsibility because many of these people are my constituents.

Staff in the institutions are disillusioned and frustrated. They are people who are almost entirely in my experience most dedicated to the jobs they have undertaken. They live their jobs more than most occupational groups. They are devastated by the lack of action by the Government in response to the report of the Victorian Committee on Mental Retardation, a report which was made available to the Government some eighteen months or two years ago. I will briefly recount the day-to-day existence of residents in an institution. The one I have chosen is the Janefield Centre. The Kingsbury Centre is similar in terms of patient activity. I have visited both these centres on several occasions and examined patient activities.

The staff of the centres provided a detailed summary of the type of day-to-day activities undertaken by patients in these two institutions in my electorate. Janefield has 45 to 50 residents in each of eleven wards. There is a nursing staff complement for each of those wards of between 3 and 5, which is considerably below the recommended World Health Organization ratio of 1:5. Very few of the residents have personal possessions because there are no adequate lockers and stealing does occur.

There is a mixture of people with quite dissimilar behaviour patterns which often leads to the disruption of many residents' lives. In the main, the residents sleep in dormitory type accommodation which is a continuous row of beds numbering 45 to 50 in each ward. No real privacy is offered.

Due to inadequate funding, clothing is passed on, resulting in ill-fitting and uncomfortable clothes. The toilets and shower facilities concern the staff. One staff member described those facilities as a car wash, that is, you put one patient in and push the earlier one out, when there is a large number of patients to be toileted and showered in a short time.

The physical facilities of the toilets and showers are not desirable. The toilets have no doors. That is a violation of the right to privacy. Often the ventilation and plumbing of the showers is inadequate. The staff say they could overcome or tolerate those difficulties if more staff were provided to assist the patients in those daily functions.

The residents rise about 7 a.m. and it is then left to three or four nurses to toilet, feed, bathe and dress those 45 to 50 residents before 9.15 a.m. when a number of the residents attend various occupational therapy activities.

The effect of such an institution is that low-functioning residents do not receive any basic training in self-care skills, that is to say, dressing, bathing, and feeding. The staff have time only to carry out the routine operation of dressing, toileting and bathing the residents. The staff are unable to assist the patients in learning these skills for themselves.

The emphasis is therefore on custodial care. Neither the capacity nor the time exists for the staff to fulfil the proper functions of the Janefield Training Centre. It is a Catch 22 situation. There is not enough staff to provide the training instruction required. As a result, the patients have become dependent upon care whereas many patients, if they were given basic instruction to acquire more skills, would become self-sufficient and thus reduce the need for staff care. It is a vicious circle. The residents become more and more dependent because of the restriction of time placed upon the staff.

From 9.30 a.m. onwards, a number of residents who are of school age attend various programmes either at school or occupational centres. The educational and occupational pursuits are of immense value and should be encouraged. During the day, approximately 140 residents are left at Janefield and they receive no occupational fulfilment at all; they merely sit around watching television and are supervised by nursing staff.

The residents' meal times clash with the staff's meal times. There is also a difficulty in ensuring adequate care and training for a number of residents because of the staff shortage. This results in the over-use of tranquillizer drugs for reasons that will be apparent to the Committee. These drugs are used mainly to reduce the level of anxiety caused by the unnatural lifestyle.

Staff members are concerned that their hopes and aspirations for a different approach to the mental retardation problem are not likely to be fulfilled. The Government could not regard its activities in this field as the highlight of its achievements over the past three or four years.

The staff are of the opinion that institutional care can and should be reduced but presently there is no real prospect of that occurring. The staff believe the present situation is due to staff shortages and the resultant restrictions imposed. The staff shortages will perpetuate institutional care in many cases where a halfway house or a return to a conventional or domestic situation could be achieved.

I have endeavoured to convey the daily activities of these residents. It is the hope of sincere and dedicated staff members that a situation will obtain where a number of these residents will leave the institutional care that they have been under for so long. The Opposition urges the Minister to adopt the required remedies.

Mr BIRRELL (Geelong West)—I will highlight developments within the City of Geelong because my comments will reinforce the statements by the honorable member for Westernport. I will nominate nine developments, the first of which was established in 1961. That establishment is a centre for severely retarded children in Fenwick Street, Geelong, and the Star Victorian Association for the Retarded has been in the forefront of that centre's establishment. My own contributions were not insignificant.

The second institution is the Karingal Spastic Centre and Sheltered Workshop in East Geelong. That institution was established prior to my becoming a member of Parliament, partly as a result of the endeavours of Mr James McRae Dunn, M.L.A., a member of the Australian Labor Party when it was in office. The third institution is the further development of the Karingal centre, a new centre and workshop in Leopold.

The fourth institution is Shannon Park, a magnificent centre for the mentally retarded. The institution shares the site of an Education Department school in Shannon Avenue. The centre

was established about 1970 and the school shortly thereafter. I personally served on the finance committee when the centre was opened.

The sixth institution is a special school at Bell Park, which was established in more recent years. It mainly caters for the intellectually retarded. The seventh institution is the first out-patients clinic for psychiatric patients at the Geelong hospital. I helped the hospital to establish that clinic about ten years ago. The clinic has developed into a $6 million 60 bed in-patient and out-patient hospital in the grounds of the Geelong hospital.

Mr Roper—That is mental health——

Mr BIRRELL—Land has been acquired at Breakwater for the eighth institution, a larger psychiatric hospital which will be built in the future.

The ninth institution caters for the deaf and blind. I was the foundation president of the Childrens Welfare Association in Geelong in 1962. That association now runs buses which transport children to specialist schools in Melbourne.

Of the nine institutions, which provide for a wide range of needs, eight have been established since 1961 when I first entered Parliament. Although the criticism of the Opposition is valid at its own level, there is continuing quiet progress. In another ten years' time, whoever is on the Opposition benches can say the same, at about the same volume, because it is easy to criticize.

Never let it be said that nothing has happened in the field of mental health care. The district of Geelong is one example of where large strides have been made. I am proud of what is happening in and around Geelong.

Mr MATHEWS (Oakleigh)—Listening to the two Government party members who have so far contributed to this debate recite the record of what they see as the achievements of the Government in the field of mental retardation, one can only despair at the extent to which they have failed to understand the feelings of mentally retarded people and their families.

The overwhelming emotion I detect among those people as I move among them is a sense of betrayal. That sense of betrayal arises from the circumstances surrounding the report which has been under discussion and which has dominated the debate tonight. Prior to 1974, when this report was first commissioned, mentally retarded people and those who have their welfare at heart were among the most effective, vociferous, and active political lobby groups in Victoria.

All honorable members who have been involved in political life in Victoria in the past decade know how fiercely those people fought to get a fair deal for their children. With the appointment of the Premier's committee of inquiry on mental retardation, these people believed that the Government had given them the signal that it was at long last prepared to take their need seriously. They believed the inquiry had been commissioned in good faith, that it would justify the hard work they were to subsequently put into it, that the report which the committee produced would be taken seriously and that action would be taken to implement it. Then, because of the failure of any of those expectations to be satisfied, the sense of betrayal to which I have referred arose.

The honorable member for Burwood has frequently interjected in this debate asking, "Where is the money coming from? From which appropriation will the money be shifted if the recommendations of the report are to be implemented?" The real question which exercises the minds of the people most intimately concerned with the report is why we are entering into the third year since the report was brought down with no more indication of what action is to be taken on the 137 recommendations set out in the report than there was in the immediate aftermath of the presentation of the report.

Let me recite the time-table. In August 1977, the committee turned over its report to the Premier. It was not until March of the following year

that Cabinet finally got around to giving the document any consideration. What decision did Cabinet reach on the matter? At that meeting, seven months after the presentation of the report, the sole decision Cabinet reached was negative, that it was not going to accept the report's central recommendation for the establishment of an autonomous office of mental retardation for improving the conditions of mental retardation, which that cause had previously lacked.

When Cabinet had taken that momentous decision, the report continued to lie in some pigeon-hole until, as the honorable member for Brunswick has disclosed tonight, in September 1978—more than a year after the presentation of the report—the then Minister of Health took to Cabinet that banal Cabinet submission which the honorable member for Brunswick sought to include in *Hansard* but which he was obliged to read instead.

Then the hiatus set in to the point where we are now in the 27th month since the presentation of the report, and no decision has been reached on the 137 recommendations set out in it, other than the decision to reject the establishment of the office of mental retardation. After 27 months of watching this Government and three successive Ministers drag their feet about the 137 recommendations, the mentally retarded people of Victoria and their families feel a deep sense of betrayal and injury. The report of the Premier's committee on mental retardation represents, as far as mentally retarded people are concerned, particularly those who are institutionalized, the gateway into a completely new life.

They have had held up to them a vision of the promised land. Instead of that vision being realized, as it could well have begun to be over the past two years, it has been snatched away from them.

As the honorable member for Brunswick has again reminded the House tonight, the Loddon-Campaspe cottages, which might, as long as two or three years ago, have provided the physical foundation for the new way of life for the mentally retarded people of Victoria, even today remain unstaffed and unoccupied. It is hard to imagine a more heart-breaking bind in which these people could be caught up.

The Minister has not seen fit to involve himself in the debate on this division, although earlier in debate dealing with other divisions he was prepared to reply to what Opposition spokesmen put forward about matters under his control. I hope the Minister will not remain silent until this matter comes to a conclusion.

If the Government is to retain any shred of credibility or honour with the families of mentally retarded people who placed their trust in the Government back in the early 1970s, at the time of the establishment of the Premier's committee, there must be a change in this item. There must be a presentation, through the agency of this item, that brings back some flicker of the hope that was available in the middle years of this decade.

I appeal to the Minister on this—if necessary, literally on bended knee—to let there be a debate on the report of the Premier's committee, to let there be an opportunity for Parliament to discuss seriously the 137 recommendations set out in the report, so that the committee of hard-working people who put in so much time and imagination into it, and all their supporters who invested so much hope, will know that it has not been for nothing, that the work has been taken seriously, that some day they will see all those 137 recommendations in operation and that in the immediate future there will be an honest, earnest start to putting them into effect.

Dr COGHILL (Werribee)—The Miniser's grasp of his portfolio has been called into grave doubt during the debate on this division, particularly by the evidence presented by the shadow Minister of Health and other speakers from the Opposition.

The honorable member for Brunswick cited questions asked of the Minister and the answers he gave. It is

clear from those examples that the Minister does not have the grasp of his portfolio one would have expected him to have after six months or so in office.

Mrs Patrick—He is doing better than you are.

Dr COGHILL—If the honorable member for Brighton listens, she will gain some ammunition that will be of use to her in Liberal Party faction fights over its future leadership.

A further example has come to my attention. I wrote to the Minister several months ago regarding the provision of additional transport for children attending the Wyndham Special Developmental School in Werribee. The Minister replied by letter dated 16 November, and said:

> The Health Commission's Mental Retardation Services will urgently review the existing transport service to the Wyndham Special School and this will, I hope, lead to a solution of the problems that exist in this area.
>
> It is highly probable that additional funds will be needed as part of the solution. I shall advise you further on this aspect as soon as the allocations of funds for 1979–80 have been determined.

In late October, about three weeks earlier than the Minister's letter, the Wyndham Special Developmental School was advised that it would receive funding for a bus. The bus has been purchased and the school has had it for more than three weeks. It has been in operation since Monday of this week.

It should be obvious from that example that there is poor communication between the Minister and the Health Commission, particularly the Mental Retardation Services Division of the commission, and a poor, quite unacceptable level of supervision of that division's activities.

Mr BORTHWICK (Minister of Health)—I welcome the debate that has occurred tonight. Seven honorable members have spoken on the division. Although I have not heard all the divisions of the Budget debated over recent days, what I have heard leads me to believe that the debate on this division has been the best.

I agree with the honorable members who have expressed the view that, ultimately, the quality of a nation can largely be judged by its sensitivities towards people who are mentally retarded or handicapped.

Australians have not had a good record in this field. There is no doubt about that and I make no bones about it and no apology for it. There has been some criticism of the fact that the two members from the Government side of the House who have contributed to the debate referred to advances made in their time in office.

No honorable member could fail to be aware that there has been a dramatic change in public attitudes towards the mentally retarded in less than twenty years. The honorable member for Oakleigh, as a person who has lived in that area, will recall the efforts made in Croydon in the early 1960s by people interested in the setting up of the now well-established centre that is now called Mon-kami. I first became interested in mental retardation through the efforts of the people involved with Mon-kami.

In 1964, a group of us endeavoured, after talking to Dr Cunningham Dax, to incite the interest of an adjacent community in the establishment of a similar centre. The late John Bennett, the then editor of *Free Press*, and I moved for the establishment of a centre in Fern Tree Gully. We knew from the population figures that there had to be a sufficient number of people in the community to warrant the establishment of the centre.

Despite the most sensitive of journalism, we were unable to persuade more than four people within that community to identify themselves. That occurred in 1964 when the public attitude was such that people literally hid the mentally retarded from view and they were not prepared to come forward, even when help was at hand, to allow the establishment of a centre.

Only a few years after that, a concerned community established what is now known as the Knoxbrooke Centre.

When one makes a comparison between what we first got at Mon-kami with what we then got at Knoxbrooke, it is apparent that there was a dramatic change in the quality of buildings, staffing and financial assistance from both Federal and State Governments, which was remarkable.

I am speaking about a community with which I have been involved, not as a Minister of the Crown, but as a person who has seen what has happened and has observed the change in attitudes during just my time in public life.

When we decided to try to build a third unit in the community, now known as the Melba Centre, we were able to raise locally approximately $200 000 in a matter of a few months. The centre was the first totally comprehensive unit ever constructed in Victoria and it includes everything from a day training centre to a sheltered workshop in one unit.

The Melba Centre is magnificent by any standards and it is now supported firmly and openly by a concerned local community. That reflects an immense change in attitudes in a relatively short time.

The Melba Centre was able, as a result of local management and interest, to persuade the Government to purchase a private hospital especially set up for severely retarded children. Today that community, on behalf of the State, administers a 38-bed hospital for severely retarded children of the type usually treated at St Nicholas Hospital.

There is also the E. W. Tipping House at Lilydale, which is also administered by the Melba Centre. That same community is about to receive a $150 000 interest-free loan, which it intends to pay back, to build its first on-site residential care establishment in the grounds of Rosene Private Hospital, which it administers. It will run the residential care accommodation at no expense to the State except the provision of an interest-free loan of $150 000 to be paid back, commencing in ten years' time and extending over the following five years.

I mention those matters because the House should not scoff at honorable members who recite the dramatic changes that have taken place. Although in local areas one might boast about changes that have occurred, one should not be smug or complacent and fail to acknowledge failures. I commend the temperate manner in which the honorable member for Bundoora spoke. At times I find it hard to be temperate and unemotional about some of the situations of the people with whom we are concerned. One cannot go to the Sunburys or the Janefields and feel smug and complacent, nor can one leave there without the greatest admiration for the people who have dedicated their life's work to people in need. However, even in some of the largest institutions of which the Premier's committee report in its thrust for normalcy has been highly critical, quite dramatic changes have occurred.

The honorable member for Morwell rightly mentioned the "Minus Children" campaign. That campaign made this community aware of the problems of these people whom we are all prone to forget at times. The campaign brought about remarkable advances at Kew Cottages. New facilities are available today which were not there five or six years ago.

Mr Ginifer—There is a big improvement on the position that existed when I was working there in 1951.

Mr BORTHWICK—It was not my sorrow to visit Kew Cottages in 1951. One cannot help noticing what has been achieved in the past decade at Kew Cottages. When one considers the Premier's committee report and what has occurred at Kew Cottages, one asks "How long can this be perpetuated?" The whole thrust of the committee's report is a striving towards deinstitutionalizing people and establishing community residential centres and a total plan which has never previously been thought of or brought together in the history of this State.

As each step is taken, unless the next step is provided, an institutional atmosphere still remains. I do not know

whether any members of the Committee have looked at the latest building which has just been opened at Kew and which is specially designed as a transitional building. A child cannot be simply taken from an institution and put in a community home. Once children have been in an institution for a considerable time the steps taken must be gradual, to enable them to learn to live in a relaxed atmosphere of a small community. The building that has been opened in recent months is especially designed to accommodate children who can more easily take the step. It has special facilities to help them on the next step.

One may well ask: Where is the next step? That matter is of considerable concern to me, to bring together, out of the philosophy contained in the report, a total plan, not one which can be achieved overnight but a plan which can be progressively implemented and which a Minister and Ministers after him can follow—I do not wish to be critical of previous leaders in the field of mental retardation—and that Government and lay people can understand.

One of the difficulties that the Government has faced in the past to some degree has been the lack of a total integrated, co-ordinated plan with positive objectives. The statement of such a plan is the hallmark of the Premier's committee's report. Many people are critical of the way the report has been presented but on going through it one finds all the steps and moves that the Director of Mental Retardation, whose position is about to be advertised, should be able to bring forward. It will provide the type of plan that mental retardation deserves and has never had in this State or, in my view, in any other State.

In saying all those things, I do not wish to underestimate the dramatic achievements of the past fifteen years, both in change of attitude and physical provision. For some considerable time Victoria will be short of the type of accommodation that Gippsland and other regions of the State will need, if and when the report is followed through.

Mr Borthwick

Initially the emphasis had to be on day training centres and that type of work. That has been and is being accomplished remarkably well. Wherever one goes in this State, committees show their centres with a sense of pride. As a concerned community we must take the next steps, and that is why I welcome this debate in which people with a genuine feeling for the mentally retarded, who so frequently are thought of only when somebody highlights the subject in a newspaper, are able to state their views. Although members like the honorable members for Brunswick and Geelong East show concern in this place, there needs to be a continuing concerned community because, as any politician knows, the real priorities reflect the attitudes of communities.

Tonight somebody challenged me to state where I stand on this matter. I do not think any honorable member believes it is not my intention to work for the mentally retarded. In the few months that I have been Minister, I have said it over and again and I will repeat it now. My two priorities as Minister of Health are the general field of geriatrics and the field of mental retardation. I include the latter because it is an area in which I have learnt from experience in the electorate that I represent that if people are challenged and led and shown the cause, they will contribute and will do well. It is not right to believe that the Australian community is not sensitive in this field. All it needs is leadership, and in the past those who have shown that quality have achieved well. Not everything has been achieved, but a great deal has.

The question of geriatrics does not come within the ambit of this division. Anybody who examines the future demography of the figures for recent years will agree that we will run into a major problem in that field in the next decade. The two areas together, both of them requiring concern and care from the community, should receive help from Parliament. I would like to think that the debate tonight——

Mr Miller—You have three years to demonstrate your concern.

Mr BORTHWICK—Time runs so quickly. The Leader of the Opposition would say that it is time we had four years instead of three years.

Mr Roper—No, we had four years.

Mr Wilkes—The Minister knows that I believe in four-year Parliaments.

Mr BORTHWICK—Yes, I have heard the Leader of the Opposition state that for many years. In my period of office I hope the Government and the Parliament can witness total co-ordinated planning in both these fields.

I have issued a direction within the Mental Health Division in an endeavour to bring it about, and I will be welcoming the appointment of the new Director of Mental Retardation—he cannot get there quickly enough so far as I am concerned.

Mr ROPER (Brunswick)—I was pleased to hear the sentiments expressed by the Minister of Health and on this occasion I hope those sentiments will be reflected by a significant improvement in the facilities provided for the State's mentally retarded children and adults. The honorable gentleman would be the first to admit that the improvements promised under the five-year plan in 1973 did not occur in any significant way and unfortunately we have wasted a signicant time since the report was released.

In a way I regret that there has not been an opportunity to fully debate this matter. The Bill is not really the best way to debate the different types of thrusts contained in the report of the committee.

Certainly the day training centres—I have visited many of them throughout the State—have done much to improve services for the mentally retarded but we have continued to neglect the most severely and profoundly retarded because of a lack of effort.

The children who need almost total care and who are very unlikely to achieve a high degree of independence, are the ones we have continued to put away—to put out of sight and out of mind.

As the Minister stated, what worries many people is the normalization aspect. I do not believe normalization would be easily achieved or could necessarily be achieved for all the children we are talking about. The thrust of the report would create institutions, small institutions in the community rather than large institutions away from the community, and to that extent I am strongly in favour of them.

It was a rewarding experience when I visited one of the training centres, Pleasant Creek near Stawell, some time ago. That centre has two comparatively new units for the profoundly retarded but it is grossly understaffed, in my view, although the staff do the best they can.

The staff find it extremely difficult to have time to train and get a degree of independence in the child. As one of them said to me, at dinner time they are just concerned to get enough food into the child to ensure that the child receives an adequate amount of nutrition. It was suggested if the centre had an adequate staff it would probably be able to train and teach many of the children to feed themselves. However, out of that particular unit two children had graduated, at least during the day time, into the more normal school activities which are carried on at Pleasant Creek. That illustrates what can be achieved. A decade ago those two children would not have been in that situation.

We must not forget the severely and profoundly retarded. It is far easier for us as a community to talk about centres such as Mon-Kami and Moonya and the other centres that exist and which provide valuable services. Mention was made of St Nicholas Hospital, but in my view there is only one solution—a large blunt-ended bulldozer. There is no excuse for retaining these antiquated structures. The same could be said about Sunbury. Although the units where the children are located are not the worst, the children should not have been located at Sunbury until proper facilities were provided.

At Ararat, Beechworth and the other places, there are long-term problems with those who cannot be easily looked after and cared for in a community setting, in day training centres or group homes. Those residents have become permanently or semi-permanently institutionalized because when they were children these services were not available. We must ensure that adequate facilities apply for as long as they live. Not only should they have adequate facilities but also we should help them to make as much of their lives as possible.

We have to start asking questions when people approach us about acute hospital proposals. When I was asked these questions during the last election campaign, I told the delegation concerned to go to Sunbury and then to come back and inform me whether there is a problem in their far more affluent acute hospital. By way of interjection, the Minister indicates that he has got into trouble for doing a similar thing, but we must understand the situation if we want to provide decent living conditions and training and educational facilities.

We have to provide the resources, and in my view we cannot expand the acute hospital field and also provide these other services. I hope the debate tonight is the beginning of a continuing Parliamentary debate on the implementation of those parts of the report which can be implemented. Not all the recommendations contained in the report can be implemented, but the areas such as covered by recommendations 24–29, referring to special services for the ethnic groups, are possible and should be developed.

This is the last Budget in which I hope the increase in allocation for mental retardation is larger than the allocation for acute hospitals and various other items in the Budget. I suspect my urgent priorities would be mental retardation, mental health and a variety of public health services. We must find additional money and find it as soon as possible.

Mr Roper

Mr AMOS (Morwell)—The Minister of Health has explained his feelings to the Committee and referred to the way in which the community has responded over a number of years to the needs of the mentally retarded in Victoria. I agree that the community at large has responded generously and the support from the community has gone beyond the realms of being more than reasonable in terms of providing for a very disadvantaged group within our society.

I pay tribute to those people who have been involved in raising funds for the administration of day training centres, the Helping Hand Association, and all of the auxiliaries that have provided the wherewithal for handicapped persons for decades. I am mindful indeed of the changes which have taken place in State Government responsibility, even during my time as a member of this House since 1970.

Even though some nine to ten years have passed since I was first elected, I concede that those changes have occurred and that the State accepts a far greater responsibility for the mentally handicapped today than it did when I was first elected.

It seems to me that, notwithstanding that very generous and fine effort which the community at large has given to the mentally retarded in Victoria by its own efforts and its own ability, only the tip of the iceberg is being touched. It is natural that parents, friends and concerned people turn to those whom they can help with their own limited resources; so that the mildly retarded, those who can be accommodated at day training centres and go home to parents during the evening, have been catered for, while the profoundly or severely retarded have been a burden on parents at home or accommodated in crowded and inappropriate centres like Kew Cottages, Sunbury and St Nicholas Hospital over this time. It is the profoundly or severely retarded about whom I am more concerned today.

When I made my earlier contribution to the Committee and spoke about the

need for a series of residential accommodation units in Gippsland, I was looking to the accommodation of those handicapped in that region who could be classed as profoundly retarded, or severely retarded, so that their parents and families would not have too many kilometres to travel to visit those who had been fortunate enough to be accommodated, even in inappropriate centres like St Nicholas Hospital, Sunbury and elsewhere.

I am grateful that the Minister responded during the debate and indicated where his priorities lie. I ask the Minister, in recognizing now his priorities in regard to general health and health administration in this State, that he be cognizant of the need to provide more for the accommodation needs of the severely and profoundly handicapped.

It seems to me that, notwithstanding the arguments that one could advance in support of the proposition that the State should accept full responsibility for the mildly retarded, those being cared for in day training centres, the Government has an even greater responsibility to ensure that the accommodation, care and facilities necessary are provided for the profoundly retarded, those with severe behavioural difficulties and those who are physically handicapped as well as mentally retarded.

There has been a change in the thinking of people involved in the care of the retarded on the sort of accommodation that should be provided as a change from the institutionalized care that was thought about back in the early planning days of Colac. Today thinking is more along the lines of providing for these people in the smaller home-type units in the community. Even though those changes have occurred, there are still immense difficulties associated with caring for the profoundly retarded in that sort of environment and there will still be a need for the larger type of institution, if you like—and that is not a very nice word, I realize. Nevertheless, there will still be a need for that larger type of accommodation unit in the care of these people. In any planning for Gippsland in particular and for other regions in the State, I want to see provision made for those people in the very near future.

Mr ROPER (Brunswick)—I wish to ask the Minister a number of questions about services in the mental health area. I notice that there is yet another increase in overtime and penalty rates provision, as there was also in mental retardation. That means that the two divisions under the Minister's control, mental health and mental retardation, account for more than one-half of the State's total overtime and penalty rate payments.

It has seemed to the Labor Party for some time that, rather than spend the money in this way—and there is a certain amount of additional expense involved in spending it in this way—additional staff should be trained and employed in order to ensure that staff are available for use throughout the State. The Minister would be aware that, under the various awards, substantial additional costs are incurred by the payment of overtime and penalty rates, but the working of overtime can lead to a situation, as happened at Plenty, where certain groups of staff can no longer cope with the pressures placed upon them.

It is the view of the Labor Party—and we discussed this matter with the union before the election and proposed it during the election campaign—that a substantial proportion of the overtime and penalty rate payments could be used to create additional jobs and improve staffing in the service as a whole. The Opposition believes that should be done with the utmost speed.

A total review of the Mental Health Act is long overdue.

The Act has not been effectively reviewed since 1952. Even amendments that the previous Mental Health Authority attempted to have put before Parliament were sidetracked by a previous permanent head of the then Department of Health, and many of the proposals never reached Parlia-

ment. As a matter of urgency, the Act ought to be reviewed. New South Wales has just completed a review of its Act and proposed legislation has reached the draft Cabinet minute stage. Victoria has a committee working on it, but I understand that it is working fairly slowly and will not be working significantly until next year.

In this area, use could be made of outside people. The Government should appoint a consultative committee in this area and in the mental retardation area to provide ongoing advice to the Minister, using people from outside the system, who often have a positive contribution to make and who also, as the Minister will be aware, often provide a large amount of work for comparatively little cost. In other words, they do not charge much for their expertise.

The Government should bring in people from outside and make use of their expertise to review the Act with the utmost speed, to control a number of practices which have grown up which at the moment are uncontrolled, and also to ensure that the Act is a proper one for the 1980s, not a good one for the 50s.

ARTS

Mr HANN (Rodney)—I refer to the arts activity centres for which the Government has been providing substantial capital funding throughout Victoria.

The first activity centre in Echuca—a joint project between the Echuca City Council and the State Ministry for the Arts—was opened earlier this year by the Premier. This project ultimately cost in excess of $700 000. There is still a dispute over grants from the Government for this project.

Application has been made to the Ministry for the Arts for additional Government grants, both for the final cost of the construction of the centre and also for a stage curtain, which has to be replaced at a cost of $4000.

I direct the attention of the committee to the ongoing maintenance costs of these arts activity centres. Negotiations were under way between the Echuca City Council and the Ministry of the Arts regarding annual maintenance and running costs of these activity centres, and it was pointed out that a prerequisite to operating these centres is a full-time director or certainly a part-time director. A part-time director has been appointed at Echuca, on the basis of a contribution from the State Government and the Echuca City Council.

A submission on this subject has been before the Ministry for the Arts for five months. We are now five months into the 1979–80 financial year and no decision has been made on the funding of this project. I believe it is because a policy decision is to be made by the Government concerning future funding of these centres throughout Victoria. It is essential that, if the centre is to be used to its maximum potential, the Government makes a decision quickly, because the Echuca City Council is threatening to close the centre until the Ministry for the Arts makes a decision on its funding.

These centres are designed as workshop areas for art and craft, as well as for theatre activities, but because of the nature of the complex it is vital to have a full-time director and be able to recoup some of the ongoing costs.

In the early stages of getting these centres off the ground, there is a definite need for funds from the Government, or from the Ministry for the Arts, to enable these centres around Victoria to operate. Initially, the capital costs and running costs of the centres are high. I refer particularly to the Echuca art group which put on an exhibition recently at the arts activity centre. Fortunately the city council was prepared to subsidize the group, otherwise the group would not have been able to afford the costs involved and the rental of the centre.

Mrs Toner—How much was involved?

Mr HANN—About $500 over a period. The costs are substantial, and include the cost for electricity, air conditioning, or heating, as the case may be. The art group placed a special

claim with the Ministry for the Arts for this exhibition and was told that no decision could be made because a decision was to be made on over-all policy in this area.

In a letter dated 13 November, the Town Clerk of the City of Echuca, Mr McCartney, wrote to the Ministry for the Arts expressing the concern of the council that after five months into the 1979–80 financial year no decision had been made on this matter. I have a copy of the letter addressed to the Minister. Mr McCartney stated:

> Whilst Council is meeting all operational costs in anticipation of a continuing maintenance grant, it is rapidly reaching the point at which this cannot be continued. Consequently I have been instructed to advise you that, unless satisfactory funding arrangements are offered by the Ministry prior to January 31, 1980, it is Council's intention to with-draw from all operational aspects and to close the doors of the Centre.

I refer the Minister to the maintenance funding of arts activity centres, particularly the one at Echuca. The Minister may have already made a decision on this matter, but if he has not done so, I ask that a decision be made quickly so that the City of Echuca knows what is to happen about the funding of its art centre.

I realize that this is a question of Government policy and any decision in relation to the Echuca centre will affect other centres in Victoria that are to be opened in the future.

Mr SIMMONDS (Reservoir)—On item 650 I raise the question of expenditure by the Ministry for the Arts. The honorable member for Rodney told the committee of an expenditure of $700 000 for a theatre at Echuca. Given the political scene there, it seems like a pork-barrel operation.

There ought to be a reappraisal of the priorities for expenditure in the arts. I draw attention to an incident that happened recently. The honorable member for Carrum, the spokesman for the Opposition on the arts, and I, arranged with the Ministry for the Arts to have a dinner at the Arts Centre for the Deputy Minister for the Arts from the Soviet Union. In a discussion between the Leader of the Opposition, the Governor, the Director, and the Ministry for the Arts, a situation developed where a handful of people from the political scene, and the administrators of the centre, had a relatively modest lunch at the restaurant at the centre and were embarrassed to find that the director had no resources for entertaining guests. He was a bit concerned about who was going to meet the expenses of the luncheon. It was embarrassing to have to discuss this matter half-way through the luncheon when we were ordering wine.

Mr Weideman—I hope you chipped in.

Mr SIMMONDS—We chipped in. It was arranged that we share the expense of the luncheon. I would have thought that an international Minister, of the standing of the Deputy Minister for the Arts from the Soviet Union, would have attracted a little more from this Government and that the cost of the function would have been met by the Ministry.

This visit was arranged by the Cultural Society of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. It is a voluntary organization which relies on interested people establishing cultural links. If the Government was concerned with establishing cultural links, it should have given due consideration to a minor matter such as this, and displayed a bit more courtesy. I hope the Director of the Arts Centre, and the Ministry, are not placed in an embarrassing position again when entertaining an international guest.

That is a relatively minor matter, but one of substance, and people of international standing who are visiting Victoria ought not to be exposed to such a position.

I speak highly of the officers of the Ministry for the Arts who went to great lengths to show the visitors the work that has been done on the theatre complex and to explain the ultimate development of the centre. This attracted a great deal of favourable comment from the visitors.

I refer also to the priorities for expenditure on the arts because often the Government loses sight of the real interest in the arts and the limited opportunities available to those engaged in the normal production processes to indulge in not only developing their interest in the arts but also in taking the performing arts to the work place in the manner in which some trade unions are now doing.

For instance, the Amalgamated Metal Workers and Shipwrights Union has developed a cultural exchange programme where performances are given in workshops, art competitions are conducted and forms of expression other than the traditional art forms are being developed on a working-class basis. I hope recognition will be given in the future to the working class in the State because it is entitled to express its culture and to receive support from the Ministry for the Arts in the same proportions as do those who own the means of production in this State. A disproportionate approach is taken in that area.

For that reason I ask whether consideration could be given to supporting the Festival of Labour in the forthcoming years. This year international guests will be coming from Italy to perform during the week's activity to commemorate the concept of the 8-hour day. The Ministry for the Arts might well support that concept in the same way as it has funded the $700 000 theatre at Echuca to service the needs of the people in that area.

I hope the Government will consider perhaps making a modest contribution towards the $6000 budget of last year's Festival of Labour, which culminated in a week's activity at Edwards Lake, Reservoir, where a number of events occurred and attracted widespread interest; they received coverage over Radio Australia and on television, and raised the question of what workers' culture is about in a way in which it has not been raised for many years. It highlighted the fact that the 8-hour day is part of the Australian culture and that it was won in Australia in 1856.

It may be worth reflecting that the culture we are now developing may in future be centred around a different concept from that of the 8-hour day. We are now moving towards a situation where our culture will be developed around the alternatives to work. People engaged in the work processes and who provide the wealth of the community should have more opportunity of participating in art forms depicting their struggles through the years and projecting their thoughts about the future for working people in a manner that has not been used in the past.

On 10 March next year at Edwards Lake the Pram Factory will again be performing with the international group from Italy which will provide entertainment for the Italian community; the Greek community will also provide entertainment, and various art shows will be conducted. Discussions will take place about the future of working-class culture and the progression of working-class ideas in Victoria, and I hope this event will attract recognition from the Ministry for the Arts.

I commend the Department of Labour and Industry which last year provided substantial assistance by organizing a display on industrial safety. I also commend the churches which participated on the Sunday in activities centred around the concept of their wish to identify with the culture of workers and its relationship to the Christian churches.

In addition the manufacturing industries made a significant contribution by illustrating the point that workers have an art form which may not necessarily have been recognized in some of the products they produce. The leather goods that were displayed by the people who were engaged in apprenticeships in the leather goods trade were exhibited in a manner which enabled the people to understand that people develop skills in the work place which can be related to art in a manner which is not generally appreciated.

I hope in the future there will be a greater orientation of working-class concepts of art than the normal trendy

and very expensive culture referred to in these Estimates.

Mr JOLLY (Dandenong)—I refer briefly to two items under the allocation for the Ministry for the Arts. The first is the savage cut that has been made in the expenditure on books and publications, which has been reduced from $8106 in 1978–79 to $7400 for 1979–80. That is a drop in real terms of about 18 per cent or almost one-fifth. It is well recognized throughout the State that the books and publications produced by the Ministry for the Arts are of a high standard and it is disappointing that a cutback is to be made this year.

This can be contrasted with the figure that is allocated for publicity. It is ironical that the amount allocated this year for publicity for the Ministry for the Arts has been increased from $2142 to $4500—that is an increase of 110 per cent. It seems that the Government has concentrated more on public relations exercises than on substance, and I hope the Minister of the Arts can explain the situation.

Mr LACY (Minister of the Arts)—It is a shame that the honorable member for Reservoir did not take the opportunity of making himself more familiar with the grants made through the Mnistry for the Arts and acquainting himself with the fact that many of the programmes supported by and many of the organizations funded by the Government—indeed, one of those to which he referred, the Pram Factory—regularly depict the struggle of the working class, class conflicts in society and the evils of the owners of the means of distribution and exchange in society.

I regularly attend their performances and wonder what the Government is doing. The Government is being so even-handed that even the Muscovites and others who want to project this as a theme of artistic endeavour are being supported in equal proportion with those who present an élitist view of society. Indeed, most of the support goes to areas where most ordinary Australians are—between the two extremes—and what the Government is doing stands up to scrutiny, even that of the honorable member for Reservoir, if he would take the trouble to scrutinize the work done and the judgments taken.

The honorable member for Dandenong referred to publicity for the Ministry for the Arts. Much of that was the type of publicity that was given to projects that would have the approval of the honorable member's colleague, the honorable member for Reservoir, including publicity for the exhibition of the Russian Old Masters at the National Gallery of Victoria and publicity for other programmes that also involve ordinary people expressing themselves in various art forms and ensuring that through the Ministry for the Arts those exhibitions are held and made well known to the people of this State.

I am not aware of the incident to which the honorable member for Reservoir referred concerning the Deputy Secretary of the Ministry for the Arts from the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, nor even that that function was held. I may have been invited to it but must have been unable to attend.

Mr Simmonds—It was before your time.

Mr LACY—That explains it.

A more substantial matter was raised by the honorable member for Rodney, who referred to the interim subsidy that was granted to the Echuca Arts Centre for the period to the end of June 1979. That subsidy was provided on the basis that the Government had not yet established a policy on the provision of funds for the operating costs of this regional arts centre programme.

That policy has not been developed because the centre at Echuca was the first to be established. Even today only 3 of these centres are established; 4 were in existence before the programme started but under construction, 4 others, which have specific commitments for funds, are in the pipeline, and another 5 have commitments in principle. All in all, there is potential in the existing

programme for seventeen regional performing art centres. The issue being examined as a matter of Government policy is whether the best division of resources would be to provide an ongoing operating subsidy for these centres. Perhaps I will need to consider extending the interim period for the Echuca centre to allow the Government to complete its discussions, to resolve the matter and to announce a policy so that everyone can be treated in the same way.

I am willing to consider the matter the honorable member raised and I assure him that it is the intention of the Government that the Echuca centre should not operate at that level. I had hoped to have been able to announce a policy, but I cannot. I hope to do so before the end of the year but, if not, it will be necessary to extend the interim period for the Echuca centre.

Mr HANN (Rodney)—I thank the Minister of the Arts for his comments on the Echuca centre.

STATE LIBRARY

Mr CATHIE (Carrum)—I notice that subsidies to municipalities towards municipal libraries have remained the same as last year, although, if one looks at the comparison between 1978–79 and 1979–80, one finds that there appears to be a small monetary increase from $11·1 million to $11·4 million. This is an important subsidy indeed. It is probably the largest single subsidy that the Government makes to local government for the running of library services. The small apparent increase was used by a Government supporter to claim that there was an increase in funds for library services this year. Nothing could be further from the truth.

If honorable members examined the annual report of the Library Council of Victoria for the year ended 30 June 1978, they would note that the council drew attention in that report, going back to the 1977 Budget, to the fact that municipal libraries then benefited from what was a substantial increase in the subsidy allocation raising the *per capita* ceiling from $2.50 to $2.75. The report emphasized that although in 1977 the Government raised the *per capita* fee that is made available to local government for the running of regional libraries and municipal library services, this did not mean any raising in the level of services provided. I quote from the report, which at page 2 states, *inter alia*:

> . . . the allocation does no more than allow for the continuation of ongoing efforts taking into account the effects of inflation.

Despite the clear warning that even when the *per capita* grant is raised the Government is not necessarily doing anything to increase the level of library services, the Government this year rejected any claim by libraries, the Library Council of Victoria, librarians and municipalities, all of whom have pleaded for an increase in *per capita* grants to local government for library services from $3 to $3.50. Despite the fact that at least one member of the Government party claimed that there had been an increase in the allocation, that *per capita* subsidy in the Budget and in the figure of $11·4 million remains the same this year as it was last year; that is, at the level of $3.

Mr Lacy—It is the highest in Australia.

Mr CATHIE—The Minister appears to believe because Victoria is going backwards in the provision of library services in should not worry as he can point to another State that is even more backward. Victorians will not accept that statement as representing proper and forward thinking in the development of library services. One has only to look through local and regional newspapers in the Parliamentary Library to determine the effect of the decision on the provision of library services in various localities.

I shall take Springvale as a random example. It is so ably represented by the honorable member for Springvale. The municipality states that the Government's library policy will mean the non-replacement of the library's ethnic services officer who is an important officer serving that community. It is a

serious loss because he speaks Spanish, Portuguese and Italian and is obviously an important contact for the people of Springvale, particularly for the ethnic and migrant communities. Staff will be reduced, particularly in the junior library; there will be long delays in books being replaced on the shelves; drastic reductions in the book funds; and the policy of the library to buy new books and to provide an important service of a school library programme in May, September and at Christmas will cease.

That is the effect on libraries of the budgetary decision of the Government to cut back on the provision for library services. I accept the interjections of the honorable member for Noble Park that local councils are providing an excellent service. In some cases, municipalities are more forward-looking than the Government and are prepared, even though the Government has cut back on expenditure, not to pass that cutback on the people whom they represent. Local government is more forward thinking than the honorable member for Noble Park.

I shall give another example and refer to the City of Frankston. The town clerk pointed out to his council that the 1979–80 Budget reduction of the Government's subsidy to the old level of $3 *per capita* means that the council has had to bear the full additional cost of maintaining the library service in a municipality that serves more than 80 000 people. The additional cost imposed on the Frankston Council to make up the shortfall in funds provided by the miserable Government is estimated——

The ACTING CHAIRMAN (Mr Birrell) Order! The time for me to report progress under Sessional Orders has arrived.

Progress was reported.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. S. J. Plowman)—The time appointed by Sessional Orders for me to interrupt business has now arrived.

Mr MACLELLAN (Minister of Transport—I move:

That the sitting be continued.

The motion was agreed to.

The House went into Committee for the further consideration of this Bill.

Discussion was resumed on clause 2 (Application of Moneys).

Mr CATHIE (Carrum)—Prior to the interruption, I used the word "miserable" because it means miserly. The Government is completely unsympathetic to the development of library services. That is a change in emphasis. When the Premier was the Minister of the Arts every year there was an increase in the *per capita* grants for library services. However, the additional cost to the Frankston council is estimated at $36 390 or 31·92 per cent. It has a snowballing effect. It means municipal councils either have to make up that shortfall or cut back in some other field of activity if they wish to retain the existing level of library services.

Similarly to the regional and municipal library services, the State Library is also facing a critical situation caused by the staff shortages and the lack of services. There is a minimum establishment of 296 but the Government imposed a staff ceiling in May 1978 when 11 positions were vacant and they have remained unfilled.

In July an additional ban was placed upon recruitment. In the case of the State Library, a further 17 vacancies were created, resulting in the current situation of 28 vacancies. The ban on recruitment has been lifted and at least base grade positions can be filled.

Next year no doubt the Minister of the Arts will receive a lot of publicity when he opens the new reference and information library. That library will require an additional eight positions. Hence, in two and a half years a critical shortage of staff has developed. This has occurred at a time when more demands than ever are being placed upon the services which the State Library provides. Those demands are being made by many groups, corporations and Government bodies.

The community requires more facilities and information because of the type of society that prevails and the

pace of technological change that is occurring. However, the State Library does not provide a computerized reference service keyed in to a data base which could provide base line information. That is an essential tool in a modern age. Year after year, the library has requested that essential piece of equipment. No telex service is provided for basic information, and that is yet another piece of equipment that has been requested year after year.

The Minister of the Arts adopts the attitude that if he says "Yes" to those demands by the State Library he will lose face. That is not the issue. The issue is that important tools should be provided by the Government in an era of technological change.

Mr Lacy—That is the blank cheque option, that is, all one has to do is ask and it will be provided.

Mr CATHIE—The Labor Party will form a Government within two years. The Minister will then have every opportunity of examining the Labor Party's methods of handling such requests. Changes in technology are becoming increasingly important. Library staff should be retrained. At a time when more and more people are endeavouring to be retrained and more young people are unemployed, the demands made upon library services are growing every day. Yet, given that situation, the Government brings down a Budget which imposes restrictions and cutbacks upon library services. That is a totally unsympathetic approach to adopt.

Dr VAUGHAN (Glenhuntly)—I have been provoked by the silly interjections by the Minister of the Arts. I know that the Minister is not really a stupid man. In fact I have some respect for the Minister's ability, but the honorable gentleman lacks a certain sensitivity in the area of the Arts.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN (Mr Birrell)—Order! Could the honorable member relate his remarks to the item under discussion?

Dr VAUGHAN—The point I wish to briefly canvass is that there has been an extremely rapid area of change in the library field. This is a result of the new technology that affects many industries. In my lifetime, there have been more rapid changes in the information area than in any other industry. If the Minister is not aware of this, he should be and one might wonder whether he should be the Minister who approves of the allocation of funds to the State Library and other libraries in Victoria. The people of Victoria need libraries. The State Library should have the best facilities available. I spent a big part of my life in a library, so I could argue my case strongly and at length, but I will not.

Mr SPYKER (Heatherton)—I agree with what was said by the honorable member for Carrum. I was requested by the cities of Mordialloc, Oakleigh and Moorabbin to write to the Minister expressing concern about the cuts in library funding. I asked the Minister of the Arts to be honest in his replies to correspondence. The Minister has tried to justify the cuts in library grants. If the Minister believes the money is not well spent and that cuts must be made, he should say so honestly in a letter and not say that there has been an increase in funds allocated when there has been a decrease.

The Minister knows that the bulk of books come from Britain and are costly because of the rates of exchange. The marginal increase in the Budget allocation is well below the rate of inflation. Because of an increase in the intake of migrants in Moorabbin, Oakleigh and Mordialloc, there is a big need for books in the Italian and Turkish languages. However, because of the cuts in the Budget allocation it will not be possible to supply those books. Part-time staff have had to be stood down because there is no provision for them in the Budget.

The community has increased leisure time available, so there is a demand for library services from all sections of the community. But fewer books are available, old books will not be replaced and the latest books will not be bought. People will say that it

is of no use going to a library if there are no books. The Government is denying the opportunity for reading to many people. Mobile libraries are provided for people who cannot visit the community library either because of time or for health reasons. The use of these mobile libraries should be encouraged.

Because of Government policy an increased burden is placed on local councils to provide other services such as meals on wheels, so local municipalities are unable to absorb the increases without increasing the rates. Therefore, the only area left to impose drastic cutbacks is in library services. Surely this is not an area where funds should be cut back. The amount of money involved is insignificant. A larger allocation should have been made to library services to encourage people to use them. Last night I spoke about education and how people are losing confidence in the resources the Government makes available. The trend continues. It is a matter of the people with the greatest need missing out.

Mr CATHIE (Carrum)—I am astounded that the Minister of the Arts has not made an attempt to reply or to defend his Government on the serious cutbacks that have been imposed by the Government on library services in Victoria. That suggests that the Government is becoming increasingly unsympathetic to the needs of the community and of the unemployed. Many people require the facilities provided by modern libraries to retrain themselves because the Government is doing little to assist those people to attain the level of skills which industry and rapid technological changes in our society require. It is typical of the Government that it is not prepared to defend the decisions it makes but is prepared to sit down and hope that somehow or other the criticisms will go away. I can assure the Minister that they will not.

IMMIGRATION AND ETHNIC AFFAIRS

Mr CATHIE (Carrum)—Honorable members will notice when looking at the figures for immigration and ethnic affairs that when one compares the Budget payments for last year with the Estimates for this year, one finds a reduction in the only part of this division where the Ministry for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs actually does something and provides "other services". Even if the money were the same this year as last year it would be decreased by 10 per cent because of inflation in the next twelve months. That is because of the policies of the Hamer and Fraser Governments. In the provision for other services, last year the payments were $122 542, and for this year, estimated expenditure is $115 600. That is the area where the Ministry and the Government has the opportunity of doing something to assist migrant and ethnic communities and people in Victoria but instead of an increase there is an effective reduction of 10 per cent.

Last year the amount allocated for grants to persons, organizations and institutions to assist in the development of community service and welfare projects was $100 000. This year the allocation is again $100 000. There has been no increase in the most important job, possibly the only important job, the Victorian Ministry can do. Once again the Government has displayed an unsympathetic and rigid approach by saying, "We do not really care about people. We can cut back in this area in the same way that we cut back in library services and in any other area that can affect the quality of life".

Mr Simpson—Where is the Minister of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs at present?

Mr CATHIE—I do not know. He seems to be something of a phantom. He has disappeared.

Policies are needed to encourage the preservation of cultural identities and in the development of a multicultural society in Australia. Far better planning is needed at the State level to absorb the rates of immigration which are, by and large, set down by the Commonwealth. The size of that intake should be related, firstly, to

the degree of need of the migrants and, secondly, to the ability of Australia and Victoria, in particular, to absorb migrants, given our current economic and social conditions.

Most support services for new migrants have to be provided by State Governments, not by the Commonwealth Government, which brings them here. The State has to provide the infrastructure to support migrants and their families once they settle in Victoria. The State must provide housing, schools, health, hospital and all the other services that contribute to making a viable, living community.

Despite that, there has been a cut in real terms in the grants being made to assist in the development of community services and welfare projects that would assist migrant communities to settle in Victoria. When one questions the often absent Minister of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs—

Mr Williams—That is uncalled for.

Mr CATHIE—The honorable member for Doncaster may have noted that when a private member's Bill that dealt with the rights of migrants was being explained it had to be dealt with by another Minister.

I asked the Minister of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs a question on notice about a survey his department had undertaken into the attitudes of older Victorians towards migrants, which cost the Victorian Government $32 000, which was paid to the consultants who prepared it. I asked about the brief given to the consultants and the Minister replied that the objectives were:

> To obtain an improved understanding of the nature, breadth and width of negative attitudes towards migrants in Victoria.

I pursued the matter further and asked the honorable gentleman another question on notice about whether the Anti-discrimination Bureau of the Community Services Centre was consulted or invited to participate in the development of the study to ascertain his attitude of Victorians to migrants. His answer was, "No". The answer continued:

> The study was not to assess discrimination in the community.

In answer to the question the Minister said the study was undertaken to examine the negative attitudes of older Victorians towards migrants and in answer to another question he said the study was not to assess discrimination in the community. What else are negative attitudes but a form of discrimination? What did the study measure other than the level of discrimination amongst older Victorians towards migrant and ethnic communities? The Minister simply contradicted himself and did not seem to know what he was saying.

I later asked whether it was planned to increase the staff and extend the functions of the Community Relations Division of the Ministry of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs. The answer was:

> One professional person is currently employed in the Community Relations Division.

That is tokenism. What are the duties of that person? They are to provide a liaison function with ethnic communities, Government departments, voluntary agencies and local government. That function would require many people if it were to be performed efficiently. This professional person is also required to undertake the investigation of cases of alleged discrimination based on race and ethnic characteristics, and to take such action as is deemed necessary to resolve proven cases. How can one person undertake all those responsibilities and perform those essential tasks in the community in an effort to help to make Australia a multi-cultural society?

What has happened to the reports of the Anti-discrimination Bureau of which there have been many. Some of the reports are two and a half years old. Officers within the department have carried out research projects and studied the extent of discrimination. They made far-reaching recommendations and said the Government should abolish legal discrimination, which exists in many statutes. They said the

Government ought to get rid of discrimination in job opportunities. Under the Victorian Public Service Act an alien cannot get a permanent job within the Public Service. The Government was told about that two years ago. The report of the bureau proposed that the Government should act to end that discrimination.

Mr Williams—What other country gives aliens jobs?

Mr CATHIE—New Zealand is one that does. The honorable member for Doncaster ought to consider the ways in which New Zealand has overcome that problem. Australia is another. The Australian Government, long ago, amended its Public Service Act to do away with such discrimination.

Mr Fogarty—Every person is entitled to a job.

Mr CATHIE—The honorable member for Doncaster probably does not believe that.

I also asked the Minister whether any ethnic affairs liaison officers have been able to assist migrants in settling down and in dealing with Government departments because many elderly Australians have difficulty in understanding their rights and obligations in dealing with State Government departments and instrumentalities.

When I asked the Minister of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs what action he had taken to seek the appointment of full-time ethnic affairs liaison officers in other departments and instrumentalities, such as the Housing Commission, the Department of Community Welfare Services, the Education Department and the Health Commission, he replied that each of those departments takes the needs of ethnic communities into consideration and there was no need for his department to worry about appointing full-time ethnic affairs liaison officers for them.

I followed that up by asking the Minister of Housing a question on the subject. I asked the honorable gentleman whether any ethnic affairs liaison officers had been appointed by his department to assist non-English speaking people and the reply was, "No". He said, "No", and was honest enough to admit why—present staff ceilings do not permit the creation of new positions.

We return to the imposition of staff ceilings by the Government and the reduction of important services which are being provided in the community and the squeeze on the money that is made available from time to time to different migrant and ethnic groups to assist them to develop their heritage and culture and to assist the rest of Australians to live in and develop a multi-cultural society.

Mr SIDIROPOULOS (Richmond)—I congratulate the shadow Minister of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs on the way in which he spoke. When one considers the allocation provided for immigration and ethnic affairs one quickly realizes that the Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs is nothing more than a token establishment providing propaganda and window dressing to persuade the ethnic groups in Victoria that it cares for their needs. In reality the amount allocated for the needs of the ethnic groups in this State is inadequate. When it is divided between so many ethnic groups in Victoria, it is merely a drop in the ocean. A few months ago honorable members learnt that racism in Australia and Victoria is a serious problem. The Minister has the responsibility for taking some action to combat racism. At that time it was said that $1 million would be spent on a programme. Since then nothing has happened.

Mr Cathie—Not one cent is provided in the Budget.

Mr SIDIROPOULOS—That proves once again that the Government is not prepared to take action. I stressed then to the Minister that the most positive and effective method of combating racism was to make a start in the primary schools. That is where the beginning should be.

A few weeks ago, in company with the Minister of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs I visited the Presbyterian Kindergartens Union, which is based in the electorate that I represent. There we saw multi-lingual teaching and the books used to teach children of Richmond with an ethnic background their mother language and the second language of English. I believe the Minister was extremely impressed at the way children were being taught bilingually.

The official policy of the Education school level will be absolutely useless unless it continues at the primary school level and later at the secondary school level. Until now no facilities have existed in primary schools for the teaching of ethnic languages, and the programme which the kindergartens are implementing will be in vain.

The official policy of the Education Department is in line with the following principles: All of our citizens should become proficient in the use of English; migrants and their children should have the opportunity of learning and studying the language, customs and history of their forebears; all of our citizens should have the opportunity of studying the language, customs and habits of a variety of cultures, particularly those relating to the migrant population.

Multi-lingualism and multi-culturalism have been adopted by all ethnic groups, by teachers and parents' associations and by Government institutions —in theory. What happens in practice is different. The Government has failed to put into practice what it professes.

I cite the example of the Greek Orthodox community which about a month ago approached the Minister for Community Welfare Services and the Minister of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs for financial support for schools that it operates. The answer of the Minister was that money was not available. That is the usual answer. Officially the Government supports a privately-owned school which was started by a Greek priest—St John's, Carlton. Why is it that the oldest ethnic community in Melbourne has been refused financial assistance for its school but a school privately-owned by a church has been supported by the Government? I also stress to the Minister that it is about time his Ministry took positive action in Victoria.

The Minister should investigate those areas where migrant children have been denied a proper education. Within the electorate I represent the Education Department has been trying recently to eliminate two or three of the primary schools and already it has been announced that the Richmond Central School will be closing down. Approximately 70 per cent of the children attending that school are of ethnic origin and the Minister has an obligation to look after those children if he wants to remain Minister of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs.

I also draw to the attention of the Minister the situation created by the Education Department in its so-called excess teacher policy which affects language programmes established in schools and carried out by teachers who have now been placed in excess.

To give the Committee an idea of the value of these programmes, I point out that in one high school a junior English programme was initiated in 1974 because tests conducted throughout the school in 1973 had shown that 35 per cent of all students in forms I. to IV. were reading at below grade 6 standard. Since then there had been little change in the standard of literacy of incoming students, but results from testing carried out in the school at the end of year 7 and year 8 have shown a general upward shift in literacy skills of those students involved in the junior English programme.

Of this year's intake, only 14·2 per cent are reading at year 7 level. The majority are reading at grade 4 to 5 level and 10 per cent are very poor readers and performing well below the grade 4 standard. This indicates a growing and desperate need for the continuation of the programme which

affects many ethnic community groups. I point out to the Minister that he should care about the education of children in the area I represent. The honorable gentleman should care about migrants generally and their problems and should at least take some action because up until now the community has not seen any action taken by the Ministry of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs.

Mr MILLER (Prahran)—How any society treats its minority groups is a mental votes and how the funds are basis of this year's Budget figures it is very clear that Victoria is an uncivilized State in society.

One has only to turn to pages 11 and 12 to see the summary of departmental votes and how the funds are appropriated. The smallest of all appropriations relates to railway construction where the allocation is $251 450, which is down from $315 251 of last year.

The second smallest allocation in the Budget figures relates to immigration and ethnic affairs. Although the allocation has been increased by some $60 000 to $799 700, it is still way below every other department vote. It is significant that of all the figures, it is the smallest vote to be granted to a particular department—the most under-budgeted Government department.

In examining the specific figures, it is highly instructive to see that the most important services that are provided are shown on page 128 of the Bill. The figure of $100 000 remains static for the provision of services to ethnic groups and grants to persons, organizations and institutions. It is true that the figure has gone up for publicity from $80 000 to $100 000. It is laudable that the work carried out by the department should be publicized, just as the activities in which the department engages should receive publicity, but when one disaggregates some of the figures, one has difficulty in determining how the $100 000, the largest single sum granted to the department, is to be spent. It is a static figure and as the shadow Minister of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs pointed out, in real money terms it is a decrease.

One should examine some of the other specific grants which are made. Under "Other Services", item 4 makes provision for an amount of $3600 for the Society for Australian-German Student Exchange. It is marvellous that a sum of this magnitude is being provided for an exchange programme between Australian and German students. It is also worthy of note that in item 5—Victoria-France Teachers Exchange —a new item—provision is made for expenditure of $5000, a trifling amount when compared with the total allocation.

The amount is also insignificant in the context of the Australian society in which we live. Neither French nor German is a major language, nor one of the major ethnic groups in Australia or the major cultural groups which are providing the greatest contribution to life in Australia.

I wholeheartedly support the contribution of $5000 which is provided for a teacher exchange. It is most welcome, but where is there a contribution towards Australian-Greek language and cultural exchange programmes or a contribution for teacher-exchange programmes between Australian and Greek, Italian and Spanish speaking teachers?

If honorable members consider the population in the inner metropolitan areas, they will note that in the electorate I represent 28 per cent of the population is Greek-speaking, but not one cent is allocated for the provision of any facility to provide services to a changed Australian society.

French is the language of diplomacy and is recognized as a civilized language. I met my wife in a French class, so there is an obvious flow-on—indeed French is the language of love.

However, in our multi-cultural society, we need to make a fundamental reappraisal of the direction in which society is going. Provision should be

made for exchanges to occur between Australian and Indonesian cultural groups, remembering that Indonesia is our nearest northern and important neighbour.

I refer now to the provision of funds for teacher exchange programmes. Provision should be made to enable teacher exchange programmes to be instituted with Indonesia, Japan or China. Australia's nearest neighbours are simply not mentioned. If Australia is to become a truly multi-cultural society and attention is to be focused on the major problems that beset Victoria and Australia, the tensions that are created must be closely studied. It is necessary to examine the sorts of attitudes canvassed in the survey to which the shadow Minister referred. It is also necessary to closely consider the sorts of development which are taking place at the Federal level. If the State contribution to this notion of co-operative federalism is to mean anything, it is necessary to examine closely some of the Commonwealth legislation dealing with immigration and ethnic affairs and, in particular, to examine the proposed Commonwealth human rights legislation which is to be brought down, and the proposal to abolish the office of Mr Grassby, the Commissioner for Community Relations.

There have been no screams of outrage from the Victorian Government about the proposal to abolish that office and to subsume it under the new organization which is to be established under that proposed Commonwealth legislation. It is submitted that what is required is a much larger allocation of funding in the forthcoming years so that a truly multi-cultural society will be given a real opportunity to develop so that all may benefit from it.

Mr SIMMONDS (Reservoir)—I endorse what has been said by previous speakers, that the Minister of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs attracts one of the smallest allocations in the Budget. When one looks at the total allocation of $799 000 and compares it with the $700 000 allocated for the Echuca Arts Theatre, one has an indication of the priorities of the Government.

The Ministry of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs has been subject to significant changes. I applaud them because I regarded the previous Minister as a disaster and I also considered that the department was well rid of his adviser, who was the candidate for Prahran. As a matter of fact, that election campaign was largely conducted from the Ministry of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs.

Mr Jona—You are out of touch with the rest of the community.

Mr SIMMONDS—I am sure that the former adviser to the Minister, the Liberal Party candidate, was out of touch with the electors of Prahran. He thought he would move from Reservoir where he insulted the electors. When he just managed to survive on a vote of something like 30 per cent, representing the Liberal Party, he graduated to Prahran, a seat which was previously held by the Liberal Party and which is now held by the Labor Party. That is a fair indication of the capacity of the former Minister of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs to judge his advisers and what they may be capable of doing.

Mr Jona—He was not an adviser and the honorable member for Reservoir knows that. He is misrepresenting the situation again. He was a personal assistant.

Mr SIMMONDS—I am indebted to the Minister for an interjection which states that he was not an adviser, that he was the Minister's personal assistant.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN (Mr Birrell)—I ask the honorable member for Reservoir to confine his remarks to Division 675 of the Appropriation Bill. It is a money affair.

Mr SIMMONDS—I was just commenting that the money expended on this Ministry in the year 1978–79 would have paid the salary of the former Minister's personal adviser and commenting

on his performance in that capacity. I thought that would have been quite relevant.

I had indicated that the total allocation for the Ministry of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs for the financial year 1979–80 is $799 000. That indicates a continuing lack of Government concern for this area. I want to give the present Minister an indication of the enormity of the problems involved in administering this department with the meagre funds allocated by the Government in this Budget.

The problems are seen when one is confronted with the sort of reality represented by the Reservoir electorate where something like 20 000 to 25 000 of the citizens were born outside Australia and speak a language other than English. The dissemination of information about local government, State government, workers compensation, problems associated with applications for permits for the purchase of land and all of those everyday activities which take place in a community where the knowledge of the language and procedures of the country is required is currently being dealt with on the basis of a voluntary organization—the one and only in the electorate, the New Settlers Association, which was recently established and which attracted from this Ministry a grant of $2000-odd to assist it in performing this task on a voluntary basis. I make the comment that, while it is laudable and a contribution towards servicing these people, the fact that that association is currently sharing its office with an infant welfare centre and performing its functions on the basis of volunteer labour on a sessional basis two or three days a week is unsatisfactory in dealing with the problems that exist.

I direct the Minister's attention to the urgent need to recognize that, on a regional basis, there must be established permanent offices with resources to service the various communities. In Victoria some 28 per cent of the community were born outside Australia in countries where a language other than English is spoken. In addition to that, 20 per cent are English-speaking migrants, so that 48 per cent of the population are virtually newcomers to this country in one way or another. Throughout the whole ambit of community activity, the Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs is established on the basis of dealing with the needs of those people in particular.

When suggestions are made that children of Greek, Italian, Yugoslav or other ethnic backgrounds ought to be given the opportunity of instruction in the language of their parents, I have heard the comments which are made. Such a suggestion in this place led the honorable member for Mitcham to interject, "Why should it be at State expense?" The point is, of course, why not? These are resources of people, languages and facilities which ought to be developed at the time when they are cheapest.

Government supporters are all worried about how to do it, and the question of where the money will come from will always be the cry from the conservative forces of reaction in this State. There is no question that, when there is need for money to put policemen on the steps to stop people from coming and making representations to Parliament, there is no shortage of money; but when it comes to providing salaries for instruction in a language spoken by the children of the citizens of this State, that is a question this Government simply cannot face.

The Minister may well consult with his colleague, the Minister of Health, who has been decorated by the Yugoslav Government for his services to the Yugoslav community during the war. On his return to Yugoslavia, he was honoured in a way in which no other Victoria citizen has been honoured.

Mr Cox—That is good.

Mr SIMMONDS—Of course it is good and to be encouraged. In Yugoslavia it is the constitutional right of all citizens to be instructed in the language of their parents. That is a right in the education system, a right which is universal throughout the

Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. That federation consists of seven States and is an autonomous region which has a similar structure to Victoria. It has a democratic and enlightened form of constitution which enables the States and the Federation to operate in a progressive and informative way.

What is wrong with the former Minister of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs? He is still worrying about learning things. There is no question that his time for learning about matters of immigration and ethnic affairs has passed him by. I am more concerned with the present Minister who has the responsibility of performing the functions I am attempting to illustrate to the House and of performing those functions on a meagre budget of $799 700.

The Opposition spokesman on ethnic affairs has correctly illustrated the point that the fixed amounts in this Budget remain stationary. I invite honorable members to look at the allocation for ethnic groups. It was $100 000 last year and it is $100 000 again this year. Is the need any less this year than last year? Are the problems any fewer? Is the department achieving any more success? Has it achieved greater resources and do those resources need servicing?

There was an injection of unparalleled efficiency when the personal adviser of the Minister was sacked, but, that is not the only solution to the problem. The solution to the problem is to provide resources for the personnel in the department to expand and to get into the community where the job needs to be done. When reports are issued which state that part of the Victorian community is racist in its outlook, this causes concern in all Ministries, and in turn throughout the Parliament. Some people say that expenditure in this area is encouraging forced marriages—such is our approach to a multi-cultural society. The reality is that most people in Victoria are prepared to live with their neighbours in harmony and welcome the opportunity of developing a diverse society in which the culture could be developed by exposure to languages and cultures other than the English language and the English culture.

There are many native citizens of this State who have been delighted to join in language classes with Italians, Yugoslavs, Turks, Greeks, and other ethnic groups to learn their language and culture. This has given them an opportunity not only to help bring the migrants into our society but to develop the native born in this country.

The Minister has acknowledged the problem that exists, but he has in many ways been thwarted by the Government and Treasury which is denying the resources where the will may exist. The Government has demonstrated that there is no will other than tokenism in the range of expenditures under this item. Salaries and allowances have risen from $340 000 to $390 000. There is a marginally higher allowance for overtime, but only in keeping with the 10 per cent inflation rate. There has been an increase in the allocation for books and publication from $2000 to $6000—a miserly increase, and a small expenditure. The previous expenditure of $80 000 for publicity has been increased to $100 000. Publicity ought to be viewed in two ways. If that publicity is designed to convince or to con people into believing that things are being done when they are not, the money will be falsely expended. If that publicity is about resources being developed to provide people with access to those resources, then that publicity is commendable.

I hope not only that the many migrant organizations that have been established within the ethnic communities, and between the English speaking and ethnic communities on a joint friendship basis, will attract additional grants so they may perform on a voluntary and semi-voluntary basis, the work they are undertaking, but also that the resources of the department will be used so that people will be advised of these services.

The Northern Citizens Association in the Reservoir electorate hopes to service

the whole of the northern area and would greatly appreciate the Government publicizing its services. The reason I refer to this is that my electorate office is not far from where they operate, and many of the people seeking the service are coming to my electorate office. My limited knowledge of the languages spoken by some of these constituents prevents me from servicing their needs. It would be of great advantage, in the work that I am trying to do in the electorate if these resources were made available by people who are conversant with the languages of the people who come along with a problem.

There are many areas that need urgent attention, but the most urgent need is for a Ministry which is able to take the resources of the department to the people and make the people part of the programme to deal with the very problems the Minister indicated existed in the reports which, for one reason or another, were suppressed initially but which, on publication, increased the extent of the problem. There is reason for optimism in this area, but I sound this note of warning: When the economic situation in this State deteriorates, and when the unemployment and deprivation occurs in the work place and throughout our economy, scapegoats are often sought. Historically, the scapegoats are the newcomers to the society, and too often that is the basis of what is sometimes called racism, but more honestly called the survival of the fittest.

I believe the expenditure in the area of immigration and ethnic affairs ought to be increased dramatically, and I hope the moneys being expended this year will be expended more wisely than they were last year.

Mrs TONER (Greensborough)—I briefly draw the attention of the Minister for Community Welfare Services and the Minister of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs to the fact that there has been no increase in the allocation to ethnic groups. Ethnic groups depend greatly on voluntary organizations for welfare and the Department of Community Welfare Services makes little attempt to cater for migrants.

In answer to question on notice No. 651, asked by the honorable member for Carrum, the Minister for Community Welfare Services said that no appointments of ethnic affairs liaison officers had been made within the department to assist non-English speaking people. The Minister said that the department has not at any time resought the establishment of a specific office for this purpose. He further said that there are no formal interpreter services available within the department.

I know the stress that this has caused to many groups when they go to a regional office with family problems and nobody is there. It seems that the department is not prepared to make a contribution. It would have been appropriate for the Minister for Community Welfare Services to make grants to ethnic groups.

Mr GINIFER (Keilor)—This debate on the Appropriation Bill has been one of the most fruitful in my thirteen-odd years in Parliament. It has been a free-wheeling debate and has enabled honorable members to put viewpoints on many aspects of the work of Government departments as it applies to their electorates.

I take this opportunity to speak of some of the needs in the electorate I represent and, in particular, the needs of the ethnic community. About 70 per cent of the people in the electorate come from non-English speaking countries. They come from many and diverse religious backgrounds. Two of the main communities within St Albans are the Yugoslav Serbo-Croatian community, which make up about 35 per cent of the community, and the Maltese community which make up another 30 per cent. I pay tribute to the leaders of the Maltese community in that area because of the initiative they have taken in establishing under the auspices of the Malta Star of the Sea organization a community service programme which is

second to none in providing voluntary service to that community. I understand that a similar plan is being proposed for the Yugoslav community.

I also pay tribute to the present Minister of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, who, on assuming his portfolio, accepted an invitation to visit St Albans to see exactly what an urban electorate containing a preponderance of working class migrant people was like. There was a double advantage in his action: Firstly, to the Minister himself, because he saw at first hand what an urban industrial community was like and, secondly, to the people of the electorate, because they could see at first hand what a Liberal Minister of the Crown was like. The honorable gentleman was much more impressive than many of his colleagues are on television.

I also appreciate the interest that was shown not only by the Yugoslav community in St Albans but also by the Maltese, and the substantial Greek communities. The Minister saw at first hand the needs of ethnic communities, which would not be obvious to him in electorates such as the one he represents. He not only showed an interest in what was occurring in the electorate I represent, but also used his influence to obtain better grants for these communities. He made representations to other Ministers in the Cabinet to ensure that the needs of my constituents are catered for. I hope the Minister will return to the electorate of Keilor to present the cheques, which will be the fruits of his labours.

Ethnic social workers and interpreters should be employed in the community health centre in St Albans so that the facilities available there can be fully utilized by the ethnic community.

I refer next to the registration of people with medical qualifications obtained in other countries. In communities such as St Albans the emphasis on qualifications and fluency in the English language does not need to be strong, so long as the professional qualifications of the persons concerned in the dental, medical or optical fields are satisfactory. I shall illustrate a problem which has arisen on a couple of occasions in St Albans. As I mentioned earlier, the Yugoslav community in the area comprises 35 per cent of the population, but when a Yugoslav-trained and qualified dental practitioner applied to be appointed to practise in St Albans, his registration was refused because of his lack of understanding of the English language. However, the same person was refused admittance to an intensive English-speaking course because he was said to be too well qualified in the English language.

These anomalies occur, yet this person could have been employed as a dentist in a community comprising 35 per cent Yugoslav-speaking people, and would have been of significant advantage to them despite his supposed lack of fluency in the English language. He could have made a vital contribution to the welfare of 35 per cent of the people in the electorate I represent.

I put these propositions for the Minister's consideration and hope that these matters will be discussed by Cabinet, Ministers of Health or on a national Ministerial level and not glossed over by the basic Anglo-Saxon traditions that apply to many professional services.

I understand that some grants are about to be made available to the St Albans ethnic community, and I invite the Minister to present the cheques personally.

Mr SIMPSON (Niddrie)—My contribution to this section of the debate will be small because I want to speak at some length on another matter later. I refer to the allocations of expenses for the Victorian Immigration Advisory Council, and I am pleased that the Minister of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs is in the Chamber. I do not know whether any formal instruction is given at naturalization ceremonies for migrants by those representing the Good Neighbour Council and the Ministry of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs to assist people who are being naturalized to exercise the ultimate right of

having their names placed on the electoral roll. I am fully aware that that is done by some municipalities, but also that sometimes the people concerned do not understand the procedures to be undertaken, and it is extremely difficult for them to fill out the forms. I appeal to the Victorian Immigration Advisory Council to seriously examine ways of assisting these people at every possible level to achieve the ultimate right—the right to vote.

Mr CATHIE (Carrum)—This is the second occasion on which the Minister of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs has not been prepared to respond to wide-ranging criticisms of the budgetary appropriations—in this case for the Ministry of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs.

I remind the Minister of what the honorable member for Reservoir said when he pointed out, as does the annual report of the Ministry, that Victoria has the highest concentration of migrant and ethnic communities of any State in the Commonwealth. In fact, 28 per cent of the people in Victoria were either born outside Australia or have parents who were born outside Australia. Victoria has greater difficulties in this area because it has to absorb a large proportion of the total Australian migrant intake. During the debate most members of the Opposition have pointed out that the only item in Division No. 675 where the Ministry and the Government have done something and where funds are actually allocated to persons, organizations and institutions to assist in the development of community services and welfare projects to ethnic groups in the community, is actually a reduction in real terms. The amount is $100 000. Honorable members can go through items under many other divisions and ascertain that the Keep Australia Beautiful Council, for example, receives $100 000. Yet despite the largest intake of any State in the Commonwealth of migrant and ethnic communities, all Victoria can make available is the same amount of money to all of those ethnic communities and groups that it provides for one single group. That strikingly illustrates the priorities that govern the choices made by Cabinet and by the Treasurer. Once again, as with libraries, the Government is inconsistent and unsympathetic. It is an irresponsible Government.

MINISTRY OF HOUSING

Mr KIRKWOOD (Preston)—In the electorate that I represent there are many Housing Commission blocks of flats occupied by pensioners. The same type of flats are in many other suburbs. Elderly citizens in these flats are in extreme difficulty in an emergency such as when an ambulance is called and they have to be carried from their second-floor flat to the ambulance and then to the hospital. The ambulance drivers have to carry those people on stretchers and in most cases, because of the structure of the flats and the positioning of the stairs, it is indeed a most difficult journey. It is most dangerous for the person on the stretcher.

The Housing Commission and the ambulance service should arrange for a paraguard carrying chair or for some other mode of transport to be available to carry elderly people down to a waiting ambulance which will take them to a hospital. One might say that a chance can be taken because an accident might never happen, but the City of Preston has experienced many difficulties with ambulance services for elderly persons in these flats. I have talked with various people in the ambulance service and in their opinion a paraguard carrying chair is the only answer to the problem. This should be provided in all flats of more than one storey. Perhaps the paraguard carrying chair could be placed under the control of a particular person who is responsible to the other tenants.

Certainly, if this is not provided, in the near future the lives of one or more elderly citizens will be seriously jeopardized because of the extra time taken to carry a person on a stretcher down the stairs and the danger of that person falling off the stretcher and because the various safeguards are not available. I suggest that the Minister of Housing and

the Government examine this matter urgently for the safety of elderly citizens in flats in Victoria.

Mr CATHIE (Carrum)—I am intrigued by the claim in the little blue book of the Treasurer, "The Budget Speech 1979–80", that State funds for housing at $86 million represent an increase of 9 per cent. Actually, there has been a very real decrease in housing funds and one does not have to look far to establish that. The little blue book highlights as another great claim of the Government that there is a further $10 million to be made available through the State Savings Bank of Victoria for co-operative housing to assist first home buyers. That is a very large claim, except that last year in the Budget speech the Government referred to an allocation of $55 million. So little of the funds are being provided that the Minister of Housing has had to alter the ratio of funds between the Housing Commission and co-operative housing societies.

Traditionally, the funds provided under the Commonwealth—State Housing Agreement has been 70 per cent to the Housing Commission and 30 per cent to terminating co-operative building societies, but this has been altered to 60 per cent to the Housing Commission and 40 per cent to terminating societies. Once again there is a reduction in funds that are available to the poorest and most needy groups in society, those who are traditionally dependent on the Housing Commission for the provision of important shelter, whether for purchase or tenancy.

Mr Dixon—Have you considered any other of the Commonwealth and State grants?

Mr CATHIE—I shall do so, but firstly I shall quote the figures to establish the point that there has been a real reduction of approximately 20 per cent in the funds made available for housing overall. The Quarterly Review on Timber's Role in the Victorian Home Building Industry, Timber Promotion Council, gives an up-to-date figure. The publication states that the drop in housing hinders recovery in the building and timber industries, it is certainly helping to add to the present recession in the timber mills. The Timber Promotion Council, in a comparison over a twelve-month period, stated that the provision for Government houses in July 1978 of $1·7 million fell in 1979 to $0·7 million, a reduction of more than 55 per cent. That occurred as a result of the budgetary decisions of the Government.

I admit to the Minister of Housing that it is not easy to establish the effects of the budgetary allocations on housing. Most honorable members received a letter from the Minister of Public Works on 11 October and a document on the 1979–80 Budget regarding its effect on the building and construction industry. Honorable members now have a letter from the same Minister informing them that many of these estimates of construction programmes for State authorities and departments have since been revised by the Treasurer. I do not know how it is possible for the Treasurer to be so wrong in the original estimates that the Minister of Public Works gave to honorable members. There are major changes between this document and the document now being circulated a month later on 14 November. The revised estimates provided by the Minister of Public Works, which are a good indication of the progression of building construction to accommodate the waiting families, demonstrate that the total amount available, including the allocation for teacher housing, is expected to fall from $159·7 million to $137·2 million this year, a drop of $22·5 million or a reduction in money terms of 14 per cent and a reduction in real terms of 24 per cent, nearly one quarter. That is the effect of the Budget appropriations.

Yet the "little blue book" can somehow or other turn that enormous reduction of 24 per cent into a statement that State funds have been increased by 9 per cent. The Minister has apparently confused Estimates with actual expenditures. Last year, under the Housing Assistance Scheme, $30 million was borrowed from the banks, divided between the co-operative housing societies which were to receive $26·5 million and the Home Finance

Trust which was to receive $3·5 million. Much of that money was not spent. Therefore, that money was taken across and inserted in the Budget Estimates for this year, whereby $10 million has been allocated for the co-operative housing societies. That appeared in the Estimates last year as part of the $55 million that the Treasurer so proudly referred to this year. The Home Finance Trust spent only $600 000 of that $3·5 million resulting in $2·9 million being carried across to this year.

When one compares Estimates with Estimates, which is the only true basis of comparison, one finds that there has been a reduction in the claimed increase of $12·9 million which results in a decrease, not an increase.

The second figure the Treasurer relies upon when he trumpets around the State stating that the Government has increased funds for housing by 9 per cent has nothing to do with the provision of housing for the general public. The 1978–79 Budget provided $409 000 for State Electricity Commission housing at Loy Yang, whereas the allocation this year is $6·3 million. None of that money is available to provide housing for the poor and needy. That entire money is allocated to the State Electricity Commission. It is bridging finance for money to be borrowed from the National Bank of Australasia Ltd by the State Electricity Commission to construct 300 houses for the contractors and their personnel who are constructing the Loy Yang power station. How can that figure be included in the housing allocation? How can the Treasurer produce his "little blue book" and claim that the Government has allocated a 9 per cent increase in housing funds? There is nothing like any such increase.

One doubts the financial competence of the Minister when he so blithely confuses estimates by lumping last year's Estimates of expenditures together to produce a false increase of 9 per cent. There is no economic expertise behind that type of budgetary procedure.

The answer to a question on notice asked by the honorable member for Oakleigh reveals the sad and true position of what is happening to houses. The provision of loans and grants to the Housing Commission indicates a percentage variation over the previous year of minus 22 per cent. There is a reduction of 32·5 per cent in the allocation of finance to the terminating building societies. This will cause a dramatic reduction of 27 per cent in the provision of urgently needed homes. No wonder there is a recession in the building and construction industry.

The Minister of Housing also has the hide to preside over the Victorian Employment Committee. Yet that Minister is creating unemployment in the housing industry because of the budgetary decisions and priorities created by the Government.

Mr Dixon—The Commonwealth Government Budget decision caused that situation.

Mr CATHIE—The Minister is merely repeating the tired argument that it is the fault of the Commonwealth Government. The State funds have been reduced as well. The Minister should examine the New South Wales project which provides additional funds to compensate for the shortfall in Commonwealth funding.

What did the Premier and Treasurer say when he introduced the Budget last year? He made a commitment and a promise that the Government would more than compensate for the shortfall in Commonwealth Government spending. The Government has never done that. The Minister now blames his colleagues in Canberra.

I described the 27 per cent decrease in the provision of houses last year. What is the provision this year? It is another decrease of 27 per cent. The number of homes that will be provided this year is only 1335. What a miserable performance when more than 22 000 families are on the waiting list who are urgently seeking accommodation.

Every week honorable members receive similar letters from the Minister

stating that the waiting period is in excess of four years. That could mean ten years based on the progression of the Government. Ten years is a more likely figure. Not only is the waiting list growing, but so also is the waiting list for those who are seeking assistance through the terminating building societies. As at 30 June 1979 an estimated 12 500 families were on the waiting list for terminating building society loans. That is an increase of 25 per cent in twelve months.

The Budget is a failure. The appropriations for housing are a failure. Although I have related my remarks to the Housing Advisory Council, which is responsible for an inquiry into the housing policies and priorities which should guide the budgetary expenditures, I have indicated that there has been a complete failure by the Government to face up to the community's needs.

Mr MATHEWS (Oakleigh)—It is a source of concern that the potential contribution by the Housing Advisory Council is undermined by the fragmentation of responsibilities in the housing field between the Ministry of Housing and the Local Government Department.

The Housing Advisory Council came into operation at the beginning of this year, charged with the following responsibilities:

> To advise the Minister on any matter which affects housing, including any matter which affects the private or public sector of the housing industry; to investigate any matter referred to it by the Housing Minister and to consult with all sections of the housing industry in relation to any matter relating to the necessities of the housing industry.

It is difficult for that council to bring down effective recommendations when the Minister to whom it reports is denied the effective exercise of responsibility in crucial fields of consumer protection and quality control involving the housing industry.

The law on building liens, on registration of builders, on the six-year guarantee on new homes, on building regulations and building surveyors and on building consultants has, for some reason best known to the Government and so far undisclosed to the Parliament, been left with the Local Government Department, which is, to say the least, lackadaisical in its pursuit of these matters which are so vital to the home buyer in this State.

I particularly refer tonight, in the context of this item of the Estimates, to concern which has been expressed by the building industry about the lack of guidelines for building inspectors. This is a matter to which the Housing Advisory Council could properly address its attention in the coming twelve months.

Building inspectors are the people who are best placed to ensure that quality and standards in the construction of new homes are observed. Every house constructed in Victoria is meant to be inspected by a building surveyor at three stages, but the industry roundly deplores the fact that no guidelines have been laid down to determine precisely what objectives and what standards these inspections will set out to enforce. I have lately had some unhappy examples brought to my attention of the effects which can follow the lack of guidelines for building inspectors.

Mr DIXON (Minister of Housing)—On a point of order, the honorable member said that the responsibility for those activities comes under another Ministry. I ask for clarification, Mr Chairman, as to whether he should proceed under this item.

Mr CATHIE (Carrum)—On the point of order, under Division No. 680, the Housing Advisory Council is listed under Other Services and is a body that has powers to investigate every aspect of housing in this State.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN (Mr Birrell)—I rule that the honorable member for Oakleigh shall be able to proceed along his chosen line under Other Services, item No. 4, Housing Advisory Council Fees.

Mr MATHEWS (Oakleigh)—That is the item to which I was addressing myself. I was hoping to bring home to

the Minister, in the context of that item, the need for guidelines for building inspectors to be laid down by the Housing Advisory Council and hopefully for the administration of those guidelines to be brought within the compass of the Minister's department rather than be left where it is at present and where so little interest has been shown.

I wish to demonstrate that point by referring to a few specific cases. My attention has been forcibly drawn to the predicament of an aged pensioner from Balnarring who literally lost her life savings because a building surveyor from the Hastings Shire Council issued a certificate of occupancy for a home that was defective. The home was not defective on my say-so or on her say-so, but defective in the terms of an inspection by the Consumer Affairs Bureau. Inspectors from the Consumer Affairs Bureau reported that the standard of workmanship and finish of the house was disgraceful. It should be of concern to this Committee that building inspectors entrusted with the responsibility of carrying out this crucial function of quality control and consumer protection on behalf of the housing industry of this State are so derelict in their duty as in this case. Mrs Elsie Smith, of Coolart Street, Balnarring, contracted in 1975 to have a house built by the firm Rob Whall and Sons and ever since she has had to struggle, unsuccessfully, to get major defects in the house repaired.

Mr DIXON (Minister of Housing)—On a point of order, I again place before you, Mr Chairman, the fact that your previous ruling concerning matters on which the Housing Advisory Council may generally advise the Minister is broad, but as I understand the position this debate is on specific items which it should deal with. Those specific items, when we get into specific detail, concern local government and the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, so I submit that the detail is out of order.

Mr CATHIE (Carrum)—On the point of order, the Housing Advisory Council is listed under this division on housing. I have in front of me the Housing (Amendment) Act which states that the functions of the council are to advise the Minister on any matter which affects housing—that is what the honorable member for Oakleigh is in fact submitting—including any matter which affects either the private or the public sector of the housing industry.

The honorable member for Oakleigh has been dealing with the private housing construction industry and the responsibility of the Housing Advisory Council and I submit that you, Mr Chairman, should rule that the honorable member for Oakleigh is in order.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN (Mr Birrell)—I stretched the bow as far as I could on my previous ruling. I now believe we are crossing into the area of building regulations and local government matters and I ask the honorable member for Oakleigh to conclude his example as quickly as possible.

Mr MATHEWS (Oakleigh)—I was concerned in my remarks on the subject to demonstrate that the responsibilities which should properly be those of the Minister of Housing are fragmented in a way which impedes the efficiency with which they are discharged.

I was concerned to develop the point that the Minister's predecessor, in introducing new legislation last year to establish the Housing Advisory Council, had taken a major step forward in the direction of bringing those responsibilities under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Housing. That is clearly laid down in the Act. I was concerned, in bringing forward the example of this unfortunate woman who has been deprived of her life savings because of a breakdown in the building inspection system in this State, to bring home to the Minister the need to follow up the matter through the council.

Another aspect of this case which should be borne in mind in the context of the responsibilities of the Housing Advisory Council is the role which the Institution of Arbitrators plays in these matters. I imagine this is one of the things that the Minister of Housing will be anxious to refer to the

council at an early date because this woman was advised by the arbitrator who was brought into her case that if she would enter into a consent agreement with her builder the major defects of the home would be rectified by another builder. However, once she had entered into the agreement, the second builder, who had been introduced into the situation by the arbitrator, said he did not want anything more to do with the matter.

I am chiefly concerned about building surveyors, and another case of this type was directed to my attention in recent weeks. On this occasion a building surveyor bluffed a young woman out of her poorly built house by insisting it would have to be torn down because of bad workmanship. When she gave up in despair and sold the property to the builder who had originally caused her problems, the surveyor's order was withdrawn. The builder was able to complete the house and sell it off at a handsome profit.

In a third case—this case will be familiar to honorable members because it has been the subject of a report by the Ombudsman, Mr Dillon—a certificate of occupancy was wrongfully issued for a house at Gisborne. No compensation had been approved for the owner, a Mrs Dot Clarke, and there has been no sign that the Government is ready to amend the Act.

As the Minister was quick to pick up during my earlier remarks, these matters have become a source of great concern to his colleague, the Minister of Consumer Affairs, because of the hundreds of cases that are being directed to the attention of that Minister every year. Unfortunately, they have not become a cause for comparable concern to the Minister for Local Government, who is entrusted with the administration of this vital area of housing policy. It seems that the Minister for Local Government is prepared to go on being fed a diet of tranquillizers by powerful interests in the building industry.

I ask the Minister of Housing, in giving consideration to the terms of reference for the Housing Advisory Council this year, to consider putting before it the responsibilities of and guidelines for building inspectors.

Mr McINNES (Gippsland South)—I often think a fault of Parliament is that honorable members tend to single out individual situations and create the impression that they are the norm. In fairness to the Housing Commission, I must say that in my experience with its construction programme it does a fine job. I receive few complaints from tenants of Housing Commission homes.

It may be that when an honorable member has an isolated instance drawn to his attention it should be raised with the Minister by correspondence so that the matter can be adjusted. That would perhaps be better than airing the problem to the extent that the impression might be created that these problems are widespread.

Honorable members should concern themselves with the general policy of the commission and I must comment on that subject. The little blue book, as it has become known, the summary of the Victorian Budget provided by the Treasurer, puts forward a glossy view by saying that State funds for housing are $86 million this year, an increase of 9 per cent. It is difficult to believe this statement.

The honorable member for Carrum quoted figures from a document called *Shelter*, which was circulated to all honorable members.

Mr Cathie—I did not refer to it.

Mr McINNES—The honorable member quoted figures from it.

Mr Cathie—The Minister gave those figures to me.

Mr McINNES—In that case the Minister must have provided the organization that published *Shelter* with those statistics. The figures bear out the fact that the $86 million seems to have come from a variety of sources. Borrowings by statutory authorities within the Ministry will be

$4·8 million and the estimate of the surplus from Housing Commission rental and purchase programmes is $21 million. The estimated surplus from co-operative housing societies for the 1979–80 financial year is $16 million. The document deals with a number of other matters that make it appear that the Government has laundered money through certain areas and surpluses and has by that means collected $86·3 million, which it has then put forward as a 9 per cent increase in the allocation.

Mr Cathie—More than $6 million of that is to be spent by the State Electricity Commission.

Mr McINNES—That is right. There is to be a special programme for Gippsland, starting at 300 houses and extending to 1100 houses. It is estimated that $11 million will be spent on housing by other bodies, such as the State Electricity Commission, the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works and the Police Department.

Mr Cathie—That is not general housing.

Mr McINNES—It is hard to say that it is general housing. One thinks in terms of the Housing Commission providing welfare housing. Mr Groom, the Federal Minister for Housing and Construction, made comparisons and said that in 1978–79 funding from the Federal Government provided advances of $82·451 million and grants of $3·388 million. In the current year advances will total $41·744 million, a drop of almost 50 per cent, but grants will total $22·231 million, a seven-fold increase. Advances are to be reduced and grants are to be increased by the Federal Government.

However, the bottom line is the crux of the matter. This was also reflected in the submission made by the *Shelter* organization, which confirms that the *per capita* spending on public housing in Victoria in 1978–79 was $8.98, while the Australian average was $18.28. The State with the highest *per capita* spending on housing was Tasmania, which spent $35.20 per head of population.

There is argument about the source and perhaps even the application of funds that is confusing, but it is clear—and this is reflected in approaches made to honorable members almost daily—that there is still a shortfall of housing. It has been claimed that, in June 1979, 22 170 households were awaiting accommodation. In Sale, which has a population of 14 000, there is a waiting list of 100 or 150 people at any time. This is because the building programme cannot provide sufficient accommodation because of a reduction in funds, despite the 9 per cent increase claimed, which seems to have really been a cutback.

Builders are in trouble and are not keen to tackle Housing Commission projects. This year a company, which is a large contractor with the Housing Commission—I shall not mention the name, but it is well known—is in financial trouble, having accepted contracts in many country towns and taken work away from local contractors. There is no incentive for country builders to tender on what they believe to be unprofitable Housing Commission constructions.

The Housing Commission endeavours to prune its costs and ensure that it builds the best house for the lowest possible price. If that can reasonably be done, it should be complimented, but that does not always seem to be the case. Builders complain about the problems of quantity surveying. They say that contracts are changed in midstream and they are unable effectively to assess modifications to the contract. As a result they are forced to include allowances in the prices for possible errors in measurement and other factors. There is a disinclination to tender competitively. However, pruning the price can sometimes be counter-productive.

It has been said that many of the smaller subcontractors, the two and three-man outfits, would tender on Housing Commission houses at a realistic price, hopefully retaining some margin of profit for themselves, if the cost-effective changes to the design could be adequately assessed by quantity surveyors. I understand that until

recently the Housing Commission has had few of these people on its staff although the Public Works Department utilizes these specialists considerably.

The Housing Commission seems to have become involved in land purchases to a greater degree than it should, and in acquiring that land at high cost. Honorable members know the background and I will not worry the House with it now. On 11 September 1977, the honorable member for Carrum asked the Minister of Housing the following question :

1. What practices the Housing Commission employs in order to determine the location preference of applicants for tenancy and whether expressions of preferences are restricted to locations where the commission has rental stock?

2. Whether new methods of determining location preference are being investigated; if so, what methods?

In relation to rental stock, in many country towns there is an infrastructure in schools, hospitals and so forth where additional Housing Commission homes could be constructed. Those places are within commuting distance of the main country towns, and initiative could be taken by the Housing Commission to provide 10, 15 or 20 houses. This would achieve several things. Firstly, it would improve the viability of a town. I have in mind the town of Mirboo North which could act as a dormitory suburb for workers in the Latrobe Valley but which is virtually precluded from benefiting from the construction of housing by the State Electricity Commission. Secondly, land is much cheaper in those areas, and thirdly, the cost of subdivision is not as high as in other areas. The Housing Commission should be endeavouring to achieve its main objective of building houses rather than entering the field of land-ownership.

The thrust of both the Federal and State Budgets is to endeavour to provide an incentive, through financial assistance, to encourage the private sector to return to providing homes. Often Governments go overboard in trying to provide welfare housing and the real reason behind the provision of welfare housing is forgotten. A wide range of income earners who are not in the welfare housing situation begin to rely on public building for their housing requirements. That is not desirable, except where the economy is such that an artificial stimulus should be provided by Government— in times of recession. However, when the general level of affluence in the community is higher, Government housing should withdraw the pressure and allow impetus in the private building area.

Mr SIMMONDS (Reservoir)—It is not my intention to deal with this subject in substance because the honorable member for Carrum has covered it adequately. However, I point out that the Opposition regrets the diminishing amount of money being spent on housing in Victoria, which reflects the policy of the Victorian and Federal Governments. I hope the Minister will consider the situation that developed in the Reservoir electorate where there are a number of multi-storied pensioners' flats. It has been drawn to my attention by the Preston-Reservoir Progress Association that on two recent occasions pensioner deaths occurred in the flats and were unnoticed. On one occasion the pensioner died and was in the flat for five days before the body was removed.

Those incidents indicate the need for the establishment of a caretaker or warden service. About eighteen months to two years ago a deputation was made to the Director of the Housing Commission with propositions to meet some of the needs of the 300 flats in the area. I hope the Minister will give this problem his attention and indicate that a flat will be made available. I understand that the Housing Commission has tentatively suggested that one of the flats formerly occupied by a deceased person could be made available for a warden. There is a need for somebody with the capacity to make regular checks to ensure that all is well within the flats, to avoid the situation of a death or illness occurring and the occupants being without assistance for a lengthy period.

Several other amenities need to be provided in the flats. Recently a successful representation was made to install hand rails, a red telephone and

so forth, which make life a little more pleasant for citizens who have finished their working days. Those people are assisted in many ways by their organization, the Elderly Citizens and Combined Pensioners Association, which is active in the area.

There needs to be a basic facility in the flats to provide a reference point and a capacity to observe conditions there and report the incidence of death and injuries more properly than at present. I hope the Minister will consider this. I have arranged for a deputation to meet with the honorable gentleman, and if he responds, I shall be happy to introduce the people concerned.

Another point arises out of assurances given to office staff employees of Government instrumentalities—exempting employees of State Government departments—that they will be covered by a new superannuation scheme which I understand is currently with the Treasury. It covers employees of the Ministry of Housing. The scheme is not likely to be introduced before the end of this year or some time into the next year There is the position of the employees of Holmesglen Constructions, an instrumentality which the Government intends to dispose of. The employees of that instrumentality should receive coverage under the superannuation scheme which should be expanded to ensure that they are not disadvantaged. This could occur if action is not taken to bring them within the relevant sections of the scheme prior to the sale of Holmsglen Constructions by the Government.

The Opposition objects to the proposed "sale" because it believes the facility will be disposed of at a bargain basement price and the State will lose the capacity to do something in an area of housing which should be developed rather than declared redundant. I hope the Minister will note the comments I have made and take the relevant action.

RAILWAY CONSTRUCTION

Mr CRABB (Knox)—It is surprising that provision is made for the Railway Construction Board under Division 710 because that board is being replaced by a new organization to be known as the Railway Construction and Property Board which is to be set up by proposed legislation currently before Parliament.

However, the only matter I draw to the attention of the Committee is that in this Bill provision does not appear to have been made for money to be spent on works and services, merely moneys to be spent on salaries, payments and general expenses.

I refer to item No. 12 under General Expenses which relates to workers compensation insurance. An amount of $97 363 was expended last year and that amount is more than 50 per cent of the salaries payable to the employees of the Railway Construction Board. The figure should not pass the Committee without explanation, particularly as workers compensation insurance in this financial year will be only $8000.

One concludes that in 1978–79 the taxpayers of Victoria paid twelve times as much for workers compensation insurance as they will pay in this financial year.

I take it that the reason for the larger amount last year was the payment of arrears of premiums paid to the State Insurance Office, but the position should be explained to the Committee before the division is agreed to and I invite the Minister of Transport to make the explanation.

Mr MACLELLAN (Minister of Transport)—I have been invited to give an explanation but I am unable to do so. If the honorable member had raised the matter with me during ordinary working hours I would have been able to obtain an explanation for him, and during the next working hours I shall do so.

TRANSPORT

Mr CRABB (Knox)—Under the Ministry of Transport division I draw specific reference to item 2 of section 3 —payments in respect of passenger transport—tram and bus services. In the past this item comprised the deficit of the Tramways Board, plus an amount of money payable by way of subsidy to private bus operators. In this financial

year the provision does not include the amount payable to private bus operators which instead is coming from the moneys raised by the petrol levy.

Frankly, it is not good enough for these figures to be included in the measure without any explanation. On the face of it, it looks as though the subsidy referred to has moved from $42·5 million to $33 million. In reality it is nothing of the sort because the aggregate figure of $42·5 million for the last financial year included a subsidy of approximately $9 million which was required for payment to private bus operators. The fact ought to have been drawn to the attention of the Committee.

RAILWAYS

Mr CRABB (Knox)—Division 750 is the Railways division and covers most of the expenditure items of the Victorian Railways. There are a number of aspects of this division which require comment. The first which I draw to the attention of the Minister of Transport and on which I expect an explanation from him during his normal working hours relates to pay-roll tax in respect of railway employees. The provision appears to be more than 5 per cent of the item "Labour". I would expect the pay-roll tax provision to have been 5 per cent of the salaries provision but it should be noted that the provision is more than $500 000 above what represents 5 per cent of the salaries provision. Indeed, last year the provision was also $500 000 above the 5 per cent provision and I would be grateful if the Minister of Transport, when he gets around to his working hours, could provide an explanation of that item.

It is also of concern that the item relating to materials and other expenditure, which is as broad a definition as one can obtain, has increased to $78 million, which represents an increase of 17 per cent, but no explanation has been given.

The other item in this division which concerns me relates to salaries where the provision has risen from $239 million to $254 million, which represents an increase of 6·5 per cent. Given the inflation rate which has been estimated in other Budget Bills, the provision would seem to imply a reduction in staff of some 3 per cent over the year and 3 per cent of the railways staff would represent something like 800 employees. I do not know how the figures have been arrived at but an explanation should be given.

It is also important to note that the item in respect of railway employees does not include provision for the payment by the Victorian Railways Board to the superannuation fund in respect of railway employees. It seems particularly strange that that figure is not included in the Bill. It is an amount of some $25 million and it is increasing at a rate that is twice the rate of increase in salaries. That position is of some concern. It is of some concern, because although it is not always increasing at an alarming rate, it is not included in the Bill and therefore it has not been adequately scrutinized by the House.

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.

LIQUOR CONTROL (AMENDMENT) BILL

Mr RAMSAY (Minister of Labour and Industry)—I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The purposes of this short Bill are to establish a new licence to enable a community Food and Wine Festival to be held in the City of Melbourne once a year and to adjust the principal Act to meet certain difficulties raised by the Subordinate Legislation Committee relating to the making of regulations under the Act. A consortium of the Victorian Branch of the Licensed Restaurateurs Association of Australia, the Caterers Association and the *Age* newspaper have approached the Government with a view to holding an annual food and wine festival in the City of Melbourne.

In essence the promoters of the scheme desire to establish, in Melbourne, a festival similar to the successful ventures in Adelaide, Brisbane,

Sydney, Surfers Paradise and Canberra which have proved to be immensely popular and have attracted large crowds to a family picnic atmosphere with special entertainment for children and the involvement of the various ethnic groups in the community. The festival envisaged will be a family day in the area of the Fitzroy Gardens held one Sunday afternoon in March. The best food will be available through Melbourne's restaurateurs and quality Australian wines will be available in what will essentially be a happy picnic atmosphere.

The proposal has the support of the Melbourne City Council and the Ministry of State Development and Tourism and, following advice from the Liquor Control Commission, the Government has decided to make appropriate enabling amendments to the Liquor Control Act 1968. Accordingly, the Bill before the House establishes a new licence which will——

Permit the sale and disposal of liquor in such parts of the Treasury and Fitzroy Gardens and the adjacent streets as the Liquor Control Commission with the consent of the Melbourne City Council determines;

be granted once only in any calendar year and may be granted for a Sunday;

specify the times during which such sales and disposal may take place. Those times will be in the discretion of the commission; and

be subject to a fee of $1000.

The second matter in the Bill deals with a regulation-making problem brought to the Government's notice by the Subordinate Legislation Committee. At present all persons holding licences to sell and dispose of liquor are required, for determining amongst other things, the annual fee, to make a return of liquor purchases. Such returns are prescribed by the regulations and are verified by statutory declaration. This procedure has been the practice in respect of purchases made by persons authorized to conduct canteens under the relevant provisions of the principal Act.

Following examination of certain canteen regulations, the Subordinate Legislation Committee has suggested that the regulation-making powers under section 44 of the Act do not extend to the prescribing of a statutory declaration in respect of canteen purchases. It is desirable that those returns continue to be so verified and the amendment proposed by clause 3 puts the matter beyond doubt.

These amendments are essentially minor. I should like to use this opportunity, however, to advise the House that further amendments to the Act, following consideration of the report by Mr Davies, Q.C., and subsequent submissions from many interested parties, are currently in preparation for introduction at an early date. I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of Mr FORDHAM (Footscray), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Tuesday, December 4.

ADJOURNMENT

Fire at A. J. Wagglen dry dock—Prahran Primary School—Surrender value of life insurance policies

Mr MACLELLAN (Minister of Transport)—I move:

That the House do now adjourn.

Mr STIRLING (Williamstown)—I raise with the Minister of Public Works a matter which I raised during the debate on the motion for the adjournment of the sitting on 1 November, namely, the fire that razed the administration section of the A. J. Wagglen dock at South Melbourne. What concerned me at that time was the type of building provided by the Government, a modular type of building, which was razed by fire. Even though the best fire service in Melbourne attempted to save the building, it was completely destroyed.

In his reply, the Minister said, *inter alia*—

I have inspected the remains of the fire and discussed with officers of my department a problem relating to this type of building . . . I have asked for a report on the fire. The Government will examine the possibility of making those types of buildings less dangerous and any fire that occurs more controllable.

In the Victorian *Government Gazette* No. 89 of 25 October 1979 under the heading "Contracts accepted" on page 3406 were listed two contracts that the Public Works Department had accepted for supply and delivery to the depot at Port Melbourne: A number of relocatable modular buildings at a cost of $5 612 500 under one contract from Cemak Associated Limited and further buildings at a cost of $1 719 655 from Jennings Industries Ltd. I ask the Minister whether he has received a report on the fire that occurred at Duke and Orr's dock, whether he has ascertained the number of similar buildings throughout the State, and what action the Government has taken to make this type of building less dangerous in the event of a fire.

Mr MILLER (Prahran)—Is the Assistant Minister of Education aware that the Prahran Primary School, which is classified as a disadvantaged school, has not received one cent under the Supplementary Grants Scheme, although the area for which the committee is responsible for allocating funds under that particular scheme has allocated funds to every other disadvantaged school in the Prahran electorate.

I ask the Minister to examine the position to ascertain why the Prahran Primary School has not been given one cent in the 1980 school year, when for 1978 and 1979 the equality programme which had been funded under the Supplementary Grants Scheme had been funded to a great extent. The scheme involved two people; one a teacher aide, and another, a community liaison officer, whose functions were to liaise with members of the Greek speaking people in Prahran, and to bring rapport between the parents and teachers of the school and other members of the community.

If no funds are made available in 1980, the hard work which has been put in by the teachers and teacher aides involved in this programme will be sacrificed. A great deal of video equipment will be left idle, the school will be the sufferer, and the students and the teachers will be the long-term sufferers as a result.

I request the Minister to treat this matter as urgent and see if this particular decision can be rescinded.

Mr COLLINS (Noble Park)—I bring a matter to the attention of the Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation. I refer to the debate that took place earlier today in this House concerning the acquisition by the Trotting Control Board of land in Keysborough without a valuation. The proposition being canvassed by the Leader of the Opposition and the Opposition spokesman for Youth, Sport and Recreation, concerns the value of the land.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. S. J. Plowman)—Order! I advise the honorable member that under Standing Orders he is not allowed to allude to a debate in this Parliament. The initial part of the matter he referred to the Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation alluded to a debate that took place this day. I advise the honorable member accordingly.

Mr COLLINS—May I refer to the matter in a different way, Mr Speaker? The question I am asking the Minister refers to any valuations which may have been brought to his attention. Is the Minister able to inform the House as to those valuations, and any other steps that he has taken to this time?

The SPEAKER—I have to rule that out of order. It is a question without notice. I suggest that the honorable member ask the question in a few hours' time.

Mr KING (Springvale)—I direct a matter to the attention of the Minister of Consumer Affairs. I have information on two life insurance policies which have been surrendered by young people in my electorate. Both of these policies had been in existence for three years, and they concern a young man and his sister who needed to cash their insurance policies. The young lady needed to buy her trousseau, and the man needed cash because he was out of work. The contract of the young lady states that $657 was paid in premiums, and she received $90.66 for the surrender value. The young man paid in $1219 and received

$167.60 for the surrender value. These are low returns and it is not a good way of paying people out.

I ask the Minister to investigate whether these amounts on surrendering a life policy could be lifted. I can make this information available to the Minister if he would care to examine it.

Mr AUSTIN (Minister of Public Works)—The matter raised by the honorable member for Williamstown referred to the burnt out building which services the Wagglen dock, and is one that I did investigate.

I told the honorable member that I would see if there was some way a building could be constructed which would make it less likely to be affected by fire. Having referred this to my department, I believe the modular building which will replace the burnt-out shell will be the same as those supplied to hundreds of schools and other areas throughout Victoria. If a sprinkler system were to be installed in the building, it would need to be done on other similar buildings throughout the State, and the cost involved would be out of keeping with the total cost of the building.

My answer is that the building will be replaced. It will be better than the building that was burnt down, and the very use of the building means that the chance of a fire will be remote.

Mr Stirling—What about the others around the State?

Mr AUSTIN—The same thing applies. The only way they could be made safe is by putting in a sprinkler system, and the cost of doing that would be out of keeping with the buildings that are going to be put in areas throughout Victoria.

Mr LACY (Assistant Minister of Education)—I will cause an investigation to be made into the matter raised by the honorable member for Prahran concerning the Prahran Primary School and the Supplementary Grants Scheme, which he believes to have been discontinued for the 1980 school year, and I will inform the honorable member accordingly.

Mr RAMSAY (Minister of Consumer Affairs)—I will be pleased to examine the matter raised by the honorable member for Springvale if he would let me have the details.

The motion was agreed to.

The House adjourned at 1.8 *a.m.* (*Thursday*).

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

The following answers to questions on notice were circulated—

TOORAK CENTRAL PRIMARY SCHOOL LAND PURCHASE

(Question No. 298)

Mr FORDHAM (Footscray) asked the Assistant Minister of Education, for the Minister of Education:

Whether properties have been purchased in Brookville Road, South Yarra, as an extension to the Toorak Central Primary School; if so—(*a*) what were the valuations of each of the properties concerned; (*b*) what was the price paid in each case; and (*c*) what was the cost of renovations?

Mr LACY (Assistant Minister of Education)—The answer supplied by the Minister of Education is:

(*a*) and (*b*)

Address	*Price*	*Valuation*	*Comments*
	$	$	
8 Brookville Road	110 000	..	Purchased at Auction February 1977
10 Brookville Road	99 000	..	Purchased at Auction December 1976
12 Brookville Road	86 000	84 000	Private Treaty December 1977
58 Fairbairn Road	10 000	9 850 and 9 700	Private Treaty January 1969

(c) Renovations to properties at 10 and 12 Brookville Road were completed earlier this year at a total cost of $8500.

STATE INSURANCE OFFICE

(Question No. 818)

Mrs TONER (Greensborough) asked the Premier:

1. What action, if any, the Premier has taken to ensure that the State Insurance Office is not acting in contravention of section 18 (1) (*b*) of the Equal Opportunity Act 1977 in respect of the discriminatory terms in which employment is offered?

2. Whether he has investigated the matter of discrimination in respect of uniforms as he made a commitment to do during the debate on the question that the House do now adjourn on 31 May 1979; if so, what was the result of this investigation, and what action has taken place?

Mr HAMER (Premier)—The answer is:

1. and 2. Yes. The Insurance Commissioner, after consultation with the Commissioner for Equal Opportunity, has formed a committee with equal representation of both males and females to review the question of dress standards, including uniforms, in the State Insurance Office.

SPECIAL SCHOOLS

(Question No. 926)

Mr MATHEWS (Oakleigh) asked the Assistant Minister of Education:

Whether he will bring up to date and consolidate in *Hansard* the answer on special schools which the former Minister of Special Education gave to the member for Footscray on 26 September 1978 in response to question No. 1070 and reported in *Hansard* at page 4247?

Mr LACY (Assistant Minister of Education)—The answer is:

Schools for the Physically and Sensorily Handicapped

(*a*) St. Albans Deaf Unit.

(*b*) Victorian School for Deaf Children
Princess Elizabeth Junior School
Monnington
Ewing House
Glendonald
Nepean
Marathon
Royal Children's Hospital
Yooralla Balwyn
Yooralla Glenroy
Shannon Park
Janefield Deaf Unit
Kew Cottages Deaf Unit.

(*c*) Victorian School for Deaf Children

(*d*) Carronbank School for Partially Sighted Children.

Places added: 6—Victorian School for Deaf Children; 18—St. Albans Deaf Unit.

Places lost: 10—Carronbank School for Partially Sighted.

Special Developmental Schools

(*a*) Balwyn S.D.S.
Djerriwarrh (Melton) S.D.S.
Heidelberg and District S.D.S.
Milparinka (Parkville) S.D.S.
Milparinka (South Melbourne) S.D.S.
Nadrasca (Nunawading) S.D.S.
Oakleigh S.D.S.
Urimbirra (Noble Park) S.D.S.
Wyndham (Werribee) S.D.S.
Woorinyan (Frankston) S.D.S.
Yarrabah (Aspendale) S.D.S.
Cobram S.D.S.
Kallemondah (Seymour) S.D.S.
Kyndalyn (Maffra) S.D.S.
Mirridong (Yarram) S.D.S.
Numurkah S.D.S.

(*b*) As above

(*c*) Nil

(*d*) Nil

Places added: 96

4 Balwyn
8 Yarrabah
3 Cobram
12 Woorinyan
8 Nurmurkah
8 Milparinka (Parkville)
8 Milparinka (South Melbourne)
9 Djerriwarrh
9 Wyndham
5 Nadrasca
17 Urimbirra
3 Heidelberg
1 Mirridong
1 Kyndalyn

Places lost: 7—Oakleigh S.D.S.

Schools for the Intellectually Handicapped

(*a*) Ashwood
Ballarat
Broadmeadows
Bulleen
Croxton
Dandenong
Fitzroy
Geelong
Janefield
Kalianna
Kew
Mitcham
Moe
Montague
Moorabbin West
Naranga
Ormond
Stawell
Rosamond
St. Albans
Shepparton
Vermont South
Watsonia
Bendigo and Northern District Work Education Centre

(*b*) As above

(*c*) Broadmeadows
Croxton
Geelong
Janefield
Kalianna
Kew
Mitcham
Moorabbin West
Ormond
Rosamond

(*d*) Nil

Places added:

24 Broadmeadows
24 Croxton
24 Geelong
100 Janefield
24 Kalianna
36 Rosamond

Sessional services of varying duration have been provided for approximately 600 residents at Kew.

Places lost: Nil

Montague—change of function, now Continuing Education Centre for Senior Intellectually Handicapped Children.

Schools for the Socially and Emotionally Handicapped

(*a*) Bayswater Youth Training Education Centre

Castlemaine Prison Education Centre

(*b*) Travancore Special School
Allambie Special School
Baltara Special School
Hillside Special School
Basin Boys' Special School
Tally Ho Special School
Langi Kal Kal Youth Training Education Centre
Malmsbury Youth Training Education Centre
Turana Youth Training Education Centre
Winlaton Youth Training Education Centre
Ararat Prison Education Centre
Beechworth Training Prison Education Centre
Bendigo Training Prison Education Centre
Pentridge Prison Education Centre
Fairlea Female Prison Education Centre
Geelong Training Prison Education Centre
South-Eastern Child and Family Centre

(*c*) Nil

(*d*) Meglin Special School
Ballarat Children's Home Special School

Places added: Services provided within Social Welfare Institutions are subject daily to sweeping fluctuations in enrolment.

Places lost: It is not possible or practical to provide this information.

SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES

(Question No. 928)

Mr MATHEWS (Oakleigh) asked the Assistant Minister of Education:

Whether he will bring up to date and consolidate in *Hansard* the answer on special services pursuant to section 64B of the *Education Act* 1958 which the former Minister of Special Education gave to the member for Footscray, on 14 November 1978 in response to question No. 1073 and reported in *Hansard* at page 5666?

Mr LACY (Assistant Minister of Education)—The answer is:

"Services" listed are ancillary to the comprehensive network of special schools of all types which has operated in Victoria.

Services for Intellectually Handicapped

(*a*), (*b*) and (*c*)

Special Facilities Units	*Teaching Positions Involved*
1972 Vermont South	+3
1975 Watsonia	+2
1975 Naranga (Frankston)	+3
1976 Ashwood	+3
1978 Geelong	+3
Continuing/Work Education Centres	
1976 Montague Continuing Education Centre	+8
1976 Bendigo and Northern District Work Education Centre	+6
Unit Based Education Programs within State Institutions for the Mentally Retarded	
1968 Janefield	+12
1975 Children's Cottages Kew	+46
1975 St Nicholas Hospital	+5
1975 Kingsbury Training Centre	+2
1976 Sunbury Training Centre	+2

Community Centre, Children's Cottages, Kew
1977 Hamer Centre.
1977 Geiger Centre.
1977 Austin Centre—Included in Kew above.
1977 Smorgan Centre.

Evening Classes
1977 Ballarat.
1978 Broadmeadows.
1977 Kalianna (Bendigo)—Not applicable.
1977 Moorabbin West.
1977 Rosamond.
1978 St Albans.
1978 Watsonia.
Vermont South Special School.

(*d*) Nil.

Special Developmental

(*a*) Nil.

(*b*) Early Childhood Program—Home Visiting Teacher Service.

1976 Oakleigh Special Developmental School—no additional staff—reallocation of existing staff.

School Based

Early Childhood Program—
Urimbirra.

Kallemondah (Seymour).
Woorinyan.
Wyndham.
Mirridong (Yarram) (No Early Childhood Program).
Milparinka (Parkville).
Nadrasca.
Oakleigh.
Yarrabah.
Djerriwarrh.

No additional staff (teachers) specifically for this special service but Welfare Officers (Mental Retardation) involved in this work (C.G. & C.S.).

(*c*) Nil.

(*d*) Nil.

Special Education (Socially and Emotionally Handicapped)

Special Services

(*a*) Nil.

Social Adjustment Centres

Ballarat	2 teachers.
Kerrimuir	2 teachers.
Monterey Social Adjustment Centre	2 teachers.
Scoresby (relocated in 1978 at Heatherdale)	2 teachers.

(*b*) Maintained.

Social Adjustment Centres

Doveton North Social Adjustment Centre	2 teachers.

(*c*) and (*d*) Nil.

New Service

South-Eastern Child and Family Centre.

Remedial Education Services

(*a*)

Year	*Special Education Units*	*Additional Staff*
1973	Sale	4
	*Morwell	4
	Ballarat	5
	Bendigo	5
1974	Frankston	5
	*Colac	5
	Doncaster	5
	Timboon	4
1975	Beechworth	5
	Boronia	5
	Camberwell	5
	Diamond Valley	5
	Echuca	5
	Essendon	5
	Wittlesea	5
	*Swan Hill	5
	Altona	5
	*Richmond	5
	*Hamilton	5
	*Warragul	5
1976	Waverley	5
	Leongatha	5
	Clayton	5
	Coburg	5
1977	Caufield	5
	Carlton	5
	Box Hill	5
	Chelsea	5
	Seymour	5
	Stawell	5
	Heidelberg	5
1979	Corio	1
	Horsham	5

(*Converted from Opportunity Remedial Centres)

Year	*Demonstration Units*	*Additional Staff*
1974	Beaumaris	8
	Footscray	8
1975	Ashwood	8
	Fawkner	8

(*b*) Maintained (in addition to above).

Special Education Units
Warrnambool
Geelong
Broadmeadows
Ringwood
Shepparton
Melton
Lilydale
Mildura
Numurkah
Benalla
Wangaratta
Footscray

Demonstration Units
Kew

Opportunity Remedial Centres
45 Centres maintained each with one staff member.

Remedial Centres
10 Centres maintained each with one staff member.

(*c*) A staffing Structure established for Special Education Units in 1976 was the major factor in increasing staff levels from 40 in 1973 to 201 in 1978.

(*d*) 1977 Victoria Park Post Primary School (Pupils integrated into local schools)
—2 staff members

1977 Mildura West O.R.C. —1 teacher.

Physically & Sensorily

(*a*) Nil.

(*b*) Visiting Teacher Service—Deaf
Visiting Teacher Service—Visually Impaired
Visiting Teacher Service—Physically Handicapped.

(*c*) In 1977 the Visiting Teacher Service—Deaf, and Visiting Teacher Service—Visually Impaired, were regionalised. (Staff deployment).

Centres were established at—
Hamilton
Horsham
Bendigo
Geelong
Ballarat
Benalla
Sunshine
Preston
Frankston
Knox
Central
Gippsland
Shepparton

(*d*) Nil.

Number of staff positions added:
Visiting Teacher Service—Deaf—2 positions
+2

Visiting Teacher Service—Visually Impaired—3 positions +3

Number of staff positions lost: Nil.

HANDICAPPED CHILDREN

(Question No. 931)

Mr MATHEWS (Oakleigh) asked the Assistant Minister of Education:

Whether he will bring up to date and consolidate in *Hansard* the answer on admission to training centres and special development schools which the former Minister of Special Education gave to the member for Footscray on 25 October 1978 in response to Question No. 1074 and reported in *Hansard* at page 5192?

Mr LACY (Assistant Minister of Education)—The answer is:

Prior to the beginning of the 1976 school year no day training centre had transferred to the Education Department to become a special developmental school.

1. (*a*) (ii) 1976 15
   1977 15
   1978 13
   (*b*) (ii) 1976 12
   1977 14
   1978 16
   1979 1
2.

Region	5–21 *years* 1976	1977	1978	1979	*Under 5 years* 1976	1977	1978	1979
Northern—								
Metropolitan	*	0	2	0	*	0	0	0
South Eastern—								
Metropolitan	2	2	1	0	2	2	2	1
Eastern	*	0	0	0	*	0	0	0
Western	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Central	13	13	10	0	10	12	14	0
Benalla	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Gippsland	*	0	0	0	*	0	0	0
Other	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*

(*Indicates no Day Training Centre had converted to Special Developmental Schools.)

GOVERNMENT PUBLIC RELATIONS

(Question No. 1060)

Mr WILKES (Leader of the Opposition) asked the Minister of Public Works:

1. How many people are employed by the departments, instrumentalities, authorities and divisions under the Minister's control in each of the advertising, public relations, information and extension fields?

2. What is the annual budget for each of these activities in each of these departments, instrumentalities, authorities and divisions?

Mr AUSTIN (Minister of Public Works)—The answer is:

The time, effort and expense entailed in collating this complex information cannot be justified. If the Leader of the Opposition requires information on any specific item arising out of this department's public relations and information activities, then every effort will be made to supply the information.

MILLER'S ROPEWORKS

(Question No. 1248)

Mr ROPER (Brunswick) asked the Assistant Minister of Education:

In respect of the Miller's Ropeworks site in Brunswick:

1. Whether the planning committee is still meeting and whether meetings are being held regularly; if so, whether the member for Brunswick's request for minutes of the meetings will be agreed to; if not, why?

2. Who made the decision to permit the Department of Youth, Sport and Recreation to move its storerooms from Camberwell to the Ropeworks site, and whether this decision was part of an overall plan, indicating details of such overall plan?

3. Whether the site co-ordinator has now been appointed, indicating his name, his experience and his terms of reference, and whether it is proposed that he will involve the local community and the school in determining future use of the site?

Mr LACY (Assistant Minister of Education)—The answer is:

1. The Steering Committee meets regularly. Normal practice is that minutes of project planning committees are not disseminated. It is intended that normal practice be followed.

2. The decision to allow the Department of Youth, Sport and Recreation use of the Ropeworks' existing facilities was made by the regional director.

This situation is interim only and final arrangements will be made when planning is completed.

3. The site project co-ordinator has not yet been appointed.

The local community and local schools will be involved in the planning process for determination of future use of the site.

SPECIAL ACCOMMODATION HOUSES

(Question No. 1307)

Mr ROPER (Brunswick) asked the Premier:

Whether, in receiving a deputation from the Rest Homes and Special Accommodation Houses Association prior to the 1979 election he stated that he would write to the Federal Government with a request that the $15·00 per week personal care subsidy be made available to residents of special accommodation houses; if so, whether he has yet written to the Commonwealth in these terms and, if not, why?

Mr HAMER (Premier)—The answer is:

No. I said that the Health Commission was considering the establishment of a working party to review the part of the Act relating to special accommodation houses, and if the commission recommended it, I would be prepared to support an approach to the Commonwealth for the extension of personal care subsidies. The working party is still conducting its review.

SCHOOL STAFF

(Question No. 1457)

Mr AMOS (Morwell) asked the Assistant Minister of Education, for the Minister of Education:

1. Whether reserve staff were held in schools in 1979 so that future identifiable needs could be met and whether this policy will be discontinued in 1980; if so, as many high school principals generally supported the motion of reserve staff, whether the decision will be reconsidered; if not, why?

2. What staff ceilings for the secondary service will be imposed in 1980?

3. Whether consideration will be given to granting wider authority to employ staff above the imposed ceiling to meet the special needs components for schools where these needs are fully documented and are reasonable in the view of the staffing officers?

Mr LACY (Assistant Minister of Education)—The answer supplied by the Minister of Education is:

1. The matter was fully dealt with in a Ministerial Statement dated 4 July 1979; a copy of which will be supplied to the honorable member.

2. and 3. The staffing entitlement of secondary schools will be calculated for 1980 on the same basis as for 1979, and provision will also be made as in 1979 for additional staff in appropriate cases to meet special needs.

TOBACCO

(Question No. 1553)

Mr FOGARTY (Sunshine) asked the Minister of Agriculture:

1. What percentage of the Australian tobacco crop is grown in Victoria?

2. What percentage of Australian-grown tobacco is used in Australian made cigarettes?

3. What is the price of—(*a*) Australian; and (*b*) imported tobacco per unit?

4. What restrictions are placed upon the making of 100 per cent Australian leaf cigarettes?

5. Whether the quality of Australian tobacco leaf is as good as or better than the imported leaf?

6. What quantity of tobacco leaf Australia imports each year and what is the value of the leaf?

7. What is the price break-up of a packet of cigarettes, indicating the percentage of—(*a*) Commonwealth Government excise duty; (*b*) Victorian State tax; (*c*) manufacturer cost and manufacturing and marketing and profit; (*d*) wholesalers return; (*e*) retailers return; and (*f*) value of tobacco in the product?

Mr I. W. SMITH (Minister of Agriculture)—The answer is:

1. Thirty-seven per cent.

2. Fifty-seven per cent.

3. (*a*) The average price realised at auction for the Australian crop in 1979 was 369·7 cents per kilogram.

(*b*) 349 cents per kilogram.

NOTE—Manufacturers have to process Australian leaf and hold it in stock for up to 18 months, thus adding considerably to the total cost of purchasing the Australian crop.

4. No restrictions.

5. Australian manufacturers use the full range of quota grades from the Australian crop. Only selected grades for specific purposes are imported. It is therefore not possible to make a valid comparison.

6. In the year to June 1979 10 347 800 kilograms of unmanufactured tobacco was imported for a cost of $36 129 000.

1. (*a*) 46 per cent.
(*b*) 12 per cent.
(*c*) 17 per cent.
(*d*) 4 per cent.
(*e*) 16 per cent.
(*f*) 5 per cent.

Legislative Council

Thursday, 22 November 1979

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. F. S. Grimwade) took the chair at 11.19 a.m. and read the prayer.

APPROPRIATION (1979–80, No. 1) BILL

This Bill was received from the Assembly and, on the motion of the Hon. HADDON STOREY (Attorney-General), was read a first time.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

HERALD AND WEEKLY TIMES LTD

The Hon. D. R. WHITE (Doutta Galla Province)—As Herald and Weekly Times Ltd shares were traded this morning at a value of $5.50 a share and as there is uncertainty surrounding the Trade Practices Commission's power to intervene in this issue, can the Attorney-General inform the House whether he has the authority to refer takeovers to the Company Take-overs Committee under section 44 (*b*) of the Parliamentary Committees Act? If that is the case, will the Attorney-General indicate the criteria he will use before deciding on referring this takeover to the committee and will the honorable gentleman take steps to refer that takeover to the committee?

The Hon. HADDON STOREY (Attorney-General)—There are a number of questions involved in the matters raised by Mr White. Under the Act the Attorney-General does have power to refer takeovers to the Company Takeovers Committee. There is no takeover involved in this instance. There was an announcement made which suggests that there will be a takeover, although it was not explicitly stated.

Whether or not the takeover offer will be referred to the committee depends upon an assessment of the nature of the circumstances. When the Bill was introduced, the then Attorney-General, Sir George Reid, said that takeovers would be referred to the committee only in exceptional circumstances, that is, when the criteria defined by the Bill applied in determining whether or not a declaration would be made.

The Hon. W. A. Landeryou—Do you concede that there is a prima facie case?

The Hon. HADDON STOREY—In answering this question I will not express any views as to whether there is a prima facie case one way or the other. No formal takeover offers have been referred to this committee unless representations have been made by people involved who raised matters upon which it was possible to make a full determination as to the criteria involved. I have received no representations from any person, other than Mr White's question this morning.

MELBOURNE AND METROPOLITAN BOARD OF WORKS

The Hon. K. I. WRIGHT (North Western Province)—Is the Minister of Water Supply aware of reports regarding requests by councils that the Melbourne Metropolitan Board of Works be further restructured? If the Minister is aware of those reports, what action does he propose to take?

The Hon. F. J. GRANTER (Minister of Water Supply)—I am aware of the moves suggested by the metropolitan section of the Municipal Association of Victoria. The Premier and I met a delegation from the association only recently. The Government will not undertake any action until the Bains report is tabled.

VICTORIAN SECONDARY TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

The Hon. N. F. STACEY (Chelsea Province)—Earlier this week a spokesman for the Victorian Secondary Teachers Association alleged that havoc would prevail in high schools at the beginning of the next school year. Does the Minister of Education place any credence upon that statement? What

action has been taken to ensure that the normal smooth beginning to the 1980 school year will occur?

The Hon. A. J. HUNT (Minister of Education)—I did not hear the broadcast referred to but I have heard about it. One wonders whether the intention of the Victorian Secondary Teachers Association is to create havoc at the beginning of the school year.

In the numbers case earlier this term, a decision was considerably delayed as a result of the association's representative sticking solely to the policy of the organization rather than meeting as a tribunal member. The decision was delayed to such a degree that the Government was almost forced to advertise for positions on the basis of last year's numbers. However, the Government advertised in a generalized way and avoided delays that would have occasioned absolute havoc next year.

The Government was forced to abandon an advertisement for assistant class teachers and to ensure that administrative transfers are made, the Government will have to proceed without advertising so that schools will be fully staffed at the beginning of next year. The Victorian Secondary Teachers Association used every method to oppose that.

The Committee of Classifiers usually meets in a quorum to process most applications. For two days the representative of the association refused to make up the quorum, although that representative's co-operation has since been forthcoming and the committee is now making excellent progress.

There have been strikes this week because of the naming of some teachers in schools as being in excess of establishments preparatory to their transfer to other schools. These strikes have been without warning. That has never happened before. Wildcat strikes of that type are impossible to provide against and are a severe detriment to both pupils and parents. It is obvious that wildcat strikes will be used to object to the transfer of those teachers from schools that have lost enrolments to schools that have gained in enrolments.

Earlier this year the association asked of a new set of transfer procedures. The Education Department prepared a set of transfer procedures for discussion. The association has since refused to discuss those transfer procedures, which it requested be prepared. It is obvious that the association's plan is to object to all those transfers.

The allegations of staffing havoc force one to question the association's intentions. The association will obviously create havoc and blame the Government for it.

RICHMOND CENTRAL PRIMARY SCHOOL

The Hon. E. H. WALKER (Melbourne Province)—I refer the Minister of Education to page 21 of this morning's *Age* which indicates that only yesterday parents at Richmond Central Primary School were told that that school will be phased out over the next two years and will not be taking new pupils in 1980. More than 300 parents met last night in the Richmond Town Hall to protest against the closure. What consultation occurred with parents of children who attend that school prior to this decision being made and, if no consultation occurred, who is responsible for such a decision?

The Hon. A. J. HUNT (Minister of Education)—Many inner suburban schools are losing enrolments at a drastic rate and that position is under review on an over-all basis. In the case of the Richmond Central Primary School, I would be happy to meet the parents concerned.

THIRD-PARTY INSURANCE

The Hon. B. A. CHAMBERLAIN (Western Province)—Will the Attorney-General give consideration to proposals that in civil actions for damages caused by personal injury, dependants be given the opportunity of having weekly payments as recompense for loss of future earnings rather than paying lump sums which can lead to enormous pay-outs?

The Hon. HADDON STOREY (Attorney-General)—This was one of the recommendations of Sir John

Minogue's report on third-party insurance as the best method of compensating people for injuries suffered in motor accidents. That report is still under consideration, as is Mr Chamberlain's proposition.

There are obvious attractions to the idea of making weekly payments for the duration of the incapacity rather than a lump sum which may prove to be inadequate or excessive depending upon what happens ultimately to the resolution of the injury.

There is one problem. Weekly payments may be taxable if they are paid as compensation for loss of ability to earn income. That is a factor that has to be taken into account in deciding whether this is an appropriate course to follow. The matter is being considered.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Hon. JOAN COXSEDGE (Melbourne West Province)—Can the Minister of Education announce the date upon which the Equal Opportunity Advisory Committee, which was set up two months ago, will convene its first meeting? Will the Minister ensure that this committee is convened in time to make a submission on the review of education policies being undertaken by the Education Department, and on the United Nations Decade for Women plan? Will it be the task of that committee to develop an over-all plan to ensure a quality of educational policies for women and girls?

The Hon. A. J. HUNT (Minister of Education)—The committee has not yet met because, contrary to the belief of Mrs Coxsedge, it has not yet been appointed. Recently, I invited the teachers' organizations to get together with a view to nominating a member of the committee. I hope to have the nomination at an early date. When the committee is formed, I shall request it to meet as soon as possible. Its objectives and purpose are as stated by Mrs Coxsedge.

ESTATE AGENTS ACT

The Hon. B. P. DUNN (North Western Province)—I ask the Attorney-General: Following the withdrawal of a Bill introduced in this House proposing amendments to the Estate Agents Act, have discussions continued with interested bodies relating to the proposed amendments to the principal Act; is further legislation being considered; and what other action is proposed by the Government?

The Hon. HADDON STOREY (Attorney-General)—I do not recall any measure proposing to amend the Estate Agents Act being introduced or withdrawn in this Chamber. The Bill was introduced in another place and it lapsed when Parliament was prorogued. It was not withdrawn. It proposed amendments to many sections of the principal Act and was introduced so that interested parties could make representations about the matters it covered or about anything else relating to the activities of estate agents.

As a result of that, many representations have been received from interested parties and further proposed legislation has been prepared. Rather than simply seeking to amend the Estate Agents Act, the new Bill constitutes a complete rewriting and re-recitation of the whole of the principal Act.

The timing of the introduction of the Bill is a matter for the Government. The question of in which House it will be introduced is also a matter for the Government.

The Hon. B. P. Dunn—It is your Bill.

The Hon. HADDON STOREY—I am the Minister responsible for the estate agents' registry and I entirely agree that it should be introduced in this House. However, as all honorable members are aware, if a Bill contains financial provisions it may be necessary to introduce it in another place.

ELTHAM SHIRE ENGINEER

The Hon. GLYN JENKINS (Geelong Province)—The Minister for Local Government will no doubt be aware of the concern of the citizens of the Shire of Eltham, and also the concern of professional engineers within local government, concerning the suspension of

Mr J. A. McDonald, the shire engineer. Can the honorable gentleman advise whether any action has been taken so that the matter can be put to rest as quickly as possible?

The Hon. D. G. CROZIER (Minister for Local Government)—In accordance with the procedure laid down in section 160 (5) of the Local Government Act, the Governor in Council yesterday appointed Mr Wallace, Stipendidary Magistrate, to conduct an inquiry.

ANCILLARY STAFF–STUDENT RATIOS

The Hon. R. A. MACKENZIE (Geelong Province)—Is the Minister of Education aware that the recent report of the Australian Teachers Federation on conditions in schools states that the ratio of ancillary staff to students is worse in Victoria than it is in any other State? The report states that the ancillary staff-student ratio in Victorian primary schools is 1 : 161, whereas in Queensland it is 1:90, in South Australia it is 1:98 and in Tasmania it is 1:68. Does the Minister intend to improve the position in the coming year?

The Hon. A. J. HUNT (Minister of Education)—I have not seen the report referred to by the honorable member but I am aware that, although the teacher-pupil ratio in Victoria is the best in Australia, that is not the case in connection with ancillary staff. The provision of funds for ancillary staff is a Budget matter and is finally a matter for the Treasurer, after consideration of all submissions. Mr Mackenzie can rest assured that there will certainly be submissions for further funds for ancillary staff from me and from the Education Department.

PERMANENT PART-TIME TEACHERS

The Hon. D. N. SALTMARSH (Waverley Province)—The first part of my question arises out of an answer the Minister of Education gave recently to a question I asked about the permanent part-time employment of teachers within the Education Department. The second part of my question also concerns the employment of part-time teachers or temporary teachers within the department. A great deal of publicity has been given to the insecurity of such appointments. Can the honorable gentleman advise the House of his views on the status of temporary teachers and part-time teachers currently employed by the Education Department?

The Hon. A. J. HUNT (Minister of Education)—Part-time teachers employed by the Government will remain on the same tenure as they have in the past. No change to the conditions of employment of teachers now in employment is contemplated at this stage.

The second part of the question, concerning the transfer of part-time teachers from the temporary role to the permanent role, entails some difficulties, which I have referred to previously. It is not a procedure that can easily be adopted because the question of superannuation and many other aspects create great problems.

However, in a period of declining enrolments, when many teachers are available, it may well be that the engagement of permanent teachers to teach part-time, if they so desire, will provide employment opportunities for teachers who would otherwise not have received them.

I am in the course of preparing a detailed paper on the effects of declining enrolments and I will be delivering that paper to the Victorian Teachers Union State Council on 7 December. Thereafter, I shall be seeking the formation of a working party to deal in greater depth and detail with the many implications of declining enrolments. I envisage that, as part of the study of that working party, attention will be given to all aspects of the question raised by the honorable member.

The Hon. E. H. Walker—Will we have access to the paper?

The Hon. A. J. HUNT—Yes. I shall be happy to table a copy of the paper I deliver to the Victorian Teachers Union on Friday, 7 December, in this House on the following Tuesday. It is an important issue. In fact, it is the most important issue facing teachers in Victoria at present.

PRESBYTERIAN TRUSTS BILL

The Hon. HADDON STOREY (Attorney-General), by leave, moved for leave to bring in a Bill to make further provision with respect to the division of certain property in accordance with The Uniting Church in Australia Act 1977 and Part III of the schedule to the Presbyterian Church of Australia Act 1971, to amend the Presbyterian Trusts Act 1890 and for other purposes.

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. F. S. Grimwade)—I have examined this measure and, in my view, it is a private Bill.

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

That this Bill be dealt with as a public Bill.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

PRESBYTERIAN SCHOOLS BILL

The Hon. HADDON STOREY (Attorney-General), by leave, moved for leave to bring in a Bill to make interim provision with respect to the management and control of certain schools pending the determination of certain legal proceedings and for other purposes.

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. F. S. Grimwade)—I have examined this measure and, in my view, it is a private Bill.

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

That this Bill be dealt with as a public Bill.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

PAPERS

The following papers, pursuant to the directions of an Act of Parliament, were laid on the table by the Clerk:

Town and Country Planning Act 1961—

Cranbourne—Shire of Cranbourne (Western Port) Planning Scheme—Amendment No. 8.

Latrobe Valley Sub-regional Planning Scheme —Amendment No. 40.

Sherbrooke—Shire of Sherbrooke Planning Scheme 1965—Amendment No. 120, 1978.

APPROPRIATION (1979–80, No. 1) BILL

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

That this Bill be now read a second time.

Its purpose is to give legislative effect to the Government's expenditure proposals for the current financial year in so far as they depend upon appropriation.

The Bill now before the House appropriates the amounts required for the service of the financial year 1979–80, including the amount previously appropriated under the Supply (1979–80, No. 1) Act 1979.

Clause 2 (1) provides for the issue and application of the sum of $2 768 939 187, the total of the expenditure requiring annual appropriation included in the estimates of the receipts and payments of the Consolidated Fund for 1979–80.

Clause 2 (2) and (3) provide appropriation authority to cope with wage awards handed down during the course of the financial year which involve expenditure in excess of that provided for in the annual appropriations.

As I have said, this Bill appropriates the amounts required for the full financial year and substitution for the grants allocated in the previous Supply Act. The purpose of clause 3 therefore is to terminate the operation of the Supply (1979–80, No. 1) Act 1979 while clause 4 ensures that the total amount to be expended under that Act and this Bill does not exceed the amount of the annual estimates requiring appropriation, that is, $2 768 939 187.

Clause 5 provides the necessary appropriation authority for this amount of expenditure. Clause 6 relates to expenditure from the Advance to Treasurer, Division No. 403 in 1978–79. The appropriation for this purpose in that year was $70 million and expenditure totalling this amount was charged to the appropriation and clause 6 deems this amount to have been appropriated in the detail contained in the table to the clause.

An explanation of the major items of expenditure from the Advance to Treasurer in 1978–79 is contained in the Budget papers at page 69. Details of all amounts transferred between items of expenditure under the provisions of section 25 of the Audit Act are included at pages 70 to 76 of those papers.

For comparative purposes in the main body of both the estimates and the Appropriation Bill, the expenditure incurred in 1978–79 under each item in the table to clause 2 includes expenditure made in the first instance from the Advance to Treasurer in 1978–79. This provides a valid basis for comparison with the appropriation for 1979–80 and accordingly no expenditure is shown against Division No. 403 Advance to Treasurer in the old year.

As has been the practice, I draw the attention of honorable members to accounting changes and changes in administrative arrangements reflected in the Appropriation Bill now before the House.

Divisions within the health department have been regrouped following the reorganization of the department which has resulted from the operations of the Health Commission. For comparative purposes expenditure incurred in 1978–79 has been similarly regrouped.

As from the commencement of this financial year, the Government recast the operations of the Chief Secretary's department. A new Ministry of Police and Emergency Services has been formed and this embraces the functions of the police, state emergency service and other emergency services. The other functions previously within the administration of the Chief Secretary have been located as follows:

Raffles and Bingo Permits Board—Attorney-General.

Government Shorthand Writer—Attorney-General.

Government Statist—Property and Services.

The Hon. Haddon Storey

Last year two additional supplementary Budget documents were provided to give certain background and comparative information for the benefit of honorable members. These were "Payments to or for Victoria by the Commonwealth 1978–79", which gives information relating to the various amounts which will be paid to Victoria during the year, and "National Accounting Statement of Receipts and Outlays of the Consolidated Fund—1978–79", which sets out details of the Consolidated Fund on a national accounting basis consistent with the classification used by the Australian Statistician for the Government sector.

These two documents have again been produced and in 1979–80 the Government has taken further steps in the continuing process of improving the information made available to honorable members during the Budget debate. This year the Budget Papers have been produced as a separate document and have been substantially expanded and restructured in a way that assists honorable members in understanding the context of the various tables contained in them.

For the first time a functional analysis of current account payments has been provided and this covers a period of six years.

Additional information on payments under the tax-sharing arrangements has been provided and a statement has been included showing honorable members how the appropriation from the Consolidated Fund to the Works and Services Account is arrived at and the impact of the current account deficit or surplus on that appropriation.

Statements have also been prepared of Treasury balances and total payments from the public account with inter-fund transfers netted off. In addition, statements of the State debt in Victoria have been recast to provide a clearer picture of this area to honorable members and for the first time the total capital works programme of major semi-government authorities have been provided showing the source of finance for those programmes.

A statement has also been provided on the economic context of the Budget. This document looks ahead to the year to which the Budget applies and has been made to focus on major economic variables. Where possible special reference is made to particular factors relating to the State of Victoria but due regard is paid to the economic context of the Federal Budget as in the Australian situation a State cannot concentrate solely on what might be termed the "state of the State's economy".

The expansion of the Budget Papers to embrace the abovementioned matters, of which only the more important have been mentioned, is a continuing process and it is the Government's intention to further improve these documents in future years to assist honorable members in understanding the context in which the Budget has been framed. Careful attention has been paid to the constructive comments made in debates on the Appropriation Bill in the Legislative Council in recent years. It will be noted that some of the suggestions relating to the publication of information have been adopted.

I will endeavour to furnish any further information requested of me when the appropriations are considered in detail during the Committee stage. I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of the Hon. R. J. Eddy, for 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.

BUSINESS FRANCHISE (TOBACCO) BILL

The debate (adjourned from November 15) on the motion of the Hon. Haddon Storey (Attorney-General) for the second reading of this debate was resumed.

The Hon. C. J. KENNEDY (Waverley Province)—Licences to sell tobacco were first introduced in 1974. At that time, according to the records, there were 15 000 firms—supermarkets, grocery stores, milk bars and so on—selling this weed. Obviously, the number has grown considerably since then.

The purpose of the Bill is to implement the Budget decision to increase fees on tobacco licences from 10 per cent to 12 per cent and it is intended that the new fees should come into effect on 1 December 1979. On this basis, the estimated gain to revenue is $3·2 million in 1979–80 and $6 million in a full year.

The Business Franchise (Tobacco) Act 1974 is to be amended by increasing wholesale tobacconist licence fees from 10 per cent to 12 per cent of the value of tobacco sold and by increasing retail tobacconist licence fees from $10 to $12.

The Opposition opposes the Bill. These charges are now a high proportion of Government revenue and this year's increase is 20 per cent. The Opposition believes smoking should be discouraged, but not on the basis of income earned. For example, a person earning $100 a week pays exactly the same price for his weed as a person earning $500 a week.

The community is becoming more aware that there is a direct relationship between smoking and serious illnesses such as heart disease and cancer. I shall develop this theme as it has some bearing on the Bill.

Last year the Budget allocation for a national blood pressure study was $30 000. This year, only $15 000 has been allocated to the National Heart Foundation for this purpose. The grant for the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research was only $360 000 last year and it has been retained at that same figure this year.

The Hon. B. P. Dunn—That is not enough.

The Hon. C. J. KENNEDY—Quite so. In a full year the Government will gain $6 million from this increased levy, an enormous sum which could be put to much better use than at present. Some of this money should be used for anti-smoking education programmes concentrated on children in the fifteen-and-under age group and

even at those in primary school. Of course, the programmes should also be aimed at other age groups.

The Marlboro man is everywhere—sports grounds, football grounds, tennis courts—advertising this cancer and death-dealing substance at the worst possible places, right on the sports grounds, associating smoking with physical fitness.

The Hon. E. H. Walker—Hypocritical, isn't it?

The Hon. C. J. KENNEDY—Totally.

The Hon. B. P. Dunn—Do you believe advertising funds of cigarette companies should be limited?

The Hon. C. J. KENNEDY—I will come to that in a moment.

Recently, the Clayton Festival was held in the middle of the Waverley electorate and some 100 000 people attended. At a rough guess, there were twelve people from a cigarette company, rather comely young ladies dressed in blue and white outfits, handing out cigarettes to all and sundry, including little children.

The Hon. E. H. Walker—Free?

The Hon. C. J. KENNEDY—Yes.

The Hon. E. H. Walker—That is a serious claim.

The Hon. C. J. KENNEDY—It is a serious offence.

The Hon. Haddon Storey—Did you report it to the authorities?

The Hon. C. J. KENNEDY—I will not be sidetracked unduly. Recently a gentleman whom I have known for some time telephoned and made an appointment to see me in my electorate office the following week. A few days later his wife rang to say he was unable to keep the appointment as he had been rushed to hospital. Later, she called again to say he had died from emphysema, a disease which is almost totally related to cigarette smoking. Basically, the only people who contract that disease are heavy cigarette smokers.

I have a close relative who suffers greatly from bronchiectasis, another disease which is aggravated by cigarette smoking. This unfortunate person keeps on smoking and no doubt cigarettes will eventually kill him, too.

In my own case, when I was a lad, as soon as I had a paper round and a substantial income, the first thing I did was buy cigarettes.

The Hon. E. H. Walker—What was substantial?

The Hon. C. J. KENNEDY—Four shillings, to begin with, but we went on strike and got six shillings.

The Hon. B. P. Dunn—We had to smoke Mallee roots up in the Mallee.

The Hon. C. J. KENNEDY—We smoked a South African mixture called Wayside Mixture—it should have been called roadside. Also available was Capstan full strength. These products were sold by a man who conducted a big business selling tobacco and cigarettes and crummy stuff to children who he knew had paper rounds and money, and we were led astray in those years. Even then the tobacco and cigarette companies knew what they were doing. I recall quite vividly the advertisements at railway stations and in the press depicting the Carlton sign and footballers going for the ball carrying the words, "We, too, smoke Turf". That was a long time ago and the situation has only worsened. I continued smoking from the age of thirteen until a couple of years ago when I reached a permanent age of 39 and gave it up and, of course, got rid of things like indigestion, heart burn and a number of other minor ailments, and I feel a lot better for it.

The Hon. E. H. Walker—And you got elected to Parliament!

The Hon. C. J. KENNEDY—Yes, I got elected to Parliament for being wise enough to give up cigarettes. In the *Age* on Monday of this week, tobacco companies came under heavy attack from Dr Nigel Gray of the Anti-Cancer Council of Victoria, who launched a justified attack on cigarette companies which are currently heavily discounting cigarettes by selling packets of 25 instead of the normal 20; so the unfortunate people who buy these substances now buy the higher units and

that increases their cigarette consumption by 25 per cent. There is no limit to the ingenuity of these companies when it comes to selling poison.

The Anti-Cancer Council is an important body which presents a report to this Parliament every year, so it is closely linked to what needs to be said on this Bill.

Dr Gray went on to say that it was notable that tobacco companies never discounted a low tar brand, that they discounted only the brands with the highest tar content. He stated further that 2·5 million Australians had given up smoking and most of them had done it on no more than public information about smoking hazards. He said that 25 per cent of men aged more than 40 years were former smokers, and one-third of the total population over 65 years of age had given up smoking. Dr Gray said that the improvement in a person's breathing was rapid once he or she stopped smoking. He said that ten people a day die from cigarette induced lung cancer and another twenty die from heart disease, chronic bronchitis and emphysema caused by their smoking. Dr Gray said that this amounted to 11 000 cigarette-caused deaths a year. He said that in money terms smoking is costing about $750 million or more a year to Australia.

The Hon. B. P. Dunn—Is it on the increase amongst the young, and amongst women?

The Hon. C. J. KENNEDY—Yes. I do not have the precise figures here but it is now a fact that more young people, particularly young girls of 14, 15 and 16 years of age, are smoking, and more women are smoking.

The Hon. J. V. C. Guest—Young women are even having heart attacks.

The Hon. C. J. KENNEDY—Yes, that is so. In a little blue book, which justifiably came under criticism in this morning's newspaper from the honorable member for Ascot Vale, Mr Edmunds, in another place—a fine member of Parliament—entitled *Victorian Budget 1979–80 Summary*, I cannot find any mention under education or health of an education programme on smoking. The Government knows quite well the effect cigarette smoking is having on people.

I refer to the National Heart Foundation of Australia. This foundation has published a leaflet on "your best bet to live a little bit longer". One of the most definite things it says is simply, "Don't smoke". Some of the points made by the National Heart Foundation of Australia are on the subject of income. If one smoked twenty cigarettes a day and gave up smoking, one would save $5 a week. That should be an attraction in itself. This brochure states:

> You'll feel better when you give cigarettes up, Your morning cough will go, your wind will improve and you'll lose the sour taste from your mouth.
>
> Food and drink will taste better.

I understand that two days after a person gives up smoking the taste buds, which help in the enjoyment of food, return to their original state, and the burning sensation disappears. This brochure continues:

> The link between cigarettes and disease has shown up time and again in different studies and research projects conducted over the past 20 years in Britain, the United States and other nations. They all show the same facts about Western man:
>
> 1. A man smoking a pack of cigarettes a day can expect to live five years less than the non-smoker. For the 40-a-day man, life expectancy is eight years less.
>
> 2. Death from heart attack is three times as common in cigarette smokers as in non-smokers. And for those smoking more than one pack per day the risk is about five times as high. But once a smoker gives away the habit his risk of heart attack falls fairly quickly to that of the non-smoker.
>
> 3. Death from coronary heart disease generally is much more common among smokers. The heavier the smoker, the higher the risk. Among men aged 40–50, deaths from coronary heart disease are nine times more common in smokers than in non-smokers.

These are important points when it comes to living a long, healthy and useful life. The brochure goes on to state:

> 4. Smokers have 10 times the risk of lung cancer and are much more likely to have cancer of the larynx, oesophagus and bladder.
>
> 5. Smokers are six times more likely to die from the crippling respiratory diseases emphysema and chronic bronchitis.

6. The sum total of all this in Australia is that 40 000 people die each year from diseases strongly associated with smoking—one death every 12 minutes.

It is interesting to note some of the chemicals used in this weed. The tobacco industry is forced to pay a certain amount in excise, taxes, and licence fees. This same pamphlet, under the heading, "How does smoking affect the body?", states:

The mixture of nicotine, carbon monoxide, tarry droplets and other hot gases which you inhale when you light up a cigarette has a marked effect on the breathing system, the heart, the blood vessels and the nervous system.

Nicotine constricts the blood vessels, particularly the coronary arteries, raises blood pressure, increases the heart rate, causes irregularities in heart rhythm and increases the heart's demand for oxygen. Recent research has also shown that nicotine tends to speed up the clogging of the arteries which leads to coronary heart disease and eventually heart attack.

While nicotine is causing the heart's demand for oxygen to rise, the carbon monoxide in cigarette smoke cuts the supply of oxygen to the tissues. Heart muscle, which has a great demand for oxygen, is already partially starved of it if the coronary arteries are diseased. Thus the heart is even more seriously handicapped by carbon monoxide inhalation.

The tarry materials in tobacco smoke are of two kinds. Some of them can actually start cancer, others speed up development of the disease.

There is saltpetre in this substance, strychnine, and almost everything one can think of. Obviously these people are flogging poison. The cigarette companies like to put out that cigarettes do not hurt women. That is wrong. This brochure states:

Cigarettes don't hurt women.

Wrong. Statistics for men are more often used because they have been smoking longer and are thus more easily studied. But the risks are high in both sexes.

The National Heart Foundation of Australia says, "Don't smoke", and its brochure is called "Decision Time". If honorable members were to write to the foundation, it would be happy to send one of these brochures to them. It should be in all schools and public places.

The Hon. C. J. Kennedy

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. F. S. Grimwade)—I hope the honorable member will relate this very interesting information to the Bill.

The Hon. C. J. KENNEDY—Yes, Mr President, I will now totally relate it to the Bill. The Government has done little in the past to limit the use of tobacco in the community. Reports by the Anti-Cancer Council of Victoria have repeatedly stressed the point and urged the Government to take action. Apart from agreeing to the warning which appears on cigarette packages, the Government has done little and has been hesitant to take positive action to limit the consumption of tobacco. Therefore, I move:

That all the words after "That" be omitted with the view of inserting in place thereof "this Bill be withdrawn and redrafted to provide that all additional revenue raised pursuant to the provisions of this Bill be credited to a fund to be established to provide for medical research and health education programmes."

I am now speaking to the motion and to the amendment, Mr President. It is obvious that the tobacco industry is a large and lucrative industry, and from the figures quoted by the Anti-Cancer Council of Victoria and the National Heart Foundation of Australia—both important and highly respected bodies, backed by some of the best medical brains in this country—something should be done to educate young people, particularly children aged fifteen years or younger, and children in primary schools, on the terrible dangers of smoking.

The Opposition opposes the Bill and supports the amendment, which I have great pleasure in moving.

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. F. S. Grimwade)—Honorable members speaking from now on will be speaking to both the motion and the amendment.

The Hon. D. M. EVANS (North Eastern Province)—Before I begin my comments on this Bill I should make two admissions which are relevant to the attitude I shall take. Firstly, I do not smoke. I gave up when I was eight. Therefore, as a non-drinker and a non-smoker, I should live until I am almost 100 years of age. Secondly, I represent the whole of the tobacco

growing industry in Victoria, which is a significant income-producing section of the community in the north-eastern part of Victoria. It is a significant economic contributor to the well-being of not only that community but also—and this should certainly interest Mr Sgro—of the migrant population, particularly the Italian section of it, in many of the valleys in north-eastern Victoria, including the King, Ovens and Kiewa valleys and the Buffalo River. They are very good business people and farm the land extremely well to produce a product which is in demand and the use of which is completely voluntary.

The point that those who attack the use of tobacco must be prepared to understand is that its use is voluntary; it is a matter of personal choice, and no doubt people who choose to smoke cigarettes—and I have already indicated that I am not one of them—do so because they enjoy the habit.

I recognize that substantial research has been conducted and designed to show that tobacco smoking is a health hazard. This research has led the Government in previous times to insist by introducing legislation that a warning be placed on all tobacco and cigarette products for sale and by imposing restrictions on the advertising of those products. It indicates some link particularly between the habit of heavy tobacco smoking and certain health problems suffered by some people. However, many of the habits of modern man, if carried to excess, may also result in significant disadvantages to health. I am reminded of the old maid who said that all the things she liked were either illegal, immoral or fattening, and that is a fair commentary in this case. The voluntary nature of this habit must be recognized.

The Bill simply amends the Business Franchise (Tobacco) Act. The matters introduced by Mr Kennedy about the tobacco smoking habit, as you quite rightly pointed out, Mr President, need a much wider area of discussion than that which is encompassed by the Bill.

Mr Kennedy's statement that more attention should be paid to the health problems of the community is fair and reasonable, but, again, it is difficult to make specific recommendations in debating a Budget Bill and to specify that funds raised under its provisions should be used for a specific purpose of this nature. No doubt the Government will make provisions for various health matters, including those referred to by Mr Kennedy, in other budgetary Bills, and perhaps it would be more appropriate for him to draw attention to the deficiencies in the money provided for research that he mentioned, quite reasonably, when those measures are debated.

The Government is again attacking the tobacco industry, the sale of tobacco and the revenue raised from that industry. However, if it is sincere—and a number of interjections were made from both sides of the House in favour of restricting tobacco smoking; hands were held up in horror by both smokers and non-smokers in the House at the thought of the habit—surely it would be reasonable not to raise revenue from what honorable members in this debate have called cancer sticks, filthy habits and other names.

The Hon. E. H. Walker—Noxious weeds?

The Hon. D. M. EVANS—That is not correct; tobacco is declared a noxious weed only between the months of May and August because the life cycle of one of the major fungus diseases in tobacco plants, blue mould, can be broken almost totally by declaring the tobacco plants to be noxious weeds and taking them out of the paddocks in that period.

The Government has imposed further taxes on this industry. The justification for this is not self-righteousness or a desire to reduce the incidence of tobacco smoking; it is simply to raise revenue, but, again, it is taking apart this valuable industry in the north-eastern part of Victoria; it brings some $20 million in primary income into that region.

The industry has been a significant supporter of the people involved in it, including a large migrant population who have come to Australia and become established by growing a legal product and selling it to meet a demand in the community.

The Bill increases from $10 to $12 the fee for a retail tobacconist's licence. Perhaps that is not unreasonable, but an interesting sideline to that is that apparently a tobacconist's licence must be obtained at the beginning of the calendar year, and it runs for 12 months. The licence is applicable to the shop and the shopkeeper who sells tobacco products. However, if the owner sells the shop to another businessman, the purchaser must take out a further licence, which runs for a shorter period. It will be my contention that the licence should always run for a full 12 months and be applicable to the shop, not the owner. That is a reasonable suggestion. The Government is ripping off the tobacco sellers by acting in this fashion.

The Bill also provides for an increase from 10 per cent to 12 per cent in the State tax on tobacco sales, and that is exactly what it is. All the smokers in the House will be aware of the constantly increasing price of cigarettes. A few years ago a packet of Marlboro cost around 35 cents, and now apparently the price is $1 or a little more. Substantial increases have occurred in the past few years.

The revenue raised by the State tax on tobacco smokers will be increased simply because the price of the product is increasing. The Government intends again to raise money from the tobacco-smoking public—those who voluntarily run the risk of smoking that has been outlined—but the cost has increased well beyond the inflation rate. This is a cynical exercise by the Government to raise funds from a habit which so many Government supporters condemn publicly as something that should not be allowed.

The National Party does not oppose the Bill because it is a Budget measure, but the Government should closely examine whether it is being sincere in its approach to the matter, because many people are not sincere. I have tried to point out that the tobacco industry is a good one which provides a living for many people, and that smoking is a voluntary habit. There are two sides to the story of the health aspects of tobacco smoking, as there are to every story, and to provide only one side to the story is unfair and unreasonable. Considerable research has been carried out from the opposite point of view, and in many cases it greatly modifies the results of research of the type referred to by Mr Kennedy, so both sides of the story should be closely examined.

I have not carried out the necessary research; if Mr Kennedy wants to move a motion later dealing specifically with the health aspects of smoking, the matter could be debated more fully, but he has put only one side of the story about tobacco smoking and it is necessary for both sides to be understood if a full appreciation is to be gained.

I make those comments indicating that the National Party, although not happy with the provisions in the Bill for the reasons I mentioned, does not plan to vote against it.

The Hon. HADDON STOREY (Attorney-General)—The Government has sympathy with the view that there should be more research and experimentation. It is well acknowledged in the community that problems are associated with tobacco smoking and that more work can be done on this aspect. Nonetheless, it is inappropriate to use this measure as a vehicle for that proposition. It is not inappropriate to discuss it, but certainly it is inappropriate to defer the passage of the Bill for that reason and to use a measure which provides for certain funds that have already been allocated in the Budget and reallocate those funds for some specific purpose. While sharing the sentiments expressed, the Government cannot accept the amendment.

The House divided on the question that the words proposed by Mr Kennedy to be omitted stand part of the motion (the Hon. F. S. Grimwade in the chair).

Ayes	26
Noes	13
Majority against the amendment	13

AYES

Mrs Baylor	Mr Jenkins
Mr Bubb	Mr Knowles
Mr Campbell	Mr Lawson
Mr Chamberlain	Mr Long
Mr Crozier	Mr Radford
Mr Dunn	Mr Saltmarsh
Dr Foley	Mr Stacey
Mr Granter	Mr Storey
Mr Guest	Mr Ward
Mr Hamilton	Mr Wright
Mr Hauser	
Mr Hayward	*Tellers:*
Mr Houghton	Mr Evans
Mr Hunt	Mr Taylor

NOES

Mr Butler	Mr Trayling
Mrs Coxsedge	Mr Walker
Mr Kent	Mr Walton
Mr Landeryou	Mr White
Mr Mackenzie	*Tellers:*
Mr Sgro	Mr Eddy
Mr Thomas	Mr Kennedy

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was read a second time and committed.

Clause 1 was agreed to.

Clause 2 (Amendment of No. 8597 s. 10)

The Hon. HADDON STOREY (Attorney-General)—I have circulated a suggested amendment to clause 2 to insert a new sub-clause. It is a technical amendment to the Bill to correct an anomaly which would inadvertently be created if the Bill were to be passed in its present form.

As the Committee knows, the fees payable under the principal Act are levied on the gross return to the wholesaler from sales to the retailer. Because it is a gross return, the tax is included in that return and it is therefore necessary to incorporate a special provision in section 10 of the principal Act applying the fee to the gross return which excluded the fee being recovered. This expression was set at ten-elevenths; if the provision remains in its present form, a tax on tax situation would have arisen, and the effective rate would have exceeded the 12 per cent.

The new licence fee is to be 12 per cent and to ensure the effective fee does not exceed that proportion it is necessary to substitute the expression, " $\frac{100}{112}$ " in the principal Act. In order to correct the anomaly which would be created if the amendment were not made, I move:

That it be a suggestion to the Assembly that they make the following amendment in the Bill:

Clause 2, line 19, at the end of the clause insert the following new sub-clause:

"( ) In section 10 (2) of the Principal Act for the expression 'ten-elevenths' there shall be substituted the expression '$\frac{100}{112}$'."

The suggested amendment was agreed to, and the clause was postponed.

Progress was reported, and the suggested amendment was reported to the House and adopted.

It was ordered that the Bill be returned to the Assembly with a message intimating the decision of the House

SECOND-HAND DEALERS (CLOSING HOURS) BILL

The debate (adjourned from November 13) on the motion of the Hon. Haddon Storey (Attorney-General) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

The Hon. W. A. LANDERYOU (Doutta Galla Province)—The Attorney-General has adequately explained the purposes of the Bill, although it is one of those measures which really jump the gun because it is based on an amendment to another Act which is not yet before the House. The Labor Party understands the purposes of the amendment and offers no opposition.

The Hon. B. P. DUNN (North Western Province)—The National Party supports the provisions of the Bill.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was read a second time, and passed through its remaining stages.

MOTOR CAR (SURCHARGE) BILL

The debate (adjourned from November 15) on the motion of the Hon. Haddon Storey (Attorney-General) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

The Hon. H. A. THOMAS (Melbourne West Province)—The Labor Party opposes the Bill. Section 41A (5)

of the principal Act imposes a tax on the already over-burdened motorist. The proposed increased surcharge is based upon 7 per cent of the premiums payable for third-party insurance, which means an increase in the surcharge from $4 to $8. The Labor Party opposes the discrimination exercised against the motorist by the increase in premiums for third-party insurance applicable to motorists who reside within a 20-mile radius of the General Post Office. For instance, a person living within that radius who drives an ordinary sedan will have his premium increased from $115.30 to $119.30, whereas a person living, for example, at Frankston, will pay only $89.40.

The surcharge was introduced in 1959 as a temporary measure for a period of twelve months. It was imposed to ease the financial problems facing hospitals. The Government promised to assist pensioners by easing their financial burden by reducing the premiums payable by pensioners.

The Opposition believes the Bill should be withdrawn and reviewed, together with provisions of section 41A (1) and (2) of the principal Act, which relate to the premiums payable for compulsory third-party insurance. The location of the motorist should not be a criterion and the surcharge based on the premise of the new figure arrived at by the Premier's committee should be reassessed.

The Hon. K. I. WRIGHT (North Western Province)—The purpose of the Bill is to implement the Budget decision to increase the surcharge on third-party insurance premiums from $4 to $8. The National Party supports the measure although it has some misgivings about it. The motorist has been hit by the Government, which is seeking revenue. The Royal Automobile Club of Victoria, in the editorial of its magazine, *Royalauto*, of October 1979 stated:

> Motorists!
>
> It is time for concern.
>
> It is obvious from the recent State Budget that the Victorian Government is now following the lead set by the Federal Government over a number of years in using the motorist as a ready-made revenue producing machine. The State Budget includes an additional $80 million from the motorists in Victoria for petrol levies, stamp duty and CTP surcharge.

It continued:

> The State Government will collect in a full year over $500 million from the motorists of Victoria.

The Hon. J. A. Taylor—The Federal Government collects about $3000 million.

The Hon. K. I. WRIGHT—The bulk of the revenue is raised by the Federal Government, but the poor old motorist does not worry whether it is collected by the State Government or the Federal Government. All he knows is that he is paying a considerable amount to keep his car on the road. I am concerned that the trend, particularly in two-car families, will be that cars will be forced off the roads.

The National Party supports the measure for two reasons. Firstly, it is a Budget measure and it is the National Party's policy to support these measures. Secondly, there has been no increase in the rate since 1974. As Mr Thomas mentioned, the surcharge was introduced as a temporary measure in 1959 and in 1961 it was made permanent. The Australian Labor Party then supported that proposition, although it may have considered the factor mentioned by Mr Thomas that the revenue would be used for hospital purposes. I reiterate that the National Party does not oppose the Bill.

The House divided on the motion (the Hon. F. S. Grimwade in the chair).

Ayes	26
Noes	13
Majority for the motion	13

AYES

Mr Bubb	Mr Jenkins
Mr Campbell	Mr Knowles
Mr Chamberlain	Mr Lawson
Mr Crozier	Mr Long
Mr Dunn	Mr Radford
Mr Evans	Mr Saltmarsh
Dr Foley	Mr Stacey
Mr Granter	Mr Storey
Mr Guest	Mr Taylor
Mr Hamilton	Mr Wright
Mr Hauser	
Mr Hayward	*Tellers:*
Mr Houghton	Mrs Baylor
Mr Hunt	Mr Ward

NOES

Mr Butler	Mr Trayling
Mrs Coxsedge	Mr Walker
Mr Eddy	Mr Walton
Mr Kennedy	Mr White
Mr Landeryou	*Tellers:*
Mr Sgro	Mr Kent
Mr Thomas	Mr Mackenzie

The Bill was read a second time and committed.

Clause 1 was agreed to.

Clause 2 (Amendment of No. 6325, s. 41A.)

The Hon. R. J. EDDY (Thomastown Province)—The Opposition opposes clause 2. As Mr Thomas pointed out, the Government has budgeted to receive a further $10 million of the increase in the surcharge from $4 to $8. This will give the Government a total of $60 million this year. It is definitely a confidence trick for the Government to increase the surcharge in insurance premiums, reduce third-party insurance for motorists and endeavour to persuade the public that they are receiving a benefit at a time when they are also faced with increased petrol prices.

The Hon. HADDON STOREY (Attorney-General)—I must say that a Bill which quite plainly states that a surcharge will be increased from $4 to $8 makes it perfectly evident what it is intending to do. I do not know how it could be construed as a confidence trick.

The Committee divided on the clause (the Hon. W. M. Campbell in the chair).

Ayes	25
Noes	13
Majority for the motion ..	12

AYES

Mrs Baylor	Mr Jenkins
Mr Bubb	Mr Knowles
Mr Chamberlain	Mr Lawson
Mr Crozier	Mr Long
Mr Dunn	Mr Radford
Mr Evans	Mr Saltmarsh
Mr Foley	Mr Stacey
Mr Granter	Mr Storey
Mr Guest	Mr Ward
Mr Hauser	Mr Wright
Mr Hayward	*Tellers:*
Mr Houghton	Mr Hamilton
Mr Hunt	Mr Taylor

NOES

Mr Butler	Mr Trayling
Mr Eddy	Mr Walker
Mr Kennedy	Mr Walton
Mr Kent	Mr White
Mr Landeryou	*Tellers:*
Mr Mackenzie	Mrs Coxsedge
Mr Sgro	Mr Thomas

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

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

That this Bill be now read a third time.

The House divided on the motion (the Hon. F. S. Grimwade in the chair).

Ayes	26
Noes	13
Majority for the motion ..	13

AYES

Mrs Baylor	Mr Knowles
Mr Campbell	Mr Lawson
Mr Crozier	Mr Long
Mr Dunn	Mr Radford
Mr Evans	Mr Saltmarsh
Dr Foley	Mr Stacey
Mr Granter	Mr Storey
Mr Guest	Mr Taylor
Mr Hamilton	Mr Ward
Mr Hauser	Mr Wright
Mr Hayward	
Mr Houghton	*Tellers:*
Mr Hunt	Mr Bubb
Mr Jenkins	Mr Chamberlain

NOES

Mr Butler	Mr Trayling
Mrs Coxsedge	Mr Walker
Mr Eddy	Mr Walton
Mr Kennedy	Mr White
Mr Kent	*Tellers:*
Mr Landeryou	Mr Sgro
Mr Mackenzie	Mr Thomas

The Bill was read a third time.

The sitting was suspended at 1.5 *p.m. until* 2.13 *p.m.*

VERMIN AND NOXIOUS WEEDS (AMENDMENT) BILL

The debate (adjourned from November 15) on the motion of the Hon. W. V. Houghton (Minister for Conservation) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

The Hon. D. E. KENT (Chelsea Province)—This Bill amends the Vermin and Noxious Weeds Act, and it is

particularly pleasing to me that its provisions abolish the penalty of imprisonment for offences against the Act. I understand that that penalty has rarely been used in Victoria, and I am not aware of any cases in which it has been used. The Government has taken a progressive step by repealing the penalty of imprisonment in this case, because imprisonment should be used only against persons who are a physical threat to other members of society. Offenders against the provisions of this Act are not likely to come into that category.

The Bill substantially increases the fines which can be imposed on offenders. It increases the minimum and maximum penalties ten-fold. Some fears may be held in farming circles that this will cause suffering to people who unwittingly commit an offence for which they are found guilty. In the past the act has been administered by the Department of Crown Lands and Survey and by the Vermin and Noxious Weeds Destruction Board in a way which I hope will continue in the future. Landholders are given considerable warning and every opportunity of rectifying their errors before action is taken against them. If a charge against a landholder is proved, it will be as a result of the failure of that person to take heed of the warnings and a deliberate failure of that person to take action. It is on the assumption that that practice will continue that the Labor Party supports the substantial increases in penalties.

The other amendments to the Act include a provision that will allow a small number of pet or fancy breed rabbits to be kept without a permit. Regulations will be prescribed to cover that hobby. It is a matter of concern that the saffron thistle has been deleted from the list of declared noxious weeds. Honorable members who are familiar with the saffron thistle realize that it causes inconvenience, principally in grain growing areas. It has been a noxious weed for many years. The reasons given for deleting it from the list are not justified. A defeatist attitude has been taken; it is accepted that the thistle has not been controlled and, therefore, perhaps it is not possible to control the weed. Apparently this step is being taken because it has been found to be uncomfortable to grain growers; the thistle is frequently found in grain and seeds and it is an offence for a noxious substance to be in grain. That is the wrong way to solve the problem. The attitude has been adopted that if the purity of the grain or seed cannot be maintained, the regulations will be altered so that the impurities are allowed and ignored.

The Hon. B. P. Dunn—It is governed by the Australian Standard White standards.

The Hon. D. E. KENT—That standard would not accept noxious weeds.

The Hon. B. P. Dunn—But it sets a standard on foreign matter.

The Hon. D. E. KENT—The saffron thistle is no longer to be regarded as a foreign matter; it is a noxious weed. Of course, any lack of knowledge of members of the Opposition will be supplemented in great detail by representatives of the National Party later. Considerable concern has been expressed because 26 employees of the Department of Crown Lands and Survey are to be dismissed—or, in a word more acceptable to the Minister, retrenched. It is a kindly word. These employees have been engaged in control of vermin and noxious weeds and many have had years of experience. They are in the exempt employees class and have been given very little notice. They have been dismissed—or retrenched—at a time of considerable need for the services of as many people and as much equipment as possible to be used for preventive work.

Allocations are made annually for blackberry spraying. One would have expected that blackberry spraying could have been commenced immediately. I understand that while these people are being retrenched other casual workers will be engaged soon for the specific work of blackberry spraying. I am further given the impression that many of those casual employees are recruited from among people who have other sources of regular income. Some would be landholders who are taking the

opportunity of supplementing their incomes which may already be substantial in comparison with the incomes of the employees being dismissed, who are dependent for income on employment in the Lands Department.

Similar matters have been brought to my attention not only by the organizer of the Australian Workers Union but also by members of the district vermin and noxious weeds advisory committees. I should like the Minister to investigate these matters and to provide an explanation for actions that have been taken which are considered by landowners to be detrimental to the work of control of vermin and noxious weeds. I refer to the incident of seven four-wheel drive vehicles being removed from the Yarram district to East Gippsland, which means that in difficult areas of accessibility the work of controlling heavy weed growth of blackberries and ragwort will be restricted.

Although landholders have had responsibility under the Act over many years for keeping half of their adjoining roadside free of noxious weeds, the board has assisted them considerably. It has taken over much of that responsibility without obligation. Owing to what are once again called economic circumstances, the board intends to place that responsibility more firmly in the hands of the landowners, with some exceptions. If this is to be successful, much greater attention must be given to Crown lands and areas of State Government land which are the source of the spread of many of these weeds and much of the vermin which causes many problems to individual landholders.

If the landholders are expected to comply with the responsibilities the Act gives them, the community has a right to expect that the Lands Department and the Vermin and Noxious Weeds Destruction Board accept fully the responsibility of controlling vermin and noxious weeds on Government-owned land. The neglect of these areas has imposed great burdens and costs on landholders. With those reservations, the Labor Party supports the Bill.

The Hon. K. I. WRIGHT (North Western Province)—The Bill contains various amendments to the Act and, by and large, the National Party is in agreement with them. On 14 November I asked a question without notice of the Minister for Conservation about prospective action on fox scalp bonuses. In reply, as reported in *Hansard* at page 4323, the Minister stated:

> Had the honorable member been more patient, he would have heard me introducing a Bill which will contain a provision to remove the bonus for fox scalps.

That was a nonsensical remark, because how on earth could I have had knowledge that the Minister had in his mind the introduction of a Bill dealing with the problem?

The Hon. W. V. Houghton—I was not criticizing you.

The Hon. K. I. WRIGHT—I took it that way because the Minister introduced the Bill by leave and he gave a similar answer to a question on notice I had asked on salt mining royalties when he prefaced his reply with the comment that he would like to send me to the salt mines for a few months.

The Hon. W. V. Houghton—That is totally misquoted!

The Hon. K. I. WRIGHT—I do not think so. The penalties in the the Bill have been increased ten-fold to a maximum of $4000. The National Party is in agreement with the increase and with Mr Kent, who also expressed support. The National Party also agrees that the term of imprisonment should be deleted from the Act. However, the Ministry for Conservation has regard to other legislation and, in particular, to legislation which concerns the trapping and illegal selling of native birds. Again, in that regard, the Minister may realize that this nefarious practice has increased and that Australian birds, including parrots, the sulphur-crested cockatoos and galahs are being illegally trapped and sold overseas. They are transported by aircraft which come in with illegal doves and go out again with Australian birds. These birds sell for high prices overseas. I suggest to the Minister that the penalties for these offences should be increased likewise.

The Bill refers to the liability of landholders for noxious weeds on their half of the roads adjoining their properties. I agree that this is their responsibility. Perhaps, as the Minister stated, it has not always been carried out with due diligence by landholders. I can see merit in the Bill that landholders should accept the responsibility of eradicating noxious weeds, not only from their properties but also from adjoining roads. Another clause deals with the restriction on the keeping of animals. For instance, a certain number of pet rabbits can be kept without any permit being required.

I turn now to the clause that is of major interest to the National Party. It relates to bonuses for specified vermin. In January this year, on behalf of the Shire of Swan Hill, I raised this matter with the Minister and mentioned the difficulties facing the municipalities. In a letter to the Minister for Conservation, the shire referred to compliance with provisions of the Act and the principal objections of the council. The shire states in that letter, *inter alia*:

(i) In most instances the fox scalps stink!! And the odour lingers.

(ii) Scalps are presented at the general office counter in a wide variety of condition. Some are wet, some are dry to the point of decomposition, whilst others carry lashings of crawlers, particularly maggots.

(iii) An administrative officer must personaly handle and count or supervise the handling and counting of the scalps to determine the number for which the bonus is claimed. Then follows the highlight of proceedings, each scalp must be perforated with holes in the form of the letter 'V' (presumably 'V' for Victory) and then final destruction by fire and/or brimstone follows—as of course does an immediate visitation to the "Gents" for internal and external cleansing of the administrative officer.

(iv) The requisite statutory declaration to the effect that the fox was destroyed at a particular place in the municipality merely pays lip service to formal procedures. It is hard to categorically prove, but it is strongly suspected that the Shire of Swan Hill has paid numerous bonuses on ex-radius and interstate foxes.

(v) Office security becomes hazardous. Because of the delightful fragrance usually associated with the fox scalp presentation, counting must take place quickly, following which the administrative officer—equipped with perforator and accompanied by the bonus claimant, proceed with due haste to the outside incinerator, where the "V" for Victory ceremony and final incarceration is formally enacted.

The letter continues by making a most relevant suggestion that, in the first line of section 24 of the Act, the word "shall" be repealed and the word "may" be substituted therefor.

The Minister replied to my representations in a letter dated 10 September 1979 which states, *inter alia*:

Following your representations, the policy continuing fox scalp bonus payments through municipalities has been reviewed.

Currently under section 24 of the Vermin and Noxious Weeds Act 1958, municipalities are obliged to pay a 75c per scalp bonus to claimants and are reimbursed 57c per payment by the Department of Crown Lands and Survey.

After consultation with interested parties the Vermin and Noxious Weeds Destruction Board has recommended that the bonus payment system on fox scalps be abolished and that section 24 of the Vermin and Noxious Weeds Act and regulations be amended accordingly, but the fox remain as proclaimed vermin within the State of Victoria.

In the case of wild dog bonus payments, it is proposed to amend legislation to retain the payment of bonuses on wild dog skins at $4.50 per skin to the claimant but with full administrative responsibilities for claim application and processing to be made through the Department of Crown Lands and Survey district offices and not with the local municipalities.

That went beyond what I suggested and it does not fully meet with the enthusiastic support of officers of the Ministry of Conservation.

The Minister then wrote to various farming organizations and the Municipal Association of Victoria in an endeavour to ascertain their views. No doubt the Minister has received those views and has taken them into consideration when having the Bill framed.

The National Party has had little time to discuss the Bill with various councils. When the second-reading speech was made last week, the National Party requested that further time be made available for consultations to occur. The Minister stated that time, if required, would be made available. Nevertheless, the National Party understands the time problem involved and is prepared to debate the Bill now.

The councils are agreeable to relinquishing the necessity or responsibility for making payment. However, the majority of councils want the bonus to continue. At a later stage, I will move an amendment to continue the fox bonus. Fox skins are fetching up to $30 each in my electorate and the disfigurement necessary to obtain the bonus probably reduces that price by $5. The bonus should be continued and paid by the Government through the Lands Department. The bonus would encourage people to bring the foxes in.

Currently, shooters will take the sound healthy fox and leave the old mangy fox to roam at will. If the Government agrees to the National Party amendment, the problem will be overcome.

With regard to the retrenchment of officers employed in the Lands Department, the figure involved is 26 officers out of 600. That is a serious matter. One 60-year old field worker who has been with the department for 30 years is to be retrenched.

The effects of myxomatosis are not as effective as they were. More rabbits are in the fields and only last week, rabbit buyers reduced by 50 per cent the number of rabbits they purchased. Obviously, there is no point in the trappers catching rabbits if they are not able to sell them.

There is unanimity in the National Party with regard to the saffron thistle. The National Party agrees with the amendment as being the only solution available.

The National Party supports the clauses of the Bill except the one relating to fox scalp bonus. At the appropriate time, the National Party will move an amendment.

The Hon. R. I. KNOWLES (Ballarat Province)—There is general unanimity on the Bill. However, Mr Wright has commented on the elimination of the fox scalp bonus. I thought his comments justified precisely what the Government proposes. Mr Wright quoted a letter from the Shire of Swan Hill which established the long and costly procedures involved in the administration of that policy. Mr Wright pointed out that the existing bonus is paid on foxes caught interstate and that, of course, is of no assistance to Victorian landholders.

Mr Wright also pointed out that when skins are sold they lose a value of $5 because of the removal of the scalp to claim the bonus. If the skin is worth $5 without the scalp having to be removed, the Government should permit the market to pay that price rather than providing $5 for each fox from State revenue. Mr Wright suggested that this would encourage shooters not to kill mangy foxes. One could hardly imagine shooters, before firing, deciding whether a fox was mangy. If farmers are out shooting, they will shoot whatever foxes come into sight. The amendment proposed in the Bill provides more flexibility.

When the Bill is enacted fox bonuses will be no longer payable. If the price of fox skins drops to a low level so that people are not encouraged to destroy foxes to sell the skins, the problem may well increase. Mr Wright's proposition is nonsense because it will create more administrative costs for the department without providing additional assistance in the destruction of foxes.

I strongly support the Bill and I support the Minister's decision as announced in the second-reading speech that the Government does not intend to continue with the payment of bonuses on foxes.

The Hon. B. P. DUNN (North Western Province)—Mr Knowles has taken up one of the major points raised by Mr Wright about the payment of fox scalp bonuses. Mr Knowles has overlooked a number of points. Many amateur shooters would not wish to skin foxes for the sake of selling the skins to an agent to collect the sort of money referred to. Farmers carry a rifle or a gun around the property most of the time. If they see a fox, they shoot it but very few, except the professional or semi-professional operator, bother to skin the fox. It is a simple matter to collect a fox scalp and obtain the bonus. The principle of discontinuing the bonus, basically, is wrong. Whilst fox skins have increased in value, so too have the animals that foxes kill and maim.

Many honorable members who have raised fat lambs will have seen the damage caused by an attack by a fox. Those honorable members will realize that the fox is a dreaded animal. Early in the morning, farmers can find up to twenty young lambs, perhaps a day or two old, with their tongue missing. The fox eats the tongue out of the lamb and leaves it to die in agony in the paddock. If the fox wishes, it will eat a small portion from the inside of the thighs or loins of the lamb and leave it to die. On many occasions on my property—Mr Radford and other honorable members have seen this too—overnight five or ten lambs have died in extreme agony because of an attack by a fox. Those lambs could have been sold for $25 or $30 each.

The Hon. E. H. Walker—What is a fox pelt worth?

The Hon. B. P. DUNN—Perhaps $30. I do not know if Mr Walker suggests one should breed foxes.

The Hon. E. H. Walker—No, I am talking about getting a return on the fox pelt.

The Hon. B. P. DUNN—I would rather have the lambs. One has to realize the seriousness of this matter. Admittedly, the increased prices that are received for fox pelts have assisted greatly in the elimination of foxes, but there are still a lot of foxes. It is wrong for the Government to opt out of its responsibilities. Officers of the Lands Department could easily undertake the responsibility for the paying of these bonuses. The onus should rest on that department and not on the municipality.

The most revolting smell must be a plastic bag of day-old fox pelts. Nothing else smells like a fox. One can still smell them the next morning, even though they have long departed. The National Party will, therefore, move an amendment during the Committee stage to ensure that the payment of a bonus for the destruction of foxes is continued. The price for fox pelts will not always be as high as it is today. This provision should be left in the Bill and should be handled by the department.

I wish to comment on one or two provisions of the Bill. The National Party is concerned about the retrenchment of officers of the Lands Department. It appears that some of the departments, particularly those in country areas, are receiving a raw deal from the Government. There are to be retrenchments not only in the Lands Department but also in the Forests Commission and in some other areas.

The Hon. W. A. Landeryou—What were your intentions with the wombats?

The Hon. B. P. DUNN—Members of the Opposition will see by the amendment to be moved by Mr Wright that the National Party wants wild dogs and foxes to remain within the provisions of the Bill and the Lands Department to pay bonuses for their destruction. The Minister will retain the right to add to the list of vermin which will qualify for a bonus.

It is vital that the Lands Department has enough staff to adequately handle its responsibilities. I represent the north-western part of the State and that area has considerable weed problems. Large areas are farmed, and consequently weed control is difficult. Many properties in the Mallee cover 2000 or 3000 hectares. Many farmers have not carried out their responsibilities in dealing with weeds on the road. Unfortunately, a number of farmers will look after their section of the road adequately, but it needs only one farmer not to do so and the control of weeds in surrounding areas is back to square one. The provision that the Minister and the department should deal with prescribed weeds on the road is a good one that needs to be exercised.

I complement the department for its control in the Hopetoun area of the silver leaf nightshade or white horse nettle, which was introduced into Australia from foreign grain imports. It is relatively isolated into compact areas of Victoria and it can be dealt with. The former Minister of Lands, Mr Borthwick, recognized that problem and decided to take action to contain that weed. That

action has been sound. The provision in the Bill will allow that control to be undertaken in other areas of Victoria.

The National Party basically supports the provisions of the Bill but will seek to amend the clause relating to the payment of a bonus for the destruction of foxes.

The Hon. D. M. EVANS (North Eastern Province)—I wish to comment on certain aspects of the Bill which to some extent have been previously covered. I support Mr Wright's intention to move an amendment to the Bill. The National Party proposes that wild dogs and foxes should be included in the animals listed in the Act on which a bounty is payable. I recognize that the new provisions of the Bill, particularly those contained in clause 12, allow the Minister to prescribe an animal as vermin on which a bounty can be paid. It is a far more positive step to include the animal.

The National Party intends to remove the wombat from the list of animals on which a bounty is paid. At some stage the wombat could be included. I have no particular dislike of the wombat. I see one of my neighbours more because if I walk along our common boundary in the morning he is fixing the holes made by a wombat the night before.

A matter which has not been canvassed so far is the effect of foxes in the spread of the hydatid disease which, if my memory is correct, is due to the parasite *tania ovis* in sheep. Years ago farm dogs were a constant source of the spreading of hydatid because farmers fed the entrails of animals that were killed to the dogs. That practice has now almost ceased, or it should have. The fox is far less selective and it is still a substantial host of the hydatid tape worm. It is a health hazard. It is necessary to control foxes and wild dogs. It makes good sense to retain this provision in the Act.

The next point is weeds on roads. Clause 3 of the Bill amends section 6 of the principal Act and gives the Minister the ability or the responsibility to take control measures from time to time on certain noxious weeds on roads. At present, the Act places the responsibility for the half-width of road adjacent to a property on the landowner. In the past few years—Mr Dunn has properly drawn attention to this fact—the Lands Department officers in many areas, if not all, have accepted responsibility for spraying weeds on that half-width of road to ensure that the weeds are controlled and not neglected by the landowner and to demonstrate, by example, that weeds need to be controlled.

Two significant things have happened in the past week or two. The first is that 26 members of the staff of the Lands Department, out of a total of 647, are about to be dismissed. In answer to a question I asked the Minister in the House and to a matter raised by Mr Baxter on the motion for the adjournment of the sitting yesterday, the Minister stated that additional responsibilities would have to be accepted by farmers. Apparently what had become a common practice by the Lands Department is now to cease.

The control of weeds by farmers and landowners on the half-width of road adjacent to their properties is historical. It dates back to the early days when they were the only people in a position to exercise that control. That is no longer the case. The Lands Department has the responsibility of taking charge of weeds on public land. The road is public property and is not, apart from its access possibilities, of real benefit to adjacent landowners. It is of benefit to the travelling public. The presence of weeds is often in no way the fault of adjacent landowners. Weeds can be spread by travelling stock which may or may not belong to the landowner. The stock may belong to someone some distance from the property concerned. It can be spread by people carrying the weeds in their clothing or by being blown off a passing motor vehicle.

The responsibility for weeds on roads is more reasonably the responsibility of the Lands Department, which accepts responsibility for control of weeds on public land. Weeds on roads will not be as well controlled in future now that it appears that the total responsibility will be passed back to the farmer, except for prescribed weeds which are considered

dangerous. That is a backward step. In addition, the fact that they are on roads provides additional opportunity for passing stock or townspeople to walk along the road, pick up the seed of the weed and spread it around the country.

I make those relevant points and indicate that generally other members of the National Party and I support the clauses contained in the Bill. The Bill increases the penalties. That is right and reasonable and underlines the importance of this matter.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was read a second time and committed.

Clause 1 was agreed to.

Clause 2 (Amendment of No. 6409 s. 3F (2))

The Hon. W. V. HOUGHTON (Minister for Conservation)—I thank those who have contributed to the wide-ranging debate on this Bill. It has been wide-ranging because in one instance it went beyond the provisions of the Bill and dealt with the matter of retrenchment of workers of the Lands Department which is mainly responsible for the control of vermin and noxious weeds. Mr Evans made a contribution to the debate, as did others. His contribution seemed to ignore the fact that it is a responsibility of landowners to control weeds on the roads adjoining their properties and that by introducing this provision, I am moving neither forwards nor backwards. The landowners have always been responsible and will continue to be responsible. Nobody enjoys retrenchments——

The Hon. D. E. Kent—Particularly the victims.

The Hon. W. V. HOUGHTON—Particularly the victims, as Mr Kent says. However, it is one of the facts of current life in the public sphere that funds are hard to come by. Therefore retrenchments have had to be made. There is no reason why this should mean that the control of vermin and noxious weeds will deteriorate. All it means is that a little more efficiency and application of the laws which already apply are required. So much for that matter which is outside the ambit of the Bill but which several honorable members have raised.

The other matter which concerns bonuses for foxes was most adequately answered by Mr Knowles.

The Hon. B. P. Dunn—That is a limited opinion.

The Hon. W. V. HOUGHTON—I am giving my opinion; Mr Dunn can give his later. Mr Wright made a good case for doing precisely what the Government proposes, and Mr Dunn reinforced that by telling the House that foxes kill and maim lambs, as I am well aware. I have seen it happen overnight to sixteen lambs in a small paddock. The fact that that happens will almost certainly lead to the destruction of the fox, whether or not there is a bonus on the scalps.

The Hon. B. P. Dunn—You are always trying to do it on the cheap.

The Hon. W. V. HOUGHTON—I make no apology for that, and I believe the destruction of the fox will continue. It is an exotic animal which is of no use in our environment.

The Hon. E. H. Walker—It is like the National Party.

The Hon. W. V. HOUGHTON—No; its members are endemic. For that reason it is not proposed to make any changes to the amendment.

The clause was agreed to, as were clauses 3 to 11.

Clause 12 (Amendment of No. 6409 s. 24)

The Hon. K. I. WRIGHT (North Western Province)—I move:

Clause 12, line 15, after "destruction" insert "of every fox, wild dog and".

The purpose of the amendment, as outlined in the second-reading speech on behalf of the National Party, is to retain the fox scalp bonus and wild dog bonus. Members of the National Party believe it is absolutely essential that this be done. I notice that Mr Knowles is no longer in the House. In response to what he said, I indicate that the overwhelming majority of municipalities in the State, particularly those in the north west, are strongly in favour of

the fox scalp bonus being retained. Section 24 of the Vermin and Noxious Weeds Act reads:

> The council of every municipality shall out of the municipal fund from time to time pay by way of bonus or reward such sum as is prescribed for the destruction of every fox wild dog or wombat destroyed within the municipal district of such municipality and the Treasurer of Victoria shall in accordance with the regulations and out of any moneys legally available for the purpose pay to the municipality such proportion of any bonus or reward so paid as is prescribed.

Honorable members will note that the section states, "every fox wild dog or wombat". Clause 12 of the Bill which amends section 24 of the principal Act reads:

> The Board shall out of moneys available for the purpose pay upon such terms and conditions as are prescribed a prescribed sum by way of bonus or reward for the destruction of every one of a prescribed kind of vermin which is destroyed in Victoria.

It will be noted that no vermin are prescribed in the Act. I presume that they are prescribed by regulation of some kind. Wild dogs could be included, as could foxes, but the Minister in his second-reading speech has specifically stated that fox scalps will not be included. I assume wild dogs are included because many requests have been made that that be done.

The Hon. W. V. Houghton—Right.

The Hon. K. I. WRIGHT—There is strong support for the retention of the fox scalp bonus. Members of the National Party have indicated that the bonus of 75 cents is totally inadequate at the moment; it should be increased to $5. As I have stated, municipalities in the north west of the State have expressed strong support for the retention of the fox scalp bonus. I shall quote briefly from several letters I have received on the subject. The Shire of Walpeup, of which Ouyen is the centre, wrote to me on 31 October 1979 as follows:

> The Council is adamant that such action should not be the first step towards removing the fox from the vermin list. In Council's opinion it is imperative that the bonus be retained on foxes as well as for wild dogs as the latter is a serious problem for those property owners in the vicinity of the Big Desert area.

The Shire of Dunmunkle, of which Rupanyup is the centre, wrote on 1 November 1979 as follows:

> This Council opposes the abolition of this bonus and, in fact, would prefer to see the 75 cents bonus increased.
>
> The reason for this is that, because good skins are bringing a good price fox hunters are not killing the young foxes which may grow and produce a good skin and they are not bothering about the mangy or otherwise defective animals because the bonus is not worth the trouble especially when it involves a statutory declaration etc.

That is why the National Party has suggested that the bonus be increased to $5, so that there is no mistake about that. The letter continues:

> Council feels there must be some incentive to dispose of these animals.

The Shire of Karkarook, centering at Hopetoun, wrote on 12 October 1979, as follows:

> Following consideration at its October meeting my Council expressed opposition to the abolishment of bonus payments which are still considered an incentive to the destruction of this vermin particularly when pelts are less valuable than they are at present.

I could continue in this vein. The municipalities in the North Western Province, and no doubt throughout the State, are extremely keen and adamant that the fox scalp bonus be continued at a higher rate of $5, as suggested, with the Lands Department continuing to have full responsibility in this matter. I conclude by once again commending the Shire of Swan Hill for raising the matter in the first instance and requesting that the fox scalp bonus be increased.

The Hon. D. E. KENT (Chelsea Province)—One feels a growing sympathy for Mr Wright and his colleagues. It is unfortunate that the association of members of the National Party with foxes has not resulted in their having more of the characteristics of the fox and the cunning of the fox than they have exhibited today. Mr Wright has put forward the most convincing arguments as to why there is no longer any justification for the payment of a 75-cent bonus on fox scalps. It is also a remarkable, but not surprising, exhibition of illogical argument that those

people, who continually condemn extravagance on the part of Government and are critical of handouts to people, still want to have this irrelevant bonus continued.

Members of the National Party have admitted that fox pelts are extremely valuable, and the price obtainable is a good incentive to keep the numbers of foxes down, to hunt them, shoot them and skin them. I am sure that people would be prepared to do that for the price. Mr Dunn said that it was probably a nauseating and difficult job. I would not like to do it.

The Hon. B. P. Dunn—Have you ever?

The Hon. D. E. KENT—No. The nature and disposition of many of Mr Dunn's farmer friends and constituents would lead them, for $20, inflation or not, to do this. Those people do not find the fox as offensive as they pretend. It is proposed that municipal officers will wash their hands of the fox but that the Government should allow this practice to continue through the Lands Department and grant an increase in the bonus. Members of the National Party always imply that country areas are populated only by farmers, but as they know, farmers comprise only a small part of that population.

The Hon. B. P. Dunn—You would turn your back on them because they are a minority?

The Hon. D. E. KENT—Mr Dunn should be well aware that there are obvious reasons why I would not turn my back on them; I have more regard for my own safety.

The Committee is presented with contradictions. One party pretends that the Government should not hand out money except in necessitous circumstances, but now asks for the continuation of the bonus which was originally intended to assist in the economic control of foxes. It must be pointed out that quite apart from the value of a bonus or the value of a skin, it is part of the responsibility of landholders, and to their economic advantage, to control both vermin and noxious weeds. Mr Dunn will probably make a suggestion on behalf of the National Party which will solve many of his problems. Short of suggesting that what is now private farmland should be handed over to the Government, he must accept that farmers must take responsibility.

The Hon. B. P. Dunn—What about Crown land and national parks?

The Hon. D. E. KENT—Discussions have taken place, and it has been acknowledged that the Lands Department has generally a responsible attitude in regard to Crown land. A speaker on behalf of the National Party supported that, particularly on the ground that it is unnecessary to do more at this stage. The provision exists through the Governor in Council prescription, through regulation introduction at any time it is considered necessary and appropriate for a bonus to be established.

The Labor Party does not believe it should be written into the Act so it rejects the amendment.

The Hon. W. V. HOUGHTON (Minister for Conservation)—Mr Kent will have even more sympathy for Mr Wright after I read this extract from the *Wimmera-Mail Times* of Monday, 12 November.

> Wimmera Shire Council wants the bonus payment system on fox scalps to be abolished.

Honorable members will gather the sense of the item so I will read no further.

The Hon. K. I. WRIGHT (North Western Province)—It might appear from what the Minister for Conservation has said that an effort has been made to mislead the Committee on the duties of local councils, but in actual fact I asked the Parliamentary Library for copies of press releases on this matter and the only press releases were six statements by Mr Radford, who was fairly vocal on this particular matter. Mr Radford appeared to lend support for the abolition of the scheme, but in any case I am not clear on that.

Members of the National Party feel no argument has been advanced by Mr Kent or the Minister for Conservation against the proposed amendment. I was surprised at Mr Kent's remarks because the Labor Party has indicated that it will go into the country areas to obtain

the support of country people, but when an opportunity presents itself like this to gain support, it fails dismally. I am sure this debate will be well and truly noted by people in the country.

The Hon. B. P. DUNN (North Western Province)—After listening to Mr Kent, honorable members now know why the Labor Party does not hold many rural seats in the Parliament of Victoria.

In his remarks on this clause, Mr Kent did recognize that there could possibly be a need for the provision, but then he discounted it on the ground that fox skins are at present considerably valuable and on that basis the Labor Party did not go along with the bonus scheme.

The National Party believes that is not the case and is not a sufficient argument for rejecting the amendment. I reject the comments of the Minister for Conservation who quoted what the Wimmera Shire Council had stated on this issue. The point is that most municipal councils want to opt out of the fox bonus scheme because of the difficulties they have in administering it, especially as the scheme mainly benefits people who come from outside the municipality. The scheme should be handled by the Lands Department and that is why the National Party has proposed the amendment, which takes the scheme from under the control of local councils and gives it to the Lands Department, to enable the bonus scheme to continue operating.

The Hon. CLIVE BUBB (Ballarat Province)—I take exception to the comment that no argument has been advanced against the amendment. It is nonsense to suggest farmers will not go out and shoot foxes unless they get a $5 bonus for the scalp. As a farmer, quite honestly if I am driving across a paddock and see a fox, I shoot it. I do not look to see whether it has a good pelt or not, I just shoot it and then I decide what I will do after I have looked at it.

On the other side of the fence there is the hunter who hunts foxes either for reward or sport. As Mr Knowles said before, if one can bring back a pelt with the scalp intact then one receives more money for that pelt than just for the back of the scalp—the $5 bounty is inconsequential.

For the same reasons wild dogs are predators on the livestock of farmers who will hunt the wild dogs because they are more callous and do more damage than foxes.

No argument has been advanced to support the amendment. I repudiate the suggestion that no argument has been put forward to rebut the amendment. I am strongly opposed to the amendment.

The Committee divided on Mr Wright's amendment (the Hon. P. D. Block in the chair).

Ayes	3
Noes	34
Majority against the amendment	31

AYES

Mr Dunn

Tellers:
Mr Evans
Mr Wright

NOES

Mrs Baylor
Mr Bubb
Mr Butler
Mr Chamberlain
Mrs Coxsedge
Mr Crozier
Mr Eddy
Dr Foley
Mr Granter
Mr Guest
Mr Hauser
Mr Hayward
Mr Houghton
Dr Howard
Mr Hunt
Mr Jenkins
Mr Kennedy
Mr Kent
Mr Knowles
Mr Landeryou
Mr Lawson
Mr Long
Mr Mackenzie
Mr Radford
Mr Saltmarsh
Mr Sgro
Mr Stacey
Mr Storey
Mr Walker
Mr Walton
Mr Ward
Mr White

Tellers:
Mr Hamilton
Mr Trayling

PAIR

Mr Baxter — Mr Taylor

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.

UNCLAIMED MONEYS BILL

The debate (adjourned from November 15) on the motion of the Hon. Haddon Storey (Attorney-General) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

The Hon. G. A. S. BUTLER (Thomastown Province)—This Bill amends section 2 of the principal Act. At first glance, it would appear to be a rather insignificant amendment of no great moment. In fact, it is probably the most expensive amendment I have ever seen because the Bill removes from clauses 12 and 13A the expression "six years" and substitutes the expression "three months".

This amendment will allow for the transfer of about $9 million from the Unclaimed Moneys Fund to the Treasury, a not insignificant sum. The Australian Labor Party does not oppose the Bill because it believes sums of that nature should not lie idle, that it is far more beneficial to the State to have these moneys transferred to a working account so that some result can be achieved with it. The Labor Party hopes the Government will use these moneys for capital expenditure and to create employment opportunities.

I suggest to the Attorney-General that a number of other statutory authorities require attention to bring into line the varying periods for which they may retain unclaimed moneys.

By section 40A of the Legal Profession Act 1958, it is left solely to the discretion of the individual practitioners as to when moneys will be transferred to the Treasury. I find that a disturbing situation. It may be said that members of the legal profession are responsible citizens, but some recent legal cases would suggest that some solicitors are not as responsible to society as they ought to be. The only stipulation contained in that Act concerning time for which unclaimed trust moneys may be held is the expression, "Where a solicitor is satisfied after due inquiry and search". Unclaimed moneys transferred to the Treasury by the legal profession amount to only about 7 per cent per annum of the total sum transferred.

Section 180 (5) of the Companies Act provides that unclaimed moneys must be held for not less than two years and not more than ten years.

The Landlord and Tenant Act provides that unclaimed moneys shall be held for three months and then transferred within a period of fourteen days.

Another body which holds unclaimed moneys is Tattersall's. Under the Tattersall Consultations Act 1958, Tattersall's contributed 43·3 per cent of the unclaimed moneys transferred to the Treasury in the 1978–79 period. Recently, the time allowed for the transfer of such moneys was reduced from three years to one year! Before the recent legislation was passed, those funds were permitted to lie idle for a period of six years, being used for no worth-while purpose other than to accumulate interest.

There ought to be some rationalization of this area and I suggest that three months would be an appropriate time limit to apply in all cases. There may be some problems with that in the legal area, however.

The Opposition supports the Bill. This year $9·5 million accrued to the Treasury by way of unclaimed moneys, but this will not be a normal annual transfer of unclaimed moneys——

The Hon. Haddon Storey—There was an unusual situation there.

The Hon. G. A. S. BUTLER—Yes, this was a "one off" situation in an endeavour to rationalize the whole matter. I understand that the sum will drop back to about $2 million a year. I hope the money will be spent on capital works programmes rather than be left to lie idle. The Opposition supports the Bill.

The Hon. B. P. DUNN (North Western Province)—The National Party supports the Bill which is a sensible move when one considers that such moneys in the Unclaimed Moneys Fund have been unusable for a period of six years. An individual making a claim will be protected, because clause 14 of the principal Act provides that, where moneys have been paid into the Consolidated Fund, the Treasurer may direct payment of a like amount to be made to a claimant out of funds made available by Parliament for this purpose. That means a person making a claim will have his position protected,

even though the money has already been paid into the Consolidated Fund. The National Party believes this is a realistic move and supports the Bill.

The Hon. R. J. EDDY (Thomastown Province)—I support the remarks of the previous speakers. The Opposition does not oppose this measure—in fact, it is long overdue. The Bill deals with unclaimed moneys received by the Treasury and paid into the Unclaimed Moneys Fund. If those moneys remain unclaimed for a period of six years, they are then paid into the Consolidated Fund and used by statutory bodies to carry out certain works. I support that procedure.

The Bill itself, as Mr Butler has pointed out, reduces from six years to three months the period for which this money must be held in the Unclaimed Moneys Fund, and rightly so. That is a move in the right direction.

Anomalies exist in respect of unclaimed moneys. Tattersall's came to Victoria in 1954 and was given authority to retain unclaimed moneys for three years. Recently it was revealed that it was holding more than $7 million in an Unclaimed Moneys Fund attracting interest of approximately 10 per cent, netting approximately $1 million profit for that unclaimed moneys account. This interest did not morally belong to the faceless shareholders of the George Adams estate. The Government would agree that morally this interest belongs to the people who have not claimed their winnings or, alternatively, to State revenue.

By recent legislation the Government has moved into line with the Opposition's contention on this matter and has reduced the holding period, as has been so ably pointed out by Mr Butler, from three years to one year. As he also pointed out, consideration should be given to further reducing the period for the holding of unclaimed moneys by the Tattersall organization. I contend that the holding period should be reduced from one year to three months. I can see no reason why this private company should hold millions of dollars of public moneys in unclaimed dividends for any longer than the absolute maximum required.

To be fair, I point out that the original Tattersalls agreement was signed by a Labor Government in 1954. It has taken 25 years to rectify this anomaly at least in part. I hope it will not take a further 25 years to reduce the holding period from one year to a much shorter period. This money that has been held over the years would have gone a long way towards constructing schools, hospitals, police stations and so on.

For the reasons I have outlined, the Bill should be supported and I ask the Attorney-General to give consideration to reducing further the holding period set by the Tattersalls Act passed during the last sessional period.

The Hon. GLYN JENKINS (Geelong Province)—Mr Eddy has overlooked an important point. During the twelve months that money is held by the Tattersall organization before being transferred to the Unclaimed Moneys Fund, anyone who is entitled to portion of that money can claim it after making application to Tattersall's.

The same principle applies to company dividends. After a company declares its dividend, under the provisions of the Companies Act it is not required to transfer unclaimed dividends into the Unclaimed Moneys Fund for twelve months. While the company holds the money it is lodged in a bank account on which interest is paid. As a person who has been responsible for administering the dividend account of a public company, I can assure honorable members that constant demands are made on the account during the twelve months for which unclaimed dividends are held. After that time the demand tapers off.

If the unclaimed money held either by companies or the Tattersall organization were to be paid into the Government's Unclaimed Moneys Fund, many thousands of inquiries would be made to the Government by persons entitled to funds. In the case of Tattersall's, most of the unclaimed funds are from fourth division prizes of approximately

$8 to $12. Substantial administrative costs would be involved in paying them out, because one would have to verify that the person seeking the money was entitled to it. There are considerable practical difficulties in what Mr Eddy suggested, which is why the Government took the action it did.

It is surprising to note how much unclaimed money exists, and not all of that money is paid to the Government as it ought to be. It is also unfortunate that Australia Post is not carrying out the task of finding out the new addresses of persons who have moved in the fine tradition that it once followed. Many dividend cheques are returned and ultimately money finishes up in the Unclaimed Moneys Fund because the Post Office does not do the job that it once did. Lists of unclaimed money are normally published in the *Government Gazette* and any observant person can see whether he or she is entitled to some of that money.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was read a second time and committed.

Clause 1 was agreed to.

Clause 2 (Amendment of No. 6879 s. 12 (2)

The Hon. HADDON STOREY (Attorney-General)—I thank those honorable members who spoke during the second-reading debate for the useful contributions they made on the subject of unclaimed moneys. The honorable members who spoke mentioned a number of statutory and other bodies that could be examined to ascertain whether more rationality could be brought into the collection and handling of unclaimed moneys. Honorable members mentioned lawyers' funds held under the provisions of the Legal Profession Practice Act, and the money held by Tattersall's.

I shall pass on those comments to the Treasurer and ask him to take them into account. The debate was a good example of honorable members attempting to make a constructive contribution towards a better system.

The clause was agreed to.

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

LAND TAX BILL

The debate (adjourned from November 15) on the motion of the Hon. Haddon Storey (Attorney General) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

The Hon. G. A. SGRO (Melbourne North Province)—On behalf of the Opposition, I move:

> That all the words after "That" be omitted with the view of inserting in place thereof "this Bill be withdrawn and re-drafted to provide for total exemption from land tax where the aggregate unimproved value of lands owned by a person, including that parcel used exclusively as the principal place of residence, does not exceed the sum of $40 000."

The purpose of the amendment is to create some equity in the area of land tax. The Bill seeks to increase from $33 000 to $40 000 the unimproved capital value of land used as a private residence that is exempt from land tax. However, inequity occurs when a person owning an average suburban residence with an unimproved capital value of, say, $8000 to $10 000, has to pay land tax on a humble beach cottage or a second block of land that may be worth only another $8000 to $10 000.

A person in this position should not be discriminated against by being taxed on the second block, when a person who lives in an elite area and whose private residence is situated on land valued at up to $40 000 pays no land tax.

It could well be that the person who owns a large house and pays no land tax is in the same economic situation as the person who owns a suburban house and a week-end beach house, yet the latter, because he chooses to spend his recreational time in a different way, is forced to pay an additional tax.

Even the State Council of the Liberal Party passed a resolution at the week-end urging the Government to abolish land tax on residential land. Surely a beach house in which a family may live for one one or two months each year could be classified as residential.

I stress that the purpose of the amendment is to reduce the burden on the person who has two, or even three, small holdings, the value of which may be nowhere near $40 000, and, specifically, not to give an advantage to people who have all their eggs in one basket. It is surely not the role of the Government, in this free enterprise society, to place restrictions on the way in which people spend their money.

I commend the amendment, which asks the Government to reconsider the Bill and to act with fairness to people who own one or two small holdings from which they are not likely to make any financial gain.

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. F. S. Grimwade)—Order! Honorable members who speak from now on will be speaking to both the Bill and the amendment.

The Hon. B. P. DUNN (North Western Province)—The National Party supports the Bill, which increases the rate of exemption for land tax payable on the unimproved capital value of principal places of residence. It is objectionable to apply land tax to a person's principal place of residence because the property does not earn income. The National Party believes—and the Government apparently agrees—that there should ultimately be a complete exemption for such residences.

The Bill increases from $33 000 to $40 000 the unimproved capital value of principal places of residence that are exempt from land tax. That is a significant increase and it will cover the majority of principal places of residence. Not many homes around Melbourne would be situated on land with an unimproved capital value of $40 000 and the measure will exempt the majority of homeowners from the payment of land tax.

The owners of residences situated on land with a higher value than that will receive an increase in the present deduction from $117.81 to $145.39. The Bill has been adequately explained by the Minister.

I also noticed the motion carried by the State Council of the Liberal Party at the week-end. The motion related to land tax payable on family homes and sought its complete abolition. That is a good goal to aim at.

The Hon. Haddon Storey—It did not say it had to happen this week, though.

The Hon. B. P. DUNN—That is why many of the motions passed at the meeting of the State Council of the Liberal Party have that well-known political flexibility. I also understand they are not binding on the Parliamentary Liberal Party, which seems to do its own thing.

The Government is moving in the right direction on land tax, as it is on a number of other State taxes. Therefore, the National Party supports the Bill and hopes ultimately there will be a total abolition of land tax on residential land.

The House divided on the question that the words proposed by Mr Sgro to be omitted stand part of the motion (the Hon. F. S. Grimwade in the chair).

Ayes	27
Noes	13
Majority against the amendment	14

AYES

Mrs Baylor	Mr Hunt
Mr Block	Mr Jenkins
Mr Bubb	Mr Knowles
Mr Campbell	Mr Lawson
Mr Chamberlain	Mr Long
Mr Crozier	Mr Radford
Mr Dunn	Mr Saltmarsh
Mr Evans	Mr Stacey
Mr Granter	Mr Storey
Mr Hamilton	Mr Ward
Mr Hauser	Mr Wright
Mr Hayward	*Tellers:*
Mr Houghton	Dr Foley
Dr Howard	Mr Guest

NOES

Mr Butler	Mr Sgro
Mrs Coxsedge	Mr Thomas
Mr Eddy	Mr Walker
Mr Kennedy	Mr White
Mr Kent	*Tellers:*
Mr Landeryou	Mr Trayling
Mr Mackenzie	Mr Walton

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was read a second time, and passed through its remaining stages.

ADJOURNMENT

School bus transportation—Police services—Drivers' licence tests—Local government superannuation scheme — Coomoora Primary School — Boronia Primary School—Irrigation at Torrumbarry

The Hon. A. J. HUNT (Minister of Education)—I move:

That the House do now adjourn.

The Hon. R. A. MACKENZIE (Geelong Province)—I raise with the Minister of Education a matter of concern to parents who live around the Buckley–Deans Marsh area. This year one of the girls living in the area was anxious to have a technical school education, but because of the bus system in the area—and she was unable to obtain Government assistance—she had to take about four buses to get to the Geelong technical school, even though there is a good technical school in the Buckley area. I understand that next year about four or five girls from that area will require technical school education.

I ask the Minister to ensure that in the coming year transportation for girls requiring technical education in Geelong will be looked into.

The Hon. R. J. EDDY (Thomastown Province)—I direct a matter to the attention of the Attorney-General, representing the Minister for Police and Emergency Services in this House, in regard to a permit that was granted this week by the Board of Works to the people at Odyssey House in Lower Plenty. I ask the Minister to ascertain from the responsible Minister what police surveillance will be available in this area? The police resources are stretched severely now over Diamond Valley, Eltham and the Shire of Whittlesea. Only one divisional van operates in the three shires between 11 p.m. and 7 a.m. There is only one crime car, and two men, for the whole police district which covers the shires of Doncaster, Reservoir, and Preston. I think the Minister will appreciate the point I am making.

The Hon. D. M. EVANS (North Eastern Province)—I direct a matter to the attention of the Attorney-General as the representative of the Minister for Police and Emergency Services. I refer to the long backlog in testing people for motor car drivers' licences, particularly in the metropolitan area. I shall state a couple of facts which will illuminate this problem. It appears that if one wished to obtain a driver's licence test at the central testing station in Lygon Street, and made a booking by telephone at 2 o'clock this afternoon, the earliest time available would be 15 February, three months away; or if one made a booking over the counter at the office, the earliest available appointment would be on 3 January 1980, which is about six weeks away.

I understand that there are only 109 licensed testing officers in the whole of Victoria, and this is contributing to the current backlog.

Honorable members will be aware that the normal period for which a learner's licence permit is granted is twelve months, with an extension of three months on the payment of a $5 fee. Anybody requiring a licence test in the metropolitan area may have to wait three months or more. I ask the Minister responsible to give this matter urgent consideration as the present situation is intolerable.

The Hon. D. N. SALTMARSH (Waverley Province)—I raise with the Minister for Local Government a matter which arises out of representations made to me today by people concerned with the superannuation scheme in local government. Recently Parliament considered amendments to remove certain anomalies in this matter, but major concern has been expressed by a number of people about the need for an overhaul and review of the entire superannuation scheme operating in the field of local government.

I ask the Minister to indicate what is intended, and if any time-table has been worked out for the consideration of this matter.

The Hon. C. J. KENNEDY (Waverley Province)—My query is directed to the Minister of Education. It relates to Coomoora Primary School at Springvale South. This school has accumulated $11 000 towards the purchase of an additional room which will be used

as a music, general purpose room, and will be made available to the public for worth-while purposes outside school hours.

I have been asked to take up with the Minister the possibility of some assistance being given for the provision of this room, because it is of considerable use to the local community as well as to the pupils at the school.

The Hon. H. G. BAYLOR (Boronia Province)—I raise with the Minister of Education a project that has been under way for some time at the Boronia High School. The Education Department had given a commitment to the school council that it would finance it on a $1 for $1 basis to provide covered-in walkways between the portable class-rooms. The school council raised money and even went so far as calling tenders for the work. It is now not sure whether the money from the Education Department will be forthcoming, and I ask the Minister to look into the matter on behalf of the school.

The Hon. J. W. S. RADFORD (Bendigo Province)—I raise a matter with the Minister of Water Supply. Members of the Torrumbarry irrigators' association have written to me expressing strong opposition to the underground drainage work being carried out in the Shepparton area. Because of the continuing work that is taking place there, the disposal of effluent other than that being discharged into the River Murray is causing detriment to all the waters downstream from that area.

The Hon. A. J. HUNT (Minister of Education)—Mr Mackenzie referred to the problem of transporting children to school by bus in the Deans Marsh area. This problem also affects the Moriac and Buckley areas, which are in the same vicinity. Another honorable member has already taken up this matter with me. I understand that the Geelong region transport co-ordination committee met yesterday to consider the problem and, one hopes, to solve it. I have not yet been apprised of the result of the meeting, but when it is known, I will ask that it be conveyed to the honorable member.

The matter of Coomoora Primary School was also raised; I shall certainly look into it, and will also refer the works at the Boronia Primary School to the attention of my colleague, the Assistant Minister of Education.

The Hon. HADDON STOREY (Attorney-General)—Mr Eddy referred to the permit which has been granted by the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works for Odyssey House and asked whether increased surveillance and other services would be carried out by the police. He asked me to take up the matter with the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, and I shall be pleased to do so and ask the honorable gentleman to reply directly to Mr Eddy.

Mr Evans also raised a matter for the attention of the Minister for Police and Emergency Services concerning the testing of applicants for drivers' licences, particularly in the metropolitan area; he said that substantial delays were occurring before people could undertake tests. I have to confess to some personal interest in this matter, as one of my children is shortly to be tested for a driving licence, and I hope the delay will not be long. I will ask the Minister to examine this matter and ascertain whether it is possible to reduce the delays.

The Hon. D. G. CROZIER (Minister for Local Government)—Mr Saltmarsh sought information concerning further improvements to the local government superannuation scheme. I assure the honorable member that in the near future—possibly next week—as a consequence of lengthy negotiations between the Municipal Officers Association and the Municipal Association of Victoria, a decision will be made on a proposal to be put to me which will form the basis of amendments to the present local government superannuation scheme. I have been in consultation with officers of the Municipal Association of Victoria this week, and I understand that their industrial claims committee will be reporting to its executive tomorrow. As a consequence of that executive meeting and perhaps further discussion with the Municipal Officers Association, I

hope it will be possible for me to instruct my department to prepare the necessary legislation, which it would be my intention to introduce in the autumn sessional period.

The Hon. F. J. GRANTER (Minister of Water Supply)—Mr Radford raised a matter concerning the Torrumbarry irrigators and their concern about the dumping of groundwater into the River Murray from Shepparton. This matter would be a concern of the Public Works Committee, which is inquiring into salinity in its over-all view of that problem. I will refer the matter to the Public Works Committee on behalf of the honorable member.

The motion was agreed to.

The House adjourned at 4.21 *p.m. until Tuesday, November* 27.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

ASSEMBLY HALLS FOR SCHOOLS

(Question No. 122)

The Hon. K. I. WRIGHT (North Western Province) asked the Minister of Education:

(*a*) What are the present subsidy arrangements for the construction of assembly halls at State secondary schools?

(*b*) How many assembly halls will be constructed in the current financial year, and at which schools?

(*c*) How many assembly halls were constructed in the last financial year, and at which schools?

(*d*) What is the current priority list?

The Hon. A. J. HUNT (Minister of Education)—The answer is:

I refer the honorable member to the Ministerial statement made in the Legislative Assembly by the Honorable Norman Lacy, MP, Assistant Minister of Education, a copy of which was tabled in this House on 17 October 1979, in particular to the section of that statement referring to the new Community Education Activity Centre Programme.

(*a*) Subsidy arrangements for the new programme will only apply in those cases where schools choose to construct other than a standard design activity centre. In such cases the department will provide the equivalent cost of the standard design with the school community providing the balance of the cost.

(*b*) Currently there are nine halls under the old programme that have been completed or are under construction and expected to be completed in this current financial year.

(*c*) A total of three halls were completed in the 1978–79 financial year at the Blackburn and Kangaroo Flat technical schools, and Hadfield High School.

(*d*) As indicated in the Ministerial statement, the former assmebly hall list has been abolished as an indicator of priority and details concerning the new programme will be announced before the end of this year.

PAY-ROLL TAX

(Question No. 195)

The Hon. D. M. EVANS (North Eastern Province) asked the Attorney-General, for the Treasurer:

How much pay-roll tax has been collected in each of the past three years from employers in the Melbourne metropolitan area and country areas, respectively?

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

Records are not maintained in a manner which would enable me to provide the honorable member with the information he sought.

Legislative Assembly

Thursday, 22 November 1979

The SPEAKER (the Hon. S. J. Plowman) took the chair at 11.5 a.m. and read the prayer.

DEATH OF SIR EDGAR TANNER

Mr THOMPSON (Treasurer)—I move:

That this House expresses its sincere sorrow at the death of Sir Edgar Stephen Tanner, C.B.E., E.D., and places on record its acknowledgement of the valuable services rendered by him to the Parliament and the people of Victoria as a member of the Legislative Assembly for the electoral district of Ripponlea from 1955 to 1967 and the electoral district of Caulfield from 1967 to 1976; Chairman of Committees from 1970 to 1973.

All honorable members of this House were shocked to hear of the sudden and unexpected death yesterday of Sir Edgar Tanner, particularly those of us who had had the pleasure of speaking with him at the State council conference over the last week-end.

Sir Edgar Tanner entered the Victorian Parliament in 1955 after a vigorous electoral contest with the former Victorian Premier, Thomas Tuke Hollway, which Sir Edgar won and thus became the member for the seat of Ripponlea. He represented that electorate until it disappeared under a redistribution in 1967 and then became the member for the State seat of Caulfield and remained its representative until he retired from Parliament in 1976.

Sir Edgar Tanner served as a member of the State Development Committee from 1964 to 1970, and during the latter years was its chairman. He was a member of the Public Accounts Committee from 1973 to 1976. He was promoted to the position of Chairman of Committees and Deputy Speaker in this House, a post that he occupied with distinction from 1970 to 1973.

Sir Edgar Tanner led a full, varied and most interesting life, a large share of which was devoted to public service on a voluntary basis, particularly in the world of amateur sport. As a young man he had been a sportsman of distinction, having run for the St. Stephen's Harriers Athletic Club as a middle distance runner. He was also a noted boxer and won the full blue for boxing at the University of Melbourne. It is interesting to note that he had 150 bouts during his career and lost only ten of them. Perhaps his record in the political arena was similar.

I first met him while he was refereeing a bout in Wilson Hall at the university boxing championships in the late 1940s, and he gave generously of his time as an amateur sporting official. Sir Edgar later became the President of the Victorian Amateur Boxing Association; for over twenty years he was the President of the Australian Amateur Boxing Union; he was President of the Australian Commonwealth Games Association and the manager of the Olympic team that went to London in 1948. He was the leader of the Australian Olympic delegation to the Olympic Games at Helsinki in 1952; to Rome in 1960 and Tokyo in 1964. There were very few associations in the world of amateur sports with which he had not been actively associated in one way or another.

I suppose his crowning glory came as the award of the Olympic Games to Melbourne in 1956. This country and the State owes much to a small group of dedicated enthusiasts who decided towards the end of the 1940s that Melbourne was to be the venue of the 1956 Olympic Games. Sir Edgar was the Honorary Secretary and Treasurer of the Australian Olympic Federation at the time. He was certainly one of that small group of dedicated enthusiasts who not only achieved the Olympic Games for Melbourne in 1956 but also helped to make an outstanding success of their management, bringing fame and a degree of fortune to Victoria and Australia.

Sir Edgar Tanner was a member of the 8th Division of the Australian Imperial Forces. He was captured by the Japanese at Ambon in 1942 as a member of the Gull Force. He spent three and a half years as a prisoner of the Japanese. I remember him telling me in the grounds of Parliament House after the Olympic Games that he had spent three and a half years fighting for his life as a prisoner of war and following his release he spent the next decade fighting to obtain the Olympic Games for Australia and that he was looking for a new mission in life. He threw himself wholeheartedly into his Parliamentary duties.

He is one member of a family that has probably achieved a unique place in Parliament. His brother, Archie Tanner, was the member for Morwell from 1967 to 1970 and, as honorable members know, his son is now the member for Caulfield. I cannot recall a case where any other family has produced three members of the Legislative Assembly during the same decade.

Sir Edgar was knighted by the Queen in 1968 for his services to the community and to amateur sport. From a brief outline of his career it can be seen that it was a most distinguished one. He was a fine spokesman and a wonderful sports organizer in the field of amateur sport. He was a dedicated and conscientious Parliamentarian and a devoted family man. Members of the Liberal Party pay tribute to an esteemed colleague of long standing. We mourn his passing and

extend our deepest sympathy to his widow, Lady Tanner, his daughter and his son, the present honorable member for Caulfield.

Mr WILKES (Leader of the Opposition)—On behalf of members of the Labor Party I join with the Treasurer in expressing our condolences to the family of the late Sir Edgar Tanner. I was first associated with him in 1957 in the Chamber and I found him to be a man of keen wit and humour. He was a fearless character in many ways because, what Edgar Tanner thought, he was prepared to do. He did not make many speeches in this place, and perhaps some honorable members may learn from that that the hallmark of a good politician is not measured by the length or number of speeches that he makes in Parliament. Although Edgar Tanner did not make many speeches he attended most assiduously to his electorate work and indeed to the work that the Government entrusted to him in the Chamber. As referred to by the Treasurer, he was always a member of the Government after winning the seat of Ripponlea from a former member of the Government, Mr Hollway. While he was here, he was friendly with members of all parties. He frequently had morning or afternoon tea with members of the Labor Party or of the National Party. When he was out of the Chamber, he knew no political boundaries.

I found our late colleague refreshing and encouraging. He was always dedicated to the Westminster system of Government, so much so that the Government of the day elected him as Deputy Speaker and Chairman of Committees. Although he enjoyed the privilege of that position, he carried out his duties impartially. His keen wit often came to the fore when he occupied the chair.

I regret his passing. When the news was conveved to me and members of my party that he had passed away so suddenly yesterday morning, we were shocked, because Edgar Tanner always looked sprightly and in the best of health. On behalf of members of the Labor Party, I extend to Lady Tanner, his daughter and his son, the honorable member for Caulfield, our sincere condolences. We trust that they will gain some solace from the respect with which Sir Edgar was held, not only in Parliament, but also throughout the community.

Mr ROSS-EDWARDS (Leader of the National Party)—I join with the Treasurer and the Leader of the Opposition in paying tribute to the services rendered to Victoria and Australia by Sir Edgar Tanner. There were three major parts of his life, the first of which was his service to his King and country in the second world war when he served as a captain in the Australian Imperial Forces. He was captured by the Japanese at Ambon while serving with the Gull Force which resulted in him being a prisoner of war for three and a half years. Naturally, this experience had an immeasurable effect on his outlook for the remainder of his life.

The second major chapter of his life was his service to the Commonwealth and to the Olympic Games organizations when, through this service, he became best known to the people of Australia. From 1946 to 1973—a long period of service—he was the Honorary Secretary and Treasurer of the Australian Olympic Games Federation. From 1973 to 1977 he was the president of that organization. At other times he was Chairman of the Australian Commonwealth Games Association and President of the Victorian Amateur Athletics Association. Only this month he stepped down as President of the Amateur Boxing Union of Australia.

Sir Edgar was a member of the House for a long time—21 years. As has been said by the Treasurer, he won the seat of Ripponlea when he defeated a former Premier of the State in an election, and in more recent times he was the member for Caulfield. He held a variety of committee positions but the major position he held was that of Chairman of Committees from 1970 to 1973. As the Leader of the Opposition said, he was one of those people who mixed with members of all parties and that is one of the characteristics for which honorable members should remember him. It is all too easy for new members of this place to keep to party affiliations and not to cross the party barrier. The longer one is in Parliament, the more one realizes

how necessary it is to mix with members of other parties if one is to make a proper contribution to Victoria. As the Leader of the Opposition said, it was more usual to see Sir Edgar at morning and afternoon tea with members of the National Party and of the Labor Party. His closest friend was Bill Phelan, the former member for Kara Kara.

I agree with the Treasurer that it is an unusual circumstance that three members of the same family should be members of Parliament in such a short time. His brother, Archie Tanner, won the seat of Morwell in 1967. In more recent times, his son became the member for Caulfield. Sir Edgar was honored by the Queen on two occasions, firstly, with a Commander of the British Empire, and secondly, with a knighthood in 1968 for his services to the Olympic and Commonwealth Games organizations. He led a full life. I was not sure of his age when he died; he did not look 75 years of age.

I admired Sir Edgar Tanner because of his many achievements in community affairs when he left this place, although it made little difference to his lifestyle because he was often in this building in recent times. As has been mentioned, he took part in the State Council of the Liberal Party last week-end. That was the nature of the man. He was not going to be idle but was going to have a say in what happened. He was never backward in doing that.

I join the Deputy Premier and the Leader of the Opposition in paying tribute to the work and service of Sir Edgar, and extend my sympathy, and that of my fellow members, to his widow, Lady Tanner, and to his son Ted and daughter Anne.

Mr A. T. EVANS (Ballarat North)—I join with the previous speakers in paying tribute to Sir Edgar Tanner, who was a former Deputy Speaker of this House and Chairman of Committees. He was a strong activist for the preservation of the Parliamentary system which we practise. It was emphasized earlier that he held those principles all of his life, but they were strengthened considerably by what he saw in overseas countries—the suffering of the people who had not had the protection and the privileges which we enjoy in this country. That strengthened his ideals further to maintain the decorum and traditions of this Parliament.

Apart from his Parliamentary efforts, he was ever willing to assist others in his position as leader of many community projects and as a private citizen. One of the matters which has been drawn to my attention, and which illustrates the kindness and graciousness of Sir Edgar, was that on the occasion of the Olympic Games being held in Melbourne in 1956—because of his dogged determination, which was a strong part of his character, he achieved those games for Melbourne—it was difficult to obtain tickets for that colourful and memorable occasion but, typical of the man, he made tickets to attend the games in 1956 available to the staff of Parliament House. That highlights the character of the man.

I join with other honorable members in extending my sympathy to Lady Tanner, to his daughter, and our Parliamentary colleague, Ted Tanner.

Mr DUNSTAN (Dromana)—I add my tribute to that of previous speakers to a very courageous man. I will relate a little known story of Sir Edgar. When he was captured during the war by the Japanese he objected in strong terms to the way his captors were treating his men and using the Australian vernacular he said that if they wanted to beat up his men they should beat him up instead. They did, with a rifle butt. As a result of that action he carried a severe internal injury for the rest of his life.

His biggest disappointment in the long time he spent as a member of Parliament was that of not being elected as Speaker after serving as Chairman of Committees and Deputy Speaker, because he believed in the institution of this place. But that was absolved and the great pride of his Parliamentary life was to see his son elected to Parliament before he died. I add my tribute to Sir Edgar Tanner.

Mr DIXON (Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation)—I wish to say three things: Firstly, Sir Edgar was my colleague in the adjoining electorate for twelve years. In that time, I came to know intimately the way in which he served his constituents. I do not know of any other member of Parliament who could exceed the service Sir Edgar gave to his constituents on what many others may think trivial matters. His door was always open and he tried to help anyone in whatever way he could.

Secondly, without Sir Edgar I probably would not be in this place. He decided that I was a person worthy of being a member of Parliament and did his best in my early political career to assist me. I pay that tribute to him.

Thirdly, he was a very kind man. I well recall that, although we differed on capital punishment, on the morning Ronald Ryan was executed, when I was distraught and distressed and had done what I could to prevent that occurrence, at about 2 a.m. I found myself at Sir Edgar's home seeking some refuge and advice. I will forever remember his kindness.

I join with other honorable members in extending my sincere sympathy to Lady Edna and his family.

Mr TREZISE (Geelong North)—I join with previous speakers in expressing my personal regret at the passing of my political opponent, but close personal friend, Sir Edgar Tanner. As the Leaders of the Opposition and the National Party said, one comes to this place and spends many hours working in this Chamber, but there are leisure times. Some of my most enjoyable leisure times were spent having a cup of tea with Sir Edgar Tanner. Sir Edgar and I had a personal love for one sport —the sport of boxing—and we spent many hours talking about individuals and the sport. Although his record in amateur sport, particularly boxing, is well known and will long be remembered by the people of Victoria and Australia, the controls that were introduced for professional boxing were introduced as a result of the advice and efforts of Sir Edgar.

I record my regret at the passing of my old mate, Sir Edgar. I was proud to know Edgar as a friend.

Mr HANN (Rodney)—I join with other speakers in paying tribute to Sir Edgar Tanner and agree with the comments of the Leaders of the Opposition and National Party and other honorable members that Sir Edgar extended his friendship beyond political allegiances in this House. When I came to this House in 1973 I was a member of the Public Accounts Committee for three years. During that period Sir Edgar extended his friendship, his support and his advice. Members of this House look to Parliamentary colleagues for their views and Sir Edgar was ready and willing to give advice. I certainly shared a number of cups of tea with him in the refreshment rooms during that period. I enjoyed his friendship. I recognize the part he has played, not only in Parliament but outside.

The Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation commented on the service he gave to his electorate. In the discussions we had from time to time, apart from the committee meetings, he mentioned some of the things he was doing for the people in his electorate.

I pay a tribute to Sir Edgar and extend my personal condolences to his widow and family. I am sorry to see his passing.

Mr COLLINS (Noble Park)—I join with my colleagues in paying the respects of my family to Sir Edgar. It is not a known fact that the Tanner family had a big influence on the career of Peter Collins, particularly in 1972 when he invited me to his house to work on the strategy for my Legislative Council campaign. He played a significant role in my lifestyle. Both brothers had a single purpose in life and had distinguished careers. They worked hard for Peter Collins and his family and we will always be grateful.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. S. J. Plowman)—My memories of Edgar Tanner are similar to those of the honorable member for Rodney. I came to know him when I was a new member coming into this place in 1973. I remember him as a senior member who was not only

friendly with all members of the House, regardless of party, but who was always willing to give friendship to the new and junior members and always willing to come forward with advice and assistance on the many problems that a new member of Parliament must face.

Sir Edgar died, it might be said appropriately, on the eve of the anniversary of the 1956 Olympic Games which will probably be the occurrence in his life for which he will be most remembered in time to come. Sir Edgar served this Parliament, this State and this nation as a gentleman in the fullest sense of the word, with dignity and distinction. I add my condolences to those of other honorable members of this place to his family at his sad passing.

The motion was agreed to in silence, honorable members signifying their unanimous agreement by standing in their places.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr THOMPSON (Treasurer)—I move:

That, as a further mark of respect to the memory of the late Sir Edgar Stephen Tanner, C.B.E., E.D., the House do now adjourn until half-past 12 o'clock this day.

The motion was agreed to.

The House adjourned at 11.32 *a.m.*

The SPEAKER (the Hon. S. J. Plowman) took the chair at 12.33 p.m.

ABSENCE OF PREMIER

The SPEAKER (the Hon. S. J. Plowman)—I have to announce that the Premier will be absent at question time.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

THIRD-PARTY INSURANCE PREMIUMS

Mr WILKES (Leader of the Opposition)—In view of the answer given by the Treasurer yesterday regarding third-party insurance premiums, can the Treasurer inform the House when the results of the present review of third-party premiums will be announced, and can he give an undertaking that the present rate of third-party insurance in respect of private motorists will not be increased in the near future?

Mr THOMPSON (Treasurer)—In view of the fact there has been no adjustment since 1976, I could not give that assurance. With regard to the completion of the review, I anticipate that it will be completed before the end of the year. The question that will require some depth of investigation is the size of profits that may be made on other activities, such as comprehensive insurance and workers compensation, which is also a responsibility or activity of the State Insurance Office, as well as third-party insurance.

LIQUEFIED PETROLEUM GAS

Mr ROSS-EDWARDS (Leader of the National Party)—Can the Minister for Minerals and Energy inform the House what progress has been made, if any, as a result of discussions between the Premier and/or himself and the Federal Government concerning the price of liquefied petroleum gas and whether any progress has been made in persuading our Federal colleagues to reduce the cost?

Mr BALFOUR (Minister for Minerals and Energy)—I believe a deal of progress has been made. I had hoped to have an answer by now. Unfortunately the Prime Minister has been ill and I believe he has some involvement in the final answer. The Premier may be talking with Mr Newman in Wodonga today and may have some further news after the meeting.

KEYSBOROUGH TROTTING COMPLEX

Mr COLLINS (Noble Park)—As the Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation has been advised by the Trotting Control Board that it has received a valuation as at 21 October regarding the property at Keysborough, can the Minister inform the House whether he has received details of the valuation and will he table the valuation for the benefit of all honorable members? Finally, if the Minister has not had an opportunity

of seeing the details of the valuation, can he advise the House of the contents of it?

Mr DIXON (Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation)—I have received a copy of the valuation, and will table it for the benefit of honorable members. According to Bissett Johnson Associates, F.I.A.V., listed Valuer No. 1010, the valuation is $1·55 million. The principal basis for the valuation is the purchase price, which was $1 403 500, on the ground that the proposed and probable use of the site is that of a trotting track. This valuation was requested by the——

The SPEAKER (the Hon. S. J. Plowman)—Order! I have appealed to honorable members not to waste time during question time by a barrage of interjections. If they continue to interrupt proceedings, I will simply have to take action against individual members, although I am loath to suggest that.

Mr DIXON—This valuation was requested by the Trotting Control Board on 21 October this year, and was received by the board yesterday. I received my copy today. I am informing honorable members of the contents of that valuation. One sentence in the valuation should be read. It is:

> The value to the owner must therefore be in excess of that to many other users.

As I said yesterday, it is important that the Trotting Control Board is aware of a valuation which I shall obtain from the Valuer-General. I have asked the Valuer-General to give me a present-day valuation of the property and also an estimate of what the value would have been on 24 May 1974 when the contract was signed.

CHARITABLE TRUSTS

Mr SIMPSON (Niddrie)—In view of the widespread discussion implicating the Smorgon group of companies, including a report in a weekly newspaper, in the avoidance of pay-roll tax by using a charitable trust, will the Minister, in fairness to the charitable trust of that group of companies, and other charitable trusts operating in Victoria, advise the House whether the Smorgons company is in any way implicated, and if so, whether any other charitable trust was also implicated?

Mr THOMPSON (Treasurer)—I have nothing to add to the answer given by the Premier the other day; that it would be inappropriate to give details of the names of companies involved in this area.

COUNTRY BAKERIES

Mr McGRATH (Lowan)—Is the Minister of Labour and Industry aware of the continuing problems confronting small country bakeries? Is the Minister further aware that the flour mill at St. Arnaud will close on Friday, leaving only three flour mills operating in country Victoria? Will the honorable gentleman order an investigation and ensure that sufficient officers of the Department of Labour and Industry are available to control the 30-mile protective radius which would help small country bakeries to remain a viable proposition?

Mr RAMSAY (Minister of Labour and Industry)—I am aware of the problems of country bakeries and the difficulties with the existing 30-mile limit on the carting of bread to country centres. The officers of my department are doing their very best to police the limit. If the honorable member has any details of breaches of the law in relation to the carting of bread, I shall be pleased if he will make them available to me.

STAMP DUTY

Mr COLEMAN (Syndal)—Can the Treasurer advise the House whether he is considering a reduction of stamp duty on transfers of short-term company debentures and unsecured notes to encourage the market on those notes and debentures? If the honorable gentleman is giving consideration to such a reduction, can he indicate the amount and timing of that reduction?

Mr THOMPSON (Treasurer)—Yes, discussions have been taking place between the New South Wales Treasury and the Victorian Treasury on this subject. It has been the practice for stamp duty on debentures and unsecured notes

to remain constant in both Victoria and New South Wales. This is desirable in the interests of the efficient working of the stock exchanges of both States. It has been felt as a result of the discussions that not only would it stimulate and develop business on the stock exchanges, but also it would possibly add to the revenue of both Victoria and New South Wales if an incentive was given on the transfer of stock in the two years prior to maturity.

At present there is a standard rate of stamp duty and this does not encourage the transfer of debentures, listed or unlisted, in the period prior to maturity, particularly during the two years prior to maturity.

As a result of these discussions, action is proposed to be taken. At the moment a charge on both buyer and seller of 30 cents per $100 is levied for unsecured stock and unlisted company debentures in listed companies and a charge of 60 cents per $100 is levied on the buyer only for debentures and unsecured deposit stock in unlisted companies.

The proposal is that instead of having a flat rate, a sliding scale should be introduced to cover the two years prior to maturity. It is believed this would stimulate business on the stock exchanges and also add to the revenues of the Treasury, both in Victoria and in New South Wales. An announcement will be made—I hope later today—that will clarify the position in greater detail, but the proposal seems to be in the mutual interests of both Victoria and New South Wales and of the respective stock exchanges.

MUNICIPAL ELECTRICAL UNDERTAKINGS

Mr AMOS (Morwell)—Will the Minister for Minerals and Energy inform the House what progress is being made by the State Electricity Commission of Victoria and the Association of Municipal Electrical Undertakings in implementing the Government's direction that outstanding matters in the proposed agreement between the State Electricity Commission of Victoria and the Association of Municipal Electrical Undertakings be finalized? Can he give an assurance that there will be no reversal of the Premier's earlier decisions regarding this agreement? Can the Minister also assure the House that the State Electricity Commission of Victoria will be able to pass on the interest accruing on Association of Municipal Electrical Undertakings council money now being held by the State Electricity Commission of Victoria?

Mr BALFOUR (Minister for Minerals and Energy)—Progress is being made. One meeting has been held and I understand the next meeting is scheduled for next Monday.

Mr Amos—What about the interest payments?

Mr BALFOUR—They would apply to what has happened over the period. With all due regard, they are still receiving the moneys they are entitled to. They are not standing out.

DONCASTER COMMUNITY CARE AND COUNSELLING CENTRE

Mr SKEGGS (Ivanhoe)—Has the Minister for Community Welfare Services received a submission from the Doncaster Community Care and Counselling Centre—Doncare—stating that it faces a deficit of $21 000 in maintaining its services in 1980, with a resulting cutback in services unless a recommendation for programmatic funding is adopted? Will the Minister give consideration to examining ways and means of assisting the Doncare centre to maintain its services?

Mr JONA (Minister for Community Welfare Services)—I am aware of the submission which has been made by the Doncaster Community Care and Counselling Centre, commonly known as Doncare, which provides excellent counselling and citizen advisory bureau service in the Doncaster region. I am also aware of the representations that have been made to the honorable members for Ivanhoe, Mitcham and Doncaster, the Minister of the Arts and other local members in that area.

The service rendered by the centre in the area of counselling and advice has been outstanding over the past ten years. The centre has received funding under the FACS programme because it was

ideally suited to the regional basis for which that programme was designed. I recognize the financial problems that this and, indeed, a large number of other organizations are confronted with in the absence of programmatic funding; but it is not easy for a department which relies on annual receipts of funds from the Treasury to engage in large-scale programmatic funding, although this can be done on a limited basis.

I am prepared to examine closely the application of Doncare to determine whether there are ways and means by which the funding difficulties to which the honorable member for Ivanhoe referred can be overcome.

PRE-SCHOOL DENTAL CLINIC

Mr GAVIN (Coburg)—Can the Assistant Minister of Health inform the House why the Government has decided to abandon dental clinics for pre-schools? Last year these clinics serviced possibly 30 000 Victorian pre-school children. In view of the disastrous effect that this decision will have on the dental health of Victorian children, will the Government reconsider the decision and ensure that grants are continued after 31 December?

Mr LIEBERMAN (Assistant Minister of Health)—The programme to which the honorable member for Coburg referred is in fact only a small part of the total programme for providing dental services for Victorian children. The programme, contributed to by about fifteen municipalities in metropolitan Melbourne, is one whereby services were provided to pre-school children only. I believe the cost of the service which had its inception in about 1973 has been estimated to be in the vicinity of $150 000 for next year.

The programme has been the subject of review and, because of the shortage of funds for all health service demands in the State, regrettably it has been decided that this programme should terminate. On my understanding, funds for the programme will continue until the end of this year. During this period a review will take place concerning the ways in which, firstly, the facilities that have been provided can be utilized and, secondly, a review of school dental services can be undertaken.

It is the Government's hope and wish that eventually Victoria will be provided with a school dental service for all pre-school and primary school children and, eventually, for secondary school children. This is obviously an ambitious programme, and I make no apologies for the fact that it has not yet been completely achieved, but I understand the Government has so far achieved a coverage of approximately 28 per cent of primary school children in Victoria.

The Government hopes gradually to develop and expand this programme and to achieve its objective; but it would be wrong and irresponsible to suggest that this can be done overnight. In the context of the question asked by the honorable member for Coburg, the decision was regretted. Nevertheless, the total policy of the Government is to provide dental care for as many children as possible.

The areas concerned will be reviewed by me to ascertain what alternative means of dental treatment can be provided for children in need. I point out, of course, that parents are primarily responsible for the care of their children. Facilities are available to parents who are concerned about their children's dental health and treatment can readily be obtained from both the private sector and, of course, the public sector. The Health Commission, and I as Minister, would like to hear of any parent who is having problems in finding facilities for the care of their children in this area.

DAVIES REPORT

Mr JASPER (Murray Valley)—I direct a question to the Minister of Labour and Industry. I refer to the apparent procrastination of the Government in implementing the recommendations of the board of inquiry into the liquor industry conducted by Mr Davies. I also refer to the fact that the report of the board of inquiry was presented and tabled in Parliament some eighteen months ago. Will the Minister clearly

indicate to the House whether a Bill to implement some of the recommendations of the report is to be introduced in this sessional period of Parliament—which will possibly last only another three weeks? If no Bill is to be introduced in this sessional period, will the Minister guarantee that recommendations from the report will be implemented by the Government and that the report will not be shelved as has been the fate of many other reports presented to Parliament?

Mr RAMSAY (Minister of Labour and Industry)—Amendments to the Liquor Control Act are in the course of preparation as a result of the Davies inquiry. I should think the honorable member would be the first to agree that Parliament should not attempt to deal with such significant legislation in the course of three weeks of any session. I can guarantee that recommendations of Mr Davies will not be shelved and that they will be the material for amendments to the Liquor Control Act in the very near future.

LOCUST PLAGUE

Mr BURGIN (Polwarth)—Is the Minister of Agriculture, through the Department of Agriculture, taking steps to inform Victorian farmers of the need and the control necessary to overcome the present plague of locusts that is threatening Victoria?

Mr I. W. SMITH (Minister of Agriculture)—With our current *Agnotes* information series we have compiled a free mini kit dealing with the problem of locusts and, in particular, explaining to people how to identify locusts from two of their like biological species, the wingless grasshopper and perhaps crickets. Also, as a matter of safety, the mini kit contains information on how to use the chemicals and, where necessary, to dispose of any surplus chemicals. The information sheet and the *Agnotes* mini kit are available through all regional offices of the Department of Agriculture. I urge farmers who are concerned about the impending plague of locusts to acquire this kit and familiarize themselves with the advantages of the information contained in the *Agnotes* mini kit. The reason for making the kit free is the seriousness of the potential outbreak.

WALHALLA

Mr CRABB (Knox)—I address my question to the Minister representing the Minister of Tourism. I draw the attention of the Minister to the historic steam train trip to Walhalla on Sunday and ask him what steps the Government has taken to promote this initiative and what steps it intends to take between now and Sunday to ensure it is the success it is meant to be.

Mr THOMPSON (Treasurer)—I have not personally heard of this promotion. It sounds like one that is well worth backing and at least deserves some publicity. In the time available to me, I will raise the matter with officers of the department and local members to see what can be done to stimulate interest in this type of promotion which is becoming more and more popular to Victorians who value their heritage.

MELBOURNE AND METROPOLITAN BOARD OF WORKS RATES

Mr COX (Mitcham)—I address my question to the Minister representing the Minister of Water Supply. No doubt the Minister is aware of the increase in Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works rates and the fact that these rates can be paid in two instalments. Will the Minister consider adopting a similar procedure to that which operates in local government where rates can be paid in four quarterly instalments?

Mr I. W. SMITH (Minister of Agriculture)—I thank the honorable member for Mitcham for his concern for ratepayers. I will raise the good suggestion with my colleague the Minister of Water Supply, who is in another place, to see if it can be implemented.

HIGHETT STREET PRIMARY SCHOOL

Mr SIDIROPOULOS (Richmond)—I ask the Assistant Minister of Education what consultation took place with the parents and school council in arriving at the decision to close the Highett

Street Primary School, Richmond, and in view of the protest by parents, will the Minister reverse his decision?

Mr LACY (Assistant Minister of Education)—A meeting was held yesterday between the regional office of the central region and the parents and school council of Highett Street, Primary School, Richmond, to discuss the issue raised by the honorable member, namely, the decision to begin a programme of rationalization of buildings in the area. With rapidly declining enrolments in schools, it has been necessary for me to embark on a programme of building resources management to ensure that the existing resources of our schools are better used in the interests of the children attending those schools.

A fortnight ago I visited the Highett Street Primary Schol and discussed that visit with the honorable member for Richmond. I informed him that as a result of that visit I was concerned that there was an increasing demand for pupil places at Richmond Girls High School and a declining demand for places at Highett Street Primary School, which share the same site. It is a very small site which is inadequate for the students of the girls high school and the students at the Highett Street Primary School.

As well as the other factors involved in the rationalization, during my predecessor's time the department has been engaged in rebuilding programmes at North Richmond Primary School and Brighton Street Primary School, which make those schools, schools also with declining enrolments, very much better for educational resources than the Highett Street Primary School. It seemed an appropriate step to take and I have approved, in principle, a plan that ensures that the Highett Street Primary School will be phased out over a period of time.

The first step is my agreement, and the endorsement by the Minister of Education, who is in another place, that no enrolments be accepted at the Highett Street Primary School for next year or for the future. Students seeking enrolment will be diverted to the North Richmond Primary School and the Brighton Street Primary School to allow the Richmond Girls High School to progressively take over and use the primary school buildings and grounds.

I inform the honorable member that the maintenance programme at the Highett State Primary School has been advanced by two quarters and will be early next year. It is envisaged that as a result of this the use of the resources in the Richmond area will be better applied and the interests of the children at Highett Street Primary School will be better served by having better buildings and the availability of specialist staff by being located at the schools with much higher enrolments. The stage was rapidly approaching when Highett Street Primary School would no longer be a viable primary school in view of its rapidly declining enrolment.

"AGNOTES"

Mr McINNES (Gippsland South)—Can the Minister of Agriculture advise the House of the approximate number of purchases by farmers to date of *Agnotes* in comparison with the circulation of the earlier farming digests? Can the honorable gentleman state whether the costs of promotion of *Agnotes* will be recouped from sales?

Mr I. W. SMITH (Minister of Agriculture)—I would prefer to answer this question in detail and I ask the honorable member to put it on notice. The sale of *Agnotes* has exceeded budget estimates and has certainly in my view justified the expenditure on publicity; that has far and away been covered by the sales. A comparison between digests, journals and *Agnotes* is rather difficult because many of the digests were issued free to lists compiled and not necessarily on request. That cannot be compared with *Agnotes*, most of which are for sale. If the honorable member will detail his question, I shall provide him with all the answers.

TRAFFIC ROUNDABOUTS

Mr BROWN (Westernport)—I address a question to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services. It relates to the installation of traffic

roundabouts in the metropolitan area. As the honorable gentleman is aware, these roundabouts are being installed for safety purposes at dangerous intersections and to divert large articulated vehicles from the areas. However, in times of emergency, in some areas fire service vehicles are unable to get through the roundabouts. Will the honorable gentleman investigate the situation to ascertain whether it can be rectified?

Mr THOMPSON (Minister for Police and Emergency Services)—I have noticed that a number of roundabouts which are being installed by municipal councils in certain areas leave very little space for vehicles. It is obvious that they are designed to prevent the larger trucks from using those roads. That may or may not be desirable, given the merits of the case, but it can have the effect, as the honorable member for Westernport has mentioned, of making it difficult for emergency vehicles, such as fire carts, to use those roads in an emergency. I will ask the Road Safety and Traffic Authority to examine these roundabouts to ensure that the movement of emergency vehicles such as fire vehicles is in no way impeded.

The sitting was suspended at 1.4 *p.m. until* 2.3 *p.m.*

PAPERS

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

Consumer Affairs Council—Report for the year 1978–79—Ordered to be printed.

Town and Country Planning Act 1961—

Cranbourne—Shire of Cranbourne (Western Port) Planning Scheme, Amendment No 8.

Latrobe Valley Sub-Regional Planning Scheme 1949, Amendment No. 40.

Sherbrooke—Shire of Sherbrooke Planning Scheme 1965, Amendment No. 120 (1978).

APPROPRIATION MESSAGE

The SPEAKER (the Hon. S. J. Plowman) announced the presentation of a message from His Excellency the Governor recommending that an appropriation be made from the Consolidated Fund for the purpose of the Victorian Arts Centre Bill.

PETITIONS

Abortion

Mr CRELLIN (Sandringham) presented a petition from certain citizens of Victoria praying that action be taken to protect unborn children by prohibiting abortion in Victoria. He stated that the petition was respectfully worded, in order, and bore 922 signatures.

It was ordered that the petition be laid on the table.

Mr McCLURE (Bendigo) presented a petiton from certain citizens of Victoria praying that action be taken to protect unborn children by prohibiting abortion in Victoria. He stated that the petition was respectfully worded, in order, and bore 1547 signatures.

It was ordered that the petition be laid on the table.

STATE FORESTS WORKS AND SERVICES BILL

The debate (adjourned from October 17) on the motion of Mr I. W. Smith (Minister of Agriculture) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

Mr WILTON (Broadmeadows)—The purpose of the measure is to obtain Parliamentary approval for the expenditure of $15·95 million on works and services by the Forests Commission of Victoria. It is regrettable that the latest annual report of the commission available to honorable members is for the year 1977–78. Section 35 of the Forests Act places a requirement on the Minister of Forests to ensure that the annual report of the Forests Commission is presented to the House in the month of October each year. The failure of the Minister to present the latest report indicates that he is lacking in his Ministerial responsibilities by not ensuring that a provision of the Act is complied with. It also means that the Minister is in contempt of the Parliament inasmuch as the Minister has not given the necessary instructions to the Forests Commission to ensure that it, as a responsible statutory authority, complies with the requirements of the Act.

A perusal of the explanatory memorandum accompanying the Bill reveals that substantial reductions have been made in some of the allocations as compared with these for last year. For instance, although fire protection is of the utmost importance because it is necessary to provide protection for our State forests, there has been a considerable reduction in the Budget allocation. We must take into account the importance of our forests to industry and this places a heavy reliance on the protection of State forests which produce various types of wood products used by decentralized industries, including sawmills, pulp mills and the chipwood industry.

I wonder whether the Government is engaging in a dangerous gamble? For instance, as shown under the heading of "Fire Protection", for the financial year 1978–79 an amount of $2 343 109 was expended, but for this financial year it is expected the expenditure will be $1·637 million, a reduction of $706 109. In order to obtain a more accurate figure and a better appreciation of the reduction in real money terms, we must add an inflation factor of 10 per cent, which is $234 310. In effect, the loss in real money terms for the current financial year is $940 419 or almost $1 million, which is a significant downturn.

In 1978–79, the total expenditure on the operations of the Forests Commission was $12 319 226 but for this financial year it is estimated that the expenditure will be $10·869 million, a reduction of almost $1·5 million. Again taking into consideration an inflation factor of 10 per cent, which is $1 231 922, the loss in real money terms for the current financial year is $2 682 148, which is a large sum of money.

I mentioned before the importance of forest operations to the State and particularly to those decentralized industries which rely heavily on forest products. It is obvious that the Forests Commission will be hard pressed to discharge its responsibility to the State of Victoria because of the shortfall in real money terms which confronts it.

In the latest annual report available to honorable members, in dealing with economics and marketing relating to the timber industry, on page 26 the Forests Commission made this comment:

> Victorian sawmillers continue to be affected by the worsening situation in the housing industry which is the major market for sawn timber. Housing activity was adversely affected by high interest rates and costly land and declined markedly from the already depressed levels of the previous year. In the 9 months ending 30 March, 1978, 19 933 houses were completed, 8 per cent less than in the equivalent period of the previous year. Immediate prospects for the industry, as indicated by statistics of house building approvals, show little improvement.

Another point made in the document is:

> The interaction of depressed markets and intense competition has caused difficulties for many sawmillers. Several mills closed for extended periods rather than continue trading at a loss; others have closed temporarily, sending staff on annual leave in advance of entitlement; some have worked short time to minimize the short term effects of reduced business activity.

Those comments are interesting if one recalls the remarks made in this House recently during a debate concerning the possibility of establishing an alpine national park. Some honorable members took the view that the establishment of such a national park would be a disastrous step for the sawmilling industry. In fact, a reading of the annual report of the Forests Commission makes it obvious that the real cause for concern is the downturn in the housing industry.

If the examination is extended to the current Government financial provisions made for the housing industry, one finds a massive withdrawal of funds at both Federal and State level. This is the real cause of the problem confronting the building industry.

The report deals with the fire problems the commission was confronted with in the year under review, and that is something which the commission has had to learn to live with. The point is made that between 15 January and 17 January, the fires became so serious and so widespread that it was necessary to call on assistance from the Army and the Air Force.

On previous occasions I have referred to the fact that the RAAF has helicopters, which are highly sophisticated

pieces of equipment, and the Army has similar equipment. It has always been a matter of concern to me that there is not closer liaison between State and Federal authorities, particularly branches of the armed services, so that the nation can, by way of a continuing programme where specialized arms of the defence forces and statutory authorities such as the Forests Commission work together at specific times of the year to map out programmes, obtain a better return for capital investment.

The commission obviously was able to obtain the assistance it needed from the defence forces on that occasion and I should like to see this liaison placed on a more permanent basis rather than waiting for the event to occur before other authorities are called on for assistance. There is much work that could be done, for instance, by some of these people who have specialized knowledge in the way of control and fire spotting and so on.

Under the heading "Biological Protection", the report makes reference to die-back which is a considerable problem. On page 35 of the report it is stated:

> Die-back caused by *Armillaria* is noticeable on good sites in the Trentham forest district. The spread of this pathogen is of major concern and a research project to find a method of control was established in the Mt. Cole Block, Beaufort forest district.

I wonder what the effects will be on such programmes of the funding cutbacks under this legislation. In view of the widespread effect of this die-back disease on Australia's forests, there must be concern within the commission.

At page 36 of the annual report, under the heading "Education and Research" it is stated:

> Regeneration studies on sites infected with the cinnamon fungus, *Phytophthora cinnamomi*, have been monitored in detail. Initial establishment of the endemic species of eucalypts being tested was slow due to severe drought during the latter half of 1977. Establishment progressed to a generally satisfactory level during the autumn of 1978 and direct effects of the fungus and other environmental factors on tree survival are now being studied in detail.

Here again I pose the question of what effect the funding cutbacks contained in the legislation will have on these programmes.

When one researches this matter, it is obvious that concern over the problem confronting Victoria is widespread. In the *Age* of 24 February 1978, an article written by Jennifer Byrne, an environmental reporter, headed "Fungus on March of Death" makes the point:

> According to the CSIRO, dieback has since ravaged about 10 per cent of the 1·8 million hectares of forest in the south-west of the State "and shows no sign of abating".

That article refers to the problem in Western Australia. The article continues:

> "A greater worry now is the possibility that dieback may spread widely in Perth's water supply catchments and cause unacceptable increases in the water's salt content," Ecos says.

That prompts the question: Is Victoria facing the same problem?

Again in the Melbourne *Age* of 13 March 1979, I read comments such as that by Mr Peter Roberts, under the heading "Threat to eucalypts". The article stated:

> Much of Australia's pastoral country could become a gum tree graveyard, according to a CSIRO entomologist.
>
> Insects that once lived in harmony with eucalypts in their natural state are now killing them.
>
> Dr Phil Carne said that there had been reports of trees in cleared farmland in New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland and South Australia suffering from dieback.
>
> "In the extreme case in the New England tablelands many of the trees are already dead. Those that aren't dead are very weak," Dr Carne said.
>
> "It must be very depressing for people to be living in this sort of environment to have a graveyard of trees surrounding them.

I recall that in 1977 the honorable member for Carrum drew the attention of the House to this matter during a debate dealing with the lack of appreciation of this problem by the then Minister of Forests. At that time, the honorable member quoted extensively from correspondence he had received from various eminent scientists working in this field with some of the universities. A reading of that debate indicates that the Government wanted to push this matter under the carpet or

ignore it in the hope that it would go away, or it just was not prepared to take note of the comments of eminent scientists doing field work on the problem, scientists who were able to speak with authority. The article in the *Age* of 24 February 1978 continues:

> The creeping progress through Victoria's forests of the mysterious cinnamon fungus has quickened to a deadly march.
>
> The imported root rotting fungus has attacked thousands of hectares in East Gippsland, the Brisbane Ranges, the Grampians and Wilson's Promontory.

As I have stated, the concern in Western Australia now is that this disease may attack forests in the water catchment areas and that it could adversely affect the quality of Perth's water supply. One asks whether Victoria will be confronted with a similar problem. I would be interested to know whether the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works has had any work done in conjunction with the Forests Commission to determine whether there is infestation within the board's catchment areas and, if there is, to what extent the infestation is present and what action is being taken.

The financial allocations made in the current Bill lead me to repeat that the Forests Commission will be hard pressed to maintain the programmes which its 1977–78 report indicates have already been established.

There are many decentralized industries in Victoria which rely entirely on forest products—not only the sawmilling industry, but the chipboard industry, the pulp and paper industry and so on —and announcements have been made of industries preparing to establish even larger works. I understand that one such project is being planned for the Wodonga area.

Quite apart from the employment opportunities provided by those industries, capital investment in decentralized industries is substantial, and the Government does have a responsibility to ensure that fire protection programmes, disease prevention programmes and research programmes are maintained at the maximum level so that continual production of the resources upon which these industries rely so heavily can be maintained.

I have already referred to the amount spent on fire protection during the year ended 30 June 1979 and the amount proposed to be spent in the year ending 30 June 1980. It is $1·637 million. However, the amount to be issued and applied under the works and services Bill is $3·75 million, an extraordinarily large amount of money to be approved when it is intended to spend only $1·637 million. I appreciate that works and services Bills always allocate a greater sum than will actually be spent and that this is necessary because of the period taken to secure Parliamentary approval for each annual piece of legislation.

Does the Government anticipate that, from 30 June 1980 until the passing of the works and services Bill at about this time next year, there will be a substantial increase in expenditure? Why is the House being asked to approve an allocation of $3·75 million if it is intended to spend less than half of that amount by 30 June 1980? The Minister may wish to comment on that.

The allocation for forest officers' quarters, workshops and other buildings to 30 June 1980 is $339 000 and the expenditure during the year ended 30 June 1979 was $841 006. However, Parliament is being asked to approve an allocation of $1·15 million, which seems to be a large allocation when compared with the amount proposed to be spent. There is a substantial reduction in the amount proposed to be spent in the current financial year compared with the amount spent last year. Obviously, there will have to be a curtailment of many of the building programmes already prepared by the commission because it will receive less than half of last year's expenditure during the present financial year.

The total proposed expenditure for the commission during the financial year 1979–80 is $10·869 million, yet the House is being asked to approve of an allocation of almost $16 million. The question that I pose is: Will there

be a sudden upsurge in the commission's expenditure between 30 June 1980 and the passage of the State Forests Works and Services Bill covering the financial year 1980–81? The Government may have in mind a long-term programme that it believes it will not be able to implement until after 30 June 1980. I hope the Minister is prepared to explain why Parliament is being asked to approve an allocation of almost $16 million when the proposed expenditure is only $10·869 million.

The Opposition does not oppose the measure because it knows that it is necessary that the Bill be passed so that funds can be provided to the commission, but it criticizes strongly the reduction of more than $2·5 million in the allocation to the Forests Commission.

Bodies such as the Forests Commission have the added ability, because of the nature of their operations, to provide employment for a large number of day labourers. Much of the commission's work involving day labour takes place in country areas. The Bill would have given the Government the opportunity of providing jobs for rural workers in the areas where there are large hardwood and softwood plantations, but the Government has not taken that opportunity. The road maintenance works carried out by the commission could have been substantially enlarged, as could its fire-protection work, planting and thinning operations and various other operations, if the Government had provided the funding to allow the commission to employ additional labour. The Government deserves criticism for that.

Another important matter is the disease of eucalyptus die-back. The timber industry and the commission are well aware of the problem and its seriousness. It is widespread and continuing and the fight against it is not being won. An article that appeared in the *Age* on 24 February 1978 stated:

> The creeping progress through Victoria's forests of the mysterious cinnamon fungus has quickened to a deadly march.

It continued:

> The imported root rotting fungus has attacked thousands of hectares in East Gippsland, the Brisbane Ranges the Grampians and Wilson's Promontory.

Not only the forests are now in danger, but the fungus is attacking other plants. The article continued:

> Eucalyptus, particularly those in the stringybark, ash and peppermint group, are most vulnerable to the fungus.
>
> But it will attack heathlands, tree plantations, orchards and gardens, killing both native and introduced species such as rhododendron, camellia and azalea.

It is obvious that this must be a worry to the commercial nursery industry. Unless the disease can be brought under control Victoria will lose large areas of forests suitable for wood production and the commercial nursery industry and the orchardists will be confronted with a serious problem. These groups of people will have to give serious consideration to making representations to the Government to ensure that research programmes are not restricted, retarded or reduced but rather are increased so that an answer to the problem can be found. If that is not done, the disease will affect not only the areas I have mentioned but also private gardens.

Even if those approaches to the Government are made, they will probably bring forth only the usual result. The Government will appoint a committee to examine the problem and will tell everyone that it intends to do something about the problem. That will not be good enough. Whatever has to be done should be done now. I can see no prospect of an increased programme being implemented in view of the reduced allocations proposed by the Bill.

Mr B. J. EVANS (Gippsland East)—I am disappointed in the speech made by the honorable member for Broadmeadows. All honorable members are aware of his capacity to enter into debate with vigour, or even with venom when it suits him. I should have thought the Bill would have stirred his ire. Despite that, he has treated the measure in lacklustre fashion. It seemed as though he made a routine speech because someone had to make a speech on behalf of the Opposition.

The Bill is disgraceful. It is the best evidence with which the House has ever been presented of the Government's neglect of the interests of rural people and country areas.

If I had been able, under the Standing Orders, to convert the motion now before the Chair into a motion of want of confidence in the Minister of Forests, I would have done so. The Minister has failed in his duty to ensure that the Forests Commission will be able to carry out its functions under the Act. What the honorable member for Broadmeadows described as "substantial reductions" I would describe as "vicious cutbacks". As I cannot convert the motion in that fashion, I move:

That all the words after "That" be omitted with the view of inserting in place thereof the words "the Bill be withdrawn so as to permit the Minister to reconsider the obviously inadequate allocation of funds therein and to have the Bill redrafted to provide sufficient funds for forests works and services".

Mr WHITING (Mildura)—I second the amendment.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Edmunds)—Order! Honorable members speaking from now on will be speaking on both the Bill and the amendment.

Mr B. J. EVANS (Gippsland East)—As I have said, I would have preferred to be able to move a motion of want of confidence in the Minister of Forests. Not being able to do so, I am conscious of the difficulties I face. Reflecting on all the honorable members of this and another place, I daresay no honorable member would be more kindly regarded than the Minister of Forests. He is an extremely nice man. He would not offend anybody. Everybody regards him as friendly and easygoing. He is held in high esteem wherever he goes throughout the community. The best way in which I can describe him is as an "Uncle Tom". Everyone knows the connotations of that expression—it means a kindly, friendly man who is selling out the interests of the people he is allegedly trying to represent.

How can any Government justify the vicious cutbacks made by the Bill? The Minister of Forests could not have put up any fight in the Cabinet room to maintain the level of expenditure of the Forests Commission. His colleagues in the Ministry who represent country areas must have done nothing to support him or to encourage him to have sufficient backbone to stand up for the commission and obtain its just requirements so that it can carry out its functions.

I may be a little sensitive to the situation, particularly in relation to the cutback of 30 per cent in the funds being made available for fire protection, because I live in an area where fire is a major hazard. It is widely expected that this will be a bad year for fires in Gippsland. Contrary to the conditions being experienced in other parts of the State, East Gippsland is going through a dry period. It also appears that the coming summer will be a period of low humidity. There has already been a great deal of wind. Those two factors, low humidity and wind, constitute serious fire hazards. Fire control, particularly in the eastern portion of the State, will be a serious problem confronting the Forests Commission in the next few months.

Last night the House was considering the Budget Bill, in which certain allocations were made for the Forests Commission. The figures in that Bill show a slight increase in the amount of funds going to the commission, but those funds will cover administration costs. The loan funds are used for capital works and to provide employment. These are the funds with which roads are graded, with which fire protection is carried out, and this is where the cutback is taking place. I find it hard to understand why the Opposition did not take up this matter because it is not the administrators, not the people walking around the office carrying files under their arms, or the cleaners, who will be thrown out of work, but the fellows working in the forests. It is the workers who will suffer because of this cutback in funds. I should have thought that the Opposition would have taken this matter up with vigour.

The Opposition also completely ignored the impact from the over-all funding of the Forests Commission.

Over many years it has been traditional for the Forests Commission to expend funds on different kinds of relief work. Between 1974 and 1979 the Forests Commission expended $8 658 295 through its appropriations or through the Works and Services Account. Over that time the Victorian Flood Relief Account 1974 spent $652 000, the Regional Employment Development Scheme $2 875 631, the Commonwealth Employment Service (1975) Trust Account $1·5 million, the Victorian Natural Disasters Relief Account $2 282 375, the Dairy Farmers Employment Scheme, $259 930, the Special Youth Employment Training Programme $673 121 and the Rural Employment Scheme $415 238, making a total of $8 658 295.

I emphasize that this money was spent on the grounds of the forests, not in offices, not in carrying out investigations or in making reports. There is no prospect of that kind of money being made available to the Forests Commission in 1979–80, and I ask honorable members to consider the effect that will have on the work of the Forests Commission.

The honorable member for Broadmeadows spoke of the problems of *cinnamomi* fungus. He seemed to think that was the major problem confronting the Forests Commission. I do not believe the problem of *cinnamomi* fungus can be under-rated, but to read reports of scientists who are concerned with problems of that kind is to fall into a trap. Scientists are rightly concerned if one tree dies from *cinnamomi* fungus, but a bushfire out of control can do more damage within a few hours than *cinnamomi* fungus has done in the past 100 years. This problem must be put into perspective. White ants can do more harm than *cinnamomi* fungus, and a number of other diseases do far more damage to trees and timber. I am not saying that investigations should not be carried out into the disease, but foresters should carry out these investigations. The field work and study will, of necessity, have to be deferred for fire protection work. The foresters will have to man the fire protection towers because of lack of funds to carry out that work.

These aspects must be taken into account. There is no way in which this House can legitimately support this Bill in its current form unless honorable members accept the argument I have put forward in recent weeks, that it is the intention of the Government to denigrate the Forests Commission and to deprive it of funds so that it will be unable to carry out its functions properly. It will then be able to say that the Forests Commission is not managing the mountain areas properly and will have to hand over this management to the National Parks Service. It is significant that although the Forests Commission funds have been cut back drastically, the funds allocated to the National Parks Service have been increased.

One comes across strange arguments on the management of forest areas. One is whether the Forests Commission is capable of carrying out the management, particularly of our alpine area, or whether it should be handed over to the National Parks Service. There sems to be a strange notion abroad that the National Parks Service has a greater capacity and more expertise to manage the alpine areas. However, the majority of the officers of the National Parks Service are from the Forests Commission. They have exactly the same know-how, the same training, and have been to the same schools. Therefore, how can it be argued that the National Parks Service has any different or more specialized knowledge on how to manage the alpine areas?

I believe the Minister of Forests has failed in his duty to drive home that point in the Cabinet room. He has failed to demonstrate to Cabinet the importance of the alpine area for hardwood production, particularly its importance in the production of seasoned quality hardwood, from which 85 per cent of the State's current production comes. The Minister has failed to drive home to Cabinet that the sawn production of timber from that area represents $24 million a year, and the Forests Commission receives a royalty in excess of $3·3 million from the alpine area. There will be a further cutback in the

funds available to the Forests Commission as these areas are taken away from its control.

The attitude is becoming prevalent in the comunity that the State's timber resources and timber areas should be preserved for posterity and that the community should not receive any value from them. The advocates of this point of view overlook that the forest represents one of the greatest means of utilizing solar power and conserving energy, and is one of the greatest sources of energy available to us.

The advocates of solar power say that the community should be utilizing solar power instead of burning oil products, coal, and things of that nature. Our trees and plants are the best known means of converting solar energy into a form of energy that can be utilized by man. Also, there is a great saving in the energy required to convert timber products for our use.

For example, a table in a booklet entitled "Wood, Nature's best energy saver", contains the relative costs of raw material and fuel. It was prepared by the Bureau of Census and Statistics, Sydney. It points out that clay bricks and refractories total 67 per cent of the total fuel cost; cement, 41 per cent; glass and glass products, 25 per cent; basic iron and steel products, 8·5 per cent; cement and ready-mixed concrete, 6·6 per cent; plaster products 6·2 per cent, and sawn and dressed timber, plywood, joinery, are as low as 3·5 per cent.

For a society that is supposed to be conscious of energy savings, that excellent example shows that the use of timber is conducive to the saving of energy and ought to be taken into account by advocates who make so much noise about wanting an alpine park, and using solar energy not nuclear energy. They should get their facts straight and understand that nature provides us with a tremendous resource in our forest areas and it is our responsibility to look after it.

It should be remembered that it is not this generation which will suffer through the cutbacks in funding to the Forests Commission, but future generations. People in 100 years time will condemn this Government for not carrying out the necessary work in the forests to ensure that adequate timber resources will be available to the community.

The final point I make is the one driven home the hardest in the Bill, the savage cutback in the allocation for fire control. I would like to read a letter from the Mount Taylor Rural Fire Brigade. That is a place which I am sure honorable members will have heard of very often. It was the home of my illustrious predecessor, the late Sir Albert Lind. The letter reads:

Dear Sir,

The northern and western boundaries of the area of responsibility of this brigade adjoins State Forests. Thus, this area is very vulnerable to any bushfire emerging from the forests on a day of northerly winds.

Rainfall for the past five months in East Gippsland has been considerably below average, allowing the forests to dry out to a far greater degree than normal. We are thus facing a season of extreme fire danger.

At a recent meeting of this brigade we were informed that, due to financial restrictions imposed by the Treasury, the Forests Commission of Victoria was being forced to retrench exempt staff. Several men in our region were affected.

Such retrenchments severely curtail the Commissions' activities, making it impossible to continue the normal programme of preventative fuel reduction burning and maintenance of access tracks. Furthermore, unless reversed before the start of the fire season, they would reduce the ability of the Commission to extinguish small fires in time to prevent a major conflagration.

There is little alternative employment in the area for retrenched workers, so many of the experienced fire fighters may be forced to leave the district. Quite apart from the disruption this would cause to the families and communities concerned these men would be unavailable in the event of a major fire occurring.

Should a major fire develop, many casual staff, with little experience of bushfires, would have to be employed. The cost of wages and expenses for such staff, which we understand is made available from the Treasurer's Advance account, would outweigh the money saved by the present restrictions. In addition, the damages caused by a major fire would total many millions of dollars. The present decision to save money by restricting finance to the Forests Commission fails to recognize that limited funding at this time may well save substantial commitments at a later date.

This brigade feels that, properly managed, the State Forests form an asset which can provide both a major source of revenue to the State and a potential source of enjoyment to thousands of people. Neglected, they have an unrivalled potential for disaster.

We appeal to you to make sufficient funds available to the Forests Commission to enable them to immediately re-employ all staff retrenched due to the present restrictions. This, we feel, would be both a humane gesture and an excellent investment of State revenue.

The letter was addressed to the Treasurer and signed by the Secretary of the Mount Taylor Rural Fire Brigade; this copy is undated. That letter succinctly puts the very point of view that I have been endeavouring to register with the House today. There is no question in the minds of people who live in that area about the serious threat that wild bush fires present to the community, and that is understandable in that part of the State.

It makes a mockery of the Government when the Minister of Housing, as he did in recent days, talks about the Government's employment schemes, because by making a foolish and irresponsible cutback in funds the Government has thrown 27 men out of employment throughout the State. It would have been 40 if the Treasurer had not responded to pressures when he made the cutbacks.

The Treasurer increased the amount of royalty imposed upon sawmillers and others who extract timber from the forests. At least he reduced the initial percentage from 20 per cent to 17·5 per cent. Nevertheless, although the Treasurer expects to receive extra revenue from our forests, he has allocated fewer funds for forest management, which is essential for the interests, not only of the forests in the area, but also of the people who live in and adjacent to those forests. The House should register its dissatisfaction in the strongest possible terms, and I commend the amendment to honorable members.

Mr McINNES (Gippsland South)—I take up the theme of the honorable member for Gippsland East when he says we are facing an energy crisis, and the world knows this. The honorable member quoted figures from a document that shows the relative value of timber versus other media. Wood takes less energy to produce than any other structural building material. It is the best insulator of all these materials; it is better than brick, steel or aluminium. That means less fuel and electricity is consumed and lower costs are incurred for winter heating and summer cooling.

A study has revealed that the production of a tonne of timber requires only 435 kilowatt hours of electrical energy. By contrast, the production of a tonne of steel consumes 3780 kilowatt hours, and a tonne of aluminium consumes 20 169 kilowatt hours.

The Government is considering the extension of power for an alumina smelter at Portland and it is estimated that it will cost over $100 million.

The Government is also considering the pollutant effect of an alumina smelter. From the aspect of conservation, wood has a far lower pollutant effect on the air. The environmental benefit of using forest product substitutes such as those I have mentioned is well known. Therefore, it behoves the Government to pay attention to the need to conserve and regenerate our forest reserves. They are renewable reserves, unlike most other raw materials, and such resources have been provided by nature for us to harvest and renew to provide for future generations.

People in Melbourne writing letters on the subject from the security of their armchairs lose sight of this fact; they have a mental picture of the timber stands in the bush and say: "What a nasty thing, to cut them down. We will be interfering with nature". The fact is that the timber millers are working with nature, and that is the message that has to be strongly put to these people.

The Government has been listening too hard to groups who would like to see sawmillers stop harvesting the forests and would convert them into something that is to be admired from afar. The Forests Commission has a proud record of administration in the forest area. Those of us who have worked closely with the commission are well aware of the problems of working in the summer heat, under

difficult conditions and on rough tracks, and the discomfort at times of flying over that area in extremely unstable flying conditions. We are well aware of the many difficulties that confront forestry teams of fire fighters. We have grown up with an appreciation of the work they do.

It seems quite irresponsible to say that if cutbacks are to be made in costs of administration, they should be made in the number of men in the field. This has happened in both the Lands Department and the Forests Commission, and it is an absurd proposition. The men in the field—not only the officers, but the men who carry out the rake and shovel and fireline work—will be affected by the cutbacks. It is all very well to say that if a forest fire gets under way volunteers and teams from elsewhere will be sent in to fight it. By the time teams are organized and transported to the site the damage is largely done and it becomes a mopping-up operation. This can become an expensive operation, even with the use of volunteers, if compensation has to be paid for injuries sustained, and volunteer fire fighters have to be fed and victualled. Money must be expended to keep at razor pitch the teams which are already experienced, who know the bush area and who have spent the earlier part of the year ensuring that fire access tracks are in readiness. Because they know their way about and will not become lost, they can get to the fire quickly and tackle it as its source. I do not think anybody who has not been close to a fire really understands what can happen in Gippsland, with a northerly wind blowing at 50 or 60 knots in the middle of January or February or even as late as March when a fire takes off. I am not speaking about fires in the Dandenong Ranges that do a limited amount of damage. Such fires are at a much lower elevation, and are not usually affected to the same degree by the higher windstream.

A bush fire is an awe-inspiring sight. When one sees the dramatic picture of a major bush fire in the Gippsland area, one realizes why it is necessary to keep fire fighters in readiness and to provide them with the best possible equipment so that they can stop the fire shortly after it starts. Most fires are started by lightning strikes in the bush, although some, unfortunately, are caused by carelessness and negligence. Inevitably nature takes a hand in causing fires by lightning strikes.

The National Party supports the provision of helicopters and aerial fire-bombing equipment to get support to a fire site as quickly as possible. The most common time for a lightning strike to cause a fire is in the late afternoon, when there is a build-up of cumulus clouds and electrostatic discharges. When a fire breaks out one acts quickly to get a crew in there before dark so that it can be brought under control by the morning. There is no time to recruit volunteers; an experienced crew is needed to move into the area within 30 or 40 minutes and to work all night to get the fire under control.

Mr Dunstan—Which is the better aircraft for fire control purposes, fixed wing or helicopter?

Mr McINNES—It is a mixture, because we need to use fixed wing aircraft first to maintain a high level of surveillance, particularly on days when thunderstorm activity is prevalent. However, it is also necessary to have helicopters standing by to get a team of men into the nearest helipad or the nearest site so that several dozen men with hand tools and chainsaws can start moving in down a ridge to get to the heart of the fire within two or three hours and be on the job by 5 o'clock or 6 o'clock in the afternoon.

A burning tree may have started a fire which might have spread over half an acre of forest by then but when teams of firefighters move quickly they can surround the fire early and control it. If the fire is left, by the following morning—and this is fairly characteristic of meteorological conditions—it will not necessarily be another calm day; there could be northerly winds of high speed, up to 40 or 50 knots; the fire takes off, and there is no way of stopping it. It would not matter if 10 000 volunteers were available with all the equipment in the world. Quick

action must be taken in those circumstances and this is why the National Party has strenuously supported all these measures.

Earlier I mentioned aerial fire-bombing, and that is another way in which small forest fires can be fought. The operation usually takes place in the late afternoon and is done from agricultural aircraft. It is a valuable technique and the Forests Commission has employed this method, using agricultural operators who have aircraft ready to carry out that work. They are placed on standby on days of acute fire danger. This policy should be continued because experienced operators become proficient in the means of fire suppression used by the commission.

Another means of fire prevention and suppression is that of backburning by aerial ignition. In the explanatory memorandum attached to the Bill a comment was made about the work carried out on ignition programmes throughout the Alps. The Forests Commission has undertaken this work most effectively, with one exception, perhaps, and that is in some of the lower lying forests such as the area between Yarram and Sale where there is a substantial amount of lowland forest which is also a fire trap. One of these days a major fire will break out in that area and will destroy that forest, which is on Crown land and contains a national park. It could easily burn through to the coast and take the townships of Seaspray and Woodside with it in the process.

This could happen unless action is taken to ensure that the material on the forest floor is subjected to mosaic pattern burning and fires are kept under control. This is an area in which conservationists are taking a great deal of interest. I hope we can work with conservationists and agree that there is a need for sensible control measures to be adopted.

At present, the Forests Commission has a problem with conservationists concerning an area near Tarra Valley National Park. I agree with conservationists that the area there should be preserved and perhaps linked up with the Tarra Valley National Park and Bulga National Park. Many trees are dying and not regenerating. Trees are used for nesting and habitat of various birds and animals. One has to accept that if entirely left to nature, the area could be subject to a fire in dry times which the honorable member for Gippsland East mentioned that will destroy all of the good intentions of various conservationist groups. The end result will be a huge blackened area of bush in which every animal and almost every bird will have lost its life and a long programme of regeneration will be needed not only for trees and timber but also for flora and fauna. That should never be forgotten.

The question of whether the responsibility lies with the National Parks Service or the Forests Commission needs to be resolved. I have no doubt that the Forests Commission is well and truly capable of handling this and I strongly err in favour of the commission out of respect to the foresters with whom I have worked for many years. Realism must be injected into the fight for preservation of forest resources.

It is tragic to note the funding provided in the Bill, particularly when the most important item of fire protection is being substantially cut back. It has been cut by 30 per cent which in real terms, is a 40 per cent cut back. It is incredible that the Government has agreed to this. Overall, forests works and services have suffered a 12 per cent cutback. I am concerned that the fire protection and suppression Budget allocation has been so savagely pruned. People in Gippsland are convinced that this summer will be dry and windy. The possibility of another fire raging this summer similar to that which put the whole of east Gippsland in flames in the late 1960s is abhorrent. The honorable member for Gippsland East is to be commended for bringing this serious error to the notice of Parliament.

Members of the National Party certainly want priority for fire prevention. We want the Government to provide adequate funding. We do not want to wait until late summer when a major

fire could occur. The Forests Commission can only carry out its responsibilities with what is provided in manpower, resources and equipment. I support the amendment moved by the honorable member for Gippsland East. It is wrong for honorable members to support a cutback of 40 per cent in the funds for fire protection.

Dr VAUGHAN (Glenhuntly)—Firstly, I direct my remarks to farm forestry, which is item 8 in the table attached to the Bill.

Mr Ross-Edwards—I draw attention to the state of the House.

A quorum was formed.

Dr VAUGHAN—In discussing the concept of farm forestry, which I support strongly, I am indebted to several points in an article in a recent edition of *Victoria's Resources* dated March 1978. The author, Annette Oaks, has listed five outcomes of farm forestry in Victoria and for the benefit of honorable members I shall quote those reasons, which are reported at page 29. They are:

1. An increase in timber production, yet the amount of land necessary to achieve an equivalent gain in production of most native species, is reduced. Similarly, the need to intensify production from native forests is reduced, so the management of these forests can be directed more closely towards the demands of catchment protection, wildlife, and recreation. This is particularly important in forests close to urban areas, because they incur the greatest pressure from competing demands.

2. By producing sawlogs in a shorter space of time, the planning horizons in native forests can be extended and be made more responsive to society's changing needs.

The information available now is not necessarily all the information that will be available in the future. The article continues:

3. If plantations are established on private land, the high costs of land purchase specifically for plantations incurred by the forestry services can be avoided.

Honorable members will appreciate the logic of that. The article continues:

4. Intensive management practices designed to increase productivity, such as growing exotic monocultures, fertilizing, and weed and scrub control, are more acceptable on alienated farming land than in native forests.

M. B. J. Evans—Acceptable to whom?

Dr VAUGHAN—To the community.

Mr B. J. Evans—That is her judgment.

Dr VAUGHAN—It is the judgment that I support. Once native forests have been worked over intensively they will never recover the condition of a virgin forest.

Mr B. J. Evans—Is that your opinion?

Dr VAUGHAN—I shall refer to my opinions later. The article continues:

5. Farm plantations could have the additional benefits of returning unproductive land such as steep slopes and weed infested areas, to a more productive use, such as timber production, catchment protection, soil conservation, and shade and shelter.

An additional point is that in view of the ecological reasons of monoculture a farm forest on alienated land does not have to be a monoculture. The article also refers to the South African experience when poplars, eucalypts, pines and other species were grown together.

I commend the Government for the allocation for farm forestry. I am puzzled by the three figures provided in the previous and present financial year and the calendar year and I ask for clarification from the Minister. If the present allocation has been set by demand then there has been insufficient encouragement by the Forests Commission for this form of agriculture. If the allocation has been set because of economic restrictions, then once again, the Government is to be blamed.

The previous speaker referred to forests as a source of trapping solar energy. This is an aspect of forestry that the community has not thought much about. Forests have been trapping solar energy since forests first began to grow. They have the ability to trap somewhere between 0·5 per cent and 2 per cent, which is perhaps the upper limit, of the incident radiation falling upon the forests for anything up to 300 or 400 years. Some research is being undertaken in the United States of America on the evaluation of farm forestry as a source of fuel for power stations. No firm conclusion can yet be drawn from the research but as the

cost of primary energy sources increases, obviously timber as a source of fuel for electric power generation will be more appealing. I hope to speak on that subject in the future. There is a definite need for more research funds for forestry.

Earlier, a member of the National Party commented that perhaps members of the Opposition read too many books. There are many biological threats to forests as well as threats of fire, insects, exploitation, Government stupidity and inaction and lack of funds. Honorable members will have read of the threat of *Phytophthora cinnamomi*, which cannot be ignored. All honorable members speak on forest ecology from a position of ignorance because the facts of the matter are largely unknown; that strengthens the argument for a greater allocation of research funds.

Mr B. J. Evans—Have you talked to the officers of the Forests Commission about it?

Dr VAUGHAN—I am a regular reader of their publications.

Mr B. J. Evans—I suggest you talk to officers of the Forests Commission. They know more than you give them credit for.

Dr VAUGHAN—I reiterate that all honorable members are speaking from a position of ignorance, and particularly the honorable member for Gippsland East. That is the argument for more research and the honorable member has just proved my point.

Another fundamental threat to forests described in Forests Commission publications in recent years is *Armillaria* which is attacking trees in the Mount Cole, Macedon and Wombat State forests. There is a lack of over-all information. Parliament is the custodian of the forests. Parliament can make errors now that will threaten the forests for all time. The Forests Commission has made a few mistakes which have biologically threatened the forests. The commission has recognized those mistakes and taken steps to rectify them.

There is a lack of basic data. There is a lack of biological understanding of the complexities of the ecosystems involved. Future Budgets should provide increased funds for research.

Mr TREWIN (Benalla)—I commend the honorable member for Gippsland East and support the amendment he has moved. The forestry areas have been forgotten. The Minister for Conservation has not met the challenges posed by the problems that exist.

The Forests Commission has been a source of revenue but is that any reason why there should not be further allocations of funds for the Forests Commission? It is no good for one to look piously at what has happened to the forests and say, "It will be good enough". Parliament should care for the forests and that is a continuing challenge.

As the honorable member for Glenhuntly said, Parliament has the privilege of caring for forests for the rest of time. Will Parliament stand idly by and witness the devastation of forests because of a lack of funds?

The honorable member spoke of research. More funds should be made available for research. Many things happening in the forests are not being attended to. An example is the sirex wasp which is very evident in the pine forests. Continuing research is needed to contain and halt the spread of the sirex wasp.

The Benalla electorate covers a vast area of forest. I am fully aware of the dangers of fire in forest areas. I was disturbed when the local community of Benalla was informed that several people had been dismissed from the Forests Commission. These were mainly experienced men who had spent many years with the commission. They had the responsibility of fire prevention, which is an essential task, especially in the summer season. Even the person who was a fire watcher for an area that covered thousands of square miles, from Mount Bulla to Mount Buffalo down to Mount Wombat near Seymour and out to the flat country, was told his services were

no longer required. Due to my quick representations that man has since been reinstated but only for the fire season.

Why should these men lose their jobs? The insecurity of tenure for employees in the countryside and the allocation of funds should be examined.

Eucalyptus trees comprise a major part of the forest areas. Those trees are susceptible to fire in the hot weather. Fortunately, I was on the north side of a fire which occurred. It was a terrible sight to witness forests being destroyed. There has been a lot of regeneration in many of the areas devastated by fire.

The timber industry has extracted timber from these forests. The only way the timber industry has survived has been by constructing roads, at the industry's own expense, to extract the timber. No one could say that the State has not benefited from the timber industry. The timber industry has spent hundreds of thousands of dollars constructing roads in forest areas. These roads are now used by the commission's officers who carry out research and fire prevention work. Had it not been for the timber industry constructing these roads then the forests would not be nearly as safe as they are.

The sawmilling industry has been advised that it will have to withdraw from the forests in the next ten to twelve years. But the Government should not allow these roads to become unserviceable. The people who go into the forests and use these roads are causing a lot of damage.

Having traversed some of the forest areas and witnessed the damage done, I am alarmed by what the future holds. How will the Forests Commission employees and national parks employees obtain access to these areas to care for the forests? The Government should ensure that hundreds of thousands of dollars will not have to be spent on these roads.

The National Party supports the amendment moved by the honorable member for Gippsland East. The National Party recognizes the importance of the commission's contribution to the community. However, if more funding is not made available the forests will degenerate to such a degree that the Government will no longer be able to care for them and will be unable to carry out fire prevention work. By the end of January there will be a large amount of fire fodder on the forest floor which could create an inferno at short notice.

The National Party supports the amendment. The Government should provide more funds so that the Forests Commission can continue to carry out its responsible and effective work.

Mr WILTON (Broadmeadows)—The Opposition will support the amendment. I did not disagree with the honorable member for Gippsland East when he referred to the importance of the forests. Forests are one of the community's most vital, renewable resources.

It is the responsibility of the Government of the day to ensure that adequate funds are provided so that adequate fire protection and research programmes are maintained. It is obvious from the figures I read out earlier that the Forests Commission will be unable to maintain the current rate of works programmes in all its fields of operation.

I regret that the honorable member for Benalla did not express his concern for bush workers when the Workers Compensation Bill was before the House. On that occasion he seemed to have forgotten his concern for that section of the community. However, the Labor Party is prepared to support the amendment.

The House divided on the question that the words proposed by Mr B. J. Evans, to be omitted stand part of the question (the Hon. S. J. Plowman in the chair).

Ayes	..	..	37
Noes	..	..	37

AYES

Mr Austin	Mr McClure
Mr Balfour	Mr McKellar
Mr Birrell	Mr Mackinnon
Mr Borthwick	Mr Maclellan
Mr Burgin	Mr Ramsay
Mrs Chambers	Mr Reynolds
Mr Coleman	Mr Richardson
Mr Collins	Mr Skeggs
Mr Crellin	Mr Smith (*South Barwon*)
Mr Dixon	Mr Smith (*Warrnambool*)
Mr Dunstan	Mr Templeton
Mr Ebery	Mr Thompson
Mr Evans (*Ballarat North*)	Mr Weideman
Mr Hayes	Mr Williams
Mr Jona	Mr Wood
Mr Kennett	
Mr Lacy	
Mr Lieberman	*Tellers*:
Mr McArthur	Mr Brown
Mr McCance	Mr Cox

NOES

Mr Amos	Mr Remington
Mr Cain	Mr Roper
Mr Cathie	Mr Rowe
Mr Crabb	Mr Sidiropoulos
Mr Culpin	Mr Simmonds
Mr Edmunds	Mr Simpson
Mr Ernst	Mr Spyker
Mr Evans (*Gippsland East*)	Mr Stirling
Mr Fogarty	Mrs Toner
Mr Gavin	Mr Trewin
Mr Ginifer	Mr Trezise
Mr Hann	Dr Vaughan
Mr Hockley	Mr Walsh
Mr Jolly	Mr Whiting
Mr King	Mr Wilkes
Mr Kirkwood	Mr Wilton
Mr McInnes	*Tellers*:
Mr Mathews	Dr Coghill
Mr Miller	Mr Jasper

PAIRS

Mr Hamer	Mr Ross-Edwards
Mrs Patrick	Mr McGrath
Mr Tanner	Mr Fordham

The SPEAKER (the Hon. S. J. Plowman)—Order! The numbers being equal, in order that this question may be considered in its original form, I cast my vote with the Noes. The Noes therefore have it.

Mr WILTON (Broadmeadows)—On a point of order, Mr Speaker, I understood you to say that you cast your vote with the noes.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. S. J. Plowman)—The honorable member for Broadmeadows is correct. By leave of the House, I will amend my vote.

Mr WILKES (Leader of the Opposition)—Leave is granted.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. S. J. Plowman)—The result of the division is Ayes 37, Noes 37. In order that this question may be considered in its original form, I cast my vote with the Ayes. I thank the honorable member for Broadmeadows for pointing out my mistake.

The amendment was therefore negatived.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was read a second time, and passed through its remaining stages.

BUSINESS FRANCHISE (TOBACCO) BILL

This Bill was returned from the Council with a message relating to a suggested amendment.

Council's amendment:

Clause 2, line 19, at the end of the clause insert the following new sub-clause:

"( ) In section 10 (2) of the Principal Act for the expression 'ten-elevenths' there shall be substituted the expression '100'."

$\frac{100}{112}$

Mr THOMPSON (Treasurer)—I move:

That the suggested amendment be agreed to.

The purpose of this amendment is to accurately reflect the increase in duty from 10 per cent to 12 per cent without a change in that fraction. If an additional $600 000 is produced it would be in excess of 12 per cent. It arises from a difficulty of, in a sense, imposing a tax on a tax. The business franchise legislation is framed to impose a duty on the revenue collected in two ways. Once the first additional revenue is collected the tax is imposed on the revenue collected plus the increased amount of levy in the form of a tax. That is why the fraction 100/112 reflects the intention of producing 12 per cent rather than a fraction which is more.

This amendment exactly implements the Budget intention of imposing a 2 per cent increase in duty, from 10 per cent to 12 per cent, on tobacco licences.

Mr ROWE (Essendon)—As the Treasurer has outlined, that was the intention of the original Bill. The Opposition does not oppose the amendment.

The motion was agreed to.

PROBATE DUTY BILL

Mr THOMPSON (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.

SECOND-HAND DEALERS (CLOSING HOURS) BILL

This Bill was received from the Council and, on the motion of Mr MACLELLAN (Minister of Transport), was read a first time.

VERMIN AND NOXIOUS WEEDS (AMENDMENT) BILL

This Bill was received from the Council and, on the motion of Mr I. W. SMITH (Minister of Agriculture), was read a first time.

WATER SUPPLY WORKS AND SERVICES BILL

The debate (adjourned from November 1) on the motion of Mr I. W. Smith (Minister of Agriculture) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

Mr WILTON (Broadmeadows)—The purpose of the Bill is similar to that of the Bill with which the House has just dealt. It is to obtain the Parliament's approval for the expenditure of $65 million on water supply works and services throughout the State.

Again the Government is engaging in disastrous cutbacks in the supply of funds for important water works, sewerage works and river improvement works that need to be carried out. To indicate the seriousness of these cutbacks I shall quote figures which clearly show not only that it is a cutback in the allocation from previous years but also that the Government has failed over the past twelve months to take into account the inflation rate. In 1978–79 the expenditure for water supply works and services was $24 224 492. For 1979–80 the provision is $21·604 million. That is a reduction of $2 620 492. If the 10 per cent inflation factor of $2 422 449 is taken into consideration, the reduction in money terms is $5 042 941.

All honorable members appreciate the importance of the works carried out by waterworks trusts and the role they play in maintaining the life style and living standards of people in rural areas. In 1978–79 the allocation to waterworks trusts was $2 075 194. For this financial year it is $1·198 million—a cutback of $877 194. In this case the 10 per cent inflation factor amounts to $207 519. Even if last year's rate of expenditure is maintained, those trusts should receive in addition to the $2·075 million, a further $207 000. The cutback in real money terms is $1 084 713.

The same story applies to sewerage authorities. The allocation in 1978–79 was $3·3 million. In 1979–80 it will be $2 million. That is $1·3 million down on last year. The inflation factor of 10 per cent amounts to $330 000. The real loss, therefore, to the sewerage authorities is $1·630 million. River improvement trusts, like water trusts and sewerage authorities, are extremely important. They play an important part in country Victoria because of the work in which they are engaged. They even contribute to flood mitigation because they remove snags from rivers. They contribute to the productivity of farms close to the major rivers and streams because of trench works that are carried out.

Mr Jasper—I am pleased to note that a city member is appreciative of the problems.

Mr WILTON—The Opposition has always understood these problems. The Labor Party can claim a record of having produced practical decisions for the long-term benefit of country Victoria. Anyone who has lived in the wheat country for any length of time, and I am sure the honorable member for Lowan will appreciate this, will remember when the wheat farmer was strung out every year at the mercy of the wheat agents.

Mr I. W. SMITH (Minister of Agriculture)—I raise a point of order. The honorable member is straying from the Bill.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Edmunds)—I uphold the point of order.

Mr WILTON (Broadmeadows)—I will return to the matter of river improvement. The honorable member for Lowan will be disturbed when he reads about these problems as a result of floods in the Wimmera area. The Government has failed to come to grips with the matter which has particularly affected Horsham. In 1978–79 $1·07 million was expended on river improvements trusts. In 1979–80 the amount will be a miserable $900 000—down $170 000. The inflation factor of 10 per cent amounts to $107 000. Therefore the real loss to the trusts is $277 000.

The totals of all those figures are as follows: In 1977–78 there was an expenditure of $38·104 million; this year, 1979–80, the expenditure will be reduced to $32·168 million; it is down $5·936 million. When the 10 per cent inflation figure of $3·810 million is added, the loss in real money terms to water trusts, sewerage authorities and river improvement trusts was $9·747 million over the past year.

From that one can realize that the Government is engaged in a disastrous withdrawal of funds from river improvement trusts, sewerage authorities and waterworks trusts. They will all be forced to reduce their works programmes drastically, and this in turn will have a spin off in the unemployment situation in country areas because most of the work that is done in river improvements, water works and sewerage is labour intensive. This is an area in which a substantial contribution could be made towards improving the unemployment situation. In recent months any number of figures have been quoted showing the unemployment rates in various regional centres and small country towns. The Government has an opportunity to improve the situation, and rather than withdrawing funds it should increase expenditure of these authorities.

It can be safely said that every sewerage authority, every water trust and every river improvement trust could easily expend the additional funds that should be provided under this Bill. Even if the Government had been prepared to maintain last year's allocation with an inflation factor of 10 per cent, that would have been a demonstration of its sincerity. The Premier talks about the Government's concern about unemployment, and various Ministers, through their glossy expensive publications which are widely circulated, talk about work study programmes and committees being established, but what Victoria needs is creation of jobs. That is what is needed, not glossy and expensive publications setting out programmes suggesting research into this or that, but which have no purpose. Everybody who is involved in this area knows that what is needed is job creation, not retraining programmes. How will the scheme be brought into operation and how will the retraining programmes be funded? More importantly, what will the programme produce —a highly trained person for what? We will have experts everywhere, but for what purpose? My definition of "expert" is a person who learns more and more about everything and finishes up knowing everything about nothing.

The Government is deserving of the strongest criticism and stands condemned for introducing this measure which fails to realize or recognize the importance of the work carried out by the various authorities covered by the Bill.

To give the Government an opportunity to re-examine the situation and to take more positive action, I propose an amendment. Like the honorable member for Gippsland East, I regret that the amendment has to be introduced in this manner. However, there is not much which can be done about it. I move:

That all the words after "That" be omitted with the view to inserting in place thereof the words "the Bill be withdrawn and redrafted so as to provide funds increased by an amount relative to the rate of inflation since the last fund allocation".

Mr SIMPSON (Niddrie)—I second the amendment.

Mr WILTON (Broadmeadows)—The Opposition is seeking justice on behalf of these authorities. The action proposed by the Government must be disheartening to those people who voluntarily give their time to be members of

sewerage authorities, river improvement trusts and water trusts throughout Victoria. For years many men and women have served on these authorities without reward but for the sole purpose of making a contribution to the community in which they live.

The Bill is indicative of the support which those authorities are receiving from the Government, a Government which is continually going into the electorates and making the outrageous claim that it has concern for country Victoria, that the Liberal Party will do something for the benefit of Victoria.

Again I submit a question to the Minister and hope on this occasion the honorable gentleman will be gracious enough to give the House the benefit of his knowledge of this matter—I am assuming the honorable gentleman does have some knowledge of the matter although he declined to make a comment when the House was considering the State Forests Works and Services Bill.

The Bill makes a total provision of $55 million, but the Government is proposing to restrict expenditure to the end of June 1980 to $32·168 million. There is a difference of $22·832 million between what will be spent to 30 June next and when the Parliament considers similar legislation next year, which will be approximately this time next year. The Bill automatically cancels out any unexpended funds from the Bill which was passed the previous year.

However, why is the Government asking the Parliament to approve the expenditure of $55 million and only proposing to spend $32 million to 30 June 1980? Between 30 June 1980 and when the 1980–81 Water Supply Works and Services Bill is passed, is there to be a sudden release of projects which will sop up $22·5 million which is included in the $55 million the Parliament is being asked to approve on this occasion?

I suspect the Government is engaging in an exercise in which the Treasurer will never be asked to produce the $22·5 million—in effect the Government is restricting expenditure to $32 million as set out in the Bill.

It will be interesting to read the press statements and publications released by the Minister which refers to the amount of money supplied by the Government for waterworks trusts, sewerage authorities and so on. Will those documents show $32 million or $55 million?

Mr Simpson—You can back it in it will be $55 million.

Mr WILTON—I am prepared to take up the offer of the honorable member for Niddrie and back it in that the figure used will be $55 million and not $32 million.

The same principle applied to the previous Bill, but on this occasion the Government should give the Parliament an explanation. Some funds must be approved to enable works to continue from 30 June 1980 until the passage of the 1980–81 Bill, but there is no likelihood of a works programme continuing to the tune of $22·5 million.

The Government is presenting a set of falsified books to give the people of Victoria the impression that it is spending $55 million on water supply, sewerage and river improvement works programmes. I submit the amendment on behalf of the Opposition as the Government is engaging in a massive withdrawal of funds. These authorities will be placed in an embarrassing situation, bearing in mind that recently the Parliament passed legislation enabling the authorities to apply to the Minister of Water Supply for permission to go into the open money market and borrow money at the relevant going rate of interest.

Honorable members know that it has been a long standing practice that sewerage authorities and water trusts have had their interest payments subsidized when the interest rate has been higher than 3 per cent. The position has been created where the authorities, on their own initiative, can approach the Minister for permission to borrow funds on the open money market and pay the market rate of interest, which will not be subsidized.

On the occasion the House was considering the legislation, on behalf of the Opposition I sounded a note of warning that I considered that water trusts and

sewerage authorities were being set up by the Government. The Government is a past master at that, having set up local government for years by initiating legislation to make it permissible for local authorities to do certain things and then engaging in a massive withdrawal of funds. To me that seems to be the exercise here, where there is a massive withdrawal of funds, in real money terms, of almost $10 million over expenditure last year.

What will be the situation when sewerage authorities and water trusts have pressure applied from the local community seeking a water supply or a sewerage service. These programmes will be drastically curtailed as a result of the withdrawal of funds. As a solution, the Minister of Water Supply will be advising them to go on to the open money market and borrow the necessary funds, but they will be further informed that they will have to pay the full interest rate. It is the end user who will suffer in the long run.

That is the situation as I see it. Members of water trusts and sewerage authorities have given their time in an honorary capacity to serve the community in which they live, but in my opinion they will be subjected to more and more pressure.

The Minister should give these authorities an assurance that that will not happen. The best way in which to do so is to accept the amendment of the Opposition and return the Bill to Cabinet for redrafting. At least, the works programme for 1978–79 would then be maintained. I would certainly wish it to be improved because of the employment opportunities that these works can generate. All works programmes carried out by the authorities are labour intensive. They include sewerage and water installation programmes, river improvement and flood mitigation programmes and so on. I commend the amendment to the House.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Edmunds)—Order! Honorable members speaking from now on will be deemed to be speaking on the Bill and on the amendment.

Mr SIMPSON (Niddrie)—I support the amendment moved by the honorable member for Broadmeadows. His remarks on the amendment spelt out clearly that in monetary terms the Bill is a backward step. Consequently, less facilities will be available and employment normally expected will not be generated. From the figures to which the honorable member for Broadmeadows referred, it is apparent that there is a reduction of $1·6 million in the allocation, allowing for the inflation rate of the last financial year.

I am reminded of the effect this has on the community by an article in today's *Age* of which the headline states, "Sewer bills cause stink." I suggest that the interpretation of bills could be two ways and that the Bill before the House causes a stink for country people. The article in the *Age* refers to the bills that they will receive if section 120A of the Sewerage Authorities Act is implemented. Sewers will be installed only on the condition that ratepayers pay twice. There is a similar section, section 142A, in the Act applying to the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works which the board has never implemented and has stated that it will never use. However, many sewerage authorities are implementing section 120A.

It was attempted to be imposed on ratepayers in the electorate of Evelyn two years ago. A proposition was put to ratepayers living in the Chirnside Park estate, where half of the estate had already been developed and the sewerage work implemented in the normal procedure, that because funds had run out as the result of cutbacks there was more finance left to service the other half of the estate and that as a result the people living in those areas should embrace section 120A of the Sewerage Authorities Act.

In round figures, this meant an additional cost to those people of $600 each. The honorable member for Knox and I, acting as proxies for two of those people, attended the meeting at their invitation. I was disappointed that the State member of the Legislative Assembly was unable to be in attendance. Representatives of

the electorate in the Upper House were also unable to attend and the Federal member responsible for that area was also unable to attend. It was unfortunate that only two members of Parliament were present. They were the Labor Party representatives who had accepted an invitation to act as proxies at the meeting. The meeting was called as the result of a petition so that the residents could learn about the proposal to implement section 120A of the Act.

The honorable member for Knox and I were most conscious that we should not try to influence that meeting. We were also conscious that we had a responsibility to let those people know the full effects of the proposal put before them. Consequently, the honorable member for Knox and I purposefully delayed making a contribution to the gathering until almost at the end of the meeting, when it was perfectly clear that those attending did not need our assistance because they had done their research themselves. It was also obvious that the 122 people, representing the ratepayers to a man and a woman, were not going to have a bar of paying twice because of cutbacks that had been introduced under the new federalism. It was undertandable that a unanimous vote resulted.

Mr Weideman—Did you vote?

Mr SIMPSON—I was a proxy and of course I voted. The unanimous decision was to reject the proposition of having to pay twice for sewerage works. The proposition was very subtly introduced as a self-help scheme. I am not adverse to self-help schemes. I have worked on school committees and in church organizations which understand that there is a certain amount of funding but, if better facilities are wanted, often a self-help scheme has to be devised through fund-raising. But it is fundamentally wrong for society and the community to talk about self-help schemes for obtaining sewerage facilities. It was on that basis that those people rejected that proposition.

I was staggered to read in the newspaper today that the authority has gone back to those same people and called another meeting. This time, 500 people attended the meeting and rejected the proposal yet again. In certain areas, that proposition has been accepted. One is at Highton, a suburb of Geelong, in the electorate of Geelong West. I have visited the area. It is a higher-class area in the respect that there are fairly expensive, quality homes in the locality and I make the assessment that there are wealthier persons living in that area. I presume the proposition was put to those residents that they embrace the scheme and a majority of the ratepayers decided to accept the proposition.

This is what concerns members of the Labor Party. With the so-called self-help scheme, residents can have sewerage facilities if they are prepared to pay twice. Those who have the capacity to pay twice will get sewerage. Those who are not of that wealthy ilk will have to wait until money becomes available and either put up with a night man calling or with some other method of disposal.

The Chirnside Park estate has been split down the middle, property owners one side paying in the normal way, those on the other side being asked to pay more because that area was developed after a change of Government in Canberra and a cutback in funds.

It is on those very strong grounds that I ask the House to support the amendment moved by the honorable member for Broadmeadows. There should never be a situation in this State where those who can pay are better class citizens and those who cannot pay are second-class citizens and will have to wait until funds become available. There should be equal opportunity for all, regardless of capacity to pay once or twice. People should have to pay for their sewerage only once, and the sooner section 120A is removed from the statute-book the better.

Mr HANN (Rodney)—In speaking on the Water Supply Works and Services Bill and to the amendment, I will deal in some detail with various projects approved for expenditure under this Bill.

Initially, I indicate that members of the National Party share the concern of the Opposition in relation to the funding of water supply works and services in this State. When one looks at the amount allocated this year in comparison with previous years and considers the works programme this State should be able to undertake, especially in regard to water works and sewerage works, one realizes that the funding provided by the Bill falls far short of requirements.

I indicate that the National Party supports the amendment moved by the honorable member for Broadmeadows, although, in some respects, the National Party does not necessarily believe it goes far enough.

The funding situation generally has just kept pace with inflation since the last allocation and no recognition is given to the fact that works in this area have been falling behind over a number of years. The ten-year programme for water supply, irrigation and drainage works throughout this State must be well towards completion. The funding for that programme has fallen far short of the works required. Priorities in water supply works and services must take into account the irrigation areas of Victoria, the private conversion works throughout the State, the waterworks trusts, the town water supplies and, of course, sewerage.

I will deal first with waterworks trusts and sewerage authorities. In my own area representations have been made to me by a number of trusts expressing alarm at Government cutbacks in funding. I received a letter from the Echuca Waterworks Trust dated 12 November commenting on the allocation made available to it this year. That letter states:

> . . . the Trust has been advised by the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission that its loan allocation for 1979–80 has been limited to—
>
> Government Loan Funds—$5930 (to meet payment of outstanding claims lodged with the Commission).
>
> Private Loan Funds—$130 000.
>
> The current year's application provided for a total capital works programme of $1 003 239

So in actual fact the programme falls short by almost $900 000. The secretary goes on to say in his letter:

> In the case of the Sewerage Authority no allocation whatsoever has been made towards the capital works programme of $240 093.

This has affected a major industry in the town, Plumrose Pty Ltd, which is urging the waterworks trust to substantially upgrade the water supply so that that firm can have a substantial annual increase in water which will lead to a substantial increase in production by that company. That increase will have its ultimate effect of boosting employment.

The letter continues:

> So far as the Sewerage Authority is concerned, funds are required to commence preliminary steps to re-locate the Sewerage Farm and Treatment Works.
>
> . . . . . .

This project is also on the verge of a necessity, and a nil allocation is not acceptable to the authority. The letter continues:

> The Authority has no option but to pursue engineering and environmental studies associated with the project, and it is imperative that at least the land purchase proceed as soon as possible to enable the project to be undertaken.
>
> . . . . . .

So the Echuca Waterworks Trust and the Echuca Sewerage Authority have expressed concern and regret at this cutback in funding by the Government. The trust has been placed in an almost impossible position in trying to maintain an adequate water supply and a proper sewerage system throughout the city.

Similar situations occur in other areas. I have received a copy of a letter from the Secretary of the Nathalia Waterworks Trust to the Minister of Water Supply. It states:

> This Trust submitted applications for funds to enable urgent works to be carried out as follows:
>
> Nathalia District—$109 500
> Barmah District—$90 000
>
> Funds allocated were as follows:
>
> Works approved, $28 300—to be funded by $5000 from Government loan funds and $15 000 to be raised by private loan

The amount of $5000 referred to was previously allocated in 1978–79 and partly claimed in April, but not re-imbursed.

So it is a situation which appears to be becoming general in the Ministry of Water Resources and Water Supply, a situation where funding deferred from last year is being deducted from allocations made this year.

The letter continues:

My Trust considers that this is a ridiculous position and has the obvious effect of strangling all progress and development in smaller country areas. This unfortunately appears to be the general policy of the existing Government which shows a total disregard for country people.

Those letters emphasize the concern these trusts are expressing to me.

A similar situation applies to the Deakin Waterworks Trust, which has made an application for something of the order of $500 000 to upgrade its water supply. At present, there is no indication when the funding may be available. Once again, a major food processing company, the Nestlé company, is dependent on the upgrading of that water supply.

In Kyabram moves have been made by the water trust to instal a filtration plant, a project which is estimated to cost $1 million. Once again, the commission, through the local authorities, has been slow to support that project in that unnecessary requirements have been placed upon the trust that it must seek plebiscites of the people. One would expect that as the commissioners of those trusts have already been elected by their ratepayers they would be in a position to recommend whether such a large scale programme should proceed. Likewise, there is the upgrading of the water supply at Merrigum. Although that upgrading has not proceeded to the stage of seeking funding from the commission, indications are that it could be some time before the funding is made available.

The National Party expresses its concern that the Government is giving a low priority to the upgrading of water supplies. It is a matter of concern because water is a vital aspect of country development, especially industrial and decentralization development. No one will move to a country area unless there is an assured supply of clean water Likewise, people expect a reticulated sewerage system. Therefore, it is essential that the Government give a higher priority and input of funding to these programmes.

I mentioned in a previous debate that the irrigation areas are worth about $200 million a year in gross revenue. Research has predicted that that figure will be increased fivefold, so the potential is enormous. However, the provision of funds for the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission is such that many irrigation systems are neglected.

I operate an irrigation farm and, therefore, I have close contact with many people involved in irrigation. Many channels are long overdue for repairs. Urgent clearing works and maintenance are needed. The old drainage systems are in need of major repairs. The Government has not provided the necessary input of finance for the irrigation districts to enable these essential works to be carried out. If these works are not carried out, some of these systems will become unworkable. The lack of funding is aggravating the salinity problem because the drainage is not as effective as it should be. That jeopardizes the irrigation system because the flow of irrigation water is not reaching the farmer as regularly as it should.

Additionally, there are substantial areas in need of adequate drainage. In the electorate I represent, farmers from many areas have made deputations to the Minister of Water Supply, and the Minister has made numerous inspections. An area which highlights the problem is that stretching from Kyabram to Tatura. That is a classic example of an area where land is affected by salinity because of the lack of adequate surface drainage.

The Minister also inspected the Taripta area and informed the farmers that it would be five years before a priority could be given to extending the drainage channel system. That is a matter of concern because the productivity

of the land would be substantially improved by providing better drainage. That would also eliminate or reduce the salinity risk in many areas.

Reference is made in the Bill to the surface drainage or salinity control works throughout the Swan Hill–Taripta area and, more specifically, in the Shepparton region. Additional funding of $1·36 million has been made in the Budget to restore ground water extraction facilities.

Concern has been expressed in the Taripta area that if effluent from underground is pumped into the River Murray, that could adversely affect irrigators downstream. I received a reply from the Minister of Water Supply today which states, *inter alia*:

> If Phase B groundwater drainage works in the Shepparton Region proceeds, the average annual salt load carried into the Torrumbarry Irrigation System through the Torrumbarry offtake would be 100 000 tonnes/year.
>
> This figure is 40 000 tonnes/year more than the average annual salt load of approximately 60 000 tonnes/year carried through the offtake regulator before groundwater drainage works in the Shepparton Region were commenced.
>
> Even with an average annual salt intake of 100 000 tonnes/year after completion of Phase B works, the Kerang Region would still remain a nett-exporter of salt, as the average annual salt load discharged in Barr Creek drainage is 190 000 tonnes/year.

Hence, the problem of salinity is one the Government should come to grips with. Officers of the Department of Agriculture predicted that much of the effluent in the Shepparton area could be blended with the irrigation water to provide additional irrigation. If that were done it would reduce the drainage outfall into the River Murray and thus reduce the salinity effect in the Shepparton area. The prediction was that as much as 250 000 extra ground feet of water could be added to the existing irrigation system in the Shepparton region. If the prediction is practicable then that proposal will be implemented rather than increasing the amount of drainage effluent from the River Murray.

The Bill needs further clarification. The Public Works Committee is considering the salinity problems in northern Victoria as a result of the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission's proposed programme costing $40 million. The committee has considered the proposal to use the mineral reserves basin scheme in the Kerang–Swan Hill area. That scheme involves the construction of a pumping station at Lake Tutchewop, which will reduce the salinity inflow from the Loddon River into the River Murray.

The explanatory memorandum to the table in the Bill states that $420 000 will be expended in 1979–80 to commence the mineral reserves basin scheme estimated to cost up to $3·3 million. The scheme will involve the construction of a pumping station at Lake Tutchewop by using pipeline channels with an evaporative basin which will reduce the salt inflow into the River Murray. That is the Government's stated objective, yet the Public Works Committee has made no decision or recommendation about the minerals reserve basin scheme.

In fact, there is substantial opposition from landholders in the area. I am amazed that the commission would say that it will spend $420 000 on a scheme that is still the subject of review by the Public Works Committee when the scheme has not been approved and there is no guarantee that it will be approved. That requires explanation. The House should know why the allocation has been included in the Bill. The Minister attempted to suggest that the money might not be spent. If that is so, the item should have been omitted from the Bill, rather than being spelt out in detail.

I have already mentioned the need for additional improvements to existing irrigation and drainage systems. The Bill refers to removal and enlargement works and the commission has carried out these works, most of them emanating from the Tatura office.

Flood plain management is an important area covered by the Bill. The proposed provision is $750 000 and the expenditure proposed for the financial year 1979–80 is $425 000. This amount is to be spent on the upgrading of levee banks and the construction of levees at retarding basins. The cost of some flood plain management works will be shared between the Commonwealth, the

State and local municipalities. From recent discussions with officers of the commission I understand that the proportions will be 40 per cent State, 40 per cent Commonwealth and 20 per cent local government.

It is of particular significance to the area I represent that one of the priorities is the works to be carried out at Nathalia. Considerable discussions have taken place since the floods of 1973, 1974 and 1975, but particularly 1974, when Nathalia was threatened by the flooding of Broken Creek. Since then, the Water Commission has carried out flood surveys and plans have been drawn up to provide a flood protection plan for Nathalia. There is still some dispute with neighbouring landholders and I hope that will be sorted out before the expenditure of the money. However, the Shire of Nathalia is anxious for the work to proceed urgently and I hope the commission will ensure that that happens.

Provision is also made for the purchase of flood-prone urban units, initially at Echuca, and rural lands at Lough Calvert. I shall comment particularly on the Echuca project. Some residents occupy land in Echuca that is seriously flood-prone and little, if any, protection is provided for them. A number of those landowners wish to sell their properties and be paid compensation so that they can move out of the area. That is desirable. Some of the householders believe it is a pleasant area in which to live because it has a natural environment and they wish to stay. They should also have that right, provided that there is no danger to life.

The Rodney electorate has done rather well in flood plain management and $250 000 has been allocated for the reconstruction of flood outlet structures on the Goulburn River at Hancock's Creek, Wakiti Creek and Deep Creek. Flood plain management in these areas is of vital concern to the local communities. The situation is unique. At each of these creeks on the Nathalia side of the Goulburn River, upstream from Shepparton, there is an opening and when the river reaches a certain flood level there are a series of fixed openings that allow water to enter the creeks.

At Deep Creek there is an old, red brick structure and once the river reaches a certain level a controlled amount of water is able to escape. The same situation applies at Wakiti Creek, where, in 1974, the floodway was at risk. Earlier this year there was a danger of the floodway being washed out.

The original structure at Hancock's Creek was washed out many years ago —I believe it was 1916—and there has been no structure there since then. There is just an open way into Hancock's Creek. The danger is that if that situation is allowed to continue there is a real risk, in a major flood, of the Goulburn River changing its course and diverting down Hancock's Creek. That would cause a major disaster.

It is pleasing that, after numerous discussions and a number of conferences, agreement has been reached with the Water Commission. I recognize the part the Minister has played in that. The honorable gentleman inspected the area two or three years ago and agreed that the work should be carried out. In fact, I understand that the work on Deep Creek has started.

Other flood plain management work should be carried out. This appears to be the first occasion on which the Victorian Government has taken part in the Commonwealth Government's water resources programme, funds from which have been offered for some years. I stand to be corrected if the State has sought financial aid from the programme in earlier years, but this is certainly the first occasion on which it has sought finance for flood management purposes, and $635 000 has been allocated this year. I hope the State Government will make greater use of these funds in future years.

Those are the major areas on which I shall comment. The National Party shares the concern expressed by previous speakers about funding for the Ministry of Water Supply not keeping pace with inflation. The Ministry is

not receiving a sufficently high priority. The National Party, therefore, supports the amendment.

Mr COLLINS (Noble Park)—I shall deal with the item in the Bill that refers to the Dandenong Valley Authority. Unlike many other honorable members who have contributed to the debate so far and have expressed their concern about decreasing funds, I shall take a somewhat different approach and put forward the positive view that many authorities are performing works in the most efficient manner possible. In many instances they are achieving a greater output of capital works than in the past because of their efficiency and organizational structure.

On many occasions during the short time I have been a member of Parliament, the former honorable member for Dandenong, when a Bill of this nature was introduced, spoke strongly in favour of the works carried out by the Dandenong Valley Authority. As the honorable member is no longer here, I shall assume his mantle, if I may be so bold.

The Dandenong Valley Authority has a capital works programme for 1979–80 of $4·066 million. Last year the total works programme amounted to $3·9 million, so there has been a small increase overall. The authority sought $1·2 million from the Government and has received an allocation of $900 000, which represents a slight decrease, as it received $970 000 last year. However, the Bill provides for an amount of up to $1·3 million to be made available to the authority in grants. I take it that, if funds are available in the course of the year and the needs are proved, the authority will be able to secure additional funds from the Government.

In recent years, the Dandenong Valley Authority has developed a highly skilled and much respected day labour work force. It now employs 110 men in that area. That is a wise allocation of its resources because it has created significant employment by the most careful use of the funds made available to it. Of the total capital works programme of $4 million plus, only $500 000 is to be carried out by contract as a result of tenders being called. The bulk of the work will be done by their own men. Of the work to be performed this year, $1·28 million of drainage works will be financed directly by the developers. A significant amount of that money will be spent in the Dandenong South area which is part of the Noble Park electorate. This area is expanding rapidly because of residential and industrial development. A further $1·8 million will involve loan and grant funds; $900 000 will be loan grants from the Government.

The principal works that will be performed by the Dandenong Valley Authority once again include major stream conservation, drainage and retention basins at Bayswater and Monbulk, plus important piping works at Mile Creek where Springvale Road meets the Princes Highway. Mile Creek carries a large flow of water at all times and is the most important component of the deviation scheme throughout the whole area.

At the same time an additional $200 000 will be made available when this Bill is passed to virtually complete the works required in the Mordialloc Creek. This was the original objective set out by the Dandenong Valley Authority some years ago, and the $200 000 made available will go a long way towards completing those works. The authority seeks an additional $500 000 for works downstream from the railway bridge, but these works do not come within the ambit of the initial objectives set some years ago, but they are important works and at this stage those funds have not been made available. There is no doubt the works may be able to be commenced during the course of the year.

An additional $600 000 has also been made available for land acquisition in conjunction with Cardinia and other important works to arrest erosion in that area. I set out earlier to try to justify that careful, prudent management, good administration and a skilled work force, can achieve significant works.

The Dandenong Valley Authority is also responsible for a number of important developments in Noble Park; not the least of those is the continuing work on the Patterson River, which will lead to the completion of an international rowing course. Honorable members will be aware that the Australian Olympic Federation and the Victorian Olympic Federation have determined, and quite rightly so, that in the event of the Olympic games being secured for Melbourne in 1988, the rowing will take place on the Patterson River. I invite the honorable member for Niddrie to come down and join me. The extraction of the Patterson River is being done by private enterprise, which, in turn, is filling in certain lands in the close vicinity. Private enterprise has constructed the area to its design and it will be a superb recreational facility.

For people who enjoy water skiing, it was most exciting when the first stage was opened earlier this year. At Patterson Lakes an inland ski resort has been created which will attract tourists in the future. The Victorian Ski Association has assumed management of it. At the opening we were fortunate to obtain the world champions, including the very atheletic Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation, who put on his skis and went through hectic runs over the obstacle course. We were glad that he finished in one piece because he took a wide arc at one stage and almost wrote himself off.

The Dandenong Valley Authority is also responsible for the Edithvale wetlands and it is continuing significant works in the area. If was through the good work of the Dandenong Valley Authority that a concrete line drain was developed along Springvale Road from Hutton Road as far as Wells Road, which of course will ensure that no potential flooding of land owned by the Trotting Control Board in that area occurs.

The other point I wish to refer to briefly was alluded to by the honorable member for Niddrie. It concerns section 142A of the Board of Works Act in regard to sewerage works. I suggest the honorable member for Niddrie might like to follow this advice. Concern was expressed by residents in Chelsea Heights and Dingley that the board was to implement this section of the Act. Representations were made by Mr Stacey, in another place, and myself, to the Minister of Water Supply, the Premier, and the Treasurer, along the lines that if the board tried to implement section 142A in these areas it would result in us leading a protest march in Bourke Street. We have been able, without any public meeting, to assure the residents of Chelsea Heights and Dingley that that section will not be implemented.

I refer to a letter received from the Minister of Water Supply, dated 8 November 1979, and it reads:

Dear Mr Collins,

I refer to your telegram of 5 November 1979, regarding the reported intention of the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works to require property owners in unsewered areas to contribute towards the cost of sewerage reticulation and headworks.

The implementation of the provisions of section 142A of the Board's Act was the subject of discussion by the Board of Works and, also, discussions between the Board, the Honorable the Premier and myself.

I now wish to advise you that it is not proposed to carry out any works using this particular section of the Act at this time.

I assure you that I will immediately inform you should there be any change in policy prior to its implementation.

Yours sincerely,

F. J. GRANTER
Minister of Water Supply

I assume the Minister was referring to the metropolitan area in general. I would like the honorable member for Niddrie to keep a close watch on this particular section of the Act. I believe it could well be deleted from the Act.

The honorable member for Niddrie said that people should not be required to pay twice for sewerage reticulation and house connection services. Those people who purchase new homes in the board's area do that already, because they pay the developer for the land, and sewerage works are included in the price of the land. It is a case of the user pays. The developer pays for water and sewerage works and so there are those two distinctions. The reality is,

the developer having the money to develop the land, pays for it in the first place.

Sooner or later this matter has to be reviewed to ensure that no section of the community is prejudiced by the application of section 142A and, more importantly, to ensure that no one group has to pay more than another.

Sewerage works have finally commenced at Chelsea Heights and at Dingley. I trust that the Board of Works will not change its plans because of lack of resources or a change of priority. The cost of connecting a household to the sewerage system is fortunately less this year than it was last year. Last year it was less than the year before. Board of Works figures show that in the past three years the cost of connecting a home to the sewerage system has fallen from approximately $1100 to $970 a home. There has been a real cost saving to home owners because the decreased funds available for reticulation and house connections has resulted in more competition between those performing these works.

Although the national sewerage programme increased the amount of funds available for sewerage works throughout Australia, as I have said before, any responsible person involved in sewerage programmes in Australia would agree that the increase in funds was such that in a short space of time less work was performed for more money between 1974 and 1976.

The cost of achieving major reticulation works in the Springvale and Dandenong areas rose by between 200 per cent and 300 per cent during 1975–76 alone. Many of the jobs tendered for were let at enormous charges because there was no one in the field to do the work. New contractors who had never done reticulation works before were charging astronomical prices and, unfortunately, in some cases they were either the lowest or the only tenders for the work. The idea was superb but the funds flowed too quickly. Better management has given local authorities more scope to raise loans—up to $1·2 million for the Dandenong Valley Authority this year.

Most rural sewerage authorities still receive subsidies from the Government. The authorities in Springvale, Noble Park and Dandenong do not, but are performing their task adequately. Householders in those areas pay half the amount of rates as those people who pay rates to the Board of Works. I place on record the fact that, if the Board of Works and/or the Government, of which I am a supporter, endeavours to take over authorities, such as Dandenong, Springvale and Noble Park, the honorable member for Dandenong and I will be running in protest against such a decision. The ratepayers of those areas, through the prudent management of those authorities, enjoy a rate which is half of that charged by the Board of Works. They achieved that result because of the prudent use of funds.

Mr Roper—Are you attacking Mr Croxford?

Mr COLLINS—Mr Croxford has a difficult task to perform and he does a good job. However, the supply of water systems to the Westernport area is costing the metropolitan ratepayer a lot. At this stage the board performs its task efficiently but too much of its funding has had to be applied in areas which are not bearing fruit. I hope there will be no further decrease in the amount of funds made available to the board and that the Westernport area will be allowed to develop at a faster pace so that the metropolitan ratepayers will finally get a return for their money.

Mr McINNES (Gippsland South)—I did not notice any mention of the Aberfeldy diversion of the upper Thompson dam. The Aberfeldy diversion was recommended several years ago by the Public Works Committee and was accepted, in principle, by the Government. It has been the considered policy of various water supply committees in Gippsland, particularly the Greater Gippsland Development League, and the Gippsland Water Utilization Committee which have repeatedly reiterated their support.

With the completion of the last major water storage in Victoria, the Dartmouth dam, it is obvious that we must address our minds to the next major

development which is to honour a promise that the Aberfeldy diversion attached to the upper Thomson dam will go ahead; the planning for that development should now be in the pipeline. I believe that project should be proceeded with as soon as possible.

The Aberfeldy diversion is not new—the concept dates back to 1929. Since 1975 fears have been expressed about the intention of the Government to support the Aberfeldy diversion. There have been doubts about the inclusion of this diversion in the current upper Thomson River programme.

Mr Croxford, the Chairman of the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works, reinforced those doubts in Gippsland twelve or fifteen months ago when he claimed the onus of developing Aberfeldy rested with Gippslanders. As far as the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works was concerned it wanted to wipe its hands of the project and would quietly drop it if the opportunity arose. Gippslanders do not intend to let the project be dropped. The project covers 70 per cent of the Aberfeldy catchment area and 23 per cent of the water resources which would be available in the Thomson storage. It would provide regulation and flood control by greater use of that storage. It would protect the land downstream in the areas represented by me and by the honorable member for Gippsland East which are commanded by the McAllister and Thomson River scheme. It would provide a back-up in water supply for land irrigated by Lake Glenmaggie and safeguard recreation in that lake in the Shire of Maffra.

I am firmly of the conviction that the project must continue. The Thomson River waters would play an important role in supplying produce for Australia's neighbours who are in dire need. It is sad that there may be a further need for the Thomson River dam to supply water to the Latrobe Valley if the project for the conversion of coal to petroleum is approved. This conversion places a heavy demand on water resources because the process uses between 2·5 tonnes and 10 tonnes of water for each 1000 gallons of petroleum products.

The Aberfeldy project is important for the future because it will supply an important function of maintaining the viability of the Gippsland Lakes system. Studies have been carried out of the Gippsland Lakes ecosystem and those studies are continuing. There should be a catchment authority rather than just an isolated study of the Gippsland Lakes. A study of the whole catchment area of the Gippsland lakes would show there is a case for the establishment of a catchment authority in this region. That has been strongly suggested by the Gippsland Water Utilization Committee and has been put to the Government on a number of occasions, generally without success. However, with the withdrawal of regional planning authorities perhaps there should be further consideration of this proposal. The catchment areas for water form a natural boundary for planning.

I refer to another matter, which although it concerns the Minister for Conservation, ought to be considered under the Water Supply Works and Services Bill. The Gippsland Water Utilization Committee provided a submission to the Minister for Conservation and the Environment Protection Authority regarding aspects of the Latrobe River. It was pleased to have that opportunity, but when the report was brought down it was not given the opportunity of discussing the recommendations. The Minister of Water Supply should take this up with his colleague, the Minister for Conservation and provide that means for further discussion. Most planning allows for consideration of preliminary recommendations before final recommendations are adopted. In this case, having provided data for input to the Environment Protection Authority, this committee has been refused the opportunity of considering the recommendations before they are finally adopted.

Mr CATHIE (Carrum)—I had not intended to enter this debate but was encouraged to do so by the honorable member for Noble Park who spoke quite vigorously about the needs of his constituents. I believe he has no option now but to join with the Opposition and vote with the amendment. It is all very

well for the honorable member to talk about what his Government is doing in supporting the Dandenong Valley Authority. Perhaps he did not read the estimates which are set out in the explanatory statement to the Water Supply Works and Services Bill.

From the statement it can be seen that the expenditure in 1978–79 was $970 000. This year it has been reduced to $900 000. If allowance is made for an inflation rate of about 10 per cent, it can be seen that, just to keep up with the inflation rate—not giving any additional funds but simply keeping pace with inflation—the amount which should have been allocated to the Dandenong Valley Authority this year was $1 067 000. What has the Government done? Instead of giving that amount of money to the Dandenong Valley Authority, it has been reduced the allocation to only $900 000, and yet the honorable member for Noble Park has said, "What a wonderful job the Government is doing in battling for the needs of the people in that area"

The Dandenong Valley Authority has an extremely important responsibility in undertaking the essential drainage works, the development of flood protection works in that valley as well as pollution control. In all of those areas, the authority is understaffed. It has been understaffed and it will continue to be understaffed as a result of this Budget. As a result the authority will not be able to perform its job as well or as efficiently as it would like.

The honorable member for Noble Park has talked a great deal but this amendment gives him the opportunity of doing something positive for the people whom he claims to represent. It gives him the opportunity of putting his vote where his mouth is and of saying that at the very least the funds allocated in the Water Supply Works and Services Bill should be at the level of the inflation rate for the ensuing twelve months—10 per cent, according to most estimates. That is the amendment which the Labor Party has proposed and which I believe the honorable member for Noble Park will have to support now.

The honorable member for Noble Park also described the work being undertaken by the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works sewerage programmes not only in the area of Noble Park but also in places such as Chelsea Heights. Areas other than Chelsea and Frankston are also concerned because of the slowness of this Government in catching up on sewerage backlog. Does the member for Noble Park recall the glib and often-repeated promises of the Premier that he would have the whole of Melbourne sewered by 1980? It then became 1983 and I think that the latest estimate is about 1993, at the current rate of progress. The honorable member for Geelong West jeers at that slow progress, and the honorable member for Noble Park talks about the marvellous representations which he and a member in another place have made for Chelsea Heights. I guarantee that the honorable member for Noble Park has not told his constituents that the Board of Works is currently studying a proposal to impose new sewerage connection charges in all of its sewerage backlog areas. However, it ought to be said here that the Board of Works has informed me that the reason for the proposed new connection charges in backlog areas is the failure of the Government to provide essential funds for sewerage, and the collapse of the national sewerage programme.

Mr Collins—That is not true.

Mr CATHIE—I have had it in writing from the Board of Works.

Mr Weideman—When is the Board of Works sewering Frankston?

Mr CATHIE—The board is currently sewering Chelsea, and the Frankston Sewerage Authority is currently sewering Seaford. I thought the honorable member for Frankston would know that.

The final matter to which I wish to refer is the slow progress being made in obtaining assistance, either from the Government or from the Dandenong Valley Authority, to solve the urgent problems occurring at Seaford South, in the City of Frankston in the electorate of Carrum.

Whenever heavy rains occur, as often happens in winter or towards the beginning of summer and in January, there is a conjunction of large volumes of water coming down from the developed areas of Frankston North and Karingal in Frankston East and the tide coming up the Kananook Creek prevents the drainage water from flowing away. It has only one place to go, and that is on to the flat land in between. Some residents have to keep ready a permanent supply of sandbags to meet this contingency.

I have raised this matter in Parliament over all the years that I have represented the people of the Carrum electorate and have not received an answer from the Minister or a solution to the problem. I placed a question on the Notice Paper, where it has remained for some considerable time, seeking a decision by the Minister. The Minister of Water Supply and the honorable member for Frankston met with the Frankston City Council this year to discuss the matter. That was six months ago. I have not yet received any response from the Minister, nor have I received an answer to my question on the Notice Paper.

There are many problems facing honorable members when they fight for improvements and increased services for the people of their electorates. That is why the Opposition is giving Government supporters the opportunity of putting their votes where their mouths are and supporting the proposed amendment by saying, "At least if we cannot go forward, we should not be going backwards".

Mr TREWIN (Benalla)—Water is the most important substance that human beings require, and I will refer to the problems of several waterworks trusts. Firstly, they cannot obtain a water supply; secondly, the supply of water is too costly, and thirdly, the purity of the water is far below the standard required for human consumption or use.

My remarks concern waterworks trusts and the contribution made by the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission—in other words the Government—towards their viability. It is about time a new formula was developed by the Water Commission to give more support to country waterworks trusts which are designed to supply water to rural townships. For many years they did not receive sufficient funds to enable them to provide services to the local people and provide them with water of suitable quality.

I take as an example the extension of the scheme at Euroa. Fifteen years ago the Public Works Committee carried out a survey of the Euroa district and determined that water could be supplied to the township and the community above and beyond Euroa where the storage facility would be built. It recommended that this project be included in the ten-year plan that was developed by the Government under the leadership of Sir Henry Bolte to promote and develop water storages in Victoria, and that plan was extremely successful. With one or two exceptions the schemes were carried out and storages were built in the north-east of Victoria at Buffalo dam, Lake Nillahcootie, Lake Mokoan and Lake Hovell. It was recommended that the Seven Creeks storage should be built at Euroa, but problems were experienced with the foundations and the proposal was not carried out.

The water trusts were lulled into a sense of security by the Public Works Committee in its report, and as a result for several years they did not promote their proposed schemes. When it became obvious that the scheme would not be developed by the Government and that no irrigation would be available in the district, the township of Euroa had to fall back on its own resources. A proposal was submitted to the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission four years ago, prior to an election in which the Minister was involved in Euroa, and a quick recommendation was made that the scheme should be proceeded with. The Water Commission and the consulting engineers did not carry out sufficient research, but the proposal went ahead. Tenders were called—the Water Commission also tendered for the project but it was not successful. The contract was let to a person who turned out not

to be capable of carrying out the construction work. Not enough research was carried out on the financial and other capabilities of the company to which the contract was awarded. The result of all this messing about has been that the storage, which initially was to have cost between $400 000 and $450 000, has cost about $1·1 million or $1·2 million. The question is: Who is going to pay for it?

Another question has arisen about the allocation of grants under the formula that was first proposed for the scheme. It was to be about $170 000, but because the trust did not charge a high enough water rate and because other matters peculiar to the system arose with the Water Commission and its formula for allocating grants, it is now expected that only $110 000 will be made available to the Euroa Waterworks Trust as a grant.

Initially the grants were to be comprised of about 40 per cent loan and 20 per cent local contribution, but in this case they will probably be made up of about 80 per cent loan, 10 per cent grant and about 10 cent local contribution from the funds of the trust. The trusts are concerned now that the rate they charge will have to be increased to such an extent that the water will become the most expensive in the State. The Minister is aware of this because about three weeks ago he declared the project officially completed and said that the water would flow to the benefit of the community.

The financial impact on the community has not yet been felt, but physically, the supply of water has pleased the people of Euroa. Normally, during summer periods, water restrictions had to be imposed in January or February and if there had been a dry season and the temperature was extra warm, the severity of the restrictions were such that very little water was available for the supply system. The construction of the storage will enable the position to be eliminated, but the point is: At what cost?

The State Rivers and Water Supply Commission or the Government has to look at this point. The trust has been reluctant to raise the matter whilst the dam was under construction because of certain peculiarities with the contractor, and because the people were delighted with the prospect of having an adequate supply of water. This is one aspect which the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission must urgently consider.

It is not only Euroa which is affected by the formula used by the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission; Glenrowan is similarly affected. The water supply is to be extended because of the increased house building taking place at Goorambat. The quality of the water supply at Violet Town is such that it has become unfit, not only for drinking purposes but also for use in any way at all, and a filtration and chlorination plant must be installed. The present financial position of the water trust will not permit this.

I know no reason why additional funding cannot be made available or another formula created which will assist the people who live in country areas and who deserve the benefit of a reasonable water supply. I challenge the Government and the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission, and particularly, the Minister of Water Supply who represents a rural electorate in which are located many water trusts, to help overcome the financial plight of water trusts.

The township of Avenel is in a peculiar position in that the Hume Freeway crosses the Hughes Creek from which the town water supply is pumped. It is a continually running stream and the local people are concerned that if an accident occurred on the Hume Freeway, which is located above the position of the pumping station, the water supply could become contaminated from liquids and fuels flowing from the accident. The local water trust is making further representation to ascertain whether additional funds can be made available to solve the problem. Perhaps the funds could be made available from the allocation to the Country Roads Board towards the construction of the national freeway between Melbourne and Wodonga.

Last week an important step was taken in the conservation of water in Victoria. I refer to the opening of the Dartmouth dam which is situated in north-east Victoria. It is either the largest or the second largest dam in Australia and it will service our irrigation districts in no uncertain manner.

Prior to the commencement of construction of the Dartmouth dam, many people who lived along streams in Victoria, on which water storages had been already constructed, made requests for permits to pump water for irrigation purposes, or for permission to be included under the licence system. They were informed that they would have to wait until Dartmouth dam came into existence, to ascertain the impact of that water storage on the irrigation areas already supplied. I refer particularly to the Goulburn River, Broken River and Broken Creek areas.

Honorable members would be aware, that many irrigation areas have not only their permitted quantity of water but also have available a quantity of water by sales. Prior to the Dartmouth dam coming into existence, it was always uncertain whether there was an adequate supply of water available to service the committed irrigation areas.

I want to see as quickly as possible the introduction of a system of permits and licences along these streams to take away some of the insecurity many farmers currently experience because this will allow them to pump water from those streams and to irrigate maybe 40 to 100 acres of their property.

The present system is unjust and should not be allowed to continue, now that the Dartmouth dam is a reality. I know that a good rainfall season is required, perhaps backed by a good snowfall season in the catchment area of the dam to help it obtain its maximum storage facility.

I would be disappointed if the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission did not provide a favourable answer to the applications already lodged to enable the landholders living along the banks of streams to pump water from the stream and to give security to their farming operations.

The Bill is an annual one and is of significance to country areas. The honorable member for Broadmeadows has moved an amendment to the effect that the allocation of funds is not keeping pace with the rate of inflation—that appears a reasonable amendment. Whilst there are many water works programmes still to be carried out—the cost of some programmes has been estimated already—greater funding must be provided for the conservation of water which, as I mentioned earlier, is our most precious product.

On the motion of Mr WHITING (Mildura), the debate was adjourned.

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

PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES (PUBLIC ACCOUNTS AND EXPENDITURE REVIEW COMMITTEE) BILL

Mr HAMER (Premier)—I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The Bill honours an undertaking given by the Government at the State election this year to set up an expenditure committee to assist Parliament in the management and control of Government administration and to scrutinize and evaluate expenditure programmes for economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

The Bill is introduced as part of an ongoing commitment by the Government to better inform Parliament on the public accounts, and improve public accountability of funds allocated by Parliament. Among the steps already taken by the Government to achieve this aim are:

(i) Improved presentation of Budget documents, including the new document, "Payments to and for the States", which explains in detail the nature and impact of Commonwealth payments to Victoria.

(ii) Better functional classification of State expenditure.

(iii) The undertaking to appoint a joint committee to examine the role and effectiveness of statutory bodies and to recommend whether they should be terminated or changed.

(iv) The establishment of a Cabinet Budget committee to consider and settle the broad priorities and strategy of the State Budget.

The increased complexity of government and the need to better inform the community on its operations has required a re-examination of the functions and performance of the Public Accounts Committee of the Legislative Assembly, and as a result the Government decided that its aims would be best achieved by creating an enlarged joint committee of both Houses and expanding the philosophy and role of the Public Accounts Committee to cover the scrutiny and evaluation of public expenditures.

The Public Accounts Committee was originally appointed under the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly—now Standing Order No. 220—in 1895. It was intended to have functions and powers similar to those of the corresponding committee of the House of Commons. This committee, comprising eight members of the Assembly, has had a long and distinguished history within the terms of its charter in reviewing many aspects of public expenditure and reporting thereon to Parliament.

The right of Parliament to control expenditure and to protect the public purse has a long history. The basic principle that the Crown has no power to tax but by legislation through Parliament is enshrined in Magna Carta. Taxation is the means of making grants to the Crown and all funds must be appropriated by Parliament and used for the specific purposes to which they are allocated.

Control of expenditure is therefore a fundamental power and duty of Parliament, and a careful scrutiny of the use of public moneys has become even more important with the growth of the public sector.

Both the British and Commonwealth Parliaments have found it desirable to establish a committee with similar powers and functions to those proposed in the Bill.

The Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee will consist of eight members of the Assembly and four from the Council, and will replace the existing Public Accounts Committee. Its functions are set out in the Bill. It will generally examine Budget allocations to departments and review and evaluate public expenditures for economy, efficiency and effectiveness. It will seek to pinpoint waste or extravagance, improve planning and expenditure control.

It will exercise the powers of all Parliamentary committees set up under the principal Act. It will have power to appoint sub-committees. It will of course require supporting staff of high calibre, and the Government will see to it that they are appointed or seconded for the task.

The equivalent Commonwealth committee has found great value in sending a statement of its preliminary conclusions to the departments concerned. It gives departments the chance to respond to committee views and the committee the chance to assess those responses.

This procedure reinforces the real task of the committee—to improve efficiency. There will most often be room for improvement, but it will be best effected by making recommendations based on consultation rather than confrontation. The committee should not be regarded as the adversary of the departments.

This form of consultation procedure is similar to that practised by the Victorian Ombudsman with marked success, and it is intended that the new committee should employ it in all appropriate circumstances. The reports by this committee will strengthen the control of Parliament over public expenditures and enhance its knowledge and understanding. I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of Mr WILKES (Leader of the Opposition), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Thursday, December 6.

The House adjourned at 6.2 p.m., until Tuesday, November 27.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

The following answers to questions on notice were circulated—

PSYCHIATRIC CENTRE FOR CHILDREN

(Question No. 1327)

Mr ROPER (Brunswick) asked the Minister of Health:

Whether there are plans to set up a day hospital and regional psychiatric centre for children in the outer south-eastern suburbs; if so, what are the details of those proposals and when it is expected that services will commence?

Mr BORTHWICK (Minister of Health) —The answer is:

There is a regional psychiatric centre for children attached to the Dandenong Psychiatric Centre which serves the municipalities of Dandenong, Springvale, Berwick, Cranbourne and Pakenham. Other municipalities of the region are served by the South Eastern Child and Family Centre, 25 Queens Road, Melbourne.

Upon relocation to Clayton the Queen Victoria Medical Centre will also incorporate a regional Child Psychiatric Service and Day Centre. There are no other plans for child psychiatric facilities in the region.

MELBOURNE AND METROPOLITAN BOARD OF WORKS

(Question No. 1528)

Mrs TONER (Greensborough) asked the Minister of Agriculture, for the Minister of Water Supply:

In the light of the Premier's affirmation that municipal councils will be involved in Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works decisions through the Area Commissions and in view of the terms of reference of the Area Commissions, how many items—(*a*) the Minister; and (*b*) the board, has initiated for referral to the Area Commission?

Mr I. W. SMITH (Minister of Agriculture)—The answer supplied by the Minister of Water Supply is:

(*a*) 4.

(*b*) 57.

TORRUMBARRY IRRIGATION SYSTEM

(Question No. 1600)

Mr HANN (Rodney) asked the Minister of Agriculture, for the Minister of Water Supply:

1 How many tonnes of salt (TDS) will be carried into the Torrumbarry irrigation system per annum through the offtake regulator at Torrumbarry on completion of Phase B drainage works in the Shepparton Region?

2 How many tonnes per annum increase is this figure over pre-drainage works in the Shepparton Region?

Mr I. W. SMITH (Minister of Agriculture)—The answer supplied by the Minister of Water Supply is:

1. If Phase B groundwater drainage works in the Shepparton Region proceeds, the average annual salt load carried into the Torrumbarry Irrigation System through the Torrumbarry offtake would be 100 000 tonnes/year.

2. This figure is 40 000 tonnes/year more than the average annual salt load of approximately 60 000 tonnes/year carried through the offtake regulator before groundwater drainage works in the Shepparton Region were commenced.

Even with an average annual salt intake of 100 000 tonnes/year after completion of Phase B works, the Kerang Region would still remain a nett-exporter of salt, as the average annual salt load discharged in Barr Creek drainage is 190 000 tonnes/year.

Legislative Council

Tuesday, 27 November 1979

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. F. S. Grimwade) took the chair at 4.52 p.m. and read the prayer.

STATE FORESTS WORKS AND SERVICES BILL

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